

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,295

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1913.

Vol. L.

EDITORIAL.

A PROPOSED NEW ASSOCIATION OF NURSES.

We publish in another column a letter from Mr. J. S. Pollitt, Hon. Treasurer of the Blackburn District Nursing Association Incorporated, proposing the formation of a "National Association of Nurses." Mr. Pollitt is well known to nurses as a friend who desires to help them to help themselves, who insists that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and denounces their ordinary rate of pay as disgracefully inadequate.

It is proposed that the objects of the new society, if it secures sufficient support, shall be (1) To associate and unite the qualified nurses of the Kingdom of England and Wales; (2) To provide means for the co-operation of nurses and the expression of their collective opinion upon matters affecting the interests of the profession; (3) To improve the condition of nursing in the country; (4) To afford the Government, local authorities, Poor Law Guardians, hospital associations—public or private—the advice and experience of the associated nurses; (5) To secure the effective representation of nursing interests in Parliament; (6) To secure the compilation of a comprehensive register of nurses, and to promote and extend the influence and dignity of the profession of nursing. To secure the recognition of the Society as a diploma-granting authority; (7) To secure and to enforce rational conditions of employment; (8) To raise the qualifications and status of nurses; (9) To secure adequate pay; (10) To afford advice and assistance to individual members in nursing and professional matters, and in legal cases of a professional nature; (11) To extend to retired nurses who may need financial help any help that can be given, in the discretion of the Committee, according to the Rules of the Society, and

also (if so decided) to extend protection to nurses wrongfully treated, and especially if wrongfully dismissed, and if thought desirable to seek incorporation under the Joint Stock Companies' Act at an early date.

We may say at once that with the majority of these objects we are in warm sympathy and have been working to obtain them for the last quarter of a century, but like all others who have endeavoured to effect organization amongst nurses the new Association, if formed, will be confronted with the initial difficulty that there is no recognized qualification for the nurses whom it desires to associate and unite, and that until we have a legal qualification for a trained nurse defined by a professional body, established by the authority of Parliament, we cannot co-ordinate nurses into a compact and forceful body, nor will the majority enter into a progressive campaign which will put them into antagonism with hospital committees who are in many instances (notably those associated together in the Central Hospital Council for London) most ungenerously opposed to organization amongst nurses on self-governing lines. The relations of nurses to these committees who as their employers have the power of promotion, and of influencing to a great extent their subsequent careers, are very delicate, and past events have inculcated the belief that the nurse who takes a prominent part in the organization of nursing, for the protection of the public and the benefit of trained nurses by so doing risks her professional promotion.

We doubt also whether, until they have the lever of legal status many nurses will be found to combine for their own protection. Further, in our opinion, practical experience has proved that the compilation of a Register, and the granting of diplomas, to be of any value must be carried out under State authority.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)