

Chapter 21 — Feeble-Mindedness in Relation to Vice and Poverty

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 21, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) J. E. Wallis **Wallin**, *Problems of Subnormality* (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1917)
- (2) Paul **Popenoe** and Roswell Hill **Johnson**, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918)
- (3) 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)
- (4) Emma O. **Lundberg** and Katharine F. **Lenroot**, *Illegitimacy as a Child-Welfare Problem: Part I; Dependent, Defective, and Delinquent Classes Series No. 9, Bureau Publication No. 66* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920)
- (5) Charles Benedict **Davenport**, *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911)
- (6) **Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census**, *Paupers in Almshouses 1910* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915)
- (7) Marian K. **Clark**, “The Fourth Great Plague—Defectives,” in *Modern Medicine*, Vol. 1, No. 2, June, 1919 (pp. 143-149)

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.

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XXI: FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS IN RELATION TO VICE AND POVERTY

21:0.1 IN THE preceding chapters the relationship of feeble-mindedness was discussed in regard to delinquency in general, but more in particular with reference to crime and criminals. In this chapter we will consider mental defectiveness more as it is concerned in vice, inebriety, poverty, etc. Let us first consider that some of our delinquents are merely “backward;” not all our misfits are clearly feeble-minded.

THE BACKWARD INDIVIDUAL

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

[Note: Sadler covered backward children in Chap. 19.]

21:1.1 Not all persons who fail to pass certain arbitrary and prearranged mental tests are to be classed as feeble-minded—some of those individuals are merely backward or uneducated.

Wallin contends that many cases showing feeble-mindedness by the Binet-Simon tests, would on more careful and painstaking examination prove to be merely backward,

The following are the records of the half dozen whom I found time to test [and who failed all or part of the 1911 Simon-Binet test] (W 223).

and cites numerous actual cases in proof,

of which the following is a typical example:

SOURCE

[contd] Mr. A, 65 years old, faculties well preserved, attended school only about 3 years in the aggregate,

successively a farmer and business man, now partly retired on a competency of \$30,000 (after considerable financial reverses from a fire),

for ten years president of the board of education in a town of 700, superintendent or assistant superintendent of a Sunday School for about 30 years, bank director,

raised and educated a family of 9 children, all normal; one engaged in scientific research (Ph.D.),

one assistant professor in a state agricultural school, one assistant professor in a medical school (Sc.D.),

one a former music teacher and organist, a graduate of a musical conservatory, now deceased,

one a graduate of the normal department of a college, one a graduate nurse, two engaged in a large retail business, one holds a clerical position, all high-school graduates and all except one one-time students in colleges and universities (W 223).

[contd] Failed on all the new 1911 tests except six digits and suggestion lines (almost passed the central thought test) (W 223).

This man, measured by the automatic standards which have been commonly followed,

21: RACE DECADENCE

21:1.2 Mr. A., 65 years old, faculties well preserved, attended school only about three years in the aggregate,

successively a farmer and business man, now partly retired on a competency of \$30,000 (after considerable financial reverses from a fire),

for ten years president of the board of education in a town of 700, superintendent or assistant superintendent of a Sunday school for about thirty years, bank director,

raised and educated a family of nine children, all normal; one (Ph.D.) engaged in scientific research,

one assistant professor in a state agricultural school, one assistant professor in a medical school,

one (now deceased) a former music teacher and organist, graduate of a musical conservatory,

one a graduate of the normal department of a college, one a graduate nurse, two engaged in a large retail business, one holds a clerical position, all high-school graduates and all except one, one-time students in colleges and universities,

failed on all the new Binet tests except six digits and suggestion lines (almost passed the central thought test).

21:1.3 This man, measured by the automatic and arbitrary standards which are commonly followed,

SOURCE

would be hopelessly feeble-minded and should have been committed to an institution for the feeble-minded long ago as a “mental defective.”

But is there any one who has the temerity, in spite of the Binet “proof,” to maintain, in view of this man’s personal, social, and commercial record, and the record of his family,

that he has been a social and mental misfit, and an undesirable citizen, and should, therefore, have been restrained from propagation because of mental deficiency (his wife is still less intelligent)?

It is a safe guess that there are hundreds of thousands like him throughout the country, no more intelligent and equally successful and prudent in the management of their affairs.

Had he been a criminal when he was tested, those who implicitly follow these standards would have offered testimony under oath that he was feeble-minded and unable to distinguish between right and wrong, or unable to choose the right and avoid the wrong (W 224).

Most “middle-grade” morons should be classed as backward or borderline.¹

It is probable that there are X-year persons whom we are justified in classing as socially weak—or socio-pathic, to borrow Hickson’s term—rather than feeble-minded.

21: RACE DECADENCE

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But is there anyone who has the temerity, in spite of the Binet “proof” to maintain, in view of this man’s personal, social, and commercial record, and the record of his family,

that he has been a social and mental misfit, and an undesirable citizen, and should, therefore, have been restrained from propagation because of the mental deficiency? (His wife is still less intelligent.)

It is a safe guess that there are hundreds of thousands like him throughout the country, no more intellectual and no better educated, but equally successful and prudent in the management of their affairs.

