

BOOK REVIEWS

FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS IN CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE—
C. Paget Lapage. with an appendix by Mary Dendy, Manchester; at the University Press, 1911. Pp. 1-359.

This book is written for school medical officers, teachers and social workers who have to deal with the feeble-minded. Its object is stated as threefold. (1) To emphasize the importance of the subject of feeble-mindedness for the welfare of the community. (2) To point out that feeble-mindedness is inherited. (3) To show that the only effective way of dealing with the problem is to provide suitable, lifelong care for the feeble-minded. The history of the movement in England to provide for them is briefly sketched. There are at present three chief agencies. (1) The Lunacy Commissioners and Idiot Asylums. Under the Idiot Act an idiot or imbecile who is under age may be placed by his parents or guardian in any hospital, institution or licensed house registered under this act. The idiot asylum can at present accommodate about seven per cent of this grade of cases, which excludes morons. There are large waiting lists, and cases must be discharged after a term of four to seven years to make room for others. (2) The Poor Law Guardians. The Guardians can deal with idiot paupers, adopt them for life and send them to workhouses or asylums with the consent of the Local Government Board. (3) The Education Authorities. These, with the consent of the parents are empowered but not required to provide for mentally defective children under the age of sixteen. In 1904 a Royal Commission on the care and control of the feeble-minded was appointed, which made the following recommendations in 1908: (1) The establishment of a Central Board of Control. (2) The registration of all mentally defective persons at the office of this board. (3) The appointment of local committees to arrange for the suitable care of defectives on the request from parents or guardians. (4) The regis-

tration and supervision of suitable houses and private homes for defectives. (5) The provision of trained visitors to exercise a supervision over all registered defectives not in colonies or other institutions. (6) The registration and classification of cases under some definite plan.

After this introductory chapter the author deals with the topics usually discussed in books on this subject, in a brief but concise manner. These are: Physical Characteristics, Mental Characteristics, Speech Defects, Special Types, (Mongols, Cretins, etc.), Diagnosis, Prognosis, Treatment and Care, (medical only), The Cell, Reproduction and Heredity, The Conditions of the Brain, Causation, Inherited Factors, Causation, Acquired Factors, Preventative Measures and General Considerations, and an appendix by Mary Dendy on treatment and training, examination of the head and of speech. Some special features of the book may be noted. He observes that the chief causes of speech defects are defects of attention, will, a mental laziness, and of memory. The babbling of normal infants, important for speech development, is often absent in the feeble-minded. The most striking defect is the substitution of one consonant for another, or "lalling." Following Wyllie's classification of the consonants into the "physiological alphabet," he gives percentages of frequency of defect for the different consonants. In the chapter on diagnosis of feeble-mindedness and its different degrees, a more or less definite procedure is outlined, but it does not incorporate any of the newer and more elaborate methods. The discussion on the condition of the brain, and on causation should prove particularly helpful to the general reader. Dividing the causes first into the inherited and the acquired, and defining the inherited as all those that affect the germ plasm before conception, he holds that ninety per cent, of the cases of feeble-mindedness are due to the inherited. The mechanism of these in producing the defects of the brain tissues is explained as a lack of an innate power of the nerve cell to develop, without the intervention of any intermediate processes. In other words, in ninety per cent, of the cases we are dealing with an hereditary arrest, pure and simple. The reasons for this position are sum-

marized under five headings which cannot be reproduced here. To the reviewer they are not entirely convincing. The author's object stated at the outset is more fully discussed and justified in the chapter on preventative measures and general considerations, in which the main recommendations of the Royal Commission are endorsed. To guard society against the feeble-minded and the consequence of their existence at large, lifelong care is essential. For the benefit of the feeble-minded themselves an early diagnosis and commitment is especially desirable. The appendix by Mary Dendy gives a very concrete and quite detailed description on the management of the feeble-minded in an institution.

