

## Annotations.

### LADY VISITORS.

At the Annual Meeting of the Donors and Governors of the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Wigan, it was proposed that lady visitors should be appointed to the hospital. Mr. J. Parkinson, in moving a resolution to this effect, said that "he had always held the opinion that ladies should visit the female wards, and listen to any complaints that might be made." This is a fair sample of the uses to which it appears to the male mind that the services of women should be put in connection with hospital administration. We have always held that the services of women are valuable in the management of hospitals, but, the position to which they should be appointed, and the only one which they can with dignity accept, is that of members of the Committee of Management. In this capacity their aid would be most valuable. But to appoint lady visitors for the avowed purpose of receiving complaints from the patients, and with the probable result of instilling into their minds grievances which previously were non-existent, would be most detrimental to the efficient management and discipline of any institution. It was further suggested by another speaker that "ladies were far more capable of examining the stores than the male visitors, and they would be better qualified to see as to the arrangement in sick rooms." If the lady visitors, who need not necessarily even belong to the educated classes, are to assume these inquisitorial functions, then at least some proof of their efficiency for the duties of which they accept the responsibility should be required from them. If we are to have inspectors they should be qualified for the position by a full practical acquaintance with the nature of the work performed by those whom they inspect. If the "examination" is only another name for amateur interference, trouble is sure to arise. We repeat, on Committees of Management women are in their right place, but if the position assigned to them is that of semi-official inquisitors into pettifogging details, it is a pernicious one. We are, therefore, glad that the resolution to which we have referred above was ultimately withdrawn. If amateurs, even those possessed of the best intentions, are to be put in positions of authority they must first qualify themselves for occupying them.

### ARMY AMBULANCES.

The clumsy construction of our Army ambulances, which has already been pointed out in this journal, is causing considerable comment in the press, and rightly. A correspondent at the front says:—"There is a marked difference between our ambulance waggons and those of the Boers. Ours appear designed to combine the greatest clumsiness and least comfort with the minimum of accommodation. It takes ten mules to draw them. They carry two men lying and some sitting. They jolt like a quarryman's dray. The Boer ambulances are lightly but strongly built, accommodate eight men lying, and, being mounted on springs, scarcely jolt at all." The regulation British ambulance weighs some two tons when loaded, and progresses at the rate of about two miles an hour. One can imagine the torture experienced by the wounded, jolted along to their destination in a conveyance of this description. It appears that a book has been published for the guidance of the British Army entitled "British Army Ambulances," containing a complete description of clumsy and useless vehicles used in this and other countries. It seems that though ambulances of a modern pattern are now obtainable, the War Office authorities, with true official conservatism, are wedded to the obsolete patterns described in the Army Guide, and do not consider any vehicle not found in this book as worthy of notice. With the usual pride of caste also they consider apparently that only Army men can design these ambulances, and look upon an offer from a competent outsider to furnish samples of up-to-date conveyances as somewhat of an insult. This being the attitude of mind of the War Office authorities it is not surprising to learn that "the British ambulances and system have been most unfavourably compared by Englishmen on the spot with those of the Boers and of the German army, the only redeeming feature being the courage and devotion of the surgeons and the rank and file." Is it too much to hope that in the future, when the inevitable reorganization of the War Office takes place, the bands of red tape in which it is swathed may be severed and that official prejudices may be subordinated to the well-being and comfort of the sick and wounded. It would be interesting to know what instruction is given to Army men qualifying them to design modern ambulances, as a technical education is certainly necessary for the production of an up to date conveyance.

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