

We have been diving into *Great Thoughts*, dated 1889, and find in this publication of half a century ago much interesting information. For instance, what the late Sir Morell Mackenzie, the great throat specialist, has to say about cigarette smoking under the heading of "Cigarettes and Alcohol" is especially apposite in these days, when the habit has become very prevalent amongst nurses, and he states:—

"Tobacco, alcohol and fiery condiments of all kinds are best avoided by those who have to speak much, or at least they should be used in strict moderation. I feel bound to warn speakers addicted to the 'herb nicotian' against cigarettes. Like tipping, the effect of cigarette smoking is cumulative, and the slight but constant absorption of tobacco juice and smoke makes the practice far more noxious in the long run than any other form of smoking. Cigarette smokers are often in a state of chronic narcotic poisoning. Though the process may be slow, there can be no doubt that it is sure. Even if it does not kill the body, it too often kills or greatly impairs the victim's working efficiency and usefulness in life. The local effects of cigarettes in the mouth must also be taken into account by those whose work lies in the direction of public speech. The white spots on the tongue and inside the cheeks, known as 'smoker's patches,' are believed by some doctors with special experience to be more common in devotees of the cigarette than in other smokers; this unhealthy condition of the mouth may not only make speaking troublesome, or even painful, but it is now proved to be a predisposing cause of cancer. All fiery or pungent foods, condiments, or drinks tend to cause congestion of the throat, and if this condition becomes chronic, it may lead to impairment, if not complete loss of voice."

BOLTS FROM THE BLUE.

AN EDUCATIONAL TASK.

"I just could not be working as you are against a tide of ignorance and self-interest," remarked a friend recently, to which we replied: "It really is inspiring, there are always 'bolts from the blue,'" and sure enough two such "bolts" have shot home in the Press of late. First came a letter in *The Times* from Miss Muriel M. Edwards, S.R.N., Secretary, Nursing Recruitment Committee, King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, in which she writes: "An adequate and ever-increasing number of recruits is needed for the ever-expanding health services of the community, but the requirement is qualitative as well as quantitative. We need a constant supply of candidates of the right type; a candidate's suitability being assessed on educational as well as on vocational standards. There is no question of the vocational suitability of many elementary school girls. The fact, however, that the proportion of failures in the preliminary State examination in recent years has sometimes been as high as 30 per cent., and always above 20 per cent., would seem to demonstrate that unless a girl has had a good general education she is severely handicapped in her nursing career and is a liability to her training school. Should we not ask the Board of Education, rather than the Ministry of Health, to help us in removing that handicap? . . . In the meantime, could not the

Board of Education give that assistance to intending nurses which was given to intending teachers until the recruitment problem for that profession had been solved? . . . It would express recognition of the outstanding importance to the community of the nursing profession. May I suggest that there is at least a strong case for asking the Board of Education to take measures to ensure that all recruits for the nursing profession should be of adequate educational standard."

We endorse this claim, and hope action will be taken without delay. Congratulations for a bright idea to Miss Muriel M. Edwards, of whose skilled help in the clerical organisation of the International Congress of Nurses in London, in 1937, we have grateful memories.

WILL BEST TYPE BE ATTRACTED?

The second "bolt from the blue" appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on March 10th. That brilliant young journalist Miss Gladys M. Hardy, S.R.N., Matron of the Battersea General Hospital, in reviewing the Rushcliffe Scale of Salaries for the Nursing profession, asks: "Will best types be attracted?"

Miss Hardy writes: "We want only girls of the best type to take up nursing; we need them well educated, intelligent and eager to learn. They should feel that nursing is a profession in which they can lead useful lives, high in the world's esteem . . . The real attraction to girls of the right type is surely not merely an advance in the wage rates for student nurses, with full board and uniform, lectures and demonstrations free, but rather the prospect of good salaries, good conditions and openings for advancement when the student stage is passed.

"Here is the weak point of the Rushcliffe outline: Fully trained nurses—the Ward Sisters, who are the real core of the profession, who have achieved full responsibility in nursing the sick—are valued at salaries ranging from £2 10s. to £3 10s. a week, minus cuts for superannuation purposes and subject to income tax, plus the nebulous emoluments valued at £100 per annum. The student may well be perplexed.

"Compared with the advantages offered to the student at the outset, the prospects on qualifying are frankly unattractive. I suggest that the Ward Sisters—real nurses—should be the pivot on which the whole wage tariff should swing. Their salaries should be levelled up, and then the recruits, with even less indulgence shown them in their probationary years than is now proposed, will look ahead with the full intention of winning their spurs.

"The Rushcliffe Outline puts the emphasis in a more dazzling welcome to untrained newcomers, for whom not even matriculation or school-leaving standard is insisted on as a prerequisite. The effect may easily be to tempt girls of the wrong type to enter the profession to escape less attractive forms of national service, and with no wish to make it a career."

Miss Hardy draws attention to the fact that no general educational qualification is required from students for entry to nursing schools; further, we may add that in promotion to office carrying salaries and emoluments of £900 per annum no test is required. This is a matter which we have no doubt will receive attention in the future.

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