Had he been a criminal when he was tested, those who implicitly follow these standards would have offered testimony under oath that he was feeble-minded and unable to distinguish between right and wrong, or unable to choose the right and avoid the wrong.

This case illustrates how easy such a mistake could be made.

21:1.4 **Most “middle-grade” morons should be classed as backward or borderline.**

It is probable that there are ten-year persons whom we are justified in classing as socially weak—or socio-pathic, to borrow Hickson’s term—rather than feeble-minded.

SOURCE

It should be emphasized that feeble-mindedness is only one cause of social weakness, incompetency, and irresponsibility (W 235).

1 Since the above was written I have found corroboration of these views in Healy's *Honesty* (1915).

The following passages express my own conclusions from a first-hand study of numerous disciplinary children:

"We must confess to a lack of sympathy with the highly colored statements and immaturely considered statistics that have been in the last few years placed before the public.

The realities of the situation are bad enough: there is no need of any propaganda by exaggerations" (p. 121) (W 248, fn).

The chief conclusions of this chapter may be summarized as follows:

1. It is not possible in a large number of cases of both children and adults to make accurate and adequate individual mental diagnoses,

or to make a mental classification of a group of individuals merely by following a rule-of-thumb procedure involving the use of the present scale of Binet-Simon tests and certain arbitrarily proposed absolute standards of retardation

or the arbitrary quotient formulas which have been proposed (W 271).

2. The function of tests in clinical psychology is the same as the function of tests in medicine.

21: RACE DECADENCE

It should be emphasized that feeble-mindedness is only one cause of social weakness, incompetency, and irresponsibility.

21:1.5 This view is also corroborated by Healy,

who says:

"We must confess to a lack of sympathy with the highly colored statements and immaturely considered statistics that have been in the last few years placed before the public.

The realities of the situation are bad enough; there is no need of any propaganda by exaggeration."

21:1.6 In distinguishing between mental defectiveness and backwardness,

Wallin insists that the following points must be kept in mind:

21:1.7 1. It is not possible in a large number of cases of both children and adults to make accurate and adequate individual mental diagnosis,

or to make a mental classification of a group of individuals merely by rule-of-thumb procedure involving the use of the present scale of Binet-Simon tests and certain arbitrarily proposed absolute standards of retardation.

21:1.8 2. The function of tests in clinical psychology is the same as the function of tests in medicine.

SOURCE

They are standardized tools by means of which the trained psychologist or trained physician may work more skillfully.

They enable him to observe under controlled, standardized, objective conditions, they render his results comparable with the observations of others, and make it possible for him to interpret his findings in terms of normal functioning when the norms are available.

Even the best tests in psychology, however, should be regarded merely as aids to assist the examining psychologist to a guarded diagnosis (W 272).

3. The standards which have been most frequently used in this country during the last six years yield entirely too high a percentage of feeble-mindedness.

There was a time when the estimates of the number of the feeble-minded in the general population, in the schools, courts, prisons, and reformatories, was too conservative.

But the pendulum has now swung to the opposite extreme.

Feeble-mindedness has become the Nemesis of our times.

We are now told that at least 3% of elementary-school children are feeble-minded, that at least half of the delinquents are feeble-minded, the figures given are sometimes nearer 100% than 50%,—

and that most of our social ills are due to feeble-mindedness.

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They are standardized tools by means of which the trained psychologist or trained physician may work more skilfully.

They enable him to observe under controlled, standardized, objective conditions; they render his results comparable with the observations of others, and make it possible for him to interpret his findings in terms of average normals.

Even the best tests in psychology, however, should be regarded merely as aids to assist in the examining psychologist to a guarded diagnosis.

21:1.9 3. The standards which have been most frequently used in this country during the last few years yield entirely too high a percentage of feeble-mindedness.

There was a time when the estimates of the number of feeble-minded in the general population, in the schools, courts, prisons, and reformatories, was too conservative.

But the pendulum has now swung to the opposite extreme.

Feeble-mindedness has become the Nemesis of our times.

We are now told that at least 3 per cent of our elementary-school children are feeble-minded, that at least half the delinquents are feeble-minded—the figures given are sometimes nearer 100 per cent than 50 per cent—

and that most of our social ills are due to feeble-mindedness.

SOURCE

We believe that feeble-mindedness is one cause, a very important cause, but still only one cause, of our social difficulties.

We believe that the number of feeble-minded children in the schools varies from less than one half of 1% to less than 1%, instead of 3% or more,

while the number of the feeble-minded in the courts, reformatories, assignation houses, and penal institutions varies from about 10% to 25%, instead of from 50% to 97% (W 275).

[contd] 4. The term “feeble-mindedness” should be more sharply delimited.

From the standpoint of intelligence the limiting line should be drawn at the point where the intelligence is so deficient (amentia) that an older adolescent or adult is just barely not able to make his living—

cannot maintain an independent existence at the simplest form of work afforded by the community.

This point will vary more or less with the community and with the individual, but the variation should not be unduly extended when the individual happens to be a delinquent.

There are other reasons for social irresponsibility than feeble-mindedness (W 275-26).

