

Notice to our Readers.

Owing to the recent dispute between the Master Printers' Federation and the London Society of Compositors, now we hope, successfully settled, we were unable to publish an issue for October. We herewith present a combined number for October and November.

Editorial.

Dinner Time.

*How dreary and how painful
This hungry life would be
Without our useful dinners,
Our restful cup of tea.*

BY THE CANNIBAL, dining on his delicate morsel of humanity; by the Tudor, feasting upon his superb dish of roasted peacock; by the Italian, with his meal of savoury macaroni; by the Indian, with his much prized buffalo stew; or by the English epicure, with his salmon and roast pheasant, the Dinner Hour is looked forward to with equal relish and delight, for truly has it been said that there is only one true way to a man's heart.

There is a fixed idea in the minds of many people, that to express delight in the cravings of our appetite, or to express any pleasure in eating or drinking, is to give way to depravity or greediness; but should this be so?

Even the studious Dr. Johnson, tells us that he minded such matters very much, and that the man who paid no attention to the cravings of his appetite, was unlikely to pay attention to anything else with zest.

As far back as the famous Roman Orator's time, dinner was regarded as a sacred institution, and from the period of Rome's glory, to the zenith of French power, the day was divided into two parts—before dinner, and after.

But though the institution itself has held good in all ages, the hour of dinner has travelled like the hands of a clock through all the hours of the day.

History tells us that Louis XII of France, like a respectable monarch, dined at the customary hour of 10 a.m., until he married a frivolous young English Princess who made him dine at the unreasonably fashionable hour of noon.

In Cromwell's time it was moved on to two o'clock, and so the hour was advanced and advanced until de Quincey tells us he does not know of any one dining later than 10 p.m. except the Irish gentleman who, according to his manservant, showed his gentility and importance by dining tomorrow. And yet, when we come to think of it, the preparing and serving of meals forms more than half the work of an ordinary house, dining is the fine art of which the satisfying of appetite (though an important part), is by no means the whole, for a meal is often the embodiment of hospitality, and not only is this so in private life, but in public life, a dinner is often offered as a mark of distinction to a well-known man of fame, or even an invitation to meet such a one at a public dinner may become a distinct mark of merit and honour.

Like the Romans, we have discovered that the true purpose and delight of dinner parties, is to know the grace of intellectual enjoyment and honourable pleasure over an animal necessity. One of the chief functions or

penalties of Premiership is to attend innumerable dinners, and even Royal banquets, as soon as he is appointed to this high office. To relax, would be considered in many instances, a political slight, and in many cases would lead to trouble.

The very large salaries paid to celebrated cooks, certainly shows that cooking, as a profession, pays, and is by no means a neglected art.

A Frenchman was once extolling his cook, who, he said could so disguise a dish, that no one could guess of what it was made, and laid a wager with a friend to test to cook's abilities. On the appointed day, the dish was brought in—very thin strips of savoury meat rolled up and stuffed. Everyone thought them delicious, but even the epicure could not say of what the dish was composed. Said the Frenchman, "Of the gentleman's white kid gloves, which he left on the hall table!"

And then think of our Christmas dinners, with their delicious aroma of roasted turkey and luscious plum pudding. Much jovial feeling is aroused by the recurrence of Christmas dinner, with pleasant friends around, all meeting and greeting each other in memory of the season.

Surely the majority of us will agree with Owen Meredith in saying:—

"We may live without friends,
We can live without books.
But civilised man
Cannot live without 'cooks.'
He may live without books;
What is knowledge? but grieving.
He may live without hopes;
All hopes are deceiving.
He may live without love;
What is passion? but pining.
But where is the man who
Can live without dining?"

MARGARET B. MACKELLAR.

Issue of Receipts for Consolidated Retention Fees.

OWING TO THE VERY HEAVY WORK involved in dealing with the many thousands of consolidated retention fees which have been received from registered nurses during the past few weeks, there is unavoidable delay at the present time in issuing the receipts for these fees. The General Nursing Council wishes to assure those nurses who have forwarded their fees, but have not yet received receipts, that the fees are being dealt with in rotation and that every endeavour is being made to carry out the work as expeditiously as possible. Nurses whose retention fees had not been received by October 31st, 1950, will be sent reminder notices, but no nurse's name will actually be removed from the Register for non-payment unless her fee is not received by December 31st, 1950.

Some confusion appears to exist between the closing date for payment of consolidated retention fees by nurses *already on the Register*, and the closing date for applications for admission to the Register by virtue of holding the Certificate of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association. No change has been made in the closing date for applications for admission to the Register from nurses holding the Certificate of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, which remains at *March 31st, 1952*, as originally announced. After that date, admission to the Part of the Register for Mental Nurses will again be by virtue of passing the Council's Examinations only.

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