

CONVALESCENT HOMES.

DR. ARTHUR E. T. LONGHURST (Grosvenor Place, S.W.) writes: Early in February a patient of mine, convalescent from double pleuro-pneumonia, was sent to the convalescent home at Eastbourne, and I saw her yesterday on her return, much improved in health; but there are a few circumstances connected with her stay in that institution which I think are well worthy your attention as bearing upon the treatment of the patients and the general management of such convalescent homes.

1. I was surprised to find that, neither on her arrival, during her stay, or on her leaving, was any physical examination made as to her condition.

2. Nor was her weight taken.

3. No cod-liver oil, Farrish's food, hypophosphites, or other medicinal restorative was given.

4. The diet was said to be poor; meat very tough; butter so bad that it spoiled the bread, and my patient scraped it off, preferring to eat the bread dry; the breakfast being only bread and butter, with tea or coffee; the dinner, tough meat with potatoes, and other vegetables occasionally, but these latter were omitted during Lent; pudding or soup occasionally, and a pint of malt liquor. Tea: bread and butter and tea or a cup of milk. Supper varied; sometimes cold meat, soup, or pudding and beer; but, as my patient said, beer and pudding did not agree, so either one or other must be left; and cold meat and beer does not, in my opinion, seem a suitable meal at night for a convalescent from severe and acute pleuro-pneumonia.

That no physical examination of my patient was ever made is to me surprising; and the weight taken on the arrival and departure of each patient, with temperature record and other observations on the general health, would surely be of interest, and result in some useful statistics as to the effect of a stay at the institution on different classes of disease as compared with similar institutions at other seaside homes.

Fortunately my patient was able and permitted to buy milk, eggs, and other articles of food, without which, and limited to the ordinary diet of the home, she says she is quite sure that she would not be so well as she is. Of course the diet scale may be modified for special cases, and I hope it is; but nevertheless it appears to be defective, especially on the following points:—

1. As to quantity of food provided.

2. As to quality.

3. As to that provided at the several meals, especially the breakfast and supper; for the former, an egg, a little porridge, a pint of milk, and sometimes bacon in addition to the bread and butter, should be given.

4. A similar meal at supper instead of meat and beer.

Judicious changes of the kind mentioned would, I think, add little, if at all, to the cost, and, if they did slightly increase the cost per head, and at the same time, with suitable medical restoratives, hasten the convalescence and thus allow an earlier return to work and a greater number of patients to pass through the institution during the year, surely the expense would be justifiable.

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BOOKS, etc., RECEIVED.

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