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**Editorial.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRIFLES.

"PERFECTION is made up of trifles, but perfection is no trifle," so it seems worth while to discuss a subject which has forced itself upon our attention in the course of visits to various hospitals, namely, the deportment of nurses on staircases and in passages. Even in hospitals of high reputation we have noticed nurses laughing and joking, calling to one another, singing, and behaving generally in an unrestrained fashion in the public corridors. "Well," some one says, "there is nothing wrong in this. Why should not nurses be happy, poor things, when possible, they have plenty to sadden them when on duty." No, there is nothing *wrong* about it, but in our opinion it is very unseemly.

Imagine the feelings of an anxious relation suddenly summoned to a dying bed, who hears on reaching the hospital, peals of laughter from nurses in the corridors. True, the nurses are off duty; true, they may just have been attending the patient in question with all devotion, for there are few, happily, who are not tender and gentle to the dying, but this im-

pression will scarcely be conveyed to the relations, and a hospital may get a name it by no means deserves from an incident of this kind. Again, we all know how sounds are carried up "well" staircases—the form of staircase used in most of our hospitals—and sounds of laughter and conversation may penetrate the wards, and annoy patients to whom quiet is essential.

Then it must always be remembered that behaviour which is allowable in the privacy of one's own home is quite out of place in public. In a private house, for instance, no one objects to the sound of a voice, either speaking or singing on the stairs. But directly we enter public life our behaviour must be quiet and restrained if it is to be seemly, and while this applies to all deportment in public, it is intensified in institutions which are concerned in the care of the sick and dying. After all, the matter is not so much one calling for hospital regulations, as for the cultivation of the sense of the fitness of things on the part of individual nurses. Some women instinctively do the right thing at the right moment, others have to acquire the habit with more or less difficulty, but it is an art which every nurse should take pains to cultivate.

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