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THE WORK OF WOMEN ON HOSPITAL BOARDS.

By Miss Lucy Walker, *Matron, Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia.*

Mrs. Hunter Robb, whose name is down on the programme for a paper on "The Work of Women on Hospital Boards," is, unfortunately, not with us to-day; and as her paper on the subject has not yet arrived, I have been asked to say what little I can, in order that a discussion may be started. We have lost much in not hearing the results of Mrs. Robb's experience, for she has been able to view the woman manager from the standpoint of the Superintendent of a Training School, and also from that of the woman-manager, she being at the present time a member of a Hospital Board.

My few thoughts have been jotted down very hurriedly, for during the past week spare moments have been extremely scarce, and I must apologise for attempting to say anything at all on the subject, with my very limited experience and lack of preparation. Outside of the city of Philadelphia my knowledge of the constitution of the Boards of Hospitals is very small, and I therefore must perforce confine my remarks to what little I know of the charitable institutions of that city, hoping that some of our distinguished visitors from the United States will be able, during the discussion, to give us the benefit of their wider knowledge and experience.

Philadelphia is noted for its many charitable institutions. In it there are numberless hospitals and homes of all kinds. In the majority of these the Boards of Management are composed of men only, the character of the institution guiding the selection of the members constituting the Board. For instance, in the Episcopal Hospital Board the names of many Episcopal clergymen are to be found; in that of the Presbyterian Hospital, Presbyterian ministers; in the Methodist Hospital, Methodist ministers, and so on. In addition to these Boards, however, it is usual to have an auxiliary of women, termed the Managers of the Ladies' Aid, or the Ladies' Aid Society. Their work consists in helping to collect funds, supplying linen, etc., inspecting the hospital, and making formal reports of its condition to the Board of Managers. They visit the patients, supply them with reading matter, and, in some cases, have a benevolent fund, with which to help patients when leaving the hospital. Such an auxiliary at one of the leading hospitals in Philadelphia consists of some 85 members, with over 70 corresponding members and collectors. For officers, they have a President, five Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary. There are ten Committees, namely: The Executive Committee, consisting of twelve members; the Committee on Organization of Work, 14 members; Furnishing Committee, 7 members; Sabbath Committee, 14 members; Library Committee, 9 members; Music Committee, 3 members; Committee on Home for Convalescents and Home for Incurables, 13 members; Benevolent Committee, 12 members; Committee on Dispensary, 4 members; and the Visiting Committee, of 28 members, which is subdivided into smaller sub-committees, detailed to visit the different departments of the hospital. For instance, eight members are appointed to visit, inspect, and report on the condition of the children's ward. Had I time I could quote largely from one of the Annual Reports of this Society of Women, which I happen to have with me, which would give a fair idea of the work accomplished by them. The Organization Committee report that they have secured 17 additional corresponding members, thereby increasing the contributions to the hospital. The Furnishing Committee report that "they have placed in the wards 5,386 articles (linen) during the year." The Sabbath Committee, that "the patients frequently express their satisfaction and pleasure in the conversation of these Sabbath visitors." The missionary visitor reports "one hundred and seventy visits paid to families of patients, and 372 garments distributed."

In another leading hospital in Philadelphia, women are permitted to be members of the Board of Management, and their work display much zeal and enthusiasm. The Training School Committee is, I believe, composed of women, and I know that one woman is on the Executive Committee. They take a very active part in the management of the hospital, and I regret that I cannot give you in detail an account of their work and its results.

And yet another charitable institution of which I know is managed entirely by women. Their number is without limit, and they enter into every detail of the management of the place. They have various purchasing committees, and the Matron sends her requisitions for supplies to these various Committees, who make all the purchases for the institution.

Again, the State Board of Charities appoint women to inspect all charitable institutions and to report on their condition every year. Two women visit each institution and are privileged to go where they will, and when they will. Their visits are always unexpected, and they generally make a very thorough inspection.

It sometimes seems to me that there cannot be a woman in Philadelphia who is not helping to manage, in some way, one or more hospitals,

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