

made at once, and have been continued ever since, upon the Register of Trained Nurses.

But we now arrive at the beginning of 1891, when the first Register was published. This event was followed almost immediately by the gracious recognition of the work of the Association by Her Majesty in the grant to it of the prefix "Royal," and shortly afterwards by the application of the Association to the Board of Trade for permission to be incorporated under the Companies' Acts, but without the addition of the word "Limited" to its name. It was publicly stated at the time, that the object of the Association was to acquire such legal powers by this humble measure of incorporation, as would enable it to take over and administer certain funds for the benefit of Nurses. It may be explained, that any seven persons can, under the Companies' Acts—by signing certain documents and depositing these, together with the payment of certain fees, at Somerset House—form themselves into a corporate body and obtain all the rights and privileges of incorporation formerly bestowed by separate Acts of Parliament or by Royal Charters. But the condition binding upon such companies is, that they shall add the word "Limited" to their name, so that all may know that the liability of their individual members is strictly limited in amount. A special Clause of one of the Acts, however, provides that in the case of societies formed for purposes other than trading, and which do not divide profits or dividends amongst their members, the Board of Trade may, by license, permit the omission of this word "Limited." The Association, then, was in this predicament. As a "Royal" Society it would have been strangely incongruous to have taken the additional affix to its name; and with a member of the Royal Family as its active President, it was contrary to all etiquette that it should do so. These facts were well known, yet the opposing Hospital authorities exhibited their antagonism by holding a private little meeting at St. Thomas's Hospital, at which certain verbose resolutions were unanimously adopted. These were then circulated broadcast over the country with the urgent request that all Hospital Committees would endorse their vague expressions of opinion and send them into the Board of Trade as though they were

quite independent outbursts of opposition. At the same time, the greatest pressure was brought to bear on medical men to sign a petition to the Board of Trade to the same effect as these resolutions.

The Association, in accordance with custom, submitting its rules and proposed objects to the Board of Trade, was directed to advertise the fact of its application for a license, and that, until May 16th, the Board would receive any notice of opposition to the application. It was led to believe that, if there were any opposition, it would be afforded an opportunity of defending itself before the matter was adjudicated upon. Very natural astonishment was therefore felt when, on May 6th—ten days, that is to say, before the opposition case was supposed to have been completed—the Association received a letter from the Board declining to permit the Association to omit the word "Limited," as desired, on the ground that considerable opposition to the Association had been expressed by influential persons. No information was afforded the Association as to the charges brought against it—not the slightest opportunity was afforded it of even explaining its own case. It was simply condemned unheard, on one-sided unsubstantiated statements. It is noticeable that precisely the same treatment was, at the same time, meted out to an important Medical Society, which also required this form of incorporation to enable it to deal with invested trust funds. The British Institute of Preventive Medicine protested, and brought such pressure to bear upon Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, that after some negotiations the desired license was granted to that body. The Royal British Nurses' Association went more quietly to work—doubtless for reasons of its own. After a conference, and correspondence which extended over the next six months, the President of the Board of Trade was led to suggest that the Association should apply to the Privy Council for an inquiry, with a view to obtaining the powers it desired, and the Association, accepting the suggestion, decided, in February, 1892, to petition for the grant of a Royal Charter.

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