

Dementia Præcox associated with Uncinariasis. (The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease.) Bondurant, Dr. Eugene D.

In the Southern States of America the hookworm has long been regarded as a possible causative factor in the psychoses and other nervous disturbances of childhood and early life. It exerts an uniformly unfavourable influence over mental development, and contributes towards the production of epilepsy, hysteroid states, and confusional psychoses, all of which syndromes disappear when the parasites are expelled.

In the case recorded hookworm injection seems to have constituted the sole exciting cause of a genuine dementia præcox. It was that of a young girl, æt. 16, previously healthy and mentally sound, of above the average intelligence. Except that her mother had been "nervous" at times her family history was alleged to be free from taint of neuro-degeneracy.

She spent a summer in the country and went without shoes part of the time, and "had ground-itch terribly." Soon after she grew pale and weak, became listless and indifferent, and mentally dull. On returning to school she found her work too hard for her, and that she "could not learn." During former years she had been bright, intelligent, active, attentive, and near the head of her class, whereas she was now dull, apathetic, inattentive, given to dreaming, and at times seemed dazed and confused. She grew worried and despondent, and cried a good deal. As time passed she grew steadily worse, became more apathetic, completely unable to learn anything, or fix her attention on her tasks; got slovenly in habits, talked to herself, and was silly and feeble-minded to the last degree.

She was brought home, when her condition was a fairly typical hebe-phenic dementia præcox. She would not converse, would sit immovably staring at vacancy; would at times smile or giggle foolishly; she made no complaint and did not seem distressed—merely apathetic, dull, and devoid of mental activity. She was entirely indifferent to her personal appearance, would not dress or undress herself, and was unclean in her habits.

Amongst other "physical" symptoms there was a partial anæsthesia over entire cutaneous surface. There were no cataleptoid symptoms. Examination of fæces showed the presence of hookworm ova in unusual numbers.

After free movement of bowels by calomel and Epsom salts she was given ten grains of powdered thymol in a capsule every twenty minutes until sixty grains were taken. Two hours later she had a second dose of salts. About 1,500 hookworms were expelled. Liberal dietary was given, with an iron tonic, and rest in bed for ten days. Improvement was immediate, and recovery rapid and complete. Before the ten days' rest was finished all symptoms of mental retardation, instability, and defect had completely disappeared, and memory, reasoning power, and power of attention, as well as the emotional state, were practically normal. One month later she returned to school, made up her deficiencies, and completed the work of the year with her class, and with credit.

Three years after the patient had remained perfectly well, there being no trace of mental or nervous instability, peculiarity, or defect, to suggest the occurrence of a former severe psychic degeneration.

T. DRAPES.

3. Sociology.

Eugenic Factors in Jewish Life. (The American Hebrew, January-February, 1917.) Fishberg, M.

It is well known that the Jews produce a very much larger proportion of persons of marked ability than the nations among which they live. Thus, although constituting less than one-third *per cent.* of white humanity, about a dozen of those who have received Nobel prizes have been Jews, and of the three American men of science who were awarded the Nobel prize, one was of Jewish extraction. It is also known that there is a very much larger proportion of mental defectives, insane, idiots, congenitally deformed, and physically weak or puny individuals among the Jews than in any other civilised religious, social, or ethnic group. Dr. Maurice Fishberg, of New York, a distinguished authority on Jewish anthropology and sociology, author of a comprehensive book on *The Jews*, here attempts to explain these two apparently contradictory facts. The considerations he thus brings forward have an important bearing on heredity as well as on eugenics and dysgenics.

Up to about seventy-five years ago practically all Jews were orthodox and intensely religious, following Biblical and rabbinical ordinances in matters of matrimony as in everything else. These ordinances were on the whole more eugenic than Christian or Mohammedan marriage laws, but with important exceptions. Every Jew was bound to marry and procreate as early as possible in life—before the age of eighteen—and for Jewesses before sixteen, but not before thirteen. Recalcitrants were forced to marry. Marriage for money was deprecated; the bride must belong to a worthy family, and above all it was desirable that she should be the daughter of a learned man. The mediæval and late Jews were thus apparently great believers in heredity, and their ideals of marriage centred in intellect and learning. If the rich could not find scholarly husbands for their daughters in their own circles they would seek them among the poor. Rich learned castes were thus formed, but not wealth, or old stock, was the core of the caste, but intellect. A promising boy among the poor was always sought out, educated, and well married, and an intellectual aristocracy thus constituted. It is on this foundation that the great achievements of the Jewish mind have arisen.

But there is another side to Jewish marriage laws and customs. In the first place, while regard was had to the beauty and physical condition of a bride, there was complete indifference to the physical defects of the bridegroom, provided he was a scholar. Moreover, although the beautiful bride was preferred, every Jew and Jewess, even if a physical and mental cripple, was encouraged to marry and to propagate. The blind were united with the lame, the insane with the imbecile, etc., and a remarkable and far-reaching dysgenic influence was furnished by societies to supply these unfortunates with dowries and trousseaux.