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PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL ADDRESS.

*at* defectiveness and dependency. And the great problem finally is how to put an end to it all. None of us will live to see that day, perhaps it will never come, but the time ought to come when the number of our criminals, insane, feeble-minded, and so on, shall be very greatly reduced; and that is the great labor, and I observe that one of the conference papers to be read by a lady in Duluth is devoted to the subject how charity may finally be dispensed with by means of the better training of the youth.

This conference is migratory; it moves from place to place. One year in St. Cloud, the next in Stillwater, the next in Minneapolis, and so on, and this year it is the pleasure of the conference to assemble in this most picturesque of the cities of Minnesota. And we came here for one purpose,—to stir up Duluth. Not that Duluth needs stirring up any more than any other city; they all need stirring up; but we come here particularly to stir up Duluth at this time, to arouse interest, if possible, in the objects of the conference; and we come here also to be stirred up. We expect to gain inspiration from what we shall hear and see. And thanking you again. Mr. President, for the cordial welcome extended by our reverend brother, I take my scat.

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BY DR. A. C. ROGERS, FARIBAULT.

Minnesota is one of the few states that began early in its history to comprehensively grasp its charitable and correctional problems, and this fact is no insignificant factor as a cause of its wonderful prosperity. Without attempting anything critical or exhaustive, I had thought of presenting a sort of panoramic view of some of its institutions, especially those under the management of the state, with such cursory comments as they have suggested to me.

Dependent Children.—Beginning with the children, this state has assumed that every child should be brought up in a good home, and so (since 1880) it gathers up the outcast and neglected ones, takes them to the beautiful, temporary home at Owatonna, where it feeds, clothes and educates them till permanent homes can be secured.

The facts that (1) the provisions of the law are so broad in application as to miss no child in need, if the authorities are true to their trusts; (2) that the most thoroughly disinterested officer of each county holds the authority to determine the necessities of each case, including the question of separation from parents; (3) that the object of the whole scheme is to place neglected and abandoned children in normal families, rather than to retain them in the institution; (4) that the state holds them under absolute control till of age, and can thus remedy at once any mistake made in placing them; (5) that the state keeps thoroughly posted concerning them, and does readjust their placing as occasion requires—are some of the salient features of this work. That there should have been received under state guardianship to Jan. 1, 1890, 1,824 children, indicates the breadth of the work; and that 83 per cent of the 304, at that time past the age of supervision, should have developed into excellent manhood and womanhood is a fact that can be fully appreciated only by a consideration of the probable results had these 304 children grown up amid the environments from which the most of them were rescued. To what extent county commissioners are watchful of their

duty, and how wisely the judges of probate exercise their authority in annulling parental guardianship are questions that would be of interest to learn.

The reformatory and penal system of Minnesota has certainly been wisely organized and developed.

The school at Red Wing, by recognizing the importance of accidental environment in determining the commitment of many of its pupils, has happily adopted the name of Training School, significant of its rational aim to educate its pupils, largely by establishing industrious habits and independence of character. But this rational work would be very incomplete without the further plan of supervision after discharge, now in vogue, the extending of the helping hand when most needed. What is true of Red Wing is equally true of St. Cloud, so far as the final purposes are concerned. Even the veteran institution at Stillwater (that ranks historically with the capital at St. Paul), that would, under the old idea, be simply the home for the hopeless criminal, who would pursue the weary round of daily toil to the predetermined end, without hope of variation or redress, rationally treats its unfortunate inmates as though possessing still some elements of manhood and some ambition to respond to the effort at education and the application of the indeterminate sentence and parole system.

The secretary of the state board of charities states that there is a constant improvement in the jails of the state, both as to sanitary conditions and classification of inmates. As the counties are becoming more prosperous and new jails are constructed, the authorities are looking around for advice as to better methods of arrangement and construction, and under the present law they have a perpetual source of information in the board.

There is still room for improvement in some quarters, but the encouraging feature is the increased desire to improve. St. Louis county, I understand, early took its place in the front rank.

Minnesota has its state board of charities that, having no managerial authority over its institutions, can stand between them and the public, and serving the interests of both, when misunderstandings occur, by being in perfect touch with both, and possessing the facilities for acquiring accurate information concerning every detail of the former, and with no bias and no interest to serve except that of the truth and the welfare of the state.

As to the poorhouses, the board of charities claims that the entirely dependent poor have not been sufficiently numerous in the state to make their care generally a serious problem, and only a few of the counties have poorhouses, and some of them are practically empty.

The proper treatment, care and disposition of the insane, the feeble-minded and the epileptic are the great problems of the state's charities. The management of the insane and the management of the feeble-minded each involves its own peculiar problems. It would seem that the rational principles involved in the treatment of the insane are (1) careful diagnosis, (2) care and treatment of each case from first to last, as a mentally sick person, with that nice adjustment of medication, nursing, diet, social intercourse and restraint, rest and employment that the peculiarities of each case suggest.

