

Chapter 20 — Feeble-Mindedness in Relation to Crime

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

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Sources for Chapter 20, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Charles Benedict Davenport, *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911)
- (2) 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)
- (3) “Morons Safe or Unsafe; Doctors Fail to Agree,” in *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 7, 1920
- (4) Joseph A. Hill, “Introduction,” in *Prisoners and Juvenile Delinquents in the United States 1910* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918)
- (5) J. E. Wallis Wallin, *Problems of Subnormality* (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1917)
- (6) Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918)
- (7) Samuel Christian Schmucker, Ph.D., *The Meaning of Evolution* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913)
- (8) William Martin Richards, M.D., “Physical Defects of Criminals,” in *Proceedings of the Annual Congress of the American Prison Association, 1911* (Indianapolis: Wm. B Burford, Printer, 1911)
- (9) “Restrain Morons for Life is Dr. Hickson’s Proposal,” in *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 25, 1918
- (10) “Would Isolate All Morons,” in *Chicago Tribune*, Sep. 27, 1914

- (11) Reginald A. **Brown**, A.M., “Juvenile Offenders,” in *Prisoners and Juvenile Delinquents in the United States 1910* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918)

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) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake, in most cases brought about by Sadler’s miscopying or misunderstanding his source.

Work-in-progress Version 28 Dec. 2025
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XX : FEEBLE - MINDEDNESS IN RELATION TO CRIME

20:0.1 WHAT is the relation between vice, crime, drunkenness, poverty, and mental defectiveness? Are these social vices and individual crimes the result of feeble-mindedness of some degree on the part of the perpetrators? What is it that heredity is responsible for—feeble-mindedness or crime? Are criminality, immorality, and improvidence inherited as such; or are these various manifestations merely the result of the inheritance of a defective mind—feeble-mindedness?

20:0.2 In at least a majority of these cases of “unsocial” and “antisocial” conduct, we believe the fundamental or basic weakness to consist of the inheritance of a defective mind; and that the vice, crime, drunkenness, shiftlessness, and other social misbehavior is directly or indirectly the result of this inherent feeble-mindedness. We believe the facts and statistics presented in this chapter go a long way toward establishing this contention, when considered in connection with the unbiased study of the whole problem.

20:0.3 It is not our intention to maintain that all crime grows out of mental defectiveness—only that a large proportion of it does; and we freely recognize numerous other influences tending toward criminality.

SOURCE

VIII: EUGENICS AND EUTHENICS (Davenport 252)

5. THE SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECT OF EUGENICS (Davenport 261)

Mental defectiveness is ascribed to malnutrition of the fetus, to asphyxiation of the child during the labor of birth, to adenoids, to infection with venereal disease—

despite the fact that (excepting mongolism) it usually occurs only in families with the defect on both sides of the house (D 261).

XXVI: MENTAL PECULIARITIES— *Concluded* (Healy 753)

LOVE OF EXCITEMENT AND ADVENTURE. (Healy 753)

§351. **General Statement.**—The love of adventure is a trait not to be considered lightly in the treatment of young offenders under the law.

Perhaps occasionally the causation of adult offenses might be looked at from this standpoint, certainly some of those that belong in the category of “wild west” crimes.

20: RACE DECADENCE

20:0.4 Not only do we sometimes ascribe crime to a wrong cause, but we not infrequently assign feeble-mindedness and other defectiveness to wrong causes.

Subnormality is ascribed to malnutrition of the fetus, to asphyxiation of the child during labor at birth, to adenoids, to infection with venereal disease,

head injuries, and many other direct and individual causes too numerous to mention,

despite the fact that (excepting Mongolian idiocy) it usually appears only in families with the defect on both sides of the house.

INFLUENCES LEADING TO CRIME

20:1.1 The love of adventure is a common cause of minor crimes among young offenders;

and in some cases even among adults.

SOURCE

The typical cases, however, of those who show this mental peculiarity in full measure are at the time experiencing the instabilities of the adolescent period (H 753).

We shall properly discuss, as love of adventure,

the desire for self-expression and for self-activity under unusually stimulating conditions, or apart from the common paths of life (H 753).

OTHER PECULIARITIES. (Healy 765)

§359. **Contrary Suggestibility.** A marked and easily recognized human trait is **obstinacy** (H 766).

The obstinate person is supposed to represent the very antithesis of social suggestibility,

and yet in some the tendency to opposition and perversity is as clearly set along definite lines by way of reaction as when the positive forms of suggestibility are shown.

It is the old story of the individual who is so against everything, that he is ready to do the opposite of whatever he is told.

This would hardly seem to have direct connection with delinquency, but yet I am constrained to believe upon the basis of several experiences that excessive, contrary self-assertion may be a real driving force towards **social offense**.

20: RACE DECADENCE

The typical cases, however, of those who show this mental peculiarity in full measure, are the adolescents.

By “love of adventure” is meant

the desire for self-expression and for self-activity under unusually stimulating conditions.

20:1.2 One of the commonest of human traits is **obstinacy**.

“The obstinate person is supposed to represent the very antithesis of social suggestibility,

and yet in some the tendency to opposition and perversity is as clearly set along definite lines by way of reaction as when the positive forms of suggestibility are shown.

It is the old story of the individual who is so against everything, that he is ready to do the opposite of whatever he is told.”

Such perverse individuals are thus disposed to commit **social offenses**.

SOURCE

One must agree with McDougall (20) in his highly original essay on the subject, that in certain individuals this “negative reaction to suggestion appears as a permanent and temperamental attitude” (H 766).

§360. **Revengefulness.** A stubbornly persistent form of self-assertion is the desire for revenge.

Within limits it is one of the most naturally expressed emotional reactions, but it may follow upon anger as an obsessional phenomenon, and be as much a sign of the lack of self-control as anger itself is.

The desire for revenge plays a considerable part in the production of criminalistic deeds of violence (H 767).

§363. **Restlessness.**— Whether or not restlessness is a mental peculiarity that may be separated from physical conditions is not quite clear. It can be a great factor making for delinquency.

