

## Our Foreign Letter.

### FROM THE UNITED STATES.

The season of business meetings and strenuous activity in all lines of work has begun, the autumn meeting of the New York State Nurses' Association being the first one I have been able to go to. It was especially interesting, as Mr. Taylor, of the Regent's Office, came to talk over the work ings of our Act and to answer questions. All that we hear of details in our own, as well as in other States, while giving ground for real encouragement, impresses one deeply with the realisation that the task of elevating general standards of education is a most arduous task, and one requiring constant effort throughout years of time. Like the work of scientific forestry, it should be judged only in periods of ten, twenty-five, and fifty years.

To expect nothing but obviously satisfactory results, and those immediately, shows thoughtlessness and a superficial knowledge of the subject. All of this means that although we have already registered in New York State some rather poor little schools, and although we have not yet a nurse inspector, yet we left the meeting feeling that we are making definite progress and that we have great cause for satisfaction. Persistent enlightenment of the public, and *this only*, can solve the question of the poor schools, and this takes time. On one hand we have the problem of the school of incomplete training which threatens to destroy our Act through political influence, and on the other, the example of similar schools honestly trying to meet the requirements by affiliation with others, and not finding any which will agree to affiliate! This is certainly hard.

About the nurse inspector the case is just this. It is not in the immediate power of the Regent's Office to give us our own inspector, owing to the general policy which is directed toward unifying the whole work of the State University, but they are allowing members of the Nurses' Examining Board to make *supplementary* inspection of schools in doubtful cases. We feel that this is treating us generously, and are convinced of the firm high purpose and true interest in sound education of these men upon whose support we are relying.

I went over to Toronto, where they had a fine meeting in favour of Registration. As the date had had to be suddenly changed, all of the expected speakers were not there, but it was evident that a serious effort for legislation is to be made. The nurses are assured of the support of the medical profession and of the National Council of Women. Mrs. Willoughby Cummings spoke very earnestly and definitely of the practical side of the movement, and mentioned her own horror at learning of the appalling multiplication of "correspondence schools," and the great impression made upon the body of women of which she is secretary, by a paper on this subject, presented at their last meeting by the head of the Victorian Order in Toronto.

Our old friend Sir Henry Burdett is visiting America, and I am told that at the meeting of hospital superintendents he told the tale of how he tried to found

a Pension Fund in America, and said that Miss Dock prevented it and caused its collapse! I am glad to say that this tirade fell flat, as no discussion followed, and the chairman changed the subject. Our hospital superintendents know perfectly well that nurses in America cannot possibly be represented as a needy and ill-paid class, and that it is absurd to sentimentalise over them. Pleasing would it be could I imagine myself so influential as Sir Henry appears to think! Alas, I know that the real reason his plans failed here was because too many nurses thought it was no concern of his whether they saved their money or not; nor did they see why, in case they did choose to insure their lives, all the world should know about it. I understand he feels much injured because he claims to have done so much to help nurses and gets so little gratitude.

I shall write you soon of the extensions in the work of the Nurses' Settlement, which is growing at a rate truly amazing. L. L. Dock.

## A Certified Midwives' League.

Dr. Annie McCall took the chair on Tuesday at the inaugural meeting of the "Certified Midwives' Total Abstinence League," which was held in the Chapter House of St. Paul's Cathedral. Miss Alice Gregory, the Dean's daughter, was one of the speakers, looking very fresh and bright in her cotton uniform. She was listened to with much sympathy and attention, speaking as she did from a practical knowledge of the difficulties of a midwife's life. Dr. Mary Roche, who was the third speaker, emphasised the national importance of the work of midwives, their influence on the lives, health and morals of the future generation, and spoke of the heroism which finds expression, not only in times of terrible disaster by fire and water, but in the self-sacrifice which lives through "every day's most quiet need," building up character and strength which are the making of a nation.

The League had its beginning in a small gathering of some 17 midwives at Golder's Hill last July, when the subject under discussion for the moment being the physical deterioration due to drink, someone asked, "Why should not midwives band themselves together to fight this fearful curse?" The idea took root, and the League now numbers over 100 members. Its principal objects are: (1) To raise the name of midwife. (2) To abolish the custom of alcohol for patient and midwife. (3) To unite midwives in total abstinence work. (4) To improve the motherhood and save the babe life of our nation. (5) To combat the physical deterioration caused by alcohol. (6) To save others.

Branches are being formed, each with its secretary, in the various districts of London, but it is hoped that the movement will spread, and gain adherents throughout the country.

Previous to the meeting a visit was paid to the Crypt of St. Paul's, where the personal escort of Miss Gregory was much appreciated, and the proceedings closed with tea, which was served in the hall of the Chapter House, by kind permission of the Dean. N.E.G.

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