

Great differences exist, even in normal minds. The mind of a genius, such as Shakespeare, Newton or Plato, is very different from that of an agricultural labourer, and yet these are all normal minds—describing a normal mind as one which enables its possessor to perform his duties as a citizen in that position of life to which he is born.

From this, it follows that feeble-minded persons are those who from birth or from an early age are so mentally defective, that while capable of guarding themselves against common physical dangers, and perhaps earning their living under favourable circumstances, they are incapable (a) of competing on equal terms with their fellows; and (b) of managing themselves and their affairs with ordinary prudence.

Dr. Exley quoted the rival theories of Sherlock and Tredgold—the first of whom holds that there is a gradual descent from the normal mind to the feeble-minded, and the imbecile to the idiot; while the latter holds that there is an impassable gulf between the lowest normal mind and the highest ament; that, in fact, weak-mindedness is not a mere subtraction from the normal.

While the most ignorant agricultural labourer is uniformly dull and stupid, he has still sufficient common sense to look after his interests and hold his own in that sphere of life in which Nature has placed him. Not so the feeble-minded persons. The mildest of these may show no apparent dulness, he may even be bright and vivacious, and in some of his abilities superior to the clod-hopper, but the other faculties of his mind are not present in like proportion. Instead of harmonious working of the different faculties of the mind, there is discord; and in the possession of that essential to independent existence—common-sense—he is lacking, and the want can never be supplied.

A table, showing number of weak-minded persons in England and Wales, was exhibited, from which it appeared that there were 138,929 or 4.03 per 1,000 of the population, or 1 in 248 persons.

Dr. Exley submitted three propositions for consideration:

- (1) The really feeble-minded person will always remain feeble-minded.
- (2) As feeble-minded persons cannot compete with their normal fellows in the battle of life, nor manage themselves or their affairs with ordinary prudence, they make for national weakness and national degeneracy.
- (3) The terrible results of feeble-minded men and women becoming parents is of vital importance to the very existence as a nation.

Diagrams were exhibited, showing the family histories of the feeble-minded, from all of which it appeared that one dominant, unfailing law prevails, *viz.*, that the unfit breed the unfit. The treatment of the feeble-minded is dealt with under (1) over-sight, (2) certification, and (3) permanent detention; and the lecturer made an

appeal to his audience to take up this question earnestly, to study it carefully, and to use their influence as citizens to help forward legislation on this subject.

A very happy meeting of the Bath Branch of the N.S.U. took place at Casa Bianca last week by invitation of Miss Stokes, about fifty members and friends were present and a very helpful address was given by the Rector of Charlcombe, after which there was music and tea.

THE BOVINE BACILLUS.

Dr. Nathan Raw, of Liverpool, seems to have presented an extraordinarily interesting paper at the Public Health Congress, at Paris last week, in the section of bacteriology and comparative pathology, on human and bovine tuberculosis. "The adult human," he said, "is more or less non-susceptible to infection by the bovine bacillus, but especially susceptible to the human bacillus. The reverse is the case with children. He concluded, therefore, that the great mass of tuberculosis occurring in the human subject is caused by the human bacillus, and is conveyed by infection. On the contrary, a considerable amount of so-called surgical tuberculosis in children and adults is caused by the bovine bacillus received into the alimentary canal through milk and food.

"For the last ten years," continued the doctor, "I have separated my wards in hospital into human and bovine wards. It is rare to find lesions of the two types in the same patient." He considers that a mild infection by bovine bacilli protects against the other. Thus, large numbers of people are immunised against pulmonary tuberculosis from having been infected in childhood by bovine bacilli through milk and food.

REFLECTIONS

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.

The honorary treasurer of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund has just received a donation of £10,000 from Mr. Edwin Tate for the endowment of the research.

On Sunday next, being Hospital Sunday, the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs of the City will attend Divine service at Westminster Abbey in the morning, St Paul's Cathedral in the afternoon (when the Lord Chancellor and some of his Majesty's Judges will also be present), and the City Temple in the evening.

The Board of Management of the Metropolitan Convalescent Institution announce that at the Home for Adults at Walton, near Weybridge, twenty-four beds are now provided for patients requiring surgical treatment after operation.

Queen Alexandra has consented to open the new wing, which will bear her name, at the British Home and Hospital for Incurables, Streatham. While as yet the date of the function has not been

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