

THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

THE DUBLIN CONGRESS.

The Congress of the Royal Institute of Public Health, which opened at Trinity College, Dublin, on Tuesday in last week, was attended by a large number of influential delegates, and the Lord Lieutenant and the Lord Mayor and Corporation were present at the inaugural proceedings, when the retiring President, Sir William H. Lever inducted the Countess of Aberdeen as President of the Congress.

Lady Aberdeen, in her inaugural address, published at length in the *Irish Times*, from which this notice is abbreviated, said that she recognised in that appointment not merely a token of kindly feeling towards herself and her fellow-workers in the Women's National Health Association of Ireland, but also a flattering and encouraging recognition of the work of women in the cause of that public health of which the Institute had constituted itself the champion and protector. Her Excellency continued—The truth is, ladies and gentlemen, that if you desire to have any great movement popularised and made to enter into the habits and homes of the people, you must have the women with you, or you will fail. If you wish to dislodge a deep-seated prejudice, if you wish to carry a great reform, if you wish to introduce successfully some new method of education, you must gain the women over to your side. And when it comes to matters of health, there, indeed, do you come against a stone wall if you wish to introduce reforms regarding food and dress, fresh air and children's training, without taking the mistress of the household with you. That was the motive which induced us here in Ireland to form the Women's National Health Association, and through it to make our direct appeal to the women of all classes and all sections to realise their responsibilities and their opportunities of arresting the ravages of one of the worst foes of the human race and of building up a strong and vigorous race. The doctors had done their best for many years to preach their gospel, the Registrar-General issued figures calculated to arouse the public, the Local Government Board issued blue books and circulars of advice and suggestion, and meetings of philanthropists met to discuss the question and to consider schemes of remedy. But little effect can be produced either by legislation or by official work unless you have public opinion behind you, and public opinion is formed in the homes of the people.

This, then, is a women's movement, supported by men, and also by another most important section of the community—the children. It is an organised effort to popularise the opinions arrived at by the medical profession and to get them put into practice; and with this in view we use every means at our command. All these popular

methods have been carried out in close co-operation with the more official section of our workers—that is the district nurses, some forty of whom are maintained by the Association, and the women guardians and members of District Councils, of whom there are now 158 in Ireland.

Lady Aberdeen further emphasised the necessity for adequate training and education for women if they are to safeguard the health of their homes and those who live in them, and said that the education of a girl, in any class of society, which does not include thorough training in this most essential part of her life-work must be held to be defective. The Women's National Health Society had brought to the notice of the Universities of Ireland the success which had attended the practice of making household science and household hygiene part of the regular University course for women in many Universities in the United States and Canada, and of the adoption of the same plan at King's College, in connection with the University of London.

While it was right, said the speaker, that such subjects should be taught at technical colleges and institutes, and in secondary schools, they must form a part of the University education of women if we are to get their full value. This stamps these household sciences as worthy of the prolonged and careful study of those who aspire to the highest kind of education attainable in the country, and these in time would help to abolish the baneful notion that the care of the house and the service of the home is on a lower plane than other trades and professions, and that there is something menial in their pursuit. We have to abolish this idea root and branch before the great problem of domestic service is solved, and nothing will help so much as to give these studies the place of honour in the education of women, from the primary school up to the University.

EUGENICS.

Many interesting papers were presented in the different sections, and the Presidential address of Sir James Barr, M.D., F.R.S., in the "Child Study and Eugenics Section," was a splendid plea for an increased feeling of responsibility in regard to the propagation and rearing of healthy and intelligent children. The study of eugenics was, said the speaker, one calculated to lead to the moral, intellectual, physical and social improvements of the human race. The propagation of the species was the highest and noblest function, and, when people began to recognise the enormous responsibility they incurred in bringing human beings into the world, this function would be studied and exercised to elevate and not to debase mankind. The advancement of the race largely depended upon women, and they should be educated in nature's laws. If women were only a little more particular in the selection of the fathers of their families, a rapid advancement would soon be achieved. Some girls with a large amount of sentiment married men to reform them, but if they were properly instructed they

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