

your sympathetic words on the subject, and you will be glad to know that I have just heard that Her Royal Highness is much better. I am sure many thousands will re-echo, with all their heart, your hope for her speedy and complete recovery." I presume that the Princess will not be back in England in time for the General Council Meeting of the British Nurses' Association, and her genial presence in the chair will be doubtless greatly missed. There is the keenest anticipation in Nursing circles as to the business to be transacted at to-morrow's gathering. There are rumours in the air of several capital schemes, but as I cannot obtain definite details, it will be better to say nothing about them till next week, when I hope to be able to consider them fully,

BUT I am told, on good authority, that there are more than eleven hundred members, and that an appeal has been received from New Zealand that Branches of the Association should be organized at the Antipodes. Considering that the first member had not been enrolled, nor any public attention drawn to the movement, till the meeting was held at St. George's Hall just eight months ago, this world-wide success is simply marvellous, for I learn, from the same source, that there are now a large number of members in New South Wales, Western Australia, South Africa, Canada, India, Malta, Egypt, Switzerland, and France, besides in every large centre in the United Kingdom.

INDEED in South Africa they seem to be most actively supporting the Association. A kind correspondent has sent me an account of a meeting held on July 17th, at the Hospital in Kimberley, when an address was given to all the Nurses in the district by Dr. Callender, the Resident Surgeon, and which was as follows :—

"FIRST, let me congratulate you all most heartily on being, at last, installed in your new home. I hope it will be more like a home than the cramped and uncomfortable rooms in which you have hitherto lived. Everything changes as time goes on, and our endeavour is that all changes shall be for the better. As regards changes, let us look at ourselves. Of all professions in the world I suppose in none have the changes been so rapid, so marked, and so much for the better, as in our own profession. By our own profession I mean not the Medical profession, so called, which includes only Medical men, but I would include also those who have devoted their time to Nursing and Hospital work. There is no Medical man of the present day but will acknowledge, if he be honest, that he owes many of his best cases of

recovery to good Nursing. I know, from my own experience, how frequent is the cry in private practice, "I could save this patient if I only had a good Nurse." Look at the operation of tracheotomy, for instance. The Medical man is, after the operation is done, the less important attendant of the two ; the Nurse, by her patient, never-ceasing attention, effects the cure. Why, then, should Nurses be excluded from the general term, 'our profession'?"

"TIME was, when Nurses were the bugbears of all ; such as Cowper's Nurse, 'who sleeps sweetly, hired to nurse the sick, whom snoring she disturbs.' Betsy Prig and Sairy Gamp, of historic fame, are even worse specimens of what Nurses were. And, until about twenty years ago, these vampires still existed. They are stamped out now, but there still remains a class even more dangerous to society—the unskilled woman, who sets up on her own account as a Trained Nurse for private cases. All Medical men, who have been in any way associated with a Hospital, where Trained Nurses are employed, or where Nurses are trained, learn to put such reliance on their Nurse that they leave an enormous amount to her discretion. And if that Nurse is not properly trained, what the result is I need not say. 'Now that we have for Nurses well educated ladies, let us train them properly,' has been the cry for many years past, and excellent has the training been, but to what end does the severe course of training lead? I remember a Nurse at home saying to me once—'What is the use of our training and lectures, and so forth? If I leave this Hospital I hold no more status in the professional world than a Nurse just beginning her training.' The speaker had been nursing for six years, and was an exceedingly skilful Surgical Nurse."

"Now I come to what I want to draw your attention to-day. What is the social and professional status of a Nurse? Socially, a Nurse is, of course, the equal of any lady in the land, and deservedly so, devoting her life, as she does, to the wants of others, leading a life of hard work and self-denial. Charles Kingsley, I think it was, who said that it was his belief that there would be a very comfortable place in Heaven for Doctors. If Kingsley were writing now I am sure he would add 'and a very comfortable one for Nurses, too.' But what is the professional status of a Nurse? A Nurse is a Nurse, and nothing more, and a Nurse may have devoted her life to the work, for one year, or twenty years, yet her position is not improved in the eyes of the world ; and only as regards the Medical profession, in the eyes of those few Medical men who have known and

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)