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WEDNESDAY MORNING, DEC. 13, 1922

THE CULT OF THE SECOND BEST

Mr. Lippmann, the brillaint young newspaper man of New York who spoke before the Historical and Literary Society last Friday on "The Cult of the Second Best," coined a pretty phrase that we shall hear a good deal of hereafter, and said a good many interesting and truthful things. Let us hear what he says:

"There is a very little distinction between the interests of the public and what the public finds interesting. Take yourselves as an example. You have a vital enormous interest in the proper settlement of the reparations problem. Have you read as much about reparations in the last two months as you have read about the kaiser's wedding and the stranded harem of the sultan? You have a profound interest in the Lausanne conference, but I am willing to wager fewer of you can describe the dress than could describe Princess Mary's wedding gown ome months ago. I am confident that more of you read about Charlie Chaplin's reported engagement to Pola Negri, and that you thought about it more than you have thought about it more than you have about Hoover is a good appointment to the Supreme court. The Stillman case was discussed a thousand times more than the tariff, and I could draw a heavy crowd in New York or Raleigh on Sunday a different answer to night if I promise to speak about political plots of Mary Pickford than I could if I offered to discuss Mr. Harding's proposal for a ship subsidy.

That's what all men who depend upon public opinion are up against, whether they hold office or run newspapers. The interests of the public and what the public finds interesting are not coincide. Even in my judgment a good sixty or seventy per cent of the insincerity, the buncombe and the sham of public life is due not to the fear of being punished but to the fear of being dull. We are much less afraid that you will lynch us than we are that you will yawn and go to sleep.

Boiled dow nthis is not much more than a complaint that men and women are not more wise, serious and self disciplined than they are. And who knows whether the subject of a ship subsidy and the tariff are much more important than Charlie Chaplin's marriage and the Stillman case? The wise ones on the subsidy have never been able to agree on anything and both sides as much of a wrangle as the former has been for seventy years and the latter for a hundred. Once each four years the wise ones tell us that hard times are caused by low tariffs and the next year they tell us they are caused by high tariffs. What's the use to keep up the dull monotony? So far as the most of us can see it makes little difference one way or the other. None of us have to deal with a ship subsidy or a tariff except in an abstract way and most of us know thearguments on both sides of each. Abstractions are far away. On the other hand all of us get married or hope to, and some are divorced or want to be or fear to be. The experience of others on these subjects comes very near to us for we may fancy that similar experiences might come to us.

The News does not seek to belittle Mr. Lippman's plea for seriousness and thoughtful consideration of important matters. On the other hand we object to his belittling and wrongly interpreting the interest that the public shows in the details of life, which segregated and unrelated, are trivial perhaps, but properly related and interpreted are not objectionable since the great bulk of these matters make up life's activities.

The serious point in the argument of our distinguished visitor is that public men do not more often act according to deliberate judgment but defer to popular clamor. There is too much truth in this, unfortunately, but even here there is another side to the question. Deplore it as we may, not blink the fact that the world is today being governed more and more by public opinion. Now public opinion is the sum of the wise and the unwise. This is the result of the growth of democracy and the mistakes that are made are the penalties of democracy. We cannot have democracy and full panoplied wisdom.

But that is not all. Appeal, if you will from democracy, and what have you? The wisdom of the wise? And, pray, at what period in the world's history, has the wisdom of the wise governed better than the democracy of the world is governing today? If you answer, please give chapter and verse. Was it in the day of the Jewish theocracy, when the chosen nation was governed by God's commissioned prophets, receiving its direction first hand from divinity? Was it in the oriental despotisms? Was it in the middle ages? Which was preferable, the Roman republic of the Roman empire? Was it in France under Napoleon, in England under the Tutors, the learned James, or was it under the enlightened regime of Kaiser William and Emperior Nicholas?

The fact that statesmen do not always speak their minds and issue their edicts according to their best wisdom has meaning here. Of course no one will contend that all statesmen and leaders are always as frank and firm as they might be. They have their shortcomings, their weaknesses, their fears and their selfish notives. There is room for more frankness, more firmness, for independence, more self assertion in leadership. But if there is one fact that stands out in human history like a mountain against the horizon it is that a wise leadership if given long and unlimited power without corrective influence by power of the masses, which you may call unwisdom if you wish, eventually goes to seed in selfishness and ruin. Instead of this running to seed by the wise we have the action and reaction of their wisdom with the wisdom and the unwisdom of the masses. "The common sense of most" which Tennyson spoke of is not always wisdom, but it is making a better show in governing the world today than the selective wisdom of the best can show.

