

all its members must be—to use the Latin word—incorporated, or made into one body by the law of the land. In primitive times, such companies were few, and seldom formed; and the only manner in which they could be incorporated was by the will of the reigning Monarch—by Royal permission, given in writing on a Roll or Charter. And in this way the City Companies, for example, the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and even the City of London and other great municipal Corporations—were founded and established, and have ever since existed. As time went on, and Parliament obtained more authority, important public bodies applied in greater and greater numbers to the Legislature for the legal and special powers they required. And by Parliament, for example, all our great railway, canal, and traffic companies were incorporated. But the time of the Houses was limited, and the growth of manufacturing and trading societies became prodigiously great; and so, finally, the Companies' Acts were passed, which, with successive additions since, now enable "any seven British subjects" to form themselves into an incorporated company, by registering its name, proposed objects, and rules of working, and by paying certain fees, at Somerset House—a method which is simplicity itself, and which is employed by scores of new societies every year.

The Royal Charter, then, is nowadays rarely sought, or granted, but it is the most ancient and most honourable method whereby incorporation can be obtained; but it will be clearly understood from our account that, as a matter of fact, it practically gives no greater legal rights or privileges than would be secured by registration under the Companies' Acts, while it entails a much greater measure of expense for its procurement.

The following is the manner in which a Royal Charter is sought: "A humble petition" is presented to HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, through the Lord President of the Privy Council, from those who desire this privilege, praying for the grant of a Charter. THE QUEEN refers the Petition to her Privy Council, who appoint certain of their number as a Committee to consider it, and cause advertisements to be inserted, calling upon all who object to a Charter being granted, to state their grounds of objection in writing before a certain date; and all who support the Petition may, within the same period, send in their further petitions in its favour. At the conclusion of

this term the applicants are usually supplied with all the objections raised against them, and then they have the right to reply, and, if required, the case on both sides is fairly argued out by Counsel in public before the Committee of the Privy Council, when every statement must be proved, and, if necessary, witnesses are examined. Both sides having been heard, the Committee deliberate and give their judgment—either that they will, or that they will not, recommend HER MAJESTY to grant the Charter. In the former case, the objects and powers sought by the petitioners, put into suitable phraseology, are then referred—in the form of a Draft Charter—to the Law Officers of the Crown, who make certain that its provisions are legally correct; and then its signature and sealing by the Privy Council Officers makes the document into a Royal Charter, and the Society into a Chartered Corporation.

We have received many communications from Nurses, asking how they could give help to the Association in this most important venture, and we hope, next week, to show them at least one method in which all can give valuable assistance.

With regard to the opposition, we frankly confess that we have the most grave forebodings—not for the harm it can do to the Association, or to the cause of Nursing progress, because the former has proved that it has indomitable courage, energy, and determination, and that, whatever happens, it means to go steadfastly forward; and the latter is only a part of an irrepressible movement throughout the civilised world. But we confess we are seriously alarmed for the position of the four London Hospitals, and three or four Scotch and provincial Institutions, who, we presume, will oppose the Association publicly, as they have hitherto done privately. With one exception they are dependent upon the voluntary subscriptions of the benevolent rich; they are all subject to the force of public opinion. We cannot but deem it most unwise that Institutions thus dependent on popular support should oppose such a popular movement as this will undoubtedly become when the whole facts are laid before the public.

THE BOARD OF TRADE.

WE have been much amused to read in the Report of the Nurses' Co-operation that the Board of Trade has not yet granted its licence to the Society, but that pressure will be now brought to bear upon it to do so. Great stress is laid upon the fact that the Board has received no objections to the grant of its licence. We should have been surprised to hear that anyone had

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)