

## THE TREATMENT OF DEGENERATIVE PSYCHOSES.\*

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For nearly three years I have been daily occupied with the medico-psychological examination of prisoners and young offenders in the reformatories of Belgium. As my experience has enlarged, I have felt the high importance of what I like to call my mission and the happy results that may follow from it in behalf of those deprived of intelligence and moral sense. I called attention to the great importance of this examination before the psychological section of the British Medical Association in 1892,† and there offered the following conclusions:

*First.*—That every prison with a population of, for instance, one thousand or more convicts should have a special ward in which one could take proper care of all the criminals who have become insane during their detention and are susceptible of recovery.

The treatment of the criminal and curable lunatics in a separate building of a prison seems to me to have great advantages. On their discharge these unhappy men could not have the stigma of having been in a lunatic asylum and consequently it would be easier for them to reconquer an honorable place in society. The special lunatic asylums for criminals ought only to be opened for those whose mental condition would not allow of rational treatment in the division of the prison called the lunatic ward; they should also receive the insane criminals whose incurability is more or less established.

*Second.*—That each prison, and a portion in each ward destined for criminals having become lunatic, ought to have a special staff of attendants with the necessary qualities, instruction and education required to treat rationally the convicts who become insane.

*Third.*—That all convicts belonging to the class called imbeciles ought to receive special physical and mental care. They ought not to be discharged before the end of the duration of their imprisonment, because, it is this class of degenerates that furnishes the great contingent of recidivists. One ought also to group in this class those criminals who, by their former way of living, have weakened their body and mind.

*Fourth.*—That society does not take sufficient care to preserve malefactors from relapse. In the present state of things, and almost generally, the

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†The Psychological Examination of Prisoners, in "The Journal of Mental Diseases," January, 1893.

old criminals feel themselves abandoned by those who ought to protect them in a social point of view; very often they are obliged to look for hospitality in lodgings inhabited by the lowest class of society. It is not easy for them to find work again, consequently they are obliged to spend most of their time in these houses of ill-repute. With the little money they have they begin to drink; they make the acquaintance of bad people, and by and by they begin to attempt, or are provoked to commit new crimes.

The psychological examination has often proved that these individuals on leaving the prison cured, as much as possible, physically and morally, if they are obliged to follow the course we have described, soon again decline mentally, and, above all, lose their will and their self-respect.

I read also, before the Congress of Anthropology held in Brussels a few days afterwards, a paper "On the Nature of the Incurrible,"\* and asserted:

That anthropologists cannot classify the incurrible without having recourse to the science of pathology. Degeneracy may involve at the same time the physical and the psychical state, but it may vary greatly and predominate in one or the other of the two states. Lombroso's school has devoted too little of its attention to the opposite etiology which considers the amelioration of man. After having studied the so-called incurrible as well among children as among youth, we concluded: In order to give to the theory of incurribility some standing, some scientific value, it would be necessary to be able to bring forward certain specimens as having passed through all the different systems of treatment and education. The proof of incurribility in men who, psychically, present no hereditary taint, is, therefore, yet to be made. . .

The reformation of so-called incurribles should be attempted in the reformatories and prisons; it should be continued even outside of these institutions. . . . If every country had the good fortune to have a law for the protection of childhood; if the authorities had sufficient latitude to remove the children from parents and tutors incapable or unworthy; if the governments would organize methodically a system of education for these unfortunate creatures, in a very few years we should see criminality decrease to a considerable extent.

To-day, and in consequence of the kind invitation of your worthy President, Dr. G. Alder Blumer, I have the honour to offer to the section on the Commitment, Detention, Care and Treatment of the Insane, of the World's Congress of Chicago, the benefit of my unintermitting study, hoping that the alienists of the New World will be pleased to accept favorably these few lines. Indeed, in what other part of the world could we meet more extended ideas of charity than in the United States? Is it not in

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\* The Monthly Summary, 1888, Elmira No. 2, and Bulletin de la Société de Médecine Mentale de Belgique, 1892.

this country that one ever says and repeats: No State or nation was ever ruined by the greatness of her charities? The Lord seems rather to prosper those peoples who are most generally charitable toward the helpless and the unfortunate.