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There are other reasons for social irresponsibility than feeble-mindedness.

FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS AND PROSTITUTION

THE PROBLEM OF DIAGNOSIS (Wallin 110)

1 The New Hampshire Children's Commission reports that "any child has been considered feeble-minded who is three years or more retarded in intelligence.

Such retardation could be determined accurately for all institutional cases by the use of the Binet-Simon Measuring Scale."

"The Commission also wishes to emphasize strongly the fact that their figures, so far as they go, underestimate rather than overestimate the situation.

They have erred, if at all, on the side of conservatism."

Witness the following sweeping claims made within the last year: "In a study of harlots numbering 424—80 per cent plus were found to be distinctly imbecile, their mental age never exceeding twelve years."

"Of some studies made in juvenile courts, numbering 1487 cases—61 per cent were found imbecile beyond a peradventure, their mental age averaging from 7% to 11" (W 112).

21:2.1 The New Hampshire Children's Commission reports that "any child has been considered feeble-minded who is three years or more retarded in intelligence.

Such retardation could be determined accurately for all institutional cases by the use of the Binet-Simon measuring scale."

The commission also wishes to emphasize strongly the fact that its figures, so far as they go, underestimate rather than overestimate the situation.

They have erred, if at all, on the side of conservatism.

"In a study of 424 harlots 80 per cent were found to be distinctly defective, their mental age seldom exceeding 12 years.

Of some studies made in juvenile courts, numbering 1,487 cases—61 per cent were found feeble-minded, their mental age averaging from 72 to 11 years."

21:2.2 There is no reliable way of determining what per cent of prostitutes of either the public or clandestine sort are mentally defective; for it is a well-known fact that such individuals are sometimes morally defective without showing the least trace of being feeble-minded.

Twenty-five years of observation and study of unfortunate women have convinced Dr. Lena K. Sadler that about 60 per cent of prostitutes are mentally deficient; about 25 per cent are normal mentally as regards intelligence, but have decided moral defects, while about 15 per cent of these women are fairly normal women both mentally and morally as regards their intellectual equipment, but who for sundry reasons choose to live an immoral life. Very few of this latter class permanently follow prostitution—it is in many of these cases only a temporary thing.

21:2.3 Again it is the author's belief, that it is the mental defect—feeble-mindedness—that is hereditary and not the tendency (directly) towards prostitution or sexual immorality. The daughter of a prostitute does not inherit her mother's tendency—directly—to prostitution, only her mother's mental defect, and thus finds herself led into an evil life for exactly the same reason that the feeble-minded mother so quickly took the path of least resistance in the social struggles and the moral battle of life.

IX: THE DYSGENIC CLASSES (Popenoe&Johnson 176)

Thus there is reason to believe that from a third to two-thirds of the prostitutes in American cities are feeble-minded.¹ [1 Goddard, H. H., *Feeble-Mindedness*, pp. 14-16.]

They should be committed to institutions for the feeble-minded and kept there (P&J 180).

21:2.4 **Thus there is reason to believe that from a third to two-thirds of the prostitutes of American cities are feeble-minded.**

They should be committed to institutions for the feeble-minded and kept there.

V: WORKING METHODS (Healy 33)

§49. Medical Methods. (Healy 65)

Physical examination of wayward girls and women should be undertaken by a skillful woman physician.

Gynecological anomalies and ailments are frequent conditions of grave causative importance, and should be carefully studied and remedied.

In those places where a competent woman physician is not available, the work may be done, as in private practice, with a nurse always present (H 65-66).

[contd] Diseases and other defective conditions of the genito-urinary system, and syphilis being present in proportionately such a large number of offenders, and leading by local irritation and by deteriorative conditions almost directly to the production of further misconduct,

call for much attention and treatment (H 66).

[contd] *Examination of girls* for virginity as a basis for their moral classification is,

from our observations in many cases,

to be greatly deprecated and I have especially urged parents against it (H 66).

We have spoken of the boy truant, the beginning of whose downfall seems traceable to eyestrain.

But what of the girl truant?

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call for much attention and treatment.

21:2.7 Examination of girls for virginity as a basis for their moral classification is,

Healy thinks,

to be greatly deprecated.

21:2.8 We have spoken of the boy truant, the beginning of whose downfall seems traceable to eyestrain.

But what of the girl truant?

SOURCE

Alas, for her, the streets hold even more temptation and even greater degradation.

Investigation of the history of the inmates of the homes for fallen women reveals a vast amount of eyestrain and other abnormal physical conditions (H 66).

EXTENT OF PROBLEM.
(Lundberg&Lenroot 10)

Estimated number of illegitimate births.
(Lundberg&Lenroot 18)

[contd] Although the available statistics are meager, an attempt was made to approximate roughly the total number of illegitimate births in the United States each year.

It was impracticable to arrive at such an estimate by the method based on the total number of live births in the United States, since incomplete birth registration makes it impossible to obtain, for the country as a whole, statistics having any degree of accuracy.

Hence, the estimate was based on the number of single, widowed, and divorced women of child-bearing age.

