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Editorial.

HOSPITAL MANNERS.

There are many qualities which it is necessary that the trained nurse should possess, a most important one being that of good manners. Is it always realised how much the well being of a hospital depends upon the manners of its nursing staff? To a newly admitted patient the manner of his reception makes an impression which remains with him throughout his stay in hospital. It may be he is admitted for a serious operation, and it is his first visit to a hospital ward. He is perhaps given a seat, and has his temperature taken, after which no further notice is taken of him for some time, while the nurse goes on with her work. A stranger, and chilled by his reception, he watches with a growing sense of desolation the unfamiliar routine. A kindly word or two would have made him feel at home, the word which would be spoken by any one possessed of good manners. Nurses are busy folk, but not too busy to speak the word which shall set a new patient at his ease, or to assure him that he will be attended to shortly, and that he will soon feel quite happy in his new surroundings. The patients are the guests of the hospital for the time being, and the nurse who receives a new patient acts as hostess for the institution and should never forget this fact. It is not, moreover, how much she says, but the manner of saying it, which makes that first impression which is subsequently so difficult to efface.

And as with the patients so also with visitors. How detrimental to an institution is any lack of courtesy in the reception of visitors, and how important it is that when the matron is off duty a gentlewoman, who

is neither *tête montée* with brief authority nor ill-mannered through lack of education, should represent her.

It must be realised that good and bad manners are confined to no section of society, a true gentlewoman may have been brought up in a cottage, and lack of manners are not unknown in those moving in circles where wealth, and the education which is attainable through its means, are not wanting. At the root of bad manners are generally to be found vulgarity and ill-nature, two attributes unbearable in a hospital sister or nurse, and manners are therefore indicative of much more to the intelligent observer than the brusqueness or discourtesy apparent on the surface. They are the indication of underlying character. The woman who is at heart unselfish cannot be discourteous, she instinctively puts herself in the position of the other person and speaks to and receives that person as she would wish to be spoken to and received herself.

True courtesy is simple, natural and genuine. We all know people whom it would be impossible to imagine doing an unkind or discourteous action. It would be entirely foreign to their nature, we say. We know others who continually ride rough shod over other people without the smallest consideration for their feelings. In both instances manners are an evidence of underlying character.

We must remember that character is built up slowly, and bad manners are difficult to eradicate. It is thus important that in the selection of probationers attention should be paid to the possession of good manners, for candidates who have not acquired them in their home surroundings are not liking to do so in the course of a brief hospital training.

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