

Finally, polite and appropriate replies must be made to the various addresses which the Corporation of the town, or the Vestry of the Parish, the Committee of the Hospital, and other local bodies, all desired to present to His Royal Highness on the auspicious occasion. And then there is the ceremony and the inevitable public luncheon, when the Prince must make a speech and quote off-hand figures and facts relating to the "great undertaking so happily inaugurated" and make the inevitable appeal for further funds; the very statistics alone—on a subject entirely new to the speaker—having doubtless cost him incalculable trouble to master.

Amongst the Royal Family, Princess Christian has most devoted herself to furthering schemes in connection with Hospitals and their workers. Indeed, so generally is this fact recognised by Nurses, that it has come to be an accepted form of speech amongst them to talk of Her Royal Highness as "our Princess," and the present affords an excellent opportunity for briefly reviewing the very important part which Princess Christian has taken in a movement which has already attained success, and which is destined, we believe, to have far-reaching consequences—the origin, rise, and progress of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

In December, 1887, when the idea of the Association was first mooted, we understand that the Princess was one of the first consulted on the matter, and to whom the proposed programme was submitted. Our readers are doubtless aware that she was present at the important preliminary meetings of the leaders of the medical and Nursing professions which were held to decide upon the basis and constitution of the Association, and that she made one of the most important speeches which were delivered at the inaugural meeting in St. George's Hall. Since then it is common knowledge how the Association has grown in numbers, influence, and usefulness; how it has carried to a successful issue one important scheme after another; how its Members are now found in every part of Her Majesty's dominions. But what is not generally known is what we have heard from more than one of the Committee of the Association—that the position of President of the Association has been no sinecure. We have been told, indeed, that the Princess is one of the most regular attendants at the meetings of all Committees; that at her request reports on various matters are made frequently to her, and that details of all kinds are regularly submitted

to her for her consideration and counsel. It has more than once been publicly acknowledged by those who have the best means of knowing the facts, that the Association "owes more than can be adequately expressed" to the personal work and wise advice of its President.

Now, from all this we draw two morals: That the deep gratitude of the sick public, as well as of Nurses as a class, is due to Her Royal Highness for the strenuous efforts she has made and is making for the attainment of an urgently needed reform. And secondly, that the ten thousand Trained Nurses who have not yet applied for membership of the Association should be shamed into doing so as soon as possible, and so, taking some part in the important schemes for the benefit of their profession, for which Princess Christian has for these three years worked so arduously.

In years to come it will probably appear incredible that at the end of the nineteenth century it was possible for any woman, even if "destitute of knowledge, or of character, or of both," to term herself a Trained Nurse, to obtain employment in that capacity, and to cause incalculable discomfort, and often actual danger, to the sick. It will seem extravagant to our successors to assert, that in 1891 there was no means of preventing Nurses who had been convicted of crime—perhaps more than once—from immediately obtaining employment at each exit from prison, on the strength of a certificate received from a Hospital years before. These gross abuses will doubtless surprise people fifty years hence, and still more when they learn that attempts to protect the sick against these very grave dangers were bitterly opposed, and that the Royal British Nurses' Association was, for its share in bringing about the Registration of Trained Nurses on the lines laid down by Parliament for the registration of members of other professions, most virulently abused and assailed. Our successors will be able, in the light of the then recognised advantages of State Registration of Nurses, to see more clearly than we can do the great work for Nurses in particular, and humanity in general, which has been brought about by the far-sighted and steadfast efforts of Her Royal Highness Princess Christian. But now, in the name of Nurses, we can thank her for the great personal care and trouble she has taken upon their behalf. In their name we may say that on next Sunday hundreds of Nurses in every part of the world will unite in earnestly wishing Her Royal Highness all happiness upon her Silver Wedding Day.

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*previous page*

*next page*