

by the accidental fact that a small clique of nonentities, thirsting for self-aggrandisement, then succeeded for the moment in obtaining control of that Association, and checking its career of usefulness. Because, meanwhile, the tide of progress has been rolling round the world; and first in the United States of America and in Canada; then at the Cape of Good Hope, and now throughout Australasia, there have been, and are being, constant improvements and reforms effected in nursing matters. The Act of Parliament passed at the Cape, in 1891, making the registration of Nurses compulsory in that Colony, was the first State recognition of the new profession of Nursing; and it then became only a question of time when the Legislatures of our other Colonies, and of Great Britain also, would also enact similar laws. In fact, throughout the whole world now, nursing is recognised as a skilled profession, and nurses are uniting together for their mutual assistance and benefit.

It is needful to recall these facts, because when we commenced our work eleven years ago, it was said on all sides that the time for it had not arrived. Some even said that the time for a Nurses' Union would never arrive. Those who sweated and exploited nurses threatened that that time never should arrive. Sir Henry Burdett's paper termed the pioneers in this great work, "the scum of the nursing profession," and "women of pseudo-respectability." To-day, nursing organization is an accomplished fact. Progress has triumphed once more, as it always has in the past. The moral surely does not require to be emphasized.

In the early days of the movement, a few hospital Matrons of the highest standing, ladies for whom we have the deepest respect, for reasons which we need not discuss considered it inadvisable that they should take any part in the work. They, therefore, held aloof from the Association, and even used all their influence to prevent their nurses joining it. But the movement swept on because it was in strict accordance with the spirit of the times, and was therefore as irresistible as the waves of the sea.

Now it is easy, for those who run, to read the crisis which is coming in the Nursing world, and the growing force of the demand which the public are making for improvements in the education and control of nurses. Efforts

are once more being strenuously made to blind the eyes of hospital Matrons to the deep significance of the attacks which are being attempted on their position and authority, and to the great responsibilities which rest upon them. They are being urged to hold aloof from the International Conference next year—to abdicate their rightful position amongst the leaders of the nursing world. We earnestly hope, however, that they will observe the lessons of the past and of the present; that they will remember that nurses are coming to this Conference from all parts of the world; and that they will realise that their position demands that their presence and their voices should not be missing in such a distinguished gathering of their profession.

---

### Annotations.

#### GYRATING GUARDIANS.

AN animated discussion took place at a recent meeting of the Bradford Board of Guardians upon the desirability or otherwise of allowing the infirmary nurses to attend the fortnightly dances at the workhouse. The discussion arose upon a proposal which was submitted by the infirmary committee, that the nurses should not be allowed to do so.

We think it is quite time that the Local Government Board enquired into this custom of dancing, which we gather prevails somewhat largely in the institutions controlled by the Board, and that it laid down some regulations on the subject. In our opinion, dancing is entirely out of place in an institution devoted to the care of the sick, and we have not hesitated frequently to express this opinion.

Further, these dances at Bradford are attended by the Guardians and their friends, and we think that most Matrons and Hospital Committees will agree with us that it is impossible that a Guardian should pilot a nurse through the mazes of the giddy waltz one evening, and maintain any sort of discipline with regard to the nursing staff in the Committee Room next day. Again, these festivities do not, we imagine, take place without refreshment of some sort being provided. The question presents itself—is this found by the ratepayers, or do the gyrating Guardians pay their footing?

We can understand that in lunatic asylums, and in infirmaries where imbeciles are main-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)