

members. Women have never yet united, and the result has naturally been that the work of women is notoriously undervalued and underpaid. Nurses stand in a unique position. They are engaged in what is now acknowledged to be a skilled calling, which is inseparably connected with that of the medical men, and which, therefore, is always certain of loyal and hearty support from the members of that powerful profession. And Nurses have too much common sense and knowledge of life not to know that women cannot combine effectually or permanently by their own unaided efforts. Some well-known ladies assert that they can, but they have never carried their precepts into practice, and probably never will. So the women in other branches of labour have never combined, probably because there were no business men available or willing to direct and aid their attempts to do so.

Nurses can claim, and now have obtained, that assistance. The leaders of the medical profession in London and the Provinces, Scotland and Ireland have recognised with unstinting praise the improvements in Nursing and the help they receive from Nurses. They have promised in return, to forward the advancement of the Nursing profession and its members with all their power and influence. And with their advice and aid the work of union has already been begun. The British Nurses' Association has been formed. Her Royal Highness Princess Christian has graciously accepted the presidency, and many of the best known physicians and surgeons in the Empire have become vice-presidents. The Dukes of St. Albans and of Abercorn, and Sir Sydney Waterlow, the well-known treasurer of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, have become the trustees. One of the most respected city bankers will act as its treasurer. Matrons of the largest London and provincial hospitals and infirmaries, and some of the cleverest business men in the medical profession, have been elected to form the executive committee. One hundred Medical Men, one hundred Matrons, and one hundred Sisters and Nurses form the General Council, which will govern the association. In four months from its inception, over seven hundred members have joined it, a success so utterly unprecedented, that it most clearly proves the eagerness with which its formation has been welcomed, and its programme appreciated. Out of about five hundred Matrons in the United Kingdom, one hundred and seven have in this short time become members. It only remains, therefore, for the Nurses to do their part, and for their own benefit, as well as for the advancement of their calling, to come forward at once and join the association, and moreover show to the world in general, and to the rest of their sex in particular, that, especially when everything is favourable and provided for them, women are as anxious as men for the advantages which accrue from union. But it may be said by

some, that they admit the usefulness of union for others, but they cannot see why Nursing should be made into a profession, nor what advantages Nurses individually would derive from joining the British Nurses' Association. To such I would say this: The labour market, so far as Nurses are concerned, is at present in a most anomalous condition. There is a great and enlarging demand for skilled workers, and yet it is being supplied to an ever-increasing extent by unskilled, untrained women. Placing for the moment to one side, the extreme detriment and disadvantage to the sick public implied in this fact, I would ask Trained Nurses to consider the glaring injustice and hardship it entails upon themselves, and, more than that, upon the good name of their calling. Because it is beyond dispute, that these untrained women not only usurp the places trained Nurses ought to fill, and appropriate the remuneration and other benefits they ought to receive; but inasmuch as the untrained undertake work without the knowledge necessary to its performance, they are perpetually making the gravest mistakes, and by ignorance and its natural offspring, presumption, and arrogance, bring direct danger to their patients, and discredit or disgrace upon the profession of Nursing itself. Is it possible, therefore, to believe that any woman, who by training and experience has learnt what skilled Nursing is and should be, can for one moment hesitate to admit that it must be for the good of every Trained Nurse, that this unfair, because unjust, competition should be prevented. How, then, can it be prevented? In the simplest and easiest way—by the State authorisation of the Registration of Trained Nurses, so that not only would the public be protected against ignorant and unskilled workers, but Trained Nurses also would be protected against ignorant and unskilled competitors, and the profession of Nursing from the discredit such so frequently bring upon it. How can Registration for Nurses be made law? Only by powerful representations as to its necessity being made to Parliament, from a large number of Nurses, and representative medical men. The latter assistance is already secured; the former can solely come from such a united body as the British Nurses' Association. Consequently the larger the number of Nurses who join that Association, the more likely is its petition for Registration to be successful.

Registration, therefore, and the innumerable benefits it would bring to Nursing and to every Nurse, is the first object of the Association. But beyond this, it will be the aim of the Association, guided as it will be by people who know exactly what Nurses want and wish for, to initiate one by one a number of schemes which will assist them individually. And Nurses must know, without further proofs being advanced, what great advantages they must, one and all, derive from being members of a united and, therefore, powerful professional body.

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