

that the teacher has received. The material used by the class is, in most cases, extra. In one school the estimated cost of the class instruction at the nurses' home, was from eight to nine dollars per lesson. This included the teacher's salary and the materials used. Three schools stated that class instruction, given to the pupils by the superintendent of nurses, or by the housekeeper, was estimated to cost from fifty to seventy-five cents for each lesson. One school pays twenty-five dollars for twelve lessons for a class of eight nurses at cooking school, and five dollars for material for each lesson. Another school sends a class of twelve nurses to cooking school, and pays seventy-five dollars for the course.

It was more difficult to get an estimate of the cost of maintaining the diet-kitchen per week. In almost every instance the cost of supplies and working expense were included in the general running expenses of the hospital; no separate account made, the diet-kitchen being considered a part of the hospital.

The cost varies greatly in each institution, depending on the number of private patients: very serious cases, the character of the work of the hospital, whether an active service (acute cases), or a mixed (acute and chronic).

As a matter of fact, is a diet-kitchen, managed by a member of the training school, a source of expense? A certain number of special dishes must be prepared at all times, and it seems reasonable to think that an intelligent nurse would use supplies more economically, and with less waste, than an ordinary cook. The wages are less or about the same; only so much would be prepared as was ordered; the service, surely, ought to be more satisfactory with the food better cooked, better prepared, better served, and always on time.

In the rush of getting out meals in a general kitchen, the time and attention given to details cannot, of course, be paid to this question, as in a smaller and quieter place.

In one hospital containing two-hundred beds, the cost of the diet-kitchen was estimated as twenty-two dollars weekly.

In another of 225, and still another of 275 beds, where all the special and liquid diets ordered were prepared in the diet-kitchen, nothing going to the wards from the general kitchen but the regular house, farinaceous, and plain milk diets; the estimated cost was from forty to sixty dollars per week.

Many special articles of food are prepared, and the patients receive all their diet from this kitchen, until they are able to take more substantial food.

In one diet-kitchen the teacher receives thirty dollars per month. The material used is estimated at three dollars per week. In this school the instructor is well trained in her line of work; she gives class instruction as well as lectures,

The length of time the nurse remains in the diet-kitchen varies from three weeks to three months. In class instruction she receives from six to twenty-four lessons.

Nurses usually receive this instruction during the second year. Probably it will be given during the third year in those schools which have adopted the three years' course.

The orders on the diet-kitchen are sometimes given by the superintendent of nurses, but generally by the member of the Hospital Staff on duty, or by the Internes.

The chief difficulties in starting a diet-kitchen seem to be the inability to provide a suitable room, fitted out with the necessary equipment, and to secure a teacher of ability at a moderate salary. The probable expense, and the limited finances of most hospitals, make it difficult to increase the nursing staff, in order to have a sufficient number to keep one nurse on duty in the diet kitchen, giving her undivided time to this branch of a nurse's practical instruction.

These difficulties form some of the chief obstacles that the superintendent of nurses has to contend with when she brings the need of a diet-kitchen to the attention of her board of trustees.

On the other hand there are advantages to be derived from a well organized, practical diet-kitchen. It relieves the general kitchen of the troublesome details which interfere, in a great measure, with the preparation and serving of the regular meals; in this way it is an invaluable help.

One superintendent replies that the diet-kitchen has been "an economy to a considerable extent, and a source of help and comfort in that greatest of trials and essentials, hospital diet and fare." Another claims the above, and adds that "there has been less friction in the hospital, and fewer complaints from patients and their friends" (an item worth remembering) "since the diet-kitchen was established some five years ago."

Class and lecture instruction, with practical demonstrations, are of some benefit perhaps, but can this be of permanent benefit? What the nurse prepares over and over again; the interest she takes to tempt the appetite of her patient, who has a distaste for any kind of food, will stimulate energies to greater effort to provide something that shall be taken and enjoyed, and which shall nourish the patient. To cook efficiently and to furnish proper food is an art which is only acquired by practice.

Then, shall the cost of the introduction of a diet-kitchen be considered too great an obstacle to be overcome by hospitals that promise a regular course of training to their accepted applicants, which shall make them efficient in the art of nursing?

*(To be continued).*

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