

she gets her certificate. And then what becomes of her? We have been told that nurses are aimless atoms. Well, I will not use that term, but I will consider them as units that want and require a little cohesion. It cannot be said that these women are aimless, because the fact is they are gaining their living by work; and we are prepared to say their aim is to do good in the world and carry out a work worthy of woman—of administering and carrying sympathy to the sick and wounded. To draw them together by incorporation and bring them into the bond of association would be to confer a benefit on them. Such an association can only be carried on by those who understand the work best. The laity cannot take any part because the work is special and requires special knowledge. These nurses seek to form themselves into a profession, and it is not too much to say that medical men regard nurses as their right hand in severe cases. Everything is in favour of association. It will benefit the public in many ways. An association like this registers, and the public will be able to distinguish nurses thoroughly trained from those who are not accepted, and will be able to refer for the character of nurses. The fact of association will lead to a higher ideal of work and method, and so probably will not fail to benefit nurses themselves. They deserve to join such an association. You allow that women who are trained deserve to be put together on a basis something like a profession. No doubt by co-operation they will be stimulated to a higher ideal, do better work, and be able to make the improvements in training and education which are so necessary. The time has now come when nurses as a body find they may fairly stand of themselves, without any aid whatever. We are in the position of those who generally succeed in life. Those who are determined to get something get it. We know what we want, and we mean to succeed, and we mean to recognise no opposition. We say to the nurses—'Come forward, because under no circumstances will such an opportunity ever present itself again.' It would be quite impossible to secure so many members of the profession and so many matrons who have borne the burden and can give an opinion. It would be impossible to bring them together again. Therefore to the nurses I say—'Now is your time! Come forward without delay, and enrol yourselves. Benefits will accrue to you and to the public. We have no fear for the success of the cause, but we wish to declare to the public what our object is—to enlist their sympathy and support.'"

Mr. BRUDENELL CARTER, who seconded the resolution, said:

"Among the advantages likely to accrue to the profession of nursing from association, we must not lose sight of this one: that in every profession there are certain people who become eminently illustrious in the eyes of their colleagues; and the

tendency of the bond of professional union is to rise to the level of ability attained to by the illustrious few to whom I have referred. It follows that nurses by association will each individually be stimulated to a higher standard of duty, and the result will be that the public will take the merit of the individual to represent the merit of the great body. On this ground—a ground abundantly justified—I would urge upon you strongly that you should not remain in the position of units, but to unite forces for the sake of support. It is, then, on this ground of a higher standard of excellence in every one as a corporation that I would urge you to combine. I cannot sit down without re-echoing the words of the chairman as to the enormous debt we owe to nurses. Let them by union increase their knowledge, and become recognised members of an associated craft."

Dr. MATTHEWS DUNCAN said that nursing would soon become one of the noblest of the recognised occupations of men or women. He pointed out that nursing was now a scientific work, and it would often be hard to decide whether to nursing or to doctoring belonged the merit of a cure.

Dr. NORMAN MOORE recalled to the memory of his hearers that this was not the first attempt at association on the part of the nurses. In 1634 the nurses of London endeavoured to become incorporated, but were unable to obtain the support of the College of Physicians. Now it was different; the work was undertaken under the highest auspices of the country. He only wished to say one word as to the way in which the profession of medicine was mixed up with that of nursing. Nurses only touched the edges of subjects on which doctors spent their lives, and it would therefore be fitting that doctors should control their course of study.

Miss WOOD said that when a young lady was grown up, she had to be brought out; and the nursing profession was in that position. She pointed out the disparity between the periods deemed necessary for training at the different schools, and the insufficiency of the guarantee to the public of a nurse's ability. All this would be obviated by the forming of an association. There was no intention of making the association anything in the nature of a trades' union. No one would be compelled to join the association, and it would not interfere with hospital customs, except by the influence of public opinion. She entreated the nurses of England to come together, and make the association a success.

Dr. CROSS, who said that his official connection with nursing must be taken as an apology for his venturing to speak on such an occasion, called attention to the great changes which had taken place in nursing. He pointed out the advantages of co-operation to bring into unison the dissimilarity of the different methods of training. Nursing was

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)