The nearer the daily life of the individual approaches that of the normal family the better it is for that individual. With the defective classes that

conformity is practically impossible; hence the necessary evil of the institution organization. As the probabilities of safe and permanent restoration to society increase, the advisability of nearer approach to normal life increases, as does also the willingness of the public to pay the greater expense of care and treatment. As the chances decrease the reverse is true. The diversity of opinions as to methods arises principally from the different values that different people place upon these conditions.

Whether the "county system" or the "colony system" as such should be adopted, it is not in my province to discuss. The question is already before the public, and the various advocates of the two systems have been, and will still be, heard from, and we must depend upon the representatives of the people in the legislature to finally determine this point.

Among the younger charities is that which gathers up the feebly gifted and the simple-minded children of the state—children always, in their mental heritage—and nurses and trains them to the limit of their capacities. Because this work is so little understood is my apology for some special explanation of its nature and purposes. The school for feeble-minded at Faribault is not the "institute for defectives," as many think, but is a department of the same; its objects are to educate all children who, by reason of mental deficiency, cannot be educated in the public schools, and to make a home for those incapable of mental development. It, therefore, consists of two quite distinct departments, viz., that of training and that of custodial care, and yet their functions are ultimately similar. These people present a problem quite distinct, in the main, from that of all other classes. These are children with eyes, but they see not as others see; they have ears, but their interpretation of sounds is not complete. Their mental images are dim and their retention uncertain. Handicapped from the start, they fall constantly behind their normal brothers and sisters. If possessed of quiet, confiding natures, they become the prey of the mischief-maker. If of nervous, excitable, aggressive temperaments, they constantly annoy and even injure their playmates. They are the objects of unceasing care and solicitude on the part of the mother, and they are the *bete noir* of the teacher. These unwelcome visitors that enter the families of both the rich and poor, unlike the other children of the state, seem to have no place in the home. They are misfits of both the family and the school, and no amount of shaping of which they are susceptible ever fits them for a normal place, either in the family, the social or the business world. This fact is at the foundation of the distinctive feature of the school for feeble-minded, viz., that it is essentially a permanent home for all classes of feeble-mindedness. The explanation of this is not far to seek. The feeble-minded child lacks the capacity for normal development. Placed under patient teachers and caretakers who understand his nature, and have the facilities for his training, he can in a large percentage of cases become a useful person within a narrow range of activities, but his limit and range are soon reached. He will always lack in the higher mental qualities of comparison and judgment, and will possess but little power of adaptation to circumstances. Thrown upon his own resources, he cannot cope with his more astute brother and quickly sinks to the level of the vagrant and tramp, and not infrequently to that of the criminal. What is true of the feeble-minded boy is true of the girl, with the additional fact that her sphere of self-helpfulness is still more limited and her moral degradation

almost certain. In the family, though he may have developed under training the manner and behavior of a gentleman, and perform promptly and accurately the simple occupations he has learned, his parents must take him into account in all their plans and give him practically the same oversight and direction that they do their normal child of four or five. If the family is of a high social station, their defective child is necessarily excluded from publicity and cared for upon the side. If he belongs to the family of the day laborer, mechanic or farmer, the father is seriously hampered in the pursuit of his daily vocation if he gives his child the care and attention that he requires, and the mother usually finds it beyond her ability to control him. Even in those cases where the parents can and gladly do give their time and affection to the welfare of their unfortunate offspring, a time comes, not infrequently, when they must leave him to others. With very rare exceptions, neither distant relatives nor strangers will exercise the patience and charity necessary to maintain the care and control of a feeble-minded child, even when they are financially able to do so. Some will; the majority will not.

Hence the school of feeble-minded no longer, as a rule, encourages the plan of sending its educated pupils back to their homes. In cases where they have good homes and their people are so situated that they will give them the necessary supervision, well and good. When they do go out, its policy is to keep informed, so far as possible, of their condition and welfare. But the great majority must remain at the school. The boys can perform very successfully, under supervision, the simple operations of the farm and garden, including the care of the stock and the handling of the work teams; and as the general institution is a convenient market for all the agricultural and dairy products produced, the farm colony is a very important feature of such an institution. Thus the training department, with its kindergarten, its schools, its sloyd, the asylum for the helpless, the farm, garden, dairy and shop, with their several accessories for suitable employment, amusement and recreation, and the opportunities for social and moral uplifting, together form a veritable "village of the simple" where they may live in happy contentment the allotted portion of their days, no longer disturbers of the general social system, and "where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage."