I submit these lines to your learned appreciation and I should feel myself well rewarded if the *élite* of the American alienists who favour me with their kind attention, could also favour me with the expression of their opinions concerning the question of the unfortunates predisposed to insanity and criminality either by heredity or by acquired diseases or bad education.

During my later studies I had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of the excellent German book of Dr. Koch, Medical Superintendent of the Lunatic Hospital of Zwiefalten, entitled: "Die Psychopathischen Minderwertigkeiten."\* This title of "Psychopathic Depreciations" is given by Dr. Koch to a very large number of these psychical manifestations, so varied in their nature and intensity which, without belonging to the class of mental diseases proper, cannot, nevertheless, be reconciled with the idea of perfect mental sanity. Under this head of psychopathic depreciation we meet cases perhaps better known in mental science as premonitory symptoms of insanity, incomplete recoveries, nervous temperament, hereditary neuroses, obsessional insanity, hereditary madness, neurasthenia, neuropathic constitution, etc.

Koch prefers his single denomination and, in preparing his work, his aim was to call the attention not only of the medical world but of all persons interested in pedagogy, law, and morals. In order to make his book, or rather the importance of it, better known, he made several divisions and subdivisions of his psychopathic depreciations; he took a special care to establish evidence of pathological shades corresponding to functional alterations of the brain and the nervous system; he made two great divisions, congenital, mostly hereditary, and acquired. Each of these conditions were divided into three others: psychopathic predisposition, psychopathic defect, and degeneration. A few words are necessary to define these conditions as we meet them in the different cases of mental weakness of which I have to speak: Congenital predisposition in psychopathic depreciation may be latent or evident. It is characterized by an exaggerated sensibil-

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\* Baumburg. Published by Otto Maier: 1898.

ity accompanied with a lack of activity or of energy of the nervous system.

In the psychopathic congenital defect we have anomalies of the psychical excitability, exaggerated excitability, rapid weakness (irritable weakness), want of balance in the mental faculties, an exaggerated individualism, a want of uprightness and judgment, inconsistency in the conduct, eccentricities, singularities, obsessions, and periodicity in these symptoms. Also Koch speaks of eccentrics, disequibrated, overscrupulous and capricious persons, foolish, misanthropes, redressers of wrongs, reformers of society, etc.

The congenital degeneration is characterized among other psychological deficiencies by a mental weakness, now in the province of the intelligence, now in the department of the moral sense, and at other times in both the intellectual and moral spheres.

The acquired psychopathic depreciation may naturally depend upon a predisposing etiology and in this case heredity will be the most important. It is needless to mention the efficient causes before this learned body; they are, moreover, too numerous. Great caution is to be used here in order not to confuse this depreciation with neurasthenia and the first symptoms of general paralysis.

In the psychopathic acquired defect the learned German alienist distinguishes the idiopathic blemish from that resulting from a vitiated constitution from intoxications, infections and nervous diseases, railway-brain, onanism, puberty and pregnancy.

The acquired degeneration is, like the congenital degeneration, a pathological condition, an intellectual or a moral weakness. It may be the consequence of an uncured insanity, of infectious diseases, of cerebral traumatism, etc. We may call it a specific degeneration when it follows alcoholism, senility, epilepsy or any other chronic neurosis.

The above quoted divisions and symptoms make it clear why Dr. Koch is not a partisan of Lombroso. We also have only to mention the results of the last Anthropological Congress, held in Brussels last year, to prove how the Italian school has lost a great deal of its prestige. This may be of importance before entering upon the practical part of my subject.

What I am now advancing is not new to competent alienists, who are daily called to give their opinion in doubtful cases, and, consequently, in cases of psychopathic depreciation. But how

often does it not happen that patients and their friends only take the advice of their family doctor who, many times, knows scarcely anything about mental diseases; who, generally, even when he knows of the results of heredity and acquired predisposition, is incompetent to properly advise his patients, because he never passed a medico-psychological examination when taking his degree, or never had the opportunity to practice to any extent in mental diseases.

