

THE INFUSION OF BAD BLOOD INTO A GOOD FAMILY

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Few families have been so fortunate as to have escaped the infusion of bad blood into the line of descent. No matter how excellent the lineage from remote ancestors, there are to be found individuals in every family who have disregarded, either voluntarily or ignorantly, the family traditions, and have married into families whose blood is teeming with undesirable traits and characteristics. In some instances these traits have been so dominant as to overshadow practically all the good qualities of the family, and in the branch affected destroy its usefulness to society. The new science of Eugenics is bringing to light many instances in which a single unsocial dominant trait introduced into an otherwise excellent family has wrought its ruin. Whole branches of families have been wrecked by a single marriage starting a line of descent which is unsocial, mentally unbalanced or of low intelligence. Such tragedies are continually occurring, even among our most gifted and highly cultivated families.

This fact is frequently overlooked, viz., that there are many intelligent, and even gifted individuals who are members of degenerate families. Such individuals are very apt to migrate from the home community in which they were reared, in order to escape the stigma of the home to which they belong. They are intelligent enough to know that the "cards are stacked" against them so long as the world knows their ancestry. They migrate to remote regions in order to escape the disgrace. Here they may marry and propagate their kind unrestricted, provided, of course, the family tree remains unknown.

About fifteen years ago an intelligent boy belonging to a degenerate family in southern Indiana migrated to the State of Kansas, where he married a talented and well educated girl, the daughter of well-to-do parents of the middle class. The type of degeneracy well known in this man's family for several generations is a low grade

of feeble-mindedness accompanied with viciousness and fits of anger followed by a prolonged state of coma. There are many criminals, police court cases, vandals, petty thieves, incendiaries, and delinquents. One branch of the family has been, at times, the occasion of much terrorism in northern Kentucky and several members of the family are now serving sentences in Indiana and Kentucky prisons.

As a result of this marriage five children were born, four of whom are perfectly normal, but one is typical of the degeneracy described above as characteristic of the father's family. At the present time he is eleven years of age, but has an intelligence quotient of 75, and is not capable of carrying the work of the second grade in school. He is a moral delinquent, already guilty of sexual perverseness and numerous petty thefts, is belligerent, high tempered and incorrigible. There is not the slightest doubt, even in the mind of his parents, that sooner or later he will become a ward of the State of Kansas. The family tree of this father, extending back only to his immediate parents, and including all his brothers and sisters with their children, is given below in Chart I.

The chart shows that this man's father was feeble-minded and his mother epileptic; that he had one normal brother and one normal sister; that he had two feeble-minded sisters who are not yet married, and one unmarried epileptic sister. It is little wonder that an intelligent man should wish to remove himself from such a home environment. The tragedy appears in his marriage into a good family, and his responsibility in bringing into the world offspring tainted with his own bad blood.

His feeble-minded son may never marry, and his other children may marry normal individuals whose children may all be normal; but the tragedy of a single life such as his son presents should be adequate warning against allowing such individuals to marry. Knowledge of his family tree would probably have deterred any intelli-

middle class of highly respected citizens of the commonwealth.

At least five of the descendants have been, or are at present, college professors, seventeen have served as high school principals or city superintendents; no less than thirty have taught in the elementary schools, and one is a Kindergartner of national reputation. Many have been and are at present successful farmers and stock raisers. One is president of a railroad corporation, another is president of a state labor organization, and there is one descendant who is probably a millionaire. There have been several Quaker preachers, and one Presbyterian preacher, though none of them have gained distinction in this field. In pre-Civil War days this family held very pronounced anti-slavery views, as did most Quakers, and maintained five well established stations of the "Underground Railroad" system reaching from Richmond, Indiana, to Fort Wayne. Hundreds of slaves made their escape to Canada over this route. The study reveals the fact that all the descendants have been law abiding, peace loving, gentle folk of good intelligence and decent behavior.

The marriages of the descendants, with one exception which will be discussed later, were uniformly favorable, producing offspring which conform more or less closely to the general type of native ability found throughout the family. The marriages were formerly held rather closely within the Quaker church, it being the custom of the sect not to marry outside. Since the Civil War, however, descendants have not at all conformed to this custom, whole branches of the family now being connected with other religious orders. All branches of the family have been practically free from mental and physical weakness, such as insanity, feeble-mindedness, cancer, and tuberculosis. Not a single instance of any of these maladies is recorded in the long history of this family. Infant mortality has been extremely low, which indicates a high degree of excellence in parental care.

