

up to July 1, 1925, 1,374 feeble-minded persons have been dealt with in this way; but, says Dr. Laughlin, "most of the cases of sexual sterilization under the present laws have been applied to the insane, although the remedy was originally, and still is most logically, applicable to the feeble-minded."

Four types of operation have been employed, two in the case of each sex. Considerable research in experimental surgery, however, is still necessary, especially as to a simpler operation for the certain sterilization of the female; it is, therefore, interesting to note that the Committee on Maternal Health in America is conducting necessary research along this line.

A systematic study of sterilization physiology is also required. Many of the individuals who were sexually sterilized some ten or more years ago are still living; abstracts of their case-histories up to the time of their sterilization are available. These case-histories, Dr. Laughlin suggests, should be brought up to date with a view to determining "the physiological, mental and the temperamental effects upon each social type, sex and age of persons sterilized, and classified, of course, by the type of operation." The indications, he adds, seem to be that no physiological harm has come from the operations, but "more exact data of benefit or harm must await the following up of the case-histories."

H. FREIZE STEPHENS.

*Mental Hygiene as Applied to the Feeble-minded.* (Proc. Amer. Assoc. for the Study of the Feeble-minded, 1926.) Pratt, G. K.

In so far as any have been as yet coherently formulated, the principles of mental hygiene are as applicable to the feeble-minded as to the normal child, and none of these is as important as that underlying the inculcation of the habit of *facing reality squarely*. Dr. Pratt rightly maintains that "it is a false and an unwise and a misplaced sympathy that declines to teach the intellectually subnormal the necessity of assuming their share of the world's disagreeable but quite necessary tasks. Of course in the case of the defective these tasks and responsibilities must be graded intelligently to meet fairly the individual's lessened capacity. But to absolve a child, merely because his intellect is below par, from any and all of the duties of real life is as certain to lead to adult selfishness, delinquency and a difficult personality as it would be in the case of a normal child."

As in the normal, too, excessive day-dreaming in aments is to be discouraged; but, more than in the normal, considerable patience and tact must be exercised in teaching mental defectives to reconcile their low intellectual capacities with, often, such high ambitions and desires, to face and accept their limitations in one sphere, while being willing to re-shape their life-plans and hopes on a lower plane in another. Yet there is a considerable danger to be avoided in this endeavour lest there be instilled that conviction of hopeless inferiority so readily acquired by the feeble in mind. Dr. Pratt discusses the treatment of this distressing condition in aments,

and recognizes the value of what elsewhere we have termed "Baden-Powellism" as an excellent means of exercising it.

Boy scouts, camp fire girls and similar agencies he also finds to be of considerable help in the management of the different manifestations in the feeble-minded of "the instinct of self-assertion," especially during the difficult days of the great pubertal urge when, like normal boys and girls, adolescent aments desire above all things to live their own lives unhampered by the dictates of authority. "Unfortunately," as Dr. Pratt points out, "such defectives lack sufficient judgment and intelligence to permit the degree of personal freedom accorded to brighter youths, and the parent or teacher must attempt the delicate task of reconciling a powerful instinct to forge out an independent career with the practical necessity for accepting the advice and decisions of others." This task will be considerably lightened where the adolescent defective has had the benefit of a sound training in childhood, for with aments, habits once learned are not easily forsaken, which makes the inculcation of an intelligent discipline in their early years their strongest adult safeguard.

H. FREIZE STEPHENS.

*Community Responsibility and Mental Deficiency.* (Proc. Amer. Assoc. for the Study of the Feeble-minded, 1926.) Sandy, W. C.

As a result of modern tendencies an increasing number of recognized mental defectives are being employed in the community, and Dr. Sandy believes that a considerable amount of communal responsibility and privilege will continue to be accorded to them. Nor can this be altogether avoided. But with the earlier recognition of aments, their better training and more efficient supervision, these privileges and responsibilities tend to become more clearly determined and definitely limited.

H. FREIZE STEPHENS.

*Fifty Years in Retrospect.* (Presidential Address at the 50th Meeting of the American Association for the Study of the Feeble-minded, as reported in their Proceedings for 1926.) Wylie, A. R. T.

An authoritative survey by its retiring President of the first fifty years of this historic and important Association that began its useful work on June 6, 1876, "in the parlor of the Pennsylvania Training School at Media" with the great Seguin as its first President. At that time there were only eight institutions for mental defectives in America—five State and three private, with a population of about 1,500. To-day there are 56 State institutions in 43 States, with a population of about 50,000, and 90 private institutions. The property value of the State institutions is nearly \$46,000,000, of the private ones \$1,500,000, while the yearly expense of the former is \$10,390,000, and of the latter \$577,000—all of which is an index of the enthusiasm and activity of this influential group of American psychiatrists.

The advances in our knowledge of mental deficiency during the