

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

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

No 1,545.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1917.

Vol. LIX.

EDITORIAL.

NURSES, USE YOUR CHARTER.

We announce in another column that the Royal British Nurses' Association have decided not to proceed with their application for a Supplemental Charter. The principal reason which actuated the Association in applying for such a Charter—to enable it, with the College of Nursing, Ltd., to become the Royal British College of Nursing—was that it hoped the amalgamated Registers of the conjoint body would be adopted by Parliament as the official (or, to be more correct, the statutory) Register under a Nurses' Registration Act. The hope of the College of Nursing, on the other hand, was that it would attain the honourable status of a body incorporated by Royal Charter. Both of these hopes have been frustrated by the decision of the Privy Council not to permit the Corporation to acquire powers to promote their own official register as the future State Register. Members of the Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association have appreciated the fact that this restriction would "annul one of the main objects for which the Supplemental Charter was desired," that it would not be to the interest of the Corporation to accept the alterations suggested by the Lords of the Privy Council, and that the effect of the limitation imposed would be "that, under the new Charter no further powers would be conferred upon the Association than those already possessed under the original Charter. The result, therefore, would be that this new Charter would serve merely to obscure the very far reaching powers which are held under the old, and thus to minimize the value of the latter." Hence the decision not to proceed with the application.

This decision prevents the College (of Nursing, Ltd., from attaining its desire to become the Royal British College of Nursing through amalgamation with the R.B.N.A., which thus retains its individuality, its name, and its Charter.

The question now is what use will the Royal British Nurses' Association make of its Charter in the immediate future? We are not altogether surprised that another body should have desired to use the powers which it confers for, so far, the Corporation itself has shown little disposition to do so. Now, however, members of the Association are giving indication that they appreciate the importance of their Charter, and, that being so, we may hope that it will be brought out of the safe in which it is locked up (metaphorically as well as actually) and used. As we recently stated in this JOURNAL the trained nurses are the only body of women workers in this kingdom who possess a Royal Charter. Privilege entails responsibility, and it is incumbent upon the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association to use the powers conferred upon them wisely and well.

In 1893, at the Dinner held to celebrate the grant of the Royal Charter to the Association, the late Sir William Savory, to whose wise counsels and generous support the Association owes so much, said "This Charter has been granted largely upon the strength of the character of those supporting the prayer for it, in the faith that they will well and truly carry out the obligations that it imposes . . . let the scope of our opportunity be the measure of our responsibilities." It is for each member to consider how she has fulfilled those obligations in the past and how best she may do so in the future.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)