

quently get through grades two and four, but find the higher grades too difficult. The teacher thinks them lazy and stupid. Not infrequently they present serious disciplinary problems to the teacher and principal. These children may be chronologically 10, 12, 14 or older, but are mentally 8 or 9. Many of the problems of retardation are due to the fact that the school authorities have not recognized the facts of mental age.

If careful study of these two ages be made by the individual teacher, she will be able to relieve much discouragement and suffering on the part of the pupil by advising the parents, with the concurrence of a physician,

to keep certain pupils out of school until their physiological age accords with the grade now determined chronologically; and by adapting the work of those retarded mentally to their powers. It must be remembered that one who is retarded mentally can sometimes acquire unusual motor skill through habit but his power of reasoning is too limited for him to succeed in many of the prescribed school subjects.

A knowledge of these facts does not lessen but rather increases, the teacher's obligation, for the public school in a democracy must adapt training to the needs and capacities of each pupil.

The Feeble Minded as a Public School Problem

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Nature expresses herself from the perfect of the type down through the various degrees to that which is useless or even harmful.

In the vegetable kingdom in the forest we find the perfect tree, also its neighbors in all shades of development, even to that which is dwarfed and crippled, perhaps crushed by the more sturdy and vigorous or, perchance, Mother Nature in her harsher moods, failed to give the tiny seed proper protection during the winter months or the mother tree while fruiting, on account of her exposed position on the cliff, suffered severely from the autumn blast and perhaps the summer drought was also blighting to her offspring.

From the highest to the lowest form of animal life in each species we find Nature expressing and reproducing herself in wonderful variety. Dog fanciers appreciate keenly the fine points of a dog where the good, active brain and nervous system dominate every movement of the beautiful, well-poised body of the animal. The result—a perfect dog. He also quickly recognizes that well-known "fool dog." How all horsemen love the description of the blooded, perfect horse as described in Job. The other extreme of horse life is also well known, in the shuffling gaited, balky, kicking animal.

What country boy where sheep are raised, has not taken delight in driving the playful lambs to shelter with their mothers, at eventide, and has not had his sympathy go out to the lamb with the feeble brain that could not hold its head erect as he gathered it into his arms and tenderly carried it to the sheep fold.

In human life we also find all degrees of mental and physical health and disease; in health as expressed in the well-poised, active men and women about their various occupations, with healthy, strong brains and nervous systems in tune with vigorous bodies. In disease we find all deviations from health in the army, of invalids

in the homes, in the sanatoriums and hospitals. We can, therefore truly say with Tennyson "So careful of the type she seems, so careless of the single life."

The brain and nervous system is a physical organ as are the heart, lungs, stomach or any other organ of the human body. Therefore, mental disease or mental defect is as much a physical disorder as heart disease or heart defect.

The difference between insanity and feeble-mindedness is: in insanity we have a brain failing to function properly on account of a diseased condition; in feeble-mindedness we have a brain failing to function properly on account of its being defective in its structure. Insanity rarely occurs in childhood. Feeble-mindedness always occurs in childhood and is usually congenital—that is, it exists from birth or may be caused by acute illness in infancy or early childhood which prevents the brain cells from properly developing.

Feeble-mindedness or mental defect is, therefore, as old as the human race. We find the Spartans in their attempt to wipe out feeble-mindedness from their race, most ruthlessly applying eugenics in their casting of their feeble-minded offspring into the River Eurotes. Where is this Spartan race today? How truly can be said of them "He that saveth his life shall lose it." It was that greatest of Teachers in the broad school of Christianity who taught his pupils to nurse the sick, care for the needy, help the helpless, comfort the fatherless, and that he that loseth his life shall save it who brought the first ray of hope to the feeble-minded.

During the middle ages, however, the feeble-minded was poorly understood. By some fanatics he was persecuted for being possessed of a devil; by others, he was worshipped. Unfortunately that fog of misunderstanding of the feeble-minded has been so dense that we are only now beginning to peer but dimly through the mist