

Capital Journal

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Perpetuating Unfit

One of the most interesting as well as one of the most depressing places to visit about Salem is the Feeble Minded Institute. A visit to it is well worth while, and one that everyone should take to increase his knowledge of mankind. Here is an institution, one of the most modern of its kind, involving an investment of some hundreds of thousands of dollars, necessitating close to \$200,000 a year for maintenance, admirably and efficiently conducted, devoted to the perpetuation of the human unfit, to defying the law of the survival of the fittest, and setting aside nature's safeguard for society—the ruthless extermination of the mental, physical and moral incapables. Inmates of the institution range from the harmless feeble-minded adult to the infant imbecil. Records show that probably 95 percent of all the inmates are the progeny of subnormal parents—mental and physical defectives, of jail birds and lunatics. And our most efficient civilization, not only sanctions their breeding but kindly looks after the offspring.

In one of the fine modern structures maintained by an indulgent and sentimental people for the perpetuation of the unfit, is a large ward full of cots occupied by infant idiots ranging from a few weeks old to several years, of pathetic looking doll-like tots, some with silken locks and waxen skins and lustrous eyes that will be forever sightless, whose delicately moulded mouths will be eternally voiceless, whose shell-like ears will never hear a human sound, and whose warped and twisted limbs will never bear the weight of the frail little bodies—whose candle of life began to flicker out with birth and in a few years will be completely extinguished. Yet the attention of skilled attendants is constantly required to keep alive for a few fleeting minutes the futile lives.

There is no possibility of these poor little victims of the sins of society ever attaining maturity, of ever securing the use of their brains, their senses or their bodies, yet they are perpetuated in misery by the maudlin sentimentality that tinkers with the result and lacks the intelligence to grapple with the cause.

Scientists tell us that embryology illustrates the evolution of humanity and that every phase in the countless eons of time in the slow and painful ascent from animalcule to man is revealed in the progress of the human embryo. Consequently when we see a case of arrested or dwarfed development, we can be quite certain that the natural growth of the embryo has been halted at a stage which man had reached at a corresponding period in evolution's history.

There is among other cases at the Institute a curious, queer, creepy little creature resembling a monkey more than a child, an affectionate animal that loves to climb and exercise in Simian fashion, that though practically brainless, with a head smaller than a boy's fist, and harder than a rock, has a certain intelligence and can be taught primitive tricks. At some stage in the embryo's development, progress stopped and the hands of the clock were turned back a million years for what should have been a man.

And this is but one of many similar cases, varying in degree and form which can be found in this and all similar institutions, and whose existence society defies the law of nature to perpetuate, altho they can never be anything but a useless care and burden upon normal humanity.

Science has recently discovered that the glands play an all important part in the functioning of the various organs of the body just how vital a part is not yet fully comprehended, but we know that when certain glands are not properly developed and do not function that the parts of the body for which they act as regulators become over or underdeveloped with the result that the stature may be increased abnormally or decreased, that the giant or the dwarf may result from the lack of harmony. Not only is the physique affected, but the mentality as well—and apparently beyond remedy.

Among the human freaks resultant from this glandular discord at the Salem institution is a 16 year old child with a head so large that it can never sit up but is doomed for life to lie and be tended in all its wants like a baby. It has a certain rudimentary glimmering of intelligence for it has been taught to run the phonograph, but its life must be forever useless and a burden upon humanity. And yet it is probably doomed to live for a long time—so excellent is the care with which it is nourished. It is part of our scheme of civilization to see to it that all such unfit survive, no matter what happens to the fit.

These are, of course, the most hopeless and forlorn glimpses to be seen at this well managed institution. The largest percentage of cases are those with subnormal mentalities, with healthy or semi-healthy bodies, capable of being taught the rudiments of industry but incapable of taking care of themselves. Closely supervised they are capable of limited useful production but turned adrift would soon become derelicts incapable of aught save perpetuating their species for others to provide for.

It is the modern tendency to control and remove all those natural checks upon the survival of the unfit that have always served to eliminate them and for violating these laws of nature society is paying the penalty in the constantly increasing number of the unfit. We can expect a still more rapid increase as society becomes more decadent, unless some check upon the reproduction of the unfit is provided, and we will experience a tremendous growth in feeble-minded institutions and asylums, as long as a mawkish and sickly humanitarianism persists in seeking to save to useless lives those damned by the sins of their parents before birth.