The wise statesman may think that he knows a thing very well yet he may also know that it cannot be translated into public action till the public has been able to absorb it, and it may be incapable of doing this at a particular time. Lloyd George is saying today in public about France and Germany what he could not have said wisely two years ago. Not because it is any truer today than it was then but because the world could not have understood it then as now. No one can expect the average man to know as much about great questions as the statesman. But the point is this: the world is going along paying attention to its marriages and divorces and dresses and other matters which touch the individual long enough to keep the statesman from flying off at a tangent. He's got to show them something before they move, and that very interest in the day's work, the day's play, and the day's trivialties is the safety valve that keeps the public from hysterically flying off after statesmen before it has been shown.

If the statesmen ever get where they can show the public the difference between tweedledee and tweedle-dum on the tariff the public will sit up and listen. We deny that statesmen necessarily adopt the cult of the second best because they cannot always lay their opinions fully before the public. St. Paul is authority for the assertion that all things which are wise are not expedient.

We repeat that we put in no plea for insincerity or lack of frankness. We are objecting to these conclusions which Mr. Lippman seems to draw wholesale from his army of facts. We simply make a plea for the unwisdom of the masses as against the wisdom of the wise, plus its consequences. We contend that in the long run its results have been no better. And if this be true, Mr. Lippman's argument is reduced to the simple proposition that if all people were wiser they would act more wisely. Against which we take no issue.

The Weeds Grow Rank in Our Garden; Their Spread Threatens The State

The Caswell Training School at Kinston Now Segregates and Cares for Three Hundred and Twenty Mental Defectives Out Of An Estimated Fifty Thousand in North Carolina; The Drivelling Idiot, The Low-Grade Imbecile, The Defective Delinquent, All Are There But More of Their Kind Are At Liberty, Reproducing Themselves Without Check.

By NELL BATTLE LEWIS

A quarter of a mile may seem to mark a gulf between two worlds. Right here in North Carolina no greater distance appears to divide a world of intelligence and achievement from another of imbecility and monstrous futility. But this appearance is delusion,— for mental defectiveness spreads abroad among the normal and its unrestricted increase gravely threatens a none-too-stable society.

Into Kinston runs a smooth, beautiful new road. It is the product of intelligence put to the social end of service to the State. But turn from that road which ordered intelligence has built and upon which the intelligent fare. Go for a quarter of a mile through a field. A cluster of buildings confronts you. It is the Caswell Training school for Mental Defectives. Here are the rank weeds of our garden. Here are the dregs from the flow of our State's life. "Weeds?" "Dregs?" in some cases, infinitely worse: distorted, drivelling, lothsome wrecks of human beings doomed to the dark confusion and the darker blankets of the mind from the hour of their wretched birth—gross caricatures of the normal, piteous enough to break the heart. It is the stark horror of these cases,—the "low-grades" they call them down there,—that strikes and sickens the visitor physically and spiritually. But the Traing School authorities will tell you that, pitiful and repulsive beyond words as the idiots and the low grades imbeciles are, of all the mentally defective they are the most harmless to society. Thee very conspicuousness of their deficiency is a safe-guard which places them obviously beyond the pale. They seldom reproduce, and it is the unchecked, promiscuous reproduction of the feeble-minded which is the ruinous canker at the vitals of present civilization.

Various Grades of Defectives.

In the Caswell Training School, as in all similar institutions, there are all grades of mental defectives. The idiot is the lowest. Many of these are without the power of speech, the veritable "jibbering" idiot. Day after day, while normal people are busy with their sane activities, the idiot sits in repulsive attitudes or lies huddled on the floor, utterly and hopelessly futile. The mental condition of many of them is so low that they derive a sensory satisfaction from resuming the pre-natal attitude, the position of the embryo. They can in no wise care for themselves. They must be bathed, dressed, fed and supervised in their bodily functions.

