

RACE BETTERMENT.

The second international conference on Race Betterment, held in San Francisco recently, was attended by a large number of men and women of scientific achievement. The conference discussed race decadence, the possibilities of race improvement, and the agencies of race betterment.

Luther Burbank, the plant wizard, discussed "Evolution and Variation with the Fundamental Significance of Sex." Mr. Burbank said: "Abundant, well-balanced nourishment and thorough culture of plants or animals will always produce good results in holding any species or variety up to its best hereditary possibilities, beyond which it cannot carry them, and lacking which, maximum development can never be realized. But a sharp line must always be drawn between the transient results, temporarily attained through favorable environment and the permanent results of selection of the best individuals for continuing the race. Only by constant selection of the best can any race ever be improved."

Paul B. Popenoe, editor of the American Journal of Heredity, in discussing "The Natural Selection of Man," declared: "There are only two ways to improve the germinal character of the race, to better it in a fundamental and enduring manner. One is to kill off the weaklings born in each generation. That is nature's way, the old method of natural selection which we are all agreed must be supplanted. When we abandon that, we have but one conceivable alternative, and that is to adopt some means by which fewer weaklings will be born in each generation. The only hope for permanent race betterment under social control is to substitute a selective birth-rate for nature's death-rate. That mean—eugenics."

Dr. J. H. Kellogg, superintendent of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, proposed that the conference institute a eugenics register which would undertake to register two classes of persons. "First, those who, on examination in relation to personal characteristics and family pedigree, are found to measure up to eugenic standards. Second, the children born of parents whose pedigree and physical characteristics conform to the required standards. Such a registry would be the beginning of a new and glorified human race which sometime, far down in the future, will have so mastered the forces of nature that disease and degeneracy will have been eliminated. Hospitals and prisons will be no longer needed, and the golden age will have been restored as the crowning result of human achievement and obedience to biologic law."