

we were discussing the formation of the British Nurses' Association, we received letters from some whose judgment is highly valued, expressing their strong opinions that it would be impossible to form a Nurses' Association, or, if formed, that it would be impossible to effect anything through its means. In forming the Association, we placed on record our own feeling that it would be many years before the Association obtained a Royal Charter, and many more years before an Act of Parliament could be gained. As a matter of fact, however, the former was secured in six years, and through the errors of the opponents of the Association, rather than through its own efforts. So great was the malice of the former, that they prevented the Association being incorporated as a Limited Liability Company, and, therefore, the appeal for a Charter was forced to the front much sooner than would otherwise have been the case. Then, it was determined to work steadily on for a number of years, making reforms quietly within the Nursing Association itself, and slowly convincing the public of the need of legislation.

Once more, the efforts of those who desired to prevent reform have recoiled upon themselves, and have hastened forward, immeasurably, the advent of a Nursing Act. The mismanagement of the Royal British Nurses' Association has resulted in drawing public attention to the foolish incapacity of half a dozen medical men, and has convinced the reforming section that it is hopeless any longer to attempt to gain their ends within the ranks of the Association. They have tried to effect reforms within the nursing world itself; their efforts have been defeated, and now they call the attention of the public to the urgent need which exists for the protection of the sick, and for the institution, therefore, of Nursing reforms.

Sir James Crichton Browne, Mr. Fardon, and their colleagues will be doubtless enabled to explain to the public not only how, and why, they have mismanaged the Association—the proofs of which we already hold—but also why they have attempted to depreciate and defeat the very measures for which the Association was founded. We do not doubt for one moment that when the whole truth is known, the need for protection against untrustworthy and dangerous nurses will be so apparent that a demand for legislation will be raised which no Government can refuse or neglect. To us,

it is immaterial whether an Act is passed next year, or the year after. The Rubicon has been crossed; and the question of reform has passed for ever out of the hands of the profession—and into the hands of the public. It is their danger which it is their duty to investigate; it is their protection for which it is their duty to provide. The protests made by hospital matrons, and by an important medical body, demanding an investigation into the condition of the Royal British Nurses' Association only opened the question. The resolutions of public meetings are now going further than this, and demanding an inquiry into the whole Nursing question—the need for which was emphasized by evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1890 and 1891, to which we shall shortly refer.

During this last week, further proof of the need for such an inquiry has been given, from a new and unexpected quarter. The Workhouse Nursing Association; a body which has done excellent, and indeed invaluable, work in the improvement of Poor Law Infirmaries has decided, for most weighty reasons that, under existing circumstances, its work "must of necessity cease." The Association has recommended that steps should be taken to urge upon the Local Government Board that the whole question of Poor Law Nursing should be undertaken by a State Department, or should be the subject of a departmental inquiry. Our contemporary, the *British Medical Journal* has published most valuable evidence, to which we shall again refer, showing the need for reforms in our workhouse infirmaries; and the collapse of this valuable reforming Association is a most important proof of the need for the Government to inquire into, and deal with, the whole Nursing question.

Annotations.

"NURSE LOUISA EAST."

IT has afforded us much amusement, on various previous occasions, to notice the contributions and the contributors who affect our pseudo-medical contemporary the *Hospital*; and this week our attention has been called to a communication in its columns from "Nurse Louisa East" which exemplifies once more the peculiar characteristics to which we have referred—that many contributors are un-

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