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Editorial.

A SECRET SOCIETY.

At the Special General Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association on January 17th, convened to consider its proposed Registration Bill, the fact that it contained no mention of the addresses of nurses, in connection with the publication of the Register, might have escaped notice, had not members been aware, that the addresses have been deliberately deleted from their own Roll. In the case of the Medical Register (which includes Dentists) in that of the Midwives' Roll, and in connection with the registration of chemists, the addresses of those registered are included as a matter of course. But nurses have learned that where the Royal British Nurses' Association is concerned nothing can be taken for granted, what they want they must put down in black and white, and Miss Halkett was therefore acting wisely to insist upon the insertion of the words "and addresses" in connection with the names on the Register.

We consider that the attitude of the Hon. Officers of the R.B.N.A., in assuming that nurses have no addresses, and must be classed with tramps, as having no settled abode, is most insulting. We can only state that whatever may be the case in connection with the members of the R.B.N.A., the thousands of nurses with whom we are in contact can all provide a permanent address.

It was during the Fardonian reign that a Roll of Members was substituted for the Register of the R.B.N.A., notwithstanding the fact that one of the grounds upon which the nurses won their Royal Charter (for which, be it noted, they paid) was: "That in furtherance of the said objects (the improvement of the profession of nurses and of the promotion of their efficiency and usefulness, &c.) a List of Nurses has been compiled

and published setting forth the names and addresses of Nurses with the names of the Hospitals and institutions at which they have been trained . . . thus enabling the public to form a more accurate judgment of the professional education and experience of the Nurses so registered." It was on the understanding that such a List of Registered Nurses would be maintained that hundreds of Nurses paid their guineas to the Association.

It is further noteworthy that a principal reason on which the late Queen granted the Royal Charter was:—"Whereas it appears to us that a permanent Association. . . for the purpose of disseminating to the public at large information respecting such persons is likely to prove of much public benefit, and that such purposes would be better ensured by the incorporation of such an Association."

The Hon. Officers of the Association on whom this trust was imposed saw no reason why, the Charter having been granted, they should not deliberately remove the addresses of the nurses registered, and deprive the public at large of this important information.

Their design was perfectly apparent—namely, to convert the Corporation into a secret society and to prevent the members from communicating with one another except through the office, a fact brought painfully home to many members during the last fortnight.

The subjugation of the nurse members has always been the aim of the Fardon-Thorne policy, and nurses who join this Association must remember that they place themselves and their reputations in the hands of the Hon. Officers, who have all the threads of the organisation of the Association in their hands, while the members are disconnected units, no co-operation or concerted action on their part being possible.

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