

Advancement of Science are not thereby registered as scientific men and women. No one can become a member of the British Medical Association until he has become qualified by law to practise as a Medical man. So, in like manner, the British Nurses' Association has been formed to unite Nurses together for their mutual aid and assistance, and to raise the knowledge and position of the whole profession. It has nothing to do with *making* Nurses. Consequently, as no examination will be necessary to obtain membership hereafter, this feature of the two questions we have quoted may be now dismissed.

But with reference to the status which Nurses who join the Association now will hold, as compared with that which will be held by those who join after it has been successfully consolidated and incorporated by Royal Charter, there can be, as we showed last week, no vestige of doubt. The founders of the Nursing Profession of the future—the combatants in the great campaign now proceeding—must inevitably receive more honour than those will deserve, and reap, who wait until all the hard work has been done by others, and then come forward to share in the advantages which have been won.

We now pass to another matter in this connection, to which we have for long desired to devote attention—the extraordinary, and, as we have upon several occasions termed it, the unprecedented, success which has attended the British Nurses' Association. Looking round upon the various professional unions which are at present in existence, we find that—as perhaps might be expected—the two most powerful amongst them are the British Medical Association, and the Incorporated Law Society.

We find that the histories of these are most instructive. In 1825, Solicitors, and in 1832, Doctors, were exactly in the position in which Nurses stood in 1887—disunited, isolated workers. In those years respectively each calling became possessed of a common rallying point, and from that time the legal and medical professions have enormously advanced, alike in public estimation, in political power, and also in the personal influence of their individual members. So we can safely prophesy that from 1887 will date the same era of professional progress for Nurses.

Turning first to the Incorporated Law Society, we find that it was at once joined by no less than two hundred and twenty-three leading lawyers. In fourteen months, says the official history, "this number had swelled to four hundred and seven, in which number country members figured; and in the year 1835 the numbers made the goodly show, for so young a body, of one thousand and fifteen." From 1825 to 1831, the Committee of Management

was busied, first with raising funds, and then of utilising these in the erection of the well-known House in Chancery Lane, and in obtaining a Charter of Incorporation. In 1833 we find the Society instituting lectures on different branches of legal education, in order to raise the general standard of knowledge; and then in 1836, "came," says the official record, "the very important measure of obtaining from the judges—with whom exclusively the matter rested—a recognition of the obvious fact, that it was expedient to examine candidates for admission as attorneys and solicitors as to their knowledge of the law and of the practice of the Courts." The result of this was, that twelve of the senior members of the Committee of Management were appointed, with other officials, to be the examiners, and "the stamp of the Society's connection with these examinations was, at the same time, effectually set upon them, by the selection of the Hall of the Institution as a 'fit and convenient place' in which to hold them." For forty years this system continued, and then, in 1877, was passed the Act of Parliament which gave the Incorporated Law Society the entire control of the admission of solicitors into the profession. An "Examination Committee" was now appointed, to conduct and supervise the necessary tests as to the knowledge and fitness of candidates; and powers were granted whereby any solicitor, who proved to be unworthy of his calling, could be struck off the rolls.

Now this brief record of a great professional Union is, it appears to us, full of encouragement to Nurses. In ten years about one Solicitor out of every eighteen in the country had joined the Law Society. *In one year about one Nurse out of every seven has joined the Nurses' Association.* It was eight years before the first turned its attention to improving the status and knowledge of its profession, and fifty-two years before it finally succeeded. The B. N. A. has grappled firmly and boldly with the question at once, and not only deserves success, but, we venture to believe, will speedily command it.

Now we turn to the British Medical Association, and there we find a somewhat different state of affairs. In 1832 Doctors were disunited, but they were examined and diplomated by State bodies for three hundred years before that time, and thus their Association had not to organize and give status to the profession—it only gave its Members unity among themselves. In 1867 the Association only numbered 3,000 Members, or, in other words, in thirty-five years it only enlisted the support of one Doctor out of every seven in the United Kingdom—precisely the proportion in which Nurses have, in one single twelve-months, rallied to the support of their Union.

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