

years, two pints of milk, and one pint of *good* beef-tea, in the absence of other food, will be a sufficiency. There has been, of late, so much attention paid to diet, as an agent in the treatment of disease, and so many varied forms of food introduced, either peptonised or malted, that the Nurse of the present day must add some knowledge of sick cookery to her curriculum before she can consider herself fully equipped for her duties.

A SCHEME OF DIETS FOR THE NURSING STAFF OF A HOSPITAL OR INFIRMARY.

BY "A SISTER."

WITHOUT attempting the impossible—namely, the laying down of unalterable rules—I, briefly, and as clearly and definitely as possible, will try to explain the details of a plan which would, I believe, promote the order, comfort, and healthfulness of "diets for Nurses."

Of course, in some Hospitals, there is a Steward, or Store-keeper, who caters for the entire staff; whilst in others a Housekeeper, or Matron, fulfils this very important office; and undoubtedly it is a most important office, inasmuch as the comfort, health, and general well-being of an entire staff depend in a large measure upon the home, and domestic administration.

However the food is supplied, I maintain that, if the supplies are regulated by the Housekeeper, or whoever superintends these domestic matters, more variety could be allowed, at the same cost; and certainly the plan would give more satisfaction to the Nurses themselves.

Here I might say, that the housekeeping capabilities of Matron or Superintendent of Nurses is most desirable. In a large institution, where she has able assistance, constant supervision is perhaps not really requisite; but, in all cases, the frequent attention to *all* domestic details—no matter how trivial they may appear—is undoubtedly good for her subordinates. If they are good, and ready to meet her wishes, they will readily welcome her advice and care; and, if they are not good—well, they certainly require it, for the general comfort of those under her charge.

In the next place there must be a strict economy practised with regard to waste—all bones and gravy must be carefully utilized for soups, stews, &c.

The amount of food supplied, too, varies considerably in different Hospitals. In a large provincial Poor-Law Infirmary, the weekly supply, per head, is as follows:—7lb. beef, mutton, veal or

pork, $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cheese, 7lb. bread, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. tea (or $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. coffee and 2oz. tea), 1lb. loaf sugar, 4oz. moist, 3 eggs, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. bacon, 1lb. flour, 4 quarts of milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. currants or raisins, 1lb. oatmeal, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. rice, sago, or tapioca, 7lb. potatoes; salad, vegetables, twice each week; also fruit as in season; spices, jam, occasionally; no stimulants.

Now, from such a liberal supply, and with a staff of, say, sixty Nurses, it is a very easy matter to arrange a varied dietary—and this is not by any means an exceptional one.

With regard to the quantity of animal food, I should suggest that a smaller supply be issued, and something else substituted, such as fruit or green vegetables. I ought to say that the *quality* of the food should be excellent; the bread freshly baked, at least three times a week; milk, fresh morning and evening; and, as I before said, a constant strict economy practised, by those in office, to prevent the waste so very common in all large institutions.

This can only be done by a careful and personal supervision over the kitchen and its workers. Cooks have generally a rooted aversion to anything approaching trouble, or personal discomfort, and unless we start with a clear knowledge of what we want done, and of how it has to be done, it is little use contending with the authorities of the kitchen.

We will suppose that we have sixty Nurses and Probationers to provide for. First, as to serving. We should have two separate dinners, and if we have a large dining-room containing two tables, both may be laid beforehand, for Nurses and Probationers. The linen must be spotless, glass and cutlery brilliant, and at least during the summer months (and with very little extra expense all the year) a few flowers, or plants arranged tastefully upon either table.

I would here give a hint to the carver. Have the knife well sharpened before beginning; it expedites the work, and is, on the ground of economy and other considerations, most desirable.

I will give a dietary for the week:—

SUNDAY.—*Dinner*—Cold beef, mutton, pork occasionally when in season; pickles or salad; mashed potatoes; fruit tarts. *Supper*—Cold meat, cheese, pickles or salad; bread; home-made lemonade makes a pleasant summer drink.

MONDAY.—*Dinner*—Hashed meat, made with any remains of cold meat, flavoured with onion, carrots, &c.; roast mutton, onion sauce; potatoes, cabbage; milk puddings. *Supper*—Oatmeal porridge, syrup treacle; milk; potato hash.

TUESDAY.—*Dinner*—Pea soup; boiled beef; carrots, turnips, potatoes; fruit or fruit tarts. *Supper*—Cold meat; cheese, pickles, bread; milk puddings.

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