

the most potent predisposing cause of nervous and mental diseases. It commonly underlies all other causes. Without it there would be little degeneracy in the world. If all hereditary tendencies to mental and nervous unsoundness and defects could be counteracted, humanity might breathe freely. It must be understood, however, that it is not any special nervous or mental defect or disturbance that is inherited, but that it is either a general defect of brain nutrition, or an instability of working in the higher nerve cells—in fact, an unstable nervous system.”

THE LEGACY OF PRECEDING GENERATIONS.

As children inherit the outward bodily configuration of their parents, and the more hidden weakness of certain organs, so moral dispositions and tendencies may descend from father to son. “The majority of parents,” we read, “are surprised when they find defects of character in their children not due either to force of example or faults of education, and want to know where they come from. Parents ought to know that the faults which they detect in their children depend on their native mentality, and that there is nothing innate within them that is not the legacy of preceding generations. When they discover in their children some intellectual or moral blemishes, they need not go far afield in looking for the causes. If they examine their own character, that of their father and mother, and of their grandparents, they are almost sure to find the germ of fatal tendencies.”

Dr. Hollander thinks that while it is possible that when only one parent is unstable their child may escape, that the offspring seldom escapes the taint when both parents are unstable. He considers recurrent insanity a very grave danger, and that it is positively criminal to withhold the

fact of a girl having once been insane from a man about to propose marriage. But it is done by parents, or the history of the attack minimized; some people even think that marriage may effect a cure. As a matter of fact, the

danger of a relapse is very great, for the woman has to face the trying periods of child-bearing. His advice on this subject has, he says, often been asked, but not always followed. The misfortune is that most tainted people get engaged first, and ask medical advice after having made an ill-judged selection, and that is the real reason why such advice is so seldom followed.

The unstability of parents may lead to abnormalities varying from idiocy and imbecility to feeble-mindedness and backwardness. In idiocy the development of the brain is permanently

arrested at the stage of infancy or *in fæto*, at a later stage imbecility, and still later feebleness of mind.

Pathologically various types of idiots are differentiated. There are children with heads too small for normal intelligence, termed microcephalics; and others with heads larger than the normal size, termed macrocephalics. Amongst these is a particular form consequent upon an inflammatory process terminating in hydrocephalus, a condition in which the brain is distended by an excessive accumulation of the cerebrospinal fluid, and the skull in consequence becomes huge and of a globular form. The illustrations reproduced on page 394 show the microcephalic and the macrocephalic child. In the latter case, one

of moderate hydrocephalus, the boy is fairly sharp, but addicted to lying and stealing. Cretins, mongolians, and epileptics are other types of the idiot class.

The chapters on backward children, and



Healthy, precocious infant.



Clever, well behaved, affectionate child.

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