control their children. The Jewish children compare favourably with those of German or Irish birth. In all these statistics the bias of the police officers must be allowed for, as their racial prejudices are very strong. M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

The Environmental Background of Juvenile Delinquency. (*Arch. of Neur. and Psychiat., November*, 1930.) *Seif, L.*

The author sees in the young delinquent the result of the action of bad environment on an easily moulded subject. He places a large share of the blame on the parents and teachers. The child naturally has an inferiority feeling, and the infliction by the parent of an "obey without question" attitude does not help matters. The child has to be treated in a firm, sympathetic manner, and shown that the adult understands it and treats it as a personality and not as a nonentity. The immediate problem of delinquency is to "educate the educators." G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

The Criminal Feeble-minded. (*Medico-Legal Journ., January–February*, 1931.) *Richmond, F. C.*

A survey of the admissions to five penal and reformatory institutions in the State of Wisconsin was made. In a total of 5,125 admissions, there were 1,737 mentally deficient, 1,438 being classed as high-grade morons, 292 as low-grade morons, and 7 as imbeciles. The percentages for males and females were practically identical. The proportion of feeble-minded increases as the age-scale ascends. M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

Talking Motion Pictures as Evidence. (*Medico-Legal Journ., January–February*, 1931.) *Herzog, A. W.*

In a Pennsylvania case talking motion pictures were taken for the purpose of showing that the confession of the accused was voluntarily made. The accused appealed on the question of the legality of the admission of such evidence. The State Supreme Court dismissed the appeal. It was held that the novelty of the talking motion picture was no reason for rejecting evidence so afforded. Photographs and phonographic reproductions had long been admissible as evidence, and there was no reason to reject a combination of the two methods. M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

Medical Evidence. (*Med. Journ. of Australia, February* 14, 1931.) *Perdriau, His Honour Judge.*

It is always salutary to learn how we appear to others, and a criticism of medical evidence from the pen of an eminent member of the legal profession is of special value. Many of the author's illustrations are taken from the evidence given in compensation cases; but there is much in his article that can be digested with profit by those of us who are called upon to act as witnesses in criminal courts, or in civil cases when the question of a person's mental state is in dispute.

Evidence may be given of facts in issue, or of facts relevant to facts in issue. Shortly stated, a fact is relevant to a fact in issue when it can be shown to be one of its causes or effects. Subject to certain important exceptions, four classes of facts are excluded from the definition of relevancy: (1) Facts similar to, but not specially connected with each other; (2) hearsay; (3) certain instances of character, or reputation; (4) opinion. This last is of chief concern to us. The existence of a fact cannot be proved by showing that some person is of opinion that the fact exists. But where the fact is a question to which only persons of special knowledge or experience can speak, such persons may state their opinon on the matter, *e.g.*, medical practitioners, engineers, chemists and others. These persons are termed "experts." This term has never been precisely defined, and whether a proposed witness can be considered an expert is a preliminary question for the judge. In general, the appearance of a witness's name on the medical register is deemed sufficient qualification for a medical practitioner to give evidence as an expert. One eminent authority has stated that the expert "is in a relatively independent position, and can therefore easily divest his mind of bias, and approach the case in a judicial spirit." The expert witness should always remember that, although he may have been called by one of the parties, he is expected to assist the court in arriving at a just conclusion on the matters in dispute—matters upon which he is assumed to be specially qualified to express an opinion. It would be well if this were always kept in mind. Judge Perdriau, however, considers that while experts notoriously differ, in most cases they make a real attempt to be fair, and their evidence is generally of the utmost assistance to the court. Endeavours are occasionally made, in cross-examination, to shake the credit of a witness; but a competent witness who is honestly trying to express his views always has the sympathy and the protection of the court.

The expert witness should always bring into court his original notes and copies of his subsequent reports. He should relate the symptoms complained of, and the signs which he himself has observed. He can then give his interpretation of the symptoms and signs in the light of the evidence given as to the facts of the case.

It is rather curious to find a learned judge misquoting such a "leading case" as that of *Bardell* v. *Pickwick*. His Honour has not given the disallowed evidence of the witness Samuel Weller accurately. M. HAMBLIN SMITH.