

## Chapter 23 — The “Aristocracy of the Unfit”

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.

© 2025 Matthew Block

### Sources for Chapter 23, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) J. H. Kellogg, M.D., “The Eugenics Registry,” in *Official Proceedings of the Second National Conference on Race Betterment, August 5, 6, 7 and 8, 1915* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Race Betterment Foundation, 1915)

*Note:* This source is coded **Kellogg1.**

- (2) Dr. J. H. Kellogg, “Needed—A New Human Race,” in *Proceedings of the First National Conference in Race Betterment, January 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1914* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Gage Printing Company, Ltd., 1914)

*Note:* This source is coded **Kellogg2.**

- (3) Paul **Popenoe** and Roswell Hill **Johnson**, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918)
- (4) Horatio M. **Pollock**, Ph.D. and Edith M. **Furbush**, A.B., B.S., *Insane, Feeble-minded, Epileptics and Inebriates in the United States, January 1, 1917* (New York City: The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Inc., 1919)
- (5) Marian K. **Clark**, “The Fourth Great Plague—Defectives,” in *Modern Medicine*, Vol. 1, No. 2, June, 1919 (pp. 143-149)
- (6) Professor Irving **Fisher**, *Bulletin 30 of the Committee of One Hundred on National Health, being a Report on National Vitality, Its Wastes and Conservation* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909)
- (7) William E. **Kellicott**, *The Social Direction of Human Evolution: An Outline of the Science of Eugenics* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1911)

- (8) “Thorne Gives Figures to Show Illinois Needs in Care of the Mentally Defective,”  
(*Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 5, 1919)

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

Work-in-progress Version 26 Dec. 2025  
© 2025 Matthew Block

## XXIII: THE “ARISTOCRACY OF THE UNFIT”

“THE EUGENICS REGISTRY”  
(Kellogg 76)

We are supporting an idle population of defectives amounting to more than one per cent of the total population, at an expense to the state and nation of more than one hundred million dollars a year.

The names of these insane, idiots, criminals and paupers are registered in state hospitals, asylums, alms houses and prisons, together with something of their pedigrees.

And with this evidence of unfitness clearly before us, we permit these defectives to breed more and worse lunatics, idiots, criminals and paupers (K 76).

Rubner in an address before an international congress recently said that the human is deteriorating

and that a given number of people, five or ten thousand, would be found to weigh less in the aggregate at the present time than the same number of people a generation ago (K1 78).

Sir Ray Lancaster recently said

“civilized mankind seems to be in a condition of almost complete cessation of selection.”

23:0.1 WE ARE supporting an idle population of defectives amounting to more than 1 per cent of the total population, at an expense to the state and nation of more than \$100,000,000 a year.

The names of these insane, idiots, criminals, and paupers are registered in state hospitals, asylums, almshouses, and prisons, together with something of their pedigrees.

And with this evidence of unfitness clearly before us, we permit many of these defectives to breed more and worse lunatics, idiots, criminals, and paupers.

23:0.2 Rubner in an address before an international congress recently said that, “the human is deteriorating

and that a given number of people, five or ten thousand, would be found to weigh less in the aggregate at the present time than the same number of people a generation ago.”

23:0.3 Sir Ray Lancaster states:

23:0.4 Civilized mankind appears to be very nearly completely in a condition of “cessation of selection.”

## SOURCE

And it is the better provided, well-fed, well-clothed, protected classes of the community in which the cessation of selection is most complete (K1 78).

“NEEDED—A NEW HUMAN RACE”  
(Kellogg2 431)

Sir Ray Lankester, in the *London Telegraph*, states:

“ ... [Note: The first two sentences above, followed by:] Racial degeneration is, therefore, to be looked for in those classes quite as much as in the half-starved, ill-clad struggling poor, if, indeed, it should be expected to be more strongly marked in them.

These are facts which tend to show that such anticipations are well founded...”  
(K2 437).

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

It is the better-provided and well-fed, well-clothed, protected classes of the community in which the cessation of selection is most complete.

Racial degeneration is, therefore, to be looked for in those classes quite as much as in the half-starved, ill-clad struggling poor, if, indeed, it should be expected to be more strongly marked in them.

These are facts which tend to show that such anticipations are well founded.

## THE DECADENT CLASSES

23:1.1 Perhaps it will be as well to take a bird's-eye view of the whole field of human decadency. Let us always bear in mind that it is the defective individual that is dangerous to society, and not a so-called class of defectives. We are not justified in cutting off the future line of some member of society just because he happens to belong to some class or group which may for the time being be under social stigmatism.

23:1.2 On the other hand it would not be fair to future generations if we should permit a manifestly defective individual to reproduce just because, in some manner he receives the social sanction of belonging to a supposedly immune group of society.

## SOURCE

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

Bearing in mind these facts, we believe that energetic means should be employed to prevent the future reproduction of the grossly defective—such as the feeble-minded, insane, epileptic, and the unmistakably inherent delinquents and degenerates.

## INSTITUTIONAL DEFECTIVES

### VII: ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE EUGENICS MOVEMENT (Popenoe&Johnson 147)

Considering only

the “institutional population” of the United States,

one gets the following figures:

BLIND: total, 64,763 according to census of 1900.

Of these, 35,645 were totally blind and 29,118 partly blind.

The affection is stated to have been congenital in 4,730 cases.

Nineteen per cent of the blind were found to have blind relatives; 4.5% of them were returned as the offspring of cousin marriages (P&J 156-57).

[contd] DEAF: total, 86,515, according to the census of 1900.

23:2.1 Stop for a moment and consider the

vast host of the “aristocracy of the unfit,”

comfortably housed in the various classes of public institutions in the United States.

In round numbers we have the following:

23:2.2 *Blind*—total, 100,000 approximately.

