Proceedings of the Nineteenth Minnesota State Conference of Charities and Correction Held in Crookston November 19-21 1910

ure as she so richly deserves, It is not all to accumulate a fortune; it is more to live a life. The woman on the farm holds the key that will give us a country life that is worth while. If such a condition now exists in a farm home it is through her genius and planning. She deserves the encomium of a grateful state,

A desirable country life needs intelligent farming. It needs co-operation in distributing the products of the farm. It needs redirected and reorganized rural schools. It needs good roads, and a fuller and richer social and intellectual life. Even if these be secured, much hard work will still be the farmers' portion. We shall not soon reach the condition of that faRMer who had to build a gymnasium to give his hired man exercise.

FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS—ITS PREVENTION,

By Dr. A, C. Rogers, Superintendent State School for Feeble-Minded and Colony for Epileptics.

When a mother of a feeble-minded child has finally realized the distressing fact of its defect, her first anxious longing is for some means to help or cure its condition. The sub-conscious factor in her anxiety is her desire to be told the cause of her child's condition, and this is one of the first questions she asks upon, seeking advice in its behalf. The almost universal question of the thoughtful visitor to an institution for the feeble-minded is: "What is the cause of all this?" The citizens of the state who cheerfully support the institution for the care and training of this class naturally and properly would know if there is to be a limit to its growth, and there is nothing in connection with the work itself that so appeals to those responsible for its conduct as the possibility of assisting to bring about a downward curve of the line representing the number of dependents and defectives.

An investigation of the case records of the institution at Faribault reveals an immense amount of information bearing upon the question of causation, but with it is considerable misinformation, and the amount of apparently correct information is still entirely inadequate for determining specific causes in a very large proportion of cases. For this reason it would seem presumptuous for the writer to propose a discussion of this subject before an intelligent audience like this, if this discussion was predicated only upon definite, well-defined laws that account for every case of mental defect, or even a very large number of them. On the other hand, there is a legitimate purpose in keeping two distinct facts before the public. First, that of the enormous amount of incapable and dependent humanity; and, second

THit there must be causes for these conditions. Only thus can ways and means be provided tor a. thorough investigation of the data availaide.

Every mental defect is either congenital or acquired In the latter case, the child may either, first, have sustained physical injury, especially about the head, fRom falls or blows, sufficient to interfere with the. process of brain development; or, second it may have suffered from some disease of childhood, like scarlet fever, measles or meningitis. Twenty-five per cent of feeble-mindedness would, probably, be a liberal assignment to these acquired cases, of which 3 per cent would refer to the first class, viz: to those who have sustained physical injury, and 20 per cent to those who have survived from diseases of childhood. The 5 per cent contingent we would always have, with more or less variation as to the number. The 20 per cent contingent would decrease with the advance of preventative medicine.

After eliminating the acquired cases, we find among the congenital cases a. few due to parental causes. The great bulk, of course. are due to hereditary causes, so far but vaguely understood, but upon which investigators are throwing more ami more light. Then there are a few cases, winch we speak of as "sporadic," because there seems at present to be no evidence of hereditary taint nor parental depressants. Of course, a cause really exists that, if known, would explain such cases, and it is only by courtesy that the term "sporadic" is tipplied to this group. •

Among parental influences venereal diseases seem to be very potent factors, though not apparently effecting a very large number of cases. Recently the blood of over 900 children in an institution for feeble-minded in Denmark was carefully subjected to the Washerman test, with the result that only a little over 1 per cent gave positive reactions. This is a field in which there is an opportunity to do positive scientific work that will be of great value. We know that there is a powerful ant i-devolopment influence exerted by this poison, as shown by sterility and still-birth associated with its known presence (See chart.] It is quite probable that this is a factor in many eases where the blood would show no reaction through this specific test, and there is a growing conviction that, while there are apparently but. relatively few cases of arrested mental development from this cause, there are really many more than the evidence shows, and that an examination of candidates for marriage should he made for e\idencea of such diseases, for the evidence of any such disease, either acquired or inherited should be cause for interdicting the consummation of this relation.

As to other parental influences, the effect upon the development of the unborn child from accident to the mother, either of a physical or intensely emotional character, is not to be overlooked, but its value,

except in very rare cases, is uncertain and probably would not apply to exceed 5 per cent of the cases.

