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## EDITORIAL.

### BUSINESS HABITS.

One of the most valuable assets which women who are contemplating adopting nursing as a profession can possess is the formation of business habits, for if these are not acquired in youth their acquisition in later life will require more or less painful effort, yet they are essential to success in the practice of any serious profession.

It is sometimes alleged that nurses, invaluable and indispensable as they are in their own special branch of work, are not businesslike in their general relations to the community. It is therefore well for individual nurses to consider whether this charge is just, and what are the habits they should cultivate in relation to the public and in their own work.

In a community life such as that in hospitals and kindred institutions it is manifest that individual must be subservient to general interests; only so is community life possible.

Punctuality and method are two cardinal virtues which must be practised in institutional life, if the organization as a whole is to run smoothly and waste of time is to be avoided. To take a concrete example. Suppose when the day and night nurses change duty the former are not in the wards as the clock strikes, and when they arrive—say a minute behind time—they spend another two minutes in conversation instead of getting to work at once, this means, if 100 nurses change duty, a waste of several hundred minutes each day amounting to many hours in the course of the year.

Again, in the performance of work, method is essential not only for the comfort of the patients but in order that every moment of precious time may be utilized to the fullest advantage.

This is the reason for the military discipline which is observed in well-managed hospitals, and many a probationer who chafes at what she considers unnecessary strictness and irksome rules in regard to punctuality, comes to realize later in her career that they are of the utmost importance.

Another virtue which, apart from any ethical standards, is essential to success is courtesy. In hospital wards as well as in private practice a courteous and sympathetic manner at once produces a favourable impression, and predisposes those with whom a nurse comes in contact to her influence.

Probably, however, it is in her business relations outside institutions, where a mentor is usually at hand, that a nurse is most open to criticism.

How many nurses when applying for a post state briefly where and when they were trained? A favourite form of application seems to be "I hold a certificate of training from a recognized training school." If the Matron of the hospital or the Superintendent of the private nursing association wishes to consider the application the applicant must be communicated with, and asked to state in what school she was trained, for how long, and in what years. It is inconceivable but true that many nurses do not know the dates between which they were trained, and remark when asked that they have a bad memory for dates.

Again nurses not unfrequently fail to keep written records of their professional engagements, and lawsuits have resulted between aggrieved employers and aggrieved nurses—usually in regard to maternity cases—in which the nurse has been unable to substantiate her claim by a particle of written evidence.

The cultivation of business habits is thus a matter of great importance to nurses.

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