

I will hold no property of my own without licence and consent of the Warden.

"This done, if he be a male, he will kiss the Brethren, if a female, the Sisters in order. Then let the males be cropped below the ear; or the hair of the women be cut off back to the middle of the neck, and then forward they must be addressed by the name of Brother or Sister."

[Here follows the section dealing with the punishment of offences, which ends with a wise note]:—

"Trivial and daily excesses of the Brethren and Sisters must also be attended to, lest, while they are overlooked, small offences shall become great."

The first, and we may add, the practical part of this unique Statute, finishes with this:—

"The Brothers and Sisters must pray continually or be engaged in work, that the devil may not find them with nothing to do. If they earn anything, let them not conceal or appropriate it, but let it be expended for the common good."*

The writer of the monograph on the Hospital praises these early nurses highly, and even if his eulogy be tinctured with idealism, some grains of truth must still be present. "It is some joy to the Christian heart to see God's poor cared for, however feebly, but it must have been a source of unutterable delight to behold long lines of sick and poor lying on their clean and simple pallets, tended by gentle Sisters, whose holy and happy occupation it was to comfort the afflicted."

Although the Benedictine Order was the oldest and most extensive single monastic Order in England, very little trace indeed remains of any records of the nursing activities of these women. Few, if any, of the large hospitals were served by Benedictine nuns. This may be understood when it is realised that the Benedictine monasteries or convents were rarely founded for any specialised work, but formed a little community, self supporting, in which each member performed any task assigned to her. But the tasks were skilfully chosen according to the Sister's capabilities, and it would be found that a Sister who was "gentle and good tempered, kind and compassionate," was given the office of Infirmarian. One may suppose that not only did she care for the sick in the convent infirmary—each house had one—but she also relieved, as far as she was able, the simple ailments of the conventual tenants and the poor people who came daily to beg at the gate.

The English Benedictine monasteries preserved more than any other that monastic ideal of self abnegation and intelligent service upon which so much of the present ethics of nursing are founded. There was the reasoned and intelligent discipline—perfect like the military discipline, but infused by a more thoughtful and ethical purpose, gaining therefrom a different tradition and one wholly humane. There was the practical efficiency, the cheerful balanced poise, the ability to control the situation, and the entire devotion called to-day "keenness" in professional work. The loss of this system left English nursing in a depth from which secular authorities did little or nothing to rescue it.

It can be clearly seen, therefore, that the nurses in England before the Reformation were very well organised, even if they lacked all that is now understood by "training." The monastic life, with its unceasing supervision, undoubtedly laid the foundations of the present day. For it will be noticed that these medieval nursing sisters all lived under a monastic rule—even those who were not attached to any particular Order.

(To be concluded.)

* Statutes of St. Mary's, Chichester.

"HOSPITAL DIETICIANS: SCIENTISTS OR NURSES."

Lecture by NEIL LEITCH, Esq., M.D., at the British College of Nurses.

Brevity has made this title a little ambiguous, so allow me to explain. By Hospital Dietician, I mean the lady (or gentleman) who arranges the details of the scientific preparation and cooking of food suitable for the needs of those in health or ill-health in a hospital. But by "Scientists or Nurses" I certainly do not wish to suggest that nurses are not scientists. They are and should be. Yet my thesis this afternoon is to claim that art will ever triumph over science, and diet however scientific may fail to win if not supported by art.

Let us first review the need for sound doctrine in dietetics. The general public derive most of their food-notions from the specious words of the advertiser, who assures them that all the desiderata of science are concentrated in some particular product. They are led to consume tinned vitamins and powdered extracts, often at ten times the cost of fresh foods, and yet usually productive of an unbalanced diet.

Other teachers of dietetics content themselves with books, newspaper or magazine articles and occasional lectures, but until lately there has been no authoritative source of information. Domestic science graduates who have qualified in dietetics are few and far between and usually hold posts which entirely restrict their scope.

On the other hand thousands of meals are cooked and distributed every day without the aid of scientific knowledge. In schools particularly this is deplorable, for the future generation is being built of faulty material which will inevitably break down when submitted to strain.

The Food Firms themselves badly need a qualified dietician on their staff. Such firms as milk depots, bacon factories, fruit and canning farms, fish depots and infant food manufacturers are examples. A man or woman with a Diploma in dietetics should have here an interesting field in demonstration and lecture work, making all arrangements for the reception of members of the General Public, and advising the company generally in many directions regarding food values.

In the smaller factories, and smaller boarding schools, it should be possible to employ say a trained nurse with a dietetic diploma, who might combine the duties of looking after the welfare of the staff with special dietetic control.

So also in cottage hospitals, cooking should be in the hands of a nurse trained in dietetics instead of being largely carried out by cooks with no scientific knowledge. The future of such nurses should be assured, so that, having done well in the smaller hospitals, they could gradually gain the higher posts in large hospitals.

Tuition in dietetics is an intensely difficult problem—to avoid this and that school of thought and to weed out error and let truth remain. Practice is equally difficult. Those who expect that a diet prepared with scientific exactitude will have the same effect on every individual will be sadly disappointed. One man's meat is still another man's poison, and biochemical research is often necessary before the lack of adaptation of patient to diet can be explained.

Another point needs emphasis here. Short periods of correct feeding in hospital are not long enough to effect marked changes, especially when the patient's illness is due to disordered feeding. Having established a correct regime it is very necessary to follow up the subject in the out-patient department and study the after effects. It has been said with considerable truth that the average hospital diet would starve a healthy man to death if he remained as

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