laboured under uncontrollable impulses. When a man sins against his inclination and deeply regrets the offence he commits, surely it may be questioned whether that man does not labour under a form of moral insanity. I remember a few years ago, when Dr. Tuke and I were discussing this very subject, he mentioned a very striking case of a young schoolmaster who consulted him on account of an almost uncontrollable impulse towards an offence which he felt he would commit, and would in such a case be sent to prison for it without a doubt. This was a God-fearing, pure-living man, anxious to do well and avoid offence. Yet under certain circumstances he recognized the serious condition of his mental health and the possible consequences, and consulted Dr. Tuke, who advised him to give up teaching.

Dr. HACK TUKE—For a year or so afterwards he struggled against this temptation and did not yield, and under my advice left the school and went and lived in Australia, where he continues to reside.

Dr. MACDOWALL—I hope that Professor Benedikt will not consider me discourteous if I suggest that the propositions which he has laid before us should be laid aside in order that we may consider them before we homologate them.

The PRESIDENT—I don't find that Professor Benedikt puts forward a proposition which he calls upon the Association to adopt.

Dr. HACK TUKE—I quite understood that he does not wish for any final expression of opinion on the part of our Association.

The Need of Special Accommodation for the Degenerate. By Dr. JULES MOREL, Medical Superintendent of the Hospice Guislain, Ghent.

The subject which I have the honour to bring before this learned Association concerns persons whose mental condition is unsatisfactory, either by arrest of brain development before birth or in early childhood, or as a result of altered intelligence following injury or acute disease in infancy, in adolescence, or even in adult life.

It is not my intention to explain how numerous, if not infinite, are the varieties of psycho-pathological cases met with by the alienist every day; for Dr. Koch, of Zwiefalben, has given ample proof of their multiplicity in his excellent book, "Die Psychopathische Minderwertigkeiten," which was published last year.

The intellectual inferiority of the criminal class is not confined to any country. It is a matter of common observation. More especially has this been noticed since the increase of inebriety and similar habits; and it has been ascertained that there is an increasing number of persons vitiated by an aberration of the moral sense, owing to the same causes.

Anatomy and physiology, normal and pathological, demonstrate the existence of individuals of psychical inferiority who are bound, in different degrees, to act abnormally. The brain, and sometimes the whole nervous system, is in a state that

cannot be regarded as other than pathological. In some this condition is permanent, while in others it is susceptible of a certain improvement.

A psychological study of youthful offenders confined in reformatories provides the best evidence of the truth of this statement. A large number of these children are abandoned or neglected, and frequently labour under symptoms of mental depreciation. We meet, in prisons and reformatories, persons absolutely unable to receive the slightest education, and there is no difficulty in perceiving that they are in an abnormal psychological condition. But, on the other hand, there are others whose intellectual capabilities are higher, and who seem to approach nearer to the psychical average. An analysis of their individuality discovers in them, side by side with certain normally, sometimes even superiorly-developed qualities, other insufficient faculties, either as a result of an incomplete education, or owing to a failure to cultivate those moral qualities which would give an appreciation of right and wrong. These individuals belong to the class of imbeciles or weak-minded. In them the formation of high ideas is deficient, their judgment is vague and narrow, and they are highly susceptible to the influence of other people.

While an ordinary man scrutinizes his personality and takes an intelligent interest in his environment, a person of weak mind does not occupy himself with the why and wherefore. He is indifferent to all that is abstract. He never thinks about serious intellectual work; the material wants of life are sufficient to satisfy him. He has a very good opinion of himself and his doings, but he does not possess a really independent mind. He is very facile; and advice, threats, or emotions are capable of modifying his feelings, and of impelling him to crime. In such a person, when under the influence of intoxicants, the state of equilibrium of the acquired notions of ethics is disordered. Modifying agents and physiological disorders act still more profoundly. This instability of the *ego* is, in certain of these individuals, more promptly variable than in normal man.

These individuals, thus rapidly sketched, are psychopaths. They include many incorrigibles who are apparently intelligent from the standpoint of the public, the police, and the magistracy, and form the very numerous contingent of habitual offenders.