How difficult it seems, and certainly is, in general practice to recognise the diminution of the force of resistance in nervous diseases! How little attention is given to the question of predisposition or heredity! How often the predisposed are living under bad influences!

The treatment of all psychopathically depreciated individuals and consequently their preservation from the evils that threaten them, ought to begin in their earliest infancy. Let us first avoid assuming hereditary predisposition when either insanity or a serious nervous disease has been stated to have occurred only once in the parents. Too often such a conclusion is adopted and hope of recovery in the descendants is given up, because one of the parents or the grandparents was affected with insanity, for instance at the period of puberty, of pregnancy, even of senility or by reason of another organic disease of the brain. A preliminary examination of the insane needs to be made before one is enabled to judge in regard to an appearance of heredity. It is only after a careful examination that one can believe and sometimes prove the existence of heredity. The proof will be beyond doubt when in parents and in their children stigmata of anatomical and psychical degeneration are abundantly found.

Whatever may be the prognosis after examination, the alienist need not always despair, except in cases of idiocy in a very high degree and of extreme dementia. The physical and mental training in the special asylums for imbeciles and idiots give such splendid results that we can not imagine how parents, and, especially, those charged with heredity, are not encouraged and advised by their doctor and friends to try, from the first year of the child's life, special measures for their preservation. If a good and persevering physical and psychical management of the weak-minded gives such admirable results in asylums, it would be still better if the child could be trained from the earliest period of its

life. This subject is ignored by the public, and in every case not sufficiently appreciated. Great efforts should be made to call the attention of all educators to this capital point.

For cases of simple congenital predisposition it is impossible to give here a full description of the prophylactic treatment. It will be sufficient to mention that indications and directions are in this matter very numerous, and that patients ought to be under the care of a physician possessing an extensive knowledge of this subject. In many of these cases it is of urgent importance that the family doctor be assisted by an alienist, as very often the judgment and the science of two medical men are not too much to save a child for the remainder of his life.

The cases of psychopathic defect must be taken into serious consideration as we are now living in the century of the neuropathies and nervous weaknesses. Here the duties of an alienist and of the medical men in general are very important. First of all we have to try and preserve the patients of a nervous, or of a weak constitution. It need not be said that we have to oppose their marriage, as nothing exactly proves their hereditary tendencies. However, advice is to be given to them, they ought to know in what state of health they are living, they must be informed of the great danger of the matrimonial union with a person of the same tendencies and especially when consanguinity exists between them.

The greatest care is to be given to children of this class. Experience, already, has led to the conclusion, that mental and physical overwork increases this defect; that young brains must not be overexcited with pernicious thoughts. The will of the children ought to be cultivated and strengthened, and consequently their mind should be regularly educated. The bodily exercises should be regular and not exhausting; the digestive functions should never be artificially stimulated in any way to increase unduly the assimilation of the food. The development of the intelligence, the sensibility and the physical training ought to be looked after in the same way. Consequently special attention should be given to the schooling and education.

Again, it is not possible to give here all the special directions. It would lead us too far, and, moreover, it would not be possible to give them completely, as they vary so much according to the individual under care. Nevertheless, we must know that physicians and parents or educators ought to understand each

other, and, once a plan of living is laid down, it ought to be followed and watched every day. The success depends on this. Let us not forget the great influence of hygienic conditions (air, light, food, dress, habitation, sleep, muscular exercises, etc.), for, without them, the efforts made for mental training are useless.

When putting these orders into execution, we not only prevent an increase of the congenital tare, but also we perceptibly amend the psychopathic depreciation that no doubt in the usual way of living would certainly become worse. The object very often thus secured is double: aggravation has been prevented, amelioration has been obtained.

But how frequently the efforts are unsuccessful, because either the family doctor, and the educator have no time to superintend the treatment and often also are unable, for many reasons, to individualise the treatment as they ought. Therefore we cannot sufficiently appreciate the high value of well organized special boarding-schools for the weak-minded.

