

may be made a valuable means of assisting and protecting members of our profession from wrongful actions-at-law, to which we are all of us at all times liable; actions brought by irresponsible persons for alleged malpractice, or by unscrupulous persons for the purpose of obtaining money under threats of injury to our professional character.

It is well known that a medical man's professional prospects depend to a very large extent, if not entirely, upon his professional reputation, and it is not difficult, therefore, for unprincipled persons to attempt to levy blackmail upon him by threatening to bring action against him for malpractice or professional incapacity, which action, though wholly groundless and undeserved, may have the most disastrous effects upon his career and pocket.

During the past two years the Association has fought out several such cases successfully, and has amply demonstrated its usefulness and justified its existence. It is, therefore, a matter of wonderment to many of us that the Association has thus far received so little encouragement or support from the profession as a whole. Out of a possible 5,500, the total membership last year was only 252. This is altogether too small a number to make the aims and work of the Association effective or sustain it in a solvent condition, and I welcome this opportunity to invite your earnest co-operation in enlarging its membership and strengthening the hands of the Executive, and would to this end suggest that a special committee be struck during the Convention for the purpose of considering how best to enlist the sympathies and support of our brethren who are not yet members. I cannot but think that a large increase in the membership must inevitably result if the aims of the Association be once rightly understood.

The objects of the Association are such as all can subscribe to. It is not intended to defend or assist in defending unworthy members, or those who are actually guilty of malpractice, or who have brought discredit upon the profession. It aims rather to assist the worthy, those of its members who are wrongfully charged and whose character and reputation are placed at stake; and also to deter irresponsible and unscrupulous persons from bringing action against members of the profession for the purpose of spiting or injuring them, or of exacting a bribe for their silence; and it is only by uniting ourselves together in such a way as this Association offers that we can hope to secure the support of our brethren and become immune to many attacks which would otherwise be made upon us.