

PROFESSIONAL REVIEW.

FIRST STEPS IN DIETETICS.*

We are slowly beginning to understand the extreme importance of dietetics both in relation to the treatment of the sick and in keeping those who are well in health, and the publication by Dr. J. Neil Leitch, M.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H., D.T.M. and H. (Eng.) of twelve lectures, entitled "First Steps in Dietetics," is timely. The booklet may be obtained from the London School of Dietetics, 20-22, Chenies Street, London, W.C., price 1s. and is attractively produced and clearly printed.

Dr. Leitch states that "dietetics may be defined as the science of nutrition, considered in its wider aspect. Many other branches of science are intimately connected with and dependent on it. Chemistry, bacteriology, physiology and anatomy, as well as pathology and medicine, all stand in relation to it, and it is probably owing to the complexity of the problems associated with it that dietetics is so variably interpreted and so many incorrect notions hold sway.

"There are certain fundamental facts which establish the importance of food. The cells of man's body are constantly being destroyed and renewed. The new elements have to come from the food, and if the food is lacking in any one constituent, renewal will be incomplete, It is a case of having kept the law in all points but one, yet being labelled guilty in common with one who has broken all points. Body growth and decay has been compared to a large building in which repairs and demolitions are constantly going on in different parts. Lack of an essential dietary-constituent is equivalent to lack of mortar, bricks, plaster, wood or iron. The builder needs all to make a sound building, but, like the body, he may of necessity incorporate unsound material. The structure may appear satisfactory, but it gives way when the strain comes."

Physiology, the Composition of Diet, Milk and Milk Products, Meat and Fish, Eggs and Cereals, Fruit and Vegetables, are severally discussed. Diet Tables are suggested for working class families who desire to economise as much as possible, and at the same time obtain an all-round and healthy diet.

A wise warning is given that "when using tables for dietary calculations care should be taken to see that they are up to date. For example, the research work carried out for the Medical Research Council by McCance and Lawrence has entirely altered the carbo-hydrate value of foodstuffs, although many books on diets for diabetes adhere to other figures which are misleading."

The concluding lectures deal with the Feeding of Children, Diabetes and Deficiency Diseases, and In Gout and Rheumatism.

"It has been suggested," the author writes, "that the school tuck box should not be allowed by any self-respecting school, simply because it condemns the administration and dietary of that school. A parent has the right to insist that his child should be well and properly fed if at boarding school. Should this be fulfilled, a tuck box would become not only unnecessary, but positively harmful.

"The feeding of children, even at the best of the public schools, at the present time is very far from what it ought to be. It is quite exceptional to employ a properly trained dietitian, and, as we saw in our first paper, these school-masters and mistresses are building into the bodies of their pupils defective material which will inevitably result in future breakdowns."

Very briefly we have indicated the scope of the booklet. We commend it to our readers and would urge upon them the primary importance of the study of dietetics.

* The Cornwall Press, Ltd., London, S.E.1.

MATERIA MEDICA FOR NURSES.

The "Materia Medica for Nurses" by A. Muir Crawford, M.D., F.R.F.P.S.G., Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics at St. Mungo's College, Glasgow, and Physician to the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, is so admirable that we are not surprised it has been necessary to publish a second edition.

The author in his preface to the first edition states that his object has been to present a short summary of the elements of materia medica, which it is hoped may be helpful to members of the nursing profession, not only for examination purposes, but also as a handy book of reference after qualification.

Only those drugs in common daily use have been considered, with their important preparations, doses, actions and uses. No attempt has been made to present a complete list of drugs, but to present a short summary of the elements of materia medica suitable for the nursing profession. In this the wisdom of the author is evident, for the result is a clear and concise presentment of information and instruction important to both pupil and registered nurses without confusing them with unnecessary details. It is excellently and attractively arranged, and those who master its contents cannot fail to have a clear knowledge of essentials. It will not only be of value to Sister-Tutors in preparing their lectures on materia medica but can confidently be put by them into the hands of their pupils. Unusual information is given at considerable length concerning substances obtained from the animal kingdom—thyroid gland, suprarenal extract, pituitary extract, insulin, liver extract, and cod-liver oil.

Vaccines—prophylactic and curative—and Sera are also discussed.

The present edition has the advantage of being brought up to date in accordance with the revised edition of the British Pharmacopœia published by the General Medical Council in September last.

The book is published by Messrs. H. K. Lewis and Co., Ltd., 136, Gower Street, London, W.C.1, and its price, 3s. 6d. net, brings it within general reach. It will elucidate much which presents difficulties to many nurses studying this very important subject.

SOUTH AFRICAN TRAINED NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

Miss B. G. Alexander, R.R.C. (President of the South African Trained Nurses' Association), has been in London for a few days, passing through to Scotland, before attending in an official capacity the Board of Directors and Grand Council of the I.C.N. in Paris. Her many friends were pleased to welcome her and find her looking so well. Miss Alexander will form one of the group of International Officers and Delegates who will leave London for the Business Meetings in Paris on July 3rd, where a most strenuous programme awaits them. Amendments to the Constitution, Reports of Committees, Finance, the Election of Officers of the Council, Invitations for the Next Place of Meeting, to say nothing of Social Functions.

We learn that South Africa is sending upwards of 20 representatives to the Congress.

WEDDING BELLS.

On May 24th, Miss Phyllis F. Whalley, S.R.N., will be married to Mr. T. Stanley Perkins, at St. Philip's Church, West Green. Miss Whalley, who was trained at the National Temperance Hospital, London, is a Fellow of the British College of Nurses, and has been a most popular member of the Registered Nurses' Association since November, 1930. Her colleagues wish her much happiness in her married life.

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