

independence of the Association, and yet, with all due deference to the advice given to that body by the leading daily journal in the kingdom. We consider that, if Nurses themselves could unite and organise a Nursing Home, with an office such as we have described, and, as our contemporary suggests, they might, after a few struggles and much hard work, perhaps achieve a distinct success, but we repeat that we are sure that it would be unwise, for many reasons, for the Association *in its corporate capacity* to undertake such a serious responsibility, such a heavy pecuniary liability, and such an invidious position in regard to the many and most excellent Institutions, now in our midst, pursuing the same course of acting as beneficial intermediaries between the public, the medical profession, and Private Nurses.

PRESS opinions upon H.R.H. Princess Christian's letter about the British Nurses' Association.

THE letter from H.R.H. Princess Christian on this subject, which appeared in a recent issue of the *Times*, has served to give a wide publicity to the newly-formed Institution and its objects. The natural, and indeed assured, outcome of publicity in such a case is sympathy; for the interests which the Association is formed to advance, though nominally, and in the first instance those of the Nurse, are really, and in the event those of the public, which employs the Nurse. This is admirably put in the letter, in which the Princess says:—"The British Nurses' Association, having succeeded in the first place in constituting itself by the enrolment of members of thoroughly trained and competent Nurses, and no others, is now seeking to establish, it is hoped on the secure basis of a Royal Charter, a system of registration which will enable every Trained Nurse to produce documentary evidence of her education and attainments, and thus to show that she is entitled to confidence in her calling. When such a system is brought into operation, people who employ unqualified Nurses will only have themselves to blame for any ill consequences which may ensue."

Such is the object—that is to say, the main object—of the Association in its more public aspect. But it may also be described from a strictly professional point of view; and in that case the most apt, and at the same time the most comprehensive, terms that can be used define its objects to be "to unite all British Nurses for their mutual help and protection, and for the advancement in every way of their professional work." These two statements are in no way repugnant to one another; indeed they are, strictly speaking, hardly distinct. For the interests of the Nurse and of the public are for the most part identical. What the Nursing

community chiefly needs is an organisation enabling efficient Nurses to secure recognition for their qualifications and making it impossible for unqualified persons to trade upon the ignorance of the public by unfounded pretensions. In a less, but still in an important, degree, the education of Nurses needs to be organised and rendered somewhat more uniform than at present. These, if they may fitly be described as professional objects falling within the above definition, are certainly no less objects of public interest. To the patients whom they tend it is a matter of the utmost importance that Nurses should receive the best possible training, and that their fitness for the duties which they undertake should be ascertained by the most careful tests.

Thus, in the main at least, the objects of the British Nurses' Association are directly, and in the highest degree, objects of public importance. It is, however, natural and most legitimate that a whole brood of subsidiary objects should gather about this main project. British Nurses have formed an aggregate, but never a body until now. When once they learn the secret of organisation, they will find that many advantages hitherto unattainable are brought within their reach; and if their organisation in its inception and working is entrusted to wise hands, the benefit thence accruing to themselves will be secured, not only without detriment to the general public, but even with incidental advantage to all. For instance, nothing could be more promotive of the material well-being of women following the profession of the Nurse than the establishment of homes—convalescent homes and the like—where they can always command what rest and repose may be necessary for recuperation after periods of exhausting toil. This is obvious, and it is only less obvious that to those who employ the Nurse, it is no small advantage that her capabilities of work and of sympathy should be maintained at high-tide level by such means. To set an invalid to nurse an invalid is not sound policy, but it is what only too often happens as the result of the arduous conditions of life under which many a more or less friendless Nurse has to prosecute her duties. There is, then, a vast field open to the British Nurses' Association, and the work which it proposes to undertake is such as gives it a special claim upon public sympathy and support. In pleading this cause with the generously disposed, Princess Christian asks no alms and seeks no benefit for which she does not offer an ample equivalent. We trust that the response to her appeal will be such as will enable her, and those with whom she has associated herself in this good work, to bring to a successful issue an undertaking which has been most nobly and, we may add, most auspiciously begun.—*The Lancet*.

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