

MEDICINE—EUGENICS

Nearsightedness Could Be Wiped Out By Eugenics

Marriage of Two Nearsighted People Should Be Avoided, Medical Association Is Told; Germans Suffer Defect

NEARSIGHTEDNESS could be eliminated, bred out of the human race, by banning marriages between nearsighted people, Dr. Lawrence T. Post, of St. Louis, declared at the meeting of the American Medical Association in Atlantic City.

The large number of nearsighted Germans today is probably due to the fact that such eugenic mating was not practiced in Germany, he said.

"There is little evidence to show that this is anything but an hereditary defect and is handed down just as other physical characteristics are," Dr. Post stated.

Even if complete eugenic mating cannot be achieved, it may at least be possible, he said, to prevent the marriage of two people afflicted with extreme nearsightedness.

Besides eyeglasses to correct the nearsighted condition, Dr. Post advised the following treatment for the nearsighted child: "a well-rounded diet with a quart of milk or its equivalent in calcium each day; maintenance of a good posture, especially not stooping when reading, in which position the eye hangs by the optic nerve almost unsupported, as a grape from its stem; a good light, work at not too close a distance from the eyes, and if general examination indicates it, adequate dosage of thyroid."

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Vaccinate Mothers

NEW-BORN babies can be protected from whooping cough by vaccinating their mothers during the last three months before the babies are born, Dr. Philip Cohen and Dr. Samuel J. Scadron, of New York, announced.

"Whooping cough is the dread contagious disease of infancy," they declared. During the first two years of life it is the cause of more deaths than measles, diphtheria, infantile paralysis and scarlet fever combined."

Babies are usually born with an endowment from their mothers of immunity against these latter diseases, the immunity lasting about six months.

Against whooping cough, however, they have no such protection and efforts to make them resistant by vaccination early in life have been unsuccessful.

Apparently the new-born baby is not capable of producing antibodies against whooping cough, even under the stimulus of vaccination. But if his mother is vaccinated before his birth, defensive forces against whooping cough which develop in her blood are transferred through the womb to the baby.

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Retards Mental Growth

THE IMPORTANCE of this new method of protecting new-born babies from whooping cough by vaccinating their mothers was emphasized by

the report that when this disease attacks a very young baby, it may prevent his normal mental and personality development.

More than half of a group of 58 children who had had whooping cough before the age of two years showed "definite behavioral, intellectual and personality changes later in life, apparently as a direct result of this infection," Dr. Louis A. Lurie and Dr. Sol Levy, of Cincinnati, reported.

In most cases, the attack of whooping cough occurred between the third and seventh months of life but the children were first brought to the Child Guidance Home at the ages of 10 and 11 years.

Besides the behavior problems, ranging from incorrigibility to behavior indicative of mental disease, below-average intelligence was found in 24 of the 58 children and 10 were definitely feeble-minded. This amount of subnormal mentality is much greater than in the entire group of children at the Child Guidance Home.

Dr. Lurie stated that in all probability the changes found "are due to definite organic lesions (injuries) produced in the brain during the attack of whooping cough."

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DEADLY

The new Flying Fortress, the Boeing B-17E, is described by the War Department as "bigger and more deadly" than any previous Flying Fortresses. Armament includes heavy caliber power turrets on top and bottom of the fuselage, tail "stinger" and side guns.