

wrote:—"The objects of the British Nurses' Association seem to me most desirable, and will, I trust, be successfully attained. The value and the desirability of good Nursing is self-evident, and whatever tends to encourage this, or to render less numerous the difficulties to which the workers in this field are exposed, is worthy of all praise, and of every assistance."

Mr. R. J. Pye-Smith (Surgeon to the Sheffield Hospital) wrote:—"The proposed organization seems very desirable, and I hope it may be arranged in an efficient and satisfactory manner."

Dr. J. W. Martin (Surgeon of the Jessop Hospital, Sheffield) wrote:—"Anything which will tend to increase the efficiency, and improve the position, of Nurses as a body, will command my warmest sympathy and support."

Dr. Porter, and Mr. Arthur Jackson (General Infirmary), and Mr. G. K. Thorpe (Public Hospital), were unavoidably absent.

The CHAIRMAN said that they had met there to hear Miss Wood explain the scheme and objects of the British Nurses' Association, and therefore, it would not be necessary for him to say much about it. He noticed that the members of the Association must be members of either the Medical or Nursing professions, and as he was neither, he thought he was somewhat out of place in taking the chair at that meeting. He, however, recognised the great importance of Nursing, not only to Hospitals, but to the general community, and, as a member of the Board of that Hospital, he felt justified in accepting the invitation, as he was always glad to do what he could to help Miss Cadbury, who had done such a good work for the Hospital, and for Nursing generally. He then called upon

Miss Wood, who was received with applause, and who said that this question was one of great importance to Nurses. The Nurses might ask, Why? They were all well trained, doing good work, and were quite comfortable as they were. It was just because they were in that position that she wished to enlist their sympathies with those who were not so well situated. The Nursing profession at the present time was most disorganised, and was really not a profession at all. Each Hospital made its own rules for the management of its own Nurses, and there was a great diversity of opinion as to what was a Trained Nurse. She had known a woman who was a cook in a London Hospital describe herself as a Trained Nurse! She had also known a charwoman of a Hospital represent herself as a Trained Nurse of that Hospital, and undertake the care of a child belonging to a Medical Officer of the Institution! The woman may have been of very good character, and so forth, but she could not possibly have had

any training in Nursing. If this was the state of the Nursing world at the present time, they would see that the term, "A Trained Nurse," was one of the widest significance. She heard of a case a short time ago in which the Nursing had been undertaken by a woman whom she had dismissed from her own Hospital for inefficiency. She did not mean to say that, in course of time, she would not have made a Trained Nurse, but she had not then seen a case of the kind she was about to take care of.

Large numbers of Nurses are sent out to India and the Colonies, and it was necessary to make quite sure that they sent out none but Trained Nurses. Imitation was the best proof of success, and Nursing had become so successful that there was a crowd of imitators, and there was no law to prevent any person calling herself a Nurse. She might put upon her card, "Miss or Mrs. So-and-So, Medical Nurse." She might also have a door plate so inscribed, and could then go forth pretending to nurse the public, and there was no one to say her nay. Of course, a gross impostor would be discovered by the Doctor, who might ask where she had been trained, but a great deal of harm might then have been done. She was afraid there were a great number of Nurses practising at the expense of the public, and who were doing great harm. These Nurses might be met in the streets of London by hundreds. If you spoke to one and said: "Well, what are you doing now?" The answer would be: "Well, I'm just nursing," and so the interview would probably end. They would be aware that when an article was manufactured, it was marked with the name, or with the corporate mark, of the maker, as a guarantee of quality. Gold and silver, of course, bore the hall mark, and it would be a very good thing if they could have a hall-mark to distinguish a genuine Nurse from a counterfeit one, and it really was to the interest of all Nurses that they should themselves combine, in order to carry out this object of the Association.

Now, it sometimes happened, if there was a bad case, and the Doctor said, "We must have a Trained Nurse"; the reply was, "Oh, don't send us a Trained Nurse; we have had quite enough of them; we will manage without." And the reason was, that some incompetent person—who gave herself far more airs and graces, than a Trained Nurse would employ—without any ability to tend the sick, had, at some time previously, come under their notice; and so these women are doing no end of harm, by giving us and our work a bad name.

The demand for Nurses is now greater than it has ever been before, but the profession was rapidly becoming over-stocked. When she was a Matron, she had frequently had five applications a

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)