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HEREDITY AND HUMAN AFFAIRS.

By
 EDWARD M. EAST
 (Reviewed by Herman W. Toepperwein).

Edward M. East's book, "Heredity and Human Affairs," is written in a popular philosophical style in order to bring out the importance of the relation that genetics bears to society the better to those whose conception of that subject is somewhat limited. Mr. East messes around quite a bit and at times says astonishingly little but on the whole he has stated some problems of great importance in a new light, in the light of eugenics unprejudiced against environmental possibilities. In fact he balances the two fairly well, considering (though he does not admit it) that the book is a plea for genetics against environment throughout. Let's consider a short synopsis.

The new light of science is outshining any previous conception of life and human affairs in a New Era of Humanism. In granting, preserving, and guiding life it is indeed the "Sister of Mercy." Through facts and not fiction it is building our future into an ethnocentric society whereas the past has been egocentric.

"Inscribed in the Delphic oracles were the words, 'know thyself,' and this, says Cercantes, 'is the most difficult lesson in the world.'" There is both a conscious and unconscious aversion among people to be connected with the rest of the animal world and that is why it is so hard to get genetic wisdom over to the average individual, when it is, at the same time, the most fundamental thing in the world. Poor circumstances may and do keep persons of great possibilities down, but it is not easy.

Genetics tells us that each individual is endowed through heredity with a number of possibilities which, given a chance, react or respond to form the man. A child cannot become great without having an inherited capacity. The responsibility upon society is therefore heavy, both in producing the child and in shaping the circumstance in which it is reared.

Some several chapters are spent in explaining the mechanics of heredity. Genetic possibilities, combinations, the fertilization of the egg-cell, are all very interesting and necessary, but entirely too much for the writer to bring out here. And too, we are more interested in the social side of the question than in the strictly biological explanation.

There can hardly be any doubt that human traits are inherited. If bodily and structural differences such

as facial features, eye and skin color, and different blood structures, then why not mental characteristics? Feeble mindedness is inherited as well as certain insanities and for like reasons the strong and average and the mind of a genius come through inheritance. And examples are given to prove this statement.

But which is the more important, heredity or environment?

Much has been said in unbalanced proportion in each case. The variations and facts, mixed germ plasm and other factors make it easy for both sides to build up certain proof. But the dispute is foolish. Neither is the more important. Heredity and Environment cannot be separated in any such manner; each depends upon the other, one cannot exist without the other.

Let us go back to some problems of Heredity and Human Affairs. Is it rational for a person of evident intelligence and culture to stand when there are seats, or ride in a certain coach just because there is a difference in skin color, the slant of the eyes, or the height of the nasal arch. Such glaring mistakes are not the result of a lack of intellect but of a rotten social heritage. Racial amalgamation should be considered from a eugenic standpoint.

What of the Negro, our greatest racial problem? He is a fit creature physically, but he is racially lower in intelligence than the white race. This is what is happening. About nine per cent of this country, the negro, is rapidly changing from a fairly distinct negro group to a mixed-blood group. Is that good for the race? The race has had little opportunity in comparison to the white race, but it is obvious that the germ plasm counts. We cannot sterilize the negro, he must be treated decently and educated up to his intellectual scale.

Now as to Genius, Mediocrity and Education. If a state must spend so much money for a mediocre person, a person of low intelligence from which it receives little benefit, why can't the state spend money on the exceptional person? Our educational system is foolish. The genius must suit his pace to the dullest member of the class, though it is from the exceptional class that the leaders of the race come. Another problem.

Some more feeblemindedness. There are about 20,000,000 people in the U. S. whose nervous systems are too defective for them to appreciate what is demanded of them in modern society. It would do no good to sterilize them for there are many more with defective germ plasm that are normal. We can do away with the extreme low types by sterilization, and if the others do not want to play fair something might be done about it. We are trying through applied science to help the bodily and mentally weak get along. But that will not produce a strong race. Superiority comes through a strong body and mind. It is the proper combination of germs, not mutations. And a civilization worthwhile needs a high rather than a low average of these qualities.

East recommends that immigration should be fixed by eugenics, that being the rational immigration law. We need high-grade brains; we must be selective.

Eugenics should be applied to pol-

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