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CHILD PROBLEMS.

Under this heading problems relating to child life are discussed. The opinions of recognized experts are given and an attempt made to present impartially all aspects of each subject dealt with.

EUGENICS AND CHILD WELFARE.

From THE HON. SIR JOHN ALEXANDER COCKBURN, K.C.M.G., M.D.

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THE science of eugenics ends with the introduction into the world of the infant. It therefore does not include the vital subjects of child-rearing and education, although it furnishes the raw material out of which the future man is, by these agencies, to be fashioned. The tendency to-day is to attach increasing importance to innate qualities and to recognize that, notwithstanding the plastic nature of the human larva, there are strict limits in the case of each individual to its potentialities. Hence the significance of eugenics to child welfare and to the race becomes proportionately emphasized.

It was that distinguished sociologist Benjamin Kidd who proclaimed the fact that the continued existence of a nation depends on the degree to which consciously or instinctively it prepares for posterity, thus exposing the fallacy underlying the plausible theory of the utilitarians that the ethical end was the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The man who asked why he should do anything for posterity as posterity had done nothing for him was a terminal twig from whom evolution has nothing to expect. Eugenics endorses the natural law of unselfish sacrifice of the parent for the welfare of the offspring. In this respect instinct has proved superior to reason and as in the beginning the healing leaves of the tree of life are the antidote to a surfeit on the fruit of the tree of knowledge. In truth, by the law of evolution, our lives are held merely in trust for the benefit of those who are to come after us. What a racial crime then appears the absence of provision for maternity insurance. Surely if the State sees fit to regulate marriage it should regard unsuitability for parentage as an even greater evil than consanguinity. There is a difference of opinion as to the hereditary nature of cancer and some other diseases, but all are agreed as to the deadly deteriorating influence of syphilis. Thousands of children come into the world doomed from this cause to the misery of countless

diseases. It is imperative to prevent children from being condemned to death before they are born, and we should guard, nourish, and succour, as a precious national asset, the expectant mother.

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From HARRY CAMPBELL, M.D., F.R.C.P.

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THE cardinal fact to bear in mind in connection with eugenics is that natural selection is the dominant factor in organic evolution. All racial (as distinguished from individual) change takes place by the survival of certain types, *i.e.*, by selection. Whether that selection operates upon insignificant variations, or upon considerable variations (mutations), or whether—as is probably the case—it operates upon both, is a matter of detail.

There can be no doubt that man might be greatly changed for the better by an all-wise artificial selection of certain types. A friend of mine who worships the beautiful and detests physical ugliness in any form, told me that, if he had his way, none but the beautiful should be permitted to multiply; and when it was objected that many people with beautiful characters might in this way be lost to the race, he somewhat brutally replied that, commendable as virtuous ugliness undoubtedly was, we could well dispense with it; that having secured a physically beautiful race, it would be time enough to set about eliminating the morally defective among them, and so breed a race of humans beautiful alike in body and in mind.

Now there can be no doubt such an achievement, although under present conditions impracticable, is, theoretically at least, possible. One might even go further: it would be possible, and this in a comparatively short space of time, greatly to improve man's intellectual powers. All that would be necessary would be to allow none but the highly intellectual to perpetuate their kind. [Whether, however, a highly beautiful, virtuous and intellectual race could work the present social machinery—whether, *i.e.*, it would be capable of carrying on all the specialized forms of activity connected with the modern social organism, is quite another matter!] Finally, it would be possible on the same lines—although I believe we might find this the most difficult task of all—materially to improve the health standard of the community.

That the power for good of judicious artificial selection will some day

be generally recognized and at least to some extent taken advantage of, can hardly be doubted. Whether the time is quite ripe for this is less certain.

In our desire to improve the human race by *artificial* selection we must be careful not to minimize the part which *natural* selection is playing in moulding man's destiny. What is largely lost sight of by modern eugenists is the important fact that natural selection is still actively at work on man, not in one direction only, but in all the directions indicated. It is strange that even such eminent biologists as Ray Lankester and Arthur Thomson have fallen into the error of supposing that this beneficent process has entirely, or almost entirely, ceased to operate in the case of civilized man.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Natural selection is essentially bound up with the very existence of life as we know it in this world of ours, for only by its means can species become adapted to, and maintain their adaptations to, the ever changing conditions. Had I the time I should have no difficulty in showing that natural selection is actively at work on man, eliminating the ugly, the immoral, as well as the physically and intellectually unfit; and that by the operation of entirely natural processes the human race is ever tending to increase in beauty, in virtue, and in intelligence, as well as to maintain its standard of physical fitness. It is the desirability of maintaining this standard which is chiefly occupying the attention of the eugenist. He is haunted with the dread that civilized man is undergoing a progressive racial deterioration. Yet, far from this being the case, he is, in actual fact, much more physically fit as regards the conditions imposed by neo-civilization than he has ever been before.

