for unconscious reasons, one being the unconscious wish that her brother (less than two years younger than herself) had never been born, or been born dead. In short, the unconscious curse upon her brother roosted in her unconscious mind and took shape concerning her own birth, on witnessing that of the calf. On the realization of this much of her hidden mental mechanism, she connected it with the above symptoms, which then fell away from her, and only then; other treatment had but aggravated them.

A last word to concern suggestion. Consciously or unconsciously to himself, for good or for evil, for better or for worse, a doctor is ever suggesting to his patient, except when analysing with skill. Yet he cannot suggest all things to all patients, for suggestibility depends, more than upon any other factor, on the contents of the unconscious mind, an unknown quantity to doctor and patient till analytically discovered. Take the example of the last-mentioned lady: it had been easy for a doctor to suggest to her that a vegetarian diet suited her best, that another pregnancy would be calamitous and that she should not make intellectual effort for fear of mental exhaustion; it had been hopeless for him to suggest to her that the pain in her neck was not of dire organic origin.

The safest all-round suggestion, though curatively very limited, except in mild hysteria, is optimism. Coleridge said, "In nervous diseases, he is the best physician who knows best how to inspire hope"—an observation from the personal experience of a highly intelligent sufferer.

THE HIGH-GRADE MENTAL DEFECT IN RELATION TO GENERAL PRACTICE.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—In choosing a subject for this lecture, I purposely selected one about which I knew next to nothing until it was forced upon me in the course of practice. Most of us, I think, find when we get into practice, no matter whether it is general or special, certain gaps in our knowledge which may be traced partly to defects in the curriculum and partly also to the fact that certain aspects of medicine make very little appeal to our examiners, and such aspects we, as students, can safely and profitably neglect. The whole subject of amentia still remains a closed book to the great majority of medical students and practitioners, and yet there is probably not one of us here who has not had occasion to regret his ignorance of the subject at some time or another.

From the sociological point of view the problem of mental defect is of absolutely fundamental importance, and particularly owing to the fact that the defect is a transmissible one. It is especially when one has dealings with the higher grades of defect that we realize the unrestricted opportunities they possess for transmitting their incapacity to the next generation. I do not, however, wish to pursue this aspect of the matter today beyond saying just this, that any legislation that overlooks this essential fact, and seeks to strain the already inadequate accommodation available for aments still further by extending admission to those who, though innately normal, have suffered a retrogression or retardation of mental

function by reason of organic brain disease, is in my opinion doing a disservice to the community rather than conferring a benefit. For such a procedure neither convenience nor sentiment ought to be urged in extenuation, no matter what the legal definition of mental deficiency may be. Nevertheless, I take it, that the intention of the authorities is to include within the scope of the new Act individuals under the age of 18, who, although innately normal, or even above normal in mental endowments, have, as the result of an attack of encephalitis lethargica, been so affected mentally as to require care. That they require care is obvious to anybody who has had to deal with these unfortunate children, but that they require the same kind of care as, or at the expense of, those whose defect is transmissible, is to my way of thinking a wrong doctrine and one which misrepresents what ought to be the primary purpose of legislation in these matters, namely the preservation of the health of the community both present and to come.

As one of many who have had experience of the difficulties and delays which at times attend our efforts to get an ament put under proper care and supervision, I cannot fail to view the recent extension of the definition of mental defect with any other feelings than those of anxiety and apprehension, unless and until such extension is accompanied by at least a proportionate extension of institutional facilities; and in saying this let it be clearly understood that the great value of institutional facilities is that they imply segregation.

To pass to the calmer waters of academic disputation, you are all acquainted with the term "moral imbecile," in fact the term is retained, I believe, in the new Act. However happy the term may be as a colloquial description of a certain type of individual, it is essential to realize, if we are to arrive at any clear conception of what is meant by mental defect, that the term is a misnomer, and that actually there is no such thing as a "moral imbecile," unless one likes to

apply the term to every infant born into the world. But even Gilbert never pushed his cynicism beyond attributing a certain political colour to the newly born.

Let us consider for a moment the mental functions with which we are endowed at birth. First we have general intelligence, a difficult thing to define although psychologists are busy attempting to measure it by various "intelligence tests." By innate intelligence we mean the latent capacity for acquiring knowledge and for profiting by it when acquired. The proverb "A burnt child dreads the fire" is an expression of the working of general intelligence on a lowly scale. Memory, perception and imagination are some of the more obvious derivatives of intelligence which is at once the most valued and the most variable factor of our inborn constitution. A second group of mental functions which must be regarded as innate comprises certain special forms of intelligence: specific intelligence, e.g., mathematical aptitude, musical capacity and so on. With this group we are not concerned here, but it is important for the understanding of that apparent paradox, "the idiot savant," such as the genius of Earlswood Asylum who, although a pronounced ament, displayed quite remarkable mechanical dexterity in the designing of models. A third, and much more important group, comprises the instinctive or emotional tendencies, the study of which has been the most helpful feature of modern psychological research. The conception of instinctive processes introduces the element of purpose as a determining factor, and on this ground it has been severely criticized by many writers, who regard the conception of purpose as incompatible with the requisites of science. This question has been lucidly discussed by Dr. Bernard Hart in his Goulstonian lectures. Here it is sufficient to point out that if the conception of purpose is to result in the removal of psychology from the domain of science, then all those sciences which deal with living as opposed to inanimate

matter, such as biology and physiology, must suffer the same fate.

Our innate mental endowments are then three in number : general intelligence, special intelligence, and certain instinctive trends or emotional tendencies. This is our stock-in-trade, the raw material out of which are fashioned our intellectual achievements and our conduct. We can now proceed to examine some cases in which the raw material was defective and we will begin with one which presents no obvious defects of what is rather loosely called "moral sense."

