

5. Discuss relation of high temperature to health.
6. Why are burns of so much importance as a problem of defensive hygiene?
7. Discuss relation of insufficient sunlight to rickets?
8. What defensive hygiene measures are particularly indicated in the University to meet the hazards of insufficient light?

XIV. DEFENSIVE HYGIENE OF HEREDITY

Our knowledge of heredity has been transferred from the realm of speculation to the realm of experiment. The rediscovery in 1900 of the work of Mendel furnished the foundation for the rapid growth of the science of genetics.

Normality and Abnormality

As a result of the statistical and experimental study of heredity, we have had revealed to us with great vividness the mechanisms by which both normal and abnormal characters can be transmitted from generation to generation. The knowledge of these mechanisms has uncovered for us some of the most pressing problems of Defensive Hygiene.

Problems

The principal problems of heredity for which we should adopt a more intelligent and aggressive defensive program are:

- (a) Hereditary mental diseases
- (b) Feeble-mindedness
- (c) Nervous and mental instability.

Extent of Problem

While there is some controversy over whether the large increase in mental deficiencies of various kinds is an absolute or relative one, there is no doubt of the immensity and importance of the problem. An intelligent opinion upon control measures should be based upon a working knowledge of the basic and exciting causes of:

- (a) Mental diseases
- (b) Feeble-mindedness.

Control of Human Heredity

Even though we have accumulated considerable knowledge of the mechanisms of both normal and abnormal heredity, it is a difficult and complex problem to apply in the human field.

Any program of applied eugenics to be successful must be practical and not visionary. In this course we are concerned directly with the prevention side and only indirectly with the constructive side.