

would not be the outcry there is at present about Nurses' diet. Better cooking and greater variety might easily be attained even with the food at present allowed. Certainly the most clever cook cannot at all times cook her dishes just right, especially the Hospital cook, as she must serve them to the minute; for she has many things to contend with, the atmosphere which affects her fires or gas, the different ages of meat, the way the meat has been fed, the length of time it has been killed, &c., &c. Only a cook knows how all these things change the meat she has to cook, making it impossible to secure joints cooked to just the same point of perfection at all times. Often, no doubt, the cook knows that the meat is spoiling by waiting, but the hour has not struck; or she knows the meat would be better for another quarter of an hour's cooking, but the hour has struck, and the meat must go. Let us not be too hard even upon cook.

"An eminent Physician" writing about food, says, "Man is not a mere chemical laboratory, he requires change in the quality of his food, he is endowed with a sense of flavour, so that were all the elements necessary for nutrition contained in his food, he would still, under the various exigencies and changes of life, and the wants of his nature, desire variety of kind and flavour in food. Food, being fitted for nutrition by containing all the necessary elements in due proportion, must also be digestible. For this purpose it must not be in a putrefying state, nor too dense so that the digestive juices cannot pervade it, nor too fluid so as to relax the coats of the stomach; nor must it be so concentrated as to over-exert the part of the stomach on which it lies, leaving the rest idle, and being at the same time insufficient to satisfy one of the causes of hunger—viz., the desire for distension. To suit it, then, for all these purposes, cooking is necessary—an art almost unknown in this country to the mass of the people. Cookery is meant to break up the fibres and render food tender, and not to decompose it, or deprive it of any of its elements."

"An eminent Physician" does not despise good cooking, neither does any one in theory, but in practice many allow bad cookery—it is less trouble. Is not that the secret? A little less trouble for the cook, decidedly less trouble for those who have to battle with the cook. But, on the other hand, it is wasteful every way, wasteful of good material, wasteful of precious health, wasteful of proper enjoyment. I take back the remark, "It is a little less trouble." Is it not multiplying trouble manifold?

The feeding of Hospital Nurses has been for some years a difficult subject, and yet it is only like the proverbial bull which wants taking by the

horns. Determination to have better cooking and serving, and greater variety, with greater economy, are all that is needed. There is fearful waste of good material at present. As great care should be insisted upon, in the cooking and serving of the Nurses' simple meals, as is insisted upon for the meals of the officers. Tidiness and carefulness should be insisted upon, in the use of everything placed upon the Nurses' tables. There should *always* be a superintendent of some sort to preside at *every* meal, and she should preside and carve as carefully and daintily as she would at a nicely served meal at her own home; and the Nurses should not accept nor help themselves to more food than they really want, any more than they would in their own homes. Why is one large helping, the rule in almost every Hospital? If it be to save time, there is no need to save time in this way; half-an-hour, at least, should be spent over dinner. If it be only to spare trouble, there is no excuse for the plan, it results in waste of half the food. The capricious appetite often flies away at the sight of the large plateful, whereas a small nicely-cooked and nicely-carved plate of meat would be appetising. Let the carver carve smaller plates, let no Nurse accept more than she feels disposed to eat, and let the rule be a second helping, if anyone will take it. Let there be cheerful talk during meals; and at dinner, two kinds of vegetables and a pudding, or something in its place. The carver, the cheerful talk, and the full half-hour are as much to be insisted upon as greater variety and better cooking and serving. The cheerful talk at dinner is as indispensable for digestion as is the pinch of salt in almost every dish. Dr. Carpenter says, "Salt is not a mere casual adjunct to our necessary food, it is in itself an indispensable ingredient of our diet." The salt of cheerfulness is equally necessary, and the best of all time for pleasant general talk, is the time of meals. It has been said, we should have at least three laughs during dinner, and certainly everyone is bound to contribute a share of agreeable talk, good humoured and cheerful. Nurses have regular meals, they might have comfort and good order, these three things conduce in a great degree to real and satisfactory enjoyment; as a rule there need be no hurry and no confusion, and the mind, too, may be free from anxiety, for in a well-organised Hospital there are always Nurses left with the patients.

(To be concluded in our next.)

LADIES having a connection among Hospitals, Nursing and similar Institutions, or interested in Nursing work in London and the provinces, can increase their incomes by obtaining subscribers for an important new weekly and monthly publication. Liberal commission.—Apply, by letter only, to Manager, "Nursing Record," St. Dunstan's House, Fetter Lane, London.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)