Of these, about 50,000 are totally blind, and 50,000 partly blind.

The affection is stated to have been congenital in 4,730 cases.

Of the blind 19 per cent were found to have blind relatives; 4.5 per cent were returned as the offspring of cousin marriages.

23:2.3 *Deaf*—total, about 100,000 including deaf and dumb.

## SOURCE

More than 50,000 of them were deaf from childhood (under 20), 12,609 being deaf from birth.

At least 4.5% of the deaf were stated to be offspring of cousin marriages, and 32.1% to have deaf relatives.

The significance of this can not be determined unless it is known how many normal persons have deaf relatives (or blind relatives, in considering the preceding paragraph),

but it points to the existence of families that are characterized by deafness (or blindness) (P&J 157).

[contd] INSANE: the census of 1910 enumerated only the insane who were in institutions; they numbered 187,791.

[The census [carried out by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene] shows that there were 234,055 insane patients under treatment in institutions in the United States on January 1, 1917.

Of these, 225,824 were in public institutions and 8,231 in private hospitals (Pollock&Furbush 2).]

The number outside of institutions is doubtless considerable but can not be computed.

The institutional population is not a permanent, but mainly a transient one, the number of persons discharged from institutions in 1910 being 29,304 (P&J 157).

From this one can get some idea of the amount of neurotic weakness in the population of the United States, much of it congenital and heritable in character (P&J 157).

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

More than 50,000 of them were deaf from childhood (under 20), 12,609 being deaf from birth.

At least 4.5 per cent of the deaf were stated to be offspring of cousin marriages, and 32.1 per cent to have deaf relatives.

“The significance of this cannot be determined unless it is known how many normal persons have deaf relatives (or blind relatives, in considering the preceding paragraph),

but it points to the existence of families that are characterized by deafness (or blindness).”

23:2.4 *Insane*.—The **last** census enumerated only the insane who were in public institutions; they numbered about 190,000.

The recent census of the National Commission on Mental Hygiene showed 234,055 insane patients in all institutions—

public and private.

The number outside of institutions is considerable but cannot be accurately estimated.

23:2.5 The institutional population is not a permanent, but mainly a transient one, the number of persons discharged from institutions in one year being about 30,000.

From this one can get some idea of the amount of neurotic weakness in the population of the United States—much of it congenital and heritable in character.

## SOURCE

[contd] FEEBLE-MINDED: the census (1910) lists only those in institutions, who totaled about 40,000.

The census experts believe that 200,000 would be a conservative estimate of the total number of feeble-minded in the country, and many psychologists think that 300,000 would be more nearly accurate.

The number of feeble-minded who are receiving institutional care is almost certainly not more than 10% or 15% of the total, and many of these (about 15,000) are in almshouses, not special institutions (P&J 157).

[contd] PAUPERS: There were 84,198 paupers enumerated in almshouses on January 1, 1910,

and 88,313 admitted during the year, which indicates that the almshouse paupers are a rapidly shifting group.

This population, probably of several hundred thousand persons, who drift into and out of almshouses, can hardly be characterized accurately, but in large part it must be considered at least inefficient and probably of mentally low grade (P&J 157-58).

[contd] CRIMINALS: The inmates of prisons, penitentiaries, reformatories, and similar places of detention numbered 111,609 in 1910; this does not include 25,000 juvenile delinquents.

The jail population is nearly all transient; one must be very cautious in inferring that conviction for an offense against the law indicates lack of eugenic value;

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

23:2.6 *Feeble-minded.*—The **latest** census lists only those in institutions, who totaled about 40,000.

The census experts believe that 200,000 would be a conservative estimate of the total number of feeble-minded in the country, and many psychologists believe that 300,000 would be more nearly accurate.

The number of feeble-minded who are receiving institutional care is almost certainly not more than 10 or 15 per cent of the total, and many of these (about 15,000) are in almshouses, not special institutions.

23:2.7 *Paupers.*—There are almost 100,000 paupers in almshouses,

and 88,313 were admitted during one year, which indicates that the almshouse paupers are a rapidly shifting group.

“This population, probably of several hundred thousand persons, who drift into and out of almshouses, can hardly be characterized accurately, but in large part it must be considered at least inefficient and probably of mentally low grade.”

23:2.8 *Criminals.*—The inmates of prisons, penitentiaries, reformatories, and similar places of detention numbered more than 100,000, and this does not include 25,000 juvenile delinquents.

“The jail population is nearly all transient; one must be very cautious in inferring that conviction for an offense against the law indicates lack of eugenic value;

## SOURCE

but it is worth noting that the number of offenders who are feeble-minded is probably not less than one-fourth or one-third.

If the number of inebriates could be added, it would greatly increase the total; and inebriacy or chronic alcoholism is generally recognized now as indicating in a majority of cases either feeble-mindedness or some other defect of the nervous system.

The number of criminals who are in some way neurotically tainted is placed by some psychologists at 50% or more of the total prison population (P&J 158).

[contd] Add to these a number of epileptics,

[The epileptics enumerated, which did not include those insane or feebleminded, totaled 10,801 (Pollack&Furbush 3).]

tramps, prostitutes, beggars, and others whom the census enumerator finds it difficult to catch, and the total number of possible undesirable parents becomes very large.

[The census showed a total of 4,891 inebriates receiving institutional care (Pollack&Furbush 4).]

It is in fact much larger than appears in these figures, because of the fact that many people carry defects that are latent and only appear in the offspring of a marriage representing two tainted strains.

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

but it is worth noting that the number of offenders who are feeble-minded is probably not less than one-fourth or one-third.

If the number of inebriates could be added, it would greatly increase the total; the inebriacy, or chronic alcoholism, is generally recognized now as indicating in a majority of cases either feeble-mindedness or some other defect of the nervous system.”