The book is well written and admirably fulfills its purpose. It should do much towards arousing a fuller appreciation of the importance of the problems incident to the existence of the feeble-minded. It should, and doubtless will find a much wider circle of readers than that to which it is addressed.

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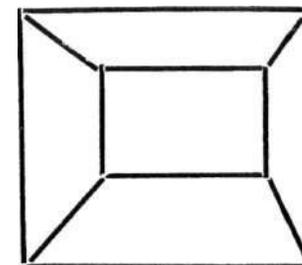
NOUVELLES RECHERCHES SUR LA MESURE DU NIVEAU INTELLECTUEL CHEZ LES ENFANTS D'ECOLE—Alfred Binet. *L'Annee Psychologique*, 1911. Pp. 145-201.

Since the publication in 1908 of the first revision of the Simon-Binet tests for measuring the intelligence of children, the tests have been used by a number of school principals and others in Europe and in America. On the basis of the results, observations, and criticisms thus obtained, Binet now offers a second revision of the tests and further discusses the following questions. (1) What relation is there between the intellectual level and school standing? (2) What effect on the results has the repetition of the examination of the same child? (3) How do teachers generally estimate the intelligence of children? (4) What difference is there in the intelligence of children of different social conditions?

In revising the list of tests some of the old ones are dropped for the following reasons: (1) Some tests were used twice in different age groups and were too similar. (2) Some could be

passed independently of intelligence; these are giving the age, the number of fingers, and naming the days of the week. (3) Some depended too much on schooling; these are reading, writing from copy, and writing from dictation. Tests of the old eleven year group are put into the new twelve year group. No tests are given for the eleven and thirteen years of the old system, and new groups of old and new tests are made up for fifteen years and for adults. The new tests introduced are as follows:

(1) Copying two forms from memory. (Ten year group) The following forms are shown together for ten seconds, and the child then draws them from memory. The test is passed if one is drawn correctly and the other half correctly.



(2) Suggestion of length of lines. (Twelve year group) On each page of a booklet of six pages are a pair of lines side by side and one centimeter apart. On the first page the lines are four and five centimeters long, respectively, on the second page five and six centimeters, and on the third, six and seven centimeters. On the last three pages the lines are equal, seven centimeters. Begin with the first pair and ask, "Which is the longer here?" Repeat the same for the second and third, changing the question to "And here?" for the last three. The test is passed if two of the last three answers are correct.

(3) Difference in meaning of abstract terms. (Adult group) Ask the following: What is the difference between,
 a. Idleness and laziness?
 b. Event and advent?
 c. Evolution and revolution.

This is part of the old thirteen year group.

(4) Passage to summarize from memory. (Adult group)
Read the following passage once slowly and with emphasis, telling the child that he will be asked to repeat from memory the essential meaning of the passage:

"There have been quite different opinions on the value of life. Some esteem it very highly, others, very poorly. It would be more correct to take a middle ground between the two. For, on the one hand, it always gives us less happiness than we wish, while on the other hand, it gives us less misfortunes than others wish for us. It is this mediocrity of life that makes it just and prevents its being radically unjust."

(5) Distinguishing between a president and a king. (Adult group) Tell the person: "There are three principal differences between a king and a president of a republic. What are they?"

No changes in the old system are made in the three to five year groups, inclusive. The revised list is as follows:

SIX YEARS

Distinction between morning and afternoon.
Definition of known objects according to use.
Copying a diamond.
Counting thirteen pennies.
Aesthetic comparison.

SEVEN YEARS

1. Showing right hand and left ear.
2. Describing a picture.
3. Execution of three simultaneous commands.
4. Counting the value of stamps, three one cent and three two cent.
5. Naming four colors.

EIGHT YEARS

Comparing two objects from memory.
Counting backwards from twenty to one.
Recognition of missing parts in pictures of faces.
Giving the date.
Repetition of five numerals.

NINE YEARS

1. Making change, nine cents out of twenty-five (Goddard's Adaptation)
2. Definition better than according to use.
3. Recognition of nine pieces of money.
4. Naming the months of the year.
5. Comprehension of easy questions. (Probably first series of X, 4 of old list.)

