

Chapter 16 — Feeble-Mindedness

from *Race Decadence:*
An Examination of the Causes of Racial Degeneracy in the United States (1922)

by William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S.

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Sources for Chapter 16, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, *Insane and Feeble-minded in Institutions*, 1910 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914)
- (2) Charles Benedict Davenport, *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911)
- (3) J. E. Wallis Wallin, *Problems of Subnormality* (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1917)
- (4) William Healy, A.B., M.D., *The Individual Delinquent: A Text-Book of Diagnosis and Prognosis for All Concerned in Understanding Offenders* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1915)
- (5) G. Archdall Reid, M.B., F.R.S.E., *The Laws of Heredity* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910)
- (6) Dr. J. H. Kellogg, "Needed—A New Human Race," in *Proceedings of the First National Conference in Race Betterment, January 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1914* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Gage Printing Company, Ltd., 1914)
- (7) William E. Kellicott, *The Social Direction of Human Evolution: An Outline of the Science of Eugenics* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1911)
- (8) Samuel Christian Schmucker, Ph.D., *The Meaning of Evolution* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913)
- (9) Dr. W. S. Sadler, "Sadler's Sensegrams," in *The Way-Bill (Published Monthly by The Traffic Club of Chicago)*, February, 1917.

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Bold type** indicates passages which Sadler copied verbatim, or nearly verbatim, from an uncited source.
- (f) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (g) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.
- (h) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake, in most cases brought about by Sadler's miscopying or misunderstanding his source.

Matthew Block
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FEEBLE-MINDED IN INSTITUTIONS,
 1910. (DoC Census Bureau 183)

INTRODUCTION (DoC Census Bureau 183)

[contd] Feeble-mindedness has been broadly defined as comprising all degrees of mental defect due to arrested or imperfect mental development

as a result of which the person so affected is incapable of competing on equal terms with his normal fellows, or of managing himself or his affairs with ordinary prudence.

The feeble-minded as thus defined range in mental development from those whose mentality does not exceed that of a normal child of 2 years to those whose mentality is as high as that of a child of 12.

The great majority of the feeble-minded are not confined in institutions but live at large; many are inmates of prisons and reformatories; many others are in almshouses, and some are confined in hospitals for the insane.

Only a small fraction of the feeble-minded are taken care of in special institutions designed for that class, but the development of recent years is in the direction of providing such institutions,

and for that reason the statistics in this report which deals with the inmates of this class of institutions have a timely social significance (DoCCB 183).

XVI — FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS

16:0.1 FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS has been broadly defined as comprising all degrees of mental defect due to arrested or imperfect mental development

as a result of which the person so affected is incapable of competing on equal terms with his normal fellows, or of managing himself or his affairs with ordinary prudence.

The feeble-minded, as thus defined, range in mental development from those whose mentality does not exceed that of a normal child of 2 years to those whose mentality is as high as that of a child of 12.

The great majority of the feeble-minded are not confined in institutions, but live at large; many are inmates of prisons and reformatories; many others are in almshouses, and some are even confined in hospitals for the insane.

Only a small fraction of the feeble-minded are taken care of in special institutions designed for that class, but the development of recent years is in the direction of providing such special institutions. (See Fig. 13.)

DEFINITION OF FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS

II: THE METHOD OF EUGENICS (Davenport 6)

1. UNIT CHARACTERS AND THEIR COMBINATION (Davenport 6)

A second expert will define a feeble-minded person as one who cannot meet all (save two) of the Binet test for three years below his own;

if he fail in one only he is no longer feeble-minded.

But this definition seems to me socially insufficient

just because there are moral imbeciles who can answer all but the moral question for their proper age (D 9).

Perhaps the best definition would be,

“deficient in some socially important trait”

and then the class would include (as perhaps it should)

the sexually immoral, the criminalistic, those who cannot control their use of narcotics, those who habitually tell lies by preference,

and those who run away from school or home.

16:1.1 Some experts will define a feeble-minded person as one who cannot meet all (save two) of the Binet tests for three years below his own;

if he fail in only one he is no longer feeble-minded.

But this definition is not quite satisfactory

because there are any number of moral imbeciles who can answer all but the moral question for their proper age.

Probably the best definition of feeble-mindedness would be,

“A person who is deficient in some socially important trait,”

and then the class as a whole would include

the sexually immoral, the criminalistic, those who cannot control their use of narcotics, those who habitually tell lies by preference,

and the truants—those who run away from school or home.

SOURCE

If from the term “feeble-minded” we exclude the sexually immoral, the criminalistic, and the narcotics such a restriction carried out into practice would greatly reduce the population of institutions for that class (D 9).

I: CHANGING ATTITUDES TO THE SUBNORMAL (Wallin 1)

Residential Institutions (Wallin 27)

The definition proposed by the English Royal Commission is in point:

A “feeble-minded” person is one who can make his living under favorable circumstances

but who is incapable of “competing on equal terms with his normal fellows or to conduct himself with ordinary prudence.”

There are any number of persons who cannot compete on equal terms with their normal fellows, who are not feeble-minded.

They may be only dull, backward, or retarded (W 32, fn).

II, XIII: MENTAL ABNORMALITY IN GENERAL (Healy 441)

§260. **Classifications.**—The main types of mental abnormality are in general terms to be classified

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If from the class of “feeble-minded” we exclude the sexually immoral, the criminalistic, and the victim of narcotics,

we would have left largely the lower grades of defectives; on the other hand, if we include the morons we would have an enormously enlarged group of degenerates.

16:1.2 The definition proposed by the English Royal Commission is in point:

“A ‘feeble-minded’ person is one who can make his living under favorable circumstances,

but who is incapable of competing on equal terms with his normal fellows, or of conducting himself with ordinary prudence.”

But there are any number of persons who cannot compete on equal terms with their normal fellows, who are not feeble-minded;

they may be only dull, backward, or retarded.

16:1.3 Healy describes three types of mental abnormality—

SOURCE

either as mental defect, or mental aberration, or mental peculiarity.