The number of criminals who are in some way neurotically tainted is placed by some psychologists at 50 per cent or more of the total prison population.

23:2.9 *Other defectives.*—Says

Johnson:

23:2.10 Add to these a number of epileptics

(over 10,000),

tramps, prostitutes, beggars, and others whom the census enumerator finds it difficult to catch, and the total number of possible undesirable parents becomes very large.

There are over 5,000 inebriates and drug addicts receiving care in institutions at public expense all the time. [Note: This sentence doesn't appear in P&J.]

It is in fact much larger than appears in these figures, because of the fact that many people carry defects that are latent and only appear in the offspring of a marriage representing two tainted strains.



## SOURCE

Thus the feeble-minded child usually if not always has feeble-mindedness in both his father's and mother's ancestry,

and for every one of the patent feeble-minded above enumerated, there may be several dozen latent ones, who are themselves probably normal in every way and yet carry the dangerously tainted germ-plasm (P&J 158).

[contd] The estimate has frequently been made that the United States would be much better off eugenically if it were deprived of the future racial contributions of at least 10% of its citizens.

While literally true this estimate is too high for the group which could be considered for attempts to directly control in a practical eugenics program (P&J 158).

[Source?]

"THE EUGENICS REGISTRY"  
(Kellogg 76)

**Statistics gathered by Davenport and his pupils showed that mental defectives constitute at the present time, not less than one per cent of the total population,**

**and defectives of other sorts have multiplied to such a degree that, according to Laughlin, not less than ten per cent of the present population of the United States must be regarded as so unfit that they ought not to be permitted to multiply their kind.**

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

Thus the feeble-minded child usually, if not always, has feeble-mindedness in both his father's and mother's ancestry,

and for every one of the patent feeble-minded above enumerated, there may be several dozen latent ones, who are themselves probably normal in every way and yet carry the dangerously tainted germ-plasm.

The estimate has frequently been made that the United States would be much better off eugenically if it were deprived of the future racial contributions of at least 10 per cent of its citizens.

While literally true, this estimate is too high for the group which could be considered for attempts to directly control in a practical eugenics program.

23:2.11 It thus appears that we are all the while caring for about 2,000,000 people in our various public and private hospitals, dispensaries, "homes," asylums, and other institutions of correction, charity, and "uplift."

23:2.12 **Statistics gathered by Davenport and his pupils showed that mental defectives constitute at the present time, not less than 1 per cent of the total population,**

**and defectives of other sorts have multiplied to such a degree that, according to Laughlin, not less than 10 per cent of the present population of the United States must be regarded as so unfit that they ought not to be permitted to multiply their kind.**

## SOURCE

**Of two million five hundred thousand children born each year, not less than three hundred thousand die before they are a year old,**

**and of those that die, probably not less than half perish simply because they are unfit to live** (K1 80).

[Note: He said 2,000,000 in 23:2.11, above.]

[See 23:0., above.]

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

**Of 2,500,000 children born each year, not less than 300,000 die before they are a year old,**

**and of those that die, probably not less than half perish simply because they are unfit to live.**

## THE BIOLOGIST'S ATTITUDE

23:3.1 Modern civilized races are proud of their ability to control nature in various ways; and it is an insult to our intelligence to intimate that we cannot control human reproduction so as to deliver society from the burden and disgrace of having to support about 1,000,000 helpless defectives and dangerous degenerates. The cost of maintaining this vast "aristocracy of the unfit" is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$500,000,000 a year; it directly costs \$100,000,000 a year for institutional maintenance alone.

23:3.2 Suppose a new disease plague should descend upon us which would strike down 3 or 4 per cent of the population, not merely rendering them inefficient, but actually throwing the whole number of smitten individuals on the community for their entire support at a cost of over \$100,000,000 annually. What would we think? What would we do? Just because these things, in a measure, have always been, we are accustomed to the burden and pay little or no heed to its final threat of our very stability and existence.

## SOURCE

### VII: ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE EUGENICS MOVEMENT

(Popenoe&Johnson 147)

[contd from 23:2.12.] Natural selection, in the early days of man's history, would have killed off many of these people early in life.

They would have been unable to compete with their physically and mentally more vigorous fellows and would have died miserably by starvation or violence.

Natural selection's use of the death-rate was a brutal one, but at least it prevented such traits as these people show from increasing in each generation.

Eugenists hope to arrive at the same result, not by the death-rate but by the birthrate.

If germinally anti-social persons are kept humanely segregated during their lifetime, instead of being turned out after a few years of institutional life and allowed to marry,

they will leave no descendants, and the number of congenital defectives in the community will be notably diminished.

If the same policy is followed through succeeding generations, the number of defectives, of those incapable of taking a useful part in society, will become smaller and smaller (P&J 158-59).

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

23:3.3 One biologist sums up the proposition thus:

23:3.4 Natural selection, in the early days of man's history, would have killed off many of these people early in life.

They would have been unable to compete with their physically and mentally more vigorous fellows and would have died miserably by starvation or violence.

Natural selection's use of the death-rate was a brutal one, but at least it prevented such traits as these people show from increasing in each generation.

Eugenists hope to arrive at the same result, and not by the death-rate but by the birth-rate.

If germinally antisocial persons are kept humanely segregated during their lifetime, instead of being turned out after a few years of institutional life and allowed to marry,

they will leave no descendants, and the number of congenital defectives in the community will be notably diminished.

If the same policy is followed through succeeding generations, the number of defectives, of those incapable of taking a useful part in society, will become smaller and smaller.

