

mouth), Miss Gardner (Blackwall), Miss Cutler (Much Wenlock), and many Sisters and nurses.

Miss Stevenson said she would open the proceedings by asking Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Hon. Secretary of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, to read a letter just received from a correspondent in America.

#### REGISTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

Mrs. Fenwick said she had just received a letter from a correspondent of the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* for insertion in that journal. She thought the Conference would understand her desire to share its good news with them.

DEAR EDITOR.—At last, after a winter's good hard work, we are beginning to reap results from our campaign for legislation. In four States the nurses have succeeded in getting Registration Bills through, and one or two more are still in process. As a consequence, we are feeling radiantly happy, and benevolently disposed even towards our enemies, who, after all, poor things, turned out to be so much less formidable than we had expected that we really cannot keep up very severe feelings toward them. In New York State, when we confronted them face to face, they boiled down to one or two cross boys and a few mercenary owners of private hospital businesses. In New Jersey they were, however, considerably more alarming, consisting mainly of professional philanthropists of the stripe who are able to make so much more mischief to the square mile than any other set of people, as you have no doubt noticed yourself.

In North Carolina the private ownership interests were sufficiently strong to have the Nurses' Bill so badly amended that, at first, the nurses were inclined to withdraw it entirely. In Illinois, as in New York, weighty opposition was almost lacking, and the nurses gained practically what they asked for. Altogether, considering that not one Bill failed entirely, that only one winter's campaign was carried on, and that the whole work was done by State organisations consisting *solely and entirely* of nurses, we all feel that we have reason for profound satisfaction and encouragement. You know with us few people expect to get a perfect Bill at the first attempt. The American method is to get an "opening wedge" as good as possible, and amend it year by year, raising it gradually to a higher plane. For this reason none of our Bills tried to fix a three-year minimum, for though now in quite general use, the three years' course is so comparatively recent that we thought best not to begin with it. Yet our success has been such that it is quite probable we might have secured it.

After all, there is no greater tactical mistake than timidity. We have learned that the enemy's first dodge is to terrify by throwing a gigantic shadow by means of cleverly-arranged settings. The idea is that you will be so frightened by this shadow that you will immediately give up everything you want, and ask to be allowed to do what they want. They call this "stampeding" you. They tried to stampede us in New York in regard to our examining board, but we saw through it, fortunately. I don't know how it is with you, but getting legislation here is like a very exciting game. There are expert moves and stupid moves. I do not play chess, but I imagine it is like a game of chess. You must find out the

weak points of your opponents and press there; you must anticipate their moves and be ready for them. We also did a good deal of "lobbying." There are two kinds of lobbying, the unrighteous and the righteous; ours was the latter kind. It consists in going to the legislative halls with a large and imposing body of people—ours were all women—dressed in their very best clothes, and with their serious purpose showing in their demeanour. Each one brings as many letters of introduction as possible to different legislators. These are then looked up and the case explained to them. The educational, practical, and progressive nature of the Bill is shown them, and the results that it is hoped will follow. Conscientious men who wish to do well in legislation depend on this individual appeal from their constituents, as they say, "We cannot, of course, know all these subjects until they are explained." They ask questions, hear both sides, and in our case it was surprising to see how much interest they showed, what a high regard was usually held for nurses, and to hear how many said, "I see your point. I had a nurse once in my family," &c.

We were treated with the most extreme courtesy. It is not really pleasant to go through the halls and lobbies all crowded with men, but universal deference and consideration were shown us. The National Congress is well used to the sight of women lobbyists, but in the State Legislatures women do not seem to go frequently. One feature of our law-making struck me as being quite ideally democratic: this is the "hearing" which is accorded each Bill. I do not know whether you have this arrangement or not. While the Bill is in its first stage a committee from the Senate and another from the Assembly, or lower house, each give a "hearing" on it. This hearing is announced and is public. Any citizen, man or woman, may go to it, may speak and present arguments either for or against the Bill in question. The members of committee ask questions, and very intelligent ones. Moreover, they appear interested, and the whole thing seems the ideal of popular government.

Where results go wrong, it is more likely to be from the persistency of commercial interests than from a failure on the part of the men to see "to the bottom of a proposition."

An experience like ours shows very clearly how things may go wrong, and why right does not always win. It is in this way: the good and loyal friends—physicians, citizens of all grades—will gladly and willingly sign your petitions, write letters for you, send telegrams, and even leave their business for a day and go and speak on your behalf. Then they go home again to their work.

But your enemy, the mercenary man, packs his grip on the first day, says good-bye to his family, goes to the Capital, and there he stays. He does not go home. You can see the point I mean to make. One other point in regard to your Mr. Bryan's suggestion to have a lawyer on the examining board. I hardly think that would work well. By all means have a legal adviser. We employed one, and he was most helpful and did a great deal of work. But I should say retain him on a business basis, and do not have him as a member, as one of you. You want a *working* lawyer, not just an advisory or ornamental one.

Now may we all learn much from the lessons of the past.

STARS AND STRIPES.

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