

The first object of the Association, which was formed about four years ago, is to protect the public, the medical profession and trained nurses by the establishment of a system of registration for trained nurses, similar to that which has been established by Parliament for medical men. That register is proposed to be founded upon the certificates of their competency, given by the various hospitals and training schools already in existence and carrying on this important educational work. It is not intended by the Association to enter into competition with any hospital or institution which devotes itself to the work of training. It does not desire or propose to interfere with the election of Nurses to train where-soever they desire, nor does it desire to interfere in any way with the proceedings of the training institutions at present in existence. My lords, the great object which the Association has in hoping to establish a register of Nurses is to save the public from being imposed upon by incompetent or inefficient Nurses. By inefficient, I mean not only the being inefficient in technical knowledge, but also being inefficient as to character. It is not only necessary that the Nurses should be persons of undoubted skill and educational efficiency, but also that they should be persons of good character. Now, my lords, according to the case for the petitioner, it is pointed out that under present conditions any person who has once received a certificate from any hospital for the training of Nurses, or from any of the training institutions that at present exist, might go out into the world, and on the strength of the certificate once received, she might obtain employment, whatever her character might be. Whatever the circumstances, she might, on the strength of having once obtained the certificate, secure employment, and the consequence, as a matter of fact, has been that many persons have obtained employment who were very inefficient in character, though not wanting in technical skill and experience. It was proposed, my lords, by this Society to meet the evil by establishing a registry of Nurses; a registry of Nurses which should be founded upon the reports of the hospitals and schools where they were trained, and also upon references as to their conduct and character supplied by the persons seeking registration. The association does not intend to be an examining association; it does not intend to be a training association: in short, it does not intend to do more than to inquire into the character, both as regards competence and, my lords, the moral character of persons applying for registration, and to place on the register records and certificates of the service and qualifications and so forth for those persons, taking care, as far as they can, that no person's name shall be put upon the register whose qualifications both as to technical training and moral character, are not of the most satisfactory nature. That is the first object which this Association had in view. My lords, your lordships will observe that the registration is a purely voluntary one; there is nothing coercive about it. There is no statutory condition that no person shall follow the profession of nurse who is not already such, or anything of that kind. It is a perfectly voluntary act on the part of the whole of the nurses or any nurse who likes to submit her qualifications, technical and moral, to be investigated by the Registration Board of the association, in order to be put upon the register. That is all that is sought—that is the first object of the Association. The second object of this Association may be thought to be of minor importance, but it is nevertheless one which is considered to be of importance by all persons interested in the welfare of this most useful class of persons, and that is the establishment, and as far as they may be

permitted, the affording of facilities for Nurses to help each other in times of adversity, sickness, and old age, and besides sickness and old age, in those accidents to which Nurses are peculiarly exposed, which may render them incapable of following their profession and earning their living. Now all will admit this is a most beneficial object, and one that is better carried out by united voluntary action than by leaving the Nurses to the chance of relief by extraneous sources. The third object of the Association was to afford, as much as it was possible to do so, facilities for rest and recreation. A Nurse's life is exposed to great hardship and to great perils of sickness; and periods of rest and periods of recreation—I mean recreation in the larger sense than is understood by the ordinary popular acceptance of the word—are essential for the due prosecution of the arduous labours of Nurses. The project was that this association might supply convalescent homes for their Nurses, and by financial arrangements might facilitate those who require rest in obtaining rest—might obtain it for those who would be otherwise unable to obtain it. Then another object of the Association is to knit together the Nurses in such a way as to form a closer bond of social union, to furnish them with greater opportunities of knowing each other, and of holding meetings, and giving and hearing lectures, or reading papers on subjects of interest, and such as are calculated to promote the efficiency of the whole profession of Nurses for their work in all subjects connected with their calling. These, my lords, were the principal objects of the Association. They may be summed up to some extent in a document which has been printed by the defendants, and which I will take the liberty of reading. At page 51 they print extracts from a pamphlet entitled—"What the British Nurses' Association is, and what it seeks to do for Nurses." That pamphlet states—"The British Nurses' Association aims, in the first instance, at bringing about a state of things in which no one will be allowed to call herself a Nurse, or at least will be regarded as a Nurse by the public, unless she has undergone a proper course of Hospital training, of sufficient length to give her an insight into the management of all kinds of illness, whether medical or surgical. Next, it will seek to form the now-scattered body of Nurses into a distinct profession, and to afford to every one of them the additional strength and increased importance which membership of a recognised profession will confer. At present, when we hear that a woman is a Nurse we hardly know what meaning to attach to the word, but when the Association has succeeded in the attainment of its primary object, the meaning will be no longer doubtful. It will be that the person to whom the word is applied has passed through a prescribed course of study and practice, and has given satisfactory proof of having turned her opportunities of learning to good account. It will also be that she is not an isolated worker, but that she belongs to an important and well-defined calling, the members of which are united together for all legitimate purposes of mutual protection and help. In pursuance of this last-named object, the Association will seek to originate and to maintain, when necessary, by the aid of the public, whatever institutions may seem likely to be beneficial to Nurses generally, such as convalescent homes, homes of rest, offices to facilitate the obtaining of engagements, societies for the promotion of thrift, and so forth, and will endeavour to guide in the most useful manner, any such institutions which may be established by others." And further on it states: "It has already been said that for the present every woman

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