

The first inquiry may be partially answered by pointing out once again the malice which has been evinced against the Association ever since its foundation. The purely personal reason which has made three leading Hospital officials opposed to a scheme which would inevitably reduce the income of one of them is, unhappily for the credit of the Hospitals, now being openly commented upon, and the scandal probably will soon be forced forward into greater publicity. The virulence of the incessant abuse published in a certain newspaper is well known. We have previously commented on its statements that the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association are "the scum of the Nursing profession"; that they are women "who took refuge in it to obtain pseudo-respectability which they could not obtain elsewhere"; that one of the members was a criminal—simply because she bore a name similar to that of a person suspected of theft. These are the arguments which thus far have been brought against the Association, and we do not congratulate the few honourable men who have been, by some extraordinary means, induced to oppose the Association, upon the manners of their avowed colleagues. We even feel assured that they would feel heartily ashamed of their associates if they knew the unstinted vituperation which publicly and privately these persons have poured out—for want presumably of some other arguments—upon a body of three thousand working women, headed by a daughter of our Queen, and each one of whom has been elected to membership, after careful inquiry, by leaders of the medical and nursing world. Unlimited abuse, in short, and an entire absence of argument, has hitherto characterised the opposition to the Royal British Nurses' Association.

But now that a Government official has to be petitioned, it is naturally felt that there must at least be some show of reason, and that reviling would be out of place. It is interesting, therefore, to observe that the person who has led the latter wing of the opposition took no part in the proceedings at St. Thomas's Hospital. This meeting—grandiloquently described as one of "representatives of Hospitals and Nurses' Training Schools"—was of very meagre proportions, and, we are informed, included some who had had no authority given to them to represent either a Hospital, or a Nurses' Training School. But this meeting passed a series of resolutions, embodying the "reasons" for which it protested against the Board of Trade permitting the

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Royal British Nurses' Association to register without the word Limited to its name. We do the gentlemen who proposed, seconded, and supported these "reasons" the justice to believe that they are the very best arguments they could possibly advance. Let us consider them carefully in turn, noting that, of course, its opponents had not the courtesy to give the Association the title conferred upon it by Her Majesty:—

(1) That the main object of the British Nurses' Association is to "form, control, and carry on a Register of Trained Nurses, or to take over, control, and carry on any such Register as may have been or shall hereafter be established by any person or persons or Association, whether incorporated or not"; or in other words to establish and control a General Register of Nurses, which shall possess an authoritative character.

In the first place, this is grammatically quite incorrect, as those who proposed this resolution must surely have been well aware, seeing that the Association has already formed and issued its Register, and that its establishment therefore is not a future event, but already an accomplished fact. In the second place, these resolutions are "published by request" in the abusive newspaper to which we have previously alluded. This is the only paper which, to our knowledge, has published them, and therefore we have here proof positive of the union to which we have above referred. Finally, unless we had it before us in print we could hardly have believed that rational educated men would have proposed, seconded, and carried unanimously such ridiculous rubbish. Their first, and presumably strongest, "reason" why the Association should be incorporated as the Royal British Nurses' Association (Limited) instead of the Royal British Nurses' Association, is that it has published, and intends to continue to publish and control, a general Register of Nurses!—and that is all!

Then we come to "reason"

(2) That a General Register, containing, as it ought, in order to be of any real service to the public, a complete statement of the essential qualification of each individual, is not adapted to the calling of a Nurse, as from the nature of the case it could not be otherwise than imperfect and untrustworthy, and therefore misleading to the public and the medical profession.

In this short compass no less than seven distinct assertions are made, not one of which is proved, and all of which are so indefinite and yet so sweeping as to be manifest exaggerations. We observe that it is admitted by inference that a General Register might be of "real service to the public." But we call upon those who have made these statements to define what they mean

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