The special aim, says Koch, is to teach the patient and to enable him to govern himself, to repose confidence in himself. To reach this end, a great deal of patience is required of him who undertakes this treatment; he has to exercise himself to win this patience; he must know how to divide the time for work and the time for rest. For many of these mentally depreciated subjects, variety is wanted as well for the physical work as for the mental training.

Those charged with the application of these remedies and exercising good judgment, are soon enabled to distinguish those cases that are the most favourable, from those that are the most difficult; they can soon say, that a favourable remedy for the one may be noxious for another and vice versa. The use of tonics, spirits, cold baths, etc., and even hypnotism, may be tried, but great caution is to be exercised and these remedies should never be employed or prescribed except by medical men.

What has just been said proves the superiority of good special institutions. All those connected with them have very delicate and difficult duties to perform. As the end to be attained is unique, all the teachers and other persons belonging to the institution should do all they can, to co-operate with and to fulfil the instructions of the medical staff.

Even the subjects of congenital psychopathic depreciation in a

high degree, as for instance, those suffering from obsessions without delusions, are not inaccessible to successful treatment. In those cases, naturally the most important part belongs to the medical treatment as in most mental diseases the more serious cases, dating from the first youth, and aggravated in proportion to the age, are more difficult to be completely cured. However, we can often stop the progressive evolution, and patients can be ameliorated in such a way that the improvement makes their life very bearable. How often since attention has been called to neurasthenia, the so-called American disease, but existing in all civilized countries of the world, have these sufferings, these formerly incurable nervous exhaustions, been cured!

The same results may be obtained with the intelligent but psychopathically depreciated subjects. Almost daily we see these successes when patients are enabled to understand the nature of their sufferings, to discern that their disease does not belong to insanity, that it will never lead to a mental disease. This understanding is one of the best of all anodynes; it reminds me of what one day the celebrated Professor Donders of Utrecht (Holland) told to one of his patients suffering from an hyperæsthesia of the optic nerves of a neurasthenic origin: "What science cannot, often time and hygiene can, realize." The intelligent patient had received from this learned man the assurance of his sight; a good hygiene and mental rest did soon afterwards produce a cure.

Is not this the best proof that the psychopathically depreciated ought to give their entire confidence to the person of their doctor's choice, who has, so to say, to nurse and to help them according to the medical directions?

The acquired psychopathic depreciations, of either the first or second degree, may also exist from the first years of the child's life. Already we have said that neurasthenia can be confounded with it. These depreciations, in proportion to their intensity, are successively characterized by a state of fatigue, and even a nervous or mental exhaustion accompanied with physical weakness and functional trouble in one or more organs of sense,—by a pathological debility of the intelligence, and impaired memory especially for recent facts, a difficulty of comprehension and of bringing up ideas and judgment,—often together with other troubles, fears, despairs, especially in cases of intoxications by morphine, cocaine, bromides, coffee, etc., in cases also of passive cerebral



hyperæmia, traumatic neurosis, etc.—and increased by irritability and excitability when the troubles arise from onanism, puberty or other period of transformation in the sexual life. In the highest degree, when there is nearly no hope of recovery, the patient is in a lingering state for the remainder of his life. These cases are met with in cerebral traumatism, in organic cerebral diseases, and as a consequence of many infectious diseases. In this degree we have modifications of the character, and in the sphere of the sensibility and the will. These troubles are still more marked in hypochondria and hysteria.

As to its treatment, many prescriptions are the same as for the congenitally depreciated we spoke of. It is a capital duty to begin to fight, from the first symptoms, against predisposing and occasional causes, because if you prevent aggravation, you make recovery possible. Especially in these depreciations, the alienist ought to utilize all his science and prove that only mental science is insufficient to cure such patients. Not only has he to guide the intellectual life, the life of sensibility and will; he has also to remedy the morbid somatic conditions, to superintend the general régime: times of work and rest, air, light, dressing, preservation from alcoholic and other excesses.