In 1848 an event occurred in the history of this family tree which practically wrecked one branch of it. The

eldest son of this original pair migrated to the state of Iowa and there married. His wife had been known to him only a short time, and it is probable that he did not know of the mental status of her forebears. At any rate this marriage initiated a series of tragedies scarcely surpassed in any Eugenics study with which I am familiar. The woman he married was attractive, intelligent, and a natural favorite. She lived to the age of sixty-six, a highly respected woman, a devoted mother, and died without showing any symptoms of the bad blood flowing in her veins.

All we know of this woman's family is that her father died in a hospital for the insane, she had one brother who committed a murder and then committed suicide rather than suffer arrest, another brother was guilty of sexual disorders, served a term in the penitentiary for rape, and finally committed suicide. Her mother died when the girl was thirteen years of age, and three children died in infancy, one supposedly in an epileptic fit. This record is sufficient to identify certain mental and moral traits which should not be transmitted.

The children of the original pair have all shown signs of the unsocial and diseased traits which were inherent in the family of the mother. The eldest daughter, a real Shakespearian shrew, while she was never actually insane, was always regarded as very peculiar. She talked almost continually during the waking period of her entire life. She was irritable, and unreasonable, an habitual scold, showed fits of passion at her children little short of real madness, was unclean in her person and house. Although she raised a large family of children, she never showed the slightest intelligence in the teaching of them, or the organization and administration of her home. She abused her husband and threatened to leave him many times. She talked about her own children in terms quite befitting them, for she apparently realized that her offspring were a degenerate lot. She gave birth to ten children, not one of whom ever gave her, or anyone else, any pleasure. Three girls were always called "half-witted" by relatives and friends. Two boys served jail sentences for serious sex crimes. Two others

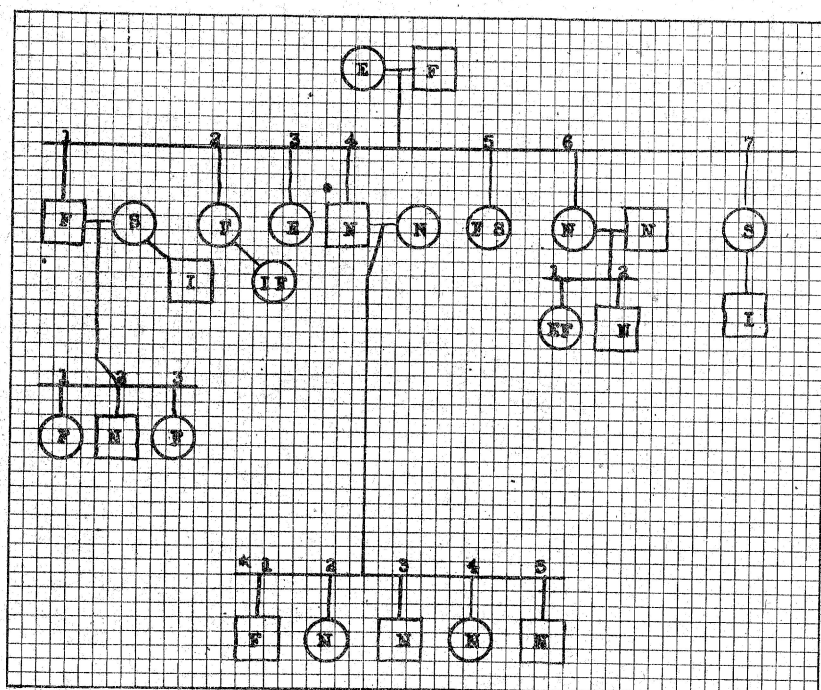


CHART I.

gent girl from considering with favor his suit for marriage.

Another case was recently brought to my attention by a social worker in the City of Chicago. Her charts showed that the girl under consideration belonged to a degenerate family which for almost a century has existed in southwestern Ohio. The girl herself is of normal intelligence, though of the servant girl class. She possessed enough energy and self reliance to break away from the home environment about fifteen years ago, and came to Chicago to live. Here she married a normal man of intelligence and excellent parentage, a mechanic of good ability.

This girl's family tree presents many cases of sexual perverseness, idiocy, imbecility, temporary insanity, feeble-mindedness, weakness, and almost always the most abject poverty. As a result of her marriage four children have been born, three of whom are perfectly

normal, and one a low grade imbecile, incapable of training or education. Her family tree, extending back to her own parents and including her brothers and sisters, is given in Chart II.