TEN YEARS

1. Arranging five weights in the order of their weight.
2. Copying two forms from memory.
3. Criticism of nonsense sentences.
4. Comprehension of difficult questions. (Probably second series of X, 4 of old list.)
5. Using three words in two sentences.

TWELVE YEARS

- Suggestion of length of lines.
Using three words in one sentence.
3. Giving more than sixty words in three minutes.
 4. Defining three abstract words.
 5. Words to put in order.

FIFTEEN YEARS

1. Repetition of seven numerals.
2. Rhyming words.
3. Repetition of one or more sentences with twenty-six syllables.
4. Interpretation of a picture.
5. Problems of diverse facts.

ADULTS

Drawing a cut in a twice folded piece of paper.
Drawing the figure of two juxtaposed triangles.
Distinguishing between a president and a king.
Distinguishing between abstract terms.
Passage to summarize from memory.
The rule for determining the mental age of a child from the

results with the new list of tests is as follows: A child is of the mental age of the last group in which he passes all the tests, plus one year for every five additional tests that he passes beyond this group. The author thinks that the revision will give no important difference in the results, but that it should take less time to make an examination since there are now less tests. Norms for the present list have been obtained from public school children, some of which are given for illustration. They are similar to those published for the 1908 tests, allowing for the fact that in the 1908 tests only children who were "regular" in their school work were tested, while now all were tested just as found in the public schools. By "regular" is meant children who are neither advanced nor back in their school work according to their chronological ages.

Correlating the school standing of ninety-three children, for which he gives figures, with their grade of intelligence as determined by the tests, shows a quite close relation between the two. Only one of superior intelligence, according to the tests, was retarded in school work, and none of inferior intelligence were advanced in their school work. Repeating the tests on the same children at intervals of two weeks gives a slight rise in their grade of intelligence as thus determined. In answer to the question as to how teachers generally estimate the intelligence of children it is pointed out, first, that some of the factors that influence their judgment of intelligence are unconscious, while others are consciously sought. Under the latter class an array of "signs," traits and evidences of intelligence coming under common observation are summarized from answers to a questionnaire sent to a number of teachers. These cannot be reviewed here. He concludes that while judging from such evidence may be sufficient for ordinary school purposes, the results from the present system of tests give a more accurate estimation of intelligence. The intelligence of children varies with parents in different social conditions. Children of the leisure classes and of the rich are more intelligent than children of the poor. This conclusion is reached from a careful analysis of Decroly and Degand's data with these tests. Some of his own results, however, on fifty

children from different social conditions, do not show this correlation, and he concludes that the social differences in this case were probably not great enough to show any effect in the results. From another group of thirty children a superiority of intelligence in the children of the rich is again seen.

In considering the amount of data on the basis of which the present revision of the tests is made, it strikes one that the revision is somewhat premature. The norms for the 1908 tests were from two hundred normal children. The criticisms suggesting defects in the system have come from sources that had less than this on the basis of which to suggest corrections. The new tests that are introduced are also based on hardly more extensive norms than were at hand for the old ones that are dropped from the list. The same holds true for the shifting of some tests from one age group to the other. From the reviewer's experience in examining a thousand feeble-minded children with the 1908 tests, he does not feel that the changes made are for the better in all cases. However, on the whole, the revised list is undoubtedly an improvement over the old one, and no one could be half as well qualified to make revisions on the basis of meagre empirical data as is the author. We welcome, especially, the change making the number of tests in each group beyond the five year group the same, and regret that this was not done for the four and five year groups also. It eliminates some inherent difficulties in determining the mental age from the results according to the rules given. The old system was also undoubtedly too pretentious in attempting to measure the small differences in mental development between the higher ages, from about nine to thirteen. The new system increases the age units it attempts to measure for the upper part of the scale, and is surely a change in the right direction.

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