

of women on hospital boards, and this decision is reached after personal experience in working, first in two of the largest hospitals in the country, where the administration of the hospital and training school in each case was quite distinct, the former being entirely in the hands of men and the latter in that of women. Later, in a hospital where the trustees were all men and the women were only an auxiliary board, giving lavishly of their time and means to procure materials and necessities generally for the hospital consumption, but having no voice in the management or direction of hospital affairs, not even to requiring an account of the disposition of the abundant materials supplied by them. And, again, later came the experience in a large hospital where everything in and about the place was administered and controlled by a board of men trustees; and, finally, it has been my privilege to work as a member of a board of women managers in a hospital administered by both men and women, the men in the capacity of trustees and the women as a board of managers. In addition to this, I have watched with keen interest the administration in all sorts and conditions of hospitals, both in this country and abroad, and the conviction has been constantly strengthened that women are needed in the administration of all such institutions, not just because they are women, or for any Women's Rights reasons, but because history shows their need and usefulness and the tremendous influence and part they have taken in establishing and improving hospitals all over the world, and because wherever the atmosphere of home is needed there their presence is needed. And where should such an atmosphere be fostered so much as in a hospital, and how can this be done without women's many-sided views of caring for the home part? You all know the old saying, "Men may work from sun to sun, but woman's work is never done," and this is so true, although men work out in the larger fields of the world, and her chief occupation lies in the home; but here she has also to do with men, women, and children, and with the thousand and one things we all know require attention to make a successful home, and that are never ceasing, while a man's work lies upon straighter lines, as a rule, and his occupation in life demands, as the bread-winner, the greater amount of his attention; hence, in the matter of home details, he must depend on the woman to take care of them, and so is unfamiliar with them, and the same holds true in hospital work. For the greatest success of the work both men and women are essential, working together understandingly, one to look after the financial part and such affairs as more strictly come under men's knowledge and experience, and the women to look after the details and housekeeping part

and such home affairs as women are more conversant with. But, if we cannot have both, then I should without hesitation be in favour of retaining the women and letting the men go, for women have been proven no mean financiers or planners, where the whole responsibility has rested with them, and from the standpoint of careful administration and economy they are undoubtedly far ahead of men trustees. One prominent example of which I can speak knowingly is that of the Illinois Training School for Nurses, Chicago, organised by a few women for the purpose of bringing relief to the city's sick poor by introducing women nurses into the wards of the city and county hospital. It has now made for itself a name as being the largest school in the country, does the nursing in two of the largest hospitals, has steadily increased its plant as the need arose, has kept itself free from indebtedness, and is practically self-supporting; at the same time, for years, it has been able to set aside a gift of \$50,000 that had been given it for general use as a special fund, the income to be devoted to supplementing the cost of good nurses, who are supplied by them at small rates to people of moderate means. The school is a model of perfect cleanliness, order, and the good care of pupil nurses, all of which is the result of the management of a board of twenty-four women, and, I may add, whose efficient superintendent for years has been our honourable president, Miss McIsaac. It may be asked, do not the hospital nurses as women represent the home element in institutions? They undoubtedly do, but then their supervision is restricted chiefly to the wards, and the superintendent of nurses is usually the only nurse who has access to most parts of the hospital. If she combines the position of matron with that of superintendent of nurses, then she has undoubtedly greater opportunities, but the Matron is clever, indeed, who possesses the experience and wisdom to manage all the details of the various departments as thoroughly, carefully, economically and perfectly as they should be managed out of the fulness of her own capabilities. Besides, why tax and overwork one woman when by a little management and system she may be assisted or relieved of an unnecessary amount of detail by the willing co-operation of a number of other women. I have heard it stated by superintendents on different occasions that board ladies make more work and trouble than they save. When such is the case, then the fault lies more with the superintendent than her board of managers. Naturally they cannot be expected to know all the ins and outs of hospital life, but, with proper organisation, and especially with co-operation on the part of the superintendent of nurses, they grasp the situation in a surprisingly short time,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)