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THE MENTAL STATUS OF REFORMATORY WOMEN

CLARENCE H. GROWDON¹

The earliest studies of the mentality of women in jails, work-houses, almshouses, and similar institutions showed a great preponderance of very low intelligence scores. Later on when the intelligence of women in penitentiaries and other institutions began to be collected a considerable change in the concept of the intelligence of criminal women had to be made. In the majority of cases the intelligence of delinquent women has been found higher than was at first believed but still stands below the average for non-delinquents.

Although several other states have reported the results of mental surveys of their prison population, both male and female, Ohio has reported almost nothing of this type, up to the present time, with regard to the inmates of its state penal institutions. Aside from a few studies of selected individual cases, and the small survey made by Murchison on the 85 cases in the Ohio Reformatory for Women in the early months of 1919, the mental status of Ohio's delinquent women is almost a matter of conjecture.

The Ohio Reformatory for Women was created by act of the legislature in 1911 and was completed and ready for occupancy in September, 1916. The law creating the prison provided for the incarceration within it of all female felons or misdemeanants above the age of 16 years whose sentence involved imprisonment of 30 days or over, or a fine, which if unpaid, would require imprisonment of 30 days or more. In 1929 the legislature repealed that portion of the law which referred to misdemeanors and left the institution a prison for female felons only.

Throughout the nearly 14 years during which the original law was in effect the prison was operated on the assumption that all prisoners committed to the prison should be treated alike, insofar as such treatment was possible. No discriminations were made because one prisoner was a felon and another a misdemeanant. Both were quartered in the same sections of the prison, both were assigned like duties, both obeyed the same prison regulations, both ate at the same tables, and no one would have been able to tell which was felon and which was misdemeanant without reference to the prison records. The ex-

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istence of such a condition offered an excellent opportunity to study the comparative intelligence of delinquent women.

Murchison's data as presented in part V of his "Criminal Intelligence," 1926, is slightly misleading in view of an unfortunate oversight which consisted in viewing the Ohio Reformatory for Women as the Ohio Penitentiary for Women and assuming that all the inmates therein were "major women criminals" a term which immediately suggests felons. As a matter of fact over 40% of the 85 inmates at the time of this survey were misdemeanants and not guilty of a felony. To what extent this misconception skews the data in the mind of the average reader may be inferred from the mental differences noted in the intelligence levels of felons as compared with misdemeanants in the pages to follow. Although it is not seriously misleading due allowance must be made for the facts existing.

The purposes of this article are two: First, to report a somewhat extended mental survey of the adult female delinquents in the State of Ohio, and second, to make a comparison of the intelligence ratings of the various groups covered by the survey. We believe the results of this survey should be made available as a further contribution to the study of intelligence as related to criminality.

The survey covers 2185 cases admitted to the Ohio Reformatory for Women, and includes all the prisoners in that institution on July 1, 1925, and all new admissions to the prison between that date and July 1, 1930. The data is not wholly complete for every admission but is as nearly complete as conditions under which examinations were made would permit. The psychologists engaged in this work were not quartered in the institution but made monthly visits to the prison to conduct the examinations. There being a considerable number of misdemeanants admitted to the prison pending the payment of a fine, there were a few cases whose fine was paid and final release accomplished between the visits of the psychologists. Otherwise the data is complete.

The method of examination was that of group examination followed by individual interviews and individual tests of such cases as showed any tendencies that would make the examiner suspect that the mental ratings found by group tests were inaccurate. Since the psycho-clinicians engaged in this work were all persons of excellent training and several years of practical experience in similar types of testing it was felt that such a method was quite satisfactory.

The tests originally used were Army Alpha, the Pintner Non-Language Test, and the Ohio Literacy Test. (This latter test is

a modification of the Camp Devens literacy test that has been standardized on a mental age basis and has been found to correlate quite satisfactorily with the Stanford-Binet test.) Minor changes were made in the Pintner Non-Language directions, since a large number of prisoners failed to put forth any high degree of effort when the original instructions were used. A comparison of the scores made by the two sets of instructions showed that the change in directions had made the test slightly less difficult for those who had made a fairly satisfactory score under the original instructions, and that there was a much higher degree of effort on the part of those who had formerly failed to enter into the spirit of the tests. After using Army Alpha for one year we experimented with the Morgan Mental Test and found it a still more satisfactory test than Army Alpha for use with the class of women with which we had to deal. This shift from Army Alpha to Morgan's Test was partially prompted by expediency and partly by the fact that the two tests gave approximately the same mental ages in the lower ranges of intelligence, and that in the upper ranges the Morgan test gave more nearly the ratings established by individual testing than did Army Alpha.

The familiar fact that few persons test exactly the same on all tests of any given battery of tests was a factor to be reckoned with. Ordinarily the mental age differences in any well chosen group of tests is not large and there is little need for any radical readjustment of the scores when it is necessary to express the mental condition of the individual in terms of some united score. Various means of combinations, generally the use of some form of weighting the scores, have been used for this purpose. Since the testing program in this case was carried on primarily for the very practical purpose of furnishing the prison authorities and the State board of clemency as true as possible an estimate of the prisoner's mental condition, and only secondarily for purposes of research, it was found necessary to adopt some comparatively simple method of combining the scores into a single representative measure. After a considerable amount of experimenting with various means of weighting the following scheme was adopted. Each test was given and scored as if it were to be the only measure taken. The mental age attained on each of the more predictable single measures of intelligence (Stanford-Binet, Army Alpha, or the Morgan test) was then multiplied by two, and added to the mental age ratings as determined by the performance test (Pintner Non-Language test), and by the purely verbalistic test (the

Ohio Literacy Test.) The process is made clear by the following formula:

$$\frac{2g + p + l}{4} = M$$

When g is the mental age attained by means of a general intelligence test, p the mental age attained by means of the performance type of test, l the mental age by the purely literacy test, and m is the final mental age rating.

Such a method gives the general intelligence test with its test of multiple abilities a decided advantage over the ratings of more limited abilities as represented by the purely performance or purely literate types of examination. Although it might be difficult to prove by purely statistical means that such a weighting scheme is the best possible means that might be employed for the purpose it may be said that it was the method which, in the opinion of trained psycho-clinicians of long experience, best correlated with their general estimates of the subject's usable intelligence. For this particular battery of tests and under the conditions imposed by virtue of the immediate situation we believe the results are as reliable as any method that might have been used. At the same time we might add that the resulting mental ages are undoubtedly as representative of the usable intelligence of our subjects as those attained elsewhere under similar circumstances in other mental surveys.

