

SCIENCE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, PUBLISHING THE
OFFICIAL NOTICES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 1905.

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THE RELATIONS OF PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCE TO OTHER SCIENCES.*

“PHYSICAL science is one and indivisible. Although for practical purposes it is convenient to mark it out into the primary regions of physics, chemistry and biology, and to subdivide these into subordinate provinces, yet the method of investigation and the ultimate object of the physical inquirer are everywhere the same.”—Huxley.

Physical science is one and indivisible; that, as I understand it, is the key note of this great congress, of which public health science forms one section, and as I am invited to consider, in the brief space of forty-five minutes, the relations of public health science to other sciences, I shall take the liberty of selecting from the whole number of ‘other sciences’ only a few, the relations of which to public health science seem to me for one reason or another especially important at the present time. I accept the term public health science without hesitation, for any division of human knowledge which has worked out its own laws with strict adherence to the rules of inductive and deductive reasoning, as public health science has done, and which has reached results enabling it to predict with accuracy, as public health science can now predict, is entitled to a place and an honorable place among the physical sciences.

Public health science had its rise and a considerable development in the eighteenth century. Before that time numerous procedures tending to protect or promote the public health had, indeed, at one time or

* Address before the International Congress of Arts and Science, St. Louis Exposition.

Science

21 (546)

Science 21 (546), 905-936.

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