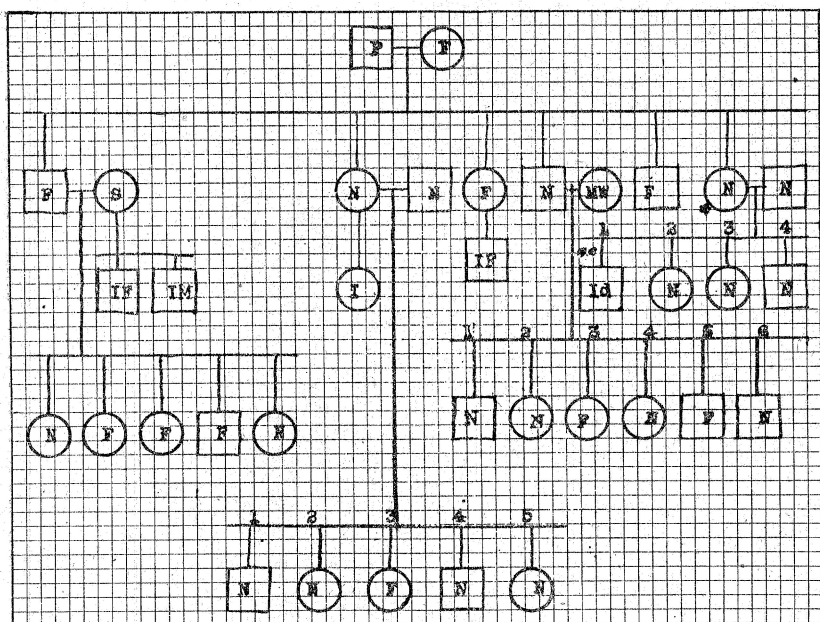


CHART II.

At present the writer is making a careful study of the descendants of a family which migrated from Pennsylvania to Eastern Indiana about 1820. They were Quakers, and believed in education, thrift, good citizenship, honesty, and peace. Approximately four hundred descendants have been traced, and the life and achievements of individuals carefully studied and tabulated. This family presents an enviable record of excellent citizenship, high ideals, and moral stamina. Throughout its long history the family has been represented in its descendants by men who have found simple duties in life and performed them with Christian fortitude. The ideals of service, so prominent in the Quaker religion, took deep root in the descendants of this family, and while few have gained distinction, nearly all belong to the great

have served terms in the penitentiary for mail robbery and burglary. One daughter married a negro and has given birth to four children, three of whom are feeble-minded or worse. At least two of the daughters were common prostitutes. Little wonder that she railed at her family and blamed her husband for her troubles. It is quite clear, however, that the bad blood came from her own family, since her husband's family was free from any of the traits appearing in her offspring.

All the children in the family showed symptoms of degeneracy similar to that found in their grandmother's stock. Not one showed the virile traits of excellent capacity so prevalent in the father himself and his whole family. In this marriage all the factors of reproduction seemed to bring together and emphasize the unsocial qualities latent in the grandmother.

The diagram illustrates more fully the degeneracy of the whole group. The mother stated to the writer that her children among themselves committed practically every social irregularity known, including adultery, incest, pander, masturbation, theft, vulgarity, obscenity, etc. She talked about their unsocial disorders with great freedom, but with deep emotion.

The eldest son, No. 2 in Chart III, in the family for many years showed no signs of degeneracy. During his youth and adolescence he was self respectable, dignified, studious, and energetic. He was somewhat addicted to intoxicants, though not to excess. He married at twenty-four a woman of fine family, and considerable wealth. At about forty the degenerate traits of his mother's family began to show themselves. He was found guilty of sexual perverseness, was accused of financial irregularities in a county office, though not convicted because it was found that his guilt involved others of the county ring. Weaknesses of various kinds overtook him, including periodical melancholia, idleness, viciousness in his home and drunkenness. At the age of fifty he had disgraced his wife and family in several debauches with disreputable people, and finally committed a sexual crime for which he was sentenced to prison for five years. A new trial brought in the insanity plea

this craft throughout his life. He never married, and became incompetent at fifty-four, when he was sent to a state sanitarium in a western state. His case was diagnosed as "softening of the brain" and he died at the age of sixty-one. His decline was quite similar to that of his brother, according to the copies of the records in my possession.

