

No one in the association has been so closely and so long identified by personal and family connection with the work for the feeble-minded in this country. His passing produces an unusually profound sorrow in the hearts of all who knew him.

A later number of the Journal will contain a more extended notice of him and the Lakeville institution, which latter is quite unique in the history of American institutions.

Mrs. Knight has been asked by the authorities to assume executive control of the institution.

SELF-SUPPORTING FEEBLE-MINDED

The larger recognition of the two facts of (a) the very large number of feeble-minded, and (b) the large expense of segregation, gives rise to the discussion of various plans for meeting the situation, most of them old ones. The placing of feeble-minded in private families and the organization of self-supporting colonies are two plans quite frequently referred to, but often without a clear comprehension of the situation or the experience of the past.

It is quite natural for one who sees the various kinds of work done by the trained feeble-minded of the higher grades, to assume that the persons who can do such things are quite competent to go out into the world and get along independently. They could, of course, if they were not feeble-minded. That fact seems to be lost sight of. In other words, the condition of mental defect involved in the term itself, implies an inability to cope with the economic and social requirements of life. All around us are failures of this very kind. The largest part of the population of our institutions for defectives comes from this class of social and economic failures.

Our training schools for the feeble-minded do not perform any miracles. Their function is to determine the capacity of the child and train the limited capacity. What he does, any one, of course, could do and that with only a fraction of the training the feeble-minded receive, if of normal mind, and possessed of a de-

sire to do it. Possibly this practical training of manual and industrial capacity has been too much neglected in the public schools in the past; in any event, it is the practical thing for the mentally deficient. On the other hand, the higher faculties by the exercise of which the individual adjusts himself to the requirements of life, are not his. He lacks in judgment, self-control, ability to adjust himself to changed conditions, and usually inability to maintain sustained effort or continuity of purpose. Only in a very limited way does he recognize the relation between cause and effect, or perceive the relation which his little world of employment bears to the general scheme of which it is a part.

With those whose business it is to anticipate his shortcomings and his overdoings, he gets along very well. The first thought of the uninformed observer is, "That child would do all right in any good family." Placed in a family, if in one familiar with his previous untrained condition, his acquired ability to do, is noteworthy and seems to promise success. While under the stimulus of close observation and friendly encouragement, things move smoothly if the requirements are not too exacting. Left to carry out instructions or to work independently the lack of dependability is soon manifest. If a boy at work on the *arm, he forgets to shut the gate and the cattle get into the corn; a broken harness is tied up with one of the lines; the plow is left at the distant side of the field when the day's work is done. though it will be needed in a different field in the other direction on the next morning, and in bringing it the clevis is lost, and thus two hours are wasted in getting to work. If a girl at work in the house, in divers ways the same lack of forethought and a marked maladjustment of acts to occasions, are characteristic. Thus what is condoned in the mental deficient when considered as such, becomes hopelessly unbearable to the ordinary family, when the offender is expected to be a dependable factor in the family economy. Of course there are occasional families imbued with the missionary spirit that patiently bear with such shortcomings, but they are rare, and the number is too inadequate to be a factor in any general placing plan. Neither is there

any indication of such a growth of altruism that the placing out scheme will be feasible in the near future.

The self-supporting colony idea needs to be explained. If one means by this that it is possible to train a group of boys in handicraft or soil tillage and organize of them a self-supporting institution, there is no reason why such a scheme could not be made to work if the boys all belonged to the high grade moron group. One can imagine that there might be local conditions that might justify such an organization, but this is not meeting the great problem of the feeble-minded. The moron group is the smallest by far in the present population of institutions for defectives and their productive industry in the general village community does them the same credit there that it would any where else, without the necessity of duplicating the organization. Individually they are of more importance in the village community than in general society. In the former they find higher grade employment such as printing and mechanical construction and their services there are needed.

In the general population, morons probably constitute the largest group of mental defectives—though many of them are not generally recognized as such. It is this fact that suggests the organization of special industrial communities for the higher mental grades. Whether justified in any given community or not would depend upon the facts in that case, but the larger problem should not be lost sight of.

The essential thing, of course, is to recognize the limitations as well as the possibilities and to meet the conditions in a broad and comprehensive manner.

A. C. Rogers.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Experimental Studies of Mental Deficiency. A Critique of the Binet-Simon Tests and a Contribution to the Psychology of Epilepsy.
J. E. WALLACE WALLIN, Ph. D., Baltimore: Warwick and York, Inc., 1912. Pp. VI+155- Price, \$1.25.

This monograph reports the results of examining 333 epileptics of the Skillman New Jersey, institution with the 1908 series of the Binet-Simon tests together with those of several other tests used at the same time. A final chapter gives a statement of the tests to serve as a practical guide in their

administration, more fully standardizing modes of procedure and of interpreting responses than is given in the original account of Binet and Simon.

The first chapter presents the data on a distribution curve giving the number of cases that fall under each of the mental ages of the Binet-Simon scale. This curve is compared with the similar curve for 378 feeble-minded at Vineland, New Jersey. The comparison shows that the greater number of the feeble-minded are of the imbecile grade while the greater number of the epileptic are of the moron grade; that while the curve for the former is fairly regular that for the epileptic is markedly skewed, showing a drop in the number of cases mentally five, and a still greater drop for the number of cases mentally nine. The larger part of the monograph is devoted to a minute analysis of the results in discussion of this skewed character of the curve, since this might indicate defects in the system of tests or in the manner of their use. Two possible reasons are given for the relatively greater number of morons with the epileptics as compared with the feeble-minded. (1) The epileptics were chronologically older than the feeble-minded at Vineland, and because of some chronological age influence in the tests the epileptics would tend to grade higher than the feeble-minded. (2) The epileptics at the Skillman institution may not have been representative, some selective process having operated tending to admit a relatively greater number of morons. But even with these possibilities taken into account, the author concludes that the epileptic are of a higher grade mentally than are the feeble-minded. This conclusion, although possibly quite correct, does not seem to me to follow from the data given by the author. There are undoubtedly many more morons with the feeble-minded than of the other grades, just as with the epileptics. This follows from the supposition that the smaller deviations from any normal will occur more frequently than the larger deviations. The fact that the number belonging to the different grades of feeble-minded does not give us the normal distribution curve to be expected rather indicates that some selective process has been operative here also in the admission of cases. This comes about through the fact that the average layman sees the need of admitting a case to an institution the less the more nearly normal a case is. In the case of the epileptic, however, the epilepsy is an additional reason for sending a case to a special institution for care and treatment, and this reason applies equally to all grades of mentality of the epileptic. Hence there are more moron epileptic in the institutions, admitted for their epilepsy, because there are more moron epileptic in society, but there are not more morons, admitted for their feeble-mindedness, in the special institutions.

Several possible reasons are first given for the skewed, character of the distribution curve. The factors responsible for it "may reside in the method of giving the tests, in the method of scoring in the defective nature or arrangement of the tests themselves in the peculiar mental organization of the epileptic, or in the averaging of the results for both defective children and defective adults." The detailed analysis of the results following, including