

The Sanitary Congress.

THE Sanitary Congress, convened under the authority of the Sanitary Institute, was opened at Southampton on Tuesday last, the proceedings commencing by a Reception of the members of Congress by the Worshipful the Mayor of Southampton, at Hartley College, at 12.30, but long before that time members were crowding in, and all the officials were busily employed in attending to their requirements.

At the luncheon which followed in the pavilion of the Royal Pier more than 300 ladies and gentlemen were present. The toast of the day, "The Sanitary Institute," was proposed by the Mayor, and responded to on behalf of the Institute by Mr. Henry Law, Chairman of the Committee, who said that the Institute had held 1,700 examinations, and granted 3,200 certificates. It has instructed three-quarters of a million people by exhibitions, and educated the exhibitors themselves. The Institute aimed at securing efficiency in public officials and at stimulating the exertions and schemes of municipal and county councils. If tuberculosis was to be effectively dealt with efficient inspection was highly necessary. The toast of "The Mayor and Corporation" was received with enthusiasm, indicative of the appreciation felt by the members of Congress of the hospitality extended to them.

In the afternoon Sir William H. Preece delivered his presidential address to a crowded audience in the Lecture Hall of Hartley College. He emphasised the supreme value of electricity in the purification of water and sewage, and with regard to bacteria expressed the opinion that by incessant campaigns, aided by sanitary science, pernicious microbes would be so effectively dealt with that there was no doubt that human life would be prolonged beyond David's allotted span.

The lecturer was of opinion that we might, at the present day, study with advantage the wisdom of Moses on the subject of sanitation. He was the greatest sanitary engineer ever known, and his doctrines summed up the objects of sanitation to-day. He referred to the book of Leviticus as a "Treatise on Hygiene," and said that six doctrines were of Mosaic origin—pure air, water, food, soil, dwellings, and bodies. He had strong views on the subject of dust, which he heartily despised, and strove to annihilate and render harmless. He ordered refuse to be burnt without the camp, and we were only now following his example by the institution of modern dust destructors.

With regard to water, why should there not be a duplicate supply, one for domestic and the other for public purposes. The use of sea water for the latter purposes deserved the serious consideration of local magnates at our seaside resorts. The London County Council would also do better to go to the sea than to "gallant little Wales" for its public water supply. In spite of its gallantry, Wales did not intend to let London rob it of its water.

In the evening the Health Exhibition was opened in the Victoria Hall by the Mayor, who in performing the ceremony made some appropriate remarks as to the educational value of such an exhibit. All honour is due to the local committee, who have worked with the uttermost enthusiasm and zeal, and we have every confidence that their work will be rewarded with the success it deserves.

Our Foreign Letter.

[FROM A SOUTH AFRICAN CORRESPONDENT].



IN a new country we have many losses, many drawbacks; but we have one great advantage—our laws are made for

the present time, and we have no struggle to free ourselves from the chains of the past. Hence, although it would be absurd to compare our nursing position and our powers of training nurses with those of most European countries (I say *most*, for I honestly think we train better than they do in some), still, we have some advantages.

MEDICAL ACT, 1891.

In 1891, when the new Medical Bill was brought before Parliament, the trained nurses of the country almost unanimously—a little band of some 66 women then, now quite an army—petitioned for a place on the Register and State control. With much care and forethought an admirable Act was drawn up and passed, providing for the registration of foreign trained nurses, and the State examination and then registration of the colonial trained. The Bill was in two parts—the first referring to midwives, and the second to trained nurses.

After eight years' trial I think we can say that, on the whole, it has worked well. Nursing is a recognised profession, and trained nurses *legally* stand in the same position as doctors and lawyers, the certificate granted by the Council being, practically, a license to practise.

There have, however, been, and there still are, considerable difficulties, with some of which I propose to deal.

MIDWIVES.

First, as regards midwives. In this great, waste, thinly-populated country, we have to deal with enormous tracts, almost pathless, where no doctor and no trained midwife could possibly live a decent life or earn a living. It is hardly too much to say, that, including natives—who, of course, vastly outnumber the white people—scarcely five per cent. of the births are attended by either doctor or midwife, the woman merely having the assistance, at the time of her confinement, of her husband, mother, or some old servant. With this state of things it would have been unreasonable to pass any law requiring the signature of a licensed practitioner for the registration of a child's birth, or any penal laws

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