It is sometimes observed in cases where there is decidedly good physical strength and good mental powers.

In nearly all cases that we have observed the characteristic has been found apparently to rest on some sort of a physical basis, perhaps inherited, as in Cases 1 and 2 (H 769).

20: RACE DECADENCE

One must agree with McDougall in his highly original essay on the subject, that in certain individuals this “negative reaction to suggestion appears as a permanent and temperamental attitude.”

20:1.3 A stubbornly persistent form of self-assertion is the desire for revenge.

Within limits it is one of the most naturally expressed emotional reactions, but it may follow upon anger as an obsessional phenomenon, and be as much a sign of the lack of self-control as anger itself is.

Says Healy:

“The desire for revenge plays a considerable part in the production of criminalistic deeds of violence.”

20:1.4 Restlessness can be a great factor making for delinquency.

It is sometimes observed in cases where there is decidedly good physical strength and good mental powers.

In most cases it is found that this sort of uneasiness rests on some sort of physical basis, perhaps inherited.

SOURCE

ADOLESCENCE. (Healy 709)

20: RACE DECADENCE

20:1.5 The greatest interest for all students of criminology centers about the fact that most frequently the career of the confirmed criminal begins during adolescence. Healy says:

§339. **Mental Characteristics of Adolescence Causing Delinquency.**—As we look over our adolescent cases, those in which the newly-developed mental characteristics of the period play a considerable part, we find always the admixture of causes which is elsewhere seen.

But we can fairly enumerate the main features of mental life which make for delinquency at this epoch:

(a) General changeableness or instability of ideas and emotions, and consequently of character.

(b) Excessive impulsions, belonging both to the physical and mental spheres.

(c) Excessive lack of self-control.

(d) Mental and physical lethargy or laziness.

(e) The general feeling, perhaps only occasional, of recklessness.

(f) Hypersensitiveness, as shown in romanticism, dissatisfactions, hypochondria, etc.

(g) Lack of foresight, which is perhaps nothing more than a feature of childish mentality carried over to the time when signs of adult development are showing themselves.

20:1.6 As we look over our adolescent cases, those in which the newly developed mental characteristics of the period play a considerable part, we find always the admixture of causes which is elsewhere seen.

But we can fairly enumerate the main features of mental life which make for delinquency at this epoch:

(a) general changeableness or instability of ideas and emotions, and consequently of character;

(b) excessive impulsions, belonging both to the physical and mental spheres;

(c) excessive lack of self-control;

(d) mental and physical lethargy or laziness;

(e) the general feeling, perhaps only occasional, of recklessness;

(f) hyper-sensitiveness, as shown in romanticism, dissatisfactions, hypochondria, etc.;

(g) lack of foresight, which is perhaps nothing more than a feature of childish mentality carried over to the time when signs of adult development are showing themselves;

SOURCE

(h) Egocentrism. Ambitiousness. These with impulsiveness and lack of experience may lead to unfortunate behavior.

Running away to go on the stage is an example (H 714).

“MORONS SAFE OR UNSAFE; DOCTORS FAIL TO AGREE” (*Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 7, 1920)

[contd] Contradictory opinions regarding morons and their treatment by the general public were expressed last night by physicians in talks before the Eugenics Education Society of Chicago....

Dr. Harret C. B. Alexander took another view [from that of Dr. H. N. Moyer, who called morons useful to society].

“I consider every moron a potential criminal,” she said.

“He can never safely live in a community and must be isolated under constant supervision. A moron has no sense of moral responsibility; he has no check to his desires.

Whatever he wishes to do he does—

he is ungrateful, ungenerous, unsympathetic.

20: RACE DECADENCE

(h) egocentrism; ambitiousness; these with impulsiveness and lack of experience may lead to unfortunate behavior.

Running away to go on the stage is an example.

20:1.7 Every feeble-minded person is a potential criminal.

They have no check to their desires.

Whatever they desire to do, they do.

Given proper circumstances they become criminals.

They are ungrateful, ungenerous, unsympathetic,

and have no consideration.

They learn only vaguely. The higher types make friends readily, but they never keep them.

A moron has no sense of moral responsibility.

SOURCE

He is a menace” (CT 7).

20: RACE DECADENCE

He is more dangerous than an adolescent neuropath or a hysteric.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN CRIME

20:2.1 It is not always easy to decide between opposing arguments on causation of crime, for instance those of the heredity specialists versus the environmental enthusiasts.

VI: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS (Healy 282)

One student of crime and criminals offers the following suggestions regarding influences predisposing to crime:

§205. **Parent Alcoholic.**—The influence of an alcoholic parent on home conditions that produce delinquency is one of the plainest facts observed in the study of criminalistics (H 286).

20:2.2 1. *Parent alcoholic.*—The influence of an alcoholic parent on home conditions that produce delinquency is one of the plainest facts observed in the study of criminalistics.

§206. **Immoral Home Environment.**—Whether or not the parents show active criminalism or immorality, the moral conditions surrounding the home may naturally be a vital point in the production of delinquency (H 288).

20:2.3 2. *Immoral home environment.*—Whether or not the parents show active criminalism or immorality, the moral conditions surrounding the home may naturally be a vital point in the production of delinquency.

§207. **Irritation at Home.**—One hears extensively of the effect of quarreling and nagging and teasing as causes of delinquency, both from offenders and their relatives (H 288).

20:2.4 3. *Irritation at home.*—One hears extensively of the effect of quarreling and nagging and teasing as causes of delinquency, both from offenders and their relatives.

§209. **Severity and Harshness of Parent.**—The effect of severity on the part of a parent may have a direct reaction in delinquency.

20:2.5 4. *Severity and harshness of parent.*—The effect of severity on the part of a parent may have a direct reaction in delinquency.

SOURCE

As we have had to reckon with such behavior, it runs all the way from mere repression to putting the child out of doors, or actual fighting (H 289).

