

Manners.

MANNERS maketh the man, and no less surely do they make the woman, a fact which in these days is somewhat apt to be forgotten. We all of us have our ideas as to what the manners of hospital nurses to their superior officers should be. We have, all of us, also had visions in times past of a day when the Royal British Nurses' Association should, by laying down a code of ethics, form some sort of a standard for the guidance of nurses on this matter. Now, alas, the very notion of the Royal British Nurses' Association teaching—manners! raises a smile and a sigh, and it will be many years, even should it amend its ways and reform its own, before it has a right to instruct nurses upon a subject in which it has shown itself so absolutely wanting. Nevertheless, although nurses are only taught by their professional association what to avoid in this respect, the subject is one of much importance, and, because many probationers who do not instinctively feel what is the right thing to do in a given situation, commit breaches of professional etiquette from ignorance and gaucherie rather than wilful rudeness, a few words on this subject appear to be in place in a nursing paper.

First, then, the rule of etiquette, which obtains in well-ordered hospitals, has been laid down for the general good. It is a fundamental principle, that the well-being of the individual must give way to the good of the community, and this in itself, is a lesson in self-effacement, which at the outset of one's hospital career, it is a distinct gain to learn. Discipline and self-restraint are virtues which are not always highly developed in probationers, and these must be acquired. For the maintenance of discipline, respect and prompt obedience to superior officers are essential, because of the official position which they hold, quite irrespective of regard for the persons themselves. The benefits of a high standard of discipline may be observed most perfectly perhaps in the manners of our army, and the success of English arms is undoubtedly due largely to the perfect control, which our officers possess over those whom they command. The same thing is seen in the ceremonial of our English Court, complicated, and at times wearisome as it is, and yet necessary to maintain the dignity and state of the Sovereign. In precisely the same way, a certain amount of ceremonial is necessary in our hospitals, if discipline and order are to be maintained. It may seem strange at first to a probationer to rise when addressed by the ward sister, who may perhaps belong obviously to a lower rank socially than herself, to hold the door open for the matron as she leaves the ward, to address the visiting physician or surgeon as Sir, and many other like courtesies which will at once occur to every nurse. But these are but part of the necessary routine if

discipline is to be maintained, and every good nurse will appreciate for herself, the fitness and desirability of such a ceremonial, and in fact will soon come to pride herself upon giving honour to those to whom honour is due. She will realize also that, far from detracting from her own personal dignity, the courtesy and respect which she accords to her superior officers is simply the outward and visible sign of her appreciation of the spirit of discipline, which to a great extent distinguishes a trained from an untrained nurse, and therefore reflects credit upon herself.

Courtesy to official superiors is, however, as a rule, easy, as there is generally, happily, a regard for the person which makes the respect shown a real mark of personal esteem, as well as an official obligation. The manners of nurses are undoubtedly most severely tested in their relations to casual visitors, and it must be candidly owned that these are frequently exceedingly bad. The staff nurse of a ward, for instance, more especially if her view of life has been circumscribed before entering upon her nursing career, is apt to lose her head upon being placed in a position necessarily of considerable authority, and to view every outsider with unconcealed disdain. Accordingly, when a visitor arrives at the ward door, having at some inconvenience, perhaps, come a long distance to make inquiries after a patient in whom she is interested, the nurse, instead of courteously going down the ward to meet her, continues sitting at the table in the middle of the ward, and calls out, over her shoulder, "What do you want?" Such a proceeding, of course, stamps the nurse at once as remarkably ill-bred, but we are afraid it is by no means uncommon. From the complaints we hear on all sides, of the manners of trained nurses, we are compelled to conclude that it not unfrequently happens, that nurses who treat their patients with all consideration, often fail entirely in courtesy to the chance visitors, with whom they are brought into contact. We desire, therefore, to point out that nurses have professional obligations in this respect, which we hope they will increasingly realize. We are quite sure if they knew the discredit which they bring upon their training schools, and the unpopularity with which they themselves are regarded, in consequence of breaches of good manners, they would recognize the necessity for amending their ways.

The Home of Rest.

MRS. FREDERICK BEER, who has in the past been such a kind friend to the Home of Rest at Brighton, has sent her most generous subscription of ten guineas during the past week. We have also had the pleasure of acknowledging a subscription of one guinea from Mrs. Henry Willett of Brighton. The holiday season is now over, but the Home is never without visitors. Christmas is always a very busy and happy time, and this year will, no doubt, find many old friends gathered together under its hospitable roof.

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