

330  
302

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# Our Defective Classes.

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How to Care for Them and Prevent  
Their Increase.

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A Paper Prepared by . . .

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Together with Articles on the Subject from the  
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## Our Defective Classes.

A strict definition of the phrase "defective classes" would embrace only those who are manifestly destitute, either congenitally or since birth, of one or more of those faculties, common to men and animals, necessary for the perception, initiation and execution of those acts on which the comfort and well-being of the individual life depends. Taste, smell, hearing, sight and feeling constitute the vitality of the animal. Take away or in any manner reduce the degree of any or either of these, and you reduce the vitality and intelligence proportionally of the individual organism, and relatively impair all of its faculties or senses.

This proposition is a self-evident, elemental one. Beginning with it, medical and social scientists have recognized and differentiated our "defective classes," which have arisen themselves, so to speak, from the natural laws of human association and relationship in civilized society, operating upon us as we have experienced them through the ages, producing at one time the violence, wounds, waste and ruin of war, and at another "the cankers of a calm world and a long peace," the result of both extremes being equally scarring and deteriorating upon individuals of the race, and these individuals transmitting the scars and defects to their posterity. Theoretically we are safe in saying that the five senses are the natural heritage and original endowment of every human being—from God Almighty himself. Practically we have experienced that, whether from barbarism and strain of war, or from the little less strenuous anxieties and struggles of our industrial and commercial civilization, or whether from other human strains, dissipations, accidents and excesses, a large number of our fellow human beings have lost a part, and some the whole, of

the original divine heritage of their five natural senses, and that it is these maimed, deprived, disinherited individuals that constitute what is known as our *defective classes*; that their number is constantly and threateningly increasing; that their defects are more certainly transmissible, cumulative and deteriorating, by the laws of hereditary, along their respective *minus* lines, than the good qualities of their more fortunate fellows are improvable and increasable along their respective *positive* lines, and that if some distinctively and effectively preventive means are not speedily adopted, vigorously prosecuted and resolutely persisted in, a degeneracy—mental, moral and physical, more darkening and overwhelming than any which caused the slow eclipse and final decay of the old pagan civilization—the unchecked cause which produce the defective classes will in an equal or shorter space of time work like results on our boasted Christian civilization, leaving our successors to again build up our race and society from the ruins, in their own cycles and generations, as we and our and their predecessors have done in ours, according to environments and evolutions.

Let me remark here, lest I be mistaken as a mere exaggerator of the appalling menaces to society from the mere increase of the defective classes, and regarded as a mere prophet of evil because of my own pessimistic and therefore distorted view of existing conditions, that I do not expect the dire consequence to happen that I have just hinted. But I do hold, with many able, thoughtful men of the medical profession, with many sociologists, statesmen and political economists who have studied and investigated the question, that unless preventive measures against the continuously progressive increase of the defective classes are adopted, such a calamity as the gradual eclipse, slow decay and final disintegration of our present form of society and government *is not only possible, but probable*. Accompanying the physical degeneracy of any part of a people throughout all ages, science and history note a corresponding decay of the masses, the degradation of their morals, the dis-