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No. 1

Editorials

DEFECTIVE CHILDREN, THEIR CARE, OCCUPATIONS AND SUPPORT

THE progressive mind of Dr. Helen MacMurchy has placed her in the van of all sociological movements in Ontario. Her recent fully detailed report gives some quite startling figures on the ratio of defectives to the population, showing that there has been culpable negligence somewhere, of late, in regard to this problem.

The cause of this sad condition should be thoroughly and promptly investigated. Amongst native Canadians it is due, among the well-to-do, to inbreeding, or marriage of those closely related in blood and tastes, while among the poor, it proceeds from too rapid production, ignorance and drunkenness or other physical crimes at the time of conception and gestation. The natural remedy is a law compelling eugenic marriages. But a large number of feeble-minded children are the offspring of foreign parents, and a close watch should be kept on the immigrants in obedience to the laws relating thereto.

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People of means who have this pathetic condition to cope with should, and usually do, protect their child, especially if it is a girl suffering from weak mentality, providing teachers of probity and skill. However, since it is a very special branch of pedagogy, bordering on the profession of medicine, teachers require additional training, including skill in many manual occupations, having to endure as well that tedium of companionship so constantly that only a large remuneration and long vacation periods, with opportunities to seek an antidote for an otherwise morbid frame of mind are absolutely necessary. It includes in their category of good qualities the gentleness, patience and aptness of a nurse, since many of these children are burdened with some visible defect, such as being unable to walk well.

This expense for private teachers throws the burden of care upon institutions. The most modern way is to conduct a sort of school-hospital, on the cottage plan on a beautiful farm, with its tilled fields, its fringes of woods carpeted with wild flowers, its brooks and orchards, giving food for chickens and cattle.

There must be complete segregation of the sexes and not more than three or four children in one cottage, for they require constant watching. Their life must be robbed of the sombre gravity that invests large institutions. A being with a large sense of humor is more nearly normal than any other. These defectives lack the power to make real fun for themselves, and happiness should be the main motive of

their existence. It is the oil that makes them work well.

To be brief, the plan of such an institution is like that of the most modern hospital, including accommodation for visiting parents, suites for the teachers and resident physicians, lecture rooms for the teachers and resident physicians, lecture rooms for the children, or a summer school for physicians and shops for the manual vocations taught the inmates. Flanking these at respective distances come the flower beds, kitchen gardens, dairy, poultry yards, bake shops, laundry and other service buildings where the work is done by teachers and pupils.

On two hundred acres a well-conducted institution can produce enough to bear one-fifth of its expenses. One-fifth more comes from the sale of articles made in the shops, either to prisons and asylums, or to the general public, baskets, mats, light furniture and certain woven goods. One-fifth comes from the fees paid by the parents who can afford it—just as in the hospitals—usually about forty dollars per month. One-fifth comes from private philanthropy incited to action by industrious campaigning, and lastly one-fifth comes from the government.

Each public school teacher should be fairly familiar with the well known tests of Binet and others to establish the standard of mentality in cases where doubt exists. All the defectives should be given to one teacher, in each school district, and she should teach them to weave, paste pictures, sew buttons on strips, and to keep clean and happy.

Some parents hate to be told that they have a "defective" child. Gloss it over and call him "atypical," but show them that these weaklings require special care. Show them that, in an institution well-managed and well-supported, these children will be much happier and progress somewhat, while running no risks, and doing no damage to anyone else. There is no end to the dangers these atypical cases run, when on the streets of a metropolis.

The outlook is not good, if after a certain period of tuition, they still measure up to only about ten years in sense. Sterilization is warmly advocated for both sexes, so that their influence cannot be felt by future generations.

The administration of these institutions is modelled on that of the best hospitals, a staff of special physicians to come when needed, from the neighboring cities, a staff of lecturers to instruct the resident teachers, a board consisting of all the necessary social factors, business men, clergymen, etc., an auxiliary body of charitable ladies, who always succeed in raising much money, and best of all, a "live wire" for superintendent, who knows the science of his vocation and can also mingle with the children so as to be loved and copied by them.

In 1800, Itard studied the uncouth defectives in the province of Aveyron in France and thus founded the science. His pupil, Seguin, opened the first institution for their care. Since then Switzerland, England and United States followed his lead, their legislatures incorporating each under an act relating to

institutions not for pecuniary profit. It is to be hoped that many such will spring up here and there, to hold these weaklings safe, and that radical steps will be taken to prevent the increase of this class in this fair land.

BIRTHDAY HONORS

THE list of Birthday Honors conferred by His Majesty on his natal day, June 3rd, was satisfactory, except in so far that it did not include the name of any member of the Canadian medical profession. In this respect, the list was certainly disappointing. There are several outstanding members of the profession in Toronto alone who are deserving of such recognition and whose names we look forward to seeing published at no distant date. We feel that such is due our profession and express the hope that it will not be overlooked.

THE MAYO FOUNDATION

THE Mayo Brothers, of Rochester, Minn., have given the magnificent sum of \$2,000,000 to the Medical School of the University of Minnesota, to be known as the Mayo Foundation. The nature and terms of the proposals have been submitted to the Board of Regents for affiliation of the Mayo Foundation with the Medical School of the University of Minnesota,

and they are, at the date of writing, under consideration. There is considerable opposition to the acceptance of the terms proposed, as the legality of the procedure has been called in question. Whether accepted or not, one thing is certain, that the magnificence of the offer has never been equalled in America, except in the case of the Rockefeller Foundation, and scientific medicine in this country will, forever, owe a debt of gratitude to the liberality of Drs. Will and Charles Mayo.

Canadian Journal of Medicine and Surgery

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Doctors will confer a favor by sending news, reports and papers of interest from any section of the country. Individual experience and theories are also solicited. Contributors must kindly remember that all papers, reports, correspondence, etc., must be in our hands by the first of the month previous to publication.

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