## RACIAL ISHMAELITES

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

## Heredity and Defectives

[contd] Nearly always the preponderance of such strains as a result of consanguineous matings

are concentrated both as to traits and localities,

and for the sake of illustrating the danger to heredity through the introduction of such defective aliens,

it is permissible to cite two well known cases:

“The progeny of Bell Juke is a dreary monotony of harlotry and licentiousness to the fifth generation,”

which cost the State of New York more than \$1,700,000 in 70 years;

and the Nam family, which has imposed financial burden of \$1,500,000 during the same period, “not directly in the care, but indirectly, in the damage they have done” (C 146).

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VI—  
CONSERVATION THROUGH  
HEREDITY. (Fisher 5)

Out of 1,200 descendants from the founder of the “Jukes” through seventy-five years,

23:4.1 Nearly always the preponderance of defective strains are a result of consanguineous matings,

and for the sake of illustrating the danger to heredity through the introduction and reproduction of such defective strains

it is permissible to cite two well-known cases:

“The progeny of Belle Jukes is a dreary monotony of harlotry and licentiousness to the fifth generation,”

which cost the state of New York more than \$1,700,000 in 75 years;

and the Nam family, which has imposed a financial burden of \$1,500,000 during the same period, “not directly in the care, but indirectly, in the damage they have done.”

23:4.2 Out of 1,200 descendants from the founder of the Jukes through 75 years,

## SOURCE

310 were professional paupers, who spent in all two thousand three hundred years in poorhouses, 50 were prostitutes, 7 murderers, 60 habitual thieves, and 130 common criminals.

The loss of potential usefulness, cost of prosecutions, expense of maintenance of jails, etc.,

Dugdale estimated to be

\$1,300,000 in seventy-five years, or over \$1,000 for each member of the family.

All these unfortunate results could have been avoided had the original criminals in this family been sterilized under a law like that of Indiana (F 5).

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

Ishmaelites of Alien Extraction

Among other cases where whole colonies of defectives spring from a single ancestor we have as illustrations the “Ishmaelites” of Indiana,

whose descendants are to-day inter-married with more than 200 other families who have begotten murderers, prostitutes, and a large number of illegitimates.

In Rhode Island there exists a whole colony of deaf mutes—the result of consanguineous matings of defective and related strains (C 146).

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

310 were professional paupers, who spent in all 2,300 years in poorhouses, 50 were prostitutes, 7 murderers, 60 habitual thieves, and 130 common criminals.

The loss of potential usefulness, cost of prosecutions, expense of maintenance of jails, etc.,

Dugdale estimated to be

over \$1,000 for each member of the family.

All these unfortunate results could have been avoided had the original criminals in this family been segregated or else sterilized.

23:4.3 Among other cases where whole colonies of defectives spring from a single ancestor we have as illustrations the “Ishmaelites” of Indiana,

whose descendants are today inter-married with more than 200 other families who have begotten murderers, prostitutes, and a large number of illegitimates.

In Rhode Island there exists a whole colony of deaf-mutes—the result of consanguineous matings of defective and related strains.

## SOURCE

VI: CONSERVATION THROUGH HEREDITY. (Fisher 49)

SECTION 3.—*Eugenics and law*. (Fisher 51)

Similarly, the “Tribe of Ishmael,” numbering 1,692 individuals in six generations, has produced 121 known prostitutes and has bred hundreds of petty thieves, vagrants, and murderers.

The history of the tribe is a swiftly moving picture of social degeneration and gross parasitism, extending from its seventeenth-century convict ancestry to the present-day horde of wandering criminal and defective descendants (F 53).

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

Ishmaelites of Alien Extraction

In Kentucky there is the Owen family.

From the original four children has sprung, since about 1850, a total of 1,750 individuals, among them 121 prostitutes, with a long criminal record and a number of murders (C 146).

[contd] Extreme examples such as the above are necessary to drive these incontrovertible facts into the public consciousness

and to illustrate the utter recklessness of permitting the admission into this country of feeble-minded, epileptic, insane, and imbecile immigrants

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

23:4.4 This “Tribe of Ishmael,” numbering 1,692 individuals in six generations, has produced 121 known prostitutes and has bred hundreds of petty thieves, vagrants, and murderers.

The history of the tribe is a swiftly moving picture of social degeneration and gross parasitism, extending from its seventeenth-century convict ancestry to the present-day horde of wandering criminal and defective descendants.

23:4.5 In Kentucky there is the Owen family.

From the original four children have sprung, since about 1850, a total of 1,750 individuals, among them 121 prostitutes, with a long criminal record and a number of murders.

23:4.6 Extreme examples such as the above are necessary to drive these incontrovertible facts into the public consciousness

and to illustrate the utter recklessness of permitting the admission into this country of feeble-minded, epileptic, insane, and imbecile immigrants

## SOURCE

who, together with their progeny, eventually reach the hospitals, almshouses, and prisons of the State (C 146).

### States Should Know Their People.

We have therefore for the four years 1914 to 1918

the astounding total of 3,923 excludable aliens upon whom orders of deportation have been suspended,

and of this number 1,723 were insane,

2,005 were excludable from other causes, as liable to become public charges, and 195 suffering from loathsome or dangerous diseases (C 144).

VIII: DESIRABILITY OF RESTRICTIVE EUGENICS (Popenoe&Johnson 167)

[contd] In a rural part of Pennsylvania lives the L. family.

### Three generations studied

“all show the same drifting, irresponsible tendency.

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

who, together with their progeny, eventually reach the hospitals, almshouses, and prisons of the state.

23:4.7 During the years from 1914-1918,

during which time the federal government suspended deportation of immigrants to belligerent countries, 4,000 excludable aliens were allowed to remain in this country,

1,723 of whom were insane,

and 195 suffering from some loathsome disease.

## THE DEFECTIVE “L.” FAMILY

23:5.1 In a rural part of Pennsylvania lives the “L.” family.

### Three generations studied

by expert field investigators, who found that:

. . . . all show the same drifting, irresponsible tendency.