Medico-psychological science, which is at present very

seriously occupied with this section of criminals, has succeeded in demonstrating that they are neither insane nor absolutely irresponsible. Their place is not in a lunatic asylum, nor in a reformatory, nor in a prison.* They should be received into institutions set apart for their special care and treatment. The present accommodation in asylums is not sufficient to receive such cases; and it is undesirable that they should be housed with the insane, on whom they would almost certainly exercise an unfavourable influence. Besides this, they would be a source of constant annoyance to the staff, because of their not being amenable to the same correction and discipline as the usual kind of insane patients. Neither are reformatories nor prisons proper places for such individuals, because, on account of their mental weakness, they cannot be classed with real delinquents or criminals. Besides, were they treated as ordinary offenders, they would, on the expiration of their penalty, be restored to liberty, and society would again be placed at the mercy of incompletely responsible persons. Society fails in its duties if it follows such a course; for it owes assistance and protection to these unhappy and incurable unfortunates, and it requires assistance and protection for itself.

The erection of special institutions would be a defence to society and a boon to the mentally depreciated, especially to those who are but slightly afflicted, and who would be saved from deeper depreciation. Such persons should be objects of prophylactic treatment against crime, and the benefit accruing therefrom would be inevitable. Such institutions would also give shelter to inebriates and persons labouring under allied neuroses; to all psychopaths, mentally enfeebled or degenerate, who have acted contrary to ethics and social laws.

Society willingly gives assistance and protection to those suffering from insanity. Why should not this charity be extended to those whose moral sense is perverted, who are no doubt more dangerous than the insane? This question is of special importance in relation to youthful offenders.

The creation of such institutions should contribute *pari*

* Dr. Koch, Superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum of Zwiefalten (Wurtemberg), was the first to recommend separate buildings for youthful offenders in a paper published in the "Irrenfreund," in 1838; "Ueber die Grenzgebiete der Zurechnungsfähigkeit." In 1890 Dr. J. Forel, Professor of Mental Diseases in the University of Zurich, discusses the same question in the "Correspondenzblatt für Schweizer Aerzte" under the title "Uebergangsformen zwischen geistiger Störung und geistiger Gesundtheit."

passu to the diminution of insanity and crime and the transmission of vicious heredity, and consequently to the improvement of mankind.

These institutions to be effective should have as large an area of inclusion as possible, and the inmates should be classified according to their intelligence and degree of moral sense. They should receive a course of systematic instruction, and periodically undergo a complete medico-psychological examination. These examinations would settle in a satisfactory and scientific manner the desirability of granting partial or complete liberty. After such a scheme had been in working order for some time, one might expect that consummation devoutly to be wished—a diminution of the population of prisons.

The International Congress, held at Antwerp in 1892, for the study of questions concerning the after-care of discharged prisoners and the protection of neglected children, recognized the principle of medico-psychological investigation, and unanimously passed the following resolution:—"That the boarding-out of neglected children should, as a general rule, be preceded by an inquiry into the condition and morality of the parents, the conduct and character of the child; and, when possible, by a period of special observation of the child itself." It will not be out of place to quote another resolution passed at the same representative Congress, viz.:—"That it cannot be considered a satisfactory legal enactment which decides the responsibility of criminal children, according as their age is below sixteen years."

These resolutions involve the necessity of studying the mental condition of the children (and even of their parents) before entering upon their new education. The pedagogue and the psychologist make no distinction between the different boarding-out systems—private family, reformatory, or special school—but rational and systematic education, enlightened by medico-psychological examination, to be completely successful, must provide for the separation of good and bad elements.

The best should be permitted to leave the institutions as soon as they are fitted to adjust themselves to ordinary circumstances and to live simply and modestly. The worst—the most degenerate—should be kept as long as possible. They should be provided for by the State, and when they are able to do remunerative work the State should profit by them. In such a community there would always be a certain pro-

portion capable of earning sufficient to counterbalance the expenses of management and maintenance.

Much useful work of a purely mechanical kind, or requiring but little intellectual capacity, is done by the inmates of lunatic asylums and prisons. Having an enfeebled intellect, capable of retaining only a limited number of impressions, which are not easily diverted, such persons often perform their work better than the average man. We not infrequently find them entirely devoted to their occupation.

