

we never heard of such a test for admission to its membership being applied by any other Union, and upon the best authority we can say that such a policy had never occurred to anyone connected with the British Nurses' Association. But once again there appears to be a widely prevalent idea that nobody can now be admitted as a Member at all—in fact, that the Association is now a close borough. Of course, all these misconceptions probably arise from the fact that there are so few female Associations of any kind, and that Nurses have never previously had one peculiarly their own. We must, therefore, explain, that as long as an Association exists at all, it must necessarily be permissible and possible for new Members to join it; otherwise, as the old Members died off, the Association also would become extinct.

We have made inquiries, and find that the method of obtaining membership of the Nurses' Association is as follows. An application form and a copy of the bye-laws must be obtained, by writing to the Secretary, at 20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope. The former must then be carefully and fully filled up and returned, with a postal order for the annual or life subscription, to the Secretary, who will at once acknowledge its receipt by a printed post-card. The applications, we are informed, are considered by a Sub-Committee, who report upon each to the next monthly meeting of the Executive Committee. If not elected by this body, the applicant, it seems, receives a note to that effect, enclosing the subscription sent; but if duly admitted as a Member, a notification of the fact, with the handsome card of membership—and, we believe, certain other papers—are sent to the candidate. This practically resembles the system pursued by all other Associations; the Committee of Management practically possessing the power to refuse membership to anyone, without being obliged to assign any reason for its decision.

Now, we desire to call the special attention of our readers to the present opportunities, and probable future difficulties, of obtaining admission to this Association. By the bye-laws, it was provided that anyone who had been engaged in nursing the sick for three years, whether trained or untrained, so long as she produced certificates of personal character and professional work satisfactory to the Committee, might, until the first day of this year, be admitted as a Member. We are not surprised to learn that, though this liberality was offered as a matter of justice to those who were experienced Nurses of the old *régime*, these have conspicuously failed to understand the value of the concession, and therefore have not availed themselves of the opportunity; and that the vast majority of the two thousand Nurses who have now been enrolled are

evidently women of good birth and education—just those most likely, in fact, to realise at once the great advantages to themselves of an association similar to those in which they would know that their fathers and brothers hastened to enrol themselves at the earliest possible opportunity.

But such being the case, we are informed that the Executive Committee saw that it could safely extend the same privilege for another twelve months; so that, as it now stands, all women who have nursed the sick for three years will, until the last day of this year, be eligible for membership. But the history of all similar Associations proves one fact beyond all doubt—that the more advantages which membership of any Society confers—the more anxiety, therefore, which people show to join it—the greater difficulty do they find in doing so. We call the earnest attention of Nurses, therefore, to the first significant sign of increased difficulty in obtaining membership of this Association, contained in an important letter which we published in our issue last week from Dr. Bedford Fenwick. It seems that the Executive Committee have decided, as soon as four thousand Members have been enrolled, to charge an entrance fee of five shillings to all future Nurses joining the Association. We are not one whit surprised to see this symptom of conscious strength, considering its wonderful progress in the first year of its life; but to our minds it means that, in all probability, the next announcement will be that, after so many thousands have joined, some new stringency will be effected in the admission of future Members. We should, therefore, earnestly advise every reader of this Journal who is eligible, to apply for membership as soon as possible.

The Association, it appears, continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Last year it did not exist. Now it is thousands strong, and has embraced British Nurses all over the world. Perhaps next year it will be incorporated by Royal Charter, will practically control the entire Nursing profession, and afford its members great privileges and advantages. It is then quite certain that the honour of its membership will be highly prized, and eagerly sought after; and we are, therefore, strongly inclined to believe that it will be made much more difficult to obtain. Once more, therefore, we counsel every Nurse who is eligible to join this wonderfully successful Association while the opportunity is still so freely offered.

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AS OTHERS SEE US.—It is a sign of the growing interest felt in the profession of Nursing that the authors of that meritorious publication the *Nursing Record* have been obliged to increase its size.—*Globe*.

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