

for some hours previously, their head has been lower than during the waking hours of the day; and it is always the most dependent parts of the body which suffer most from dropsy. It is important to remember that those who have this condition or, as it is technically called, *œdema*, are very liable to have bed sores when they are kept for any length of time in a recumbent posture; the skin becoming softened by the effused fluid underneath it, and thus more readily becoming ulcerated in consequence of the pressure. In these cases, therefore, extreme care and attention are necessary, and the use of air-pillows or water-beds are generally advised. If the *œdema* becomes very great, the skin of the leg for example becomes white and shiny, and seems tightly stretched instead of falling into folds as in the natural state. Sometimes, this distension becomes so great that it appears almost as if the skin would break; and, in such instances, the disturbance in the circulation through the skin is often so considerable as to make the surface become dark red or even purple. In these patients, it is often advisable, in order to prevent more serious consequences, such as sloughing of the skin or local gangrene, to perform the operation which is known as "tapping"; and thus by removing the excessive fluid to relieve the pressure upon the skin. Formerly, this operation had to be frequently repeated because the blood-vessels exuded water as fast as it was removed. Now, by means of little silver tubes, called after the physician who advised their employment—Dr. Southey—a continual discharge of fluid can be obtained; the tubes being placed in the dropsical limb, and having attached to them a length of fine india rubber tubing through which the water can run away into a proper receptacle. By this means, the dropsy can be quickly relieved whilst the patient is gaining strength, and other measures are being taken to relieve or to cure the disease which is the cause of the condition. A most important point to remember is that patients suffering from kidney disease, who have been tapped for dropsy, are exceedingly liable to have an attack of Erysipelas around, and starting from, the punctures. Absolute cleanliness of the skin therefore is most essential, and the free use of carbolic oil around the limb is a great preventative of the new disease.

(To be continued.)

## Royal British Nurses' Association.

(Incorporated by Royal Charter.)

### THE LATEST ATTEMPT TO STIFLE FREE SPEECH.

THAT matters have at last reached a climax in the concerns of the Royal British Nurses' Association is apparent, and the disastrous policy of official autocracy, inaugurated by Dr. Bezly Thorne during his term of office, has at last reached a limit beyond which it cannot be permitted to go.

The provisions of the Charter and the Bye-Laws, possess the force of law, and, if they are not maintained by the officials in their entirety, it is the duty of the members to invoke the law in defence of their rights and privileges. From the following correspondence, there is no doubt that this course should be adopted by all members who are determined to maintain the legal rights and privileges granted to them by Her Majesty in Council.

*To the Editor of the Nursing Record.*

MADAM,—You mentioned in your issue of last week, that at the Annual Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, held in the Great Hall of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, the chairman of the meeting (Sir James Crichton Browne) refused to allow the resolution to be proposed, of which I had given due notice in accordance with the Bye-Law relating to resolutions at Annual and Special General Meetings, on the ground that the letter enclosing the resolution was unregistered. You also drew attention to the fact that I stated at the meeting that the letter was registered, and that I produced the official receipt for its registration. I have since received a letter from the Post Office authorities confirming my statement. I enclose it to you, together with all the correspondence which has passed between the Secretary of the Association and myself with reference to the resolution. I hope you will be able to find space for this in the columns of the NURSING RECORD, as I can but feel that this is not an isolated case, but only another instance of the unjust and high-handed treatment to which the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association are subjected, if they venture to express views which are not in sympathy with those of the officials of the Association. As the Executive Committee have

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From the sweet-scented Island of Ceylon.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)