As I pointed out more than twenty years ago in my "Causation of Disease," every non-accidental death occurring before the end of reproductive life falls under the law of natural selection; and the greater the number of such deaths, the more stringent is the selective process, and the hardier the surviving race. This truth must ever be borne in mind in considering the high birth- and death-rate of the urban poor. Racially the poor are (in my opinion at least) inferior mentally and, to some extent, physically to the well-to-do; and hence if the former propagate more rapidly than the latter this may be detrimental to the race at large. On the other hand, it must be remembered that, by so much as the death-rate of the one is greater than that of the other, by so much is the elimination of defective types greater in the one than in the other. Very much more is done to preserve defective physical types in the case of the well-to-do than in the case of the poor.

While, then, I am willing to admit that the time is near at hand, if it has not already arrived, when an attempt should be made—chiefly by educating public opinion and creating new ideals—very cautiously to supplement (not *substitute* be it noticed) natural by artificial selection, I have no fear for natural selection and of its power to lift man upward. That inexorable process is very well capable of taking care of itself. Upon it we must place our chief reliance, not only to maintain our present efficiency, but to advance us in the future, as it has advanced us in the past. Its operation is far less hindered than we are apt to think. Here and there perhaps we may be temporarily checking its sway, but so long as life lasts on this earth, it will in its own tragic way continue to carry on its beneficent work of racial adaptation; and we may rest assured this natural selection will be performed with infinitely greater wisdom than any selection which the wisest of men can make.

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From J. LIONEL TAYLER, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

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WHAT I personally feel to be the one safe method of inquiry into problems of eugenics and child welfare is that which studies structure and function side by side. This method has been practised by medical men and physiologists for the last hundred or more years, and there must be much danger in investigating the psychological aspect apart from the structural, morphological one, or *vice versâ*.

No one will question the advance which has been made in the knowledge of disease as a result of the increased study of *post-mortem* evidence; nor the benefit which has followed from the surgical observation of disease, the result of the advances in operative surgery. And, in like manner, our most valuable and certain conclusions on states of feeble-mindedness and idiocy have been obtained by noting that certain bodily characteristics are associated with certain mental ones (as, for instance, oblique eyes and mongoloid imbecility). In eugenics surely no other means of study can be regarded as satisfactory, for methods not based upon the observed relation of structure and function are necessarily far too speculative to be safe.

Take as an example such a simple question as that of precocity in

growth. D. Kidd¹ and others, in reference to savage childhood, find that primitive children develop early, mentally and physically; the same fact is certainly observable in many slum types of our large towns, who are very early able to fend for themselves in a manner that is often surprising. The fact also that, in the higher mammalia, the more intelligent forms of life have longer periods of infancy also points to the conclusion that precocity is an undesirable feature in a child; yet it is not less certain that many normal geniuses have been extremely precocious, while others are slow in developing. In music, for instance, these two groups are noticeably prominent. And as artistic and literary genius is on the whole more precocious than scientific, we may be, and probably are, dealing with another kind of precocity, and one that is possibly highly desirable for the race.² Again, there are some boys and girls who attain their full stature and mental equipment some four or five years earlier than others, who are yet neither precocious in the primitive sense, nor have they any observable qualities of genius, and the rapid growth is often not traceable to abundance of food or exceptional hygiene. Yet, again, precocity is certainly associated in some instances with warm climates and also luxurious habits, and less rapid development with colder and more severe surroundings. Finally, it is probable, as statistics in regard to overcrowding reveal, that bad air, poor food, and injurious pre-natal and post-natal conditions of child life all tend to retard growth. But until we begin to patiently unravel the different forms of precocity by studying the different types of children to be found under different conditions, we shall be in serious danger of confusing good and bad types together, or of calling some defect hereditary when it is hygienic or climatic.

In like manner, the tables of heights and weights at different ages for different individuals are useless to the observant medical man, who knows that height and weight factors are type and racial as well as hygienic signs, and harmful to the unobservant, as reliance is placed on unscientific data.

Or to take another point of view, almost all co-education statistics are vitiated because no attempt has been made to separate into groups the different states of masculinism and femininism in order to discover what effect co-education has upon the *biologically* feminine type of girl and the *biologically* masculine type of boy.