This brings us to the consideration of the hereditary factors. In this field, as indicated before, there is an immense amount of information, but it consists very largely, at the present time, of very little information about many people. It needs amplification—collateral and ancestral relationship should be studied and the data classified. There is also a large element of errors in the records at present on file, owing to the ignorance, or conscious or unconscious prejudice of the contributors. While there are perhaps few definite principles to be announced, there are a number of very strong "suspicions," which are growing stronger, as to the importance of some hereditary influences. As to the cases the writer has known most of personally, there are few whose families, so far as investigated, do not show ancestral or collateral cases of defect or neurosis. (See charts.) These charts, which can be multiplied almost indefinitely with variations, are graphic representations of certain evident conditions even from our imperfect data, and we believe that, if this data can be verified, amplified and extended, an astonishing amount of valuable information will be obtained, which will have definite value on the question of causation. The publication of the Mendelian law, to which the writer called the attention of this conference at its last meeting in St. Paul, and of which considerable has appeared in popular articles for two or three years, has stimulated new interest and studies in hereditary—not only in plant and animal life generally, but in human heredity as well. From this law, as a working hypothesis for human heredity, new discoveries are being made, and facts long known are assuming new meaning. In some of the individual physical characteristics, like color of eyes, color and quality of hair, hereditary law has been worked out. Some diseases, such as Huntington's chorea and a number of the specific types, are known to be distinctly hereditary. (See chart.)

One of the suspicions referred to is that drugs, especially alcohol, have a much greater effect upon the germ protoplasm, therefore on parental and hereditary influence on progeny, than the superficial evidence indicates.

Our records show 16 per cent of cases in which the parents are or have been addicted to the use of alcohol as a beverage. Yet, notwithstanding the fact that there are often distinct neuroses discovered in these family lines, as the histories are extended and more ancestral and collateral branches investigated, the alcohol factor by this process grows larger also. This suspicion is in accord' with the emphatic declaration of some European authorities, who attribute as high as 40 per cent of degeneracy directly to alcoholism, and a much higher percentage directly and indirectly to this factor. This whole subject, however, is receiving much thought and study, and we shall await the results of further research for more definite statements concerning it.

The American Breeders' Association has formed a department of eugenics, with some of our best known men on its committee—David Starr Jordan, Alexander Graham Bell, Charles R. Henderson and others.

Among other lines of investigation which it is planning and carrying on, it is urging the amplification and study of data already collected. Dr. Davenport, the secretary of this committee, speaking of the whole country, says:

"While the acquisition of new data is desirable, much can be done by studying the extant records of institutions. The amount of such data is enormous. They lie hidden in records of our numerous charity organizations, our 42 institutions for the feeble-minded, our 115 schools and homes for the deaf and blind our 350 hospitals for the insane, our 1,200 refuge homes, our 1,300 prisons, our 1,500 hospitals and our 2,500 almshouses. Our great insurance companies and our college gymnasiums have tens of thousands of records of the characters of human blood lines. These records should be studied, their hereditary data sifted out and properly recorded on cards, and the cards sent to a central bureau for study, in order that data should be placed in their proper relations in the great strains of human protoplasm that are coursing through the country.

Thus could be learned not only the method of heredity of human characteristics, but we shall identify those lines which supply our families of great men: our Adamses, our Abbotts, our Beechers, our Blairs, and so on through the alphabet. We shall also learn whence come our 300,000 insane and feeble-minded, our 160,000 blind or deaf, the 2,000,000 that are annually cared for by our hospitals and homes, our 80,000 prisoners and the thousands of criminals that are not in prison, and our 100,000 paupers in almshouses and out. This 3 or 4 per cent of our population is a fearful drag on our civilization. * * * A new plague that rendered 4 per cent of our population, chiefly at the most productive age, not only incompetent, but a burden, costing $100,000,000 yearly to support, would instantly attract universal attention, and millions would be forthcoming for its study, as they have been for the study of cancer. But we have become so used to crime, disease and degeneracy that we take them as necessary evils. That they were, in the world's ignorance, is granted. That they must remain so is denied."

Minnesota has the machinery for procuring data along this line, and that at a comparatively small expense. So much for the scientific attitude toward the question of good hereditary. The purposes of this brief discussion will have been served, if it shall awaken any interest in and support for research work along the lines suggested.