Only the weak-minded—those unable to receive any education—the idiots—would become a perpetual burden on the Treasury; and to keep this dangerous and pathological class out of harm's way society would willingly contribute. Moreover, the additional outlay would be met by the retrenchment resulting from a diminution of the prison population—a happy compensation for the State Budget. Besides, if those unfitted for education could not be kept in these institutions, why should they not be confined in lunatic asylums, which already receive many idiots?

We would again emphasize the fact that the increased expenditure would be more apparent than real. Even were this not the case, may it not be urged that society is responsible for its degenerated products?

To sum up, in establishing institutions for the degenerate, society would accomplish a threefold task—

1st. Self-preservation, and reduction of crime.

2nd. Protection for the degenerate.

3rd. Marked diminution of defects—inebriety, vagrancy, debauchery, etc.—which are the origin of so many crimes.

It would be a short-sighted policy on the part of the State were it deterred from entering on such an enterprise because of the huge initial cost. The only possible objection to the establishment of these institutions is that by-and-by the accumulation of incorrigibles and morally insane grouped together would form very dangerous elements, to combat which special rules would have to be made. As we have the precedent of prisons to guide us, this objection is rather superficial. Experience demonstrates the possibility of main-

there is a large mass of the population in regard to whom we feel that they are dangerous to the community, that they are more or less congenitally different from other people, and what is generally called degenerate, but who have not committed any crime at all. And then the question arises—Have they any outward physical symptoms from which we infer that they are likely to commit crime. Professor Benedikt and I got permission some time ago to visit the great State Prison at Louvain, with a view to examine the inmates—their physical signs—including the shape of their heads. Professor Benedikt examined them with great care, and I have no doubt that he did draw useful inferences. But for myself, I felt, after leaving the prison, that I was no nearer being able from the size and form of the head to distinguish between the moral man and the murderer. And, though no doubt Professor Benedikt has gone into the matter deeply, has he or anyone who has studied the subject been able to differentiate between the two classes, the so-called degenerate and normal members of the community? Until we can do so I think that we are unable to go to the Government and make a demand for the sequestration of persons who have not committed any crime, and to ask to have them placed in a special institution. I entirely agree with those who, like Dr. Morel, wish this class of the community to be placed under surveillance and a certain amount of restraint. But, speaking for England, I fear we cannot do it, and the time is not near when we shall be able to do it. When we can come to this I for one shall rejoice, for I know that there are a great number who ought to be placed under care. It is true there are reformatories in England, but a boy or girl must have committed some overt act before being placed in them. Signs of moral perversion would not suffice. And then, again, with regard to the familiar cases which go to Broadmoor, it is only when the deed is done that the law in certain cases humanely places them there. I repeat that, as regards this most important class, the cause eventually of so much crime, I feel the greatest difficulty in suggesting any practical solution of the question beyond what is already being done.

Professor BENEDIKT—Stigmata can not be regarded as an absolute proof of degeneration, and the less so as epileptics, congenital insane, persons with other brain diseases, and even normal individuals show the same signs. The psychological proof of the necessity of sequestration must be the result of actual deeds. The stigmata only give us the right to suspect degeneration. That which Dr. Morel proposes is not, as I understand, in opposition to the ideas of Dr. Hack Tuke. The persons brought under Dr. Morel's notice have given evidence of their dangerousness in reformatories, after having committed crimes and having been recognized as incorrigible by the Judges. But the sequestration must not be absolute. They should be confined as may seem proper to the Psychologists and Judges.

The GENERAL SECRETARY—There is one of the classes of degenerates to which Dr. Morel has alluded—the class of idiots. No doubt it is quite wrong, as he said, that they should be put into prison. But, of course, he is aware, and the members of the Association are aware, that there are institutions for improving and training idiots and imbeciles. I don't know whether there are institutions of that kind in Belgium, but the experience of such institutions, in America and on the Continent and in England, has shown the great improvement of which idiots are susceptible. Dr. Telford Smith will bear me out in the statement that idiots and imbeciles are considerably improved physically and mentally by the education they receive in these institutions; because there are workshops in which they can be trained in certain trades, such as shoemaking, tailoring, and so on. And in many cases we find that they are able to

