

Association has sanctioned, nor of the development which, in course of time, that scheme may undergo. Her Royal Highness evidently sees that, viewed in the light of the progress of other professions in the past, this educational scheme contains the germ of more than a mere preparatory school.

Great interest will be aroused in the Nursing profession by the suggestion of the Association, that State recognition of a definite diploma of Nursing, and official sanction to the Registration of Nurses, is necessary and desirable. The only manner in which such recognition and sanction can be given is, of course, by means of a special Act of Parliament; and one which would revolutionise the Nursing profession, as at present constituted, by placing it upon a firm, definite, and legal basis. Such an Act, we take it, would provide for the formation of a governing body for the profession which would define and enforce a fixed curriculum of education; which would be empowered to adopt such measures as might be necessary to supervise the methods in which that curriculum was carried out in different hospitals; which would exercise some control over the manner in which the Nurse was finally examined and her knowledge attested by formal diploma; and which would carry on the work of Registration and would thus control Registered Nurses.

Everything tends to make one believe that the Nursing profession will follow in due time the methods pursued by other professions both in attaining and carrying out State supervision and control. The Register of the Royal British Nurses' Association is, as we have frequently pointed out, only the commencement of the system, because it is, and must always be, under the Charter of the Corporation, a purely voluntary scheme. Under an Act of Parliament, Registration would be conducted on lines which, although not distinctly compulsory in word, would, in effect, almost secure that result. Because the arrangements authorised by the Act would probably provide that those who were registered should have a distinctive legal title, and that those who adopted that title without conforming to the regulations of the Act, should be liable to certain pains and penalties. And in any case, those who were not registered would be bereft of the definite privileges which the Act would almost certainly bestow upon those who were enrolled under its provisions. We have always recognised and pointed out that the Royal Charter of the Association, while conferring upon it great prestige and authority, did not, and could not, afford it the powers of legal registration, which could only be given by Act of Parliament. It has been much debated what the Association will do in regard to this matter, and the statement of Her Royal Highness gives authoritative and public information upon the future and necessary development of the movement for the Legal Registration of Nurses.

MORE PROGRESS.

Some very important information was elicited at the Quarterly Court of Governors of the London Hospital last week, for it was stated in reply to a question by Mr. YATMAN that the Committee of the London Hospital now expect their Probationers to remain for a third year in their service. The term of training at this Institution is still only two years, and a certificate is granted at the end of that term. Considering that the London Hospital now stands almost alone in maintaining the old-fashioned and unsatisfactory two years standard, it would certainly have been wiser if it had advanced as other large Hospitals have done, and had at once instituted the three years course. It is, moreover, very probable that this half measure will not succeed in practice, and that Nurses who have obtained their certificate as thoroughly trained, may object to stay on in the service of the Hospital for a further period, in which case we imagine the Hospital authorities would have considerable difficulty in retaining them. It was also announced that the committee have obtained a house in Bow, and are preparing to utilise it for the admission of students, who would pass through a preliminary course of instruction in technical subjects, so as to prepare them the better to fulfil their duties as Probationers when admitted into the Hospital. This system, as our readers are aware, has for some time past been in force in Glasgow, and at St. Bartholomew's, and other large Schools, and we are glad to find the London Hospital following in the same path, especially as one consequence will inevitably be to press forward other progressive methods in this great Institution.

MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION.

The resolution passed at the Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association condemning legislation for midwives, has naturally caused much disappointment amongst those who have been attempting to secure an Act for the purpose. They are now making strenuous efforts to pretend that the resolution in question is really not of the slightest importance whatsoever; and a contemporary devotes more than a column and a half of its space to proving—we hope to its own satisfaction, for nobody else will be convinced—that the British Medical Association could not have understood the subject it was discussing, and that therefore its opinion upon the matter cannot be held to have any weight. Unfortunately, however, our contemporary will find that the resolution to which it alludes only signified the deep-rooted opposition of the medical profession to the institution of an inferior order of midwifery practitioners. This is again evidenced in a letter which we published last week from a medical man, which corroborates many others which we have received from different parts of the country. We would take this opportunity of stating our entire conviction, that there will be no support given by thoroughly trained Nurses to any principle involving the admission of untrained and ignorant workers to a professional status. In future, we hope that the place of the midwife will be taken—as was first, in these columns, suggested would be the case—by the thoroughly educated Obstetric Nurse.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)