

may flood the country with the semi-trained, and the villagers are supposed to be grateful for the services of a cheap nurse whom the lady of the Manor would not employ if she or her family were ill.

(Miss Paterson described a glaring case of this kind in connection with a large Cottage Hospital which boasts a Duchess on its Committee. (A voice: We don't want duchesses.)

THE ADVISORY COUNCIL OF MEDICAL AND ALLIED SERVICES.

She next drew attention to the composition of the Council on Medical and Allied Services appointed to advise the Minister of Health. I have always, she said, regarded medicine and nursing as twin professions. Yet the Council, appointed by the Minister, consists of 16 doctors, 2 chemists, 1 surgeon dentist, and 1 hospital administrator. It is obvious we are only machinery which will be set in action when the Minister of Health has decided on our work. Hands we may have, heads we are given no credit for.

Are you going to let the new Ministry career down the same old road, with the nursing profession at its heels, instead of alongside, or in front? As for the Hospital Administrator who, I was told, was to represent nurses—well, I refuse to be administered as long as I have a mind of my own. I shall choose my own work and fees, and now that I have a vote, I intend to have a word in the conduct of public affairs. Who can speak for nurses but a nurse? (Applause.)

THREE CLASSES OF SLAVES.

Miss Paterson defined three classes of slave:—

1. The slave, whose master cares for his bodily welfare to ensure a return in work accomplished.
2. The Serf Slave.
3. The Wage Slave, who is underpaid, overworked, and cast aside when of no further use—the class which concerns nurses most closely.

BURNT CHILDREN.

Nurses have, she said, been exploited long enough. The last big camouflaged effort of the Employers in the College of Nursing Company, Ltd., will be riddled at last, as some of the keenest supporters of the movement for a professional Nurses' Trade Union are its burnt children.

The hospitals have boycotted the independent nurses, and forbidden them, in at least thirty cases I know of, to speak within their portals on matters vital to the profession. To redress the wrongs which she had enumerated Miss Paterson urged that a powerful Trade Union is necessary to which nurses can bring their grievances—economic and otherwise—without being marked women, for the beauty of a Trade Union is that it is anonymous, the Secretary acts at the behest of the Council.

She reminded those who feared that trade unionism is derogatory to the profession, or does away with the idea of a vocation, that the doctors have their Medical Defence Union one of its objects being "to promote honourable practice, and suppress and prosecute unauthorised practitioners."

A PEG FOR THE NURSE'S HALO.

Concluding, she said: As for those who fear for their vocation, well, Scripture says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire," and, personally, I would scorn to offer to any sick or poor person some of the service I have seen "handed out" by the voluntary worker. If you love your work and your profession, just payment will not lower your standard, but widen the scope of your activities. As nurses we are charged with lack of loyalty to each other, and want of co-operation. Fear and economic stress have been largely responsible for this, not lack of Christian feeling; but if things go on much longer as at present, I should advise the nurse who claims that nursing is a vocation, and not a profession, to bespeak a bed in the nearest Union, and a peg whereon to hang her "halo," for that is all she will have left. (Prolonged applause.)

BETTER TO BE FEARED THAN DESPISED.

MR. ALFRED LUGG, Secretary of the Actors' Association, said obviously no meeting would have been called if it were not a fact that nurses are suffering under grave injustice, long hours, inadequate remuneration, and, probably most serious of all, competition and underselling by quacks. Matters can only be righted by organised effort, which, by constant and accumulative pressure, will finally right all the wrongs that the nurse is heir to. My Council, he said, unanimously decided that the Actors' Association should give every possible assistance to the nurses in their endeavours to form a National Union for Nurses. (Great applause.)

After explaining what the actors had accomplished through their Union, he continued:—When I first approached the Council and asked them to consider very carefully the advantages that would accrue from Registration under the Trade Union Act, everybody but one member was hot against the proposal, but as a Trade Union we have already achieved a standard form of agreement which, if not perfect, at least removes most of the evils from which our people suffered. Our membership has grown from a few—a very few—hundreds to many thousands, and we are respected by all respectable employers and feared by the other kind. Ladies, it is better to be feared than to be despised, and to be respected is better than either.

So few people appear to know exactly what a Trade Union is. With most of us it is a vague connotation usually implying strikes, and latterly revolution and Bolshevism; whereas Trade Unions are perfectly legal and constitutional bodies regulated by Act of Parliament. A Trade Union, as we understand it, is a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining and improving the conditions of employment, and such associations are the obvious reply of wage-earners to the association of shareholders in a Company to maintain and improve their power of making money. If the latter association is right and legal, clearly the former is also, yet it was not until after 50 years of bitter struggle

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