

the sake of the Association, as much as for our own—acquainted with its counsels. But it is evident from every available indication that when the Association is ready for the Charter of Incorporation it will have behind, and with, it a great amount of professional and public support in aid of its petition to the Queen. It has never suggested that it would be advisable to obtain that help of the helpless, an Act of Parliament, but proposes to do by private efforts what the State by itself could probably not accomplish—produce order and system out of chaos, protect the public and purify the Nursing profession. That it will completely succeed, no one who has watched its wonderful progress thus far can have the smallest doubt. To have enrolled three thousand of the *élite* of the Nursing profession as its members; to have directly or indirectly brought about the most important reforms in many English Hospitals and a complete re-organisation in the Nursing of several large Colonial Institutions; to have carried through a scheme of national importance, which must have been most costly as well as most difficult; and a number of minor enterprises, each of which must have had special difficulties by reason of its novelty; and at the same time to so completely overcome the rock of financial insecurity upon which so many associations, general and professional, have been wrecked, as to show in the second balance-sheet an invested reserve fund of nearly £1,000, are, it must be admitted, magnificent—and we believe unprecedented—results for less than three years' work. It goes without saying that they redound to the credit of the energy, tact and business abilities of the Executive Committee, and must be most satisfactory to Her Royal Highness Princess Christian, whose steadfast support and invaluable personal assistance as its President the Committee has so frequently acknowledged. Such then is the record of the British Nurses' Association, founded and supported by the highest professional authorities, doing all its work openly, and taking no single step without consulting those whose interests were thereby involved, consequently winning the approval and support of all disinterested persons—increasing continually in success and influence.

But now we turn to the Midwives' Institute, and find in every one of the above particulars the very reverse conditions. Founded some five years ago as the Midwives' Club, it possessed at first a remarkably indefinite constitution; in fact, was a lay body with a professional name. Its membership was open to Trained Nurses and Midwives, and also to ladies interested in, but not practically acquainted with, either calling. As might have been predicted, the Club languished

through its early life, and some few months ago, as we pointed out, contained amongst its members considerably more Nurses than Midwives. However, the Club took some placid part in preparing a Bill to be introduced some day into Parliament. After more than three years' existence—that is to say, early last year—its published list of Members showed that these only numbered one hundred and fifty in all. Of these seventeen were lay members—*i.e.*, neither Nurses nor Midwives—seventy were Trained Nurses, five had no designation, and, therefore, were presumably also of the laity, and only fifty-eight were Midwives. The Club issued a minute monthly journal, had a reading-room, and held several meetings each year, when papers on medical and obstetrical subjects were read. Such had been its progress during the four years of its existence, and such was its position when, about a year ago, it was suddenly galvanised into new life.

At the great meeting at the Mansion House in July, 1889, several leading Obstetric Physicians called upon the British Nurses' Association to undertake the Registration of Midwives, which various Societies had for thirty years previously been attempting to secure. And it was understood that the Association would probably respond to this influential appeal. Then it was suddenly announced that the Midwives' Club had been incorporated under the Companies' Acts, and had blossomed out into the Midwives' Institute, and it has since been stated that now—after five years' existence, that is—it possesses two hundred members. We have been unable, however, to obtain any direct information upon this point, or as to the composition of the present membership.

Then the Bill which had for so many years reclined in its archives was brought out—presumably dusted—and quietly introduced into the House of Commons amongst the hundreds of other private members' measures. Until we noticed and drew attention to the fact, it was apparently quite unknown to the great mass of the medical profession and Midwives, whose interests it so vitally affects. Then gradually its provisions became understood, and just in time—when it had been rushed through the second reading—the Parliamentary Bills Committee of the British Medical Association secured its withdrawal and amendment, its Chairman going so far as to describe it as an utterly bad Bill. Since then professional feeling has been widely aroused by Dr. Rentoul, Dr. Drage, and others; and those who have attempted to smuggle into law provisions upon which the medical profession has never been consulted, and which would do enormous harm to everyone concerned, are being

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