It seems to me that the treatment of the poor, according to the associated charities plan, which involves the thorough investigation of every application, and which seeks to avoid pauperizing and to stimulate self-helpfulness, is rational and right, and yet how difficult to convince many intelligent and influential people of the necessity of this course. It is advocated and discussed in nearly all gatherings of this kind, national, state, district and local, and yet indiscriminate giving, or worse—the giving for personal or political advantage—without regard to the principles of justice or ultimate self-helpfulness, do much to counteract the beneficial results of the associated charities and to mislead the public as to its real purposes and methods. In the smaller towns of the state it is very difficult to keep up any charity organization, principally because the work of investigation must almost necessarily be gratuitous.

Although the present times are prosperous, we should keep up the process of education on the principle that we should prepare for war in times of peace.

One class of very unfortunate people Minnesota is still only providing for, viz., the epileptics. Of the large number in the state, about 100 are cared for at St. Peter and Fergus Falls each, about 15 at Rochester and 100 at Faribault. Their presence with either the insane or feeble-minded is unfortunate for both, and the epileptics themselves. As their claim will form a special topic for one session of the conference, I will not dwell upon it further than to say that every feeling of charity prompts and impels toward the extension of success to this class. This disease is generally incurable, and according to experience and the best modern light upon the subject, the regular life of a well organized "colony" or village community of epileptics, with medical treatment as an adjunct, will do all that can be done, viz., minimize the number and severity of the spasms, cure the occasional case, and render the existence of all useful and happy, and at the worst, more endurable.

Civil Service—Excellent beginnings of a civil service have been made in the state institutions of Minnesota. The training classes and graduated payrolls for nurses and attendants that have existed in some of them for several years are notable illustrations. I believe similar appropriate training can and should be provided for other classes of employment. I believe, with Professor Ely, that any position of public trust should require for its incumbent not merely a formal examination as to apparent qualifications, but a distinct and severe course of training that shall prepare him for the highest possible efficiency of service. While this may be too utopian for immediate realization in civil administration, in no places are the circumstances more favorable for carrying out this plan than in our institutions, where large numbers are employed in a diversity of service. Each institution requires specialists of its own kind. The firm discipline of the prison must become more elastic in the juvenile reformatory, where characters are less completely formed, and could have no application in the hospital for insane, where all apparent perversity is recognized as a disease and directly opposed only in so far as the safety to life and limb of patient and nurse may require. The dependent child must find in its teachers and matrons the inspirations and consolations that the homes and the public schools supply to his more fortunate brother and sister. The attendant who is responsible for a group of feeble-minded or idiotic children cannot make a success of her work unless she not only becomes versed in the arts of nursing and the routine care of children, but she must be possessed of a fund of maternal love and sympathy that attracts and controls like magic her innocent family. She must be a mother as well as a nurse. The training process thus serves to sift out the temperamentally unfitted before they are permitted to assume independent responsibility that would surely result in a lowered service and might result in abuse or scandal. The position of a care taker in any of our public institutions is a professional one, and carries with it the success or failure of the institution itself. The hospital patient is even more dependent upon the nurse for his welfare than upon the physician, and so in each case the inmate is more completely dependent upon the person who lives with him than upon the supervising officer.

A carefully classified service with preliminary training does not increase the expense in proportion to the betterment of the service, if indeed it does at all. Competent help should be well paid, and their tenure permanent so

almost the standard is maintained. Incompetent help should not be employed at any price, and there should be sufficient period of probation, with a small wage, if any, to insure no mistake in advancement. This could easily be afforded by the applicant because he has in view the good wages and permanent employment awaiting if once proven competent and qualified. To the extent that increased expense was commensurate with increased efficiency, there would be no fear of the public that pays the bills, for while economy is justly and properly made much of in public print and address, I should prefer to take my chances with the public with an increased per capita with an honest administration and efficient service than with a low per capita with either a dishonest administration or an inefficient service.

So far I have referred only to some of the working details of the vast machinery that is dealing with some of the abnormal conditions of humanity. It is right that this machinery be kept in first-class condition, with up-to-date improvements and with skilled operators to direct and supervise it, but it is the duty of every intelligent man and woman to peer critically into our social systems for the purpose of discovering, as far as possible, the causes of these conditions. We have a right, I think, to assert that all forms of mental defect and alienation and many forms of criminality (when the latter has not been the result of deliberate education) are the results of congenital deficiency or instability—a deficiency or unsymmetrical apportionment of the elements that compose the wonderful organization known as man. We thus have a right, as scientists, and as persons having the best welfare of the race at heart, to look very critically into their antecedents. If the deficiency is marked at birth, we put the child into a class. If the adult breaks down mentally, we put him into another class. If he violates the moral or statutory code, we put him into still another class. Unfortunately, however, no man is able to determine with very great precision who are competent to beget perfectly healthy offspring. It ought to be perfectly clear to any disinterested person that people who have already been "weighed in the balance and found wanting" should be excluded from the duties and privileges of parenthood. The public is rapidly coming to this conviction, and if some of the always difficult questions of determining the disposition of the borderland cases can be settled satisfactorily, we shall expect our legal friends and legislators to bring about statutory provisions in support of this idea.

