

The Progress of State Registration.

Writing editorially, Miss Sophia Palmer, editor-in-chief of the *American Journal of Nursing*, refers to Bills before the Legislature:—

The North Carolina State Nurses' Association is to be congratulated upon having been the first to report a Bill before the Legislature. A brief account of the situation is given in the "Official Department," which shows that although the Bill passed the House successfully, it was meeting with opposition from proprietors of private sanatoria and one hospital, which were evidently unwilling or unable to give to their pupils that minimum amount of education or "training" that the State should decide to be necessary.

In Illinois the situation is equally interesting. We quote from a letter received from the President, Mrs. Hutchinson, which gives the situation in a nutshell:—

"Our Bill is before the General Assembly. Whether or not it ever leaves that august presence is a question, but the unity that has come as a result of the organisation among the nurses is worth having worked for.

"We prepared our original Bill, which you have printed, the State Board of Health presented a second Bill, and now we, in conjunction with the State Board of Health, have drawn up a compromise Bill which in some respects is better than either of the other two. While we do not get a separate board (the granting of separate boards being entirely against the custom of this Legislature), we get an 'Examining Committee for Registration of Nurses of the State Board of Health,' to consist of three nurses and the secretary of the State Board of Health. These nurses are to be appointed from recommendations made by the Illinois State Association of Graduate Nurses, and one of the three is to hold the office of assistant to the secretary of the State Board of Health. She is to have an office in Chicago and to be paid a salary of 1,200 dollars a year and expenses (travelling, &c.). An important provision in this Bill is that this committee shall investigate training-schools and see that the work they are doing comes up to the required standard. I shall send you a copy of this Bill as soon as I get one. I fully believe we shall have State Registration here before June 1st. Our Bill does not reserve the right to use 'trained' or 'graduate,' as that interferes with 'vested rights' and would not pass, but we do reserve the right to use 'registered' and 'licensed.'"

In New York, since the January meeting, the Legislative Committee of the New York State Nurses' Association has been exceedingly active. Much pressure was brought to bear upon the Committee by the Secretary of the Board of Regents of the University to strike out the words "general" and "State hospitals" in the first section of the Bill, it being his opinion that the chances of passing the Bill would be much greater if this concession was made before the Bill was introduced, and this the Committee decided to do after very careful consideration and able advice.

The Bill as it is to be presented is given in full in the "Official Department," and it will be seen that the educational qualifications are safeguarded by the phrase "as maintaining in this and other respects proper standards, all of which shall be determined by

the Regents of the University of the State of New York."

It is perfectly understood that the opposition to the New York Bill will be very great, and it comes from two recognised sources. New York State has an unlimited number of small private hospitals and sanatoria that are commercially opposed to the Bill, and a commercial opposition to an educational measure usually, at first, carries much political influence. Eventually, when the opposition has served to educate the public, the *right* wins. The other source of opposition comes from the *minority* of the New York State Nurses' Association, the "rule or ruin" element that almost every large organisation has to contend with, and which often serves as a stimulus to more active work on the part of the majority.

On February 16th a Bill was introduced to the Assembly by Mr. Nye, of Schuyler County, brother of Miss Sylveen Nye, of Buffalo, asking for the registration of nurses under the *Secretary of State*. The only qualification called for, as we interpret the Bill, is a sworn statement from the individual that he or she is *entitled* to registration, and the privilege seems to be granted equally to nurses who have not been given a diploma. This measure calls for no educational standards, is not safeguarded by supervision of the Regents of the University, and while it might serve the purpose of an entering-wedge, from the standpoint of educational advancement it asks for nothing and its passage would mean nothing to the profession.

Probably before this number of the *Journal* is ready for circulation the fate of these Bills in all three States will be decided. We can only repeat what we have said in these pages before, that even with *failure* we shall have made great progress because of the educational influence of agitation.

As we go to press New Jersey reports a Bill before the House. Virginia nurses have not reported, but we know they are not idle. We offer our congratulations in advance to the first State to report a Bill "*passed*."

And so do we.

Bruising, and Broken Bones.

Truth is doing good work in reporting all cases of the death of poor lunatics in asylums where circumstances are suspicious, and it is truly wonderful how many lunatics appear to suffer from bruises and broken bones. We are glad to note that the Irish Lunacy Board is endeavouring to impress the Sligo District Asylums Committee that it is their duty as guardians of the insane poor to take adequate steps for the protection of their charges. This Committee, *Truth* points out, appear more concerned for the protection of the attendants than for the welfare of the inmates of the asylums.

All over the United Kingdom our asylums are governed in too autocratic a manner. Much more public inspection is required both by men and women before the "bruising" and "brittle bone" scandals can be put down.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)