§211. **Home Uncongeniality.**—One of the most peculiar phases of family life that has come to our notice as a cause of delinquency is the uncongeniality that arises through a young individual desiring to better himself (H 290).

§212. **Parents Separated.**—A very fruitful source of delinquency is found in the separation of parents, either with or without divorce (H 290).

§213. **Crowded Housing Conditions.**—The material foundations of social life deeply influence morality.

In the matter of the many decencies that depend upon housing conditions this stands out very clearly.

A considerable cause of sexual vice is to be found in the spacial circumstances of home life (H 291).

§214. **Poverty.**—The general relation of poverty to criminalism it is not necessary to expatiate on (H 292).

§215. **No Home.**—An adolescent without a home is under the most favorable circumstances for the establishment of criminalistic behavior (H 292).

§216. **Parental Neglect.**—The subject of the effect of parental neglect as productive of delinquency is altogether too trite to be dwelled on in detail (H 292).

20: RACE DECADENCE

As we have to reckon with such behavior, it runs all the way from mere repression to putting the child out-of-doors, or actual fighting.

20:2.6 5. *Home uncongeniality.*—One of the most peculiar phases of family life that has come to our notice as a cause of delinquency is the uncongeniality that arises through a young individual desiring to better himself.

20:2.7 6. *Parents separated.*—A very fruitful source of delinquency is found in the separation of parents, either with or without divorce.

20:2.8 7. *Crowded housing conditions.*—The material foundations of social life deeply influence morality.

In the matter of the many decencies that depend upon housing conditions this stands out very clearly.

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20:2.9 8. *Poverty.*—It is not necessary to expatiate on the general relation of poverty to criminalism.

20:2.10 9. *No home.*—An adolescent without a home is under the most favorable circumstances for the establishment of criminalistic behavior.

20:2.11 10. *Parental neglect.*—The subject of the effect of parental neglect as productive of delinquency is altogether too trite to be dwelt on in detail.

SOURCE

§217. **Bad Companions.**—As observed in any phase of court life, bad companions play an immense part in the production of criminalism.

To be sure there are quite solitary individuals who have developed an anti-social grudge, or who have deliberately entered upon a professional criminalistic career, but the majority work up their impulses gregariously (H 293).

§218. **Theatres.**—Possible effects of theatrical presentations in producing criminalism is obvious when it occurs at all.

High-priced plays are as a rule not seen by adolescents, and it is doubtful if theatres ever influence towards criminalistic conduct except at this impressionable age.

Melodramas urge to action much as moving pictures do (H 294)

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the stimulation of certain shows is towards misconduct in sex affairs; the influence is direct (H 295).

§219. **Social Allurements.**—The various allurements of social life which stand out in the causation of delinquency form a great variety which are too long to recount.

We find, for instance, a defective boy who is a great runaway always going to the shops down town (H 295).

20: RACE DECADENCE

20:2.12 11. *Bad companions.*—As observed in any phase of court life, bad companions play an immense part in the production of criminalism—

though some seem to prefer solitary crime.

20:2.13 12. *Theaters.*—Possible effects of theatrical presentations in producing criminalism is obvious.

High-priced plays are, as a rule, not seen by adolescents, and it is doubtful if theaters ever influence toward criminalistic conduct except at this impressionable age.

Melodramas urge to action much as moving pictures do,

and there cannot be the slightest doubt that the stimulation of certain shows is towards misconduct in sex affairs.

20:2.14 13. *Social allurements.*—The various allurements of social life which stand out in the causation of delinquency form a great variety which are too long to recount.

We find, for instance, a defective boy, who is a great runaway, always going to the shops down town.

SOURCE

The allurements of *fine clothes* as worn by others or as seen in shop windows is, to those who have a native desire for finery, an undoubted temptation which may result in some form of dishonest acquirement (H 295).

[contd] §220. **School Irritation.**—As part of the psychical environment we must very properly reckon with this factor, although in the study of the individual the prime cause would undoubtedly be the personal peculiarity which leads to the irritation (H 295).

§221. **Unsatisfactory Vocation.**—On some occasions we have found hypersensitive adolescents to whom the vocations they were following were highly irritative, and who showed delinquent tendencies as a result (H 296).

VII: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS—
Concluded (Healy 297)

§223. **Influence of Newspapers.** Consideration of the question of the influence of newspapers in producing anti-social conduct has brought forth results surprising to ourselves.

It would seem, *a priori*, that the great amount of material which the newspapers publish relating to delinquency must certainly very definitely harm the readers.

§226. **Experiences During Custody.** ... In his chapter on the etiology of crime Lombroso (239) devotes a section to prisons.

20: RACE DECADENCE

The allurements of fine clothes as worn by others, or as seen in shop windows, is, to those who have a native desire for finery, an undoubted temptation which may result in some form of dishonest acquirement.

20:2.15 14. *School irritation.*—As part of the psychical environment we must very properly reckon with this factor, although in the study of the individual the prime cause would undoubtedly be the personal peculiarity which leads to the irritation.

20:2.16 15. *Unsatisfactory vocation.*—On some occasions we have found hypersensitive adolescents to whom the vocations they were following were highly irritative, and who showed delinquent tendencies as a result.

20:2.17 16. *Influence of newspapers.*—Consideration of the question of the influence of newspapers in producing antisocial conduct has brought forth surprising results.

It would seem, *a priori*, that a great amount of material which the newspapers publish relating to delinquency must certainly definitely very harm the readers;

the only reason they do no more harm is the fact that most criminal careers are begun before the newspaper reading age.

20:2.18 17. *Jails and prisons.*—

Lombroso says:

SOURCE

“One of the greatest factors in crime is the prison.”

Tarde (120, p. 256) says,

“The criminal is partly the result of his own crime and partly of criminal justice.”

And Holmes (66, p. 244 ff.) says,

“Why is it that a man’s facial expression changes during a long detention?

Why is it that his voice becomes hard and unnatural?

Why is it that his eyes become shifty, cunning and wild?

It is not because of hard work, it is the system that does it, the long-continued soul-and-mind-destroying monotony...” (H 310-11).