Woman, single, aged 41. Numerous letters precede the consultation from relations, friends, and doctors, all stating how difficult she has been and each one offering a different explanation to account for it. But the patient, who by the way is very much undersized (4 ft. 9 in.), may be left to tell her own story. "She lives with her mother, her father being dead, and the rest of the family married. She had never been strong, never been able to do things like ordinary people, suffers from backache and headache; the air where she lives (and has lived for twenty-eight years) does not suit her, being too strong; nearly all foods disagree with her, she has to be very careful as she gets frantic indigestion. All active exercise utterly exhausts her; if she goes to church she is exhausted for the rest of the day. She gets up at 10.30, rests after lunch and again before dinner. Her mother (aged 75) gets very worried about her; her duty is to her mother, she is all that her mother has left, but her mother is impulsive and impatient and does not understand her. Doctors do not understand her either. She cannot take up any work or go into Society as it exhausts her and gives her indigestion. Rest cures have failed because they never lasted long enough. She is very fond of music and misses the company of a man who used to come and sing songs for her benefit." Finally she wishes to know if she is well enough to get married, as she believes that men are likely to make love to her. The history revealed that the last of many governesses gave her up as hopeless when she was 17, that she had never achieved

anything, and for years had expected her aged mother to wait on her hand and foot. As a placebo she was sent for a few weeks to a country convalescent home, where it was reported that "in the latter part of her residence she pursued in an aggressive and rather blatant manner one of the male patients."

The intelligence rating of this patient was 12 years. She had always been regarded as neurasthenic; money which the family could ill afford had been spent in a praiseworthy but misdirected attempt to recapture her health, but not until she was over 40 had she been recognized for what she had always been, namely, a feeble-minded person. This case then demonstrates the practical importance of diagnosis in mental just as much as in bodily disorders, since once this has been established those responsible were able to realize the futility of further financial expenditure. The defect here was one of general intelligence together with a very imperfect development of the emotional tendencies. It should, however, be pointed out that it is only by the operation of intelligence that our instinctive endowments can be developed and built up into those enduring sentiments which fashion our conduct and guide our course through life. In the absence of such development our "interests" can be only skin-deep and our capacity for abstract reasoning profoundly limited. Like many other defectives the patient had one great interest, namely, to make herself the centre round which the household revolved by exciting sympathy for her ailments. This, I believe, is due to a very imperfect and therefore distorted growth of the self-regarding sentiment; there was sufficient intelligence to give her some insight into her inferiority, and as a defence, and at the behest of what little there was of self-esteem, she developed a host of complaints with the idea of increasing her importance in the little world she lived in. Her disposition was colourless, all her emotional tendencies were equally

atrophic, and beyond being utterly selfish in her attitudes towards her mother, she did not offend social conventions.

In the case next to be referred to, conduct is becoming more outrageous but not yet bringing the patient in conflict with the law.

Girl, aged 27. Her father was an alcoholic, and deserted the home when she was three years old, and she has two healthy sisters who are married. She has lived with her mother and her mother's sister "in a rather puritanical atmosphere." Her aunt writes: "She walked and talked at a normal age. As a child, very excitable and passionate, with no sense of fear. Later on, very difficult and unmanageable; sent home from four schools owing to defiance of rules. From time to time has been boarded with different families in the hope of finding congenial surroundings, but in no case would they keep her long. Aged 16, tried office work; after a month at the Bank of England, sent away as unsuitable; then to a large stores for a month, with the same result, as she would go out to lunch and not return till five o'clock. She then took up farming, and went to fourteen different farms, staying for two to six weeks at each; in most cases the report was that she did not like work and only wanted to ride the horses. She then tried to become a nurse, and went to a country hospital, but was sent home after three weeks as absolutely unsuitable. Aged 20, she applied to be trained as an army motor cyclist, but was refused. For the last six years she has been studying music and singing; she refused to take the ordinary course at a musical academy, but, notwithstanding, has had some fleeting successes. Very excitable, erratic, and moody, can be bright and entertaining when she likes; has no vicious tendencies, free from malice, of a generous disposition, and extremely lazy." Six months before I saw her she was found in her bed-room, shamming unconsciousness, with the gas turned on and her window wide open, and on medical advice was sent as a last resort to Australia, said to be suffering from neurasthenia and nervous exhaustion. She was met on arrival, and treated with quite extraordinary consideration and patience, to which she responded during the whole of her visit with studied rudeness. In spite of very inadequate musical qualifica-

tions, various employments were found for her, only to be quickly discarded; nothing below the position and dignity of a *prima donna* would satisfy her. She then went to a residential club in a humble capacity, and vanished after being there a few hours; she was found the next morning some distance away, having taken a toothbrush and some fruit with her up into the hills, where "she intended to die." Finally, after many other adventures, she was repatriated home at the expense of the steamship company, who were apparently responsible in law, in so far as they had introduced an immigrant who had failed to support herself. On her return, she told me as follows: "She had had a vague idea that Australia would be adventurous, but she loathed it, the environment was wrong, and the people irritated her. She was the most popular girl on the boat. Wants a life of adventure, would like to go to China, but being only a 'mouldy girl' cannot do these things. Would like to fence, sail, ride and dance, loves constant change. Has no friends, hates her home, likes Bohemian people and a spice of danger in everything. Has no desire to get married or to be made love to; babies make her sick. Has read the Greek philosophers and Oliver Lodge. Hates everybody and everybody hates her."

(To be continued).

X-RAYS AS AN AID IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASES OF THE ALIMENTARY TRACT.

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As this lecture-demonstration is, in common with others of the present series arranged by the Fellowship of Medicine, open to all medical men, it must necessarily be of a non-