## SOURCE

No one can say they are positively bad or serious disturbers of the communities where they may have a temporary home.

Certain members are epileptic and defective to the point of imbecility.

The father of this family drank and provided little for their support.

The mother, though hard working, was never able to care for them properly.

So they and their 12 children were frequent recipients of public relief, a habit which they have consistently kept up.

Ten of the children grew to maturity, and all but one married and had in their turn large families.

With two exceptions these have lived in the territory studied.

Nobody knows how they have subsisted, even with the generous help they have received.

They drift in and out of the various settlements, taking care to keep their residence in the county which has provided most liberally for their support.

In some villages it is said that they have been in and out half a dozen times in the last few years.

First one family comes slipping back, then one by one the others trail in as long as there are cheap shelters to be had.

Then rents fall due, neighbors become suspicious of invaded henroosts and potato patches, and one after another the families take their departure, only to reappear after a year or two (P&J 167).

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

No one can say they are positively bad or serious disturbers of the communities where they may have a temporary home.

Certain members are epileptic and defective to the point of imbecility.

The father of this family drank and provided little for their support.

The mother, though hard working, was never able to care for them properly.

So they and their twelve children were frequent recipients of public relief, a habit which they have consistently kept up.

Ten of the children grew to maturity, and all but one married and had in their turn large families.

With two exceptions these have lived in the territory studied.

Nobody knows how they have subsisted, even with the generous help they have received.

They drift in and out of the various settlements, taking care to keep their residence in the county which has provided most liberally for their support.

In some villages it is said that they have been in and out half a dozen times in the last few years.

First one family comes slipping back, then one by one the others trail in as long as there are cheap shelters to be had.

Then rents fall due, neighbors become suspicious of invaded hen roosts and potato patches, and one after another the families take their departure, only to reappear after a year or two.



## SOURCE

[contd] “The seven children of the eldest son were scattered years ago through the death of their father.

They were taken by strangers, and though kept in school, none of them proved capable of advancement.

Three at least could not learn to read or handle the smallest quantities.

The rest do this with difficulty.

All but two are now married and founding the fourth generation of this line.

The family of the fourth son are now county charges.

Of the 14 children of school age in this and the remaining families, all are greatly retarded.

One is an epileptic and at 16 can not read or write.

One at 15 is in the third reader and should be set down as defective.

The remainder are from one to four years retarded (P&J 167-68).

[contd] “There is nothing striking in the annals of this family.

It comes as near the lowest margin of human existence as possible and illustrates how marked defect may sometimes exist without serious results in the infringement of law and custom.

Its serious menace, however, lies in the certain marriage into stocks which are no better, and the production of large families which continue to exist on the same level of semi-dependency.

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

23:5.2 The seven children of the eldest son were scattered years ago through the death of their father.

They were taken by strangers, and though kept in school, none of them proved capable of advancement.

Three at least could not learn to read or handle the smallest quantities.

The rest do this with difficulty.

All but two are now married and founding the fourth generation of this line.

The family of the fourth son are now county charges.

23:5.3 Of the fourteen children of school age in this and the remaining families, all are greatly retarded.

One is an epileptic, and at 16 years old cannot read or write.

One at 15 is in the third reader and should be set down as defective.

The remainder are from one to four years retarded.

23:5.4 There is nothing striking in the annals of this family.

It comes as near the lowest margin of human existence as possible and illustrates how marked defect may sometimes exist without serious results in the infringement of law and custom.

Its serious menace, however, lies in the certain marriage into stocks which are no better, and the production of large families which continue to exist on the same level of semi-dependency.

## SOURCE

In place of the two dependents of a generation ago we now find in the third generation 32 descendants who bid fair to continue their existence on the same plane—certainly an enormous multiplication of the initial burden of expense.”\*

[\*Key, Dr. Wilhelmina E. , *Feebleminded Citizens in Pennsylvania*, pp. 11, 12, Philadelphia, Public Charities Assn. , 1915.] (P&J 168)

[contd] **From cases of this sort, which represent the least striking kind of bad breeding,**

**the student may pass through many types up to the great tribes of Jukes, Nams, Kallikaks, Zeros, Dacks, Ishmaels, Sixties, Hickories, Hill Folk, Piney Folk, and the rest,**

**with which the readers of the literature of restrictive eugenics are familiar.**

**It is abundantly demonstrated that much, if not most, of their trouble is the outcome of bad heredity (P&J 168).**

**Those who see in improvement of the environment the cure for all such plague spots as these tribes inhabit, overlook the fact that man largely creates his own environment.**

**The story of the tenement-dwellers who were supplied with bath tubs, but refused to use them for any other purpose than to store coal,**

exemplifies a wide range of facts (P&J 168-69).

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

In place of the two dependents of a generation ago we now find in the third generation thirty-two descendants who bid fair to continue their existence on the same plane—certainly an enormous multiplication of the initial burden of expense.

23:5.5 **From cases of this sort, which represent the least striking kind of bad breeding,**

**the student may pass through many types up to the great tribes of Jukes, Nams, Kallikaks, Zeros, Dacks, Ishmaels, Sixties, Hickories, Hill Folk, Piney Folk, and the rest,**

**with which our readers are familiar.**

**It is abundantly demonstrated that most of their trouble is the outcome of bad heredity.**

23:5.6 **Those who see in improvement of the environment the cure for all such plague spots as these tribes inhabit, overlook the fact that “man largely creates his own environment.”**

**The story of the tenement dwellers who were supplied with bathtubs, but refused to use them for any other purpose than to store coal,**

but further illustrates this fact.

## THE ZERO FAMILY

III: HUMAN HEREDITY AND THE  
EUGENIC PROGRAM (Kellicott 133)

Probably the most complete family history of this kind ever worked out is that of the “Familie Zero”—

a Swiss family whose pedigree has been recently unraveled in a splendid manner by Jorger.

