quite recently I have had two cases, the only two for a year. I cannot find proof of the disease having been directly passed from one patient to another, and on questioning my colleagues I could only find instances of two cases in which the disease had been communicated to attendants in the asylum.

*The Industrial Training of Imbeciles.** By G. E. SHUTTLEWORTH, B.A., M.D., Medical Examiner of Defective Children, London School Board; formerly Medical Superintendent, Royal Albert Asylum, Lancaster.

IT occurred to me that, on the occasion of our division meeting at an asylum which has made special provision for the care and treatment of imbeciles, apart from the other patients, a brief dissertation as to forms of industrial training appropriate to such might not be out of place.

In the training of imbeciles, I think that all experience teaches that educational processes should be moulded with a view to ultimate industrial usefulness. In school, indeed, the senses must be sharpened, the muscles disciplined, and the intellectual powers exercised; but after all no great degree of scholastic proficiency can be expected. I do not mean that where sufficient capacity exists, the inculcation of the "three R's" should not be attempted, for doubtless the imbecile's enjoyment of life will be increased by an ability to read books, to correspond with friends, and to add up figures. When the patient belongs to a higher social grade, a larger share of time may be devoted to such studies, though even with such it must be remembered that more is learnt by the hand than by the head, and manual training is often the best means of mental amelioration, producing as it does tangible results which are a source of satisfaction both to teacher and taught. But with patients belonging to the pauper class, it seems hardly justifiable to consume a large proportion of the plastic period of youth in what we ordinarily term "school work." Rather should it be utilised for the acquirement of technical skill in some industry which will enable the imbecile to produce something towards the cost of his maintenance. It is true that in many cases appropriate physical exercises will be needed as a preliminary measure to correct motor irregularities which would militate against precision in handicraft. *Athetosis* may be adduced as an instance of this, and it is wonderful how much may be done in helping

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patients so affected to control purposeless movements by means of such exercises as those of the "peg-board," tying knots in string for macramé work, and the picture-perforating of the Kindergarten system. Drill with dumb-bells, wands, rings, &c., is also useful in strengthening powers of grasping, often deficient with imbeciles. Many of the occupations of the Kindergarten form attractive as well as instructive introductions to the employments of real life, and with younger children are valuable in forming habits of industry, as well as cultivating deftness and dexterity.

Passing now to consider the kinds of work best suited for imbeciles, I should be inclined to assign the first place to outdoor work, wherever practicable. Not only is the general health (apt to be feeble) benefited thereby, but in every garden and on every farm there are many small but essential jobs which may be done by an imbecile, after a little training, almost as well as by a paid labourer. A measure of supervision is necessarily required; but with this, weeding amongst crops, harvesting, the feeding of cattle and even the grooming of horses may be satisfactorily accomplished by such. I was interested to hear from Mrs. Burgwin (superintendent of the London School Board special classes for feeble-minded children) that several of her ex-pupils (not far removed from imbecility) are employed as stable helpers and are well reported on. In a dairy farm the preparation of the stall food for the cows, which is more or less a matter of routine, but takes a good deal of time, may be efficiently carried out by imbeciles; and at the Royal Albert Asylum our boys helped in the milking, a cowman afterwards going round to ascertain that each cow had been properly "stripped." In Denmark, however, we found (with Dr. Ireland) that "milking is considered too nice an occupation for imbeciles;" and at the large imbecile institution at Ebberoddgard, three hired dairymaids performed this duty. In England, and especially in the metropolitan district, the prospects of profitable farming by imbecile labour are necessarily dubious; but in America we find superintendents (like Dr. Doren, of Columbus, Ohio) claiming to run a stock farm in this way to a profit. Fruit growing and tinning seems to be carried on remuneratively in some of the American institutions for the feeble minded; and that for the state of California boasts of the possession of 1670 acres of fertile land, with "everything on it that the garden of Eden had, except perhaps the forbidden fruit!"

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In passing, I may put in a plea for the occasional outdoor employment of imbecile girls as well as boys. Much depends on the custom of the country, and in a Norwegian institution I have seen girls gardening with a will, and even constructing paths; and in Denmark the girls in Dr. Keller's industrial institution are similarly employed. Now that we have lady gardeners at Kew, and women employed in our market gardens, there seems no reason why our female imbeciles should not have the advantage of work in the fresh air in such light occupations as hay-making, picking fruit and vegetables, &c. Laundry work (the staple employment of feeble-minded women) would be no worse done were some of the workers occasionally permitted to vary their steamy and enervating industry in the way above described.

Of course, industrial training must be considered in relation to the probabilities of the imbecile's employment in after-life. The training institution has to endeavour to fit its pupils for life in the outer world under the care of friends; and for the town-bred imbecile suitable indoor occupation must be found. As a rule, some simple handicraft, which can be practised at home, or in a small shop. rather than in a factory or other large establishment, is to be preferred, and shoe-making, tailoring, mat-making, brush-making, &c., may be the means, if not of livelihood, at any rate of contented occupation under a modicum of supervision. But speaking generally, in spite of an experience at the Royal Albert Asylum of 15 per cent. of patients discharged after full training earning wages, the struggle for existence in the outer world seems too keen for the average imbecile, and for the majority some permanent tutelage is necessary.

