

Matrons in Council.



THE Quarterly Meeting of the Matrons' Council was held on Thursday the 12th inst. at the Matron's House, St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

Applications for membership were received from the following ladies, who were unanimously elected: Miss Emmie Lofts, Matron, New Infirmary, Lewisham; Miss Ethel Atkins, The Park Hospital, Hither Green; Miss Beatrice Jones, Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, Victoria Park; Miss C. S. Wilkie, St. Luke's Hospital, Halifax; Miss Jane Ann Jackson, Strangers' Hospital, Rio de Janeiro; Miss J. Melita Jones, The Hospital, Nelson, New Zealand; Miss S. B. McGahey, Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney.

It was further proposed, seconded and adopted, "That Miss McGahey, Lady Superintendent of the Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, be requested to accept the Honorary Membership of the Matrons' Council, and to act as its representative in New South Wales.

LETTERS of interest in the work of the Matrons' Council were read from Mrs. Hampton Robb, Hon. Member, United States; Miss Melita Jones, Nelson Hospital, New Zealand; and Miss McGahey, Sydney, to whom the Council agreed that letters should be sent by the Hon. Secretary.

It has been proposed that the Matrons' Council at their next meeting in April should consider the question of adopting a distinctive badge and motto for the Society, and the Hon. Secretary will be pleased to receive any suggestions from the members on these points. The motto "Cogito ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am) has been unanimously approved by the Executive Committee, and will be submitted to the Council at its next meeting.

It will gratify the members to learn that Miss Isla Stewart, the Chairman of the Matrons' Council, and their representative on the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, has accepted a seat on the Professional Subcommittee of the forthcoming International Congress, and that with her usual sense of public responsibility to her profession, she is taking an active interest in furthering the success of the Nursing Section.

MARGARET BREAY,
Hon. Sec.

Echoes of Plague Nursing.

RUMOURS have reached England that some of the Nurses sent to India on Plague Duty have not been altogether discreet. But if we who are comfortably at home realised half the difficulties our Nurses have had to contend with, we should hear more praise and less blame.

Descriptions which have reached us of pioneer camp work prove that many of the nurses have done admirably well and overcome the difficulties with spirit. For instance, imagine a segregation camp composed of half-a-dozen ordinary wards for Hindu patients—a dozen chuppers, made of palm leaf matting with corrugated iron roofs for caste families—bungalows for European patients—bungalows for doctors—and nurses, all scattered around their own compounds, divided by a wall of matting, to visit which one must pass through a hole in the matting wall, up and down, over heaps of stones, and in and out of deep holes. Imagine night duty under these circumstances, especially when the helpers are on strike. We have read of how the ayahs and ward boys who were supposed to do both night and day duty calmly slept all night and disappeared all day, leaving the nurse to tramp, tramp, up hill and down dale, through the various compounds all night through, and into the wards picking up the delirious patients off the floor and placing them back in bed!

Then there was the most difficult question of nourishment, in the night, none of any kind being provided for bad cases, and a nurse has been told by an Indian medical officer when she asked for night milk, that "the patients had plenty in the day"! This same medical officer expressed sorrow at the idea of an English nurse sitting in any of the wards during the night. "So unwholesome"!—which was quite true; but as a seat outside meant malaria, the fact that there was no time for rest, was the easy solution of the difficulty.

And then the rains! The gentle dripping of the "heavenly watering-pot" at home—compare it with the drenching, sluicing down-pour of water in the tropics! Imagine the night round, tramp, splash—tramp, splash, over wet grasses and into deep holes with strict impartiality; and when a verandah happened only to have a couple of steps here and there, and the balli wallah (lamplighter) was also on strike, and the dripping nurse carried a badly-trimmed lamp, making the darkness more dismal, was it surprising that on one occasion she walked over the edge of the verandah and flop! found herself prone in a fair sized pond?

And then there was the difficulty of removing the dead. Thus, in a night round the nurse

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)