

The Matrons' Council.

A recently-elected member of the Matrons' Council is Miss M. E. O'Connor, Matron of the Napier Hospital, New Zealand, whose portrait is published on this page. Miss O'Connor's nursing career has been a varied and interesting one. She was trained for three years at the Royal Hospital, Salford, where she subsequently remained for two years in charge of the children's ward. She then went out to Australia to take up private nursing in Sydney. Of this experience Miss O'Connor writes:—"I greatly regretted that it was not until after I left England that private nurses were sent out from the hospital where I trained, consequently my ideas were very vague as regards the number of accomplishments required from a trained nurse in the Colonies. I was not left long in doubt, however, as my first case was that of a perfectly helpless woman, who, to add to the difficulties, kept a boarding-house for workmen. But the crowning point was reached when, upon my arrival, the one and only maid departed at 11.30 p.m., leaving me alone. I asked the men to leave next day and advertised for a maid, but had to do the housekeeping in the meantime."

From the Nurses' Home Miss O'Connor went to the Children's Hospital, Sydney, as Sister-in-Charge of the Diphtheria Branch. She says:—"My private nursing experience came in very useful here, as I had sole charge of the Branch, both housekeeping and nursing, and I consider this the hardest part of my nursing career, for it was before the use of diphtheritic

antitoxin, but after its use the work was not so depressing, and I continued in it for five years." Three years ago Miss O'Connor was appointed Matron of Napier Hospital, New Zealand.

"It was," she says, "soon after my arrival in the Colony that the Act for the State Registration of Trained Nurses was passed. We were all very delighted about it, and feel that Mrs. Grace Neill and Dr.

Macgregor have done a great deal for the nursing world, and the nurses throughout the Colony are very grateful, for we realise how much it means to the public as well as ourselves.

"We frequently hear of women putting on a nurse's uniform and taking up private nursing after four or five months' hospital experience, and, to make matters worse for the patients, these people have frequently been dismissed from our hospitals as unsuitable. Surely well-trained and certificated nurses deserve some hall-mark to distinguish them from such as the above.

"I sincerely hope that, with the New Year, State Registration will be granted to our nurses at home. It would seem that the home public are very slow in realising that such a step would be a protection to themselves, or, at any rate, to their

sick. My short experience of the effect of State Registration of Nurses is that new probationers enter into their work with more heart and enthusiasm. So keen is the desire for knowledge that my Maori day pupils asked if they might be allowed to attend the nurses' lectures, and I find that if a nurse fails in her first State examination it has a very stimulating effect upon other nurses, for failure means a longer training."



MISS M. E. O'CONNOR.

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