

was first mooted, that it was to be the thing that its name implied, viz. : a Council of *Matrons*, who would meet amongst themselves formally and informally for the discussion of subjects in which they were interested, and who would form an assembly that would carry weight by its quality more than its quantity. Instead, an Association has been inaugurated that is to all intents and purposes, though not in name, a Nurses' Debating Society of unwieldy proportions. In the report of the proceedings given in your journal, no mention whatever is made of the fact that resolutions were passed (far too hurriedly as many think) by which Associates, viz. : those who are not Matrons, are entitled to be present at two-thirds of the meetings, thereby undoubtedly depriving them of their distinctive character. Another point that appeared to me extremely unsatisfactory was the paragraph stating that those are eligible for membership who "have been" Matrons. For how long? Was that clause left purposely elastic so that those who had only held Matronships for a few months or had been "locums" for a short period, could join the Matrons' Council as members? I fancy the indiscriminate admission of associates will be the death-blow to the Matrons' Council—certain elected honorary associates would have always been gladly received—but the Matrons' Council, as at present constituted, has set no limit to its borders. There is hardly a Matron, now-a-days, who does not naturally discuss certain matters with her officers—the Sisters or Charge Nurses—she does it to a greater or less degree according to her character and surroundings. It is, I hope, unusual to meet with discourtesy and distrust amongst those who work under the same roof and for the same object; but with all due respect to the Sisters and Charge Nurses, I frankly own that I find one obtains quite as much good advice from them as one could possibly desire within the four walls of one's own Hospital. Sometimes one has to grieve their hearts by not accepting it, but that is of course unusual. I do not think that the general discussion of Hospital affairs with the Sisters and Charge Nurses of other Hospitals would particularly benefit me or them. To do so with my fellow-Matrons would be a great pleasure, and should have excellent results; as Miss Stewart remarked in her eloquent, studiously temperate speech, "the cloistered life leads rather to narrowness, to severity and infallibility"; and I believe if the Council had been made a select and compact body it would have had very great—deservedly great—influence. A Matrons' Council would have found all Matrons practically unanimous. To conclude: No one present but must have been touched by the extreme devotion Miss Stewart displayed to the cause in hand, and who must not have admired her tact and courtesy, but those who think as I do, can but have deplored the mistakes which we believe will be fatal to the complete success of her scheme.

M. MOLLETT,
Matron.

Royal South Hants Infirmary.

[We publish, with pleasure, Miss Mollett's views concerning the suggested composition of the Matrons' Council, and shall be pleased also to make public the letters of others who desire to criticise it. As will be seen from Miss Isla Stewart's letter in the present issue, her wish in the matter is that the "proposed

Bye-Laws" discussed at the inaugural meeting shall, as is customary, be finally settled at the first meeting of Members; but so far as we are able to judge from the proposed privileges of Associates, it has never been contemplated that they should have the privileges of *Members*, and certainly it was neither suggested nor thought possible that private hospital matters should be discussed between senior and junior officers. We venture to think that Miss Mollett has gathered a wrong impression of the proposed constitution, and hope she will be present on November the 1st when reasons for and against the admission of associates can be freely expressed. The constitution, as proposed at the preliminary meeting, would act thus. The privileges of membership would be open to women who are or have been Matrons of Hospitals, or Superintendents of Nursing Institutions who are trained Nurses. Members would be eligible to hold the positions of Honorary Officers or Chairman and Vice-Chairmen—for seats on the Council, Executive and Advisory Committees, and to attend all public conferences and schools of method. Associates must be Nurses of upwards of three years' training holding the position of Sister, Night Superintendent or Charge Nurse. The privileges of associates would be to attend *public* conferences, at which they may read and debate papers, and to obtain instruction in the conduct of business in schools of method.—ED.]

A Book of the Week.

"JOANNA TRAILL—SPINSTER."*

MESSRS. HEINEMANN have started their series of pioneer volumes with a powerfully written and well conceived story. The history of "Joanna Trill" is bound up with that of the rescue of "Christine Dow," the placing in close juxtaposition the spinster maiden lady, who all her life has been under the rule of her more energetic sisters, and the girl who through poverty and neglect has fallen from that pedestal of virtue which the world considers a necessity, is a stroke of genius. From the very beginning, the book is interesting and full of excellent character sketches. Joanna's two "superior" sisters are admirably etched. Mrs. Crane's "obtrusive elegance" and selfish motives were most aggressive and—

"Mrs. Prothero was indeed not elegant . . . but if she were not as clever as Mrs. Crane, she recognised her limitations. And this in itself implies brains and some ability."

Joanna's quiet efforts to assert herself after she inherits her uncle's property are most amusingly described, but if it had not been for Mr. Boas, and the absorbing interest that arose in her life in consequence of her endeavours to rescue Christine, she probably never would have succeeded in emancipating herself from their thralldom, but Mr. Boas and his charity-missions, among the outcast and fallen, from the first dominate Joanna, and the influence of her sisters dwindles beneath it. She impulsively promises

* "Joanna Trill—Spinster." By Annie E. Holdsworth. Pioneer Series, 2s. 6d. net. Heinemann, 1894.

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