In the United States in 1915 the estimated number of single, widowed, and divorced white women 15 to 44 years of age was 8,769,000.1

21: RACE DECADENCE

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21:2.9 Investigation of the history of the inmates of the homes for fallen women reveals a vast amount of eyestrain and other abnormal physical conditions.

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS

21:3.1' Although the available statistics are meager, an attempt was made by the Census Bureau to approximate roughly the total number of illegitimate births in the United States each year.

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SOURCE

1 The number of single, widowed, and divorced white women 15 to 44 years of age on July 1, 1915, was estimated by projecting the annual increase in this group between 1900 and 1910, using the arithmetical method. Strictly speaking, the figures for "white women" refer to women of all races other than Negro. The figure 8,769,000 includes approximately 0.2 per cent of Indians, Chinese, and Japanese.

In the 16 States for which figures of illegitimate births were obtained the rate per 1,000 single, widowed, and divorced white women of childbearing age may be estimated as at least 3.7.2

2 The rate per 1,000 white and Negro women in the group specified, exclusive of the Negro women in two States, was found to be 4.3. (See Table V, p. 21.)

The rate per 1,000 white women in this group can be found by assuming, in the absence, for most of the States, of illegitimate births classified by color, that the ratio between the white and Negro illegitimate birth rates was the same as that in the area of good birth registration, Maryland and Philadelphia combined, where illegitimate births are classified by color.

(Maryland was not in the birth registration area in 1915 but was admitted in 1916.) Applying this ratio to the respective white and Negro populations in the group specified results in the figure of 3.7 for the white unmarried female population of childbearing age.

Applying this ratio to the estimated population given above gives 32,400 as an estimated number of illegitimate white births in the United States each year.

It must, of course, be remembered that this figure is an estimate based on only a part of the country; it is improbable, however, that the true figure is below it.

Indeed it may safely be considered as a minimum estimate because of incompleteness of birth registration and erroneous registration of illegitimate as legitimate births (L&L 26).

21: RACE DECADENCE

1 The number of single, widowed, and divorced white women 15 to 44 years of age on July 1, 1915, was estimated by projecting the annual increase in this group between 1900 and 1910, using the arithmetical method. Strictly speaking, the figures for "white women" refer to women of all races other than Negro. The figure 8,769,000 includes approximately 0.2 per cent of Indians, Chinese, and Japanese.

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SOURCE

[contd] Because of the recognized inadequacy of birth registration in a considerable part of the United States, another estimate was made based on data from States included in the birth registration area in 1915.

By the method described above the rate for white unmarried women of childbearing age in these States may be estimated as 4.¹

¹The rate per 1,000 white and Negro women in the group specified was 4.6; the correction has been made on the same basis as described in note 2, p. 26.

This rate, applied to the number of single, widowed, and divorced white women of childbearing age in the United States, gives a total of 35,100 illegitimate white births.

It must be borne in mind that States in the birth registration area have a disproportionate urban population among which the illegitimate birth rate is high.

Nevertheless, this figure may be regarded as an understatement because of errors and omissions of registration of illegitimate births even in States included in the birth-registration area.

2

² A careful study of records of social agencies in Boston added one-eighth to the number of illegitimate births registered as such in the city.

Similar estimates for Negroes would be subject to a much greater percentage of error than are estimates for whites, first, because of inadequate registration in areas where the Negro population is largest, and secondly, because of special conditions affecting Negroes.

21: RACE DECADENCE

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This rate applied to the number of single, widowed, and divorced white women of childbearing age in the United States, gives a total of 35,100 illegitimate white births.

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SOURCE

Such an estimate, if made, should of course be accompanied by a full discussion of the history of the problem and of the difficulties involved in setting up new standards of family morality in place of those existing under slavery conditions (L&L 27).

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FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS AND POVERTY

21:4.1 There is a direct connection between hereditary feeble-mindedness and such social problems as poverty, drunkenness, drug addiction, and other phases of delinquency and ne'er-do-well-ism. (See Fig. 17.)

21:4.2 Poverty cannot be banished from our present-day civilization as long as feeble-mindedness is slowly increasing among the general population. These mental defectives cannot compete with their more normal and energetic fellows in the struggle for existence. The higher grade of defectives turn criminal or immoral and the lower grades gravitate to the poorfarm or other institutions for the feeble-minded.

21:4.3 Drunkenness and drug addiction result from many and varied influences—both physical and mental—but as a class, the victims of narcotism are neurotic, and constitutionally inferior, if not out-and-out feeble-minded. While this is not true of all, it is true of the vast majority of these habitues of alcohol and dope. Some unfortunates are nervous as a result of the use of alcohol and narcotics; but the greater number fall victims to use of the drug because they are inherently neurotic—because they are mentally inferior and defective—because they come into this world blasted—feeble-minded.

SOURCE

IX: THE DYSGENIC CLASSES (Popenoe&Johnson 176)

[contd from 21:2.4, above] **It is certain that many of the pauper class, which fills up almshouses, are similarly deficient.**

Indeed, the census of 1910 discovered that of the 84,198 paupers in institutions on the first of January in that year, 13,238 were feeble-minded, 3,518 insane, 2,202 epileptic, 918 deaf-mute, 3,375 blind, 13,753 crippled, maimed or deformed.

