

**MEMORIAL TO MISS CECILIA LIDDIATT.**

Several Members and other friends of the late Miss Cecilia Liddiatt have expressed the wish that we should establish some memorial to her and it has now been decided that this shall take the form of a "Cecilia Liddiatt Gift Fund." We hope to collect a sum sufficient to enable us to send out at Christmas time in each year, a cheque to some sick or aged nurse in order that we may place some brightness and good cheer in her life on Christmas Day. We all have in our hands, in greater or less degree, powers that go to the moulding of other people's lives, powers to place in these lives joy or sorrow, and we know of no scheme that appears to give greater happiness to many of our sick and aged nurses than this one which secures to them happiness and comfort on Christmas Day.

Miss Liddiatt, during her long connection with the Association, was ever generous to the sad and the lonely; but apart from generous help to those, we remember how she sought to bring joy and beauty into our lives in organising long summer rambles or by entertaining her colleagues at Headquarters. We consider that, on these grounds, the establishment of a small fund which will supply one Christmas cheque annually, would be likely to prove a suitable means of perpetuating Miss Liddiatt's memory in her Association. At the close of last year we received from Mrs. Liddiatt and her daughter a sum of five pounds towards any memorial we might decide to establish and we also had five pounds from Mrs. Farrell and her family for a similar purpose. We have thus made quite a good beginning, and if every Member of the Association, as well as other nurses who were friends of the late Miss Liddiatt, would send to us the small sum of one shilling we ought soon to be able to invest an amount sufficient to provide "a gift" when Christmas comes again.

**SOME INORGANIC FOODSTUFFS.**

The mineral elements in our food which, if it be burnt, remain in the ash, are variously termed ash constituents, mineral matter or inorganic materials, and we speak of the processes of change which they undergo in the body as mineral metabolism. Some mineral matters are taken in and given off in a completely inorganic form, others enter into the composition of the organic tissues and only become inorganic again when the organic matter is oxidised; some of these materials are taken in food both in organic and inorganic form. The mineral matter in our body is present in bones, teeth, muscles, blood and other tissues. It circulates in the fluids and helps in the composition of the digestive secretions causing those to be alkaline or acid as the case may be. The proper concentration of those inorganic materials is of the most vital importance to the health of the body.

The chief mineral constituents in food are calcium, magnesium, iron, chlorides, sulphates, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, and there are also some silica and fluorine. The body excretes from 20 to 30 grams of mineral salts daily so that this must be made good and, in the case of a young body, provision has, in addition, to be made for growth. Any standard work on food will give tables showing the amount of the different inorganic materials necessary daily at the different ages and in normal conditions.

The amount of mineral matter to be found in an adult body is seven pounds and almost the whole of this is in the bones. It is classed among those elements in our bodies which go to build up new tissues and to repair those wasted by work. It takes no part in heat production but of late it has been conceded that it does participate, to some extent, in the production of energy. Calcium for instance is important in relation to muscular contraction. This particular mineral constituent is however a necessity for many other reasons and especially it must enter into consideration as regards the diet of children, in order to

make due provision for skeletal development. A deficiency of it in an infant's diet leads to softening of the bones and is a frequent cause of rickets. Some authorities hold that an excess of calcium in the diet may give rise to calculus, constipation and certain other conditions of ill health. Cheese is a food rich in calcium and milk makes a good second. Then, upon eggs, some vegetables, butter and nuts we also rely for supplies, and our hard London water is a good source of calcium. Calcium is necessary to the coagulation of the blood and it also has its effect on the heart's action.

Magnesium is, with certain exceptions, present in food in much the same distribution as calcium, there is less of it in milk and more in meat; certain vegetables are comparatively rich in it.

Iron is a constituent in our food regarding which calculation is difficult. It is usually present in the tissues in an organic form and, as it is excreted by the bowel, estimates in regard to it are apt to be uncertain. In meat the iron present depends somewhat on the method of killing while the amount in the soil influences the extent of its presence in vegetables. Spinach is usually the vegetable richest in iron; beef, yolk of egg, apples, lentils and apricots are other foods which give supplies. Milk and its derivatives are poor in iron, hence the importance, during pregnancy, of exercising care that the diet is relatively rich in iron so that the child may start life with some reserve of this in its tissues. Absence of iron in the diet produces anæmia and it is an essential element in the distribution of oxygen by means of the blood; copper acts in close connection with the assimilation and transformation of iron.

Fluids in the body contain both sodium and potassium and the latter plays an important part in the construction of muscle cells and red blood corpuscles. Sodium is obtained mainly from the salt in our food. Common salt is taken in the form of sodium chloride. The amount of sodium chloride in the tissues influences the quantity of water in the body because the latter must have a constant concentration of sodium chloride and so, when the salt is reduced, the intake of water is less. This position is also to some extent influenced by the fact that sodium chloride is excreted in the urine and perspiration. We constantly hear people's opinions as to the value of salt in the diet; some contend that it is usually consumed to an extent that is harmful and that thereby gout, skin disease and kidney affections may result; others contend that extra supplies of salt are beneficial and help the processes of digestion because of its influence on the production of hydrochloric acid. The last fact brings it into consideration when digestive conditions are abnormal; when digestion is weak it may act as a stimulant by increasing the production of gastric juice and the presence of acidity is an indication for its limitation. Vegetarians usually take more salt in the food than those who eat meat.

Phosphorus is especially important to the young and growing body; it is present in the bones and nervous system, in muscle and indeed in all cell nuclei. It is found in the body both in organic and inorganic combination, and in its organic form it is especially useful in the repair of broken down tissue and in the growth of new.

Sulphur is also usually found in a state of organic combination and this chiefly in the proteins. Chlorine, as we have indicated, is generally present in food in the form of sodium chloride. Silica and fluorine are present in very small amounts and are obtained chiefly from vegetables, especially watercress. Iodine is got mainly from fish and acts upon the body through the thyroid gland. Oxalic acid is present in food chiefly as oxalate of lime.

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