

of births to a marriage in the whole population is 4.63, and it has been ascertained that the average number of births in degenerate families is 7.3. Clearly, then, this is a question which should receive early consideration, as it is one which affects the future well-being of the whole nation. In England and Wales alone, according to the statistics given in the report of the Royal Commission of 1908, there were no less than 149,628 persons who were defective in mind. At the same time it was calculated that there were 125,827 insane persons, exclusive of those termed mentally defective.

With regard to the Dominion of New Zealand, we have already under consideration some 150 cases of mental deficiency, apart from those included as insane, habitual criminals, or chronic inebriates. These 150 cases have come to light without any special canvass, so that the total number of mental defectives in this Dominion who are as yet outside institutional care must be considerable. The Education Act of 1908 provides for the compulsory education of afflicted children between the ages of seven and sixteen, but it cannot be assumed that normal intelligence dawns at this age as a matter of course. At this critical age the protection of the law is still necessary. After-care Committees have been appointed in various large towns in England with the object of promoting the welfare of defective children when they have left school; but the results have been very disappointing. It is generally recognized now that the only thing for the majority of these cases is permanent control. The report of the Birmingham Special Schools' After-care Committee, dated 25th June, 1909, states, "If the care and control of the mentally defective is to be confined to giving them an expensive education between the ages of seven and sixteen, then I," [Mrs. Hume Pinsent, Chairman of the Special Schools Committee] "for one, after nine years' experience I have had, should say, without the slightest hesitation, that the public money so spent has been, and will be, entirely wasted. But if the public will listen to the experience gained in and through the special schools, and if they are willing to learn from that experience, and to insist on the legislation which it has shown to be necessary, then every penny which has been spent on special schools will prove to have been well invested, and society will be richly rewarded. A few of the mentally defective get on fairly well, and may be said to be harmless, but all lack the higher reasoning faculties, the majority break down, all are unstable and lacking in self-control, many commit anti-social acts and fall into crime and pauperism directly they are left to fend for themselves. There is no longer a shadow of doubt on the question—the mentally defective are persons who need lifelong care and control. Some, indeed, may occasionally be provided for in their own homes, but a very large number require institutional control in industrial colonies. It is only in this way that you can provide for these defectives humanely and economically. The greatest essential for the protection of the feeble-minded is power of detention and control."

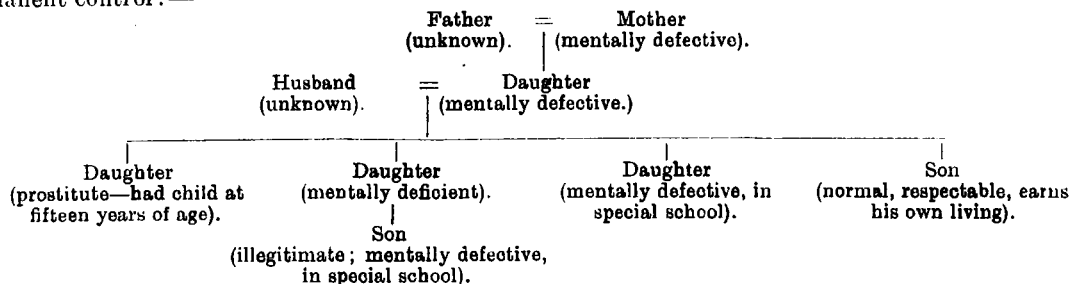
Again, in the same report, referring to that section of the feeble-minded who are above the age of sixteen years, and who are at their own homes and without training, Mrs. Hume Pinsent puts the case much in the same way as I have put it, on several occasions, to the Education Department. She states, "The great majority are therefore still without the care and control they so urgently need. This is not only deplorable for them, but means wearing out the overburdened mother, and often spoiling the lives and chances of normal brothers and sisters."

In conclusion, summing up the case for the amending of the Education Act for compulsory detention of the feeble-minded, Mrs. Hume Pinsent says,—

"Therefore, after eight years with the defectives, the After-care Committee would like to endorse their opinion, previously expressed, that, for a large percentage of the feeble-minded, permanent control is necessary for the following reasons:—

- "(1.) To enable them to contribute to their own support.
- "(2.) To save them from harsh treatment at home and in the streets.
- "(3.) To prevent them becoming drunkards, criminals, and prostitutes.
- "(4.) To prevent them giving birth to children who can only grow up to be a burden to the community.

"The following diagram, concerning a family of degenerates, illustrates the need for permanent control:—



"If the first mentally defective woman had been segregated, the birth of four other feeble-minded persons and a prostitute would have been prevented."

The habitual criminal, the chronic inebriate, the degenerate, the defective, and the insane should not be allowed to pollute the stream of human development. As Professor Karl Pearson says, "The State must do in the future, consciously, what evolution, natural law, has done in the past. Segregation, without opportunity to multiply their kind, is the only profitable course for the social reformer who would reduce the number of the physically and mentally defective."

This is a great question, beset with many difficulties, but it is one of national importance. That phase of the question with which we are more immediately concerned is the permanent care and control of the feeble in mind. The danger lies in the fact that these degenerates mate with