

operandi secured from the scene of the crime may not agree with the personality of the one convicted who is subsequently proved innocent. In the majority of manslaughter and homicide cases the offender often claims self defense.

"Briefly, the so-called *modus operandi* described in the monograph form by Atcherly, an English constable, and later perfected by Vollmer and statisticians, refers to a minute description and classification at the scene of the crime, and is based upon the assumption that the offender leaves traces of his personality behind. These 'clues' are significant and even no 'clue' is equally significant. Many officers speak of offenders who commit any type of crime and change from time to time. All offenders, and especially recidivists, leave tell-tale traces behind."

Dr. Larson cited his own experience in one case to show how this method actually works out.

"As an intermediate case-working chief investigator a few years ago, for many weeks the writer and his police colleagues were trying to locate a gang of auto thieves who combined joy-riding with drinking, with hold-ups, rape, and shooting scrapes with police officers. By the use of maps, plotting times of attack with places where the stolen cars and other evidence were recovered, it became possible to predict so that traps could be laid.

"Only through the carelessness and poor cooperation and intimidation of witnesses did these fail, although the identity of the offenders had been accurately established. After a frustrated hold-up and wounding of one of the gang in a duel with an officer, the crimes were temporarily stopped with the final arrest of the gangsters.

"In the study of the crime in cases of homicide, the manner of death, place, circumstances, apparent motives, secured objectively tell us much about the type of individual to look for, and this, coupled with all of the factors of a subsequent psychological analysis give much interesting data.

"The killing of jealousy, or in the heat of passion, fever of revenge or drinking, or due to delusions of persecution, differ from the mass murders, such as lynchings, sadistic or other sex crimes, from the 'ride' of the gangsters, to the killing of the squealer or stool pigeon found with a nickel in his hand or his lips sewed together, or torch killing, or the gangster 'spotting' of the victim to the cult murder and those of strikes, etc. No one factor in the personality integration is important alone, but each differs in every case depending upon the relative stability or extent of organization."

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Science News Letter, January 12, 1935

#### SOCIOLOGY

## Sterilization Wrong Approach To Feebleminded Problem

**S**TERILIZATION will not solve the problem of mental deficiency on either economic, eugenic or humanitarian grounds, in the opinion of Dr. Lionel S. Penrose, research medical officer of the Royal Eastern Counties Institution at Colchester, England.

The menace of the feeble-minded is a question of very moderate dimensions when put in its true proportion to other problems, Dr. Penrose points out in his recently-published book, *Mental Defect* (Farrar & Rinehart).

On the economic side, Dr. Penrose states that it might cost the state as much as four million pounds to provide institutional care for all the mentally defective in England who need it.

But it would be possible to cope with the whole problem of mental deficiency in that country by a comparatively small reduction in the hundred million pounds or so spent annually on the fighting forces.

Only 5 per cent. of the next generation of mentally defective persons would be prevented if all existing mentally defective parents were compulsorily sterilized, Dr. Penrose says.

"Furthermore, a large proportion of existing defectives never could have children because their mentality is of such low grade that they would never, in the ordinary way, find a mate," he states.

The only defectives whom it would

be worth while sterilizing are those of high enough mentality and complete enough physique to enable them to have offspring. But even these defectives can not, under present economic conditions, earn their own living. Sooner or later they drift into institutions and they would do so whether sterilized or not.

Of the slightly higher grade of defectives, those having a mental age of nine years or more, there is the serious difficulty of determining whether they are or are not defective. Many authorities consider this mental age the borderline. Undoubtedly these persons make poor parents, but even here the problem is solved by itself without recourse to sterilization, Dr. Penrose indicates. These persons generally come to the attention of the authorities because of behavior difficulty and as soon as they are thus discovered, they are put under institutional care.

Finally, Dr. Penrose questions the humanitarian views of those who advocate sterilization of mental defectives.

"At the back of the minds of many people is the notion that sterilization should be a punitive measure," he declares.

"It has been pointed out that the advocates of sterilization never wish it to be applied to their own class, but always to someone else.

Science News Letter, January 12, 1935

#### ETHNOLOGY

## Snowshoes Not Indian; Originated in Asia

**S**NOWSHOES, commonly thought of as an Indian invention, really originated in Asia, Dr. D. S. Davidson, anthropologist at the University of Pennsylvania, told the American Anthropological Association at its meeting in Pittsburgh.

The archancestral Asiatic snowshoes, however, were pretty crude affairs, Dr. Davidson explained. They were of an awkward, round, "bearpaw" pattern, with irregular and unsystematic lacing. The highly evolved types used by the Indians, and now a favorite implement of winter sport, were evolved in North America, while the ski, originally a crude plank, was being refined and shaped on the other side of the ocean.

Lately, Dr. Davidson stated, there has been a new migration of the snowshoe, this time westward into Asia again. The natives on the other side of the Bering Sea have learned the use of the highly evolved snowshoe from the North American tribes.

Science News Letter, January 12, 1935