The population of the prison divides itself according to race into approximately 60% whites and 40% negroes. Of the white population approximately 20% (12% of the entire population) are foreign born, and come chiefly from the eastern and southern states of Europe. Many of these have attained a certain facility in the use of their adopted tongue, though there are many who were unable to make a really representative score on any of the group tests given. In these cases we were compelled to resort to individual methods of examining and occasionally had to resort to the use of an interpreter. Of the seventy deferred cases on whom no mental age could be safely estimated almost all the white subjects were from the foreign-born, foreign-speaking class. Although it may be argued that the average mental scores for our white women are thereby unduly lowered because of the presence of these foreign women, our fairly low percentage of subjects with a high percentage of elimination brings the average back more closely to the true average than will be found in most surveys.

Since all the subjects in the study are adults and have, theoretic-

cally at least, reached their level of intellectual development as measured by tests we shall present our data in terms of mental age alone. We prefer this method to that of making reference to intelligence quotient which must be reinterpreted in terms of the method of calculation used, or to a diagnosis of levels such as feeble-minded, average, superior, etc., which in our opinion must consider not only mental test ratings but also certain other factors, chiefly social, which are not revealed by the tests themselves. In the present form we can present a set of uniform psycho-metric values which have a standard meaning regardless of the significance which various interpreters may care to attach to them.

Table I shows the distribution of mental ages attained by the white and negro groups separately. In this table no separation is made on the basis of whether or not the crime was a felony or a misdemeanor. All the inmates are included, and the only separation made is that of race.

TABLE I

SHOWING THE MENTAL AGES OF PRISONERS EXAMINED AT THE OHIO REFORMATORY FOR WOMEN FROM JULY 1st, 1925, TO JULY 1st, 1930

| <i>Whites</i> | | | <i>Negroes</i> | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
| M. A. | Freq. | % | M. A. | Freq. | % |
| —6 | 9 | .69 | —6 | 17 | 2.11 |
| 6 | 21 | 1.61 | 6 | 36 | 4.48 |
| 7 | 63 | 4.81 | 7 | 95 | 11.83 |
| 8 | 155 | 11.90 | 8 | 147 | 18.30 |
| 9 | 174 | 13.26 | 9 | 163 | 20.39 |
| 10 | 174 | 13.26 | 10 | 146 | 18.18 |
| 11 | 160 | 12.19 | 11 | 80 | 9.96 |
| 12 | 158 | 12.17 | 12 | 49 | 6.10 |
| 13 | 120 | 9.14 | 13 | 24 | 2.98 |
| 14 | 88 | 6.70 | 14 | 19 | 2.36 |
| 15 | 97 | 7.39 | 15 | 14 | 1.74 |
| 16 | 50 | 3.81 | 16 | 11 | 1.36 |
| 17 | 36 | 2.75 | 17 | 1 | .12 |
| 18 | 7 | .53 | 18 | 1 | .12 |
| Total | 1312 | | Total | 803 | |
| Def'd | 48 | | Def'd | 22 | |
| Average M. A. 11.12 yrs. | | | Average M. A. 9.40 yrs. | | |
| Median M. A. 11.31 yrs. | | | Median M. A. 9.65 yrs. | | |
| Av. Deviation 1.86 yrs. | | | Av. Deviation 1.36 yrs. | | |

Although we have no mental age norms for women based upon such extensive data as those derived from men during the World War we may assume, considering the general agreement usually found in comparative studies of the mentality of men and women elsewhere, that the norms for women would very closely approximate that of men had such extensive studies been made. On that assumption we are

presenting the World War norms for men as the best available figures on the distribution of mental ages throughout the adult population of our country whether men or women. In Table II these percentages of frequency of the mental ages of adult soldiers are compared with the percentages of frequency of the mental ages attained by the prisoners of the Ohio Reformatory for Women. The World War data used is that which the army psychologists considered the best estimate of the mentality of the general population and is to be found in the Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences, Vol. XV, P. 790. In addition to the comparison just mentioned Table II contains a column designated as "prison ratio". This figure shows to what extent individuals of a given mental age tend to gravitate into prison. For example in the general population .20 of one percent have a mental age of 6 years. Assuming that one's mentality is not a factor in his becoming a prisoner we should expect this same percentage of six years mentality in the population at the prison. As a matter of fact it is 1.61 percent, or 8.05 times as frequent among these women prisoners as in the population at large. The ratios at the other mental ages have a like significance. The rapidly decreasing prison ratio as the

TABLE II
SHOWING COMPARATIVE FREQUENCIES OF PERSONS IN THE OHIO REFORMATORY FOR
WOMEN AND IN THE GENERAL POPULATION AT THE DIFFERENT MENTAL AGES
(Based on World War data)

| <i>Whites</i> | | | | <i>Negroes</i> | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| M. A. | % U. S. A. | % O. R. W. | Prison Ratio | M. A. | % U. S. A. | % O. R. W. | Prison Ratio |
| -6 | .20 | .69 | 3.45 | -6 | 2.95 | 2.11 | .79 |
| 6 | .20 | 1.61 | 8.05 | 6 | 5.20 | 4.48 | .86 |
| 7 | 1.75 | 4.81 | 2.74 | 7 | 8.50 | 11.83 | 1.39 |
| 8 | 3.15 | 11.90 | 3.77 | 8 | 15.30 | 18.30 | 1.20 |
| 9 | 4.70 | 13.26 | 2.82 | 9 | 16.00 | 20.39 | 1.27 |
| 10 | 7.60 | 13.26 | 1.74 | 10 | 16.00 | 18.18 | 1.36 |
| 11 | 12.70 | 12.19 | .96 | 11 | 15.00 | 9.96 | .66 |
| 12 | 17.00 | 12.17 | .71 | 12 | 10.00 | 6.10 | .61 |
| 13 | 15.80 | 9.14 | .58 | 13 | 5.40 | 2.98 | .55 |
| 14 | 13.60 | 6.70 | .39 | 14 | 2.80 | 2.36 | .84 |
| 15 | 9.30 | 7.39 | .79 | 15 | 1.70 | 1.74 | 1.02 |
| 16 | 6.10 | 3.81 | .62 | 16 | .79 | 1.36 | 1.72 |
| 17 | 3.90 | 2.75 | .70 | 17 | .27 | .12 | .44 |
| 18 | 2.30 | .53 | .23 | 18 | .10 | .12 | 1.20 |
| 19 | 1.50 | .00 | .00 | 19 | .04 | .00 | .00 |
| 20 | .08 | .00 | .00 | 20 | .01 | .00 | .00 |
| 21 | .07 | .00 | .00 | 21 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| 22 | .05 | .00 | .00 | 22 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Total U. S. A. 93,955 whites | | | | Total U. S. A. 18,891 negroes | | | |
| Total O. R. W. 1,312 whites | | | | Total O. R. W. 803 negroes | | | |
| U. S. A. Median M. A....13.15 yrs. | | | | U. S. A. Median M. A....10.10 yrs. | | | |
| O. R. W. Median M. A....11.31 yrs. | | | | O. R. W. Median M. A.... 9.65 yrs. | | | |

mentality increases among the whites, and the much less noticeable change which occurs in the negro ratings seems to indicate that the mentality of the individual is a much more significant factor in incarceration of whites than in the case of negroes. The significance of this fact is an interesting field for speculation, and probably has its answer in social attitudes with respect to the races.