20: RACE DECADENCE

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RACE AND CRIME

INTRODUCTION. (Hill 1)

PRISON COMMITMENTS. (Hill 17)

The racial composition of the population doubtless has considerable influence on the amount of law-breaking.

Figures presented in another connection (see pp. 87 and 106) **show that**

there are proportionately more commitments among the Negro population than among the white,

and more among the foreign-born white population than among the native white.

20:3.1 The racial composition of the population doubtless has considerable influence on the amount of law-breaking.

Figures show that

there are proportionately more commitments among the Negro population than among the white,

and more among the foreign-born white population than among the native white.

SOURCE

Moreover, there appears to be considerable difference in this respect between the different classes of immigrants as distinguished by country of birth.

The sex and age composition is another factor of some importance in this connection.

The great majority of the offenders committed to prisons and jails are adult males;

only about 2 per cent of the total number of prisoners and juvenile delinquents committed in 1910 were under 15 years of age and only about 10 per cent were females.

It follows, therefore, that a community or class in which there is a relatively large percentage of adult males is likely to have a higher ratio of prison commitments

than one in which there is a relatively large proportion of females and children.

In fact it will be found from statistics

presented in another section (see p. 118)

that the difference just noted between the native white and foreign-born white as regards the ratio of commitments

is largely accounted for by the difference in the age composition of the two classes (H 20).

20: RACE DECADENCE

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that the difference just noted between the native white and foreign-born white, as regards the ratio of commitments,

is largely accounted for by the difference in the age composition of the two classes.

SOURCE

[contd] That illiteracy is a factor which may have some connection with the frequency of prison commitments is indicated by statistics

presented elsewhere in this report (see p. 144).

These statistics show, at any rate, that the percentage of illiteracy is higher among prisoners than in the general population in the same community;

but, on the other hand, it is a question whether in some communities where there is a high degree of illiteracy

there may not be, as compared with other communities, a more lax enforcement of the laws and fewer legal restrictions or prohibitions,

particularly as regards such offenses as drunkenness, disorderly conduct, vagrancy, and prostitution.

In short, there may be in such communities less law and likewise more lawlessness than in other communities where the population is less illiterate (H 20).

20: RACE DECADENCE

20:3.2 That illiteracy is a factor which may have some connection with the frequency of prison commitments is indicated by statistics.

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but, on the other hand, it is a question whether in some communities where there is a high degree of illiteracy

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In short, there may be in such communities less law and likewise more lawlessness than in other communities where the population is less illiterate.

WHO IS FEEBLE-MINDED?

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

THE PROBLEM OF DIAGNOSIS (Wallin 110)

[S]ince we are beginning to readjust our treatment of the feeble-minded, it is therefore all the more necessary to insist that

20:4.1 It is desirable that

SOURCE

the individual should be correctly diagnosed,

so that, for example, backward pupils may not be forced to spend all their school days with feeble-minded children in special schools,

and so that backward prostitutes and backward juvenile and adult delinquents shall not be diagnosed as feeble-minded,

in order to incarcerate them as feeble-minded for lifelong custody in an eleemosynary institution

or in order to exculpate them from accountability for the commission of criminal acts (W 111).

VI: WORKING METHODS—*Continued*
(Healy 68)

§73. Suggestibility.— ... Binet says heedlessness and lack of attention may cause falling into the trap.

This, as we see it, is exactly how in social life certain individuals from empty-headedness or lapses of will receive criminalistic suggestions.

The individual through certain negative aspects of his mental life is more passive and suggestible than he might otherwise be (H 93).

20: RACE DECADENCE

the suspected subnormal individual should be correctly diagnosed,

so that, for example, backward children may not be forced to spend all their school days with feeble-minded children in special schools,

and so that backward prostitutes and backward juvenile and adult delinquents shall not be diagnosed as feeble-minded,

in order to incarcerate them in some custodial institution for life,

or to exculpate them from accountability for the commission of some crime.

Binet says heedlessness and lack of attention may cause falling into the trap.

This, as we see it, is exactly how in social life certain individuals from empty-headedness or lapses of will receive criminalistic suggestions.

The individual, through certain negative aspects of his mental life, is more passive and suggestible than he might be otherwise.

SOURCE

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

THE PROBLEM OF DIAGNOSIS (Wallin 110)

The absolute degree of retardation is found by subtracting the individual's mental age (i. e., B.-S.) from his chronological age. The rule has been laid down that the individual is feeble-minded

if he shows an “intellectual retardation of two years at an age below nine, or three years at and above nine” (W 116).

[M]any of those who have most stoutly defended the accuracy of Binet surveys made by amateurs ... have never attempted to prove the accuracy of the diagnosis by expert reexaminations of the same cases (W 119).

[T]he amateur—the mere Binet tester—is unqualified to make mental diagnoses ... at most the amateur can reliably diagnose only the very obvious cases of feeble-mindedness

and is quite incompetent to make a differential diagnosis of the most numerous types of defectives, the high-grade feeble-minded, the borderline, and the backward cases (W 119-20).

20: RACE DECADENCE

20:4.2 The Binet-Simon rule of determining feeble-mindedness is to subtract the individual's age as shown by the tests from his actual age, and to class the individual as feeble-minded

if he shows an “intellectual retardation of two years at an age below nine, or three years at and above nine.”

20:4.3 The greatest difficulty with this whole thing is the fact that so many of these tests are, or have been, made by amateurs—by persons not properly trained or experienced for such work.

Expert re-examination does not always confirm their diagnosis;

and so it is demonstrated that

the average amateur can only accurately diagnose the most obvious cases of feeble-mindedness,

let alone be able to make a differential diagnosis as between the various types and degrees of mental subnormality and defectiveness.

SOURCE

Evidently the tacit assumption has been that the basis of classification which has been used is universally accepted and therefore need not even be stated, much less explained or justified,

although the literature clearly shows that the whole matter of the criteria or standards of feeble-mindedness is still in controversy.

