

and discussed. The reading of each paper is calculated to occupy not more than twenty minutes, and each author is requested to furnish a short *précis* for press publication. The papers will subsequently be published in *extenso* in the Memorial Volume.

Every effort will be made to provide for the due reception of members, and the Catholic ladies of the archdiocese will be invited to organise entertainments, such as a reception to the visiting prelates and members, a grand concert, and an exhibition of the work of the children of our Catholic schools.

Application will be made to the Railway Commissioners of the various States, and to the principal steamship companies, and hotels, for the same liberal concessions to members of congress which were made to them on previous occasions, and excursions at tourist rates to the principal places of interest in and around Sydney will be arranged if desired. In short, everything that is possible will be done to provide for the comfort and convenience of visitors who will be entered on the roll of the congress.

The condition of membership is the payment of an entrance fee of half a guinea, or of one guinea for a member and two ladies. Cards of membership will be issued, entitling the holders to admission to all the sessions of the congress, as well as to such entertainments as may be organised on their behalf, and in addition each member will receive a copy of the Memorial Volume containing the proceedings of the congress and the papers contributed.

In order to take the necessary preparatory steps for holding the congress, his Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop proposes to call together at an early date the leading clergy and laity, and to form an executive committee, of which his Eminence will act as president, and the Archbishops and Bishops of Australasia as vice-presidents. The Right Reverend Monsignor O'Brien, D.D., Rector of St. John's College within the University of Sydney, and the Honorable Thomas Hughes, M.L.C., have been appointed hon. secretaries, to whom all inquiries and correspondence may be addressed and the Right Reverend Monsignor O'Haran, D.D., and Mr. T. J. Dalton, K.C.S.G., have been appointed hon. treasurers.

It is earnestly hoped that all who have at heart the interests of the Catholic Faith will place their services at the disposal of his Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop, and do all in their power to make the third Australasian Catholic Congress a pronounced success.

*PATRICK FRANCIS CARDINAL MORAN,
Archbishop of Sydney,
President.

Denis F. O'Haran and Thomas J. Dalton,
Hon. Treasurers.

James J. O'Brien and Thomas Hughes,
Hon. Secretaries.

St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, May 12, 1909.

THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN

OUTSPOKEN CONDEMNATION OF MODERN METHODS.

There was a large gathering, especially of women, on Wednesday afternoon of last week in Burns Hall, Dunedin, on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Society for the Promotion of the Health of Women and Children. A feature of the meeting was the address by Dr. Batchelor, who dealt in a trenchant and outspoken manner with the modern system of education in its relation to young women. It will be noticed by our readers that the condemnation by Dr. Batchelor of the methods of education in vogue at the present time is a practical endorsement of the opinions expressed time and again in the editorial columns of the *N.Z. Tablet* on the same subject. Dr. Batchelor spoke in part as follows:—He would endeavor to place before the meeting certain thoughts and deductions, the outcome of his own personal experience and observation after some 40 years' active engagement in the work of his profession. He trusted he would never be afraid to express his opinions because they might be unpopular. Then the doctor continued: Let me ask this question—Are the present conditions of life, as lived by a large proportion of the young women of this Dominion, favorable to what I most emphatically assert is the main function of womanhood, the raising of a healthy and vigorous race? Is it not rather altogether pushed into the background, and made a totally secondary consideration, and is not her success in some profession which ensures immediate emolument looked upon as the first and main object of life for the majority of our girls? If this

is the case, we are perpetrating a grave error opposed to the most elementary principles of physiology, and I cannot but think that our existing educational system for girls is primarily and principally at fault in the matter. Let me clearly state that, so far as regards the higher education of women, providing it is conducted on reasonable lines and in accordance with her peculiar physiological necessities, I am fully in sympathy; but my contention is that essential physiological principles are being totally ignored, and that our present educational system encourages and invites young women to enter a course of study for which Nature never intended them, and which undoubtedly, in a considerable number of cases, is followed by an inadequate development of those organs and functions which are characteristic of healthy womanhood. Up to a certain age, say, to the twelfth or thirteenth year, boys and girls can work and be taught together in the same classes with advantage, the girl, on the whole, probably being the brighter and more conscientious in her work; but after that age their course of study should absolutely diverge. Physiology teaches us that the stress of the development of certain organs and functions in the female lays an enormous strain on her constitution. While a moderate exercise and development of her mental powers are beneficial, an undue tax on them tends in not a few cases to a failure in development in her physical characteristics, and often to a breakdown in both directions.

Wrong Evolution.

As a medical man practising for over 20 years specially in diseases of women, evidence is almost daily brought before me of the mischief wrought and the disasters that ensue. When we see young women competing with men, undertaking the same University curriculum and examinations, when we see them entering professions, eager to obtain clerkships, office-work, and typewriting, and when the work in our factories is largely conducted by female labor, one cannot but realise that our social evolution is progressing on incorrect lines, and is diverging further and further from the home life which tends to the rearing of a healthy population.

When these young women marry, what is their subsequent history? If there is a family at all, instead of childbirth being a normal physiological process attended by little risk or undue suffering, we find in a large proportion of cases the process becomes an absolutely pathological one, and I think every practitioner of long experience will endorse this view: that the percentage of normal unaided cases attended by the doctor in our large towns is year by year decreasing. Neurasthenic females cannot bear the pains of labor as their healthier mothers did before them. Narcotics and anaesthetics must be freely employed, and manipulative assistance has frequently to be made use of, while the ultimate results compare most unfavorably with those of Nature's unaided efforts. As a sequence, despite the fact that the practitioner of the present day is far better equipped than his predecessors of 30 years ago, his results are no better as regards maternal and infant mortality.

Our Universities invite and hold out inducements to young women to enter their doors. At the inception of the medical woman era, in my student days it was natural that I should have sided with the thoughtless and often boyish opposition at first aroused; years later, after my connection with our local University, impressed by the excellent students some of these ladies proved themselves to be, I was inclined to think that the change might eventuate successfully, but as a result of more extended experience the conclusion forced upon me is that in only a few very exceptional cases are women suited for a profession which makes such incessant demands on the physical and nervous energies of those who pursue it. A small proportion of our lady doctors have attained a moderate success. But at what cost? My experience of medical students, put briefly, is this: Of the men a small proportion break down during their course of study; of the women the majority do—it is the few who do not. The average male student, and sometimes the student below the average, usually turns out a fairly useful and successful practitioner; the brilliant female student at the best attains only mediocrity.

Women at Work.

When, again, numbers of young women are found entering into clerkships, office and factory work, this seems to me largely attributable to our educational system, that does not aim at preparing our girls for a domestic life, but attempts to train them to pass a useless matriculation examination. Does our State system of education encourage girls to enter domestic service? Yet, I confidently assert, the girl employed in domestic duties in a good home, with a good mistress, is happier, better off, leads a more wholesome and healthier life, will make a better wife and mother, and is more likely to rear a healthy