In the seventeenth century this family divided into three lines; two of these have ever since remained valued and highly respected families, while the third has descended to the depths.

This third line was established by a man who was himself the result of two generations of intermarriage, the second tainted with insanity.

He was of roving disposition, and in the Valla Fontana found an Italian vagrant wife of vicious character.

Their son inherited fully his parental traits and himself married a member of a German vagabond family—Marcus, known to this day as a vagabond family.

This marriage sealed the fate of their hundreds of descendants.

This pair had seven children, all characterized by vagabondage, thievery, drunkenness, mental and physical defect, and immorality.

Their history for the three succeeding generations is incompletely summarized in Fig. 29.

23:6.1 Probably the most complete family history of this kind ever worked out is that of the Zero family—

a Swiss family—whose pedigree has been recently unraveled in a splendid manner by Jörger.

In the seventeenth century this family divided into three lines; two of these have ever since remained valued and highly respected families, while the third has descended to the depths.

This third line was established by a man who was the result of two generations of intermarriage, the second tainted with insanity.

He was of roving disposition, and in the Valla Fontana found an Italian vagrant wife of vicious character.

Their son inherited fully his parental traits and himself married a member of a German vagabond family—Marcus, known to this day as a vagabond family.

This marriage sealed the fate of their hundreds of descendants.

This pair had seven children, all characterized by vagabondage, thievery, drunkenness, mental and physical defect, and immorality.

## SOURCE

In 1905, 190 members of this family were known to be living, and probably many living are unknown on account of illegitimate birth (K 184, 186).

[contd] In 1861 a sympathetic and charitable priest attempted to save from their obvious fate many of these “Zero” children and others who resided in and near his village,

by placing them in industrious and respectable families to be reared under more favorable auspices.

The attempt failed utterly, for every one of the “Zero” children either ran away or was enticed away by his relatives (K 186-87).

[contd] The blame for such an atrocity as this family or the Jukes does not rest with these persons themselves;

it must be placed squarely upon the shoulders and consciences of the intelligent members of society who have permitted these predetermined degenerates to be brought into the world,

and who are to-day taking no broadly sympathetic view of their treatment by exercising preventive measures.

*Laissez faire?* (K 187)

We might contrast with such families as have been recorded in the three preceding figures some well-known families at the other pole of society. As an interesting example we have the family described by Poellmann.

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

In 1905, 190 members of this family were known to be living, and probably many living are unknown on account of illegitimate birth.

23:6.2 In 1861 a sympathetic and charitable priest attempted to save from their obvious fate many of these “Zero” children and others who resided in and near his village,

by placing them in industrious and respectable families to be reared under more favorable auspices.

The attempt failed utterly, for every one of the Zero children either ran away or was enticed away by his relatives.

23:6.3 The blame for such an atrocity as this family, or the Jukes, does not rest with these persons themselves.

It must be placed squarely upon the shoulders and consciences of the intelligent members of society who have permitted these predetermined degenerates to be brought into the world,

and who are today taking no broadly sympathetic view of their treatment by exercising preventive measures.

23:6.4 As an interesting example we have another family described by Poellmann.

## SOURCE

This was established by

two daughters of a woman drunkard who in five or six generations produced all told 834 descendants.

The histories of 709 of these are known.

Of the 709, 107 were of illegitimate birth; 64 were inmates of almshouses; 162 were professional beggars; 164 were prostitutes and 17 procurers; (K 181-82)

One of the best known families of this type is the so-called “Jukes” family of New York so carefully investigated by Dugdale.... 130 were convicted criminals; 60 were habitual thieves; 7 were murderers.

Not one had even a common school education.

Only 20 learned a trade, and 10 of these learned it in State prison!

They have cost the State over a million and a quarter dollars, and the cost is still going on.

Who pays this bill?

What right had an intelligent and humane society to allow these poor unfortunates to be born into the kind of lives they had to lead, not by choice but by the disadvantage of birth?

Darwin wrote long ago “... except in the case of man himself, hardly anyone is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed” (K 182, 184).

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

This was established by:

. . . . two daughters of a woman drunkard who in five or six generations produced all told 834 descendants.

The history of 709 of these are known.

Of the 709, 107 were of illegitimate birth; 64 were inmates of almshouses; 162 were professional beggars; 164 were prostitutes;

130 were convicted criminals; 60 were habitual thieves; 7 were murderers.

Not one had even a common-school education.

Only 20 learned a trade, and 10 of these learned it in state prisons.

They have cost the state over \$1,250,000, and the cost is still going on.

Who pays this bill?

What right had an intelligent and humane society to allow these poor unfortunates to be born into the kind of lives they had to lead, not by choice but by the disadvantage of birth?

Darwin wrote long ago: “. . . except in the case of man himself, hardly anyone is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.”

## THE SITUATION IN ILLINOIS

“THORNE GIVES FIGURES TO SHOW ILLINOIS NEEDS IN CARE OF THE MENTALLY DEFECTIVE” (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 5, 1919)

BY CHARLES H. THORNE. [Director State Department of Public Welfare.]

The feeble minded criminal is at last being placed in the limelight, which is a most hopeful sign of progress.

It is time, because with all of the wild and terrifying statements the truth has not been half told.

The cold fact is that the problem is greater than are the facilities of society to cope with it by present methods.

Feeble-mindedness represents a structural brain defect and is incurable, unimprovable, and degenerative.

#### **Morons the Great Menace.**

The idiots and imbeciles can be recognized at sight and are not a menace because they can be cared for only in institutions and rapidly move at an early age into their custody.