It is perfectly true that sometimes we cannot sharply divide the lines.

The mental defective may have aberrational states superadded;

between mere mental peculiarities and real aberration differentiation at times is often impossible.

The main types stand out with great clearness, but indefiniteness for classification besets the border lines (H 442-43).

To make clear the subclasses of mental abnormality is the purpose of the following schedule and related statements:

[FIGURE] (W 443)

II, XIV: MENTAL DEFECT (Healy 447)

§263. **Nomenclature.**—The nomenclature to be most recommended

is that adopted by the American Association for the Study of the Feeble-minded in 1910.

This body of experienced scientific workers agreed to use the word feeble-minded as a generic term under which there should be the subclasses idiots, imbeciles, and morons (Μωρος, stupid) (H 448).

According to the work of Goddard and others, defectives who are able to get through the Binet test for 12 years are practically never to be found in institutional life.

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The mental defective may have aberrational states superadded;

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The main types stand out with great clearness, but indefiniteness for classification besets the border lines.

16:1.4 To make clear the subclasses of mental abnormality is the purpose of the accompanying scheme.

(See Fig. 14.)

16:1.5 The best classification of defectives

is that adopted by the American Association for the Study of Feeble-mindedness in 1910.

This body of experienced scientific workers agreed to use the word “feeble-minded” as a generic term under which there should be the subclasses: idiots, imbeciles, and morons.

16:1.6 According to the works of Goddard and others, defectives who are able to get through the Binet test for 12 years are practically never to be found in institutional life.

SOURCE

That is to say, individuals of mental ages above 12 are at least in some degree regarded as socially acceptable (H 449).

The American Association has set forth the following practical scheme of diagnosis:

Idiots are those who are able to do the mental tests up to the level of the normal child of 2 years:

Imbeciles are able to do the tests performed by a normal child between the ages of 2 and 7 years:

Morons are those who equal the mental performance of a child between the age of 7 and 12 years (H 450).

§265. **Idiots.**—The group of individuals properly designated under modern nomenclature as idiots rarely, if ever, are criminals.

In practically all cases they are found so intolerable socially on account of their mental defect that they are early segregated and protected (H 454).

[contd] § 266. **Imbeciles.**—The middle grade of feeble-minded, namely imbeciles, are more frequently encountered in connection with court work, but are not at all numerous (H 454).

§267. **Morons.**—Of much more importance, so far as criminality is concerned, is the upper grade of the feeble-minded, the class of morons.

As we go up in the scale of mentality we naturally find more ability to be an active delinquent (H 455).

16: RACE DECADENCE

That is to say individuals of mental ages above 12 are at least in some degree regarded as socially acceptable.

16:1.7 The American Association has set forth the following practical scheme of diagnosis:

Idiots are those who are able to do the Binet mental tests up to the level of the normal child of 2 years;

imbeciles are able to do the tests performed by a normal child between the ages of 2 and 7 years;

morons are those who equal the mental performance of a child between the ages of 7 and 12 years.

16:1.8 *Idiots.*—The group of individuals properly designated under modern nomenclature as idiots rarely, if ever, are criminals.

In practically all classes they are found so intolerable socially on account of their mental defect that they are early segregated in public institutions.

16:1.9 *Imbeciles.*—The middle grade of feeble-minded, imbeciles, are more frequently met with, but are not at all numerous.

16:1.10 *Morons.*—Of much more importance, so far as society is concerned, is the upper grade of feeble-minded, the class of the morons.

As we go up in the scale of mentality we naturally find more ability to make trouble in the social body.

FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

FEEBLE-MINDED IN INSTITUTIONS, 1910. (DoC Census Bureau 183)

INTRODUCTION (DoC Census Bureau 183)

[contd from 16:0.1, above] In connection with the population censuses from 1850 to 1890, inclusive, the attempt was made to enumerate all the mentally defective in the general population.

The methods adopted in different years were not uniform, and the results cannot be regarded as complete or comparable.

In the case of the feeble-minded the comparability of the returns is also affected by the fact that from 1850 to 1880 the enumeration, according to the terms used, covered chiefly, if not entirely, those whose idiocy or imbecility was apparent.

With increasing study of the defective classes, however, there arose a conviction that there were many on the borderland of mental deficiency,

who, though not entirely helpless or dependent, were possibly an even greater menace to society than those who were.

They were evidently not idiots, in the ordinary acceptance of the word, and the term "feeble-minded" was adopted in the report for 1890 and has been used ever since.

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SOURCE

Since 1890, however, no general enumeration of this large and ill-defined class has been attempted by the Bureau of the Census.

In 1904 and again in 1910 the census was restricted to the inmates of special institutions for this class (DoCCB 183).

[contd] An important factor affecting comparisons of different periods is the change that has taken place in the general methods of care for the feeble-minded.

Formerly almost all of this class under institutional care were in almshouses or in asylums for the insane.

As late as 1890 only 16 states had provided separate institutions for the feeble-minded, and the number of such institutions was only 24.

In 1904 the number of institutions had increased to 42, and the number of states making such provision was 25.

In 1910 there were 63 institutions reported by 31 states.

At the present writing (1914) there are only 7 states which make no special provision for this class of defectives;

and in an increasing number of states the statutes provide for their transfer from almshouses to separate institutions as rapidly as possible (DoCCB 183).

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After that time, however, no general enumeration of this large and ill-defined class has been attempted by the Bureau of the Census.

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16:2.2 An important factor affecting comparisons of different periods is the change that has taken place in the general methods of care for the feeble-minded.

Formerly almost all of this class under institutional care were in almshouses or in asylums for the insane.

As late as 1890 only sixteen states had provided separate institutions for the feeble-minded, and the number of such institutions was only twenty-four.

In 1904 the number of institutions had increased to forty-two, and the number of states making such provisions was twenty-five.

In 1910 there were sixty-three institutions reported by thirty-one states.

16:2.3 At present there are few states which make no special provision for this class of defectives.

