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Editorial.

HAIL, COLUMBIA!

The dominant note of the week is one of joy. In the first place, we have the supreme pleasure of announcing that in four of the United States—New York, North Carolina, Illinois, and New Jersey—the earnest efforts of the State Associations of Nurses for professional organisation have been crowned with success, and Bills providing for the legal registration of trained nurses have now become law. The majority of the Bills enumerated incorporate all that the State Associations asked for, and give the nurses ample powers of self-government.

Secondly, although in Great Britain we have been sixteen years striving for a reform which our American colleagues have effected in a few months, the prospects of success are at present more hopeful than they have ever been before. The Annual Meeting of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, held last Friday in London, and the Conference which followed it, were most inspiring to those who have worked long and steadily in the cause of Registration for Nurses. From the earnest purpose shining in the faces of those who filled the large room at 20, Hanover Square it was manifest that, in spite of disappointments in the past, the conscience of those who support the movement is as keen as ever, and that their conviction of the duty which they owe to their profession, and to the public at large, is strong enough to eventually overcome all obstacles which stand between them and their desire. They mean to see the Bill through, and, be it noted, it is staying power to the end which counts in at the finish of a race.

It is a step—a great step—forward that the meeting last week authorised the Executive Committee of the State Registration Society to instruct Counsel to draft a Bill for the

Legal Registration of Trained Nurses. By this means we shall crystallise our programme in a concrete form. We shall be able to hand the Bill to inquirers, and to say "This is what we want." A Bill to be effective must stand for two great fundamental principles:

1. That a legal system of Registration of Trained Nurses is expedient *in principle*, and would be conducive to the best interests of nurses and of great public benefit.

2. That the control of the nursing profession should be in professional hands, and that the preponderating vote in any body charged by Parliament with the control of nurses must be in the hands of nurses themselves through their directly-elected representatives. In this view we are supported by a thoughtful article in the last issue of the *Medical Times*, which says:—"The great majority of the members of the Nursing Council should undoubtedly be direct representatives of the registered nurses themselves. The cardinal mistake which everyone now recognises to have been made in the Medical Acts was the appointment of a large number of representatives of the medical examining bodies on the Medical Council. . . . Furthermore, as the majority of the Council have represented bodies which subscribe nothing to the funds of the Council, they were made responsible for the expenditure and management of moneys provided by the medical profession, the members of which only possess the most meagre direct representation on the Council. The nurses then are well advised in seeking to avoid the pitfalls into which medical legislation has fallen, and, by insisting upon the principle of the Council being chiefly composed of representatives directly elected by the registered nurses themselves, they are going far to make nursing legislation more successful, more effective, and considerably more useful to every interest concerned than medical legislation has ever proved to be."

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