

Cold ham, fried bacon and eggs, curry, rissoles, mince, boiled eggs, and fried fish, with occasionally cold meat, make sufficient variety for their breakfast; and after prayers, each Nurse produces a plate, and receives something to cook for her midnight meal, a similar supply of which is given her to carry up to the Sister and Staff Nurse of her Ward, as provision for their breakfast. This may consist one night of eggs, another of ham, fish (dried or fresh), occasionally varied by cold corned beef (the latter, of course, is cooked), or any other suitable breakfast dish. After this, the Night Nurse has to provide for herself during the night, and she is fortunate if she can cook and eat her supper undisturbed.

At nine a.m. the arduous duties are over; her patients are in apple-pie order for the day, and she is at leisure to change her dress, and repair to the Home for dinner, which meal ought to be prepared with even more care than that of the Day Nurses. The same kind of dinners do for both, with perhaps soup less frequently, and puddings about five days in the week.

I do not know whether this essay is intended to comprise a *scale* of diet, as well as a *scheme* of diet, but I daresay it will be useful to compute the average consumption of each member of the Nursing Staff, and the probable cost of maintenance. I only purpose doing this, however, in the chief articles of which the food is composed; as it will be evident, at a glance, that one cannot compute the amount of, say, sugar and flavouring in a pudding, without giving the recipe; and as one of the points on which I insist most strongly is variety, I might almost as well compile a cookery book at once.

Average supply of groceries per week, for breakfast and tea, per head: Tea, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.; sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.; butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Bread, 1 lb. per diem, or rather more when it is provided for supper (say about 8 lb. or 9 lb. a week, including lunch and dinner). One egg or 6 oz. meat, or $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of fish, with 1 oz. syrup each, for lunch; milk or coffee, half a pint. For dinner: $\frac{3}{4}$ pt. of soup, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. meat, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. potatoes, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb., or less, of other vegetables; meat and vegetables in same proportion as above, with rice or sago, 2 oz.; milk, half a pint; half an egg, sugar, and flavouring, for pudding. Beer, half a pint. For supper: $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. butter and 1 oz. cheese, or 2 oz. jam, with coffee or milk, half a pint; or oatmeal, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb., and milk, half a pint; or rice, 2 oz., and milk, half a pint; with sugar about 1 oz.

The above computation for lunch and supper is only intended to apply to the Probationers who take their meals *en masse*. I have already referred to the weekly amount to be given to the Sisters and Staff Nurses, who take theirs separately; and the *daily* portion assigned to them, and the

Night Nurses, for consumption in the Wards, may be in the same proportion as that provided for the Probationers' lunch. Two pints of milk each is about the amount consumed per diem, including breakfast and tea and pudding, besides lunch, and supper.

This scale of diet can be provided, with care and good management, at from ten to twelve shillings per week each.

It is not intended that the above proportions should be laid down as a rule, but merely as a guide; for the Nurses ought never to feel that they are limited to food, and it will frequently happen that there is too much of one article allowed, and not enough of another; but that is a matter of detail, and can always be arranged between the Home Superintendent and the Steward, or whoever has the management of the food supply.

There is still another class of the Nursing Staff to be found now in many of the larger Hospitals, whose food we have not yet considered—namely, the Paying Probationers. There are different ways of managing for them. In some Hospitals, they do exactly the same work, and have the same hours on duty, as the ordinary Probationers, in which cases their food is the same, and served the same hours as theirs; and I believe, at the conclusion of their training, they are guaranteed employment, so that they receive, as it were, an equivalent for the money they have expended. But, again, at others, the Lady Probationers are looked upon as "extras," and neither go to the Ward so early, nor have such long hours on duty, as the others.

I do not advocate this kind of training, as it is much easier for a Sister to see at a glance if her Ward is in perfect order, and to train her Probationers, if she has had, in her earlier days, to do the same dusting and polishing herself. However, this is beside the mark; and, of course, it suits many, who would not be strong enough to go through the ordinary course. So, as we find them thus, we must consider how best they may be catered for. If there is a considerable number, and they have separate accommodation, it will be found more convenient to provide their meals at different hours; and, as they pay a guinea a week for maintenance, are entitled to more delicate fare than the ordinary Probationers. For instance, while the best salt butter is provided for the latter, the former should have fresh. They may also be allowed jam for tea, and rolls for breakfast. When they do not go to the Wards until eight o'clock, seven-thirty is the breakfast hour. There ought to be both tea and coffee on the table, and one or two nice breakfast dishes, say, sausages and buttered eggs, one day; fried ham and eggs, and fish, another, and so on.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)