This seems to be a duty of the State rather than a matter for charitable provision; and it is satisfactory to see that the county of Middlesex has accepted this duty in no grudging spirit. Those of you who have visited the idiot annexe will have seen how admirably equipped the new building is for the industrial training of imbeciles; and one advantage of its connection with a large county asylum is that the latter supplies a convenient market for the industrial products. Farm, garden, and dairy produce are, of course, always in demand; and carpentering, tailoring, shoe-making, mat-making, brush and basket-making, sash-line making, book-binding, and even printing (which appears to be carried on at a profit at the imbecile establishments which run a press), will minister to the daily needs of the establishment, as

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will also the sewing, laundry, and kitchen work of the girls.

The selection of the particular occupation best suited for each imbecile involves on the part of those in charge careful observation and some experience; and valuable hints may be gathered in the course of the Kindergarten instruction. It is important that those who preside in the workshops should be regarded as teachers rather than as productive workers themselves, as so much depends upon the painstaking individual tuition accorded to each pupil. A tactful industrial trainer is, indeed, an instructor not only of the hand and eye, but of the mind also.

Experience leads me to say that some slight recompense for work well done, either in money or in kind, will form a powerful incentive for imbeciles to "put their back into their work." A penny a week thus paid on the satisfactory report of the industrial trainer will produce more than a shillingsworth of extra work; and I see powers are given in the new Lunacy Bill to recompense, to the extent of one tenth of its value, work done by patients. I do not know how this scale will be regarded by trades unionists amongst the lunatics; and even with aspiring imbeciles one must be prepared for such a criticism as that mentioned in a recent report of the Eastern Counties Asylum. A youth, who had distinguished himself in button-holing, being told that next week he should try his hand at a suit, retorted, "I suppose I shall only get a penny a week if I make a suit, and I think these are *sweating* wages!"

If time permitted it would be interesting to refer to the miscellaneous and sometimes curious employments carried on by imbeciles in various countries (*e. g.* cigarette-making in the school at the Hague), but I have already exceeded my limits, and must now close these discursive observations.

Discussion.

Dr. BEACH said the paper was a very practical one, and must appeal to every one in the room, whether they have had to do with imbeciles or not. He spoke of children he had had at Darenth who were employed in the wards and workshops, but where there were opportunities, he said, a farm was very desirable. As an instance of the benefit of training imbeciles he mentioned the case of some boys who afterwards became soldiers, and to whom the bed-making learnt in the asylum was of use. With regard to training in voluntary asylums, where all children have to be discharged at a certain time, he said that if not taught a trade they would have to go into the workhouse, so that in these cases trades were useful. He also alluded to a proposal that had been made for the castration of imbeciles.

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The CHAIRMAN said he agreed with Dr. Shuttleworth that it was not right to spend county money in trying to educate such children to add up long addition sums or enumerate the kings of England. These could be of no possible use to the children, as they would have to spend most of their time under institutional discipline, and quite probably on the first series of fits would lose their acquisitions; but he thought that it was perfectly right to teach them some simple handicraft, or how to engage in agricultural pursuits. The chief points that were aimed at in the education of these children at the annexe were attained by a number of small class rooms, so that the children's attention was not easily distracted; short lessons, so that they need not become tedious or irksome, daily repeated, so that they might remember them; and the importance of not allowing the teacher or workman to work himself, but only to instruct the children.

Dr. BOWER congratulated Dr. Shuttleworth on his paper. He thought it a great advantage to have such children trained, and though in years to come they may crowd his wards with useful imbeciles, a few may also turn out as useful members of society.

Remarks upon the term "Weakmindedness," with Observations upon the need of Definite Nomenclature for Cases of Congenital Mental Defect which are not certifiable as Imbecile or Insane. By A. R. DOUGLAS, Deputy Medical Officer, H.M. Prison, Portland.

THE term "weakmindedness" is a most misleading and ambiguous one, and it is imperative that it should receive early attention. It is confusing from the very comprehensive scope of its significance, and altogether so capable of such extremely varied and general interpretation that it is rendered worthless, and perhaps worse than worthless, for the purposes of actual practice. By some, the slightest departure from the normal mental standard is regarded as "weakmindedness," although the case in question might be one of mere eccentricity; by others, again, the term is accepted in its full comprehensiveness,—the lunatic and imbecile, the idiot and person of defective intellect (who cannot be classified with either of the above three divisions), are all included together, and in the absence of a qualifying statement, confusion is the result. It is most improbable that any two alienists would be likely to interpret the meaning of the term in the same way, and the Commissioners in Lunacy, who are most strict in the matter of validity of certificate, would certainly not accept it *per se* on account of its ambiguity.

Every insane person is weakminded, so are the idiot and the imbecile, but there are a vast number of individuals who, although they are neither insane nor imbecile, are congenitally below the normal standard of intellect, and I submit that it

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