

The Belated Roll of the R.B.N.A.

The Roll of Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association for 1902, due in July, has just been issued, veritably at the eleventh hour—or rather month. Had it not appeared at all it would have been better for the reputation of the managers of the Association. It is, if possible, more cram full of erroneous entries than usual, and no attempt appears to have been made by the Registrar to do the work for which she is specially appointed, and for which she is highly paid. It is not too much to say that the present issue of the Roll is a disgrace to the Committee and officials of the R.B.N.A.

For instance, nurses who have been foolish enough to waste a guinea on so called "registration" by an Association which purports to consider Registration of Nurses "inexpedient in principle," and who paid their money in June, 1901, find their names printed for the first time in November, 1902, so that they have had to possess their souls in patience for at least eighteen months before receiving the very doubtful equivalent of their money.

From July, 1901, to July, 1902, 88 nurses have joined the Association—the majority apparently for work in kind on the private Nursing Associations run by the Corporation for the few at the expense of the many. Ten new members were trained at the Middlesex Hospital, and eleven at the Adelaide Hospital, Victoria. There are 2,438 nurses' names on the roll, and from the Treasurer's annual report we gather just about half of these have paid their subscriptions, and on the lists 249 are marked "uncommunicated"; a large number of these being Middlesex-trained nurses.

To quote a few of the gross and inexcusable entries. Miss Nott-Bower is still stated to be Matron of Guy's Hospital, a post she vacated in 1899, where her second successor is now installed. Miss Dora Finch, Matron of University College Hospital, is entered as resident at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, an institution she left in 1899 when appointed Matron of the New Hospital for Women.

Mrs. Okell is entered as Matron of the West Ham Infirmary; she left in 1898. Miss Parry is supposed to be still Matron of the Women's Hospital at Brighton, although she vacated that post three years ago. As for Miss Rosamond Bruce, Miss Ponsford, Miss Fox, Miss Ellen Marion Cross, Miss Rosamond Rolleston, and dozens of others, they have been wed from one to six years, and have thus changed their names and addresses. We find St. Thomas's nurses "certificated," which is incorrect, if an urgently-needed reform,

and we should be sorry to list the number of names of nurses still on the roll long since dead and gone to their rest—notably poor Emily Louisa Symonds, a member of the Chartered Nurses' Society, who was found dead in the brick-fields at Wormwood Scrubbs, a report of whose death appeared in every London paper. In this connection it is needless to say that not one sympathetic line alluding to her lonely and tragic death appeared in the *Nurses' Journal*, the official organ of the Association to which she belonged.

We can only suggest that the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING should be studied by the paid officials of the R.B.N.A., so that they may acquaint themselves with the needs and affairs of the profession which they exploit. Indeed, after glancing through this discreditable publication, the statement made in the preface that "The offices of the Association are open to Nurses wishing to obtain information and advice" appears truly colossal in its impertinence.

Legal Matters.

A NURSE'S GOOD NAME.

In the King's Bench Division last week, Mr. Justice Lawrance and a special jury had before them an action brought by Mrs. Margaret Ellen Ingle, a professional nurse, for alleged libel against Dr. Henry Vivian Bertram. The plaintiff was in attendance on an old lady suffering from senile decay, and on one occasion, when the patient became violently excited over some remarks made by one of her daughters, the nurse, putting her arm round her, drew her away. Later the defendant wrote to one of the patient's daughters saying that from what he happened to see of Mrs. Ingle's treatment of her she did not seem to be a proper person to have control of her. Upon the plaintiff's solicitor asking the defendant to withdraw his observations he replied that he happened to be a witness, with others, of the brutal way in which, for no reason, Mrs. Ingle treated her unfortunate patient. If she had still been in the service of the executors of the lady's late husband, instead of the Lunacy Commissioners, she would have been dismissed the same day. When the plaintiff entered the witness box she was immediately called down to assist at a conference, after which Mr. McCall, K.C., who appeared for the defence, informed the judge that he would not be troubled further with the case. His client felt he ought not to have made the statements complained of, and now felt that they were not justifiable. He therefore wished to withdraw them and express his regret. A juror was withdrawn and the matter then dropped.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)