Others do not give even a hint as to the adequacy of their examinations—

the thoroughness of the Binet testing, or the extent of the psychological, medical, developmental, and social examination.

Many of the writers do not tell us whether the 1908 or the 1911 scale was used, whether the 1913 suggestions were followed, whether the tests above age 12 were given, and whether the Binet rating includes the latter tests (W 121).

20: RACE DECADENCE

The making of this sort of a diagnosis should be regarded as a serious responsibility.

20:4.4 Evidently the tacit assumption has been that the basis of classification which has been used is universally accepted and therefore need not even be stated, much less explained or justified,

although the literature clearly shows that the whole matter of the criteria or standards of feeble-mindedness is still in controversy.

Many examiners do not give even a hint as to the adequacy of their examinations—

the thoroughness of the Binet testing, or the extent of the psychological, medical, developmental, and social examination.

Many of the writers do not tell us whether the 1908 or 1911 scale was used, whether the 1913 suggestions were followed, whether the tests above age 12 were given, and whether the Binet rating included the latter tests.

20:4.5 The author confidently believes that feeble-mindedness is on the increase—that it constitutes a national menace—but he also feels that in some quarters there exists a tendency unduly to magnify the evil and otherwise to exaggerate the dangers. What is desired is the truth—facts—and these are serious enough to stir us to action. A sane people do not require to be scared into hasty and immature action by over-magnification of the dangers which threaten us.

A SURVEY OF CRIME

VIII: STATISTICS (Healy 126)

§91. Group II. Summary of Causative Factors by Groups and Totals in 823 Cases—560 Males, 263 Females. (Healy 130)

[*Note*: Healy was director of the Psychopathic Institute, Juvenile Court, Chicago.]

[*chart* (H 130)] [*Note*: Healy's results do not support Sadler's assertion that feeble-mindedness is the greatest cause of crime.]

II: ORIENTATIONS (Healy 9)

§ 17. **Ascertained Facts Overwhelm the Theories.** ... It was clearly evident that classification by crimes leads only in special instances to knowledge of the criminal;

that statistics of seasons, and races, and head-measurements, and alcoholism, and so on, mean almost nothing for the fundamental understanding of the individual case;

that epileptic and atavistic theories could not be substantiated by case histories;

that refinements of psycho-physical measurements sometimes used on criminals need a tremendous amount of overhauling before they can be regarded as valid for conclusions;

20:5.1 That the reader may gain an idea of the importance of mental defectiveness as a cause of crime, in relation to all other influences, the following summary of a study of 823 cases (560 males and 263 females) made by the Chicago Psychopathic Laboratory is here given:

[*chart*]

20:5.2 The conclusions of these psychologic and expert investigators are:

20:5.3 It was clearly evident that classification by crimes leads only in special instances to knowledge of the criminal;

that statistics of seasons, and races, and head measurements, and alcoholism, and so on, mean almost nothing for the fundamental understanding of the individual case;

that epileptic and atavistic theories could not be substantiated by case histories;

that refinements of psycho-physical measurements sometimes used on criminals need a tremendous amount of overhauling before they can be regarded as valid for conclusions;

SOURCE

that the elders, who spoke so glibly of “the criminal” as a born type, had not the means of investigating whether he was not rather a born defective, and a criminal through accident of environment (H 16-17).

[contd] This last consideration alone is enough to make the student look askance at all the older classifications.

The statistics that we are offered concerning criminals, whether about their deeds, their ears, their religious faith, or what not, are presented without knowledge of essential facts, such as whether or not they were mentally defective;

and thus lead us nowhere for purposes of practical treatment.

We see segregated in institutions the feeble-minded with just these stigmatized skulls and palates and ears.

We find well-developed stigmata sometimes in those who are morally normal.

So it seems that by virtue of education or social protection, such marked individuals need not become criminals (H 17).

20: RACE DECADENCE

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We find well-developed stigmata sometimes in those who are morally normal.

So it seems that by virtue of education or social protection, such marked individuals need not become criminals.

CRIMINALS AS A CLASS

IX: THE DYSGENIC CLASSES (Popenoe&Johnson 176)

Finally, there is the criminal class,

20:6.1 Criminality

is an old battle-ground where

SOURCE

over which the respective champions of heredity and environment have so often waged partisan warfare (P&J 181).

Laws such as have been passed in several states, providing for the sterilization of criminals *as such*, must be deplored by the eugenicist as much as they are by the pseudo-sociologist who “does not believe in heredity”;

but this is not saying that there are not many cases in which eugenic action is desirable; for inheritance of a lack of emotional control makes a man in one sense a “born criminal.”¹

[¹ See the recent studies of C. B. Davenport, particularly *The Feebly Inhibited*, Washington, Carnegie Institution, 1915 (P&J 182).]

He is not, in most respects, the creature which he was made out to be by Lombroso and his followers;

but he exists, nevertheless, and no ameliorative treatment given him will be of such value to society as preventing his reproduction (P&J 181-82).

In an investigation, the benefit of the doubt should be given to the individual.

But when every possible concession is made to the influence of environment,

20: RACE DECADENCE

many conflicts have been fought between the champions of the theories of heredity versus environment as the chief cause of crime.

Are criminals born or are they made by their surroundings?

Laws such as have been passed in several states providing for the sterilization of criminals *as such*, must be deplored by the eugenicist as much as they are by the pseudo-sociologist who “does not believe in heredity;”

but this is not saying that there are not many cases in which eugenic action is desirable; for inheritance of a lack of emotional control makes a man in one sense “a born criminal.”¹

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but he exists, nevertheless, and no ameliorative treatment given him will be of such value to society as preventing his reproduction.

20:6.2 In any investigation of criminals, the benefit of doubt should be given to the individual.

But when every possible concession is made to the influence of environment,

SOURCE

the psychiatric study of the individual and the investigation of his family history still show that there are criminals who congenitally lack the inhibitions and instincts which make it possible for others to be useful members of society.³

When a criminal of this natural type is found, the duty of society is unquestionably to protect itself by cutting off that line of descent (P&J 182).