So doing, following the scientific prescriptions, not only one increases the force of resistance of the patient, but also of future generations. Often one succeeds in increasing the power of commanding one's self, of renouncing certain factitious wants and passions, enlarging the feeling of duty, understanding the aim why he is born, and what holy mission he has to fulfil upon earth. The intelligent man has always to have in mind that he has to improve himself, to try and benefit his fellow creatures and so he fulfils before society and the Lord the most important of his duties. Medical men, parents or educators, have always to think about these essential principles, and when they do not reach the wanted results at home, they have to commit their patients to proper special institutions, but never to those where care and education is given by routine.

In the highest degree of congenital depreciation we have the real mental degeneration. Persons suffering from this defect are better known under the name of degenerated or weak-minded. Many of them are found in lunatic asylums; the greatest part enjoy their liberty but the population of the prisons and of the

reformatories count a certain number of them. In order not to repeat, we will include in the same division the acquired psychopathic depreciations, also degenerates or weak-minded, as in a medico-psychological view the treatment may be said to be nearly the same.

We all know that a great difference exists in the mental state of health of the degenerates. Some degenerates are distinguished by a great deficiency in the intellectual sphere, some others are characterized by a great want of moral power, others finally have deficiencies in both the intellectual and the moral spheres.

Although many degenerates are hopeless as regards treatment, a great number, a proportion of nearly sixty per cent., is suited to be submitted to a mental training. According to Shuttleworth and Seguin, if a complete cure may be considered as impossible, many of the most serious and disagreeable symptoms can, nevertheless, be removed. The degenerates, inaccessible to kindness, to severity and to every kind of treatment, are individuals, so says Koch, whose pathological lesions are identified with physiological wickedness. Notwithstanding this, some of them often show one side on which they can be taken, especially when they are kept away from noxious influences and when they are brought into a new medium. This fact is to be verified in well organized lunatic asylums; seemingly hopeless weak-minded cases, after a certain time of training, are often enabled to learn a handicraft or a trade and to return to their family.

Some weak-minded of the lowest degree, if unable to reach this so-called perfection, can still be made useful and happy, although they must meet certain difficulties in the course of their existence. These results can be obtained, but before attaining them a great deal of courage and energy is requisite. Courage and energy should be applied, great should be the patience and persistence as long as some hope remains. Do not even despair with morally insane. Meynert, Von Krafft-Ebing, Koch and others of the best known alienists have succeeded, after a certain period of treatment, in attaining more or less great and permanent results. What nature really refused cannot be given to a degenerate; but sometimes it happens that something can be added to what already exists, and very often more natural qualities can be discovered in an individual than was to be hoped.

The qualities required for the training of degenerates are so numerous that it is very seldom parents and relations possess them; often they are unable to form for themselves any correct opinion of the mental state of their weak-minded charges; often too, the intellectual powers of the relations are insufficient, and often also they refuse to be good aids because they cannot believe in the good results of a rational treatment. And without a gradual education the mental deterioration of the degenerates increases without interruption. For all these reasons we have scarcely any hope of amendment if the weak-minded are kept in their families.

Happy are the degenerates confined in season in a good lunatic asylum or in special schools for weak-minded and even in reformatories. Some are to be found in the prisons. The most fortunate are those who encounter on their way medical advice rather than a judge! The staff of the lunatic asylums, or better still the staff of the asylums for idiots and imbeciles, know their mental deficiencies, and the medical superintendent keeps them under proper care as long as they are unable to join their family.

The reformatories and even the prisons mostly receive the neglected or abandoned degenerates, who have become criminals.

Can a happy modification of the degenerated be obtained in lunatic asylums? Does a reformatory suffice to amend the psychological lacunae of the weak-minded offenders? And I mention only the prisons, as a recollection, because in the present situation of the penitentiary system I don't believe very serious improvements can be reached in these institutions.

I make haste to say that at the present time we possess several well organized asylums with special sections for children, which have all the desired means to ameliorate the mental state of the weak-minded, but only upon condition that they should be sent to them when their age and the degree of their intellectual powers still give some hope for their return into society.

