

It is proposed to rebuild the Royal Orthopædic and Spinal Hospital, Birmingham, and to raise a sum of £30,000 for this purpose, and to repay the mortgage debt on the outpatient department of £2,800. In the opinion of the medical committee this is absolutely essential for the safety of the patients, as the present in-patient department is quite unsuited for the work which has to be performed.

The Marquess of Linlithgow has accepted the Presidency of the Congress of The Royal Institute of Public Health, to be held in Edinburgh from Wednesday, July 8th, to Monday, July 13th, 1914, inclusive, on the invitation of The Right Honourable The Lord Provost and The City Council.

Satisfactory progress is being made with the rebuilding of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, the last part to be occupied being the south extension from the central block, which comprises five medical wards. The stonework of the front block, which contains the other five medical wards, is practically completed, and the finishing touches are being put upon the dome.

Good progress is being made with the Red Cross and National Health Service Exhibition to be held in Aberdeen from December 16th to 20th. The Red Cross section will show the work done in England, Germany, France, Switzerland, and other countries; exhibits of transport and ambulance models, field cookery, camp kitchens, first aid outfits, models of hospitals, trains, &c. The Infant Welfare section, and the Food and Cookery section, promise to be specially comprehensive. In the Historic section many interesting loan exhibits will be on view. The list of Prizes offered appeared in our issue of September 27th.

MENTAL DEFICIENCY.

The King, on the recommendation of the Home Secretary, has been pleased to appoint Sir William Byrne, K.C.V.O., C.B., Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, Dr. Arthur Rotherham, M.A., M.B., Medical Superintendent of the Darenth Asylum, and Miss Mary Dendy, hon. secretary of the Lancashire and Cheshire Society for the Permanent Care of the Feeble-minded, to be Commissioners (paid) under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913.

The existing Lunacy Commissioners are *ex-officio* members of the Board of Control.

It may be added that under the Act the salary of the chairman of the Board of Control is not to exceed £1,800 a year; and that of the other paid Commissioners is not to exceed £1,500 a year.

We are pleased to note that a woman, if only one, has been given office and equal salary on the Commission. Miss Mary Dendy has devoted herself for years to work among mental defectives, and her experience will be of the utmost value on the Board.

MISSIONARY NURSES' LEAGUE.

HOSPITAL WORK IN PERSIA.

In his lecture, given under the auspices of the Nurses' Missionary League, Dr. White began with a humorous account of the journey to Persia—in which the real delights come when you travel from the coast in a drosky to Teheran, and especially when you leave Teheran behind and proceed across the desert riding on a camel or a mule or a donkey, or better still in one of two kennel-like boxes strapped on either side of a mule—the danger being that if one of the two passengers is not so thin as the other, the whole may capsize. After twenty days of this method of travelling, you reach the very bigoted Mohammedan city of Yezd.

When Dr. White first went out seventeen years ago the first thing to be done was to win the affections of the people, for they had all been brought up to curse the Christian "infidels." There was only one thing to offer them. Their own ideas of medicine are primitive. Diseases are considered either "hot" or "cold," and either "hot" or "cold" medicine must be taken. Thus cock is "hot" and hen is "cold"—and, therefore, for fever, you must take cock-broth, and for rheumatism hen-broth. A Persian becomes a doctor by putting on spectacles and buying a big book; he need not know anything. At first Dr. White's patients seemed very amused when he diagnosed their diseases—and prescribed, say, a table-spoonful of medicine three times a day. Later on he discovered that they were accustomed to take their medicine rather in a wash-hand basin, by the quart or half-gallon!

At first it was difficult to get patients to come, but one day a Parsee widow brought her son, suffering from stone. After much discussion an operation was allowed, and had to be performed in the doctor's bedroom, he himself having to give the chloroform and act as nurse as well. Happily, the operation was successful, and the boy got better and went out cured—having been visited by crowds of people who came to look at him and hear all about it. After this, patients came readily—an old inn was presented to the missionaries by its Parsee owner, and a hospital was built which was used for some years. Now there are two hospitals—a men's and a women's—with two English doctors and two English nurses. During the past 15 years there have been 362,000 attendances of out-patients and 6,200 in-patients—the figures for last year having been 35,000 out-patients' attendances and 750 in-patients'. The patients come from a radius of 100 miles in each direction, and are drawn from a population of about 800,000 or a million. The men's wards have 96 beds, and there are X-ray and electrical apparatus. The work is much like that at home, is as thoroughly proficient as it can be made, and the results will compare very favourably with those of any London hospital. The English nurse in the hospital is rather a matron—and needs to be an

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