The third son, No. 4, Chart III, of this original pair seemed for many years to be normal in every respect. He was engaged in Government service with considerable distinction for a time, married well, and was the father of

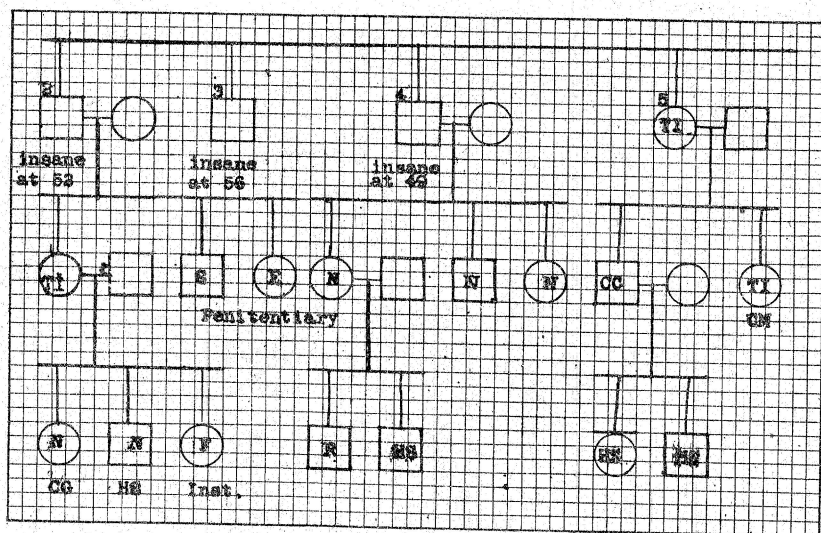


CHART IV.

three children. He provided a fine home in which was a considerable library, excellent pictures, and other means of culture usual in the best American families. He seemed to develop greatly after his school days, by much general reading and study, and was regarded most favorably by all who knew him. His social qualities were exceptional, and the best citizens in the community sought him out as a most companionable and versatile friend. Just when he had reached this point an event happened which shocked all who knew him but which was a harbinger of his future collapse. He was caught in fraudulent use of

funds held in trust. The case was settled and a jail sentence suspended. He moved to another state and made a new start, but several minor lapses followed in quick succession. Once, an affair with a woman; another, a drunken spree for a few weeks in another city; and finally the selling of his property without the knowledge or consent of his wife. The money was quickly squandered, and his once happy home was wrecked. His downfall was rapid. The saloon, the brothel, the gambling den now became his haunts and he was rarely seen by his family. In a drunken row he was accused of killing his pal. By this time he had so far deteriorated from his former self that it was quite easy to prove him insane when he came up for trial. He was sent to the hospital for the insane in the state of Iowa, where he slowly deteriorated mentally and physically for about five years when he died.

His case turned out to be quite similar to that of his two elder brothers. The break came at about the same period of life or a little later, but the symptoms in the diagnoses were quite similar.

The youngest daughter, No. 5, Chart III, in this family is still living. She has never suffered a breakdown but has always been regarded as most peculiar. She married and is the mother of three children, but she has not lived with her husband for many years, nor do her children see her. She has long periods of depression during which she will not speak to her most intimate friends. These are probably forerunners of a final state of melancholia so common in her mother's family.

In the third generation the terrible effects of the un-social dominant traits described in the parents are still evident. The accompanying charts show to what a low station many of the descendants of the original pair have sunk. One branch seems to have reached so low a stage that there is little danger of further propagation. From every standpoint the results have been disastrous. Economically it has been wasteful. Four states, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska, have expended approximately \$18,000 in legal processes alone; a moderate esti-

mate of hospital and asylum fees for the incompetents is placed at \$20,000. The negative results entailed upon the community by mere residence of such socially unfit can never be estimated.

The question naturally arises, how long will society fail to comprehend this problem? How long will our marriage laws permit unsocial dominant traits to be freely propagated by any wretch who may possess them? It should be as difficult to get a marriage license as a life insurance policy. If men and women who contemplate marriage were compelled to submit with the application for the license a true family tree indicating family traits and hereditary tendencies, and if this application were compulsory long enough time before contemplated marriage to permit the state eugenist to pass upon the family of pedigrees, it is possible that two-thirds of the degenerate and unsocial qualities in the race could be eliminated.