³ As a result of psychiatric study of the inmates of Sing Sing in 1916, it was said that two-thirds of them showed some mental defect.

Examination of 100 convicts selected at random in the Massachusetts State Prison showed that 29% were feeble-minded and 11% borderline cases.

The highest percentage of mental defectives was found among criminals serving sentence for murder in the second degree, manslaughter, burglary and robbery.

(Rossey, C. S., in *State Board of Insanity Bull.*, Boston, Nov., 1915).

Paul M. Bowers told the 1916 meeting of the American Prison Association of his study of 100 recidivists, each of whom had been convicted not fewer than four times.

Of these 12 were insane, 23 feeble-minded and 10 epileptic, and in each case Dr. Bowers said the mental defect bore a direct causal relation to the crime committed (P&J 182).

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III: THE INHERITANCE OF FAMILY TRAITS (Davenport 26)

23. CRIMINALITY (Davenport 83)

The foregoing cases are samples of scores that have been collected and serve as fair representations of the kind of blood that goes to the making of thousands of criminals in this country. **It is just as sensible to imprison a person for feeble-mindedness or insanity as it is to imprison criminals belonging to such strains.**

The question whether a given person is a case for the penitentiary or the hospital is not primarily a legal question but one for a physician with the aid of a student of heredity and family histories (D 92).

It is just as sensible to imprison a person for feeble-mindedness or insanity as it is to imprison criminals belonging to these defective strains.

The question whether a given person is a case for the penitentiary or the hospital is not primarily a legal question, but one for a physician with the aid of a student of heredity and family histories.

CRIMINAL HEREDITY

I: HEREDITY (Healy 188)

§141. Studies of Heredity Need Critical Methods. (Healy 188)

1 We have also searched the literature for recent careful studies on the inheritance of criminalistic tendencies. Apart from the researches on the **inheritance of various mental and nervous defects** or aberrations that are so frequently correlated with delinquency, we find nothing in the least convincing-

20:7.1 Most students of crime, as well as observers of heredity, have reached the conclusion that criminality—as such—is not hereditary;

that the thing which is undoubtedly inherited and which is associated with crime, is some form of mental defect.

nothing to add to Aschaffenburg's summary (1, Eng. ed. p. 129) of work done on the subject,

In other words, we agree with Aschaffenburg,

SOURCE

or to his words,

“This makes it possible to dispense with the hypothesis that criminal tendencies, like artistic talents, for instance, are transmitted from parents to children.

I expressly say that we can dispense with it for it cannot be refuted or proved” (H 188, fn).

From our experience we would warn at this place once more against the danger of drawing easy conclusions about heredity being the main factor back of misdeeds simply because some progenitors or other members of the family were guilty of delinquency.

Both mother and child may be prostitutes, and both be victims of environment.

Grandparents and parents and children may be liars, or thieves, or misdoers in other ways, and very little cause of their conduct be protoplasmic carrying over of special traits.

Some changes or reformations that may be witnessed through alteration of environment, make one very skeptical about deciding the rôle of inheritance in criminalism, unless other proof than that of similar misconduct in successive generations is brought forth.

We feel certain that absolutely the only fair way to study inheritance in criminalistic families is to ascertain the various causes of misbehavior in individual cases, and then to reckon up these with known heritable conditions (H 188-89).

20: RACE DECADENCE

who said:

“This makes it possible to dispense with the hypothesis that criminal tendencies, like artistic talents for instance, are transmitted from parents to children.

I expressly say that we can dispense with it, for it cannot be refuted or proved.”

20:7.2 Such an experienced investigator as Healy says:

20:7.3 From our experience we would warn at this place, once more, against the danger of drawing easy conclusions about heredity being the main factor back of misdeeds simply because some progenitors or other members of the family were guilty of delinquency.

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We feel certain that absolutely the only fair way to study inheritance in criminalistic families is to ascertain the various causes of misbehavior in individual cases, and then to reckon up these with known heritable conditions.

SOURCE

20: RACE DECADENCE

20:7.4 Among those traits of character or tendencies of temperament (not to be classed as evidence of mental defectiveness) which seem to predispose certain otherwise unstable individuals to crime, may be mentioned:

§142. **Inheritance of Excess of Energy.** (Healy 189)

inheritance of excess of energy;

§143. **Irritability of Temper.** (Healy 191)

irritability of temper;

§144. **Inheritance of Hypersexual Tendencies.** (Healy 192)

hyper-sexual tendencies;

§145. **Inheritance of Physical Traits.** (Healy 198)

other abnormal physical traits;

II: FACTORS IN DEVELOPMENTAL CONDITIONS (Healy 201)

§152. **Alcoholism During Pregnancy.** (Healy 204)

alcoholism during pregnancy;

§154. **Congenital Syphilis.** (Healy 204)

and congenital syphilis.

X: THE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF MAN (Schmucker 249)

At the recent Eugenics Congress in London

20:7.5 At the first Eugenics Congress in London,

one of the speakers expressed a preference for the son of a husky burglar over the son of a tuberculous bishop.

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This is doubtless quite correct, but why should the bishop be tuberculous?

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The truth of the matter is, the reverse is more likely to be the case.

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SOURCE

Personally, I should prefer to be the offspring of a husky bishop.

In dealing with criminals, then, with a view to cutting off their posterity, we must be careful to understand whether we are dealing with a hereditary

or an acquired criminality.

If there is a genuine hereditary criminal taint, society is right in freeing itself of it.

If it is acquired criminality, then it is not transmissible,

and the offspring, **if placed in a good environment, are likely to be good citizens** (S 268).

20: RACE DECADENCE

In dealing with criminals, then, with a view to cutting off their posterity, we must be careful to understand whether we are dealing with a hereditary feeble-mindedness

or an acquired criminality.

If there is a genuine hereditary criminal taint, society is right in freeing itself of it.

