

propagation of virile and stable progeny. In respect to feeble-mindedness, the evidence is convincing that like begets like, and it has been further demonstrated that the average family of a feeble-minded mother numbers much larger than the average family of a normal minded mother. Such circumstances enter largely into the argument of those who would safeguard futurity by resort to some or other means of preventing procreation by the mentally unfit. Inasmuch as the practitioner is at times consulted by those who meditate matrimony, he may be able to occasionally render a definite service by discouraging a union which might be expected to lead to the birth of children so sired or damed as to practically doom them to a life of incompetency.

And then the practitioner has also the opportunity to sometimes advise the mode of life to be followed by those whose heredity predisposes them to mental disaster. In such case he should realize that everything possible should be done to assure the *corpus sanum* which we believe to be so essential to a *mens sana*. The stresses of active competition and the absurdities of many of our social customs bear hard upon an unstable nervous organization. Those whose nervous and mental endowments are unstable should be advised to live quietly, to avoid unnecessary excitement or entanglement which might make excessive demands upon mental and nervous energy, to attend carefully to all details of personal hygiene, to maintain the general health at the best attainable standard—reporting promptly to the physician any departure from that standard, and particularly to place strict limits upon worry and to abstain from alcohol and from any chance of acquiring venereal disease. If statistics count for anything they show conclusively that alcoholism and syphilis are very potent factors in the causation of mental disorder, and that they are particularly disastrous to those whose inheritance respecting mental and nervous conditions is not of the best. As it is more especially those of unstable nervous organization who are prone to fall victim to the lures of Bacchus and Venus, this point should be stressed when dealing with such people.

Worry is one of the causes of mental disorder which looms large in the statistics. Naturally it is most in evidence where the strain of competition is most felt, and that is in the large centres of population. Hence the desirability of protecting the predisposed by having them locate where they may live quietly in freedom from the special demands which city life imposes and which few can meet without taking much thought of the morrow. Worries resulting from domestic infelicities, however, are not restricted to the cities. Where such are suspected, all parties concerned should be interviewed, and tactful representation made of the need for establishing harmonious relationship even though this may require of some the exercise of a disproportionate share of patience and forbearance.