

cause the meat in many instances is not good, in many more because it is not properly cooked, and in either case is unfit for consumption. There is little or no change in the diet at most Hospitals. Joint follows joint—or as our contemporary's correspondent complains, pork succeeds pork—with wearisome iteration, while the jaded body and mind, above all things, requires variety to tempt the appetite. The result of all of which is that, at most Hospitals, Nurses undoubtedly do not obtain the amount of food which is essential for their health. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the importance of this matter. We commend it to the earnest consideration of Hospital Committees, feeling confident that they are unaware of the facts of the case, but knowing them, will at once recognise their responsibility in the matter, and inquire into it as it affects their individual Institutions, and take immediate steps to remedy such defects as they may then discover.

### A GUIDE TO MEDICAL AND SURGICAL NURSING.\*

THE special part of a Nurse's training can be acquired nowhere but in a Hospital. Such accomplishments as bedmaking, and the like, it is obviously possible to obtain in many other places.

There is no doubt that, to whatever Hospital you go, you will receive very excellent practical instructions, from the Sisters and Nurses under whom you may be placed, in the various services required of you.

You will be taught to wait upon the Surgeons during their visits to the Wards, and to assist them and the dressers in the dressing of wounds, &c. ; and, as time goes on, you will probably, in many Hospitals, at least, have important dressings confided to your sole care. You will learn also to attend in the Operating Theatre, and to make yourself useful when there ; and you will likewise have to perform many minor Surgical and Medical operations yourself.

For all these, special and personal teaching is absolutely necessary. For this reason I repeat that the special and technical part of a Nurse's training can only be acquired by actual Hospital experience. But you will, nevertheless, learn a great deal more easily, if you have some idea beforehand of what you are about to see and to hear, as well as some general knowledge of the why and the wherefore of the various processes into which you are about to be initiated ; and, especially,

\* These articles are partially from the pen of the late Miss Alice Fisher, and will eventually be published in book form, being revised by Rachel Norris.

if the scientific words you will hear used convey some idea to your mind, instead of being spoken, as it were, in an unknown tongue.

Nearly every Hospital nowadays possesses a library for the use of the Nurses ; while you, no doubt, have access to a medical dictionary,\* and if you daily look out these few fresh words, and study their full meaning carefully, you will insensibly acquire a fund of knowledge, which you will find very valuable when your real Hospital work commences. When you have once acquired a knowledge of the commoner technical terms you will stand no chance of forgetting them, as in the course of your Ward-work you will constantly hear them repeated.

#### CHAPTER I.—ANATOMY.

I SHOULD like now to proceed to give such a general idea of anatomy and physiology as will enable you to be intelligent Nurses, and not mere machines.

To begin with, it will be well that you should first of all know the exact meaning of the word *anatomy*. It comes from a Greek word, which means literally dissection, or cutting up, and it generally implies the art of dissecting any animal body to discover exactly its structure.

Before going any further into the subject of anatomy—which, I may here remark, I do not presume to do in the broad and comprehensive manner of those whose duty it is to teach Medical Students—I wish you to obtain, firstly, a thorough and clear idea of the structure of the human skeleton, which is the frame-work of bone that supports the rest of the body.

The bones of the skeleton are for protection and locomotion. Thus, the skull protects the brain ; the ribs and breast-bone, the heart and lungs ; while the vertebræ defends the spinal cord, a prolongation of the brain.

Bone is composed of animal and earthy matters. The earthy matter gives the bone its hardness, the animal its toughness.

In the bones of children the animal, or gelatinous, part is so much more abundant than the earthy or mineral matter, that, instead of breaking, they are apt to twist or bend like a green branch. In grown-up people, and especially in the aged, the proportion of earthy matter is, on the contrary, much greater, and the bones being, consequently, more brittle, they are liable to snap like a dry branch.

*Blood vessels* are found in bones ; hence the living bone has a reddish colour, owing to the blood in the vessels. *Nerves* are also necessary for the composition of bone. The brain is the great centre of the nervous system, from whence the

\* "Hoblyn's Medical Dictionary" is a most valuable possession for every Nurse.

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