

delegate from that country received, before she left for England, a letter signed by 113 Matrons and Nurses of the Commune Hospital, and the Royal Frederics Hospital asking her to obtain information concerning the formation of Nursing Associations.

Again, on the subject of the Professional Training and Status of Nurses we find ourselves entirely in sympathy with Mrs. Neill, the representative from New Zealand, and in relation to the same matter the most earnest-minded of British nurses will find that their views coincide with those of the American and Canadian nurses, who must, moreover, command our warm admiration for the way in which they have marshalled their forces upon a sound and self-respecting basis, so that their professional organizations are already a powerful force for good.

Miss M. H. Watkins comes to the Congress as a State Registered Nurse, and there is no one of us but desires to attain the same assured position before the law, and is anxious to learn from her how registration is carried on in Cape Colony.

This international community of sentiment and unanimity of aspiration, is most inspiring. It shows us, in the first place, that the great nursing sisterhood can never be fettered and bound down by narrow restrictions and laws, that as its aims and hopes are world-wide, so the principles which govern it must be world-wide also; broad enough to be adapted to the varied conditions of nursing in diverse countries; high enough to uphold the dignity and honour of the profession; and so elastic, that, as time goes on, and the vista of what is required of trained nurses unfolds itself more and more to our view, there shall be nothing laid down as of universal obligation, either as regards ethics or training, which would impede or hamper that natural and inevitable development which, as a scientific profession, we cherish as one of our most precious possessions.

The question as to how the organization of the Nursing Profession may be best achieved on broad and comprehensive lines, is one which may well be discussed at the present time, for it is probable that, never again for many years to come, will there be assembled in this country so representative a body of nurses. We take this opportunity of assuring our foreign colleagues of our appreciation of their presence at this time, and our hopefulness that beneficial and lasting results will be the outcome of such international conference.

## Annotations.

### A BENEFICENT SERUM.

It is reported that two Brussels physicians, Drs. Roquette and Lapo, have discovered a serum which cures cancer. It is further stated that experiments which are being conducted at the Brussels Hospital under the auspices of the Belgian Medical Academy have been completely successful. The news sounds almost too good to be true, but if it is indeed a fact that a means has at last been discovered of successfully combating this terrible disease, the names of the medical men above mentioned will assuredly be handed down to posterity with those of the greatest benefactors of the human race that the world has ever known.

### THE MIDWIVES' BILL.

THE Midwives' Bill introduced into the House of Commons by the Right Hon. J. B. Balfour has been dropped by the promoters, as it failed to pass its second reading. It is probable, however, that it may be revived in another form next year, and therefore it is important that both the public and the nursing profession should understand the position.

There is no doubt that legislation is needed. At present there is nothing to prevent any woman, absolutely ignorant of the duties required of her from calling herself a midwife, and practising in this capacity, and, as a matter of fact, many totally uneducated women do so practise. It is most desirable therefore that competent midwives should be distinguished, and distinguishable from the absolutely ignorant. But, then, comes the question, What constitutes competency? And here opinions are widely at variance. It has been held by the promoters of the Midwives' Registration Bill—or, as it should now be called, the Midwives' Licensing Bill, for those who support it have abandoned the principle of Registration—that a three months' special training is a sufficient qualification.

For this reason we have never been able to give our support to the Bill. In the first place, we hold such a course to be of necessity superficial, and in the second place, we have always held that any speciality can only satisfactorily be practised when founded upon a basis of general knowledge. The legalised midwife should therefore be required to show evidence of general medical or nursing training before she is allowed to register.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)