

any rate, is distinctly untrue. We have already received the names of forty-three members who were present at the Meeting and voted against the Bye-Laws; and we would ask any of our readers, who have not already done so, and who took a similar action on this occasion, to be good enough to send us their names at once.

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### Annotation.

#### DEGRADATION.

THE season of Christmas is once more with us, and it is our habit to express our good wishes to the Nursing profession at this season. This year, however, we can but state our conviction that even the happiness of this Holy Season must, to all self-respecting nurses, be overshadowed by the cloud which has settled down upon the profession to which they belong. We cannot even expect that those members of the nursing profession who betrayed their trust on Friday, December 17th, will spend a "happy" Christmas.

The 10th *Conversazione*, which was held on December 15th, at the Institute of Painters in Water Colours, only illustrated the degradation which has fallen upon the Association. With the exception of Miss Thorold, the matron of the Middlesex Hospital, who received the guests, not one matron of any leading London Hospital was present; and with the exception of Dr. Pavy, and Dr. Bedford Fenwick, no Vice-President, who is not an Hon. Officer, was in the room. This, in itself, in view of the fact that many eminent members, both of the medical and nursing professions, in former years, took part in these proceedings, is especially significant. It is further typical of the depths of degradation to which the Association has fallen, that the honoured guest of the Hon. Officers was Sir Henry Burdett, who for many years systematically took every opportunity of attacking the Association in the *Hospital* newspaper, as well as of publishing false statements concerning individual members, and who admitted to his journal a letter describing the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association as the "scum of the Nursing Profession" on the ground that this was a "perfectly fair criticism," and who has, moreover, just issued a directory deliberately depreciating the status of trained nurses, by placing the names of those who have received a three years' training side by side with those who have never been inside a hospital at all.

The Special General Meeting to consider the proposed new Bye-Laws took place on December 17th, and we do not think that the members present on that occasion realize the gravity of what they have done. But, we do say that, had there been any sense of justice, right, or honour in the majority of those present, the degrading exhibition which then took place would have been impossible. The privileges won by the work of a devoted band of women, and conferred upon the nursing profession by a Royal Charter, were deliberately repudiated by a meeting mostly composed of women, who certainly needed a strong sense of duty to vote against the influences brought to bear upon them from the platform, and the coercion of medical men present, upon whose patronage many of them are dependent for their livelihood. Unhappily, the consciences of the majority were not sufficiently strong to withstand these influences, and they consequently voted as they were required; but, the fact that these nurses comprehended so little, and esteemed so lightly, the privileges conferred upon them in the first Royal Charter granted to women, must be a deep grief not only to all nurses imbued with a sense of professional responsibility, but also to all women who desire to see their sex self-respecting, and self-dependent. The nursing profession has placed a halter round its own neck, and, unhappily, not only those members who have proved themselves so unworthy of the liberties which have been won for them, but succeeding generations of British Nurses, may have to suffer for the betrayal of trust which took place at the meeting on Friday, December 17th, when a hooting, hissing, and ribald mob, voted away the liberties of British Nurses. For these reasons it would be a mere mockery on our part this year to wish the Nursing profession a "Merry Christmas."

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### Notice.

THE Special Number of the NURSING RECORD will be issued on January 1st, 1898, and will contain many matters of special interest to Nurses. It will also, as has been our custom for some time past with our Special Numbers, be larger than our usual issue. As the Special Number has on former occasions been speedily exhausted, we take this opportunity of advising those who desire to obtain it to order it early from their booksellers or from the offices of the Journal.

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