

to let time prove the justice and strength of our cause, and expose the reasons of such opposition to it. But we should not only be more than human but we should also fail to score fair points in the game, if we omitted to note and to emphasize the successes which are achieved from time to time.

We commenced with a clearly defined programme. For example, our first plank was that the nursing profession in this, and every other, country should be properly organized, as the members of other professions are. The Royal Charter of the Royal British Nurses' Association set the seal of the State upon our endeavours in that direction. Since then, unions of nurses have been formed in the United States of America, and in Holland. And there are not wanting indications that before very long the same movement may be inaugurated in other British colonies, and in more than one continental country. Nurses, in fact, are realising that union means strength, and a just recognition of their claims.

In the next place, we suggested that, for the protection of the public, and for the honour of trained nurses, the State should institute some form of registration whereby the sick would be safeguarded against women who did not possess the professional knowledge or the personal character necessary to make them efficient and trustworthy. The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope in 1891 passed an Act compelling all nurses in that great Colony to be registered under its Medical Council; and it is only a question of time when the mother country as well as its other Colonies, and other countries as well, will carry out this same important reform.

We have often predicted that, as a necessary corollary of State registration, there would be instituted a uniform system and standard of education for nurses; and that, moreover, the body entrusted by the State with the control of the nursing profession would, as a natural result of such a uniform system of education, find itself compelled to do away with the present plan of multitudinous hospital examinations and to institute State examinations for State licenses as the sole, and only uniform, qualification for registration. In all the reforms we have referred to, we have expressed our confidence, because they are with one exception founded upon analogous measures found necessary, and carried out already, in other professions.

But the last-named suggestion, being somewhat more novel, has appeared to some to be visionary; and by many critics, indeed, it has been described as impossible of fulfilment in the case of nurses. Accomplished facts, however, are once again on our side. The Medical Council of the Cape Colony, acting under its Act of Parliament, has rescinded the authority hitherto allowed to hospital committees to examine and certify their own nurses, and has fulfilled our anticipations by instituting, on behalf of the Council, State examinations, every six months, for nurses; ordaining that only those nurses who pass such examinations can be registered under the Act. The object lesson is all important for nurses, and it exhibits the inevitable results which will follow in this and other countries from similar legislation.

Annotations.

MEDALS FOR AMERICAN NURSES.

MISS MARGARET LIVINGSTON CHANLER, and Miss Boulogny, who rendered signal service to their country in the Hispano-American War, have been recommended for that rare honour, the thanks of Congress, and it is probable that the thanks of the American nation, as well as gold medals, in recognition of their work for the sick and wounded soldiers in Puerto Rico will be conveyed by a special Act of Congress.

Miss Chanler and Miss Boulogny landed in Porto Rico on July 31st last year, and the same day began to nurse both the American and Spanish sick. Miss Chanler, at her own expense, immediately hired a house as a hospital for American Officers, and the number of the sick increased until finally she was supporting three hospitals. In September she handed over these hospitals to the trained nurses sent to the island by the Government, having first provided for their rental and running expenses. General Miles has reported upon the work of these two ladies in the following terms:—

"Such noble and generous acts performed under circumstances of great embarrassment and in the danger of contracting fatal diseases prevalent at that time, our government should recognize, and I recommend that appropriate medals be presented these two women; and in the case of Miss Chanler, on account of her contributing so largely and

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)