SOURCE

[contd] The effect of these conditions upon the statistics is apparent.

In the 1890 census the institutional population, enumerated as feeble-minded, included 5,254 in special institutions and 2,469 in hospitals for the insane;

and in addition to these, 7,811 inmates of almshouses were returned as “idiots,” making a total of 15,534 feeble-minded or idiots.

In 1904 the number in special institutions had risen to 14,347 and in 1910 to 20,731.

The 1904 and 1910 censuses of the insane in hospitals made no separate enumeration of the feeble-minded inmates of those institutions, nor was there any record made of those in reformatories or other correctional institutions;

but the 1904 report on paupers showed 16,551 inmates of almshouses classed as feeble-minded, which number was reduced in the report for 1910 to 13,238.

On January 1, 1904, a total of 30,898 feeble-minded persons were either in special institutions or in almshouses, and on January 1, 1910, a total of 33,969 (DoCCB 183).

16: RACE DECADENCE

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16: RACE DECADENCE

VI: STATE PROVISIONS FOR DEFECTIVE CHILDREN (Wallin 382)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEFECTIVE CHILDREN: A. THE FEEBLE-MINDED (Wallin 386)

I. The Present Situation in the State with reference to the Feeble-minded (Wallin 386)

Less than 10% of our feeble-minded population is confined in our [*i.e.* Missouri's] colony for the feeble-minded (W 387).

The state of Minnesota cares for one feeble-minded person in its large colony for the feeble-minded to every 1281 persons in the general population of the state.

The corresponding figure for Iowa is 1 to 1504; for Indiana, 1 to 2207; for Kansas, 1 to 3493; and for Illinois, 1 to 3883.

Missouri, on the other hand, cares for only one feeble-minded person in the institution at Marshall to every 6977 in the general population (these calculations are based on the enumerations given in the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1913, Vol. II, p. 671) (W 387-88).

[Note: Source for 16:2.6-9 might be J.H. Kellogg.]

16:2.5 Less than 10 per cent of our feeble-minded population is confined in our colonies or institutions for the feeble-minded.

The state of Minnesota cares for one feeble-minded person in its large colony for the feeble-minded to every 1,281 persons in the general population of the state.

The corresponding figures for Iowa are 1 to 1,504; for Indiana 1 to 2,207; for Kansas 1 to 3,493; and for Illinois 1 to 3,883.

Missouri, on the other hand, cares for only one feeble-minded person to every 6,977 in the general population.

16:2.6 As will be seen, it is quite impossible to ascertain the actual number of feeble-minded in this country at the present time—we know about those only in state institutions.

16:2.7 In 1900 Great Britain reported having 1,527 imbeciles per 1,000,000 of population.

SOURCE

16: RACE DECADENCE

16:2.8 There are probably no less than 300,000 out-and-out feeble-minded persons in the United States—and this does not take into consideration the enormous and unknown number of individuals whose taint of feeble-mindedness is latent, but whose tainted germ-plasm is sure to transmit its defective strain to succeeding generations. Some of these latent or masked cases, as individuals, may show fair mental development, and are, therefore, in many respects, all the more dangerous and deceptive to the rest of society.

16:2.9 Almost 50,000 feeble-minded and mentally deficient individuals were turned up by the examinations of the selective military draft. Dr. Pierce Bailey, Chairman of the New York State Commission on Mental Defectives, is authority for the statement, that nervous and mental diseases numbered 60,000, and ran especially high among the immigrant classes of New York. Medical authorities believe that the general population will show almost twice the amount of feeble-mindedness that was shown among those drafted between the ages of 21 and 31.

I: CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SUBNORMAL (Wallin 1)

Residential Institutions (Wallin 27)

The number of inmates in the American institutions for the feeble-minded in 1914, according to the report of the Commissioner of Education, was 28,878.

16:2.10 The number of inmates in the American institutions for the feeble-minded in 1914, according to the report of the Commissioner of Education, was 28,878.

SOURCE

Of these, 916 were in private institutions and 27,962 in state institutions (the state institutions, however, include two villages for epileptics).

How many feeble-minded persons are at large in society and how many are confined in improper types of institutions are not known.

The estimates frequently hazarded are mere conjectures.

Indeed, we are lacking scientifically accurate data to show what percentage of the inmates in the public and private institutions are actually feeble-minded (W 32).

II: WHO IS FEEBLE-MINDED? (Wallin 110)

Question 2 (Wallin 195)

Also Langmead:

“I do not think that we can label a child as defective in mind by a fixed test, or set of tests, no matter how carefully thought out. . . .

Judged by them alone, the minds of many children who are not mentally defective will be weighed in the balance and found wanting”—

and that is exactly the situation that confronts us today (W 198).

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Indeed, we are lacking scientifically accurate data to show what percentage of the inmates in the public and private institutions are actually feeble-minded.

STANDARDS OF FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS

16.3.1 Who is feeble-minded?

Langmead in discussing this question says:

“I do not think that we can label a child as defective in mind by a fixed test, or set of tests, no matter how carefully thought out. . . .

Judged by them alone, the minds of many children who are not mentally defective will be weighed in the balance and found wanting.”

SOURCE

16: RACE DECADENCE

16:3.2 Speaking of the Binet scale,

According to Healy

Healy declares:

“this scale, it may at once be said, is to be fairly employed merely as a scheme for preliminary diagnosis, and like many other useful ideas has been given exaggerated importance,

“This scale, it may at once be said, is to be fairly employed merely as a scheme for preliminary diagnosis, and like many other useful ideas has been given exaggerated importance,

as if by it one were capable of measuring all the vast intricacies and possibilities of the human mind, defective and normal” (W 199).

as if by it one were capable of measuring all the vast intricacies and possibilities of the human mind, defective and normal.”