Most of us feel to-day that much is wrong with our life-conditions: defective eyes and teeth; nervousness; an apparent increase in insanity

¹ KIDD, D.: "Savage Childhood."

² The alleged hereditary instability of certain types of genius is, of course, a further difficulty to be considered.

and non-bacterial diseases—all alike point to constitutional enfeeblement, as do also the inability of some mothers to nurse their own children, and the loss of parental desire in adults of both sexes, which seems to be increasing everywhere to-day. Is enfeeblement hereditary, or is it environmental, or is it due to a change in type which demands different social surroundings to live healthily?

Nothing but careful *continued observations of the physical and mental characteristics of individual children*, recorded by the co-operation of teacher, school medical officer, general practitioner, and parent, will, I believe, finally reveal to us the exact causes (eugenic and hygienic) of the ill-health in our midst.

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By MRS. A. C. GOTTO.

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FROM the standpoint of the eugenicist, the welfare of the child is necessarily dependent on its eugenic quality; the greatest asset it can have being parents representing sound stock. No amount of attention given to the environment, home life, nourishment, education, &c., can be of much avail unless the inherent quality of the child is such that it can respond. It must not be thought from this that the effect of environment is under-rated by the eugenicist. A child is like an undeveloped photographic plate (the limitations of the figure are obvious); the result of development is a good or bad rendering of the picture already imprinted on it, but the picture itself remains the same, and no amount of variation of the process of development will make a photograph of a ship into one of a landscape. So with the child, innate characters correspond with the picture; educative methods may be used in developing them, but in the end they manifest themselves only as various means for developing inherent characters, which may be neglected or assisted by different methods, but the potentiality of which remains unchanged. The biological factor is, then, of primary importance in child welfare. Once this is universally recognized, much of our present social work will be reformed. Of what use, under such circumstances, are the efforts to develop along *mental* lines mentally defective children? The money now spent on such methods in special schools—where, by the way, more is lavished on abortive attempts to educate those who are uneducable than is spent on the fit child, who would profit by instruction—would be diverted to more useful channels.

The Waverley Institution of America has amply proved the effectiveness of simple manual work for the feeble-minded. Instead of attempting to instruct the children in reading, writing and arithemetic, it recognizes the futility of such a proceeding, and directs its attention to varieties of manual industries, such as washing, weaving, gardening, &c., with the result that the institution is nearly self-supporting. The present movement urging the permanent care of the feeble-minded will make such things generally known. It is among the general population that there is such crying need for the recognition of personal responsibility towards the race. If it were more clearly recognized that in the choice of a partner the actual type and quality of future offspring are decided, and that all subsequent provisions are as trifles compared with that choice, there would surely be fewer hasty and selfish marriages. The greatest tragedy in life is the helpless hopelessness of the mother of suffering and degenerate children.

At least the next generation can have a better chance, and in turn can give it; they can profit by our mistakes. The wise parent will instil the eugenic ideal, in many conscious and unconscious ways, into the minds of his children. The importance and privilege of parenthood will be put before them, and their ideas of beauty will be made to include health and fitness. If the right ideals have been put before the child and adolescent, when the time for marriage comes the subconscious judgment of the individual will have been so formed that he or she will be attracted to the eugenic type, and unfit or anti-eugenic type will be rejected. It will be realized that fitness, mental, moral, and physical, are of more true worth to children than any economic provision it is possible to make for them.

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AMONG the many directions in which one tries to foresee the traps and pitfalls into which the young are apt to drop, there are two which stand out pre-eminently, and to these children are exposed at an early age—the sexual impulse and the alcoholic example and education. It seems almost a pity that the sexual proclivities arise so early—a pity, that is, from the point of view that functions which are intended to be exercised so much later on in the career of the young person should be

nascent at so early a state, when premature cultivation may be fraught with very disastrous consequences. Of course, one recognizes that the development of the sexual life is intimately connected with the perfection of mental integrity, and it may well be that the gradual entry into consciousness of the latent sexual elements should proceed *pari passu* with the gradual expansion of those other mental states of which they form so essential a part; but it cannot be too strongly urged that undue and premature cultivation of the sexual proclivities should be fended off with the greatest rigour. In the practical study of insanity nothing is so forced upon our attention as the great part played by excesses in the direction indicated, and by the self-incrimination frequently displayed by those who have exploited these functions before the time was ripe for their correct physiological exhibition. The practice among the Jews of early circumcision must be strongly commended as tending to lessen early irritation, and especial attention should be given to the prevention of masturbation, set up, as it so often is, by the bad example of other boys. Hence, supervision of the early life of the child, especially at school, is one of the most exigent duties of the schoolmaster. How far it is necessary or advisable to lecture boys on this subject, except in the case of those caught *flagrante delicto*, is a debatable point. Whether it is judicious to arouse into flame these smouldering promptings by direct allusion to them is a matter on which people differ; but there can be no difficulty in agreeing that bad environment, the reading of amatory novels, and all that is calculated to give prominence to a very delicately balanced part of the organism, should be most stringently guarded against.