If it is acquired,

the **criminals**, **if placed in good environment, are likely to become good citizens.**

20:7.6 I no longer believe in the existence of a hereditary criminal class. I do not believe there is a typical criminal class. Criminals are such because of the inheritance of definite or general mental defects, or because they turn to crime as the path of least resistance as regards the circumstances of their environment, temperament, health, vices, etc.

FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS AND CRIME

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

RÉSUMÉ OF RECENT STUDIES OF SOCIAL OR EDUCATIONAL DEVIATES

CASES IN ADULT COURTS OR ADULT CONVICTS

Institution: Psychopathic Laboratory, Municipal Courts, Boston. (W 123)

Subjects: 350 adult criminals (210 women and 140 men) from the first and second criminal sessions and (a few cases) from domestic relations courts.

Method: Point Scale, evidently also B.-S., medical, psychopathic, neurological.

Conclusions:

7.3/7% normal, 31.1/7% mental defectives, 20.2/7% subnormal, 24.2/7% constitutional psychopaths, 3.5/7% dementia præcox, 3.5/7% epileptics, 9.2/7% scattering neurotic and psychotic conditions (W 123).

[contd] *Institution: Psychopathic Laboratory of Kansas State Prison.*

Reference: *The Survey*, May 15, 1915 (slightly different figures are given in *The Training School Bulletin*, Vol. XI, 1915, p. 169).

Subjects: 224 white and 101 colored male convicts.

Method: Evidently wholly B.-S.

20:8.1 In the Psychopathic Laboratory of the Boston Municipal Courts,

350 criminals (210 women and 140 men) were carefully examined in regard to their mentality,

with the following results:

Mental defectives	31.1 per cent
Const. psychopaths	24.2 per cent
Subnormal	20.2 per cent
Dementia præcox	3.5 per cent
Epileptics	3.5 per cent
Unclassified neurotics	10.2 per cent
Normal	7.3 per cent

20:8.2 The Psychopathic Laboratory of the Kansas State Prison

gave out the following report on the examination of

224 white and 101 colored convicts:

SOURCE

Conclusions: White men, 14.7% normal, 16.5% subnormal, 68.8% morons;

colored men, 3.9% normal, 5.9% subnormal and 90.2 morons.

(Analyses of the data, where detailed results are available, justify the inference that the majority of these morons are backward and not feeble-minded.) (W 123-24)

[See 20:10.4, below.]

20: RACE DECADENCE

White Men

Morons	68.8 per cent
Subnormal	16.5 per cent
Normal	14.7 per cent

Colored Men

Morons	90.2 per cent
Subnormal	5.9 per cent
Normal	3.9 per cent

20:8.3 Wherever investigations of a scientific character have been made as touching feeble-mindedness in the criminal population, they unfailingly show anywhere from 65 to 85 per cent of criminals to be mental defectives of some degree.

20:8.4 The author believes that it is the feeble-mindedness that is hereditary—not the criminality. Criminals, as such, are not born; potential criminals are—because they inherit these mental defects which predispose them to a life of crime or some other abnormal or unsocial pursuit.

PHYSICAL SIDE OF CRIME

[*Note:* Sadler discussed eye disorders among school children, not among prisoners. See 19:1. He does mention “the boy truant, the beginning of whose downfall seems traceable to eyestrain,” in 21:2.8.]

20:9.1 Attention has already been called to the prevalence of eye disorders among the inmates of penal institutions.

“PHYSICAL DEFECTS OF CRIMINALS” (Richards 185)

EYESTRAIN. (Richards 186)

Dr. Case at the Elmira Reformatory found that the number of boys suffering from serious defects of vision was 56 per cent.—and this without the use of medicine in the eyes.

Dr. Orton of the New Jersey Reformatory found in his last series of 125 cases, that without the use of medicine only 35 per cent. of the boys apparently needed glasses (R 187).

In a former state of civilization, or even now in the country districts, a boy who was afflicted with defective vision could earn a living.

To quote a justice of the Court of Special Sessions of New York City,

“a boy in the country can see a cow on the other side of a fence no matter how bad his eyes are,” and herding pigs has never been cited as a cause of eye-strain even by the most ardent disciples of that gospel.

In the city, however, the case is quite different.

Most of the work in city life requires the near use of eyes for long continued periods.

Applicants for positions in some of our large corporations are tested for eyesight, and if it is not good, they are rejected.

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Most of the work in city life requires the near use of eyes for long-continued periods.

Applicants for positions in some of our large corporations are tested for eyesight, and if it is not good they are rejected.

SOURCE

Even if applicants with bad eyes are accepted they are frequently unable to perform their duties satisfactorily, and are soon discharged.

As an example of this, the New York Telephone Company refuses thousands of applicants every year on account of bad vision, though the ordinary person would never think of eyes in connection with a telephone (R 188-89).

[contd] In the DeWitt Clinton High School in New York City, is a class of thirty-seven defectives who have failed in every subject.

Nothing else could be done with them, so they were put in charge of the physical culture instructor, who reported to the principal that they were “a lot of crooks, thieves and gamblers.”

Now the most cursory examination of these boys’ eyes as compared with those of a normal class in the next room showed that these defective boys averaged less than half as good eyesight.

Does it require any special gift of prophecy to foretell that in the course of the next ten or fifteen years almost all of these boys will go the usual route of crime, reformatory and prison? (H 189)

AS TO STOPPED UP NOSES. (Richards 196)

[contd] The medical profession is awakening to the fact that a large number of diseases are due to conditions in the nose as an underlying cause, and mouth breathing as its consequences.

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Does it require any special gift of prophecy to foretell that in the course of the next ten or fifteen years almost all of these boys will go the usual route of crime, reformatory, and prison?

20:9.3 The medical profession is awakening to the fact that a large number of diseases are due to conditions in the nose as an underlying cause, and mouth-breathing as its consequence.