I have seen many lunatic asylums. I know all those of Belgium and several of France, Germany, Austria, Holland and England. I have been surprised to ascertain that, in most of these asylums, little attention is given to the education of patients of no more than fifteen or twenty years of age. In asylums with special sections for idiots and imbeciles, it is a rule that the children leave the school at the age of about fifteen years for the workshop where they have to learn a trade suited to their phys-

ical and intellectual strength. At about this age it is thought that sufficient experience has been gained with the feeble-minded and that one may then conclude as to a favourable or unfavourable prognosis.

The foregoing observations must be applied to the training of children in most reformatories. If instruction and moral training of the young offenders is what medical science requires at the present time, I should say that pupils of reformatories are more happily trained than the children in many of the special sections of lunatic asylums. In Belgium the pupils generally leave the reformatories between their eighteenth and twenty-first year. In many European reformatories, perhaps also in some American, the pupils are allowed to leave sooner and even without a previous determination as to whether they are weak-minded or not.

Daily experience proves this is a great mistake. If the old pupil is weak-minded, if he has the misfortune to be fatherless or motherless, if his father, his mother is disqualified or unable to give a good education to their child, all that has been done in his favour in the industrial school or in the reformatory is lost, the boy may be considered as abandoned.

Is this not one of the inconveniences of the reforming school? It is only in case a pupil should have proved, during all his stay in one of these institutions, that he has been an idiot absolutely unable to assimilate the least notion of a training, instruction or profession, that care is taken by sending him to an asylum.

Moreover, generally, it is considered in the reformatories that when a pupil has succeeded in mastering the primary instruction, or the first principles of a trade, he is prepared and ready for taking care of himself and associating with his fellow creatures, and is able to know his duties. He is set free and takes his liberty when the door of the institution is opened to him. If he belongs to the class of the degenerates, what good can one expect from him on his return into society? The reformatory may have it registered that he was a boy of a bad disposition, indifferent, undisciplined, immoral, in one word he had a bad record. No good report can be given of him.

What ought he to do without any adequate protection? Members of the committee of patronage dare not and cannot introduce him into a workshop or into any other business; certainly

they cannot do so without blushing. He who deserves perhaps the highest commiseration does not receive the slightest protection! And this because the managers of some reformatories have not the good fortune to have chosen a competent man who, in this case, would have been enabled to discern the psychological situation of this probably weak-minded individual.

My aim is not to make known the splendid results of many reformatories. These results only appertain to their normal population. These institutions receive but young offenders; usually they have but one programme, no selection or rational classification is made between the pupils, be they intelligent or not. I think the time has come that all offenders, young and old, but especially those of the reformatories, ought to be mentally examined if, after a few weeks of their detention, some doubt arises concerning their psychical conditions. It ought to be taken in consideration that many offenders are born from parents with congenital or acquired and consequently hereditary mental taints; that their children, not being born in a normal physiological condition, come to the reformatories because of the tare of degeneration they have inherited or acquired and because of the bad education they received from their unworthy or incapable ancestors. Therefore they ought to be classified according to the degree of their mental capacity, and special treatment ought to be prescribed for those who move every one's pity. Double charitable work would then be realized. Efforts should be made toward raising up the unfortunate, not only in his own, but also in society's interest.

With these modifications introduced into the reformatories much better results ought to be obtained from the beginning and at the entrance of the inmates; careful psychological examination should be made from time to time if any reason should exist for it, as, for instance, insufficiency of progress obtained, suspicion as to their mental faculties, bad conduct, etc.

Since the service of mental medicine has been introduced in the Belgium prisons and for the undisciplined pupils of the reformatories, we are almost daily occupied with this, in so many respects, difficult question. We have examined more than five hundred young and old offenders, we have taken up their case at the moment the condition of their intelligence seemed suspicious to the managers, at the same time, as no good medico-psycholog-

ical examination can be made without inquiring of the pathological conditions that could have contributed, in the course of the existence of the offenders, to trouble their mental faculties, we directed our investigations to the nature of their education and their passions, we wanted to know the conduct of their parents, their uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, and further still, the nervous and mental diseases of their relatives, in a word, we sought for all the information that could be called upon for the proposed end.

