

Kaspar Hauser must either have been the child of a high family or an impostor. Whichever view we take, there are difficulties and improbabilities to face. We cannot deny that the Duchess has thrown some doubts upon his pretensions, but if he played a part, he certainly played it wonderfully well, and at the outset, at least, for a very poor stake, as for several months he would eat nothing but bread and water; nor is it at all likely that he could foresee the train of events which rendered him conspicuous, but never happy.

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*The Feeble-Minded Child and Adult: A Report on an Investigation of the Physical and Mental Condition of 50,000 School Children, with Suggestions for the Better Education and Care of Feeble-Minded Children and Adults.* With tables, list of books of reference, etc., etc. Swan Sonnenschein and Co., Paternoster Square, London. 1898.

This is one of a series of books published by the Charity Organization Society, bearing on various branches of charitable work. It seems that in July, 1890, the Council of the Charity Organization Society passed a resolution that a Special Committee of the Council should be appointed to consider and report upon the public and charitable provision made for the care and training of feeble-minded, epileptic, deformed, and crippled persons. It was referred to this Committee, which included many experts, to promote in the first place a scientific inquiry with regard to the number and condition of feeble-minded children or adults; to raise a fund for carrying on the inquiry, to be employed in payment for the services of medical men engaged in this investigation; and, lastly, to prepare for publication a statement endorsed by leading medical men and others specially qualified to form an opinion on the subject. This book is the result of the investigation set on foot by this Special Committee, and gives the result of the examination of 50,000 children, as well as many interesting particulars respecting the life of the feeble-minded adult. The International Congress on Hygiene and Demography passed two important resolutions unanimously, viz.: (1) That, according to recent returns, it would appear that an appreciable number of children, though not imbecile, are more or less defectively developed in brain and body; that for their

training and education special arrangements are necessary, and that in the absence of such arrangements there is great probability of grave moral and mental deterioration; and (2) that an investigation which has been made in regard to the conditions of bodily development and brain action in 50,000 children indicates new and grave problems respecting the provision necessary for the care and training of those who are more or less defective in make, and also respecting the causation in certain districts of mal-developments which are much associated with defects of the brain; and that an extended inquiry is desirable for the further elucidation of the subject. In order to carry on this inquiry a Committee on the Mental and Physical Condition of Children was formed, which holds its meetings at the Parkes Museum, in Margaret Street. The children, examined by Dr. Warner and others, were seen in Poor-Law schools, certified industrial schools, homes and orphanages, and public elementary day schools. The results of the investigation are very important, for it was found that of the 50,027 children no less than 9,186, or 18·3 per cent., were defective in some way or other. Examining these 9,186 still further, we find that 5,851 showed defects of development; 5,487 presented abnormal nerve signs; 2,003 were delicate, pale, or thin; 3,679 were reported by the teachers as being dull in school; 2,780 presented development defects, but no abnormal nerve signs; 2,416 showed nerve signs, but no defects; 1,473 showed eye defects; 67 were deaf; 239 were crippled, paralyzed, maimed, or deformed; 54 were epileptic; 234 were feeble-minded, and 817 required special care and training. These 817 may seem a small number to be cared for, but if we consider that on Lady Day, 1891, there were 782,611 children of the elementary school class, and, in addition, 10,143 attending Poor-Law schools, we find that there are no less than 792,754 children who require to be examined. Of these, taking the same proportion as before, 10,947, or 13 per thousand, will probably require special care and training. This affects London alone, but no doubt something like the same proportion would be found in the large provincial towns. If this be so, the question is one of national importance, and the actual number should be ascertained without delay by a further examination promoted by funds provided by the Government. According to General Moberly, these mentally exceptional children do not attend school, or nothing is done for them in the way of teaching. As these children belong to the State, and all

children now have a right to education, certainly these should have that advantage quite as much as the deaf and dumb, for whom provision has been made. The experience of those who have undertaken the education of the feeble-minded in Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark is very encouraging. At Elberfeld, in Germany, for instance, the children are selected after having been for two years at an ordinary elementary school and found unable to keep up with the required curriculum. The teachers train them according to the methods found useful for teaching imbeciles and deaf mutes. They are kept at school for from one year to five years and a half, and sometimes beyond the age of 14. The following results are obtained: Of 40 pupils who left on the 1st May, 1885, 30 were able to pass their examination at the age of 14; 3 were sent away as idiotic; 5 returned to the ordinary elementary schools; 1 left the town, and 1 died. Of the 30, all but 6 afterwards obtained employment as artisans in various trades; and the girls as factory hands or servants. The school was established eleven years ago with 25 pupils, and there are now 90. The two principal objects kept in view are the prevention of idiocy and the withdrawal from the ordinary classes of a dead weight of backward pupils that hinder the progress of average children. At Christiania it is found that many of the pupils, after two or three years in these special classes, pass on to the ordinary school; some attain the standard prior to "confirmation," which every one there has to pass before going into any business capacity; some leave to go to special institutions for imbeciles; and some are ineducable, and, after full trial, are dismissed to their homes. It is interesting to know that the London School Board has now at work 10 classes of these children, and the results have already become so encouraging that it is intended to build special schoolrooms for them. The Leicester School Board has also a class undergoing special education. With regard to Poor-Law children, the Committee recommend that powers should, by Act of Parliament, be given to Boards of Guardians to send such children to any certified school-home fitted for their reception, as can now be done, under 25 and 26 Vict., cap. 43, sections 1 and 10, in the case of blind or deaf and dumb children. Whether the Guardians would make use of this power is another matter; some the reviewer knows would on no account part with their children, while others say that the total number in the Poor-Law schools in London is so

few that it is undesirable to take any further steps in the matter.

The second part of the book concerns the feeble-minded adult. Inquiries have been made as to the number of these cases; how far there was habitual resort to the workhouse; and how far there was lapse and eventual reversion to the workhouse. From some returns made by the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants it appears that 2,690 girls from Metropolitan Poor-Law schools have been placed under their care, and of these 170, or 6·3 per cent., were considered to be feeble-minded. As to the second question, the evidence of Poor-Law medical officers and lady Guardians shows that in large workhouses, with 1,200 to 1,500 inmates, the feeble-minded amount to 12 or 24. With reference to the third point, there is no doubt that a large number do lapse and return to the workhouse, often as the mothers of illegitimate children. The evidence of all those who have to do with the subject is that return to the workhouse after the age of 16 is undesirable and may be ruinous; and that homes should be provided into which feeble-minded girls after leaving school could pass direct. The experience of three of these homes which are now at work is highly encouraging, and the Charity Organization Society strongly recommends the formation of small homes where there can be occupation and oversight of adults of feeble mind.

The book is well got up, and contains much valuable information which will be useful to those who are at work at this difficult subject.

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*The Epileptic and Crippled Child and Adult: A Report on the Present Condition of these Classes of Afflicted Persons, with Suggestions for their Better Education and Employment.* Swan Sonnenschein and Co., Paternoster Square, London. 1893.

This is a sequel to the book "The Feeble-Minded Child and Adult," and arose in the same manner, viz., from a special Committee of the Charity Organization Society. This volume is a part of the report of that Committee, printed separately for the convenience of persons who are more particularly interested in this subject. The first point to be made out was the number of epileptics for whom provision should be made. It seems that in Germany the number is estimated at one per thousand of the population.