A total of 63.7% of the whole had some serious physical or mental defect.

Obviously, most of these would be taken care of under some other heading, in the program of restrictive eugenics.

While paupers should be prohibited from reproduction as long as they are in state custody,

careful discrimination is necessary in the treatment of those whose condition is due more to environment than heredity (P&J 180-81).

III: THE INHERITANCE OF FAMILY TRAITS (Davenport 27)

21. PAUPERISM (Davenport 80)

[contd] **Pauperism is a result of a complex of causes.**

21: RACE DECADENCE

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Obviously, most of these would be taken care of under some other heading, in the program of restrictive eugenics.

While paupers should be prohibited from reproduction as long as they are in state custody,

careful and just discrimination is necessary in the treatment of those whose condition is due more to environment than heredity.

21:4.5 **Pauperism is a result of a complex of causes.**

SOURCE

On one side it is mainly environmental in origin as, for instance, in the case when a sudden accident, like death of the father, leaves a widow and family of children without means of livelihood, or a prolonged disease of the wage earner exhausts savings (D 80).

In the larger pedigrees of the Jukes and Zero families more definite data as to inheritance of some of the elements of poverty can be gained.

Let us take “shiftlessness” as an important element in poverty.

Then classifying all persons in these two families as very shiftless, somewhat shiftless, and industrious the following conclusions are reached.

When both parents are *very* shiftless practically all children are “very shiftless” or “somewhat shiftless.”

Out of 62 offspring, 3 are given as “industrious” or about 5 per cent (Fig. 48).

When both parents are shiftless in some degree about 15 per cent of the known offspring are recorded as industrious.

When one parent is more or less shiftless while the other is industrious only about 10 per cent of the children are “very shiftless.”

It is probable that both shiftlessness and lack of physical energy are due to the absence of something which can be got back into the offspring only by mating with industry (D 80, 82).

21: RACE DECADENCE

On one side it is mainly environmental in origin as, for instance, in the case when a sudden accident, like death of the father, leaves a widow and family of children without means of livelihood, or a prolonged disease of the wage-earner exhausts savings.

21:4.6 In the larger pedigrees of the Jukes and Zero families more definite data as to inheritance of some of the elements of poverty can be gained.

Let us take “shiftlessness” as an important element in poverty.

Then classifying all persons in these two families as very shiftless, somewhat shiftless, and industrious, the following conclusions are reached.

When both parents are very shiftless practically all children are “very shiftless” or “somewhat shiftless.”

Out of 62 offspring, 3 are given as “industrious” or about 5 per cent.

When both parents are shiftless in some degree about 15 per cent of the known offspring are recorded as industrious.

When one parent is more or less shiftless while the other is industrious only about 10 per cent of the children are “very shiftless.”

It is probable that both shiftlessness and lack of physical energy are due to the absence of something which can be got back into the offspring only by mating with superior stock.

SOURCE

PAUPERS IN ALMSHOUSES 1910 (DoC Census Bureau)

[See Table 2 (DoCCB 82-83)]

Table 2.—Paupers enumerated in almshouses on January 1, 1910, classified by race, nativity, parentage, and sex, by divisions and state (DoCCB 82-83)

[See Table 44 (DoCCB 133)]

Table 44.—Female paupers enumerated in almshouses on January 1, 1910, or admitted during 1910, who are reported to have borne children, classified by number of children borne, and by race, nativity, and age of mother, for the United States as a whole (DoCCB 133).

21: RACE DECADENCE

The fundamental cause of pauperism is to be found in hereditary tendencies.

21:4.7 The last census of paupers in the United States—those residing in almshouses gave the total of this class as 84,198.

There are undoubtedly considerably over 100,000 of this class in this country.

The distribution of paupers as regards age, nativity, etc., is shown by Table No. 11, Appendix A.

CHILDREN BORN OF PAUPER MOTHERS

21:5.1 It is astounding to contemplate the number of children which are annually born of feeble-minded and pauper parents in this country.

In proof of this please note that in 1910 the report of the Census Bureau indicated that the female paupers in the almshouses of the United States are shown to have borne 18,448 children.

For details see Appendix A, Table No. 12.

SOURCE

[[Table 43] indicates that 436 illegitimate babies were born in this country in 1910. The total births were 1,107.]

Table 43.—Babies born in almshouses in 1910, classified according to whether father was in the institution or not, and as legitimate or illegitimate, by divisions (DoCCB 132)

21: RACE DECADENCE

21:5.2 It should be further noted, in this connection, that

the census reports show that in one year 1,107 **illegitimate** babies were born to mothers confined in the various almshouses of this country.

For details see Table No. 13, Appendix A.

INEBRIETY

IX: THE DYSGENIC CLASSES (Popenoe&Johnson 176)

In a consideration of the chronic inebriate, the problem of environmental influences is again met in an acute form, aggravated by the venom of controversy engendered by bigotry and self-interest.

That many chronic inebriates owe their condition almost wholly to heredity, and are likely to leave offspring of the same character, is indisputable.

