

THE ORGANISATION OF GENERAL NURSES BY UNPROFESSIONAL TRADE UNIONISTS.

In the Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of the Mental Hospitals and Institutional Workers' Union, held at Weston-super-Mare, the Organisation of Nurses was referred to by Mr. C. Bartlett (the President), in his address, in which he said:—

"I regret very much that greater success has not attended the initial efforts of our Union to assist the general nurses of this country to establish for themselves an organisation on trade-union lines, whereby their difficulties, their grievances, and their injustices can be ventilated.

Such a position as exists can be attributed to none but themselves, for it is apparent that such nurses are divided amongst themselves, and in the majority of cases possess a lurking fear as to the wisdom of being associated with the formation of a trade union, and are unable to reconcile the contemplation of such a project with the dignity of the profession to which they have dedicated themselves.

Nothing is more totally erroneous and contrary to the policy of our Union than the possession of this view.

It is the one desire of our Union to raise still higher the status of nursing in all its spheres, to secure economic freedom for all engaged in the profession, to secure protection from the exploitation now so common, and in every way to work for the greater efficiency of the profession and the general improvement of conditions for all engaged therein. I desire, therefore, to appeal to nurses generally to come off the pedestal from which they are viewing this problem, and endeavour to realise that so long as this marked indifference and erroneous outlook characterises their attitude to a trade union administered by themselves, so long will the exploitation continue, so long will the bad conditions remain, and be handed down as a heritage to those who follow them in the profession.

I confidently appeal to the delegates here assembled not to let this question remain where it is, but to go from this Conference to their respective areas pledged to use every opportunity of assisting the National Executive Council and its officers in their efforts to secure for the nursing profession of this country a strong and effective trade union."

We have never found that people once up care to "come off their pedestals," and Nursing having attained to the dignity of a profession, nothing could be more injurious than to materialise it with a trade.

Nurses in Great Britain have several powerful organisations, through which, if they have the energy, they are quite able to make their wishes known and ventilate their grievances—and, quite frankly, after the Bills concerning their professional affairs, introduced respectively into the House of Commons by Mr. Fenner Brockway and Mr. J. Batey, concerning the crude and disastrous provisions of which the nursing profession was never consulted, and which aroused its strongest opposition when made public, general nurses have no faith in trade unions policy; moreover, those of us who attended meetings called in support of trade unions control, have not yet forgotten the intolerable and insulting attitude of the "union" officials towards those of us who had the temerity to invite information concerning our own affairs. We feel sure the delegates of the Mental Hospitals and Institutional Workers' Union would be wise to leave general trained nurses to manage their own affairs professionally, as they evidently prefer to do.

Our advice to Registered Nurses is to stick tight to their pedestals.

FEMALE NURSING IN MALE WARDS.

Very strong protests were made at the Conference against female nursing in male wards. Mr. Curtis remarked that it was not only the rapid spread of female nursing to which they objected, but the danger of female officials, Matrons, Sisters-in-Charge, etc., overrunning the male

wards completely. The male staff—many of them with long service—were in danger of being completely dominated by the female staff, matrons taking the place of inspectors, and thus cutting out the opportunity of promotion for male nurses who would never be able to rise above the rank of staff or charge nurse.

Mr. Miles considered this system degrading and demoralising, and it was a disgrace and a slur on civilization that such a thing should be allowed.

Miss Ackland, speaking from a female nurse's point of view, objected to the system and said there were already enough women doing men's work, and it was obvious that they were not placed in male wards for the comfort of the patients, but because they worked for less money than men were willing to accept.

It will, in our opinion, be a terrible setback in the nursing of mentally sick persons if women are prevented from caring for male patients. No argument will convince the public that where nursing is concerned women are not to be preferred to men. In certain sections and wards in mental hospitals male nurses are necessary, but in supervision, both of the standard of nursing and of ward administration, woman is in her right place as an expert domestic supervisor—and we hope to see her motherly qualities recognised more and more in hospitals for the mentally afflicted.

THE ANTI-NOISE LEAGUE.

We are glad to note that Lord Horder, Dr. James Purves-Stewart, Lord Riddell, Lord Buckmaster and others are inviting all who suffer from the infliction of unnecessary noise to communicate with the Honorary Secretary, Anti-Noise League, at 9, Weymouth Street, W.1.

These wise men aim at enlisting, with the least possible delay, such a force of public opinion as will induce the authorities to regulate by law certain forms of noise which are manifestly injurious to the comfort, health, and repose of the community at large, as well as being damaging to efficiency and to the amenities of numerous urban localities. The motor rampant has become a tyrannical curse in our midst, and we willingly subscribe our little half-crown towards the mitigation of the noise evil.

NOISE PREVENTION IN BRUSSELS.

Further measures have now been decided upon to prevent noise in the streets of Brussels.

The use of loudspeakers in public thoroughfares is to be allowed only by special permission of the Burgomaster. Loudspeakers on motor-vehicles as a means of advertising commercial undertakings have led to obstruction in the streets and are now forbidden. Loudspeakers, gramophones, and wireless sets in houses will be prohibited if they are audible outside the building or if they cause complaints from neighbours. An order made by the Burgomaster forbids the use of all these articles between 11 p.m. and 9 a.m.

THE FOUNDER OF MODERN ANATOMY.

"Leonardo da Vinci," we are told, "was the true source of modern anatomy, for he inspired the work of Andreas Vesalius (1515-1564), who taught that Galen described the anatomy of animals and not of man. Vesalius published his magnificent 'Humani Corporis Fabrica' in 1543, and caused the woodcuts illustrating it to be drawn directly from the dissections. He thus became the founder of modern anatomy and indirectly of surgery."

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