Our next two tables will present the data regarding the comparative mental ages of felons and misdemeanants. The provisions of the law creating the prison make it difficult to make a clear cut distinction between felonies and misdemeanants on the basis of commitment alone since in some cases identical offenses might be prosecuted as felonies at one time and as misdemeanors at another. For purposes of separation the following crimes are considered as felonies:

- abandoning a minor child
- aiding escape
- adultery
- arson
- assault to kill, rob, wound, or maim
- auto stealing
- bigamy
- burglary
- burglary and larceny
- embezzlement
- forgery
- obtaining by fraud
- grand larceny
- murder
- manslaughter
- maiming
- manufacture or transportation of liquor
- robbery
- perjury

The following crimes are considered as misdemeanors:

- assault and battery
- delinquency
- incurigibility
- escaping from an institution
- petit larceny
- prostitution
- contributing to delinquency, dependency, or neglect
- resisting an officer
- intoxication
- possession of alcoholic beverages
- disorderly conduct
- illegal possession of firearms

frequenting or operating a disorderly house
loitering
acting as a suspicious person

Table III shows the data relative to the mental ages of felons.

TABLE III

SHOWING THE MENTAL AGES OF O. R. W. FELONS ACCORDING TO RACE

| <i>Whites</i> | | | <i>Negroes</i> | | |
|--------------------|-------|------|--------------------|-------|------|
| M. A. | Freq. | % | M. A. | Freq. | % |
| —6 | 2 | .5 | —6 | 8 | 3.6 |
| 6 | 5 | 1.2 | 6 | 10 | 4.4 |
| 7 | 17 | 3.9 | 7 | 25 | 11.1 |
| 8 | 29 | 6.7 | 8 | 35 | 15.5 |
| 9 | 47 | 10.9 | 9 | 54 | 23.9 |
| 10 | 58 | 13.4 | 10 | 47 | 20.8 |
| 11 | 48 | 11.1 | 11 | 19 | 8.4 |
| 12 | 58 | 13.4 | 12 | 10 | 4.4 |
| 13 | 34 | 7.9 | 13 | 4 | 1.8 |
| 14 | 35 | 8.1 | 14 | 6 | 2.7 |
| 15 | 48 | 11.1 | 15 | 3 | 1.4 |
| 16 | 22 | 5.1 | 16 | 3 | 1.4 |
| 17 | 25 | 6.7 | 17 | 1 | .2 |
| 18 | 4 | .9 | 18 | 0 | .0 |
| Total | 432 | | Total | 225 | |
| Def'd | 16 | | Def'd | 5 | |
| Average M. A. | 11.85 | | Average M. A. | 9.30 | |
| Median M. A. | 12.15 | | Median M. A. | 9.50 | |

Table IV presents the data relative to the mental ages of misdemeanants.

TABLE IV

SHOWING THE MENTAL AGES OF O. R. W. MISDEMEANANTS ACCORDING TO RACE

| <i>Whites</i> | | | <i>Negroes</i> | | |
|--------------------|-------|------|--------------------|-------|------|
| M. A. | Freq. | % | M. A. | Freq. | % |
| —6 | 7 | .8 | —6 | 9 | 1.6 |
| 6 | 16 | 1.8 | 6 | 26 | 4.5 |
| 7 | 46 | 5.2 | 7 | 70 | 12.1 |
| 8 | 126 | 14.4 | 8 | 112 | 19.4 |
| 9 | 127 | 14.5 | 9 | 109 | 18.9 |
| 10 | 116 | 13.2 | 10 | 99 | 17.2 |
| 11 | 112 | 12.7 | 11 | 61 | 10.6 |
| 12 | 100 | 11.4 | 12 | 39 | 6.8 |
| 13 | 86 | 9.8 | 13 | 20 | 3.5 |
| 14 | 53 | 6.0 | 14 | 13 | 2.4 |
| 15 | 49 | 5.5 | 15 | 11 | 1.9 |
| 16 | 28 | 3.2 | 16 | 8 | 1.4 |
| 17 | 11 | 1.1 | 17 | 0 | .0 |
| 18 | 3 | .3 | 18 | 1 | .2 |
| Total | 880 | | Total | 578 | |
| Def'd | 32 | | Def'd | 17 | |
| Average M. A. | 10.89 | | Average M. A. | 9.44 | |
| Median M. A. | 11.17 | | Median M. A. | 9.66 | |

In order to bring out more clearly the relative comparisons between the various types of delinquents and norms for their respective races we are presenting a series of percentile curves which will graphically portray these relations. Figure I covers the data presented in Table I and II, Figure 2 covers the data in Table III and IV. The figures along the vertical axes of these curves present the mental ages attained by the members of the groups in question. They range from 6 years to 18 years.