While I do not know very much about the scientific side of this question, when coming up in the train the other day, I happened to

look up at the ceiling of the car, the chair car, and I noticed a compass there. The thought occurred to me that here also is a use for the magnetic needle; the mariner uses it, the woodsman uses it in the woods, and the boy scouts use it in their maneuvers. Now here on a railroad train we can look at the needle and see the direction m which we are traveling; The needle always points to the magnetic pole, so that it makes no difference where we are on earth, we can determine from it the direction in which we are going.

In the study of sociological problems we come back to one thing than we are absolutely sure of, and that is that the home is the important thing, and if every member of the home does the very best that he or she can for the good of that home, and for every member in it, all of these problems would be largely solved.

In the meantime, we can all understand that no amount of knowlegde will better the race unless self-control is recognized as the most important factor in human existence. So let us remember that "sober, quiet, industrious, temperate and righteous living is the best known preventive of degeneracy, and he who does most to promote it is 'the greatest philanthropist.' "

EDUCATION FOR SERVICE.

Prof. Graham Taylor, D. D., Warden, Chicago Commons.

Shortly after coming to Chicago I 'went down in the neighborhood of Hull 'House to render some volunteer work. I was met there by a Russian Jew, who said to me, "I bear that you are coming down here to lend a hand." "Yes," I said, "I am." "Well," he said, "I hope you know that you owe it to us."

Well, that never quite occurred to me, but I assented, and he proceeded to bear that in upon my conscience in this fashion. He said: "You are a student—you need a building to study in. We build it for you. You need books, and we manufacture them. You need clothing, and my race has created the ready-made clothes trade." He was the victim of the sweat-shop system of Chicago, and he went on down the line making the appeal all the time that learning owed what it had to labor, but he summed up that appeal with this tremendous conclusion: He looked me square in the eyes and said: "Hut for the large number of us fellows on earth who work, who labor, and who do without culture, you, sir, would have no leisure to learn."

I never realized that my leisure to learn rolled up a debt to those who maybe had as much capacity for learning as I, but were all the time patient to labor while I had leisure to learn,

That same tremendous obligation was .borne in upon my family by another incident, when one of the members of my family circle went to Harvard university. A Jewish boy with whom he had been acquainted at the settlement wrote him that he hoped he would never forget that his education was costing a great deal more than he or his father would ever pay for it and then, in a kind of a passionate outburst, he said to this son of mine: "Return in glorious light the privileges which others are giving you."

I do not wonder that that college boy wrote home to his father, after that tremendous lesson in moral obligation, asking what he should do to pay his honest debt.

That is the way I learned that all education is an obligation to public service. There are students here from the state agricultural college. It is a college of the state. It is built and supported by taxation. Its walls are held together by the sweat of the farmer and the grime of the mechanic. Why have the people of this great state consented to be taxed to build that agricultural college, the University of Minnesota, the public schools and the high schools that are the centers of all the towns, villages and the wards of the city? Was it not to equip its sons and daughters in order that they might return the service as worthy citizens? Was if not that they should feel their obligation to promote the welfare of the commonwealth? He or she who takes that education for a private purpose, who thinks that ibis equipment can he used for self, and self only, who thinks that it is fair to get all he can and give as little back as possible is a downright, dishonest person. He has committed a breach of public trust. The teacher that builds herself up out of her school, instead of the school up out of herself; the lawyer who builds himself up out of his clients, instead of the client's interest up out of himself; the doctor who builds up his own reputation as a professional asset out of his patients, instead of the patients up out of his professional skill; the minister of the church members that try to make the community build a church up, instead of the church building up the community, have committed a breach of trust.

All education is an obligation to public service, and that is so for three reasons: 1. Because our very consciousness of self is a social product. We think of self first in terms of others, is what psychologists tell us, and even if we are not conscious of so doing, we are what we are very largely because of what others have made us There are no self-made men and women. If there was extracted from you and me all that others have put into us, mother, father, brother, sister, playmate, workmate, neighbor and friends, what would there be left? Would we recognize ourselves if by some strange chemistry all that we owe to others were suddenly taken out of our makeup? Now, education in itself, in its development, is a social product. No