Royal British Nurses' Association.

Incorporated by Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRESIDENT.

We have received the gracious commands of Her Royal Highness the Princess Arthur of Connaught to convey her Christmas greetings to Members of the Association, through its Official Organ, and her good wishes that they may all have a very prosperous and happy New Year.

CHRISTMAS.

We shall be glad if all Members who intend to be present at Christmas dinner will notify us of this fact so that we may make the necessary arrangements. We expect, judging from the bookings, to have a very full house at Christmas time, but this is what we hope for and look forward to at the Club. The precise programme for Christmas Day has not yet been arranged but no doubt it will follow out that of previous Christmases. We hope that all Members, whether at the Club or elsewhere, will have a very happy Christmas, and we thank all those who have helped us, through the Calendar fund, to extend Christmas hospitality to about 150 sick and aged nurses in their own homes.

SOME LITTLE REGARDED CONSTITUENTS OF FOOD.

A LECTURE BY R. KING BROWN, M.D., D.P.H., given to the Royal British Nurses' Association.

In commencing his lecture, Dr. King Brown said that he did not mean to indicate that the constituents of food, which he proposed to speak of, were disregarded by dietitians but rather that the public knew too little of certain elements that were of real importance in the diet—the mineral elements and the Vitamins.

Mineral elements do not supply heat but they certainly have a part in regulating the production of heat and energy. The chief mineral constituents of food are potassium, sodium, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, chlorine, sulphur, and there are traces of fluorine, silica and iodine. The mineral matters in food act as tissue builders. There is always the danger that no thought at all may be given to whether they have the place they ought to hold in the dietary. The general public require no education as to the need for supplies of protein, carbohydrates and fats, but they do require education in connection with the part played by mineral constituents in the body's metabolism and it is an important part of a nurse's duty very often to give information on food hygiene and points such as this which are connected with it.

Calcium is one of the most important elements in our food and it is found in the greatest abundance in cheese. It is also supplied in such articles of diet as milk, eggs, green vegetables, butter, nuts, hard drinking water and the flesh of young animals, as in veal. An adult should have from 0.4 to 1 gramme daily and infants should have 5 grammes. Milk would be the most important means of supplying calcium were it more concentrated, but this criticism applies to it in connection with all the elements. Eggs have a great deal of calcium, principally in the yolk (and of course, the shell) as can easily be imagined when we remember that a chicken develops out of the egg without any outside nourishment. Calcium is important to the heart's action—"no calcium, no heartbeat," it has been said.

Magnesium is usually present in the same proportion as calcium except in milk where it is in smaller proportion. It is present in a greater proportion in meat. Along with calcium it exists in bones, teeth, the cell nuclei, etc.

Phosphorus is very important as building material and is essential to the cell nuclei and nervous system. It is estimated as phosphoric acid before combination with some other constitutent. Chiefly it exists in organic combination as phosphates of various alkalis and alkaline earths—very complicated compounds. It is found as nuclei protein in pancreas, liver and the kidneys, as phosphoproteins in such foods as milk, cheese and eggs, and there are other very complex combinations; it combines with calcium in the formation of bone. Cerebos salt contains 4 per cent. calcium and magnesium phosphates.

Sodium and potassium are necessary for the blood. Potassium is required for the construction of cells, especially red blood cells and muscles. It also helps to maintain the alkalinity of the blood.

Iron is present in food in organic form and green vegetables are the best source of iron—parsley and spinach are very good in this connection. Saltwater fish have 40 per cent. more iron than freshwater fish. Dried peas have a large proportion, and so also has egg yolk. Other valuable sources of iron are beef, oatmeal and raisins. Kidney and liver are very rich in iron. Protein and iron tend to run parallel in the diet. If there is a good percentage of protein there is usually a good percentage of iron too. On the Continent pernicious anæmia is not nearly so prevalent as in England, and this is believed to be due to the fact that people there eat more liver and such internal organs, which are called offal very often in England and correspondingly despised. Just in such cases the nurse can very often give very valuable information. Iodine is procured from fish, mussels and watercress.

Dr. King Brown gave a classification of certain foods according to whether those are acid, alkaline or neutral, and drew attention to the fact that the juices of lemons, oranges and grape fruit are to be regarded as alkaline for they will not be absorbed until, by the digestive organs, they have been rendered so.

In speaking of the vitamins Dr. King Brown stated that Vitamin A is the anti-infectious vitamin. Its absence leads to stone in the kidney and bladder sometimes; it acts on the epithelia generally, on the mouth, throat and uro-genital tract. Its absence in sufficient quantity often

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