

actual intervals of sleep with impunity, such people are greatly favoured.

Various authorities have given their views as to how to maintain habits of sleep, amongst them early rising, regular meals, breathing exercises at the open window and mapping out the day so as to produce regularity in its activities. This last brings us again to that important item in connection with the prevention of fatigue—the preservation of a certain rhythm in life; the value of this is shown by the fact that the people who suffer from nervous affections are very often just those who are constantly engaging their attention in first one thing and then another and never seem to possess the ability to settle to anything.

It is to be remembered that the best way to rest is not by means of idleness or inactivity. If, for instance, one set of brain centres is called specially into activity in the business of life, these centres must have a due amount of rest and the best means of securing this rest is by the employment of quite different centres; then those last in use get a chance of remaining more or less out of action. Thus people, whose work is chiefly physical will usually find that their best source of recreation lies in reading, music, painting or the like; while, for the brain worker, the two latter, gardening or games are specially beneficial. In fact one might quote here the prescription of an old sea captain when he said that to secure long life one should eat well, sleep well and "ave an 'obby." And the old mariner was not far wrong for a hobby gives a way of escape into quite another world from that in which people live during their working hours. It pays to be versatile, and it is much more healthy to know a little about many things than to know all about one.

Another way in which to avoid fatigue lies in taking a healthy interest and enjoyment in the things around us. When we were discussing this subject of fatigue, the other day, a nurse who had been up all night said, "I was tired beyond words this morning, so tired that I felt that I just must go and look at the beautiful Portland Vase. It did me no end of good"; and no doubt she was right. She went and let the beautiful live in her, and who shall say that such a tonic was not worth the time it took from her ordinary rest; those who love beautiful literature, beautiful works of art, beautiful music, beautiful scenery and such like have roads of escape from all the grind and rush of life, from all its strain, its hurry and its anxieties. But joy in such things has to be cultivated, tastes must be acquired; the gift of being able to enjoy either fine literature or fine art does not just happen; it has to be developed, like everything else, from the forces of the will, of perception, and of feeling.

ISABEL MACDONALD.

HISTORY OF NURSING SOCIETIES.

The study of history is very fascinating, and it is interesting to note that now that Nursing has become a Profession, nurses in various parts of the world are beginning to look up its past and its pioneer personnel. There is to be a History of Nursing Luncheon at Montreal for those who are interested in this subject. This meeting will be under the auspices of the two pioneer History of Nursing Societies in McGill University and Teachers' College, Columbia University. As we report in another column, the British College of Nurses has appointed a History of Nursing Standing Committee, as it has already some exceedingly interesting and valuable assets and is on the outlook for more. We shall look forward to a full report of the activities of the "historians" at Montreal.

PLEASE READ.

Please read the report of the Interview between the General Nursing Council for England and Wales and the Royal Medico-Psychological Association on page 186.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

SMALLPOX.

The following official statement has been issued by the Ministry of Health:—

As there appears still to be some misunderstanding in this country and America as to the prevalence of smallpox in England, the Ministry of Health think it advisable to issue a brief statement on the subject.

1. Smallpox of mild degree has been more than usually prevalent in England and Wales since 1922. The actual figures and deaths have been as follows:—

Year.	Number of Cases.	Number of Deaths.	Per cent. mortality.
1922	.. 973	.. 27	.. 2.77
1923	.. 2,504	.. 7	.. 0.28
1924	.. 3,797	.. 8	.. 0.21
1925	.. 5,354	.. 6	.. 0.11
1926	.. 10,141	.. 11	.. 0.11
1927	.. 14,787	.. 36	.. 0.24
1928	.. 12,420	.. 53	.. 0.43
1929*	.. 3,283	.. 8	.. 0.25

* First quarter: provisional figures.

2. The distribution of these cases has been chiefly in certain industrial areas in South Wales, Durham, Derbyshire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, where vaccination among adolescents and adults has been relatively neglected. The increased movement of the people, together with the extreme mildness of degree of infection has, of course, also tended to disseminate this malady.

3. The smallpox cases which arose from infection from the *Tuscania*, which reached England from Bombay at the end of March, numbered 51 (out of 1,554 passengers and crew), 35 of which cases occurred in England and 16 in Scotland. Ten cases proved fatal. These cases, unlike those referred to above, were of severe degree and were imported. There have been no further infections from the *Tuscania* since April. Public opinion may therefore be reassured that the *Tuscania* outbreak, which was in any case narrowly restricted, has definitely terminated.

4. Smallpox of mild degree has been prevalent in Europe and America during the last few years but now shows signs of abatement, and in England we are in this respect no worse off than we have been for a quinquennium.

5. The general health of Great Britain is exceptionally good, and compares favourably with that of other great nations and its own past records. Indeed, the total death rate of 11.7 per thousand is within 0.1 per cent. the lowest on record. The infant mortality, always a living and susceptible index of national health, is 65 per thousand births, the lowest ever recorded. The total number of deaths from all forms of infectious disease in 1928 was 83,660 (including all forms of tuberculosis, pneumonia, etc.) as compared with 96,571 in 1927. With a declining general mortality, a declining infant mortality, and a falling zymotic death rate, it may be said that the health of England is satisfactory.

POISONOUS FUMES.

We know several nurses, ardent advocates of high standards of public health, who voted for Labour candidates as a protest against the apathy of the late Government in their handling of the scheme for the erection of the high-power electricity station at Battersea, and the emission of poisonous and destructive fumes for miles around, to say nothing of smoke and grit, which must result.

The conference, proposed by the Westminster Council of local authorities concerned, on steps necessary to safeguard the health of the community, should result in preventing this

previous page

next page