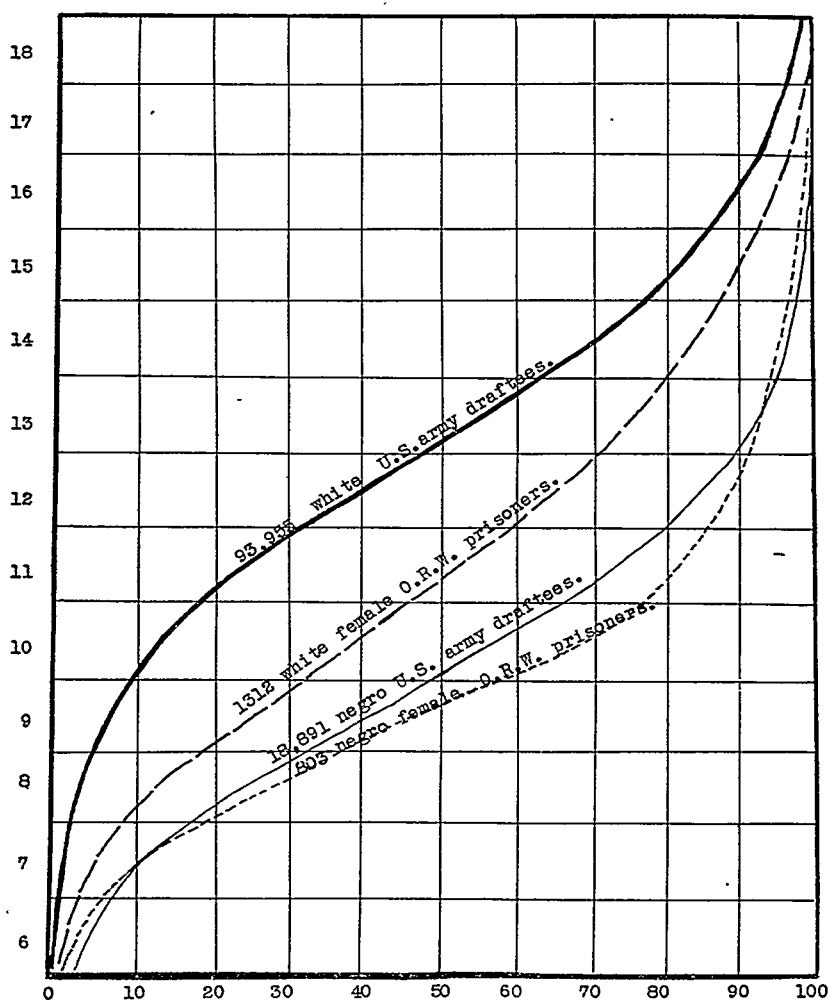


Fig. 1. Showing percentile curve of mental ages attained by U.S. army draftees and O.R.V. prisoners, according to race.

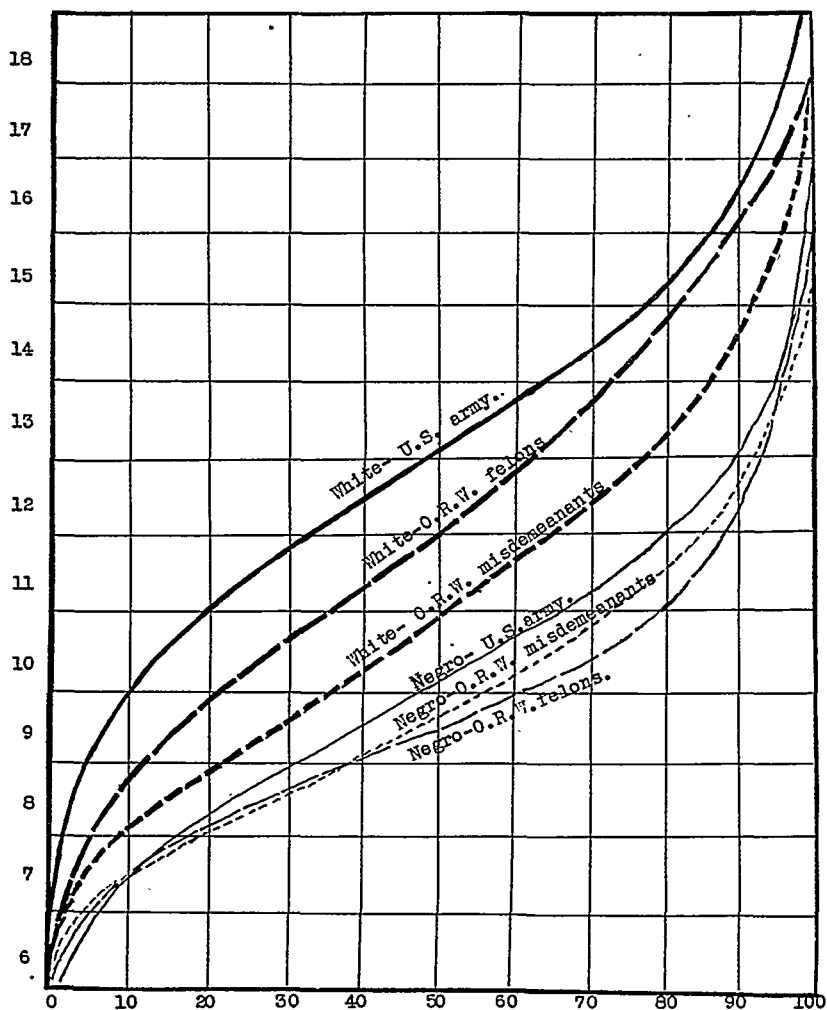


Fig. 2. Showing percentile curves of mental ages attained by U.S. army draftees and by felons and misdemeanants in O.R.W.

The numbers along the horizontal axes represent the various percentiles from 0 to 100. The curves are to be interpreted as follows, e. g., in Figure I the line representing the percentiles for white draftees shows that only .4 of one percent had a mental age at or below six years, that 2.15 percent had a mental age at or below eight years, and so on for all the other ages until at age eighteen 98.3 percent had a mental age at or below 18 years. The remaining 1.7 percent scatter over the mental ages up to and including twenty-two years. In order

to keep the curve on as large a scale as possible we have omitted the extension of the year intervals for the very limited number of cases in the ranges above 18 years.

From these tables and figures it may be readily seen that for both races and both types of delinquency the prisoners in the Ohio Reformatory for Women fall below the mental ratings of their respective races in the general population. The white prisoners fall farther below their fellows in the general population than do the negroes, and the misdemeanants tend to group together more at the lower levels than do the felons.

A comparison of the mental age distributions among prisoners convicted of various types of offenses affords an interesting and instructive approach to the problem of mentality among criminals. In Tables V and VI we present the percent of frequency of the mental ages attained by certain of these groups of prisoners.

TABLE V

SHOWING THE PERCENTAGE OF FREQUENCY OF THE VARIOUS MENTAL AGES FOR THE FOLLOWING OFFENSES: (A) MURDER, INCLUDING MANSLAUGHTER; (B) LESSER CRIMES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON SUCH AS MAIMING AND VARIOUS TYPES OF ASSAULT; (C) FORNICATION, ADULTERY AND BIGAMY; (D) PROSTITUTION IN ALL ITS FORMS; (E) CONTRIBUTING TO DEPENDENCY, DELINQUENCY AND NEGLECT; (F) VIOLATION OF THE LIQUOR LAWS

