

through his behest, in retaliatory murder. These conditions would naturally lead to the establishment of priestly courts for the trial of homicide.

(6) The account of these courts is detailed, and seems well founded. It does not, however, so define the relations of the different courts as to make clear what would happen if, for example, the Areopagus considered a case outside its jurisdiction as being one of involuntary homicide, while the Palladium rejected it as being one of voluntary homicide. Would a man escape who, on either view, was liable to some punishment? Such an *impasse* might easily develop, unless the different courts were in some organized relation of concurrent or appellate jurisdiction—linking the Palladium, and possibly the Delphinium, with the Areopagus as co-ordinate or superior court. Professor Treston might perhaps dismiss the difficulty, in the spirit of his introduction, by saying that though such conditions of miscarriage might subsist in mediæval or modern justice, by the broad common sense of primitive law they would be avoided. We could only answer that this original view is in direct conflict with every well-known feature of the history of legal institutions. That history exhibits a constant process of the shedding of formalisms—the infant swaddling-bands of the earliest courts.

The technicality and unreasonableness of these ancient tribunals has often seemed to us to stultify conclusions reached on the innocent method of reconstructing ancient law by the expansion of scattered fragments into patterns of visionary reasonableness. The more exiguous the data, the more favourably the reconstructed code compares with modern, or any actual law, and the more flattering, it may be presumed, is its portrayal of the original from which the fragments come.

(7) In considering later Greece, we are inclined to doubt our author's use of Plato's *Laws* and of the tragedies. No one, surely, can so refract the visions of Plato's uplifted eyes as to bend them to the pedestrian uses of a text-book of law, without ignoring the reach of the Platonic aim, and blinding himself to its richer intellectual promptings and significance. Similarly, to look upon the tragedians as if they were no more than able interpreters of the spiritual atmosphere of their time, is to reduce the impulse of imaginative genius to a sensitive form of journalism. If Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides so selected and adapted material from the mass of Homeric and other legends as to frame a vehicle old, yet new, for their own rapt, ideal teaching to their own day, it by no means follows that they chipped the result into consistency with their own actual political and legal environment.

W. G. H. C.

Social Control of the Feeble-minded. By STANLEY P. DAVIES, Ph.D.
The National Committee for Mental Hygiene. New York City.
8vo. Pp. x + 222. Price \$1.25.

This volume aims at the presentation of the concepts held from time to time regarding mental deficiency and the stages of the development of social control of this problem. It may at once be

stated that the author deserves congratulations on the success with which he has carried out this task, in a form suited alike for the professed psychiatrist, for the member of a mental hospital committee, or for the general reader.

He commences by a discussion of the various proposed definitions of the term feeble-minded, inclining in the end to combine both social and psychological terms: "a satisfactory definition would indicate an intelligence quotient below a certain level," as a measure of general intelligence, "plus a certain deficiency in other personality traits leading to social inefficiency." The use of the intelligence quotient alone, though it sorts out the defective, truly enough, also segregates out large numbers of normal individuals; while the social test alone is rather too vague, and may entangle in its meshes those whose failure is due to inhibitions arising from contact with the outer world.

He proceeds by the historical method, distinguishing four periods in the evolution of the social reaction to the problem. In the ancient and medieval period, down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the mentally defective were treated kindly or cruelly in accordance with the current ecclesiastic views of the causation of the condition—whether they were "les enfants du bon Dieu," or, as was held by Luther and Calvin, were "filled with Satan."

With the discovery of the "wild boy of Aveyron" in 1798, and the attempts at his education made by Itard, commences the period of physiological education, the methods of Seguin, Itard's pupil, still holding the field, especially as re-introduced by Madame Montessori. During this period institutions for the feeble-minded were established in most parts of America and Western Europe.

At first it was believed that all the mentally defective could be educated to fill a useful niche in the world, while many hoped for a complete recovery in the slighter cases. It is to this aspiration that we owe the Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act, which provided special schools and extended the period of compulsory education for the scholars therein until the age of sixteen years. Gradually, however, each institution and school found that the lower-grade pupils were unfit to leave at sixteen, so that there was an increasing demand for custodial care after the school age. This introduced an alarmist period, when the emphasis on eugenics and the application of the standardized methods of intelligence testing awakened public attention to the magnitude of the problem of mental deficiency. The students of heredity, basing their studies on cases brought to notice in institutions, concluded that mental deficiency behaved as if due to a single unit character inherited along Mendelian lines, so that while the offspring of other matings would show a proportionate frequency of defect, all the offspring of a pair of mentally defective parents would be themselves defective. In this fear they urged wholesale segregation, to be supplemented where necessary by measures for sterilization. Laws to give effect to this proposal for sterilization were passed by fifteen States of the Union, but as there was no strong public opinion