I have dwelt too long upon the reformatories, but it ought to be remembered that in Belgium we have no good asylums for imbeciles. Usually these weak-minded remain free and very often they are either neglected or abandoned by their parents; they become delinquents and then, when young, the government keeps them in reformatories. So it is explained how so many degenerates are found in these institutions. If this fact were known sufficiently, no doubt a rational treatment could be undertaken in these schools as well as in the asylums for imbeciles. One would begin naturally with the treatment of the congenital tare and with this often the progress of the depreciation or degeneration would be stopped; it would be neutralized or even diminished.

Special principles of the treatment of the degenerates are very numerous. One ought to remember that many of them are so weak-minded that even their organs of sense have but the slightest education. The educator has to know this; it is of capital importance. He has to systematically study these senses, and the degree of their functions; and, when necessary, he has to classify his weak-minded charges according to the degree of their degeneration. The educator has also to study their moral nature and their natural feelings. He should try and discover their natural dispositions and take them into consideration in the education he has to give; he must utilize them because they can help in the choice he has to make of their profession.

These few suggestions point in favor of an early treatment of the degenerates. They also prove how the interference of the educator should be slow and prudent, and, as the natural dispositions of the weak-minded are limited, one ought not to make haste and attempt too much for fear of exhausting their mental power. The nature and the degree of the progress to be made will vary considerably according to the qualities of him who has the charge of

their improvement. The very important thing is for the teacher to win the confidence of his patient, and to assure himself at the same time that the patient reciprocates his confidence. Moreover, the teacher has to know the limits of this confidence in order not to destroy the object he wishes to attain.

It is natural that in the course of the treatment, and especially in the beginning, there should be disappointments, but one must not lose his courage if disappointments are met; and one ought never to make known, by words or otherwise, in the presence of the degenerates, that any hope is lost. Experience teaches us every day that we have never completely to despair and that, by persevering, many disappointments are largely compensated for by brilliant results. One cannot guess at the might of the combined action of kindness, patience, perseverance, justice and equity. One ought to so work the mind of the degenerate as to extract from him something useful, and the least occasion ought not to be lost to prove what we wish to obtain from him.

What I just said argues in favour of the individualization of the treatment. When enquiring after the natural disposition of the degenerate, as well for his instruction as for his future professional teaching, we ought to try and develop at the same time his character.

To attain these results, the teacher must evidently not consider himself as having the same situation as a teacher of the lower classes. His mission is much higher, and, because of the numerous difficulties he will find on his way, and of the superior qualities he ought to possess, he will have to stay a longer time with his pupils.

Unhappily in most countries, there are not sufficient asylums for imbeciles and consequently for degenerates. Even supposing families can avail themselves sufficiently of the institutions, parents, and especially poor parents, are not to be readily separated from their children when they are idiots, or morally insane, except by superior force. The other children, the imbeciles, go to school, they make no progress, and very often are a hindrance to the class. The teachers, seeing no results are obtained, neglect them, or do not trouble themselves with them any more; then they are really abandoned. If the teacher gives them an excess of kindness and patience, it will be at the expense of the better pupils.

All these facts being taken in consideration, why should governments not undertake the creation of special institutions for weak-minded children? Such institutions, if well organized, would certainly diminish the population of the reformatories, and also the population of lunatic asylums and prisons. There, doubtless, most of them would be enabled to receive some education.

The creation of a law forfeiting parental control on account of incapacity or unworthiness would soon fill up and multiply such institutions. It is in these schools for the weak-minded that the alienist will be enabled to obtain undeniably brilliant results and to separate, at a certain moment, the degenerates beyond any hope of becoming suitable for society, or noxious for themselves in a moral point of view.

The incurable degenerates often go from a lunatic asylum to a prison and vice versa. Dr. Koch wishes to see them brought together at a certain age, also in a special institution. We completely agree with him on this important question. Governments ought to afford protection for all the degenerates who after a certain time of treatment are considered as hopeless for society; they want protection as well for themselves as for the public security. They should not be admitted for any fixed time but for as long as public security, morality and order may demand it.