Question 3 (Wallin 200)

We must conclude, therefore, that, no matter how valuable the Vineland revision may be—

16:3.3 We must conclude, therefore, that, no matter how valuable our mental tests may be—

and we do not wish to minimize its real value—

and we do not wish to minimize their real value—

it has not been “mathematically demonstrated” that it is a “marvel of accuracy” and that it will “tell us to a nicety just where a child stands in his mental capacity.”

it has not been “mathematically demonstrated” that it is a “marvel of accuracy” and that it will “tell us to a nicety just where a child stands in his mental capacity.”

All we are justified in saying is that it possesses a fair degree of accuracy and that it is of considerable value for the estimation of the intelligence level—

All we are justified in saying is that it possesses a fair degree of accuracy and that it is of considerable value for the estimation of the general intelligence.

in fact, of very high value in spite of its imperfections, provided it is legitimately used (that is, as an aid in mental diagnosis but not as an automatic mental diagnostic) (W 206-07).

Mental tests are merely “tools” designed to aid in making a diagnosis.

Question 4 (Wallin 207)

The limit of feeble-mindedness is not determined primarily by the mere fact of the accuracy of a measuring scale of intelligence,

16:3.4 The limit of feeble-mindedness is not determined primarily by the mere fact of the accuracy of a measuring scale of intelligence,

SOURCE

but by social criteria: the degree of intelligence required by a person to make his living and to conform to the laws and conventions of the social milieu in which he finds himself (W 208).

In an address delivered before the Eugenics Educational Society, Binet's associate, Simon, made these statements:

“We mean by the term ‘idiot’ an individual whose intellectual development is that of 2 years or under.

We mean by the term ‘imbecile’ an individual whose intellectual development corresponds to that of a child between the ages of 3 and 7 years.

And finally by the term ‘feeble-minded’ (*débile*) we mean an individual whose intellectual level, while superior to that of a child of 7 years, is nevertheless below the average development of an adult.

This latter degree of development, as I have said, is still inadequately determined.

Provisionally it might be proposed to fix at 9 years the upper level of mental debility. . . .

A development equivalent to the normal average at 9 years of age is the minimum below which the individual is capable of getting along without tutelage in the conditions of modern life. . . .

Nine years is the intellectual level found in the lowest class of domestic servants, in those who are just on the border of a possible existence of economic independence;

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but by social criteria, by the degree of intelligence required by a person to make his living and to conform to the laws and conventions of the social levels in which he finds himself.

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Nine years is the intellectual level found in the lowest class of domestic servants, in those who are just on the border of a possible existence of economic independence;

SOURCE

it is, on the other hand, the highest level met with in general paralytics who come under asylum care on account of their dementia... (W 216).

[See 16:1.5, above.]

XXIV: INTEMPERANCE AND INSANITY (Reid 456)

779. In conclusion, the [Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded] sums up the general effect of the evidence as follows :—

“(1) That both on grounds of fact and theory there is the highest degree of probability that ‘feeble-mindedness’ is usually spontaneous in origin—that is not due to influences acting on the parent—and tends strongly to be inherited.

“(2) That, especially in view of the evidence concerning fertility, the prevention of mentally defective persons from becoming parents would tend largely to diminish the number of such persons in the population.

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it is, on the other hand, the highest level met with in general paralytics who come under asylum care on account of their dementia.

16:3.7 While all authorities are not agreed in every respect as to the standard for determining feeble-mindedness, we think the standard adopted by the American Association for the Study of Feeble-mindedness—the one already presented—is one designed acceptably to serve all practical purposes.

ORIGIN OF FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS

16:4.1 A British commission for the study of this subject came to the following conclusions respecting the probable origin of feeble-mindedness:

16:4.2 1. That both on grounds of fact and theory there is the highest degree of probability that feeble-mindedness is usually spontaneous in origin—that is, not due to influences acting on the parent—and tends strongly to be inherited.

16:4.3 2. That, especially in view of the evidence concerning fertility, the prevention of mentally defective persons from becoming parents would tend largely to diminish the number of such persons in the population.

SOURCE

“(3) That the evidence for these conclusions strongly supports measures, which on other grounds are of pressing importance, for placing mentally defective persons, men and women, who are living at large and uncontrolled, in institutions where they will be employed and detained;

and in this, and in other ways, kept under effective supervision so long as may be necessary” (R 475).

XXII: NATURE AND NURTURE (Reid 410)

699. A little thought renders it evident that the essential defect of the feeble-minded person, the idiot, and the imbecile, is lack of memory.

He is unable to profit like the normal individual from experience.

This defect of memory may be, and usually is, general, so that the individual is able to learn very little.

Or the defect may be limited to some particular;

for example the individual may be unable to acquire the code of morals prevalent in the community in which he exists—

an acquirement which on the average and in the long run would be of great advantage to him (R 425).

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16:4.4 3. That the evidence for these conclusions strongly supports measures, which on other grounds are of pressing importance, for placing mentally defective persons, men and women, who are living at large and uncontrolled, in institutions where they will be employed and detained;

and in this, and other ways, kept under effective supervision so long as may be necessary.

16:4.5 A little study will render it evident that one of the essential defects of the feeble-minded person, the idiot, and the imbecile, is lack of memory,

lack of association of ideas.

They are unable to profit, like the normal individual, from experience.

This defect of memory may be, and usually is, general, so that the individual is able to learn very little;

or the defect may be limited to some particular,

as in case of those who are unable to acquire the code of conventional morals prevailing in the community in which they live.

SOURCE

The truth that the higher intellectual faculties are less developed in the feeble-minded than lower faculties is due entirely to the fact that the former can be acquired only by people whose receptive powers are considerable.

In effect and in fact the feeble-minded person is an instance of reversion to a pre-human mental state.

Judged by the human standard every dog and monkey is an imbecile.

But the reversion of the imbecile is not complete; for, while he has lost part of his power of profiting by experience, he has regained no part of the lost power of being guided by instinct.

Therefore he is correspondingly helpless as compared to a lower animal.

On the other hand, the instincts (*e.g.* the sexual) which normal human beings still possess often appear unduly prominent in him; but only because he cannot *learn* to control them (R 425).

[See 16:7.4, below, re Goddard's estimate of "at least two-thirds".]

