

Matrons in Council.



MADAM, — Having been present at the inaugural meeting at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in July, and having previously expressed my opinion in your columns as to the great need which exists for a Council of Hospital Matrons—judging from the experience of a Matron of a somewhat isolated country Hospital—I feel constrained again to express an opinion upon the subject of the admission of Associates as suggested by Miss Isla Stewart—Associates who shall be trained Nurses of upwards of three years' experience, occupying the very responsible and honourable positions of Sisters of Wards. It appears to me—and I believe numbers of my colleagues agree with me—that the one great question which we have to discuss in the near future, is the curriculum of education for the future training of Nurses, which will commend itself to the majority of superintendents of training schools—a curriculum which will at the same time meet the needs of our special Hospitals, and provide the community, rich and poor, with the most efficient Nurses, and which will justify a Registration Board in placing the Nurse who has completed such a curriculum, and passed definite examinations, upon an official Register. I have been a Matron for some years, and as the Matron of a Hospital of 40 beds, in the country, am called upon to perform duties which do not fall to the lot of superintendents of large, efficiently organized Hospitals. What is lost in prestige is gained in practical experience, and a day never passes in which I do not remember with gratitude the splendid practical teaching I received at my Alma Mater, under the experienced Sisters of Wards, many of whom have occupied their posts of authority and responsibility in our large Nurse training schools for many years, and who, had they cared to perform the official duties of a Matron, might long ago have presided with distinction as superintendents. The vast store of practical knowledge which a Sister in a large ward accumulates after a few years of work, the intuitive way in which she "spots a good Pro," the manner in which she is able to gauge the value of systems of practical and theoretical methods of training, mark her at once as an almost indispensable coadjutor of the Matron of a large training school. I contend, therefore, that a Matrons' Council, meeting in consultation concerning matters which affect the well-being of Nurses of all classes, would be largely stultified in its deliberations were it to exclude entirely from its ranks those valued workers, who are the actual trainers of our future Nurses. I feel strongly on this question, and am entirely in sympathy with Miss Stewart in her views concerning the desirability of admitting Sisters as Associates to the Matrons' Council. Many of the Sisters under whom I worked, and who so generously tried to impart to me some of the large stores of knowledge which they had gained by years of personal contact with the sick, are Sisters still—they are still my superiors in every respect, as they were in the days of my probation; I still seek and honour their advice,

more even now, perhaps, than in the past. I should feel it, therefore, an honour if those to whom I owe so much, were associate with me in this new Council. We have need of their sympathy, need of their help, need of their experience, and doubtless shall find ourselves sometimes in need of their advice.—I am, Madam, Yours,

CHARLOTTE OKELL, *Registered Nurse,
Matron of the Bridgewater Infirmary.*

Reflections

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



MISS SYDNEY J. BROWNE has, we are informed, been appointed Superintendent Sister at the Woolwich Military Hospital, a promotion which is well deserved after her splendid record of service as a Nursing Sister in the army. Miss SYDNEY BROWNE was trained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and was Matron of the West Bromwich Hospital for some years. She entered the Army Nursing Service in 1883; was at Suez and Suakim during 1884 and 1885, working in the "Ganges" Hospital Ship during the whole Soudan campaign; Sister at Woolwich Military Hospital 1885 to 1887, she was promoted to be Superintending Sister in 1887, when she had charge of the Military Hospital at Malta until 1892. She has of late been in charge at the Curragh Camp. Miss BROWNE is a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association and a registered Nurse. She is also a member of St. Barnabas' Guild for Nurses. We feel sure, in congratulating Miss BROWNE upon her new appointment, we shall only express the opinion of her colleagues, when we state that no Sister in Her Majesty's Army has won for herself a more enviable reputation for devotion to duty, or will occupy the position of authority to which she has been advanced with greater benefit to the Army Nursing Service and to her profession than Sister SYDNEY BROWNE. We congratulate the War Office upon its wise selection.

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MISS JANE JEFFERY, who was trained at the Middlesex Hospital, and holds the Diploma of the London Obstetrical Society, has been appointed by the Workhouse Nursing Association, Nurse to the Newton Abbott Union Infirmary.

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It will be remembered that it was owing to the conscientious conduct of her predecessor, that the terrible abuses in connection with the nursing of the unfortunate inmates was exposed, and indeed, that the public conscience, as expressed both in the medical and lay press, has at last been awakened.

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