

just conditions—for a standard of professional education, a decent economic return, and legal status. As part of the State and necessary to its efficiency, the trained nurses of the United Kingdom claim from the State, and the Government which is responsible for its stability, provision by Act of Parliament for efficient equipment for the performance of their professional duties.

We know it is a question requiring very careful consideration; it is the duty, therefore, of those who make our laws to obtain special knowledge concerning our condition. This in all these years they have not troubled to do.

How otherwise could the Prime Minister have honestly said he had "no special knowledge" of the Nursing Question, which we have agitated most constitutionally for a quarter of a century?

Then we come to the advice given to the Deputation.

It amounts to this.

A few autocratic managers of voluntary charities, and the medical and nursing officers under their control, a mere fraction of interested people, who have absolute power over the workers they employ, oppose, as the majority of industrial magnates have ever opposed, the just demands for better conditions, some measure of self-government and State protection of the organized workers.

The Premier says in effect to a very dependant class—the trained nurses of the United Kingdom—annihilate the interested opposition of these wealthy and socially influential laymen, emasculate your conscientious demands until they approve of them—then, and not until then, will any Liberal Government give facilities for legislation; "if this were attained, you would have no more ardent sympathisers than the Government."

Are we as practical politicians to take such advice seriously?

Were the little sooty martyrs who climbed chimneys in the last century seriously advised to go to Master Sweep for redress? Had they been, is it presumable that brushes would have been substituted for boys—even unto this day? We doubt it. How about all our beneficent factory and industrial legislation and inspection in recent times? Were the men's Trades Unions referred to their employers and exploiters for redress? Those of us who have studied the history of such legislation are well aware that working men, with the clinching argument of the vote in hand, insisted that Parliament alone could and should deal with their demands. This question of Nurses' Registration has, after a quarter of a century,

been narrowed down to this fundamental demand, that as a class nurses, and the educational and economic standards of their work, shall not be left to the mercy of those who employ them. That it is the first duty of a sane Government to keep the balance of power between the worker and those who use their labour for profit, and moreover that it is the first duty of a human being to claim the possession of his own body and soul in so far as in him lies.

It is the first and last duty of government to maintain equity and justice in the body politic, and it is upon this fundamental principle that the demand for Nurses' Registration is based, and which we hope to impress upon His Majesty's Government, as it acquires "special knowledge of the subject."

THE AFTERMATH.

To judge from the enormous pile of newspaper cuttings to hand, the result of the Deputation was very satisfactory in so far as it broke down the boycott of the partisan anti-registration organs, and presented an opportunity for unprejudiced papers to place the truth before the public. Of course, Mr. Sydney Holland constituted himself the spokesman of the reactionary little clique he commands. He has had a happy time. Letters and pamphlets have been showered around, presumably at the expense of the charitable, whose subscriptions to hospitals the Central Hospital Council for London has taken power to use for the purpose. Incidentally, Mr. Holland in his communications to the press, has once more shown up the London Hospital Nursing Department in all its crude commercialism—a very canker at the heart of conscientious nursing aspiration. Once again Mr. Holland claims that his superficial short-term training produces the best results, because London Hospital nurses monopolise the seats of the mighty. We all know better than that by now, and have only to turn to Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service to realise that with Mr. Holland and other London Hospital influence on the Nursing Board, it is no difficult matter to foist into the three senior and most lucrative posts ladies holding the two years' certificate of training from the London, to the exclusion of highly qualified women from more thorough schools!

The Nursing Profession needs State Registration for many reasons, but it needs it primarily, at the present epoch, to excise the canker which poisons its life's stream; government through social influence, and promotion by patronage instead of for merit.

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