

"To the brutalities of the Emperor she opposed the most dignified deportment well made to inspire sympathy, without allowing sympathy to degenerate into pity and disesteem. At the famous banquet, where the Emperor flung at her the word "Fool!" she let some tears be seen just enough to touch the hearts of those who witnessed the painful scene; then turning immediately to Count Stragonof, who was standing behind her chair, she begged him to tell her something merry, to make her laugh and distract people's attention."

One day, three weeks later, when Catherine was sleeping, 'Alexis Orlof,' one of her lovers, entered her room at five o'clock in the morning, and said to her, "It is time to get up. Everything is ready for your proclamation." She dressed herself hurriedly, and jumped into the coach that had brought Orlof, and the vehicle set out a headlong speed for St. Petersburg.

Thus, to reign despotically over the vastest empire in the world, arrived Catherine between six and seven in the morning, brought by peasants, conducted by her lover, and accompanied only by her maid and her coiffeur.

The following July 18th, Peter was slain, and how it came about is still a mystery—for Russian walls are thick, and Russian tongues are silent.

Catherine says of herself, "To tell the truth, I have never fancied myself extremely beautiful, but I had the gift of pleasing, and that was my greatest gift." But one is tempted to believe that she deliberately underrated her charms, when one reads the unanimous opinions of her contemporaries. With all her veneer of French philosophy, Catherine was, at heart, a barbarian; her strangely dual personality is well indicated in the second volume of this interesting history. She governed Russia with the genius and might of a man, while in her various *liaisons* she proved as promiscuous as any Parisian cocotte. She was cruel and impulsive, but she was also brave and fearless; and posterity may pardon her sins, for the sake of her barbaric vitality and large-hearted diplomacy.

Review.

"FOOD for the Sick," by Mary Truman, M.R.B.N.A., and Edith Sykes, A.S.I., County Council Lecturers (The Record Press, Limited, 376, Strand. Price, Threepence). Anything that will arouse English Nurses to the fact that without a knowledge of sick cookery, they are very imperfectly trained, will be of immense use to the profession and the public. The authors of this excellent little work remark in the preface, on Diet, that "many a patient is lost by the incompetence of the Nurse in not knowing how to prepare and administer the right food at the proper time." This is so true, that we welcome the publication of "Food for the Sick," as for a small sum those Nurses, who are placed in the common position of attending upon an invalid in lodgings or elsewhere, where the cooking is elementary, can, from its many receipts, teach herself to make many little simple dainties, which will tempt the appetite of her patient. We note some excellent advice about "milk"-cocoa, tea and coffee made with boiling milk instead of water, are palatable and nourishing. Cold tea with cream, given early in the morning, is good for consumptive patients after profuse sweats. Beef-tea for babies. Very young children do not like salt, therefore, when beef-tea is ordered for an infant, use sugar instead of salt. We specially commend the numerous excellent receipts for drinks.

Letters to the Editor.

The Editor begs to convey her warmest thanks to all those kind friends who have made Christmas so bright and happy a season to her, by their kind letters and lovely gifts.

THE OTHER SIDE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I have been very interested in the Nurses' pay, &c. Now, I have been a Private Nurse fully sixteen years. I have spent between four and five years in an Institution, salary £25 per year. I then worked on my own account about six years. I have always done well, and had a very fair amount of work. Now, the last three or four years I have been in an Institution at £30 per year. I feel it my duty to warn Nurses who are so anxious to receive their own fees. I am better off in every way with £30 per year. When I leave a case I know I have a comfortable home to go to. However long I am in the Home I need not worry, I know my salary is sure; there is no need for anxiety. When I received my own fees the anxiety was dreadful if a case did not come quickly; in fact, if I was a fortnight in the Home my nerves were in such a state that I was scarcely able to work when I had the chance, and I know for a fact it is the case with half the Nurses who receive their own fees. I know a great many Nurses, and I am satisfied that those living in an Institution are far happier than those who receive their own fees, only they must grumble. The only really satisfied Nurses are the gamps who can go to some lying-in Hospital for a month or two, and then demand the same fees as qualified women. I allow, if the Institution is not a really comfortable one, the Nurse would be better in lodgings.—Yours, &c.

S. S.

INFECTION CARRIED BY THE BREATH.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—In one of the medical journals a few weeks back, doctors were warned as to how infection may be carried in the breath, and surely if doctors need to take precautions against infection for themselves and for their patients, Nurses, who are their hands and eyes, must take equal care. Formerly it was considered sufficient to cleanse the skin and hair thoroughly, and to change the dress in order to insure safety from spreading disease; but the fact now before us that the breath itself of Doctor or Nurse may carry infection is a very terrible idea. Death has actually been brought to patients by the attendants breathing over them infected breath, when all possible precautions had been taken, as was supposed, to prevent the approach of poison. Just imagine the horror of a Nurse's breath being charged with the germs of death! This sounds strong, perhaps, but it will frequently prove a truth, unless every Nurse takes up the matter and says, "My breath, at any rate, shall be germ free." To keep herself in health, and to prevent harm coming both to her patients and her friends, every Nurse should see to it that her lungs are daily (and, if possible, more frequently still) recharged with fresh air. Daily exercises in the open air is an absolute duty, and must be taken as a duty if it cannot be taken as a pleasure. It is a great temptation to lie down and read in off duty time, but it must be a matter of conscience to go out first, that she may breathe fresh air, purify her blood, keep herself in health, prevent the wilful spread of disease, and do her duty faithfully. "Steadfast and true," not in word, but in deed. True to herself for the good of others. Steadfast in taking all possible means to work her work faithfully.—Yours, &c.,

Cambridge.

L. B.

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