16: RACE DECADENCE

The truth that the higher intellectual faculties are less developed in the feeble-minded than the lower faculties is due entirely to the fact that the former can be acquired only by people whose mental powers are more or less normal.

In effect and in fact the feeble-minded person is an instance of reversion to a prehuman mental state.

Judged by the human standard, every dog and monkey is an imbecile.

But the reversion of the imbecile is not complete; for, while he has lost part of his power of profiting by experience, he has regained no part of the lost power of being properly guided by instinct;

he is, therefore, correspondingly helpless as compared to a lower animal.

On the other hand, the instincts (*e. g.*, the sexual) which normal human beings still possess often appear unduly prominent—simply because he cannot learn to control them.

FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS AND HEREDITY

16:5.1 There is every reason to believe that

at least two-thirds of the feeble-mindedness in this country is directly due to heredity.

This is not only a serious problem for the present generation, but one that is even more serious for all future generations,

SOURCE

16: RACE DECADENCE

because of the fact that a very great number of these feeble-minded of the present generation will surely transmit their defects and degeneracy to a large per cent of their descendants.

16:5.2 Feeble-minded persons from sound stock, whose arrested development is due to scarlet fever or some other severe disease of childhood, or to accident, are of course not to be feared in this connection.

16:5.3 Feeble-mindedness is a mental defect which is highly hereditary.

[See Chap. VII: “Is Feeble-Mindedness a Unit Character?”, in Henry Herbert Goddard, Ph.D., *Feeble-mindedness: Its Causes and Consequences* (1914).]

Some eugenists have even thought it to be a true “unit character.”

When two inherently feeble-minded persons marry, all of their offspring, almost without exception, are destined to be feeble-minded.

The feeble-minded are never of much real value to society—

[See sections in Chap. V: “Discussion of the Data” re Insanity and Feeble-mindedness, and Genius and Feeble-mindedness, in Goddard, *Feeble-mindedness: Its Causes and Consequences* (1914).]

they never present such instances as are found among the insane, of persons with some mental lack of balance, but who sometimes belong to the order of geniuses or near-geniuses.

“NEEDED—A NEW HUMAN RACE”
(Kellogg 431)

Tredgold

[Doctor Tredgold, an eminent English authority ... (K 438).]

shows that mental unsoundness, lunacy, idiocy, imbecility, and feeble-mindedness

16:5.4 Tredgold,

the well-known English authority,

believes that in the case of mental unsoundness, such as lunacy, idiocy, imbecility (feeble-mindedness),

SOURCE

may be traced to hereditary influence in 90 per cent of the cases.

Mr. David Heron and others have shown that while there has been a marked decline in the birth rate in the population in general,

the diminution is almost entirely confined to the healthy and thrifty class.

In a section of population numbering a million and a quarter persons, thrifty and healthy artisans,

the decline in the birth rate in twenty-four years, 1880 to 1904, was over 52 per cent, or three times that in England and Wales as a whole.

Study of a large number of families of the working class of incompetent and parasitic character found that the average number of children to the family was 7.4,

while in thrifty and competent working families the number was 3.7.

In other words, the incompetent and defective classes are multiplying far more rapidly than are the competent and efficient (K 440).

16: RACE DECADENCE

at least 90 per cent of these cases may be traced to heredity.

16:5.5 Mr. David Heron, and others, have shown that while there has been a marked decline in the birth-rate of the population in general,

the diminution is almost entirely confined to the healthy and thrifty class.

In a section of population numbering 1,250,000 persons, thrifty and healthy artisans,

the decline in the birth-rate in twenty-four years, 1880 to 1904, was over 52 per cent, or three times that in England and Wales as a whole.

16:5.6 Study of a large number of families of the working class of incompetent and parasitic character revealed that the average number of children to the family was 7.4,

while in thrifty and competent working families the number was 3.7.

In other words, the incompetent and defective classes are multiplying far more rapidly than are the competent and efficient.

Heredity explains most of our mental defectiveness and moral degeneracy—our racial decadence; and the control of heredity—the regulation of the offspring of these defectives—presents the only avenue of hope for dodging the inevitable social catastrophe toward which we are certainly headed, if no preventive measures are set in operation in the near future. The defectives are doubling their numbers each generation while the desirables are not quite reproducing themselves.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE INHERITANCE OF FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS

III: HUMAN HEREDITY AND THE GENETICS PROBLEM (Kellicott 133)

Goddard has recently published several family histories showing the inheritance of feeble-mindedness.

One of the most significant of these—significant both socially and eugenically—is summarized here in Fig. 22.

Of this Goddard writes:

“Here we have a feeble-minded woman [IV, 3] who has had three husbands (including one ‘who was not her husband’) and the result has been nothing but feeble-minded children.

The story may be told as follows:

16:6.1 Goddard has recently published several family histories showing the inheritance of feeble-mindedness.

One of the most significant of these—significant both socially and eugenically—is summarized as follows:

“Here we have a feeble-minded woman who has had three husbands (including one ‘who was not her husband’) and the result has been nothing but feeble-minded children.”

The story may be told as follows:

SOURCE

"This woman was a handsome girl, apparently having inherited some refinement from her mother, although her father was a feeble-minded, alcoholic brute.

Somewhere about the age of 17 or 18 years she went out to do housework in a family in one of the towns of this State [New Jersey].

She soon became the mother of an illegitimate child.

It was born in an almshouse to which she fled after she had been discharged from the home where she had been at work.

After this, charitably disposed people tried to do what they could for her, giving her a home for herself and her child in return for the work which she could do.

However, she soon appeared in the same condition.

An effort was then made to discover the father of this second child,

and when he was found to be a drunken, feeble-minded epileptic living in the neighborhood,

in order to save the legitimacy of the child, her friends (*sic*) saw to it that a marriage ceremony took place.

Later another feeble-minded child was born to them.

Then the whole family secured a home with an unmarried farmer in the neighborhood.

16: RACE DECADENCE

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Later, another feeble-minded child was born to them.

