

Note on Corneal Grafting Act, 1952.

THE CORNEAL GRAFTING ACT, 1952, received the Royal Assent on June 26th. The Act makes it possible for people to have their eyes used for corneal grafting after their death, if they wish this to be done. This is an operation which gives a good chance of restoring sight in certain types of blindness. It must be pointed out, however, that only a minority of blind people can be helped in this way. The Act will not come into force for another three months, in order to give the hospital authorities time to organise their arrangements.

Meanwhile, those who wish to offer their eyes for use after their death should take the following steps :

1. Make a written statement of their wish that their eyes should be used for therapeutic purposes after their death ;
2. Give it to their family or anyone else with whom they live ;
3. Give a copy also to any executors appointed to carry out their Will ;
4. Inform the authorities of any hospital which they may enter as an in-patient of their wish that their eyes should be used after death for this purpose.

These are the positive steps which can be taken and letters to the Ministry or to local hospitals should not be encouraged since they can only elicit similar advice.

There is not the slightest danger that anyone who does not wish his eyes to be used will have them taken. Eyes may not be removed under the Act if the patient has objected before his death or—unless the patient has asked positively that his eyes be used—if any of his family has expressed objection.

There is only a limited number of hospitals at which corneal grafting operations can be undertaken. While every effort will be made to take advantage of any offers made, in some circumstances it may be difficult to do so and in such cases the family should ask the advice of the doctor in attendance at the time.

Seventeenth Century Housekeeping.

THE PRICES OF THINGS in the time of Charles II may be found interesting.

In considering them one has to remember that the general purchasing power of money was then four times that of the present time. A leg of mutton would cost 2s. 6d. ; " a cheese," they had one each week, weight not stated, varied from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 8d.

Butter would be 8d. or 9d. a pound ; and about one pound would be used each week. Sugar was 6d. a pound.

Flour would be bought by sixpennyworths, and coals would be bought in small quantities for 1s. 6d. each week. Fires were principally kept going with wood. Once a month the washerwoman would be called in and sheets were washed ; therefore, the washing was all done at home.

Raisins and currants at 2d. a pound, eggs, nutmeg, ginger, mace, rice and suet proclaimed the pudding. It was made in fifty different ways, but the ingredients were always the same. Cakes also were made, and pies, both fruit and meat pies, and open tarts. These were all sent to the bakehouse to be baked at 1d. each, so that the kitchen contained no oven. Candles were 5d. a pound.

Herrings were bought nearly every week, and sometimes ling—" a pole of Ling."

Bacon was 7d. a pound, rice also. Oranges came in about December ; cherries in their season were 2d. a pound ; gooseberries, 4d., sold by the measure ; peas, 6d. a peck ; beans, 4d. a quart ; asparagus (" sparragrasse ") was in

April excessively dear, as now, perhaps 6s. 2d., a most extravagant expenditure for a single dish in those days. Two weeks later it would be down to 1s. 6d. for 200. A " sallet," that is a lettuce, would be 1d.

In the household accounts of these times, one finds, once in six weeks, mention of " earbs," that is, thyme, sage, rosemary, etc., for 2d. " Cowcumber " are a 1d. apiece and a favourite vegetable.

Radishes, carrots, turnips, French beans are also mentioned as being bought.

In the spring cream cheese appears.

They pickled everything ; walnuts, gherkins, asparagus, peaches, cauliflowers, plums, nectarines, onions, lemons, barberries, mushrooms, nasturtium buds, lime tree buds, oysters, samphire and elder roots.

They distilled rose buds and rose leaves, lavender, walnut water and cherry water. They always had plague water handy, hysterical water, and other fine remedies. They " jarred " cherries, quinces, hops, apricots, damsons and peaches. They made pleasing syrups.

They knew how to keep green peas, green gooseberries, asparagus and damsons until Christmas.

They made wine out of all the fruits in season ; the act still survives though our clubmen turn up their noses at the delicate cowslip, the stimulating ginger, and the dainty raspberry—a dessert wine.

Everything was potted from pigeon to venison. Nothing is said of these in the account books but the large quantity of vinegar bought every week shows the activity in the pickling department.

Only once is there any mention of spirits. It is when a bottle of brandy is bought at 1s. 2d.

Very little milk was bought. This may have been because their own dairy supplied them and perhaps milk was only used very occasionally in the house.

The food of very young children, infants after they were weaned, was not then milk but pap, which seems to have been a compound of flour, sugar, and water.

There is no mention in the accounts of tea, coffee, or chocolate. Tea was already a fashionable drink but the price of 60s. a pound placed it beyond the reach of the ordinary household. Coffee was much cheaper ; at the coffee houses it was sold at a 1d. a cup but was not used in private houses.

Turning aside from the subject of food, schooling for J. S. was 2d. a week. His shoes were 1s. 9d. the pair. The cobbler was Goodman Archer ; Goody Archer was his wife. A letter cost 2d. or 4d. Everything ordered or bought was brought by the carrier which greatly increased expense. A lady's gloves cost 2s. a pair, her silk stockings 10s. and ordinary stockings 6s. a pair ; her shoes 3s. ; her mask 1s. Her pattens for muddy weather 2s. a pair. Knitting needles cost 1d. each ; steel bodkins 2d., needles, 8d. the half-hundred ; pins, 9d. a thousand ; ribbons 3d. a yard.

On one occasion, only once, it is recorded that the family bought a book. Only one, and then it was so expensive that they could never afford another. This is the entry : " Paid a gentleman for a book £3 10s. 0d." What book could be worth 70s. in the year 1678 one asks in wonder—that is £15 in present-day money.

The menu of a dinner is preserved in Pepys. Everything was served at once.

They had marrow bones, a leg of mutton, three pullets, and a dozen larks in one dish, a tart, a neat's tongue, anchovies and a dish of peaches, and cheese. This was for 13 persons.

The dishes were served in pewter as they are still for the students in the hall of Lincoln's Inn. Supper of which there is little mention, was like breakfast, but not quite so solid.

After supper a tankard of ale.

In the winter there was a posset or a toasted crab in the jug.

A. R. B.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)