

distinct interest in retaining as long as possible their share in a lucrative branch of nursing. The vituperation consequent on Dr. Wood's proposal that the certificated asylum attendant should be eligible to be placed on a separate register of the Royal British Nurses' Association, may not therefore have been altogether dependent on the want of information so freely manifested.

The correspondence, in various medical papers resulting from this attack, has, however, fairly conclusively shown that the certificated attendant has passed an examination considerably in advance of anything demanded from the certificated hospital nurse, and is therefore in as good if not a better position for seeking the confidence of the public in this special line of work.

Certificated mental nurses in private practice, unattached to asylums, will need some combination which can assure the public not only of their technical qualifications, but of their moral character. The question the Medico-Psychological Association has to consider is whether this can be supplied by its own organisation or by adopting the proposed alliance with the R.B.N.A., or by other means.

The small number of private mental nurses would render an independent organisation difficult, and an organisation in connection with our own body would not be easy to establish, if indeed within the scope of our work; so that an alliance with some other body would seem to be almost necessary.

If such association be made, as for example with the R.B.N.A., we must insist that no inferior or second rate position be accorded to the bearers of our certificate. These are worthy, even now, to rank with the certificated nurse, and the standard both of instruction and examination is rising much more rapidly with the former than with the latter.

Certificated attendants, therefore, need no patronage or condescension, and the Association, so far as it acts for them, should insist on the fullest recognition of the high standard of moral character and of special instruction necessary to obtain their qualification.

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#### *Nursing in Belgian Asylums.*

This question of nursing is not insular; it is debated at home and abroad. It is an outstanding fact of the age—symptomatic indeed. While the modern training of asylum nurses has been in active development in this country and in

America throughout the last decade, resulting in such notable facts as are recorded by Dr. Outterson Wood, we regret to note that the efforts of Dr. Jules Morel have not met with a more worthy response in Belgium. Dr. Peeters in 1892 warned his colleagues that uneducated nursing must be to some degree sterile of results, and he boldly claimed that the nursing staff is called to a higher mission in an asylum than in an ordinary hospital. This has been recognised in Holland, where the Psychological Association has called upon its members to persevere in their efforts for the improvement of the nursing staff, and has instituted an examination similar to our own. A similar movement has taken place in Germany, where, in 1885, it was supported by the veteran Dr. Laehr, and where Dr. Siemnes has since declared that they can look forward with confidence to a happy solution of the question.

It is extraordinary that Belgium should lag behind in this department of mental science. Dr. Sibbald has shown what is being done at Gheel and Lierneux in previous pages of this number of the Journal; and Dr. Morel has lately recorded the notable results of the medico-psychological service in the Belgian prisons to which three asylum physicians were appointed in 1891. In these matters we are not abreast of the times; but Belgium and Britain must keep step in the march of progress.

It would appear that the familiar, unworthy objection has for the time prevailed in the Society of Mental Medicine of Belgium—the fear that the nurse may be transformed into the *demi-savant*. As who should say that the anatomy and physiology of a locomotive engine ought to be kept strictly private in case the driver should become an inferior engineer! But Dr. Morel must return to the attack, for even were his opponents' cause righteous there is no Joshua among us to say, *Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon*.

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#### *Aphasia and Will Making.*

Dr. Byrom Bramwell has dealt with this question in a suggestive manner. The legal attitude in reference to wills made by the insane is generally in accordance with justice, for judgment may be said to be ruled by the case of *Banks v. Goodfellow*, when Lord Chief Justice Cockburn adopted the earlier test, "Was the capacity in this particular case adequate to the act?"