It is the moron without judgment, who is both the direct and the indirect menace to society;

23:7.1 In appealing to the State Legislature of Illinois for the enactment of suitable laws looking towards the better handling of the problem of delinquents and defectives,

Charles H. Thorne, Director State Department of Public Welfare said:<sup>1</sup>

23:7.2 The feeble-minded criminal is at last being placed in the limelight, which is a most hopeful sign of progress.

23:7.3 It is time, because with all of the wild and terrifying statements the truth has not been half told.

23:7.4 The cold fact is that the problem is greater than are the facilities of society to cope with it by present methods.

23:7.5 Feeble-mindedness represents a structural brain defect and is incurable, unimprovable, and degenerative.

23:7.6 The idiots and imbeciles can be recognized at sight and are not a menace because they can be cared for only in institutions and rapidly move at an early age into their custody.

23:7.7 It is the moron without judgment, who is both the direct and the indirect menace to society;

## SOURCE

direct because from them are recruited the prostitutes, mothers of illegitimate children, and sex perverts; indirect, because they are prolific and certain breeders of their own kind.

Once in the blood the menace is continuous; for even the normal child of a feeble-minded parent may become the parent of feeble-minded children, or the condition may not reappear before the grandchildren or great grandchildren (CDT 6).

### Hard to Recognize.

The following gives the latest estimates of the extent of feeble-mindedness and is based upon the report of Dr. A. J. Rosanoff [made in 1916 for the National Committee of Mental Hygiene] which contains probably the most accurate figures now obtainable on mental deficiency.

Dr. Rosanoff made an accurate census of the entire population, above school age, of the county of Nassau in New York state.

This county was selected as being typical of the state as regards proportion of urban and rural dwellers, immigrants, stable residents, etc.

The population was 115,827.

The definite abnormality per 100,000 was:

Insanity	341.0
Feeble-mindedness	546.5
Epilepsy	62.2
Inebriates, criminals, prostitutes, etc.	424.8
Total	1,374.5

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

direct because from them are recruited the prostitutes, mothers of illegitimate children, and sex perverts; indirect, because they are prolific and certain breeders of their own kind.

Once in the blood the menace is continuous; for even the normal child of a feeble-minded parent may become the parent of feeble-minded children, or the condition may not reappear before the grandchildren or great-grandchildren.

23:7.8 The following gives the latest estimates of the extent of feeble-mindedness and is based upon the report of Dr. A. J. Rosanoff (made in 1916 for the National Committee of Mental Hygiene) which contains probably the most accurate figures now obtainable on mental deficiency.

Dr. Rosanoff made an accurate census of the entire population, above school age, of the county of Nassau in New York State.

This county was selected as being typical of the state in regard to proportion of urban and rural dwellers, immigrants, stable residents, etc.

The population was 115,827.

The definite abnormality per 100,000 was:

Insanity	341.0
Feeble-mindedness	546.5
Epilepsy	62.2
Inebriates, criminals, prostitutes, etc.	424.8
Total	1,374.5

## SOURCE

### Social Maladjustments.

The social maladjustments of the cases of abnormality were grouped as follows:

Retardation in school .145.9  
Truancy, unruliness, etc .....17.5  
Sex immorality 100.2  
Criminal tendencies 65.2  
Vagrancy 1.7  
Dependency 242.8  
Inebriety 276.3  
Drug habits 3.5  
Domestic maladjustments 12.1  
Medical cases 49.1  
Other groups (mainly those in institutions) 319.5  
No maladjustments 140.7  
Total 1,374.5

Treatment considered necessary:

Institutional care 816.7  
Other treatment 392.0  
None 165.8  
Total 1,374.5

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

23:7.9 The social maladjustments of the cases of abnormality were grouped as follows:

Retardation in school .145.9  
Truancy, unruliness, etc .....17.5  
Sex immorality 100.2  
Criminal tendencies 65.2  
Vagrancy 1.7  
Dependency 242.8  
Inebriety 276.3  
Drug habits 3.5  
Domestic maladjustments 12.1  
Medical cases 49.1  
Other groups (mainly those in institutions) 319.5  
No maladjustments 140.7  
Total 1,374.5

23:7.10 Treatment considered necessary:

Institutional care 816.7  
Other treatment 392.0  
None 165.8  
Total 1,374.5

## APPLIED TO ILLINOIS

Applied to the State of Illinois this would mean that with a population of 6,193,626 (United States Census Bureau estimate for 1917) there are:

Insane 21,120  
Feeble minded 38,848  
Epileptic 3,852  
Inebriates, criminals, etc. 26,310  
Total 85,130

23:8.1 Applied to the State of Illinois this would mean that with a population of 6,193,626 (United States Census Bureau estimate for 1917) there are:

Insane 21,120  
Feeble-minded 38,848  
Epileptic 3,852  
Inebriates, criminals, etc. 26,310  
Total 85,130



## SOURCE

The need for treatment would be:

Institution care 50,584  
Other treatment 24,279  
None 10,267  
Total 85,130

### Institutions Now Provided.

To meet these conditions the state possesses:

Eight hospitals for insane, housing 18,000, which indicates that we are almost up with the insane problem.

One institution for epileptics, which soon will be able to care for all who need care.

One home for dependent children, which can handle only the most pressing cases.

One reformatory for youths, containing a large number of mental defectives who eventually must be discharged, but who should be kept for life.

Two prisons for men and one for women, also containing a large number of mental defectives who should be kept for life.

Two correctional schools, one for boys and one for girls, and both, especially the one for girls, being temporary homes for mental defectives who must be discharged at 21 years of age whether they should be or not.

One institution for feeble-minded, with 2,335 inhabitants.

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

23:8.2 The need for treatment would be:

Institution care 50,584  
Other treatment 24,279  
None 10,267  
Total 85,130

23:8.3 To meet these conditions the state possesses:

23:8.4 Eight hospitals for insane, housing 18,000, which indicates that we are almost up with the insane problem.

