

SILENCE IS GOLDEN.

By FELIX J. KOCH.

In the American nursing world the hospital erected at Pueblo by the great Iron and Fuel Company is known as the "s-s-h hospital," for its by-word—Silence! Director, attendants, employees, each and all have impressed on them, from day of appointment, the fact that in a hospital silence is, above all other things, golden, and so there are many and curious devices to obtain this eternal reign of quiet. That, though, is just one of the unique phases of what is perhaps the world's model hospital for employees.

Only one who has visited this institution can appreciate what comfort a sociological department provided by a great trust can give to employees. The traveller coming to the Hospital passes first through fine gardens, like some public park. Back in these is set the building, a charming structure, rather in mission style, and the outer walls ornamented by huge, oval-topped panels of green tile, containing portraits of famous physicians and other Nestors of the medical art. Particularly in the late sundown of a summer's evening these panels have a charm that attracts and arouses admiration.

A visitor then comes to the long mission porch of the institution. One of the physicians in charge greets the sightseer here, or, if the guests be many, divides them into groups, that guides may explain to all, and yet without raising the voice hardly over a whisper, when inside the building. Before proceeding on the tour, moreover, the directors ask that guests indulge in no talking while inside the institution.

There are three things in particular that the institution is proud of: no noise, no dust, no smells. The hospital cooking is done far in the rear, in a special kitchen.

NO STAIRS.

More unique still is the fact that there are no steps in the building. Replacing these, the floors are inclined, so that one can ascend from any one story to another by a long, sloping pathway rising up from the floor. Such ascent is especially easy for little children, for sick men or women, for the aged, and such as may suffer with heart troubles of various kinds. An incline of this sort, according to authorities, should replace the staircases in every schoolhouse in the land, nor would it come amiss in the average home, where it might be built off at one side the house at least.

Again, there is no slamming of doors in this hospital. All the doors swing through completely. Hence, one has no click or noise or snap every time the nurse passes in or out in the night.

Nurses are not permitted to wear rustling skirts, and no shoes without rubber heels may "go" here. The floors, in addition, are of matted cork carpeting, and this, too, helps to minimise sound.

Turning, as the breeze rustles the curtain behind him, the Superintendent laughs guiltily. "I'm such a crank against noise," he says, "that I am called the 's-h-h doctor' hereabouts!"

The shelves for linen in the hospital are all open, and so there are no doors to creak. More than this, there are no doors to hide the dirt where someone may fail to clean out, or behind which someone else may cram things. There is nothing that a trained eye doesn't see often in the course of any given day. In fact, the inspectors can see everything as they go through the ward.

All draperies and hangings in the house are arranged so that they can be taken down to wash. Our ordinary home roller-shades grow very dusty, says the doctor, hence here they have curtains, which are washed like towels and sheets and quite as often. At the windows they are hung in such a way that they can be taken down. The window, too, is lowered at the top so that one can take things down from there and not interfere with light or ventilation.

LEAD OPERATING ROOMS.

Some of the most interesting features of this Pueblo Hospital are the lead operating rooms. As a general rule, in modern hospitals the walls are of cement, glass and the like, but here the operating rooms are of lead, so that the room can be thoroughly steamed when desired. There are only two other hospitals in the world boasting such apartments, the one is in St. Louis, the other San Francisco.

Reaching this outer verandah at six, it is six twenty before the doctor has told of all these things, and is ready to pass you inside.

Your first point of interest is the incline in the floors—this ascending on the one side, descending on the other side of the hall, with neat brass rail at outer edge of each slope, the carpet of cork under the feet, and the white walls rising up. You pass then through double doors of white, with glass panes, into the wards.

THE WARDS.

Each of these wards, as you see them, has the small white cots for the patients ranged about. A nurse, in blue gown, with white cap and apron, is in constant charge. Sometimes she will have four of the white cots in a room here. Beside each bed a tasty stand of white enamelled iron has its two shelves for medicines and so on, while an easy chair is drawn near.

Thirty-five different nationalities are treated in this hospital, and it has been found that one cannot well put negroes in the same room with the Italians, and that similar other groupings will not do. Hence the patients are separated, by nationality, among the small ward-rooms.

If a patient wish the nurse, he presses a button at the bed, but does not hear the bell. The press of the button lights a red light in the hall, so that the first nurse to pass must see it, and at the same time it records at the office, where a check is kept.

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