

reached its height. We are not satisfied yet. It is growing and must grow."

Brave words where so much deserves praise—words that carry a ring of future action in them, and reveal the constant effort of selfless thought. Truly good work is being done in many lands and in many realms of suffering and deformity, but nowhere more earnestly, more modestly, more patiently than among those who study and tend and teach the blind.

LINA MOLLETT.

## Our American Letter.

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

WITHIN the last few years, interesting developments have appeared here and there, in the graduate Nurses' Directory methods, strongly indicative of the growing tendency toward co-operation and self-governing principles. This in itself is nothing new, being but the general tenor of this age, but the members of the Nursing Profession, being yet infants in organisation, are only beginning to realise that they may outgrow their early forms and become competent to conduct their own Registries.

One of the first, if not, perhaps, the very first, instance of a Co-operative Registry, was that organised by the graduates of the Farrand Training School of Detroit, Michigan. The Superintendent is a woman of much breadth; the pupils, enthusiastic and progressive. The registry is a part of the work of the Alumnae Association. The graduates make the rules and elect their Managing Committee, of which the Superintendent is always a member. The first Registry in New York to be founded on this basis was that of the New York City School, of Blackwell's Island. It has now been in operation several years, and has had much thought and care given to its organisation by the two clear-sighted women in charge of the School, both of whom hold responsible offices on the Managing Committee. The expenses include the salary of a thoroughly competent Nurse as Manager, long-distance telephone, etc.; and a yearly report is published showing the number of calls, the income and expenditures, with any other items of interest. The Registry occupies attractive and convenient rooms in the heart of the city, and is altogether an excellent example.

Compared with this specialised and business-like system, the registry methods of Bellevue, which still retain the simplicity of a less competitive period, seem inadequate and unsatisfactory. The whole charge of the eighty or ninety registered graduates is tacked on as an extra to the regular work of the Superintendent, to which it constitutes a perpetually recurring interruption. With no special assistant, no special office or convenience, no distinct headquarters nor manager's salary, this system is naturally inexpensive. The last annual report of the School shows the expenses of the registry during the year to have been some fifty odd dollars, while the Nurses' registry fees in the same time amounted to one thousand dollars, the surplus going, as a matter of course, into the income of the School.

While many Nurses, from force of habit, accept this without thought one way or another, there are others who are dissatisfied. As a matter of fact, the Bellevue graduates, having no voice in the affairs of their registry, are yet paying for it at nearly the same rate

as the New York City Nurses, who control their own. They practically pay a manager's salary, yet have no hand in the management.

It is reasonable to suppose that registry fees are intended to cover registry expenses, and, if this is the case, when a surplus remains it should be returned as a dividend, or deposited as a sinking fund, or the fees should be lowered. But best of all would it be, in this case, to take the full amount and devote it to the legitimate expenses of a well-located, well-managed, co-operatively-conducted registry, in a central and accessible part of town.

The Illinois, the largest registry in the West, and modelled after Bellevue, has the same defects of system, though better managed as to detail. The proportions of the work some time ago necessitated a special assistant to take charge of the registry, but her work also is carried on in an inconvenient way between School and Hospital buildings, in a remote and inaccessible neighbourhood, while the financial reports of the School show less plainly than do those of Bellevue the relation between registry receipts and registry expenses. From a book-keeping standpoint, this is at least a slipshod way of dealing with cash accounts.

As long as work is plenty, all goes well; but if times are hard, or calls diminish from any cause, this system is an unpopular one. The Nurses suspect unfairness, and believe that work might be better divided, while the person who happens to be in charge suffers accordingly, even to the extent of much personal odium. Though with co-operative methods there is doubtless often some fault-finding, yet it is greatly less than that generated by a system under which the Nurses have no voice and no share in the responsibility, and with the financial details of which they are entirely unacquainted. An interesting departure is about to be made in Brooklyn, where the graduates of all Schools in the City are uniting in establishing a Central Registry, to cover the whole field of work and do away with the small individual registries. The plan bids fair to be an eminent success, and is receiving the active help of the Training School Superintendents. It is easy to see how much more economically one large Central Registry could be managed than several small ones, and it should prove equally satisfactory on other lines as well.

The Johns Hopkins Training School, always in the foreground of progress, is about to organise a registry which will be directly controlled by the graduates through their Alumnae Association, of which the Superintendent, as a School graduate, is a member, and in which she usually holds office and takes her full share of work.

It is a little odd that Boston, in most directions so far ahead, is in Nursing matters extremely conservative, not to say narrow. Not, let it be understood, as to the Nurses themselves, but as to the powers behind School and Hospital.

The formation of an Alumnae Association among the graduates of an old Boston School was quietly, but effectually, discouraged by the governing body for some years; vainly at last, for in '95, at the time of the meeting of the Superintendents' Society in Boston, two graduates of the School, who were members of the Society, and had achieved distinction during a number of years, lent their influence, and an Association was formed. However, other Boston Schools are largely unorganised as to their graduates. Nurses' Clubs there are, with much that is pleasant

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