23:8.5 One institution for epileptics, which soon will be able to care for all who need care.

23:8.6 One home for dependent children, which can handle only the most pressing cases.

23:8.7 One reformatory for youths, containing a large number of mental defectives who eventually must be discharged, but who should be kept for life.

23:8.8 Two prisons for men and one for women, also containing a large number of mental defectives who should be kept for life.

23:8.9 Two correctional schools, one for boys and one for girls, and both, especially the one for girls, being temporary homes for mental defectives who must be discharged at 21 years of age whether they should be or not.

23:8.10 One institution for feeble-minded, with 2,335 inhabitants.

**THOSE THAT ARE NEEDED****Those That Are Needed.**

Authority and appropriations are being asked for another institution for feeble-minded, which, if obtained, will ease the pressure a little, although it is obvious that four or five more are needed and eventually must be provided.

There is a great demand for, and an early state venture, should be, an institution for the segregation of what are known as the mentally defective, delinquent, or the feeble-minded with criminal activities of a violent, destructive character.

It will be possible to determine who should be sent to such a place only after long observation and careful, conservative, well-balanced study.

The present commitment law is sufficient, as any person of doubtful mentality may be subjected to the proper preliminary study and if mental deficiency is established commitment can be made.

The trouble lies not in the law but in the lack of sufficient plan (CDT 6).

23:9.1 Authority and appropriations are being asked for another institution for feeble-minded, which, if obtained, will ease the pressure a little, although it is obvious that four or five more are needed and eventually must be provided.

23:9.2 There is a great demand for, and an early state venture, should be, an institution for the segregation of what are known as the mentally defective, delinquent, or the feeble-minded with criminal activities of a violent, destructive character.

23:9.3 It will be possible to determine who should be sent to such a place only after long observation and careful, conservative, well-balanced study.

23:9.4 The present commitment law is sufficient, as any person of doubtful mentality may be subjected to the proper preliminary study and if mental deficiency is established commitment can be made.

23:9.5 The trouble lies not in the law but in the lack of sufficient plans.

## SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

1. We are supporting an idle population of defectives equal to 1 per cent of the total population at an annual expense of more than \$100,000,000.

2. These defectives are mostly registered in public institutions, and yet we permit most of them to continue to reproduce their undesirable kind.

3. Natural selection—so thinks Lankaster—has about ceased to operate in the case of the modern civilized races.

4. We have assembled in our various public institutions a vast “aristocracy of the unfit,” who enjoy life at the expense of the industrious taxpayers.

5. In this country we have over 100,000 blind—50,000 totally blind, 19 per cent have blind relatives and almost 5 per cent result from cousin marriages.

6. We have 100,000 deaf and dumb. Over 12,000 deaf from birth. Again about 5 per cent are offspring of cousin marriages; 32.1 have deaf relatives.

7. There are probably not less than 250,000 insane in this country; and the feeble-minded are approximately the same in number.

8. There are almost 100,000 paupers in the almshouses of this country; 88,000 were admitted in one year, the total number, therefore, probably numbers several hundreds of thousands.

9. There are over 100,000 criminals in our various penal institutions, exclusive of over 25,000 juvenile delinquents.

## SOURCE

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

10. There are over 5,000 drug victims receiving public care; about 10,000 epileptic, not to mention a vast army of tramps, prostitutes, and beggars, who also belong to this great “aristocracy of the unfit.”

11. The greatest menace of all are those normal appearing individuals who are “carriers” of these latent strains of defectiveness—who may enter into good lines of heredity and thus fatally degenerate our otherwise good stock.

12. It appears that we are constantly caring for over 2,000,000 of these “unfit” in the public and private institutions of this country.

13. Laughlin asserts that fully 10 per cent of our present population is unfit to reproduce itself.

14. It is a disgrace to modern society that it does not deliver itself from this burden of supporting over 1,000,000 helpless defectives and dangerous degenerates.

15. The total cost of maintaining this vast army of the unfit is over \$500,000,000 a year, \$100,000,000 for institutional care alone.

16. What would we think of a new disease which would strike down and cripple for life 3 or 4 per cent of our population? That is what unrestricted reproduction of defectives is doing.

17. The “Jukes” cost the state of New York almost \$2,000,000 in 75 years. The Nam family \$ 1,500,000 during the same period.

18. Among 1,200 Jukes descendants there were: 310 paupers, 50 prostitutes, 7 murderers, 68 thieves, 130 criminals.

19. The “Tribe of Ishmael” numbering 1,692 individuals, in six generations produced 121 prostitutes, and numberless thieves, vagrants, and murderers.

## SOURCE

## 23: RACE DECADENCE

20. A study of the "L." family serves to show that shiftlessness and general irresponsibility are largely hereditary.

21. The Zero family tends to show that well-meant charitable and reformatory work will not annul the inexorable laws of human heredity.

22. In the case of the Poellmann family, 709 descendants are known, of which 107 are illegitimate, 64 in almshouses, 162 professional beggars, 164 prostitutes, 130 convicted criminals, 60 habitual thieves, 7 murderers.

23. In a New York State survey, the following per 100,000 of population were discovered: insanity 341.0; feeble-mindedness 546.5; epilepsy 62.2; inebriates, criminals, and prostitutes 424.8, total 1,374.5.

24. Applied to Illinois this rate would mean: insane 21,120; feeble-minded 38,848; epileptic 3,852; criminals, prostitutes, etc., 26,310, total 85,130.

1. From the second paragraph of the article:

The [Illinois] legislature is prepared to go to any extent in doing its part regardless of cost, in view of statements today of senate and house leaders. The department of public welfare has its proposed legislation ready to present when the session reconvenes next week.