by examining the mental and physical condition of children in England. I think that, out of the first 50,000 children, there were upwards of 300 feeble-minded, for whom we recommended special education. Another committee was formed after the International Congress of Hygiene, and now 100,000 children are being examined. Dr. Warner is the man to whom we are indebted, and he tells us that he will be soon able to state the number of feeble-minded children in the community. We are strongly of opinion that the time has arrived when the Government should have a committee appointed to investigate this matter, not only in London, but in the provinces of England, in Scotland and Ireland. In order to make the question an international one the same investigation is going on on the Continent, so that we may be able to come to a joint opinion on the subject. The London School Board has ten schools in which these feeble-minded children have a quite distinct education. They are enormously improved by the education which they receive, and at the present time a good many are so far improved that they can be sent back to the ordinary schools where they were before. Previously no special education was provided, and many of the degenerate became imbecile. The example of the London School Board has been followed by the School Board in Leicester, and that in Birmingham, and I know that the question is being taken up in Manchester and Liverpool. I, and many others, entertained the idea that many criminals were weak-minded; but Dr. Gowers has stated that this is quite untrue. He said that the criminal institutions of London contain very few such.

Dr. CARSWELL—Degenerate persons of criminal and vicious instincts abound in large cities, and the management of such persons is a problem affecting populous towns much more than country districts. I happen to have had opportunities for seeing many of those "Borderland" cases in the most populous parish of Scotland. I refer to the Barony parish of Glasgow, which contains a population of about 320,000. I have occasion to medically examine a considerable number of ordinary applicants for parochial relief, in addition to my duties in connection with the reported cases of insanity. We find many examples of mental failure and moral degeneracy of the kind referred to during this discussion among ordinary paupers as well as among the insane. Degenerates are to be found in these three classes:—(1) the criminal, that is to say, those who have committed serious crimes; (2) police offenders, as we call them in Scotland, *i.e.*, persons who commit slight offences, habitual drunkards, and persons charged with assaults and offences due to drink; then (3) there is the third class of degenerates, those persons who are partly police offenders and partly paupers, who rely upon the parish as their chief support. Reference has been made by Dr. Hack Tuke and others to certain practical difficulties in the way of sequestrating persons alleged to be degenerates for the protection of society. Dr. Tuke has told us that, after a careful examination of a very large number of degenerates, he came to the conclusion that he could not tell from the physical conformation of such persons whether in any particular case the person would show criminal tendencies or not. Clearly, if we wait, until we are able to declare in relation to particular cases that the presence of certain physical indications is evidence of mental deficiency of the criminal or vicious type, before we propose measures for the restraint of such persons, we shall have to wait long enough. No doubt the physical features of mental and associated moral deficiency are indications of great importance, and they must not be ignored in determining the question at issue in every case of alleged moral degeneracy, viz., is this person instinctively criminal or vicious? Nor does an estimation of the degree of intelligence manifested by a degenerate help us any more certainly than the indications afforded by his physical conformation. I submit that apart from, but in conjunction with the psychological evidence afforded by the examination of the alleged degenerate, there exists abundant material to prove degeneracy, and I think there is good ground upon which to proceed at once to the consideration of practical proposals. In large cities and large parishes local authorities have material enough to act upon to call for

something being done with these degenerate and borderland cases. And in Scotland, at any rate, there is, at present, a movement in this direction. It is just announced that Sir Geo. Trevelyan has appointed a small Committee, to be presided over by Sir Chas. Cameron, to inquire into the question of habitual police offenders. Certainly there is a strong feeling in Glasgow as to the necessity for something being done. It cannot be on the ordinary line for certifying lunatics. A broader line must be drawn. And if those who are responsible for the care of such people—police authorities and parochial boards who have to maintain them—are able to lay definite evidence before the authorities in proof that they are degenerate and ought to be sequestrated, would that meet with the approval of Dr. Hack Tuke and Professor Benedikt? I think that, in the biography of these persons, as recorded in the police and parochial records, we have material at hand to proceed at once. But in order that anything like this may be done we must have local control in respect to such questions. Dr. Hack Tuke remarked that in England public opinion had not reached the length of committing a man to an institution for special care until he had committed an overt act, and proof was given that he was not responsible. Well, the desire to deal with degenerates in an effectual way is found to be difficult of application just for this reason, that though opinion in a city like Glasgow may be advanced, we find that the legislature will not look at proposals made by local authorities to entrust them with special powers for dealing with the degenerate, but will only give them powers in conformity with the general law of the country. Now it seems to me that one town or district may be far in advance of others, and ought to have local powers to deal with such problems. This aspect of the question, I think, has not been referred to to-day, and I beg to make the suggestion now. Perhaps I should correct my position by saying that when I refer to paupers I don't refer to all paupers. I don't include those who become paupers as the result of failure in the struggle for life. But a very large proportion of our paupers are degenerates. They remain for a few weeks in the poorhouse and a few weeks in the streets, and it depends upon the amount of drink which they get whether their next place of residence is the prison or the poorhouse. These are the degenerates that ought to be sequestrated. With regard to the education of feeble-minded children we find it is an urgent problem in Glasgow. Every child is now expected to "toe the line" of the educational standard, schoolmasters press for results according to the code, and if a child is not keeping up with the class he is thrown out and reported as imbecile, the parochial authorities being then asked to provide for him as an imbecile. I think that it is an excellent idea providing schools for feeble-minded children in London and Leicester and Birmingham.