Let us not, however, think that legislation of any kind will reach the root of the matter. We are not willing to admit that the best civilization is necessarily a producer of degeneracy, but we must admit that there creep into our civilization many things tolerated and even encouraged which are fruitful of it. The slums are not the only sources of degeneracy: it is found abundantly in the path of all forms of selfish ambition. The mad rush for wealth that sacrifices all helpful growth of body and soul in the mere pleasure of getting is an influential factor. This is an age of excitement; of over-stimulation, and yet he who would slacken his pace dare not, for fear he will be outdone in the race. In this connection, and because the boy is father to the man, I wish to refer to two things discussed by Dr. Jones of Chicago, at the Illinois State Conference last October, by quoting a few lines from his address upon certain dangers to the "children of the state," viz., "indolence" and "overweening self-consciousness," so often developed in the rearing of children:

"The depths of degradation await the indolent. The most disorderly explosions of pent-up passions and unreleased power follow in the wake of enforced idleness. So profound is this danger that even the Satan that can find 'some work for idle hands to do' is a benefactor and a friend, for the moment he puts his pupils to work he becomes to them a teacher who will lead them to the light. There is no law of life more fundamental than that of motion. Action in its very nature is salutary, and labor is the first and last great schoolmaster. Toil of any kind, so it engages the attention, directs the energies, develops the organs of the child's mind or body, is beneficent, while its counterpart, indolence, is always inevitably malignant, debilitating and destructive. There can be no development, mental, spiritual or physical, except by exercise. I do not mean spasmodic, reluctant, intermittent task-doing, but I do mean spontaneous, systematic, continuous exercise. \* \* \* The whole anxiety of the parent seems to be for some fresh diversion, some new indolence, which they call entertainment, rather than some absorbing activity, some engrossing and overmastering task. \* \* \* The health of the child is curtailed in occupation, the safety of the saint is represented by it, and the progress of humanity is dependent upon it. \* \* \* The school has its tasks, but it has no occupations. It has its hypothetical six hours for its study, but no industry. The safety of the state lies in the occupation of its children. Occupation is not drudgery. There is an overwork that is killing, but the danger from work—any work, all work—is trifling, compared with the greater dangers of indolence. \* \* \*

"The second danger to the state and to the child that I have in mind, is that overweening self-consciousness. It would seem as though the school and street alike conspire in these days to develop prigs, sprouting little upstarts. Our communities are full of poor little boys and girls awakened prematurely out of the blessed sleep of unconsciousness into the feverish life of the egotist, their little hearts torn with social anxieties for fear of Mrs. Grundy. They are jealous of their place and ambitious for recognition, and, striving to be at the head of the line, they are kept awake by anxiety about their 'standing.' All the great organs of the body are planted deep below their consciousness. The high functions of brain, heart and lungs and their associate organs are carried on automatically, unconsciously. Alas for the man who is conscious of his stomach! Still more pity for the man, woman or child who is forever conscious of his soul or solicitous for his mind, ever studying self before the glass, or parading himself before hypothetical admiring mirrors. \* \* \* Egoism is sad in the nursery as it is on the floors of congress, and in both places it defeats normal action, discounts strength, mars happiness. \* \* \* Beautiful colors of the petals are elaborated in the dark, and they are marred, if not spoiled, by any disturbing violence done to the bud. Anything that has a tendency to emphasize the peculiarity or set undue emphasis upon the personality of any child is cruelty to the child.

"If these two dangers really exist, we are prepared to discover at least two of the conditions which it becomes the duty of the state to secure for its wards, to provide for its children—and all the children belong to the state—viz., a maximum of activity consistent with the necessary reactions of rest and recuperation, and that privacy, that benign neglect, that wise non-attendance that will give the soul a chance to develop, the mind to find itself by reflection, meditation; in short, give the child a chance to grow, as all growths must come largely through induction, unconsciousness."

As the throttle of the powerful locomotive turns on the steam, the heavy freight train winds steadily up the mountain side. When standing idly by the station this trundle power wastes itself upon the air. He who would live only for excitement may go to Paris and easily disappear in the furnace heat of dissipation. Paris, that great city, but if he would seek sturdy, wholesome manhood and womanhood, in that same France he would find it among the plain rural peasantry. Sober, quiet, industrious, temperate and righteous living is the best known preventive of degeneracy, and he who does most to promote it is the greatest philanthropist.