As to the possibility of “reforming” such an individual, there may be room for a difference of opinion; as to the possibility of reforming his germ-plasm, there can be none.

Society owes them the best possible care, and part of its care should certainly be to see that they do not reproduce their kind.

21:6.1 Regarding chronic inebriety and its relation to heredity, **Johnson** says:

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SOURCE

As to the borderland cases and in the matter of inebriety borderland is perhaps bigger than mainland—it is doubtful whether much direct action can be taken in the present state of scientific knowledge and of public sentiment.

Education of public opinion to avoid marriage with drunkards will probably be the most effective means of procedure (P&J 181).

21: RACE DECADENCE

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Education of public opinion to avoid marriage with drunkards will probably be the most effective means of procedure.

21:6.3 There is little doubt but that some individuals stupefy themselves with narcotics and thus appear to a mental disadvantage—they seem to grow more feeble-minded as a result of drink; while still others drink so inordinately merely because they are inherently weak-minded—they lack the power to resist the charm of drink and other narcotics.

DEFECTIVES AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

“THE FOURTH GREAT PLAGUE—DEFECTIVES” (Clark 143)

Defectives and Industrial Accidents

[contd] In the 60,000 factories of New York 2,000,000 workers are employed, of whom approximately 1,600,000 are foreign born (C 148).

[contd] During the year 1915, the first year in which the Workmen’s Compensation Law became effective in the State of New York, there were 225,391 reported accidents;

in 1916 there were 273,385; in 1917, 313,406; and in 1918, 286,871,

21:7.1 In the 60,000 factories of New York 2,000,000 workers are employed, of whom approximately 1,600,000 are foreign born.

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in 1916 there were 273,385; in 1917, 313,406; and in 1918, 286,771,

SOURCE

costing \$11,500,000, or \$40,000 a day, and representing an average of 274,763 each year—

practically as great a number per year in that one state as the entire National Army casualties since we entered the war

of which the latest figures announced by the War Department, including prisoners released and returned, amount to 289,416 (C 148).

With the productive capacity of a nation reduced, and its dependent and defective classes multiplying in such alarming proportions the tax upon its resources becomes inequitable.

In Pennsylvania, the state receiving the second largest quota of immigration, accident casualties are not only voluminous but of the direst nature.

During the past year the New York State Industrial Commission has investigated cases involving actions in which the total amount sued for was approximately \$1,500,000.

Settlements were obtained amounting to only about \$25,000, in many cases leaving behind derelicts as helpless as any of the survivors of war (C 148).

[contd] Five years ago, the coming and going, the hiring and firing, of the alien worker was little regarded; Ellis Island could produce many more where he came from.

Five years ago the economic aspect of uncompensated accident casualties was considered of small importance (C 148).

21: RACE DECADENCE

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21.7.4 Five years ago the coming and going, the hiring and firing, of the alien worker was little regarded; Ellis Island could produce many more where he came from.

Five years ago the economic aspect of uncompensated accident casualties was considered of small importance.

SOURCE

21: RACE DECADENCE

There is no way of definitely knowing what percentage of our industrial accidents are due to mental defectiveness on the part of the workers; but there is little or no doubt that a very considerable number of such mishaps are due to stupidity and dullness, which is akin to feeble-mindedness or mental backwardness of some degree. Feeble-mindedness goes a long way towards explaining much of the inefficiency of the nation.

GETTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE

21.8.1 Is poverty a cause of crime? Are crime and immorality more largely due to inherent tendency or to the surroundings?

VIII: EUGENICS AND EUTHENICS (Davenport 261)

5. THE SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF EUGENICS (Davenport 261)

Even when there is some relation between the alleged cause and the result

one feels that all these explanations are based on the logical error: *post hoc ergo propter hoc*:

and that the cart is often put before the mule.

The very multiplicity of explanations shows their inadequacy.

There is a more fundamental explanation for these non-social traits than any of those that are usually ascribed (D 261-62).

Wherever there is some relation between the alleged cause and the result,

one feels that these explanations are based on the logical error,

and that the cart is often put before the horse.

The very multiplicity of explanations shows their inadequacy.

There is a more fundamental explanation for these non-social traits than any of those that are usually ascribed.

SOURCE

21: RACE DECADENCE

21:8.2 One author sums up the “values” and “relationships” of this problem in the following statement:

[contd] First of all we can see clearly that the traits that cause so much trouble are “unfortunate” or “bad” only in relation to our society, i. e., relatively, not absolutely.

21:8.3 First of all we can see clearly that the traits that cause so much trouble are “unfortunate” or “bad” only in relation to our society, i. e., relatively, not absolutely.

Lack of speech, inability to care for the person or to respond in the conventional fashion to the calls of nature, failure to learn the art of dressing and undressing, inability to count, entire lack of ambition beyond getting a meal, abject slothfulness, love of sitting by the hour picking at a piece of cloth—

Lack of speech, inability to care for the person or to respond in the conventional fashion to the calls of nature, failure to learn the art of dressing and undressing, inability to count, entire lack of ambition beyond getting a meal, abject slothfulness, love of sitting by the hour picking at a piece of cloth,

these are unfortunate traits for a twentieth-century citizen but they constitute a first-rate mental equipment for our remote ape-like ancestors, nor do we pity infants, who invariably have them.

these are unfortunate mental traits for a twentieth-century citizen but they constitute a first-rate mental equipment for our remote apelike ancestors, nor do we pity infants who invariably have them.