behind the movement, the man in the street being just a little suspicious of the prophetic powers of the expert in heredity, actually only 403 operations have been performed in the whole of the fifteen States during the period of fourteen years. This measure of eugenic control is tending to fall into disuse, and, as the author is careful to point out, such a rapid solution of an urgent problem was not advocated by those of the medical profession who were best informed on the matter. Various commissions set to work to ascertain the provision required for segregation; that for New York State, for example, pointed out that whereas there was provision for 3,000 defectives, they had learned of the existence of 21,000 others not in institutions. At the same time the various revisions of the Binet-Simon tests had been vigorously applied in schools and institutions, and the definite assertion was made that all who test below 70 I.Q. should be considered feeble-minded, while some indeed extended this to a lower limit of normality of 75 I.Q. This means that all over sixteen who failed to pass tests for the age of 12 were feeble-minded. This definition was largely used in the selection of children for special schools, for which purpose it has indeed some value, but many protested against its general application in the case of adults, since although tests may measure general intelligence, this latter is not the same as wisdom, nor the sole factor in determining conduct. With the war came the trial of the "American Army Tests" on the draft, with the result that *if* the mental testers' definition was to be held good, almost half the draft would have been deemed feeble-minded. This absurdity led to a drastic reconsideration and the withdrawal from a position that had never been generally accepted in this country.

The modern period since 1918 has seen the development of extra-institutional methods of care, training and supervision of the defective. Recent work on heredity has shown that mental deficiency cannot be regarded as a unit character, so that the frequency of its transmission, regarded merely as a statistical question, would be lessened—a conclusion more in agreement with actual facts than the previously held views. It was found that many of the families investigated, and on which the conclusions had been based, were really extreme cases, and that mental deficiency was more often a result of illness or accident in the lifetime of the individual. Also the extreme views that nearly all prisoners, prostitutes and the like were defective have given way to smaller estimates—10 *per cent.* or even less—and it has been realized that the cause of delinquency is usually to be sought in the environment. The experiments in licensing out on trial from such institutions as Waverly and Rome indicated how large a number of the trained inmates could make good in the world, provided they were well placed and adequately supervised. The idea that all defectives married or had illegitimate children was found not to accord with facts, while it was evident that the enormous expense of general segregation was neither popular nor justified. This American experience is fully supported by such data as have been collected during the period of operation of the Mental Deficiency Act in Britain, where most of the defectives

have perforce had to be dealt with by means of school education and supervision only, under which the majority are capable of absorbing and of living up to ideals.

The conclusion of the author is that the majority of the feeble-minded may safely be retained as functioning members of society, *provided* the group exercises over them a sufficient degree of social self-control to give them the training suited to their capacities, and continues to furnish throughout their lives the sort of leadership which will foster in them the highest social ideals. The way this task has been approached by the authorities of the leading institutions in the United States forms the subject of interesting chapters on social reconstruction, which should be read by all who have such a task before them. It is not enough to test a person to know that he will grade as mentally defective; his whole personality must be the subject of inquiry, the right subject to awaken interest must be found, and various methods tried to exchange faulty for desirable forms of reaction. The method is not haphazard, albeit it must necessarily proceed by methods of trial and error. Although it is impossible to supply a missing intellect, it is often possible to socialize the personality; though the smaller number whose anti-social reactions are confirmed will always need permanent care. The most successful schemes seem to include school, followed by a period at a colony, and gradual reintroduction to the world through some system of boarding-out as a worker or life in a hostel. This latter method fortunately seems likely to take root in this country, where such provision has so far been sadly neglected.

The methods expounded by the author cover the chief experiments of which the results are so far available, and if the ideal method has not yet been found, they point the way to the best and most economical use of our available resources, with a minimum of interference with the liberty of the subject or the self-respect of the community.

F. S.

Health and Conduct. By ARTHUR J. BROCK, M.D. Edin. With an Introduction by Prof. PATRICK GEDDES. London: Williams & Norgate, Ltd., 1923. Demy 8vo. Pp. xxiii + 295. Price 10s. 6d. net.

This book is offered as a doctor's contribution to sociology; and certainly the medical man, whose profession brings him into contact with all kinds of people and provides him with an intimate knowledge of the conditions under which they live, should be peculiarly fitted to contribute studies of value to social science. Dr. Brock is a disciple of Comte, the founder of sociology in its modern sense, whose teachings have recently borne fruit in the work of Geddes and others on Regionalism and Civics. For Dr. Brock, as for Comte, sociology is not a matter of statistics, blue books and economics; rather is a living science—the science of human life. If society is regarded as a living organism, it is natural for the doctor to develop the thesis that its present disturbed state is the expression of a social disease, the causation, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of