

RETYPE FROM THE ORIGINAL
Quarterly conference October 31, 1901

Comments on Employment of the Defective Classes A.C. Rogers

Discussion

Mr. Leavett:-

Dr. Rogers, what do you think about that?

Dr. Rogers:-

I have, Mr. Chairman, but very little to add to what Dr. Kilbourne has given us. I believe personally in the employment of all defective classes, as far as possible. We would naturally look at the employment from the mental or developmental, as well as the physical standpoint. The cases of defectives who come to Faribault require at least a large number of them the mental training, and it may be a proper classification of education to say that it is that which brings to us knowledge, and teaches us how to do, how to perform. I can hardly think of education without as association of these two functions. Now with a child we know that one of the most important things to do is to teach him to observe, to cultivate the power of observation, and we succeed best when we bring to that child something which, first, arouses its attention, and then can bring to bear upon a large, the largest number of its perspective faculties; a child who hears a thing told does not know it, but if he hears a thing told, if he sees the object, if he touches it, he cultivated his power of observation and has made an impression on his mind which develops and strengthens his memory.

Now, with the feeble minded people, it is especially necessary to bring to bear all the senses possible, both because of the feeble brain and the imperfect nervous system? Another condition we have to contend with as a weak will. Now we all of us instinctively love power; the child who tantalizes and teases another is giving us an example of the love of power, the ability to influence some one else, and he loves to tease and tantalize another child just to see its effects, his power over that child. Now, if we give a child a piece of clay and he learns that he can mould it, and produce forms, he is at once interested; his will power is aroused and he exerts all his senses in that direction. The desire may have been there before, but the will necessary to do was lacking; so if we give him nails and he finds he can make a box, it is just what his heart has desired, and if we go farther and give him other tools, he can make a cart; he is delighted we are teaching him to do as well as to know, so from the educational standpoint we are developing the power of attention and observation, we are developing the memory and we are developing the will.

Now, from the remedial standpoint, we all know very well that if a person exercises properly, he improves his bodily functions, the digestion is improved, the

eliminating processes are performed better, the circulation is improved; so with the patient, the action of the diseased points is relieved and the patient is improved. For this very reason alone, the epileptics are the class which require especial employment; he is a self centered individual; from early childhood he has been subject to parents and friends, and learns to look upon himself as the sole object of his family or neighborhood and the vicinity; he becomes egotistical and selfish. A slight will often throw him into a frenzy. Now employment is very necessary to take him outside of himself, and it is often found that employment is a great remedy. The difficulty, as Dr. Kilbourne has said is to find employment. About ten years ago I was very solicitous to find something for the feebleminded in the climate of Minnesota. There must be occupations to be carried on through the whole year, and there is nothing so well adapted to the feeble minded boy as the occupation of the farm and dairy, so one of the first things to do in an institution for feeble minded is to obtain a good farm and then to get a dairy; the occupation is simple and can easily be learned, and then all products have their own market in the institution. In the climate of Minnesota, it is necessary to supplement farm work by other work during the winter season. In the institution at Faribault, we have the sloyd work in the school work and the more advanced sloyd or carpenter work in the shop; we have the brush work, which at one time was a very profitable industry; in fact so much so that we were obliged to keep the older boys in the shop until ten O'clock at night to fill our orders. Of course there is the general repair work, painting, glazing and other occupations. Then the care of the stock affords employment for a large number of the boys. For the girls we have lace making, which has been referred to, and now under the direction of a seamstress; our older girls are doing a great deal of tailoring work. Then, too, poultry raising is good employment for our girls; at present we have a small chicken house, and I do not care to say more about it. In some institutions the boys are employed in making brick, which is good work when you have the clay for the brick. In one of the institutions in Indiana it is proposed to have a large fruit farm, the girls to care for the small fruit; make preserves of it, and I think this is a good employment.

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