

and they bring many good and practical suggestions not only to their own particular duties but to the good of the whole institution. But to accomplish this much-to-be-desired result, three things are absolutely necessary: they are, hearty co-operation on the part of the superintendent of nurses, a properly selected board of managers, which is properly organised, and which has strictly defined duties. I put the co-operation of the superintendent first, for this is most essential, otherwise a house divided against itself must fall, or, at all events, the results will fall far short of the best. So far as it concerns the hospital, the same mind should dwell in all who have anything to do with it, and that is, everything done and said should be with the best interest and greatest good of the hospital always uppermost. All its work should be done from this standpoint. The desire to have one's own personal opinions prevail should not be fostered. On the contrary, the power to see affairs from other people's points of view and to accept cheerfully and carry out faithfully any decision arrived at is to be desired. In the formation of a board of women managers, many more things have to be taken into consideration than the superintendent of nurses may always realise or may be too inexperienced to understand, and, in some instances, it may puzzle her to know why certain women are members of such a board. The reasons for selections may vary according to the sources from which the hospital is supported. Some hospitals, as we know, are supported by religious denominations, others may be richly endowed by private bequests; the municipal hospital is supported out of the city treasury, while others are dependent solely for support from general contributions, and to this last class belong the greater number of hospitals. At the same time, no matter how securely endowed, or how independent a hospital may be of its public, it is always well to have a number of people in the community who take a personal interest in it, who are jealous of its good name, who will stand loyally by it if it is unjustly criticised, who will use their influence to make friends for it, and who will watch that it is worthy of the favour and confidence of all who may seek its shelter for aid, and the assistance of women in these respects is far-reaching. In addition to this the active co-operation of well known women whose names stand for integrity, and what is best in the community at once lifts any institution their names are associated with above reproach, and strengthens its officials in their endeavours in this respect. Again where the aim is to have the good of the hospital as far-reaching as possible, and where this is dependent upon the generosity of the individual it is well to have among its supports friends who can serve not only philanthropically

but financially, and can influence others to give. Thus the society women, the woman who is known for her indefatigable good work, the good, practical, economical housekeeper and the business woman can all find a fitting place on hospital boards. The main point being to make clear to them their usefulness, to define their duties and their privileges and restrictions, and a board divided into suitable committees with an executive committee composed of the heads of these various committees may be useful in many ways. As an instance, in the absorbing interests of the practical side of their work, nurses for want of time are apt to lose sight of the fact that there are other factors besides medicines and the purely practical nursing and prescribing that act as tonics and medicines in the restoration of health, and that convalescence may be retarded by the patient falling into an indifferent listless attitude of mind unless proper provision is made against it, and what brightens up the patients more than the sight of a new face, the bringing in fresh flowers, a bright entertaining story, a quiet game of some sort, seeing the magazine pictures, and perhaps the supplying of some light work for the fingers. All of such things a ward visitor represents, provided the nurses will co-operate far enough to keep her in touch with the patient's needs. Such measures are sources of real economy and greater good, for they undoubtedly hasten convalescence, and give places sooner to others who need the care more. Again a good, practical, far-seeing superintendent who is in hearty accord with her committees on hospital and household supplies can hold their interest to such an extent that much will be provided that will be a distinct saving to the hospital finances, and from the standpoint of the nurse to have a certain number of women in the community already conversant with her ability and her ambitions to further district nursing, visiting nursing, or whatever form her future work may take, is only one of the many advantages that other women may be to her. I have in the brief time allotted but imperfectly given some reasons why women are in place on hospital boards, and I beg to close by repeating that it lies in the power of the superintendent of nurses, if she be a capable, experienced executive officer to develop more and more the good work done by such boards, for our hospitals of to-day, although far ahead in some respects, still fall far short of possessing that home atmosphere that makes patients forget they are within the walls of an institution, and which can only exist where the presence of woman and her aid is the most strongly felt.

---

The discussion, and our remarks on the first session of the Congress, will appear next week.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)