

my particular difficulties. I have tried to write from a general point of view.

There is no need for exaggeration in the matter, it is one for calm and sane consideration, and though sure that in many hospitals the nurses are not fed really well and *adequately*, I do not believe that there are many now in which they are fed *badly*.

That the food is not always satisfying is shown in eagerness to obtain other food, the frequency with which it is supplemented even by nurses with very little money to spare. Hunger does not seem to be really appeased and the same nurse who has groaned at "everlasting beef and mutton" at mid-day, may be heard towards evening to express a craving for a "good meat meal," grown women appear to return to their school-days, when a hamper from home was eagerly looked for.

That it is not always to the taste of the consumers is shown by the great pleasure given by an occasional luxury, and by the addition of pickles, vinegar, and large quantities of pepper, salt, and mustard (or with puddings, sugar) to "help it down." It is remarkable how much sugar will sometimes be taken by women who have formerly had no liking for sweets.

No one in hospital deserves more sympathy and encouragement than does the housekeeper, and no one receives more undeserved blame than she, undeserved because she is often expected to do the impossible, *i.e.*, to please everyone, in spite of inconvenient kitchens, inefficient kitchen staff, and limited expenditure.

I like to think, what I am sure is fact, that the improvement which has taken place of late years is due in very small degree, if at all, to complaints from nurses themselves. They are usually wonderfully contented, and loyal to their training schools. It is due much more to the fact that for some years past Matrons have been fully trained nurses themselves, and remember the strain and fatigue of the three or four years' training and the places where the "shoe pinched" most. We have come to a stage when we may with advantage unite to educate public opinion on the matter, for until we have uprooted the idea that nurses can be adequately fed on something considerably less than 1s. a day per head, we cannot do very much more. I say *adequately* because it is, of course, possible to feed a woman on less, but it is doubtful if it can be done really well for one who expends as much mental and physical energy on her daily work as does a nurse in a busy hospital.

I believe that really good and varied plain food can be supplied at the rate of 1s. a day per head (at any rate in large institutions), pro-

vided the housekeeper has time to devote to inspection and supervision, and that the cook knows how to cook and has time to do it properly. Some think 1s. a day too much, but, taking all the drawbacks of a nurse's life into consideration, I cannot think so. A nurse has to perform duties which tax each muscle and strain every nerve, not on one occasion, but day after day. She begins her training with the ordinary strength of a girl of 20 and odd years, and with absolutely no knowledge of the theory or practice of nursing. Muscle and brain must alike develop rapidly if she is to attain to even a moderate standard of efficiency in three years. She therefore requires a greater amount of nourishment than she would had she remained at home, leading an ordinary quiet home life. A man who is preparing for great exertion in the way of sports or races is carefully trained and dieted. He would be thought foolish to compete otherwise. The same sort of consideration, in modified degree, should be devoted to the physical training of a probationer. As to what kind of food would be most suitable for this purpose, how should I dare to give an opinion on a matter where doctors disagree. One advocates "more proteid," another "less proteid," another an increased supply of 'carbo-hydrates,' and while one says "give plenty of fats," another says "reduce them." One advises light, easily-digested meals given frequently, and another briefly expresses the opinion that nurses should be fed "like fighting cocks." We might, however, study with advantage some of the modern works on dietetics, written by men who have devoted themselves to the subject, and whose theories have been confirmed by chemical and physiological research. With scientific knowledge added to common sense we might arrive at more satisfactory results, and the study is an interesting one.

It is well known that the new probationer thinks that she does the lion's share of the work of a ward, but we know that she is really not doing as much as the senior nurses. Her muscles, being flabby, she finds it hard, and does it slowly, and she has no energy to spare for developing her mental powers, so that she is usually found to be forgetful and unobservant. As her physical powers become accustomed to doing the work more easily and quickly, her powers of observation and memory begin to develop. The mental strain and the responsibility increase with each promotion, and nurses are often observed to get thinner as the final examination draws near. The output of energy all the time is very great.

After reading some treatises on food, we can almost imagine that as we become more en-

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