

who wish to succeed in practice; and who believe that one of the best means to that coveted end is to be able to do good to the patients who seek their aid.—Fothergill in *Med. Brief*.

CONSANGUINITY IN MARRIAGE.

Dr. E. S. McKee, of Cincinnati, lately read a paper before the Ohio State Medical Society, in which he introduces statistics on this question, gathered from England, Scotland, and Ireland. He draws the following conclusions from his researches on the subject:

1. Like breeds like, good or bad, entirely independent of consanguinity.

2. Evil results have undoubtedly followed consanguineous marriages, but whether dependent upon consanguinity is extremely doubtful.

3. Intemperance, luxury, dissipation, sloth, and shiftlessness, as well as hygienic surroundings and innumerable other causes, among them the depraved moral state dependent on births the result of incest, should bear much of the responsibility laid at the door of consanguinity.

4. Testimony is often weakened by religious or other prejudices.

5. Data are of doubtful reliability, full of flaws and false reasoning. The noted cases are the unfortunate ones. The favorable are unknown or forgotten. It is the ill news which travels fast and far.

6. We as physicians know that there is much more illicit intercourse than is generally discovered. May not many people be related, though not aware of it. Many marriages may thus occur between relatives presumed to be non-relatives, thus again vitiating statistics.

7. Statistics show about the same proportion of deaf-mutes, idiots, and insane persons, descendants from consanguineous marriages, to the number of those unfortunates, as the number of consanguineous marriages is to the whole number of marriages. They show fertility among the consanguineous to be slightly greater than among non-consanguineous. They also show a somewhat greater frequency of retinitis pigmentosa.

8. Atavism explains fully the fact that in some instances healthy consanguineous parents beget unhealthy children. This, as is well known, occurs in most hereditary troubles. Furthermore, a less superficial examination may show this healthfulness to be only apparent.

9. Evil results in the offspring of consanguineous marriages prove that *something* was wrong. That it was the consanguinity has not been proven. It may have been one of a hundred things, and dependent upon on all of the antecedents for generations. Such results remaining absent after these marriages prove, for that case at least, that consanguinity was harmless, for it was known to

be present. Further, if consanguinity was the cause, the effect should follow where the cause is present.

10. Consanguineous marriages which bring together persons having a disease or morbid tendency in common are dangerous to the offspring. Not, however, one whit more so than the marriage of any other two persons not related, yet having an equal amount of tendency to diseases in common. Conditions present in both parents, good or bad, are simply augmented, and the result would have been the same were they not related.

11. Given, a malformation or disease firmly established, we have a tendency to breed true. Given, a defect or peculiarity in a family, race or sect, this will naturally be propagated by intermarriage, *e. g.*, color-blindness is remarkably hereditary among the Jews and Quakers. The Quakers are educated to abhor color. Those who admire color separate themselves from the sect and thus intensify the tendency in the remainder. The defect has probably crept among the Jews, and is kept up and intensified by intermarriage. The same means has also had its effect among the Quakers.

12. Certain inherited diseases—as scrofula, phthisis, and rachitis—which are ascribed to consanguineous marriages, probably in every instance could be traced back to an ancestor.

13. Man is an animal, anatomically, physiologically, and sexually. He is subject to the same laws of propagation. In-and-in breeding in animals is carried on to an extent not only not permissible in the human species on moral grounds, but also beyond the bounds of human possibility. Yet this is done by cunning breeders to improve the stock and put money into their pockets. The Jersey cattle have been bred for the last hundred and fifty years on a small island, six by eleven miles. You would not raise them for beef or oxen, yet they command a high price for their milk and butter. This was probably the recommendation of the first cattle on the island, and this quality has improved from that time to this through in-and-in breeding.

14. It would be better for the offspring were consanguineous marriages under medical supervision. Certainly no better than for all marriages to be under like supervision.

15. The half a hundred abnormalities ascribed to consanguinity, including almost all the ills that flesh is heir to—among others, whooping cough—approach the ludicrous.

16. The factors which lead to consanguineous marriages are, portions of country geographically isolated or mountainous, rendering communication with the outside world difficult; religious or political sects of an exclusive nature, and aristocratic ideas. As examples, note the percentage of consanguineous marriages in Scotland, 5.25 per cent.,