Then the whole family secured a home with an unmarried farmer in the neighborhood.

SOURCE

They lived there together until another child was forthcoming which the husband refused to own.

When, finally, the farmer acknowledged this child to be his,

the same good friends (sic) interfered, went into the courts and procured a divorce from the husband and had the woman married to the father of the expected fourth child.

This proved to be feeble-minded, and they have four other feeble-minded children, making eight in all, born of this woman.

There have also been one child still born and one miscarriage (K 162-66).

[contd] "As will be seen from the chart, this woman had four feeble-minded brothers and sisters [IV, 6, 10, 15, 16].

These are all married and have children.

The older of the two sisters had a child by her own father, when she was thirteen years old.

The child died at about six years of age.

This woman has since married.

The two brothers have each at least one child of whose mental condition nothing is known.

The other sister married a feeble-minded man and had three children.

16: RACE DECADENCE

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When, finally, the farmer acknowledged this child to be his,

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The child died at about 6 years of age.

This woman has since married.

The two brothers have at least one child, of whose mental condition nothing is known.

The other sister married a feeble-minded man and had three children.

SOURCE

Two of these are feeble-minded and the other died in infancy” (K 166).

[contd] The paternal ancestry of this unfortunate woman is hardly less interesting, as may be seen from the diagram.

All told, this family history, as far as it is known, includes 59 per sons ; the mental character of 12 of these is unknown; 10 died in infancy or before their characteristics were known; of the remaining 37, 30 were feeble-minded (K 166).

X: THE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF MAN (Schmucker 249)

Of all the calamities that can befall a human being, feeble-mindedness is, perhaps, the worst.

From most misfortunes it is possible to recover;

with most of the rest one may exist without detriment to the race.

To be feeble-minded simply means to hark back to the level of our animal ancestors,

without regaining their power to guide life.

The animal is provided with a bundle of instincts which tell him what to do in all the ordinary emergencies of life.

16: RACE DECADENCE

Two of these are feeble-minded and the other died in infancy.

16:6.3 The parental ancestry of this unfortunate woman is hardly less interesting.

All told, this family history, as far as it is known, includes 59 persons; the mental character of 12 of these is unknown; 10 died in infancy, or before their characteristics were known; of the remaining 37, 30 were feeble-minded.

THE TAINTED STREAM OF LIFE

16:7.1 Of all the calamities that can befall a human being feeble-mindedness is, undoubtedly, the worst.

From most misfortunes it is possible, in some degree, to recover;

with many of the rest one may at least continue to live without detriment to the race.

To be feeble-minded simply means to hark back to the level of our animal ancestors,

without the compensation of regaining their instinctive powers.

The animal is provided with a bundle of instincts which tell him what to do in all the ordinary emergencies of life.

SOURCE

The human species, in its development, has lost a large portion of its instincts,

and has gained, instead, the power of intelligent choice and the ability to learn by imitation (S 264-65).

Students of sociology are making clear to us that a large portion of the criminality of the world, much of the looseness of life,

and a large part of the alcoholic excesses are due to this taint of feeble-mindedness (S 265).

Prisons, almshouses, and houses of shame owe their population in no small degree to this bitter curse.

It will not be long before society will learn to protect itself against such poisoning of the human stock (S 265).

There is one type of mental weakling, known as the Mongolian idiot, which may arise right out of the heart of an apparently sound family.

But the number of feeble-minded, who are feeble-minded because of their heredity, is dishearteningly and astonishingly large (S 265-66).

Every attempt to examine large numbers of school children shows a sickening proportion of those who are distinctly feeble.

Every little community seems to have its boy or girl who is what is known as silly.

16: RACE DECADENCE

The human species, in its development, has largely lost this biologic instinct,

and has gained, instead, the power of intelligent choice and the ability to learn by experience and by imitation.

16:7.2 Modern science is making clear to us that a large part of the criminality and immorality of the world,

together with much of the alcoholic excesses are due to this inherited taint of feeble-mindedness.

Prisons, almshouses, and houses of shame owe their population in no small degree to this bitter curse.

How long will it be before society will learn to protect itself against such poisoning of the stream of life?

16:7.3 There is one type of mental weakling, known as the Mongolian idiot, which may arise right out of the heart of an apparently sound family.

But the number of these is comparatively small;

while the number of feeble-minded who are feeble-minded because of their heredity is dishearteningly and astonishingly large.

Every school has its backward children,

and every little community has its silly boys and half-wit girls;

SOURCE

Such people rarely live long lives without leaving behind them feeble-minded children, no small proportion of whom are likely to be illegitimate.

Against this fouling of the stream at its source society must protect itself (S 266).

IV: THE HYGIENE OF EUGENIC GENERATION (Wallin 417)

THE PROBLEM OF PREVENTION (Wallin 417)

1. Society should prevent degenerate or anti-eugenical matings. It is alleged that 30% of the general population are carriers of neuropathic defects,

that 15% of the present generation produces 50% of the next generation,

and that this producing minority represents the poorer, lower or eugenically inferior elements of the population.

Tredgold claims that 80% of feeble-mindedness is due to a “neuropathic inheritance,”

while Goddard holds that at least two thirds of the feeble-minded have inherited their defect.

Without attempting to determine whether these estimates are accurate, it is at least true that heredity is one of the most potent factors in the pathogenesis of feeble-mindedness or degeneracy (W 418).

16: RACE DECADENCE

and such defectives seldom live long lives without leaving behind their tainted and degenerate offspring—no small proportion of whom are likely to be illegitimate.

Against this fouling of the stream at its source, society must sooner or later protect itself—

or face extinction as a highly civilized and progressive organization.

16:7.4 It is alleged that 30 per cent of the general population are carriers of neuropathic defects,

that 15 per cent of the present generation produces 50 per cent of the next generation,

and that this producing minority represents the poorer, lower, or eugenically inferior elements of the population.

Tredgold claims that 80 per cent of feeble-mindedness is due to a “neuropathic inheritance”

while Goddard holds that at least two-thirds of the feeble-minded have inherited their defect.