| | | Whites | | | | | |
|-----------|------|---------|------|------|------|------|--|
| No. Cases | A | B | C | D | E | F | |
| M. A. | % | % | % | % | % | % | |
| 6 | 2.8 | .0 | 5.3 | 1.5 | 3.0 | 2.4 | |
| 7 | 2.8 | 4.6 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 7.3 | 7.1 | |
| 8 | 14.0 | 27.3 | 3.6 | 11.9 | 10.5 | 21.8 | |
| 9 | 11.2 | 13.7 | 10.6 | 18.4 | 15.5 | 11.5 | |
| 10 | 2.8 | 18.2 | 22.9 | 12.9 | 15.6 | 12.7 | |
| 11 | 22.3 | 9.1 | 12.3 | 13.9 | 14.0 | 12.3 | |
| 12 | 16.7 | 4.6 | 8.8 | 13.9 | 8.6 | 11.5 | |
| 13 | .0 | 9.1 | 8.8 | 11.9 | 8.6 | 6.7 | |
| 14 | 5.6 | 4.6 | 10.6 | 4.0 | 4.9 | 8.0 | |
| 15 | 8.4 | 9.1 | 10.6 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 4.4 | |
| 16 | 11.2 | .0 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 4.6 | 1.6 | |
| 17 up | 2.8 | .0 | 3.6 | 2.0 | 1.6 | .4 | |
| | | Negroes | | | | | |
| No. Cases | A | B | C | D | E | F | |
| M. A. | % | % | % | % | % | % | |
| 6 | 1.5 | 8.8 | .0 | 5.2 | 4.0 | 8.8 | |
| 7 | 8.7 | 17.5 | 28.6 | 13.5 | 11.9 | 10.2 | |
| 8 | 18.9 | 20.0 | 28.6 | 13.5 | 13.2 | 21.7 | |
| 9 | 30.5 | 21.3 | 7.1 | 13.5 | 17.2 | 21.0 | |
| 10 | 16.0 | 13.8 | 14.3 | 18.7 | 21.1 | 16.4 | |
| 11 | 10.2 | 8.8 | 21.4 | 15.7 | 11.9 | 9.8 | |
| 12 | 8.7 | 5.0 | .0 | 7.5 | 13.2 | 4.9 | |
| 13 | 1.5 | 2.5 | .0 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 2.8 | |
| 14 | 2.9 | 1.3 | .0 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 2.1 | |
| 15 | 1.5 | .0 | .0 | 3.0 | 1.4 | 1.8 | |
| 16 | .0 | 1.3 | .0 | 3.8 | .0 | .7 | |
| 17 up | .0 | .0 | .0 | .8 | .0 | .0 | |

TABLE VI

SHOWING THE PERCENTAGE OF FREQUENCY OF THE VARIOUS MENTAL AGES FOR THE FOLLOWING OFFENSES: (A) GRAND LARCENY AND AUTO STEALING; (B) PETIT LARCENY AND POCKET PICKING; (C) BURGLARY, BREAKING AND ENTERING; (D) ROBBERY AND ASSAULT TO ROB; (E) FORGERY, EMBEZZLEMENT, ETC.

| | | IMBELLMENT, ETC. | | | | |
|-----------|------|------------------|------|------|------|--|
| | | <i>Whites</i> | | | | |
| No. Cases | A | B | C | D | E | |
| M. A | 46 | 50 | 34 | 29 | 88 | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | |
| 6 | .0 | 2.0 | 3.0 | .0 | .0 | |
| 7 | 2.2 | 10.0 | .0 | .0 | .0 | |
| 8 | 4.4 | 12.0 | 5.9 | 10.4 | 4.6 | |
| 9 | 8.7 | 6.0 | 5.9 | 17.3 | 4.6 | |
| 10 | 8.7 | 8.0 | 29.5 | 17.3 | 3.5 | |
| 11 | 8.7 | 8.0 | 3.0 | 14.0 | 5.7 | |
| 12 | 19.6 | 18.0 | 14.8 | 10.4 | 17.1 | |
| 13 | 13.1 | 8.0 | 5.9 | 3.6 | 13.7 | |
| 14 | 6.6 | 10.0 | 3.0 | 14.0 | 9.1 | |
| 15 | 10.9 | 10.0 | 17.7 | 3.5 | 16.0 | |
| 16 | 8.7 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 6.9 | 11.4 | |
| 17 up | 8.7 | 6.0 | 8.9 | 3.5 | 14.8 | |

| <i>Negroes</i> | | | | | |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| No. Cases | A | B | C | D | E |
| M. A | % | % | % | % | % |
| 6 | .0 | 7.2 | 22.2 | 15.9 | .0 |
| 7 | 7.7 | 4.8 | 22.2 | 10.6 | .0 |
| 8 | 3.9 | 9.6 | .0 | 26.4 | .0 |
| 9 | 19.3 | 14.4 | 33.3 | 15.9 | .0 |
| 10 | 42.4 | 33.4 | .0 | 15.9 | 50.0 |
| 11 | 7.7 | 7.2 | .0 | .0 | 25.0 |
| 12 | .0 | 9.6 | 11.1 | 10.6 | 25.0 |
| 13 | 3.9 | 7.2 | .0 | .0 | .0 |
| 14 | 7.7 | 7.2 | .0 | .0 | .0 |
| 15 | 3.9 | .0 | 11.1 | .0 | .0 |
| 16 | .0 | .0 | .0 | 5.5 | .0 |
| 17 up | 3.9 | .0 | .0 | .0 | .0 |

In Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6 we present percentile curves showing graphically the comparison between the racial norms for the general population, as represented by army draftees, and the various types of crimes tabulated in Tables V and VI. Owing to the limited number of cases and the consequent sharp variations in the curves we have been obliged to smooth them out to a considerable degree in order to portray the probable distribution had a large number of cases been employed.

It must be remembered that in reading percentile curves the frequency of occurrence at any given level is indicated by the slope of the curve. The more nearly the line approaches the vertical the less the frequency the more nearly the horizontal position the greater the frequency, e. g. in Figure 3 the sudden flattening of the curve for burglary at the ten year level indicates a radical increase in the frequency of offenses at this mental age. If it is desired to compare the relative frequency of crimes at any given mental age with the relative frequency of any other crime at the same mental age it may be done roughly from the curves by comparing the slopes of the two curves at that level.

With the exception of forgery all the white groups guilty of felonies show curves indicating a very high frequency in the mental ages up to and including the tenth year. In the case of white misdemeanants the same condition is found, only in a still more marked form. In the middle ranges between the tenth and fifteenth years all the curves for white women show a marked decrease in frequency. In the uppermost ranges there is a tendency to increase in relative frequency at or about the fifteenth or sixteenth year.

