

connected might not object to their display of a badge—we believe that they would, in their lonely work and retired lives, care little to wear an addition to their uniform, which only few people would see, and the significance of which, fewer still could understand. Both in public and private work difficulties would certainly arise from the exhibition of any distinctive decoration.

But we would argue against the idea upon higher and wider grounds than mere expediency. For now when so much is being done directly or indirectly to raise the status of Nurses, to increase public confidence in their utility, and to unite them all together in one great Sisterhood of Mercy, it is surely no time to inaugurate a scheme which would undoubtedly arouse jealousy, and create friction, if not absolute discord, amongst the various sections of workers in the Nursing world.

We are well aware that the members of the Guild of St. Barnabas wear a distinctive ornament, but we contend that, even though these are Nurses, their case is totally dissimilar from the one we are now considering. It is, we believe, an old-established custom for an emblem to be worn by those belonging to such religious organisations as the one we have named, as a constant memento of the promises they have made, and an outward and visible sign of their intention to conform to the rules of life and conduct, enjoined on every member. But the British Nurses' Association is a purely professional Union, and therefore such reasons cannot be urged in its case. So far as we are aware, the members of no other calling distinguish themselves by means of a badge. Certainly neither Medical men, nor lawyers, nor clergymen do so, and therefore it would be a most unusual professional innovation for Nurses to wear one. We might go so far as to say that a proposition that the members of the British Medical Association should adopt an external manifestation of their connection with that powerful body, would be greeted—would be in fact killed and buried—in inextinguishable merriment.

For these and many other reasons, which we need not here adduce, we therefore decidedly consider that our correspondent's suggestion of a badge to be worn by Members of the British Nurses' Association is not advisable. Indeed, in view of the careful manner in which the affairs of the Association have hitherto been conducted, we should be extremely surprised to find the idea even officially proposed, much less sanctioned by the General Council.

But the question has raised another of a somewhat similar kind, which it appears to us has much more to recommend it. One of our readers suggests that, when the Royal Charter is granted, the Association should commemorate the

great event by striking a small medal; and that all those Nurses who at that time are Members should have the right to purchase one of these in gold, silver, or bronze, as she chooses, or her means allow. Considering how important a work will then have been achieved—that, in fact, the Profession of Nursing will from that time date its birth as a legally recognised and organised calling—it would be only in accordance with custom that some means should be taken to celebrate the fact in a fitting manner. And to those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, to those who have had the foresight and the courage to come forward and join in the demand for the reform and organisation of the nursing world, some meed of recognition and praise is indisputably due. We earnestly hope that in some way this will be accorded. For these two or three thousand Nurses, we shall ever hold, have deserved well of their country, their sex, and their profession. They have proved that women can unite for great and high professional objects, can quietly and steadfastly win their way in the face of malevolent misrepresentations, opposition, and abuse, and can bring about reforms which must redound to the advantage of the entire community.

Experience teaches that when success has been gained, when the Association has become incorporated, and its power of assisting its Members individually grows every year greater and greater, its numbers will increase by leaps and bounds. But the credit and the praise of founding the Nursing Union will ever remain with those who joined its ranks when it was opposed and vilified, and had not yet secured its ends. From information we have received, we are led to believe that these first Members of the Association will derive great and material advantages, which those who join later will not be able to obtain.

But we are strongly inclined to support this simple and perhaps somewhat sentimental suggestion of a commemorative medal. It could be easily designed, and might, for example, have on the obverse the official Seal of the Association stamped, and on the reverse the name of the Member and the date of her enrolment suitably engraved. Such a Medal as this would cost the Association nothing. It would furnish a memento alike valuable and valued of one of the most important professional movements of modern times, and it would be a graceful recognition of the work done by the first Members of the Association.

How difficult it is to keep within the bounds of truth, when we are no longer within the bounds of charity.—MASSILLON.

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