Without attempting to determine whether these estimates are accurate, it is at least true that heredity is one of the most potent factors in the production of feeble-mindedness and of racial degeneracy.

SOURCE

FEEBLE-MINDED IN INSTITUTIONS, 1910. (DoC Census Bureau 183)

ANALYSIS OF RETURNS (DoC Census Bureau 184)

In interpreting this table it is to be remembered that it does not include feeble-minded persons in the general population, but only those either in institutions specifically for this class or in almshouses.

Accordingly, it is indicative mainly of the degree to which the states have emphasized institutional care for this class of defectives,

and the evident disproportion between the groups of states does not indicate the actual situation so far as the number of feeble minded in proportion to the population is concerned.

The small numbers and the low rate per 100,000 of population in the southern and western divisions by no means prove that feeble-mindedness is not proportionally as prevalent there as in the northern and eastern divisions,

but merely that the states of those sections have not yet faced the problem of dealing with the situation.

That the three great southern divisions should report but six feeble-minded negroes in special institutions (see Table 2, p. 196), all in the one state of Tennessee,

16: RACE DECADENCE

16:7.5 For distribution of the feeble-minded in the United States, see Appendix A, Table No. 10.

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but merely that the states of those sections have not yet faced the problem of dealing with the situation.

That the three great southern divisions should report but six feeble-minded Negroes in special institutions, all in the one state of Tennessee,

SOURCE

is simply evidence that the Southern states have made practically no provision for the institutional care of this class of defectives (DoCCB 186).

Discharges.—Most of those inmates who were discharged from institutions for the feeble-minded in 1910 were intrusted to the care of relatives or friends, 55 being reported as discharged to “keeping of self.”

As regards the condition of those discharged, 612, or about 61 per cent, were reported as improved, which includes those who were cured, if any, and 280 as unimproved, while for 117 no report was obtained (DoCCB 190).

16: RACE DECADENCE

is simple evidence that the southern states have made practically no provision for the institutional care of this class of defectives.

As just pointed out, the South and West have been backward in caring for the feeble-minded.

16:7.7 Most of those inmates who were discharged from institutions for the feeble-minded in 1910 were intrusted to the care of relatives or friends, only 55 being reported as discharged to “keeping of self.”

As regards the condition of those discharged, 612, or about 61 per cent were reported as improved, which includes those who were cured, if any, and 280 as unimproved, while for 117 no report was obtained.

16:7.8 In the case of those feeble-minded persons “discharged” it requires but a small exercise of the imagination to picture the direful consequences on future generations of the descendants of those “discharged” but inherently defective inmates of public asylums. There is no law to prevent their marriage and reproduction, and even if we had laws prohibiting the marriage of such “discharged” defectives even such desirable laws would not prevent the illegitimate offspring of such undesirable citizens coming into the world to prove a curse both to themselves and untold numbers of others belonging to unborn generations.

PHYSICALLY DEFECTIVE FEEBLE-MINDED

Physically defective feeble-minded.—Table 13 brings out the significant fact that a large proportion of the feeble-minded are physically defective—that is, blind, deaf, crippled, maimed or deformed, paralytic or epileptic.

Out of a total of 20,731 persons enumerated on January 1, 1910, in institutions for the feeble-minded, 5,246, or 25.3 per cent, are reported as thus defective, while of the 3,825 admitted to the institutions during the year, 910, or 23.8 per cent, were defective (DoCCB 190).

[contd] It is of some interest to note that the proportion reported as physically defective was considerably smaller in 1910 than it was in 1904.

Based on the total number enumerated at the beginning of the year and admitted during the year, the percentage physically defective declined from 30.2 in 1904 to 25.1 in 1910.

The decline took place principally in the percentage of epileptics, which was 17.8 in 1904 and 11.6 in 1910, and probably reflects the tendency to make special provision for the care of epileptics in colonies or separate institutions (DoCCB 190).

16:8.1 Table No. 8, Appendix A, brings out the significant fact that a large proportion of the feeble-minded are also physically defective—that is blind, deaf, crippled, maimed, or deformed, paralytic, or epileptic.

Out of a total of 20,731 persons enumerated on January 1, 1910, in institutions for the feeble-minded, 5,246 or 25.3 per cent, are reported as thus defective, while of the 3,825 admitted to the institutions during the year, 910 or 23.8 per cent were defective.

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THE DOCTOR'S ATTITUDE

“SADLER’S SENSEGRAMS” (Sadler 9)

Protect the Strong From the Weak. (Sadler 11)

[contd] We are turning Heaven and earth upside down by philanthropic science, civilization and Christianity,

to save all the weak elements of our civilization—

soup kitchens, special nurses for backward children—

and I believe in all of these things;

if it does not do them any good, it does us good (S 11).

[contd] I believe it is the doctor’s business to save every child that is born in the world.

I do not take any stock in this Bollinger nonsense, and all that.

If a baby is here, and a doctor can save its life, it is his business to do it.

I do not believe that any physician should ever take the power of life and death in his own hands (S 11).

[contd] But, gentlemen, if we represent you gentlemen, and the civilized, Christianized sentiment,

of protecting the weak, and giving them a fair and square deal—

16:9.1 We are turning heaven and earth upside down by philanthropic effort, medical science, and Christianity,

to save all the weak elements of our civilization—

soup kitchens, special schools for backward children, visiting nurses, free dispensaries—

and I believe in these things—

if it does not do the unfortunates any good, it certainly does us a lot of good;

for, I believe it is the doctor’s business to try to save every child that is born into the world.

I do not take any stock in this nonsense, that doctors should let defective babies die at birth.

If a baby is here and a doctor can save its life, it is his business to do it.

I do not believe that any physician should ever take the power of life and death in his own hands.