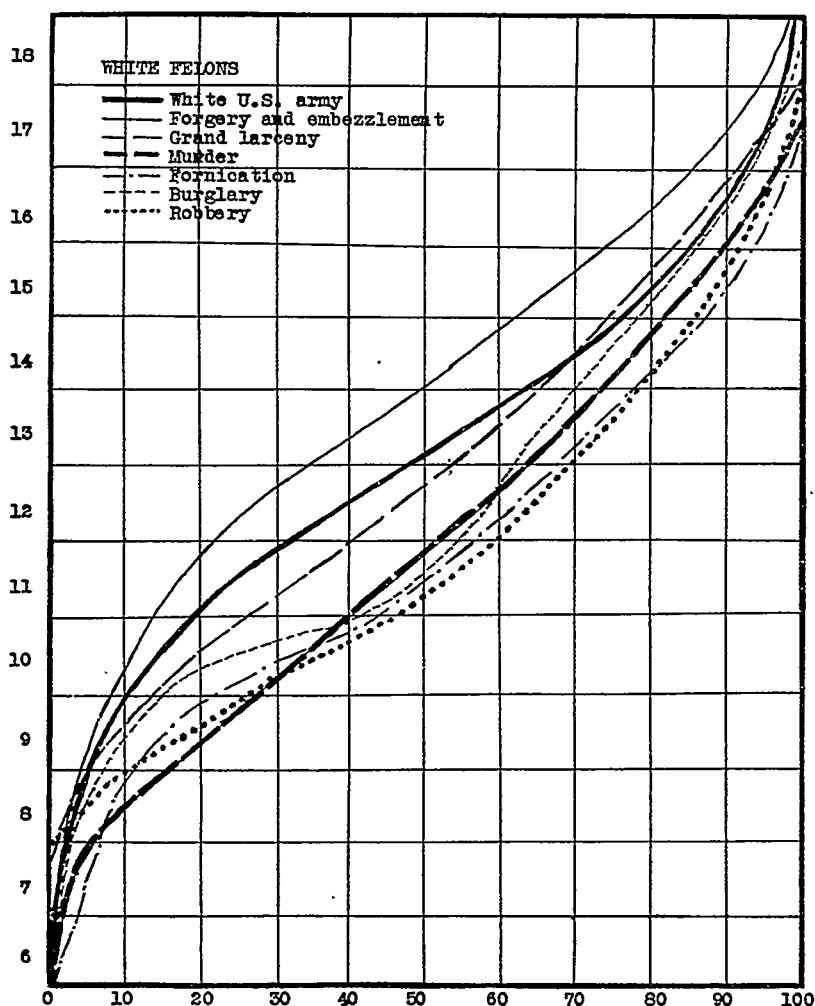


Fig. 3. Percentile curve comparing mental ages of U.S. army draftees with those attained by various types of female felons. (Whites)

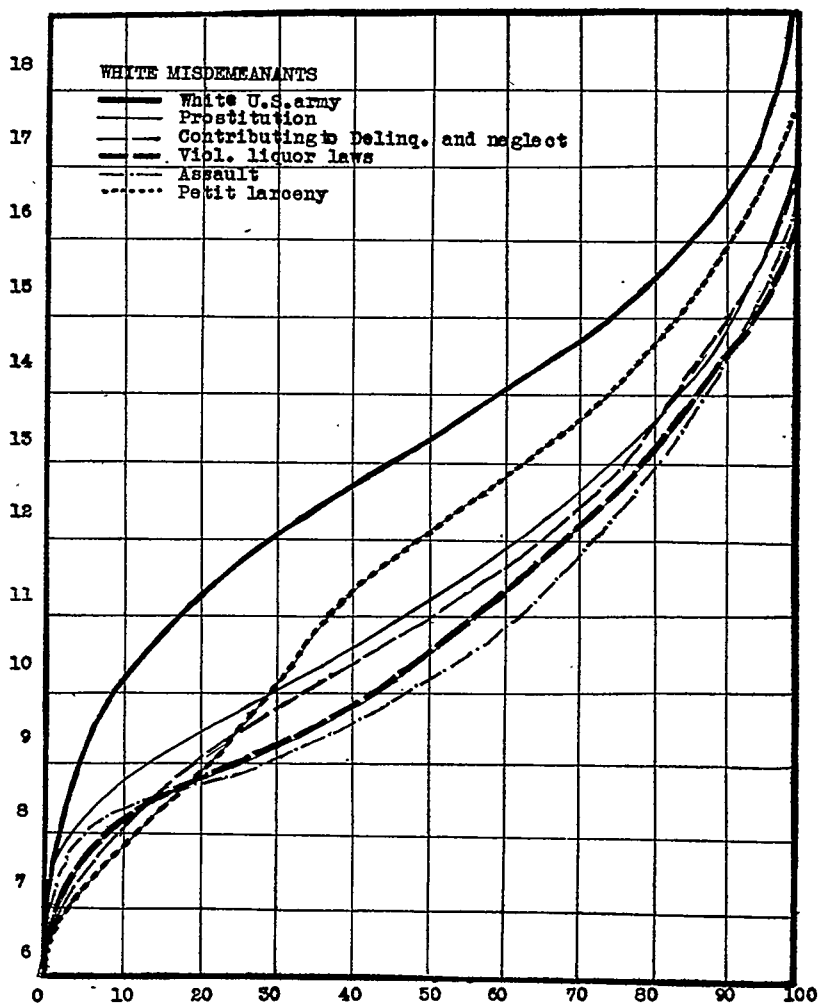
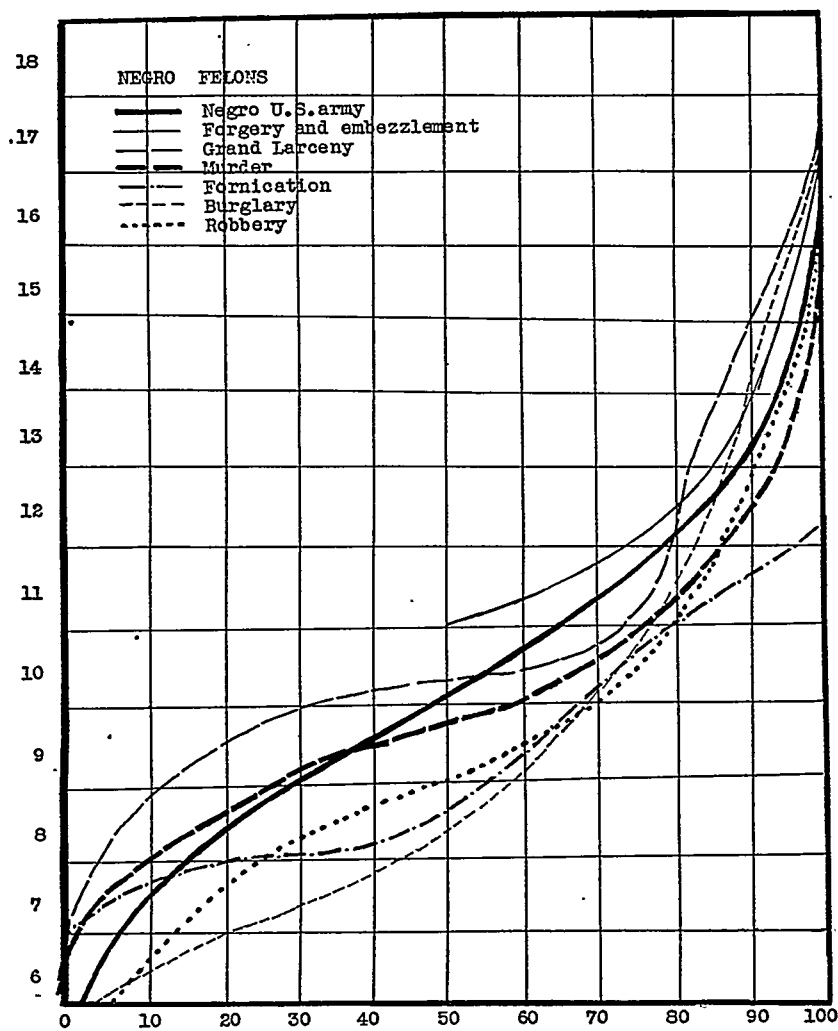


