THE WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY DEMANDS THAT MARRIAGE SHOULD BE REGULATED.

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The closing hours of the nineteenth century are full of marvelous results in science and art, and of wonderful progress in medicine and surgery, but in the midst of these brilliant achievements may be seen on every side insanity, pauperism, criminality and the degenerating effects of various vices of nutrition so rapidly increasing that they will overwhelm the race unless they can be arrested. These melancholy effects are produced, at least in part, by the violation of the laws of heredity, constantly taking place in unregulated marriages. Under our higher civilization abnormal man, be he defective, dependent or delinquent, is propagated, cultivated and protected, his feeble and crippled offspring are nursed to manhood and sent forth to produce their kind. Under savage and semi-civilized conditions these abnormalities are speedily extinguished, the deformed and the weaklings have no place in their system, and some way or other are soon cut off.

The physicians, who have always been the advance guard of progress, ever watchful of the welfare of those entrusted to their care, must rise in their might, find the remedy and apply it to these defects of this brilliant age. The study of these defects of our civilization develop startling revelations.

First, consider the increase of insanity in Great Britain. In 1860 the proportion of insane to the population was 1 to 523, in 1870 1 to 411, in 1880 1 to 360, in 1890 1 to 320. The proportion of the insane to the population in New York to-day is 1 in 315. If this increase is to be stopped, it must be by the earnest efforts of such distinguished members of the profession as are gathered here.

Consider the question of crime. The census of 1890 places the criminals in prisons and reformatories at 82,329. If only one-third are incarcerated this gives a criminal population of about 250,000. Between the years 1850 and 1890 the population increased 170 per cent., the criminals increased 445 per cent. Between the years 1880 and 1890, the total population increased 24.5 per cent., the criminal population increased 45 per cent.

The statistics of pauperism show equally startling defects in our sociology. Dugdale, in his admirable study of the "Juke" family, shows how from one degenerate man, in seven generations there were developed 1,200 criminals and paupers. McCulloch, in his history of the "Ben Ishmael" family, showed as the offspring of this degenerate, 1,750 criminals and paupers. Maudsley says that an idiot is not an accident, nor an irreclaimable criminal an unaccountable casualty. Our mental and physical condition is an inheritance, an estate in trust received from our ancestors; we make it better or we make it worse, and we hand it down to our children. Heredity, according to Ribot, "that biological law by which all beings endowed with life tend to repeat themselves in their descendants," is the great underlying factor, and yet, while we are extremely careful to observe its

demands in the breeding of horses and cattle, we pay but little attention to it in laying the foundation for the physical, mental or moral condition of our children.

The laity need to be instructed on the subject; they should be taught that insanity, epilepsy, tuberculosis and drunkenness are all most certainly transmissible, and that out of them proceed pauperism and crime, and that he or she who possesses any one of these, or any other vice of nutrition, by marrying assumes a terrible responsibility in the suffering and misery they inflict upon their progeny.

Fortunately for the race these degenerates tend to extinction, and in the third and fourth generation, if not sooner, they have paid the penalty by annihilation, of their violation of the laws of nature.

Some of the laity are already deeply interested in this matter, and are seeking to find ways and means by which they may avoid these consequences; and the tendency to reversion furnishes us with the method by which the milder cases of hereditary taint may produce children who will but slightly inherit the abnormalities. We would, of course, advise such persons to unite in wedlock with those as far as possible removed from the vice of constitution which they possess, and then their progeny may be thrown back to the normal type.

The most perplexing, as well as the most active factor in producing the defects of our civilization, is alcoholism. The appetite for alcohol may be acquired, but it can be transmitted to the children, and various diseases and degenerations follow. Echeverria collected the statistics of sixty-eight males and forty-seven females who were alcoholics. The number of children born to them was 476. Of these, 23 were stillborn, 107 died of convulsions in infancy, 3 suicided, 96 had epilepsy, 13 were idiots, 19 maniacal, 7 had general paresis, 5 had locomotor ataxia, 26 had hysteria, 23 paralysis, 19 deformed, 9 chorea, 7 strabismus, 3 were deaf, and 205 exhibited drinking tendencies.

Dr. Tarnavskin examined at St. Petersburg prostitutes who had been inmates not less than two years, and found eighty-two per cent had parents who were habitual drunkards.

Boies' makes the statement, "that the consumption of distilled spirits, per capita, has not materially changed even in fifty years in this country, but the consumption of malt liquors has increased 738.1 per cent. contemporaneously with an increase of 445 per cent. in criminals in fifty years. These statistics show very plainly that the temperance reformers have not reached the masses. While the decanter is no longer seen on the sideboard, and the consumption of wine among the well-to-do people has diminished, yet the saloons are multiplying on every side. Surely we can not permit this condition of things to continue longer, and must recognize the inadequacy of the forces that are contending with it. The physicians must educate the laity, must impress them with a knowledge of the disastrous effects of alcoholism, and through their coöperation secure such legislation as will remove the blot from our civilization.

The effect of marriages, in disregard of the laws of heredity, are well shown in the following life trees. They are taken from Dr. Strahan's admirable book on "Marriage and Disease," and other sources.

1 Prisoners and Paupers.

CASE I.

J. E——'s FAMILY.

CASE II.

K. S——'s FAMILY.

CASE III.

Father a drunkard.

CASE IV.

M. Died mad.

CASE V.

F. A suicide.

CASE VII.

J. G. A——'s FAMILY HISTORY.

CASE VIII.

S. H——'s FAMILY.

FATHER. Eccentric, hypochondriac.

Dr. Richardson.

In the midst of these overwhelming exhibits, surely the welfare of the community demands that marriage should be regulated. It is horrible to contemplate what will be the condition of the race in the future, and what will become of our social and political institutions if this wholesale production of abnormalities does not cease.

In most of the States of the Union a marriage license is necessary before the ceremony can be performed, but its requirements are insignificant. Let us agree that in addition, proper evidence must be furnished that both parties are in good health, that they are not insane, criminals, paupers, alcoholic nor narcotic inebriates, that they are not tuberculous, cancerous nor epileptic, and that they have not active venereal disease.

If the members of this great profession will unitedly advocate this great reform, they will succeed, and more than ever deserve the title of public benefactors.

AGE AND SEX INCIDENCE OF MORTALITY IN MICHIGAN FROM DIPHTHERIA AND FROM CROUP DURING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, 1870-94; A STATISTIC STUDY.

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No apology is necessary at the present time for a statistic study bearing upon the history of diphtheria and croup in the United States during recent years. It is only a short time since the etiologic characteristics of the disease, or diseases, dependent chiefly upon the presence of the Klebs-Löffler bacillus and associated microorganisms, have been definitely ascertained, and a still briefer time has elapsed since the antitoxin treatment, based entirely upon modern bacteriologic research, has promised to revolutionize entirely the treatment, and to greatly reduce the mor-