

in that year that the first step was taken towards the organisation of the nursing profession, by the inauguration of the British Nurses' Association, upon the suggestion of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, with the co-operation of Miss Isla Stewart, Miss M. Mollett, and half-a-dozen progressive hospital Matrons. I may remind you that the objects of that Association were defined by its Founders to be "To unite British nurses together in membership of a recognised profession for their mutual support and assistance; to improve their education; to provide for their proper certification and registration; and to enable them to obtain, when thoroughly trained, a just reward for their work."

It is an old story, but one which some day, perhaps, will be fully told, how bitterly opposed the then employers of nurses, the Committees of the large majority of the leading London hospitals, and the private nursing associations were, with a few splendid exceptions to this first attempt to unite nurses together. Pamphlets were written and circulated broadcast, condemning the formation of the British Nurses' Association as "most injurious to the best interests of nurses." The lay editor of the *Hospital* week by week virulently attacked the young Society, and his paper stigmatised those who joined the Association as "the scum of the nursing profession." The Association had no power of replying to these attacks, when, at the most critical moment, in 1888, a firm of publishers determined to issue a Nursing journal, and the Editor had the wisdom to approach the leaders of the nursing reform movement, and to determine that his paper in future should represent their views. So the *Nursing Record* (now the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*), came into existence. It threw itself into the campaign with immense energy and pluck. It refuted week by week every argument brought against the Association; it carried the war into the enemy's country, and made such scathing exposures of the motives underlying the opposition that within a few months the pamphlets ceased to be published, and the opposition became a matter of secret influence rather than public abuse. For five years, however, the Association was opposed at every turn, privately and publicly, and it was in no small measure due to the educational effects produced by the articles published in the *Nursing Record*, and to the constant and bold advocacy of that Journal that the Association was at last able to obtain a Royal Charter, the first body of women in the United King-

dom to obtain that ancient and honourable form of incorporation.

But the victory of the nurses was not yet. The Royal Charter won, the nurses had to face a greater danger. An open enemy is easy to fight, but a false friend cannot be met by honourable persons on equal terms. The betrayal by the officers in power of the principles for which the British Nurses' Association was founded was one of the most cruel acts of injustice to women which has ever been perpetrated, but has proved a most useful lesson to the nursing world at large.

At this juncture a strong and steadfast organ in the press was invaluable. The *Nursing Record* remained true to the principles for which the Association was founded, and the debt owed by the profession at large to those who guided its policy is incalculable.

The opposition to the professional co-operation of nurses, voiced by the commercial nursing press, concentrated itself very naturally upon its fearless advocate, and the most strenuous efforts were made to ruin the Journal. The nurses at many hospitals were strictly forbidden to purchase or read the *Nursing Record*, being publicly informed that to do so would be "disloyal to their hospital." Important firms were urged not to advertise in the Journal, and the argument was more than once used that they would lose orders from public and charitable institutions if they did so. It is easy, therefore, to understand under what enormous difficulties the *Nursing Record* conducted its work for the nursing profession, and it fully explains the fact that its first proprietors lost so heavily upon it that they sold the Journal after some three years to another firm, which after another three years, had also lost so much that they proposed to stop the issue of the paper.

At this crisis, realising the immense work which the Journal had accomplished for nurses in the few years of its existence, and how absolutely essential it was to have such an organ in the press, if liberty of conscience for nurses and power to co-operate were to be possible, Dr. and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick purchased the Journal. From what has already been said, it can easily be understood that for some years they carried on the paper at a great financial loss. It must, indeed, have required an extraordinary sense of professional duty, great tenacity of purpose, and untiring work to continue to advocate a Cause which for the next succeeding few years met with the bitterest opposition, and with very slowly

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