

not a single nurse (whatever her opinion) is excluded from this meeting, and that no opinion, whatever it may be—for or against this movement will be refused a hearing."

The meeting was, said Dr. McGregor Robertson, for two purposes—to get information on the Professional Union, and to have a free discussion. He hoped all would ventilate their opinions with the greatest possible freedom.

MISS PATERSON'S SPEECH.

Miss Jentie B. N. Paterson said that the Union expected to be registered any day now, and put before the meeting the reasons why, in her opinion, all nurses should join it, stating its objects, and the qualifications for membership. Owing to the generous help and advice given by other Trade Unions, the nurses had been able to organise their Union quickly. They were no longer a lonely unit, but a link "in a long chain of others which said 'This last link may be weak, but if you hurt it you will have us all to deal with.'"

Eight months ago she had been opposed to a Trade Union for Nurses—she rather felt it was lowering the profession—but since then it had been forced home that if we were to have *any* profession to boast of we must have a strong Trade Union of all trained nurses co-operating, the weak with the strong, to raise and safeguard the profession.

Miss Paterson maintained the right of probationers and nurses in hospitals to hear both sides of questions affecting their professional interests, and said that hospitals were public institutions, maintained by public money, and should not be "cages." (Loud applause.) In many instances when the Nurses' Registration Bill, now an Act, was before Parliament, delegates from the Nurses Societies were refused permission to speak to the nurses in their off-duty time in hospital. She, herself, had been refused such permission by the Matrons of the Royal and the Western Infirmarys in Glasgow, but to the everlasting credit of the Victoria Infirmary she received the reply that, "if the nurses cared to hear her in their own sitting-room, in their off duty time, the Superintendent and Matron would be pleased for her to go." She went, and met with every courtesy and facility. (Applause.) Several such Matrons had stood for the rights of the rank and file, but the nursing profession was in a vicious circle, the probationer was under the heel of the Matron, and the Matron, who was at loggerheads with her committee, did not long retain her post; so these forewomen, or managers—to use Trade Union terms—were to be pitied. It was hoped to protect them from their employers by welcoming them to the Union, though, of course, they were debarred from sitting on the Council. Their advice, however, would be valuable when freed from economic pressure.

Miss Paterson remarked she thought that subconsciously she had belonged to an immaterialised Trade Union since her probationer

days, when she realised how hopelessly most of her colleagues were exploited, and the danger which threatened many of her co-workers if they offended "the powers that be."

The employers of nurses had formed the College of Nursing Company, Limited, and it was only a fitting answer that the nurses should form a Trade Union. The one was the outcome of the other and a Trade Union no less professional than a Limited Liability Company; in fact, it was more so, as there were several professional Trade Unions, but, so far, no other profession had had a Limited Liability Company foisted upon it. Nurses were faced with a terrible combine, so forcible and far-reaching that unless they joined a Union recognised by law they could not make any headway against their employers on the one hand, and the army of semi-trained nurses of mushroom growth on the other; both, if given a free-hand, would ruin hospital, private, district, and public health nurses. At the present time many aspirants to nurses' posts, without their qualifications, were being subsidised by Red Cross money to pick up a scrap training to undertake work requiring the fully trained, experienced nurse. There were fully trained nurses who nursed through the war at present studying the extra branches of their profession, but because they were not disabled and, therefore, did not come under the Ministry of Pensions, or because they had not the magic initials V.A.D., paid for their extra training out of their meagre savings. The public must be awakened to the danger to the national health of employing semi-trained nurses, and to the fact that nurses do not desire Charity Doles, in the shape of the Nation's Fund for Nurses. Miss Paterson commented on the *Daily Telegraph* Shilling Fund for Nurses—begging money from sailors and soldiers who had in many instances scarcely enough to support themselves, and to the additional plea put forward by Mrs. Martin Harvey in that paper for the nurses that they tended these men when they were lousy. "What must they think of us," said Miss Paterson. She mentioned also the leaflets issued by the nurses in protest. "Large Charity Doles mean small Salaries," "C stands for Charity and for Chains." (Loud applause.)

After giving instances of inadequate salaries, and undercutting, and the competition of London hospitals, running private nursing staffs, with nurses in private practice, Miss Paterson said that though nurses in Scotland had not this great economic danger to face, there was every reason why they should help their less fortunate sisters to fight it. Trade unionism at its purest meant co-operation of fellow workers for the good of the whole. In the past, nurses had lacked co-operation and loyalty to each other, for which fear and economic stress had been largely responsible. There need be no more fear. The Union also offered a means of co-operation which would eventually remove the economic stress.

One of the most insidious evils which threatened the nursing profession, was social influence and

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