

to stave off State Registration for the nurses until the half nurses could get seated in the saddle—could be organised for the more expensive branches of nursing work.

#### DANGER No. 5.

Another very serious menace to the nurses is that so many of their papers are controlled and financed by their employers. There are plenty of educated women in the profession capable of managing their own press as the doctors do theirs; and apart from other things I think I may safely prophesy there will never be unity in the profession until it manages and supports its own press.

I could go on enumerating many more dangers. Never has there been a time of greater crisis for the nurses. Thousand of them are out of employment, and a very dark future lies before them unless they wake up and face the position. You have been exploited in the past, the only thing to do is to combine and to prove that you are no longer exploitable.

#### DON'T BE A CHARACTERLESS CLOG ON THE WHEEL.

Whatever you do, don't be passive resisters. If you feel that in this movement you have the right means, and a strong means to protect you, face prejudice bravely, and go on with it. If you feel that other Societies which have been fighting for you for so long meet more with your views, support them—don't be a characterless clog on the wheel. On all hands the amateur is ousting you, on all hands your future is faced with dangers, and things look very black for the nurses.

Miss Macdonald then told an ancient Indian legend showing how a time of difficulty and wrong, misery and suffering often means a great step forward in resolution, and so results may be achieved in a very short time which otherwise can only be attained by slow years of labour. She advised her hearers to deal with the present situation with strong courage, not to drift on to the city of destruction. She concluded: It is useless to bleat about unity in the nursing profession while, at a time such as this, you have one press fighting for the interest of the employer, and another for the protection of the nurses and their patients. It is absolutely wrong that the nursing press should be a matter of commercial enterprise for men who know nothing about nursing. If it is so, it is bound to serve the interest only of the people who can pay, and, therefore, you see columns and columns of advertisements from employers in this press. Another thing is that those long lists of advertisements are the bait, the noose, that make the nurses read these papers. Sometimes the feeling rises in me that they represent the price of blood, and I feel I can hardly touch the thing.

I will confess the full measure of my own iniquity, though, here and now. I have written articles for this press myself. When the scales fell from my eyes I paid conscience money to the Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund. Let the gentle-

men who gain kudos and social prestige by sitting on the Boards of Hospitals play the game to those nurses, wielding their professional press solely for the liberty and progress of their profession, and for the protection of the individual nurse. Give to those nurses an equal chance with the men who run their press for commercial gain. These remarks are inspired by no one; they are simply the result of my own observation and my deductions therefrom.

#### A WORD TO R.B.N.A. MEMBERS.

Now a word to R.B.N.A. members. When Sir Henry Burdett writes me up in the *Hospital* and the *Mirror* next week, don't please fill my letter-box again with indignant letters of sympathy, as you did the last time. I have no respect for anyone who uses nurses in any way as a commercial asset, and so I can't care for anything he says. Very likely I shan't have time to read it.

#### RIPE TO HARVEST.

At the conclusion of Miss Macdonald's speech, which was most warmly received except by a little hostile College clique at the back of the room, a member of the R.B.N.A. offered her a sheaf of beautiful autumn leaves with the cryptic remark, "The leaves are ripe to harvest; see that these do not turn blood red."

#### MISS JENTIE PATERSON ON NURSING ECONOMICS.

Miss Jentie Paterson, in commencing a vigorous and racy speech, said that though she was known to many present as a member of the N.U.T.N.—and that society had been seriously considering the question of a trade-union for nurses—she was on the platform simply as a working—should she say a fighting—nurse, expressing her own considered views. She continued:—

#### NOT PARASITES ON SOCIETY.

I joined a Nurses' Society realising that unity meant strength; but, I am convinced, that hard as we have worked, and despite the huge amount of work the societies have done for the Profession, we nurses are faced with a terrible "combine" so forcible and far-reaching that, unless we form a union recognised by law, we cannot make any headway against our employers on the one hand, and, on the other, the army of semi-trained workers, which, if given a free field, will ruin the Private, District, and Public Health Nurses and endanger the public itself. We should let it be clearly understood that we will not lower our professional dignity, and become parasites on society. We demand our just fees—not charity doles—and an open market.

#### EXPLOITATION OF NURSES.

As nurses we are exploited from the moment we enter hospitals, our cheap labour is more easily obtained than that of ward maids and charwomen, and it is beyond question that probationers are regarded more as a means of running a charitable institution cheaply (what a travesty of the name), than as students studying for a profession. (Hisses and a storm of cheers.) Long ago, as a probationer, I realized that the

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