Fig. 4. Percentile curve comparing mental ages of U.S. army draftees with those attained by female misdemeanants. (Whites)



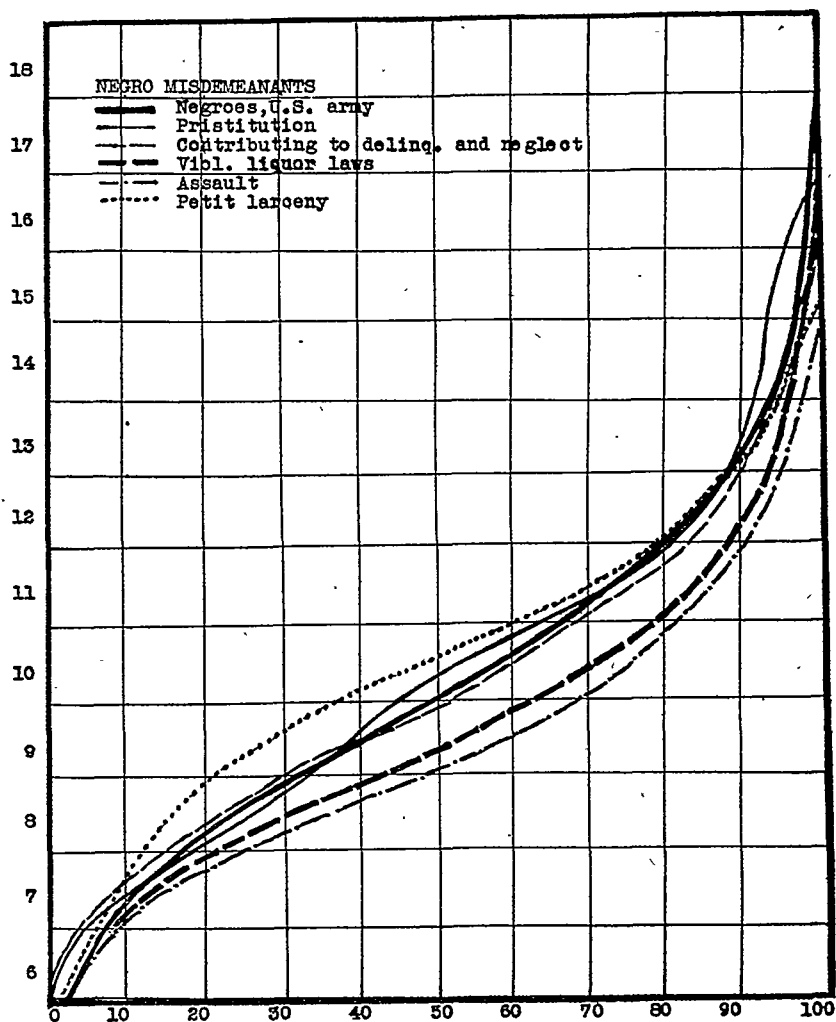


Fig. 6. Percentile curve comparing the mental ages of U.S. army draftees with those attained by female misdemeanants (Negroes)

In the case of negroes the curves for all classes of felonious crimes are much more irregular than in the cases of white women. The curves for negro misdemeanors do not vary widely from their racial norms.

Although the medium mental ages do not give an altogether adequate picture of the relative intelligence levels of the groups as a whole, it is interesting to note the relative order of each crime for the two races. We present them in parallel columns arranged in order according to diminishing medium ages.

| <i>Whites</i> | <i>Negroes</i> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Forgery | 1. Forgery and embezzlement |
| 2. (White Norm) | 2. Petit larceny and pocket picking |
| 3. Grand larceny and auto stealing | 3. Prostitution |
| 4. Petit larceny and pocket picking | 4. Grand larceny and auto stealing |
| 5. Murder | 5. (Negro Norm) |
| 6. Burglary | 6. Contributing to delinquency, etc. |
| 7. Fornication, bigamy, etc. | 7. Murder |
| 8. Robbery | 8. Violation of liquor laws |
| 9. Prostitution. | 9. Acts of violence (assault) |
| 10. Contributing to delinquency | 10. Robbery |
| 11. Violation of liquor laws | 11. Fornication, bigamy, etc. |
| 12. Acts of violence (assault) | 12. Burglary |

In the cases of forgery, grand larceny, petit larceny, murder, and robbery the rank differences are small. In the case of fornication, violation of the liquor laws, and acts of violence the differences in rank are considerable and in the cases of burglary and prostitution the differences in rank are very great. Burglary rates fair in intelligence among the whites but lowest of all among the negroes. Prostitution rates fairly high among the negroes but quite low among the whites.

TABLE VIII

SHOWING THE "PRISON RATIO" AT EACH MENTAL AGE FOR EACH TYPE OF CRIME COVERED BY THIS STUDY.
ALL SUBJECTS ARE NEGRO O. R. W. PRISONERS.

[illegible]

Although the observations already mentioned are easily made from the tables and curves already presented, the full force of the relationship between crime and mentality cannot be fully appreciated until a more direct comparison between the intelligence levels of the general population and the reformatory women is made.

In Tables VII and VIII we present these comparisons year for year in the form of "prison ratios" such as shown in Table II. We shall take up each group of delinquent women and show what the ratios are for that crime and for that race.

From Tables VII and VIII it will be noted that in both races and for practically all crimes the ratio of frequency in the prison population is far above that in the general population for all mental ages under ten years. In the case of white women the proportion is frequently three, four, or five times as great, and in a few cases is from eight to thirteen times as high as in the general population. In the case of negroes it is rare to find a ratio of more than two times as great as in the general negro population. On the whole, the ratio averages considerably below a 1 to 1 relationship at mental ages 11, 12, 13, and 14 years when women of either race are considered. The few exceptions are probably due to small numbers in certain groups under consideration.