Next to the idiot in lack of mentality is the imbecile. There are several grades of these. Like the idiot the imbecile usually bears the physical stigma of defectiveness. His grotesque expression, that terrible blank, silly look in the eyes proclaims his misfortune. But, luckily, the majority of imbeciles are happy—as the saying goes, "as happy as if they had good sense,"—because they are unable to realize their condition. Many of the imbeciles play about the grounds at Caswell, apparently contented enough. Some of them attend school, graded to their mental capacity. And they are never more delighted than when they are allowed to help with the care of the low grades. No doubt this breaks up temporarily the inferiority complex which they may have by showing that in comparison with the idiots they represent the "superior." In the imbecile girls, the care of the more unfortunate appeals to the maternal instinct which, like everything related to the sexual life, is usually highly developed in the mentally defective.

Occassionally, in the irritable type of imbecile, the sex urge shows itself in fits of extreme violence. During the writer's recent visit to the Caswell Training School, the halls of one of the dormitories rang with a dreadful shrieking. The shrieks came from a girl of about twelve years who was wildly shaking the bars of a wooden cage in which she had to be confined until the paroxsym passed. "This is one of her sex-spells," explained the attendant.

By far the most dangerous of all the feeble-minded is the moron, the "defective delinquent," of which there are many at Caswell. This type of mental defective may appear perfectly normal. Upon casual observation there is generally no outward sign of inner lack. Too often the defectiveness of the moron is recognized only after it has borne its anti-social fruit, crime, immorality, illegitimacy. For this class has a practically irresistible tendency to crime and immorality. The fact that such a large proportion of criminals and prostitutes have been found to be feeble-minded bears witness to this. The girl at Caswell, who, of all the morons there, has an expression most benign has, likewise, a record for immorality which is nothing less than appalling. Its climax came when she was discovered, infected with syphilis, living openly with negro man, apparently entirely satisfied with herself and her estate. The moron often marries, and in or out of wedlock (more often the latter) is extremely prolific. The tests of mental defectiveness of this type who do not exhibit to the untrained eye the signs of their condition have shown the foundations of a state. Especially in a democracy where, we are told, "all men are equal," and where each has a voice in his government, they represent a menace which, if allowed to continue unchecked, cannot be overestimated.

One of the most disheartning things to be seen at the Caswell Training School are the young babies of moronic mothers. That in the face of the fact that there is not the slightest question that mental defectiveness is an inherited characteristic! Neither of these babies was born in the school. One was brought there by the mother when she was admitted, and the other was the almost inevitable result of its mother's temporary release into socity.

In addition to the feeble-minded, there are a number of inmates of the Caswell Training School who rightly belong in a different sort of institution. There are some twenty-odd epileptics and two or three cases of dementia praecox.

Daily Life at the School

Daily life at the Caswell Training School is as orderly and as systematic as such a rank profusion of sub-normality will allow. A number of the children attend school arranging for their mental conditions. Some of the high-grade boys and girls are able to help with the house-work and the farm-work. Each day there is chapel. Never in her life has the writer heard any congregation sing with such gusto and with such complete abandon as those defective children. They simply shout Gospel hymns at the top of their lungs. "Brighten the Corner Where You Are" appeared to be a favorite. But there is irony enough you may be sure, at the Caswell Training School.

On the day of our visit at chapel there was a duet sung by two morons entirely devoid of any moral sense about that "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere." They effected a fair vocal harmony even if they could not achieve a mental and moral one. A blind imbecile boy with a most touching and wistful little face sat and rocked to and fro to the rhythm of that hopeful song. Neither, you see, is the dramatic lacking at the Caswell Training School.

But the sheer epitome of dramatic leering, squinting eyes that can never, never see the rational beauty of life, those heart-breaking examples of blighted childhood which a society, cruelly reckless of cost, has permitted to be born for its own deterioration—these would make Nicholas Nickleby's pathetic scholars at Dotheboys Hall appear, by comparison, a company of young princes. Over that distressing group falls thick the darkest shadow of life, the blackest pall—mental defectiveness. The children stand waiting to take their places at table. But first there is grace: "Father we thank Thee for Thy many blessings." What poignant and what bitter mockery! And not less poignant nor less bitter for its supreme unconsciousness!

