

THE MATRONS' COUNCIL.

By the kind invitation of Miss Pote Hunt, the Lady Superintendent, the Spring Meeting of the Matrons' Council will be held at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester, on Saturday, April 25th, at 3 p.m.

After the business meeting is concluded a lecture will be given on "Charles Dickens" by Mr. Paul Matthews, Head Master of Sir Joseph Williamson's School, Rochester.

Miss Pote Hunt suggests that some of the members of the Council who could go down to Rochester by a morning train might like to see the Cathedral, and some of the interesting places connected with Dickens and his writings. The President of the Dickens Society and his wife have most kindly offered to act as escort, and both Miss Pote Hunt, and Miss Beatrice Jones, Lady Superintendent of the Military Hospital, Chatham, will be pleased to welcome members to luncheon.

Full particulars of the meeting, with train service, &c., will be notified in due course.

STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

A Meeting of the Nursing Staff of Guy's Hospital is to be held on Thursday in this week, to discuss State Registration. Dr. Goodall, the Med. Hon. Secretary, of the Central Registration Committee, will give an address. The National Union of Trained Nurses are also waking up on this important professional question. It will be discussed at Leeds and Cambridge.

REGISTRATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Writing from the Orange River Colony, a member of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve, on the need for a better system of Nurses' Registration in South Africa, than that now in force by the Medical Councils, reports:—"Since coming to this country I have registered in Cape Colony as a nurse and midwife, and again as a midwife in the Orange Free State. At present I am doing private nursing in this town and district. Although we register in this country, the law does not prevent women who are not trained at all practising, and calling themselves "nurses." In this little town I have to compete with any number of these "handy women," who have never been in a hospital, nor have they qualified as midwives. Another woman working as a "nurse" has had six months in the Salvation Hospital, Cape

Town, and passed as a midwife, and her business card is inscribed, "Nurse —, certified midwife South African Hospitals." All these untrained women are allowed to practise as nurses, and charge the public full fees of £4 4s. a week.

Before I could take up nursing in this place, I was told I must register again in the Orange Free State, yet all these "handy women" are practising and allowed to do so by the doctors here. Surely there must be something wrong with the law which does not prevent unqualified women calling themselves nurses, and yet requires women who are qualified to register several times over in the same country.

Nurses all over the world owe you a debt of gratitude for all you have done and are doing on their behalf. I should like to be able to help on the registration movement in England, and hope the day is not far distant when the law will be effectively in force."

To be effectively in force a Nurses' Registration Act must provide for wide powers of self-government. Nurses in South Africa owe the Medical Councils gratitude for their help in the past, but, as the following information from the *Lancet* proves, the medical profession cannot maintain discipline (with the best intentions in the world) in the ranks of professional nurses.

Thanks to the efforts of the late Sister Henrietta, of Kimberley, the first Act for the State Registration of Nurses came into force in Cape Colony in 1891, and it has been followed by legislation in other South African States. The system, however, was not sound, as the Medical Councils carried out the provisions of the Acts; and—as we have often pointed out—if an efficient system of Nurses' Registration is to be put in force, the Registered Nurses themselves, must have adequate power of self-government upon the Central Authority empowered to define the educational curriculum, and maintain professional discipline. It is the only way.

We are pleased to learn from the *Lancet* that it is probable that before long an attempt will be made to organize the nursing profession (in South Africa), which at present is without any recognised body to look after its interests, and that the Government may be induced to bring in legislation in the near future for the purpose of establishing a Central Nurses' and Midwives' Board in place of the four Medical Councils, which have outlived their usefulness as registering authorities for nurses. This is proved by the ease with which nurses from

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)