In these tables we again find a marked tendency toward a high ratio of frequency in the mental ages at and above the fifteenth year in both races. These observations seem to justify the conclusion that, in Ohio at least, a woman's chances of being sentenced to a reformatory is many times more likely if her mental age is below 10 years than if it is between 10 and 15 years. Also that her chances of being sentenced to prison are slightly greater than average if her mental age is above 15 years.

It is interesting to speculate on the probable causes of this low frequency at the mental ages which approximate the average mentality of the general population, and the increased frequencies at the extremes of the mental age distribution. One might well suppose that those persons of very low grade intelligence (those whose mental age is at or below 6 years) are so lacking in mentality that they could not be expected to comprehend the nature or purposes of laws; that all of them might be expected to be law breakers unless confined to custodial institutions; and that if allowed at large practically all of them would eventually fall victims of the law. Such an inference becomes a little uncertain, however, when we note that among the negroes, where the general population contains a comparatively large

number of persons with mental ages below 7 years, the prison ratio is comparatively small as compared with the mental ages somewhat higher than that level. It is certainly not true that in Ohio a relatively larger percent of negroes with these very low mental ages are committed to institutions for the feeble-minded than is true of whites. This being true we ought, if the above inference were true, find a higher prison ratio among the negro prisoners of very low intelligence than we find among the whites. The figures just presented show the opposite to be true.

Further examination of Tables VII and VIII shows that the mental ages of 7, 8, 9, and 10 years are the ones where conviction is predominantly most frequent. This might be accounted for by the inference that feeble-mindedness often goes unnoticed at the moron levels. Persons having an intelligence level above the mental age of 7 years are generally looked upon, by the laity, as persons morally responsible for their actions. Consequently, while they are in fact less resistant to the temptations of vice and crime, society attempts to hold them to average standards of behavior. Under such conditions it is inevitable that a high percent of them will drift into prison. Extending the same inference downward we might explain the lower frequency of conviction at the very low mental levels on the grounds that almost everyone recognizes the mental deficiency of one of imbecile grade. Therefore society, recognizing their evident irresponsibility, either fails to bring a criminal charge against them, or, if the case comes to court, the tendency is to commit the individual to other than a penal institution, or to dismiss the prisoner with the lightest possible punishment.

We shall now be compelled to offer some sort of explanation for the relatively low prison ratios at the mental ages which approximate the general average for the population at large. The easiest supposition is to infer that these persons are mentally competent to comprehend the nature of law and the ethical necessity of conforming to social regulations. As a consequence we might anticipate that these persons would be, by nature, more law abiding than those of lesser intelligence. This is unquestionably true to a degree; however, we must not forget that the frequency of conviction is markedly reduced by the concomitant ability to sidestep the law, to cover up damaging evidence, to choose more capable lawyers in their defense, and to exercise greater social and political pressure to extricate themselves from the clutches of the law. The well known difficulty of convicting the individual of average intelligence who has good financial, social, and political stand-

ing leads us to believe that the relative frequency of conviction among delinquents of average intelligence is considerably below what it would be were conviction based wholly upon their natural inclination to conform to law.

If we are to agree that the possession of average intelligence implies a keener ethical comprehension and a greater desire to be law abiding, what shall we say of the higher prison ratio which almost invariably appears when we pass into the mildly superior groups? Either the possession of high intelligence does not imply ability to choose a more judicious path in right and wrong, or we must admit the presence of other factors which outweigh this quality. Must we admit that the good judgment of our superior groups is overcome by such factors as overambition, overconfidence in one's ability to outwit the law, the spirit of non-conformity and rebellion, selfishness, and faulty social ideals? This may well be an important factor in the explanation.

In offering these possible reasons for the peculiar distributions of mental ages the writer recognizes that a full explanation is not possible without extended investigation into fields not open to him. It is probable that not only these but many other factors have influenced the conviction of these delinquent women. An attempt at further analysis will not be attempted, since the purpose of this article is primarily the presentation of the data without necessarily attempting to explain it.

SUMMARY:

1. The equality of treatment given the prisoners of all classes in the Ohio Reformatory for Women gave an unusual opportunity to make a comparative study of the mentality of the various types of delinquents under controlled conditions.

2. The data presented covers the entire population of the prison, with a few unavoidable exceptions, for the five year period between July 1, 1925 and July 1, 1930. It summarizes the results obtained from 2185 women prisoners, 1360 of whom were white, and 825 of whom were negroes; 678 of whom were felons, and 1507 of whom were misdemeanants.

3. The method of examination was that of group testing, employing a battery of tests covering general abilities, performance ability, and literacy. These tests were supplemented by interviews and individual tests when necessary.

4. The results, expressed in terms of mental age, are compared with the racial norms established by the army psychologists during

the World War. The comparison shows that white female prisoners deviate from their racial norm to a far greater extent than negroes deviate from their racial norm.

5. The median mental age of the entire white prison population was 11.31 yrs., or 1.84 yrs. lower than that established for whites by the army psychologists. The median mental age for white felons was 12.15 yrs., for white misdemeanants 11.17 yrs., or 1.00 and 1.98 yrs. respectively, below their racial median.

6. The median mental age of all the negro prisoners was 9.65 yrs., or .45 yr. below the norm for negroes in the general population. The median mental age for negro felons was 9.50 yrs., for negro misdemeanants 9.66 yrs., or .50 and .44 yrs. respectively, below their racial median.

7. The group composed of forgers and embezzlers was the only white group whose median mental age exceeded that of the white population in general. Among the negroes the groups convicted of forgery and embezzlement, petit larceny and pocket picking, prostitution, grand larceny, and auto stealing all had median mental ages above that for the negro race in the general population.

8. Women prisoners, of both races, who were convicted of assault, robbery, fornication, and violation of the liquor laws had median mental ages considerably below the medians for their respective races in the general population.

9. On the basis of "prison ratios" the percentages of white women prisoners having mental ages below eleven years are, in general, from two to nine times as high as in the general white population. In the case of negro prisoners the same tendency was noted except that the ratios seldom exceeded one and one-half times that in the negro population at large.

10. For both races the "prison ratio" shows, in general, less than the expected percentage in prison at mental ages 11, 12, 13, and 14 yrs., although there is a marked increase in the frequency at and above the 15th year.

11. The explanation of the increased "prison ratios" below the tenth and above the fourteenth years of mental age is not wholly clear. Possible factors include the following conditions: poor comprehension and judgment, and ease of detection and prosecution in the case of those of very low intelligence; better comprehension and judgment of ethical relations, greater ability to evade prosecution, and more effective means of escaping conviction in the case of those of average intelligence; and over-ambition, over-confidence in their ability to

escape prosecution, selfishness, and a lack of self control in the case of the more intellectual classes.

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