So likewise with crimes:—the acts of taking and keeping loose articles, of tearing away obstructions to get at something desired, of picking valuables out of holes and pockets, of assaulting a neighbor who has something desirable or who has caused pain or who is in the way, of deserting family and other relatives, of promiscuous sexual relations—

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these are crimes for a twentieth-century citizen but they are the normal acts of our remote, ape-like ancestors and (excepting the last) they are so common with infants that we laugh when they do such things.

these are crimes for a twentieth-century citizen, but they were the normal acts and customs of our remote ancestors, and excepting the last, they are so common with infants that we laugh when they do such things.

In a word the traits of the feeble-minded and the criminalistic are normal traits for infants and for an earlier stage in man’s evolution.

In a word the traits of the feeble-minded and the criminalistic individual are alike normal traits for infants of today and adults in the earlier stages of man’s evolution.

SOURCE

There is an aphorism that biologists use which is apt here—ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.

This means that the individual (ontos) in its development passes through stages like those the race (phylum) has traversed in its evolution.

The infant represents the ape-like stage (D 262).

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There is an aphorism that biologists use which is apt here: “Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny,”

which means that the individual in its development passes through the stages like those the race has traversed in its evolution.

The infant represents the apelike stage.

THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

21:9.1 What are we going to do about it? What shall we do with the criminals and delinquent classes? First we must by painstaking effort and scientific methods separate these unfortunates into two classes—those who have gone wrong because of hereditary defects—and those who have stumbled because of backwardness or unfavorable environment.

21:9.2 Regarding the first class—those with defective mentality of hereditary origin—there is but one thing to recommend: that is, to substitute some sort of régime which will effectually prevent reproduction—either segregation or sterilization.

21:9.3 Regarding the second class—the doubtful cases and those unfortunates who are not altogether defective—there are a number of things which may prove of benefit:

SOURCE

21: RACE DECADENCE

X: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS—
TREATMENT (Healy 166)

§135. **Treatment of Environment.**
(Healy 176)

[Such statements as, “Crime is a disease,” appear
dubiously cheap in the light of our experience (H
4).]

§124. **Punishment is Necessary.**— ...

**It certainly is the sincere opinion of
many offenders that if punishment
were more swiftly and surely carried
out, its deterrent effect would be
commensurably greater** (H 167).

§125. **Defective Self-Control No
Excuse for Legal Freedom.**—Any idea that
the state ought to lessen its hold upon
offenders because of the fact of their
diminished or partial moral responsibility
cannot be **logically** substantiated by our
findings (H 167).

21:9.4 1. **Environment.**—

Remove every physical handicap;
improve the health; give such medical and
surgical attention as may be indicated.
This must not be taken to mean that the
author subscribes to such foolish current
teaching as is embodied in the popular
statement that

“crime is a disease.”

21:9.5 2. **Punishment.**—

Inflict proper punishment; set in
operation effective correction. While
punishment may not be of much value to
the more defective classes; it is of real
assistance if wisely applied to this group
of offenders.

**It certainly is the sincere opinion of
many offenders that if punishment
were more swiftly and more surely
carried out, its deterrent effect would
be commensurably greater.**

21:9.6 3. **Detention.**—Irresponsible
individuals should not be permitted to
roam at will about the country to prey
upon society as the whim may possess
them from time to time.

There is no **logic**

SOURCE

To put a concrete case: the authorities who freed the epileptic inmate of a reformatory because he was epileptic (Case 78), acted most unwarrantably (H 167).

§127. **Mental Life and Moral Dangers During Custody.**— ... After learning some of the genetics of criminalistic tendencies,

sanitation and physical features of the building where offenders are detained appear quite secondary in importance to the moral possibilities of the place (H 168).

Fortunately the equipment that maintains physical health conserves to a certain extent the moral well-being of prisoners, although they are by no means identical (H 168-69).

It is no lack of wisdom that leads the shrewd policeman to say to the young offender, “You’d better keep out of jail, because if you ‘re not a crook when you go in, you will be when you come out.”

21: RACE DECADENCE

in turning loose an epileptic upon the public just because he is in a reformatory

and the authorities happen to decide that he was not “responsible for his crime.”

21:9.7 4. *Prison reform.*—Let us clean up and reorganize our penal institutions. Why should a sojourn in some reformatory establishment be commonly looked upon as the surest way to make a confirmed criminal out of some young offender?

21:9.8 After learning some of the genetics of criminalistic tendencies,

even sanitation and the physical features of the building where offenders are detained appear quite secondary in importance to the moral possibilities of the place.

Fortunately the equipment that maintains physical health conserves to a certain extent the moral well-being of the prisoner.

