

ASSORTATIVE MARRIAGE AND INFERTILITY

QUANTITATIVE analyses of marriage selection have established that there is a general tendency in human beings for "the attraction of certain classes of males to certain classes of females" (Pearson).¹ Correlations of physical characters studied with reference to this tendency have yielded an average value of about 0.24 (Willoughby and Pomerat²). Schiller³ has summarized the literature dealing with homogamy in man, with special reference to behavior characteristics.

Materials for the present study were obtained through the kindness of Dr. A. W. Rowe, to whom the writer is deeply indebted. Records of a consecutive series of 107 infertile married couples which were thoroughly studied for diagnostic purposes at the Evans Memorial (Boston, Massachusetts) were used to study the relation between assortative mating and infertility. Since all cases desired children, presumably the contraceptive factor is not involved in this problem. The routine program in this study of sterility has been described by Rowe⁴ and a preliminary discussion of the constitutional factors involved was published by Meaker.⁵

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients of 0.63 ± 0.04 and of 0.40 ± 0.055 were obtained for the height and trunk length, respectively, in these married pairs. These are the highest values which have been thus far reported for homogamy in man.

The only other stature correlation recorded to date gave a value of 0.28 ± 0.02 (Pearson and Lee),⁶ derived from an English population consisting of 1,079 couples "very largely from the professional classes." It is quite possible that in the groups cited racial factors are involved. These differences as well as additional characters in the infertility group and of fertility characterized by high and low homogamy, respectively, are under investigation. The findings reported, if confirmed, are eugenically important, since they suggest a possible relation between homogamy and fertility.

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FOSSIL RESIN

It appears that some of the conifers to-day are repeating their conservational history of ancient times. In New Zealand the copal deposits from ancient Kauri forests, and in the region of the Black Sea the amber deposits, have been interesting for centuries. Now it may be stated definitely that the balsam is doing the same thing. I cut open several gum blisters on a balsam tree that had been dead for six years and found some of them full of liquid gum while in others the resinous matter had hardened into an amber-like consistency. I think this may not be a matter of common knowledge.

CHASE S. OSBORN

REPORTS

THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

CEREMONIES to mark the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Medical School of Harvard University were held on October 7. The school opened on October 7, 1783, with the induction into office of John Warren as professor of anatomy and surgery and Benjamin Waterhouse as professor of the theory and practise of physic.

On October 6 a program at the Medical School and three of its affiliated hospitals in Boston was arranged by the president and officers of the Medical Alumni Association, open to alumni of the Medical School. During the morning, the alumni inspected

the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Boston City Hospital and the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. In the afternoon they heard a series of talks at the Medical School by members of the faculty, and in the evening an anniversary dinner was held in Vanderbilt Hall.

On October 7 the formal anniversary program was held at Sanders Theater by the president of the university and the dean and faculty of the Medical School. The aim of this program was to repeat in part the exercises held at the college on this day 150 years ago.

The following description of the ceremony is taken from the official program:

This day, one hundred and fifty years ago, two of the medical professors, viz., Dr. John Warren and Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse, were publicly inducted into office. A ceremony is held to commemorate the occasion.

At about ten-thirty o'clock A. M., the medical alumni and guests with several other gentlemen of the board of overseers and corporation come to the university and, at the steps of Harvard Hall, are received by the president, medical professors and tutors. A little before eleven

⁶ K. Pearson and A. Lee, "On the Laws of Inheritance in Man," *Biometrika*, 2, 373 ff., 1903.

¹ K. Pearson and others, "Cooperative Study of Assortative Mating in Man," *Biometrika*, 2, 373 ff., 1902.

² R. R. Willoughby, and C. M. Pomerat, "Homogamy in the Toad," *Am. Nat.*, 66, 223, 1932.

³ B. Schiller, "A Quantitative Analysis of Marriage Selection in a Small Group," *Jour. Soc. Psychol.*, 3, 3, 297-319, 1932.

⁴ A. W. Rowe, "Some Constitutional Factors in Human Sterility," *Proc. 2d Int. Cong. Sex. Res.*, 534-544, 1930.

⁵ S. R. Meaker, "Constitutional Factors in the Causation of Sterility," *Jour. Am. Med. Assn.*, 92, 1493, 1929.