SOURCE

From this come long continued colds in the head, attacks of sore throat or tonsillitis, catarrhal deafness, which constitutes 95 per cent of all deafness,

irregular teeth caused by lateral pressure on them by the cheeks, giving mouth breathing either by day or night,

resultant bad position and interlocking of the teeth,

and a greater consequent deposit of tartar around their roots

caused by the pockets

thus formed for the retention of food particles,

and the difficulty of cleaning them properly with the toothbrush.

This frequently goes on to formation of pus around the teeth, with their consequent decay and loss,

and the flow of pus increases the frequency of sore throat and many digestive troubles.

Many cases of appendicitis could be traced to this source of infection, and many surgeons now refuse to operate for this disease until the teeth have been put in a healthy condition (R 196).

[Source?]

20: RACE DECADENCE

From this come long-continued colds in the head, attacks of sore throat or tonsillitis, catarrhal deafness (which constitutes 95 per cent of all deafness),

and as a result of mouth-breathing either by day or night,

a greater deposit of tartar is made around the gum-line of the teeth,

and thus the foundation is laid for the retention of food particles,

which frequently goes on to the formation of pus around the teeth, with their consequent decay and loss.

Many cases of appendicitis could be traced to this source of infection, and many surgeons now refuse to operate for this disease until the teeth have been put in a healthy condition

except in the case of acute appendicitis.

20:9.4 Among the physical conditions or defects so commonly found in criminals should be noted: speech defects; deaf-mutism; enuresis; local irritations; headaches; head injuries; as well as the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and even excessive use of tea and coffee.

THE BOYS' COURT

"RESTRAIN MORONS FOR LIFE IS
DR. HICKSON'S PROPOSAL"
(*Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 25, 1918)

Many Defectives Doomed to Crime.

The findings are based upon the laboratory analysis of 4,539 individual cases, which have passed through the municipal court

from May 1, 1914, to April 30, 1917.

Among important facts set forth in the report, as proved by laboratory research and experience, may be listed the following:

That 2 per cent of the population is criminally inclined.

That 2 per cent of the population is defective mentally.

That a large percentage of mental defectives are absolutely incurable criminals.

That the mentally defective criminal propagates defectives who will be criminals.

That present criminal reform methods and punishment are largely futile as protection to society.

That little decrease in crime may be expected until present obsolete school instruction methods are changed and permanent segregation of the criminally defective is provided for.

20:10.1 The findings herewith presented are based upon the laboratory analysis of 4,539 individual cases, which have passed through the Municipal Court of Chicago

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That 2 per cent of the population is defective mentally.

That a large percentage of mental defectives are absolutely incurable criminals.

That the mentally defective criminal propagates defectives who will be criminals.

That present criminal reform methods and punishment are largely futile as protection to society.

That little decrease in crime may be expected until present obsolete school instruction methods are changed; and permanent segregation of the criminally defective is provided for.

SOURCE

Some Defectives Often in Court.

The report states that the laboratory research activities have demonstrated not only that a large proportion of the cases in all of these courts indicate that the defendants are mental defectives,

but also that the same defendants in hundreds of instances appear in the various branch courts.

He has also established, he says, that

the great majority of the defendants have previously been in the Juvenile court, and even before that had trouble as children in the schools (CT).

[contd] Statistics of the boys' court of especial interest as indicating that this group of defendants, popularly supposed to be first offenders, is for the most part made up of young, but confirmed, criminals who offer few possibilities of permanent reform (CT).

"WOULD ISOLATE ALL MORONS"
(Chicago Tribune, Sep. 27, 1914)

" ... Eighty-five percent of the young fellows who are brought into the boy's court are feeble minded; they cannot support themselves..." (CT 13).

20: RACE DECADENCE

20:10.2 Psychologic laboratory research activities have demonstrated not only that a large proportion of the cases in all of our courts indicate that the defendants are mental defectives,

but also that the same defendants in hundreds of instances appear in the various branch courts.

It has been established that

the great majority of the defendants have previously been in the Juvenile Court, and even before that had trouble, as children, in the schools.

20:10.3 Statistics of the Boys' Court are of especial interest as indicating that this group of defendants, popularly supposed to be first offenders, is, for the most part, made up of young but confirmed criminals who offer few possibilities of permanent reform.

20:10.4 The rôle of feeble-mindedness in the causation of crime is fully demonstrated by the fact that

85 per cent of the youths brought into the Boys' Court of Chicago are feeble-minded, subnormal, or mentally defective in some degree.

JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

“JUVENILE OFFENDERS” (Brown 154)

SUMMARY. (Brown 156)

[contd] The total number of juvenile offenders under 18 years of age reported

as committed to penal or reformatory institutions in 1910 was 25,422.

As compared with the total population under 18 years of age, this represents a ratio of 72.9 per 100,000.

In view of the fact, however, that children under 10 years of age are not ordinarily considered as capable of committing a violation of the law,

a fairer measure of juvenile delinquency would be a comparison between the juvenile offenders 10 to 17 years of age and the total population of the same age.

Since 568 of the juvenile offenders reported were under 10 years of age, the number from 10 to 17 years of age committed was 24,854,

which represents a ratio of 171.7 per 100,000 of the general population of corresponding age.

The corresponding ratio for offenders 18 years of age or over was 820.5 per 100,000 population of the same age.

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SOURCE

This difference in the ratios for juvenile and adult offenders is of course not surprising, since juveniles lack the opportunity or the temptation to commit many of the crimes for which adults are imprisoned,

and it is furthermore the tendency to a considerable degree to send juvenile offenders to a penal or reformatory institution only after all other means of correction have failed (B 156).

[!]

20: RACE DECADENCE

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and it is furthermore the tendency to a considerable degree to send juvenile offenders to a penal or reformatory institution only after all other means of correction have failed.

20:11.2 Expert authorities are now agreed that heredity—feeble-mindedness—is the chief factor in the causation of all delinquencies. While many different causes enter into the production of juvenile delinquency, the more careful investigators are coming to the conclusion that hereditary inferiority is the basic explanation. Social and economic reforms all have their place in our general scheme of “uplift,” but eugenics is, after all, the true solution of the most of our so-called social problems of this sort.