

writes to A men asking them to employ only A nurses. In the same way, B hospital circularises B men, asking them only to employ B nurses, and so on through the alphabet. This is the first factor I spoke of.

Then there is the question of partially trained labour. We have to fear that the market may be flooded with what is commonly known as the V.A.D. I became a member of the College of Nursing some years ago after reading a circular they sent out, in which they pointed out this particular danger. They stated that unless the nursing profession organised themselves they might find that after the war this partially trained labour would be doing their work, and taking their fees. But what do we find now? The chairman of the College of Nursing, is also chairman of the British Red Cross Society; thus the affairs of the trained and untrained woman are impartially decided by the same man.

No man can serve two masters—either he will cling to the one and despise the other, or, what is not at all unlikely, he will cling to neither and despise both. In support of what I say, may I read to you a cutting from the *Evening Standard*, of Thursday, the 23rd inst.?

Miss MacCallum then read a paragraph relating to a meeting held, by permission of the King, at St. James's Palace on October 22nd, at which Sir Arthur Stanley presided, and said that "during the war the V.A.D. worked under the War Office but now that its work in that connection came to an end, the Ministries of Health and Pensions had sprung into existence, and he felt that there was a great field of work for voluntary aid in connection with these new departments in peace time."

Dr. Addison said "the Ministry of Health welcomed the assistance of the V.A.D.; the Ministry would be glad to confer with the organization and to ask its assistance from time to time in promoting the health of the people."

A proposal to submit a scheme of V.A.D. re-organization to the Army Council and the subject of the activities of the Red Cross and Order of St. John in peace-time together with other items on the agenda, were discussed privately.

I think, said Miss MacCallum, there is no doubt as to which side our impartial chairman clings to for the moment.

What, asked the chairman, did they mean exactly by voluntary aid by the V.A.D. or, as some called them, the P.A.D.

(Miss Ferrier, College of Nursing, Ltd., here interposed that the V.A.D. differentiated between the trained and untrained. They were paid in order to get a hold over them.)

I commend this, said the chairman, to ladies working in Public Health. The Ministry of Health is pleased to confer with the V.A.D.s on public health matters because they have an organization at their back. (Cries of "Shame," "Disgraceful.")

Under these circumstances we look round to see what others have done in the same case, and we find that as soon as they have banded them-

selves together and formed a union, their troubles begin to decrease. I have tried to put before you therefore the need for united action on the part of the nurses.

I am afraid the word "union" is synonymous in many of our minds with the word "strike" and perhaps some of you will be afraid that upon the payment of the first sixpence a strike will immediately be called. But in the first place, just think how many years must elapse before we could be in a pecuniary position to strike; for it requires a large balance at the bank. Secondly, consider who is it in a strike, as in a war, suffers first, last, and always—the women and children. Therefore, I say, women will not think once, but a hundred times before they sanction a general strike. Of course anybody can call a partial strike, as did the doctors at Dundalk some little while ago, and as some infirmity nurses have done. But a general strike is a different matter.

All the same, the mere fact of having the power to strike will be a wonderful weapon in our hands.

If, like the wise virgins, we fill our vessels with oil, it does not necessarily follow that we must use that oil. If we do, however, there are two ways of making it effective; in the first place you pour oil on a fire and see the flames mount up, in the second you pour oil on the troubled waters and see the waves calm down. I cannot but think, that if we nurses had had a union, and been able to speak to the men who brought about the last strike, we might have been instrumental in bringing about a reconciliation before so much valuable time and money had been lost. There must have been many men in these unions who would have been personally known to us, and some of them at least will not forget the Sisters who tried to help them when they needed help. So you see, instead of fomenting strikes, we may be in a position to prevent them.

When one comes to think of it, the ideals of these unions are very fine; I believe they are the foundation on which the Universal Brotherhood of Man will be built. Take a group of individuals like ourselves.

We band together and form a union, the strong to protect the weak; many of us through force of character, or force of circumstances, are economically independent. It is our place to join up in order to stand by those who have never had the chance to stand up for themselves. How many nurses, owing to the fact that they have had to help some relation or, being widows, to educate their children, have just had to take what work they could get, at whatever rate of remuneration offered. In a union like ours we would say, "if you hurt one you hurt all, if you sweat one you sweat all, it must not be done."

Having formed our union, as a group of individuals, we automatically become a link in a vast chain of other unions. These unions say, in their turn, "This last-formed union may be weak, but it is a link in our chain; if you hurt it you have us all to deal with." Surely, there-

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