The case of alcohol, too, is very urgent. One sees with misgivings the practice of taking young children into hotels and table-d'hôte dinners, accompanied with even the giving of stimulants. Such practices should be condemned absolutely; children should never be brought up to take alcohol as a regular accompaniment to food, nor is it even advisable that they should be brought into familiarity with the use of it. To train a young person to be able to "stand his liquor" is a crime, and, though it is not advisable to practise deceit before children by drinking only water at meals and taking stimulants "on the quiet," it should always be remembered that children are great at copying and at noting the habits of their seniors, and that moderation and abstinence are the "complexes" which should be at the base of the mental organism of the young, for on these alone can a healthy superstructure be erected.

From C. W. SALEEBY, M.D., F.R.S.E., F.Z.S.

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BY eugenics I understand the application to mankind of the Darwinian, which is the natural, principle of selection for parenthood. Under the automatic *régime* this selection proceeds by death—*i.e.*, by rejection for life. Such selection is necessarily always occurring amongst ourselves. But eugenics is selection for parenthood, not selection for life. No form of killing or permission of killing is eugenics. The eugenic opportunity ended when the new individual came into being, at the moment of conception.

It follows that the production of abortion, the destruction of the unfit, the permission of infant mortality, are none of them eugenics and do it nothing but injury. As regards infant mortality we now have exhaustive proof that, as I have always maintained, it is not eugenic in any sense, merely slaying many and injuring many more. All individuals must be held sacred and our ideal must be to provide the best environment for each of them.

Many students of heredity, and notably Professor Karl Pearson, though in this respect, at any rate, he is in agreement with some of the minor Mendelians, are now teaching that "nature" is everything and "nurture" practically nothing in determining the characters and destiny of living things. Hence most of our work for the child is condemned as futile or worse. These are the opinions of students who have lost all sense of proportion because their work is entirely confined to calculating and counting in territory—notably psychological—where they are not at home. Eugenics and childhood are alike injured by these exaggerations. The truth is that the characters of living beings are not, as our naïve mathematicians suppose, the *sum* of "nature" and "nurture," but their *product*, and to ignore either is to make a fatal error. All but eugenists ignore "nature"; and eugenists must recant the foolish error of retaliating by ignoring "nurture." Eugenist and educationist must work together for their supreme end. Above all does this apply to what I have called "Preventive eugenics, which stands between healthy stocks and the *racial poisons*, as they are best named—alcohol, the worst enemy of childhood alike in the natural and the nurtural factor, lead, venereal disease, and malaria."

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From CHARLES WALKER, M.Sc.

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IT is necessary to discriminate definitely between what is good for the race and what is good for the individual. What is beneficial in a high degree may be injurious to the race; therefore, organized efforts to benefit children should be in directions which will not lower the racial standard of any character that is of obvious value. The action of natural selection upon inborn variations occurring among the individuals forming a slum population will, according to the time during which the selection acts, produce a race which is more or less slum immune. If the slum environment can be permanently removed, slum immunity ceases to be of value to the race; therefore, as the total removal of slums appears to be feasible, efforts in this direction are wise. Here the individual is benefited and no harm done to the race. The campaign against tubercle is of doubtful value. The risk of infection as regards the individual is lessened, and so those who have varied from the racial mean of immunity survive longer and have more chance of producing children who may vary towards still less immunity. When we consider the ravages of the tubercle bacillus upon its introduction among races that have not, as we have, undergone a stringent selection with regard to it, and also consider the fact that *every* individual in England must be frequently infected, it becomes evident that we, as a race, have reached a high degree of immunity. The campaign benefits the individual who has varied towards less immunity, but the ultimate result must be the lowering of the racial standard. It is almost impossible to imagine that this bacillus can ever be completely extirpated; it is too widespread and resistant. These two examples, taken from hundreds, show that a mistaken altruistic sentiment is as likely as not to injure the race in benefiting the individual.

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