21:9.9 **It is no lack of wisdom that leads the shrewd policeman to say to the young offender: “You’d better keep out of jail, because if you’re not a crook when you go in, you will be when you come out.”**

SOURCE

What a very strange anomaly it is, that society should take the person from whom it desires better actions, and place him under conditions which offer every chance for the creation of worse tendencies (H 169).

[Note: Compare §134. Treatment of Mental Causes. (Healy 175)]

Religious workers ... would be able to build up better constructive measures if they understood various fundamental needs (H 175-76).

§137. Good Treatment Can Only Come Through Understanding and Following Up.— ... Offenders can never be treated properly unless their problems are understood.

21: RACE DECADENCE

What a very strange anomaly it is, that society should take the person from whom it desires better actions, and place him under conditions which offer every chance for the creation of worse tendencies.

21:9.10 5. *Mental and manual training*.—Schooling for the mind and training for the hand—especially the latter—are the prime requisites for uplifting the more hopeful class of delinquents. Maybe something can be done to atone for some of the defects in our educational and social systems as regards these weaker members of our commonwealth.

21:9.11 6. *Play and religion*. We must teach these individuals how to have a “good time” without having to become “antisocial” in so doing. They must be introduced to wholesome methods of recreation. Play is the sovereign remedy for the “curable” class of delinquents.

21:9.12 Religion also has its place in individual cases. There can be no doubt that it helps to strengthen the will of some, while it supplies the basis for a “changed state of mind” and attitude on the part of others.

Many zealous Christian workers would do more to uplift the fallen if they had a little training in biology on the one hand and some understanding of psychology on the other.

21:9.13 Offenders can never be treated properly unless their problems are understood.

SOURCE

No machinery of court or institution, however well organized, can ever take the place of deep humanistic understanding.

The girl put it well who blurted out to a certain judge, "You and your officers are here to do your duty, and I suppose you are going to send me away, but before I go I want to tell you one thing; you don't at all understand me" (H 179).

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SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

1. We are forced to recognize that many a substantial and prosperous citizen might so fail in passing certain set, arbitrary mental tests as to fall under the class of the feeble-minded.

2. Most "middle-grade" morons, like other borderline cases, are easily confused with the "backward" group. This group is also known by the name of "sociopaths."

3. In studying mental subnormality, we should recognize that the rôle of laboratory tests is similar to the technical tests in medicine—they are a help towards diagnosis—not the basis thereof.

4. Wallin thinks the estimates of 3 per cent mental defectiveness in American school children too high. He thinks that our standards and tests are not satisfactory.

5. This author thinks we have less than 1 per cent mental defectives in the schools; and that only 10 to 25 per cent of delinquents are defective—instead of 50 per cent or more.

6. On the other hand the New Hampshire Children's Commission reports that in examining 424 harlots, that 80 per cent were found distinctly defective.

7. Of 1,487 cases of previous delinquency studied in courts, 61 per cent were found feeble-minded, age tests averaging from 72 to 11 years.

8. Dr. Lena K. Sadler estimates prostitutes as 60 per cent feeble-minded, 25 per cent normal, except for moral defects, and 15 per cent average normal.

9. The daughter of a prostitute does not directly inherit her mother's tendency to immorality, but simply inherits the mother's feeble-minded mentality—which always chooses the path of least resistance.

10. All sexual delinquents should be subjected to a thorough-going physical and medical examination in addition to the standard mental tests.

11. The Census Bureau estimates that we have over 35,000 illegitimate white babies born in the United States each year.

12. There appears to be a direct connection between inherited feeble-mindedness and such social problems as poverty, drunkenness, drug habits, and general ne'er-do-well-ism.

13. In times of stress the higher grades of defectives turn criminal, the middle grades gravitate to the poorfarm, and the lower grades to the feeble-minded asylum.

14. Twenty-five per cent of the paupers of this country are recognized to be out-and-out feeble-minded or insane, while 63.7 per cent have some mental or physical defect.

15. "Shiftlessness" is a hereditary trait of character and has been most carefully worked out in such families as the Jukes and Zeros.

16. There are about 100,000 paupers confined in the almshouses of this country, not to mention those subsisting on charity outside the poorhouse.

SOURCE

21: RACE DECADENCE

17. During a recent year, female paupers in almshouses of the United States gave birth to 18,448 children.

18. During a single year 1,107 illegitimate babies were born to defective mothers confined in the various almshouses of this country.

19. While alcoholism may stupefy the mind, the majority of inebriety grows out of inherent weak-mindedness these unfortunates lack the power to resist the charm of drink.

20. The increasing prevalence of feeble-mindedness is undoubtedly associated with the increasing number of industrial accidents.

21. The inherently feeble-minded commits acts, which his fellows classify as crimes; but which were entirely normal on the part of his remote ancestors.

22. In dealing with all classes of delinquents, we must recognize two classes—those who are inherently defective, and those who have stumbled because of unfavorable environment.

23. Our treatment of the hereditary delinquent must provide for continuous supervision and attention.

24. Our treatment of the environmental delinquent must provide for: the removal of physical handicaps and proper punishment during detention in an uplifting atmosphere.

25. Both manual and mental training would be helpful to the non-hereditary delinquent, not to mention the good effects of plain religion.