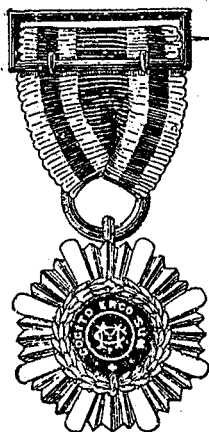


The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland.



A meeting of the Matrons' Council was held at 431, Oxford Street, on Wednesday, October 26th. The President, Miss Heather-Bigg, was in the chair, there was a good attendance of members, and some twenty members wrote regretting their inability to be present.

The first business was the annual election of the Hon. Secretary, and as Miss Mollett consented to act again, she was unanimously re-elected.

Four ladies were nominated, subject to their consent to act, to fill the additional positions as Vice-Presidents provided for under the new Bye-laws.

The meeting then discussed the attitude of the Matrons' Council with regard to the proposed memorials to Miss Florence Nightingale.

Those present were unanimously of opinion that the first care of trained nurses must be that a statue of Miss Nightingale shall be placed in a prominent position in the Metropolis, and that any further memorial should be of an educational character, as most suitably commemorating Miss Nightingale's life and work.

It was decided to forward the following Resolution to Mr. J. G. Wainwright, Treasurer of St. Thomas's Hospital.

RESOLUTION.

The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland is of the opinion that the Nurses' Memorial to Florence Nightingale should take the form of a statue, to be erected in some suitable position, as a permanent Memorial and a lasting sign to future ages of the admiration and appreciation of the Twentieth Century nurses for the great Foundress of their Profession. The Matrons' Council deprecates the idea of placing in the forefront of the Nurses' Memorial a scheme, however praiseworthy, for the personal benefit of nurses themselves.

It was decided that the January meeting of the Matrons' Council should be held in London, and the April and July meetings in the provinces.

The business meeting then terminated.

M. MOLLETT,
Hon. Secretary.

After an interval for tea, Miss Mollett opened a discussion on The Supply of Probationers.

THE SUPPLY OF PROBATIONERS.

The discussion of this question was suggested under two heads:—(1) Whether the women who offer themselves for training at the present time are less suitable for the Nursing Profession than those who applied ten or fifteen years ago. (2) If so, what is the cause and the remedy?

In opening the discussion, Miss Mollett related a story of Charles II., who requested the Royal Society to decide why a fish weighed more in water than out of it. The question was discussed with due solemnity until one member discovered that it weighed the same in both instances.

One point to be considered, said Miss Mollett, was that "there is more of the pro." Thirty years ago very few hospitals took probationers and professed, or pretended, to train them. Now every hospital, big and little, was full of probationers. It was sometimes thought that the present type of probationers was not as good as it used to be, because now there were so many other openings for women. Miss Mollett was of opinion that this did not affect the nursing profession so much as was sometimes thought, as it was counterbalanced by the fact that so many more women than formerly wished to work.

In regard to the qualities desirable in a probationer, every Matron had her ideal, which certainly included excellent health, physique, good appearance, suitable temperament, and aptitude, which implied the "born nurse," for without such aptitude no amount of training would make a woman a really good nurse.

Then she should have a fair education. A hospital was neither a national school nor an infants' school. In the future no doubt the nursing profession would be able to establish tests of preliminary education. Another essential quality was good breeding, not that confined to any particular class, but good manners and refined ways should be learnt when young; they could not be taught for the first time when a woman entered a hospital. She was not referring to poverty, but to the type of woman who appeared in Merry Widow hats and handsome dresses and had only two changes of under-linen.

One member said that she had great and increasing difficulty in filling vacancies for probationers with women of a type whom she cared to take.

Amongst the present day characteristics mentioned by another speaker were an alteration in the national character. She thought that generally there was less sense of duty, lower ideals than formerly, and this was shown in the training school by the desire for as much time off duty as possible.

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