

# The Journal of Psycho-Asthenics.

VOL. II.

JUNE, 1898.

NO. 4.

A quarterly journal, devoted to the education and care of the Feeble-Minded and the care and treatment of Epileptics. Published under the auspices of the Association of Officers of American Institutions for Feeble-Minded.

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(Entered at the Postoffice at Faribault, Rice Co., Minn., as second class matter.)

## EDITORIAL.

### DOES THE EDUCATION OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED PAY?

In 1883 Governor Butler, of Massachusetts, in his message to the Legislature, referred to the School for Feeble-Minded in the following language :

"When the State shall have sufficiently educated every bright child within its borders, it will be time enough to undertake the education of the idiotic and feeble-minded. I submit that this attempt to reverse the irrevocable decree as to 'the survival of the fittest' is not even kindness to the poor creatures who are at this school. Give them an asylum with good and kind treatment; but not a school. The report from that school shows that none of its pupils have been made self-supporting by its teachings. The report further shows that those in whom some spark of intelligence has been awakened, have become so ashamed of their school that when they write to their parents they beg for paper and envelopes which have not its card upon it. That is, they have been educated simply enough to know of their deficiencies and be ashamed of them-

selves and their surroundings. We do not contribute to their happiness by giving them that degree of knowledge. A well-fed, well-cared for idiot, is a happy creature. An idiot awakened to his condition is a miserable one.

An occasional skeptic on the question of schools for feeble-minded is the excuse for referring to this sentiment.

Whatever may have been the motive for these strictures, or the condition of the School at South Boston at that time, it is a significant fact that the school soon after started upon a career of expansion and has since grown, not only in the extent and character of its work, but in its influence upon the processes of education as applied to the feeble-minded in other states.

It would seem, it is true, that the law of the "survival of the fittest" is largely ignored in the education of the feeble-minded, and it is also true that many children possessing feeble minds are exceedingly sensitive concerning their relation to the school. According to the observation of the writer, however, those children who are the most sensitive about being considered pupils of a school for feeble-minded, are among the brightest and the most capable. This condition is not a reflection upon the training of the school per se, or the selection of the children in attendance. The Governor overlooked, and doubtless was ignorant of the fact, that nearly all feeble-minded children suffer continually, both mentally and morally, from forced comparisons with normal children until they receive the friendly protection of the school. They not only suffer this continual torture, but this is in itself a serious obstacle to improvement, because of the repulsive attitude the children therefrom assume toward their environments. Their general condition in the school, as is well known by all who have given the matter any attention, is one of happiness and contentment. It will thus be seen that we have in one case a few children in the schools sensitive about their association, but developed to a self-supporting condition: in the other, the great majority of feeble-minded children, at first sensitive, then irritable and finally callous and ugly in disposition, a helpless burden to their friends and a nuisance to the neighborhood.

There is often, it is true, an overweening confidence that borders upon officiousness and that inspires the possessor to as-

same responsibilities far beyond his capacity ; yet that is true often of normal minds after the completion of a college course. As the college boy must go through an education in the practical affairs of life, so must our boys and girls in the schools for feeble-minded go through an experience that leaves them more or less completely to their own resources, before they learn their own true capacities and limitations.

As to the actual degree of independence developed, we shall hope to say something later.

#### THE VINELAND MEETING.

The meeting in May at Vineland, N. J., was very satisfactory in attendance and interest. Only a very few of the older, living members were absent and several new members were present for the first time. The more formal papers and addresses were: The "Annual Address of President," Dr. Geo. Brown, Barre, Mass.; "Nasal Reflexes and the Aggravation of Mental Symptoms in the Feeble-Minded," Dr. J. Madison Taylor, Philadelphia ; "Physical Anomalies of the Feeble-Minded," Dr. A. W. Wilmarth, Chippewa Falls, Wis.; "Adenoma Sebaceum," Dr. M. W. Barr, Elwyn, Pa.; "The Educated Imbecile," Dr. S. J. Fort, Ellicot City, Md.; "Locating Needles by the X-Ray," Dr. A. C. Rogers, Faribault, Minn.;" "Some Thoughts on Teaching the Idiot," Mrs. Eldridge, Lapeer, Mich.; "A Winter in Sloyd," Miss Lucile Gilman, St. Cloud, Minn.

The best feature of the meeting was the good feeling and enthusiasm of the members and the active part and interest taken in the proceedings by all. The social features were delightful and the association has seldom been honored by such elaborate and such well executed plans for entertainment as it found at the New Jersey School for Feeble-Minded Women, with Dr. Mary J. Dunlap in charge. The minutes of the meeting will be printed in full in the next number.

#### THE MEETING FOR 1899.

Everyone realizes the impossibility of properly preparing a paper for publication or public discussion during the last few days

prior to its delivery, unless, at least, the data for its preparation has been collected and under consideration for a long time. It was proposed at Vineland that a few subjects be assigned one year in advance, although these were not to interfere in any way with any other material that might appear or be desirable later, nor with the liberty of any one else to choose his own subject later. A committee appointed for the purpose made the following assignments, after consultation with the members present: "The Sell-Supporting Imbecile," Alex. Johnson; "Paralytic Idiocy," Dr. W. E. Fernald; "Cases of Idiocy without Physical Defects," Dr. S. J. Fort; "The Use of Nature Studies in Sense Training," E. lb Johnstone; "The Study of the Blood in Idiocy," Dr. A. W. Wilmarth; "Circulatory Anomalies in Idiocy," Dr. W. A. Polglase; "The Thyroid Treatment of Cretinism," Dr. J. M. Murdoch ; "Legal Control of the Feeble-Minded." Dr. A. C. Rogers. These subjects were assigned because of the announced interest of the persons present in the subjects assigned to them respectively. It was desired by the committee that especial attention be given during the year to these subjects by their authors, with a view to presenting the results of a year's study and investigation at the meeting in New York. In the meantime, let it be distinctly understood that this proposed programme is in no way to exclude anyone else or any other subject. The Secretary takes this method of reminding the members who have assignments of their topics, and of requesting any others, to select their topics as early as possible, so that ample time may be given to their consideration.

From N. Y. Tribune.

#### DEATH OF DR. E. C. SEGUIN.

We referred in the last number to the will of Dr. E. C. Seguin. The following brief sketch of his life was published in the Daily Tribune of March 21st:

" Dr. Edward Constant Seguin, the well-known physician, of No. 47 West Fiftieth st., New York, died on Feb. 19th, 1898. Dr. Seguin was born in Paris, France, in 1843. He was the only child of Dr. Edward O. Seguin, whose brother, father and several rela-