Along State Street

A matrimonial knot is often tied into a slip-knot. If misery loves company, why doesn't everybody get married? The latest invention is an electric worm-catcher. People are getting wise to this early bird business. The increased cost of living is not worrying a lot of people so much as the increased cost of luxuries. With all his wealth, one would think that John D. Rockefeller ought to have enough money to buy his family off. The spendthrift, who used to take his girl to all the free lectures and patriotic parades, can now pilot her around to the radio concerts in the neighborhood. Industries in Germany are said to be permitted to print their own marks. The business slogan in that country just now is said to be "Own your own mint." An interesting table of statistics might be made up showing the amount of money we are now spending on soda water compared with the little that still goes into baby's shoes.

SAP AND SALT

BY Bert Moses

A good undertaker is one who has reduced patience to a science.

All things come to those who go out and fetch them in.

Did you ever notice how cheap you can buy things you don't want?

It is not what you get, but what you expect to get, that makes life worth while.

Being kind is much more to your credit than merely being respectable.

Congress gets its bad reputation because of the bad men in it, the good men not seeming to have much to say.

Hez Heck Says:

"Troubles ain't helped none by carryin' 'em on your face."



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PANTOMIME—By J. H. Striebel



WHAT HAPPENED When Sheila Elliston Refused Love

By IDAH McGLONE GIBSON

A Fiendish Plan
"Soon after, dear," continued Sheila, reading Walter's letter, "I received from you the sweetest letter that man ever read. It gave me back hope and wish to live. Oh, Sheila, why did you not wait for me if you cared for me as much as you said you did in that letter."
"I wonder if you know that that was the first time in all my life that I had looked upon your handwriting. It seemed a part of yourself. I determined to go back to you immediately. I determined to stop all narcotics."
"The man who looked me up at Susanna's request had given me some money and Sue's letter enclosing yours contained a generous check telling me that as soon as possible I had better come home."
"With hope renewed, with good food, which I had for the first time in many months, with decent clothing, I regained much of my self-respect and I started for Paris on my way to the homeland and you."
I broke in upon the letter reading impetuously.
"I cannot understand, Sheila, how any woman could be so fiendish. She must have written a love letter to her own brother purporting to come from you."
"Yes, Kay, but there is worse to come."
"I would think that impossible. I can imagine a woman wanting to hurt and ruin another woman or perhaps another man, but a woman to deliberately sacrifice not only

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her own brother's happiness but his life to what she might call her love for another man is beyond me."
"Listen, dear," said Sheila going back to Walter's letter:
"At Paris that was no letter, no word from either you or Sue. My money soon ran out. Practically I used the last cent of my money but received no answer."
"I managed to make enough to keep body and soul together as a guide about Paris to some of the many Americans who were rushing there at the close of the war. In a round-about way I learned that a Mr. Phillip Spencer had been very devoted to your sister and that she had followed him back to the states, presumably to be married."
"Of course I understood from this that Sue had learned of her mistake about you when she returned and had tried to rectify it, but I could not understand why I received no answer to my letters and cablegrams."
"What had changed everything, I can't understand," said Sheila to me.
"I can, Sheila," I interrupted. "Don't you understand that Susanna Jones thought when she first arrived home that if she could bring Walter on to see her might possibly awaken the old romance in your heart and that you would marry her brother leaving the field clear to marriage with Phil for herself. There is only one thing that I cannot understand, Sheila. This is just what made my brother insist upon that hasty marriage with you. It was not at all like him. Every Spencer who has ever been married has walked up the aisle of St. Thomas or the older chapel which stood in its place with all his world looking on from the pews."
"However, as soon as Susanna found that you and Phil were really married, she did not want her brother to come home. That would spoil her plan to eventually separate you and Phil. Consequently she stopped communication with Walter thinking that he would never be able to shake off the clutch of despondency and dope and return to America if she did not send him the money to come."
"I think you are right, Kay, for listen to the rest of this letter."
"As far as I was concerned, Sheila, America might have dropped into the Atlantic ocean. I tried to keep out of the way of people I knew over home and devoted myself as guide to those people who had never seen or heard of me. How-

ever, I determined to go home and see for myself what had happened. By the utmost self-sacrifice I managed to get a little money ahead and took passage on the steamer and returned—to find that my sister would have nothing to do with me. By the terms of my father's will I am dependent upon Sue and upon my step-mother. The lawyers tell me that only by my returning abroad immediately and remaining away will I receive one cent to keep body and soul together."
"Of course I tried to find out about you and at last succeeded in learning that after your trial you had been paroled to some woman whose name I could not learn and dropped out of everyone's ken."
"Oh, Sheila, Sheila, can you ever forgive me or my family for the terrible thing that was done to you. I have come to the conclusion that whether you love me or not at the time, you have not been guilty of any wrong doing and that you intended to marry me and be a good wife to me. Tell me that it is true, dear, and keep me from going mad."
Tomorrow—Walter Jones' Story.

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