

is preferable. The chief difficulty is, perhaps, to be found in the fact that many, if not the great majority of, asylums are so constructed that the necessary adaptation for such a radical change would hardly be feasible. This is certainly a formidable obstacle, and in some cases probably insurmountable. Still, it might not be impossible to make such alterations in most of them as would admit of the new methods being even partially adopted. And in the case of new asylums being erected it ought in future to be made a prime consideration that they should be so constructed as to afford facilities for such a scheme of organisation in the nursing department. As a matter of fact it is scarcely correct to regard this method of nursing as exclusively Scottish, as since the year 1902 a system of nursing male patients by female nurses has come into operation in several of the London asylums. It was first started at Bexley, and was subsequently adopted in the Epileptic Colony, at Horton, and Long Grove. The villa system would be the ideal one for such institutions, each of the component buildings forming a unit in itself, having its own independent arrangements.

The sexual difficulty, on which sometimes stress is laid, cannot really be said to exist. As regards patients with propensities of this kind no one proposes that they should be put in the charge of females; in their case everyone is agreed that male attendants are necessary.

On the whole it is probable that most, if not all, of those who approach this subject in an impartial spirit and with unprejudiced minds, will come to the conclusion that Dr. Robertson has proved his point, and that the experience of Scottish asylums has established beyond cavil the advantages of a system which, without hazarding too confident a prediction, is not unlikely, sooner or later, to be generally if not universally adopted throughout the asylum service.

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## Part II.—Reviews.

*National Association for the Feeble-minded. Annual Conference Report, 1915.*

“The Methods of Examination best Adapted to Ascertain the Presence, or otherwise, of Mental Defect,” formed the subject of

discussion at the Conference. The subject is both important and practical, and the various contributions contained in the report merit the close attention of those who are called upon to deal with cases coming under the provisions of the Mental Deficiency Act.

Sir Bryan Donkin, in his introductory remarks as Chairman of the Conference, brings into prominence the difficulty of attempting to formulate exact definitions in the differentiation of "normal" and "feeble-minded," or of attempting to establish a hard and fast line between them. Such cases as come under observation cannot be judged by the intellect alone. He truly points out, "It is a matter of *defect of mind* in all, as evidenced chiefly by careful and often prolonged observation of conduct, and by study of the history in each case, leading to an inference of the incapacity of the subjects to adjust themselves effectively to their social surroundings." Actual "mental tests" for mental deficiency can hardly be more than one factor in arriving at a conclusion as to the status and course of treatment indicated in any given case. The most reliable test is, after all, actual life, which reveals more truly than anything else the individual's mental capacity.

Within the limits indicated in the subject for discussion the papers cover a wide field. This may be briefly indicated by a list of the titles and contributors.

"A Scheme for the Detection and Treatment of Mentally Defective School Children," Dr. Robert Hughes.

"The Detection of Mental Deficiency on the Large Scale in School Children," W. H. Winch, District Inspector of Schools, London County Council.

"Emploi des tests de Binet et Simon chez les Enfants Anormaux Anglais et Belges," Dr. Boulenger.

"What Tests in Childhood are best Calculated to Throw Light Upon their Capacities for Future Work," Dr. W. A. Potts.

"The Value of a Uniform Examination of the Feeble-minded for Education Purposes," Dr. Allan Warner.

"Practical Application of the Binet Tests," R. L. Langdon Down.

"The Binet-Simon Tests as a Means of Grading Mental Defectives under the Mental Deficiency Act," Dr. W. B. Drummond.

"The Classification of the Mentally Defective as regarded from a Legal Standpoint under the Mental Deficiency Act," Dr. E. B. Sherlock.

"The Characteristics and Identification of the Feeble-minded Criminal," Dr. Charles Goring.

"Classification of the Mentally Defective from an Administrative Point of View," Dr. H. W. Sinclair.

All these papers are essentially practical in character and will repay a careful study.  
H. D.

*Wishfulfilment and Symbolism in Fairy Tales.* By DR. FRANZ RICKLIN.  
Translated by Dr. W. A. White. New York: Nervous and Mental Diseases Publishing Co., 1915. Pp. 90. Roy. 8vo.

It is well known that from the Freudian standpoint fairy tales are constituted in somewhat the same manner as dreams, on the basis of the unconscious, and that they thus form the material for a psychology which may be brought into line with that of hysteria and mental disease.