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Editorial.

LADY VISITORS.

WE briefly reported last week the resignation of Miss Lucy M. Rae, Matron of the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital, on the ground that she felt unable to work with the Lady Visitors, but the matter is so important that we refer to it at greater length in this issue. The appointment of lady visitors on the part of Hospital Committees is in our view a radical error. If not members of the Committee they should have no official responsibility. As a rule, these ladies have no knowledge of hospital administration, and their amateur and often ill-directed interposition in the domestic and nursing departments of the institutions which they visit is extremely galling and vexatious to a Matron who knows her business. The same intervention in the details of work might with equal propriety be permitted in the medical and the secretarial departments of hospitals, and the result would be equally unsatisfactory. We have always been appreciative of the work of women in connection with hospitals, but their authorised position in these institutions should be on the same basis as that of the male managers, namely, that of duly appointed members of the Board

of Management. Such appointments whenever they have been made, have been singularly successful, and beneficial to the institution concerned. Less progressive Committees, which are not willing to accord women seats on the Managing Body, and yet realizing to some extent the anomaly of excluding them entirely, throw a sop to Cerberus by appointing Lady Visitors, to whom is accorded an undefined position. The women who will accept positions of this nature do not, as a rule, possess conspicuous ability, they do not work on broad lines, but concern themselves with details which must be left to the discretion of the responsible official if professional work is not to be hampered by amateur surveillance. The result is that Matrons possessing experience and ability find it impossible to work satisfactorily with Lady Visitors, and public institutions lose the services of trusted officials, because they do not utilize in a legitimate and orderly way the valuable services which women are able and willing to render.

Those women who desire to serve on hospital committees, and there is ample scope for their work, will do well to qualify themselves by studying the best methods of hospital administration and the conduct of public business.

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