16:9.2 But, if we physicians represent the civilized and Christianized sentiment of modern society

in protecting the weak and giving them a fair and square deal—

SOURCE

if the physician steps in and saves that baby at birth, and then it grows to adolescence,

and it is manifestly degenerate, and can only reproduce its kind,

then I say that

you, the voter, the electorate, you owe it to the medical profession, on the one hand, and to society, on the other,

to say to this defective child,

“We will do our level best for you,

but you shall be sterilized,

so that there will be no more like you to follow.” (Applause.) (S 11)

[contd] It is a biological crime, the way we allow these defectives and degenerates to reproduce themselves, to-day.

I went up here into Wisconsin, to give a lecture, for a medical society, the other day.

They showed me around the high school, with its manual training equipment—a wonderful thing.

They took me down to where a woman was teaching five little deaf mutes,

16: RACE DECADENCE

if the physician steps in and saves that baby at birth—and then it grows to adolescence,

and shows that it is manifestly defective and degenerate and we know that it can reproduce only its kind;

then we maintain that

society owes it to the medical profession on the one hand, and to itself on the other,

to say in substance to this defective child:

“We will do our very best for you,

you shall be educated or trained up to your fullest capacity;

and then you shall be either segregated or sterilized.

We will do our full duty by you,

but there must be no more like you.”

16:9.3 It is a biological crime to allow defectives and degenerates to reproduce themselves.

16:9.4 Delivering a lecture in a Wisconsin town not long ago,

the author was shown around the new high school with its manual training equipment—a wonderful institution.

In one room a young woman was teaching five little deaf-mutes,

SOURCE

three of them born of one father and mother, both father and mother being feeble-minded paupers, at the Poor Farm.

They had wanted to get married, and the people said, "Let them get married and settle down."

They have a fourth one coming on, and that will be a deaf mute,

because, when feeble-minded mates with feeble-minded, the offspring are practically 100 per cent. feeble-minded.

If one side is normal and the other affected, then it operates somewhere in the Mendelian ratio, of three to one,

or 75 per cent. of the total affected, and 25 per cent. apparently normal (S 11).

[contd] There are a lot of things, we do not know about breeding, and about heredity, but there are some things we do know, and I say to you very frankly, gentlemen, that I am not interested in any of these half-baked laws, for the sterilization of habitual criminals, or prostitutes, or anything of that kind....

I say that the thing that needs to be combatted, by segregation or sterilization, is feeble-mindedness; and when the law is put upon that basic ground, I am willing to work for it, and to fight for it (S 11-12).

16: RACE DECADENCE

three of them born of one father and mother, both parents being feeble-minded paupers.

They wanted to marry and the people said: "Let them get married and settle down."

They have a fourth child coming and it is also sure to be a deaf-mute,

because, when the feeble-minded mate with the feeble-minded, the offspring are practically 100 per cent defective or feeble-minded.

If one side is normal and the other affected, then it operates somewhere near the Mendelian ratio of 3 to 1,

or 75 per cent of the total affected, and 25 per cent apparently normal—

but carriers of the defective strain over into the next generation.

16:9.5 There are a lot of things we do not know about breeding and about heredity, but there are some things we do know,

and the time has come to do something, to put into practical working the light and information we possess.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

1. Probably the best definition for feeble-mindedness is “a person who is deficient in some socially important trait.”

2. Persons are commonly regarded as being feeble-minded when they fail to meet all (save two) of the Binet tests for three years below their own.

3. The English definition is: “One who is incapable of competing on equal terms with his normal fellows, or of conducting himself with ordinary prudence.”

4. We use “feeble-mindedness” as a general term embracing mental defectiveness in general; and specifically including the subclasses of idiots, imbeciles, and morons.

5. Idiots are those who can do the Binet tests up to the level of a normal child of 2 years.

6. Imbeciles are those who do the Binet tests for the normal child between 2 and 7 years.

7. Morons are the ones who do the tests for the normal child up to 12 years of age.

8. There are only sixty-three institutions for the feeble-minded in thirty-one states. The rest of this class is confined in almshouses and insane asylums.

9. At the last census there were 20,731 feeble-minded in special institutions and 13,238 in almshouses. There are probably no less than 300,000 in the United States.

10. Great Britain reports 1,527 imbeciles per 1,000,000 of population; and over 50,000 feeble-minded were turned up by the recent military draft in America.

11. Valuable as are the Binet tests, they cannot be regarded as infallible in the estimation of human intelligence and the diagnostication of feeble-mindedness.

12. Feeble-mindedness is largely hereditary, and can thus be effectively controlled by state regulation.

13. The central defect of the feeble-minded is lack of memory, deficient association of ideas, inability to profit from experience and reason from cause to effect.

14. The lower grades of feeble-mindedness represent a reversal to lower and primitive biologic types; but, unfortunately, their corresponding instincts are largely absent.

15. Authorities (Goddard and others) believe that not less than two-thirds of feeble-mindedness in this country is hereditary.

16. Arrested mental development as a result of scarlet fever or other diseases and accidents is not transmissible by inheritance.

17. When two feeble-minded persons marry practically all of the offspring are destined to feeble-mindedness.

18. An English authority (Tredgold) thinks that 90 per cent of mental defectiveness is hereditary.

19. The recent decline in birth-rates (52 per cent in twenty-four years) in this country and England is among the more desirable classes; the defective classes show no decrease.

20. One survey shows 3.7 children per family among the better classes; 7.4 among the undesirable citizens.

21. The study of numerous strains of defective stock shows how unfailingly these defectives pour their accursed germ-plasm on down through their progeny.

SOURCE

16: RACE DECADENCE

22. Feeble-mindedness is the consummate curse of the human race. It means to hark back to the primitive level of our prehistoric ancestors without the compensation of their instinctive faculties.

23. Much of the world's criminality, immorality, pauperism, and drunkenness is due to inherited feeble-mindedness.

24. Thirty per cent of the general population are carriers of this hereditary defectiveness; and 15 per cent (the less desirable) of the present generation produces 50 per cent of the next.

25. Each year hundreds of inmates of the institutions for the feeble-minded are "discharged" for various reasons to go out and reproduce their kind.