A clinic where minor ailments, for the most part, are treated is held every morning at the school. But little or nothing can be done to improve the mental condition of the feeble-minded. If taken under six months the Cretin imbecile will respond to a certain type of treatment. Glandular treatment may also reduce superfluous flesh and promote bodily growth in older cases. This is being done in a few instances by Dr. William A. Newbold, the psychiartrist at Caswell.

Inadequate Provision.

The legions of the mentally defective in North Carolina, as elsewhere in this country, represent in naked hideous fact. Only a false sentimentality fraught with the gravest danger to society will shut its eyes to this actual condition. Not only are the feeble-minded in our midst in astonishing numbers, but they are on the rapid increase. The proportion of children born per family among the inferior is said to run something like four times greater than among the superior. The Caswell Training School is doing what it can to meet this serious problem, although the institution at present is necessarily inadequate. But segregated the mental defective must be, if society is to maintain its vitality and, in a few generations, its safety.

On the basis of a survey of school children made in one of the Western States, it was estimated that more than two per cent of the population of that state is mentally defective. In North Carolina with its numerous isolated communities where families have interbred for genertaions to the pollution of their blood strains, it is thought by some authorities that such an estimate would be conservative. But even at that, two per cent of the population of this state would amount in round numbers to 50,000 people. Fifty thousand mental defectives! Provision now for three hundred and twenty. Provision asked for one thousand! Surely a modest request.

Three hundred and twenty children are now at the Caswell Training School. There would be almost a hundred more if the maintenance fund of the institution were not exhausted. Daily applications for admission come in for children whom it would seem imperative that the school take. But the present financial situation at the Training School forces Dr. C. Banks McNairy, the superintendent, to turn away applicants by the score. By order of the governor and the board of trustees of the school only children who are able to pay a maintenance fee of a dollar a day can now be admitted.

But the superintendent has great plans for the school. The institution will ask the legislature that its capacity be enlarged to provide maintenance and accomodation for a unit of one thousand children. A well-equipped hospital is necessary and wards where the high grades may be separated from the lower. Increased facilities for vocational training are badly needed. A number of defective children are able to benefit by simple instruction of this kind, and a considerable proportion, it is hoped, may even be fitted to make their living in society after proper precautions are taken.

Segregation Imperative.

Segregation of the feeble-minded is the solution which the Caswell Training School is offering to meet one of the state's gravest problems. Complete segregation is its aim. The bulletin of the school defies its purpose thus:

"The aim of the institution is to segregate, care for, train, and educate as their mentality will permit, the State's mental defectives; to disseminate knowledge concerning the extent and menace of mental deficiency; and to suggest and initiate methods for its control and ultimate eradication from our people, with the hope that an extension bureau may be created and a psychological clinic established where all criminal defectives may be sent for study and observation where proper estimates of their mentality may be made, expert advice as to their responsibility given, and the best methods of treatment suggested for their future happiness and development."

And yet anyone who visits the Caswell Training School with an unprejudiced view-point; who sees the criminal waste of the lives of those children; who appreciates the injustice of such a crippled and distorted existence; who understands the desperate menace

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A Few Christmas Suggestions

SHOP EARLY

Make our your list and then make your purchases the first day you can.

Go down town the first minutes you can get off from the house.

During the morning hours (before 12) you will secure better attention and you will find the store less crowded.

This will make for more careful and satisfactory selection your part and also for a wider choice.

FOR HIM—

Bath Robes
Smoking Jackets
Mufflers
Socks
Handkerchiefs
Scarfs
Silk Shirts
Belts and Buckles
Useful Jewelry
Slippers

FOR THE BOYS

We have a host of useful articles and if he is a "Boy Scout" we have all the official paraphernalia.

FOR HER

Gloves
Silk Hose
Neckpieces of lace
Silk and Wool Scarfs
Perfumery of all sorts
Table Linen and Towels
Furs
Stationery Sets
Pearl Necklaces
Other Jewelry

FOR THE CHILDREN

Hand Knit Sweaters
Caps, Leggins, &c.
Boxes of Handkerchiefs
Fur Sets
Unbreakable Dolls
Talking Dolls
Shoenhut Toys
Circus
Pianos
Baby Specialties in a special section

You will find our gifts suitable, most unusual and attractive. They will help simpify your task of making appropriate gifts for Christmas.

H. Weil & Bros.

The Store of Useful Gifts

BRINGING UP FATHER — BY GEORGE McMANUS