Dr. TELFORD SMITH—With regard to the idiot and imbecile classes of the degenerate, the experience at the Royal Albert Asylum (where they are taken for a period of seven years' training, between the ages of 6 and 15) was that after their period of training the patients went home and were taken in hand by their parents, who tried to get them into situations according to the trade which they had learned. But it often happened that their fellow-workmen found them weak-minded, and not up to the average, and their employers would not retain them. The patients were taken home and did not improve; in fact, in idleness they degenerated slowly. They were then sent to the Workhouse, and from there they generally ended up in the lunatic asylum. Well, in such cases the seven years' training is wasted. Now, if these patients could be drafted from the training institutions into a custodial asylum, where their work could

joint rate-supported asylums. This system would prove more economical than the present plan of keeping them in lunatic asylums—the very worst place for them. A great many of the most trainable cases in institutions belong to what I might call the class of moral imbeciles, and if they are allowed to go at large they are liable to degenerate into the criminal classes. However, on speaking to Mr. Justice Day, when he visited our asylum, on the question of weak-mindedness in connection with criminality, he said that his experience was that imbeciles do not form a large contingent of the criminal classes, but that criminals, as a rule, are rather above than below the average in mental capacity.

Dr. NOLAN—I quite agree with the observation of Dr. Telford Smith, that after a period in the reformatory the patient should not be allowed to be transferred to a lunatic asylum. In this country there is a very large number of institutions, industrial schools, male and female orphanages, penitentiaries, etc., which, if modified, would meet the wants of this class. I don't think that the erection of a building to house every class of degenerates would be desirable or necessary; but at present we have the material which might meet the wants that Dr. Morel has indicated.

Dr. HACK TUKE—Much has been said on the subject of weak-minded children and their going out into the community, improved and more or less able to earn their own living. Well, in regard to this, it may be thought very pessimistic on my part, but I confess that I look with the greatest apprehension on the influence on the community of these discharged and improved children. I fear that the result will be the propagation of still more weak-mindedness. I am on the Committee Dr. Beach has referred to, and in regard to scholars who have a great strain put upon them in order to reach the ordinary standards, I have great sympathy with them, and I have tried to get them into these auxiliary schools mentioned by Dr. Beach. At the same time, I must confess that the condition of things is alarming for the descendants of these scholars.

The Necessity for Legislation rê *Suicide.*

By S. A. K. STRAHAN, M.D., L.R.C.P., F.S.S., Barrister-at-Law, Senior Assistant Medical Officer, County Asylum, Northampton.

(*Abstract.*)*

Up to the end of the sixteenth century the body of the suicide was treated with barbarous cruelty. This was the outcome of the canon law rather than the civil law, and the Church still clings to a belief in the efficacy of old-time procedure. Only the other day (February, 1894) the Archbishop of Canterbury said that "the increase of suicide is largely due to the now almost universal verdict of temporary insanity given at coroners' inquests;" and he further referred to the burial of suicides in consecrated ground with Christian rites as "harmful in every way."

It is almost impossible for the lay mind to understand this position, which would seem to indicate a desire to return to

* [For full development of Dr. Strahan's argument see "Suicide and Insanity," London, 1893, by the same author.—ED.]