

Summoning up his last ounce of strength, with a will born of desperation, he was able at last to let out a frightful scream. As he did so, a hand was suddenly placed across his mouth, and he could hear the dentist

say in a hoarse, sepulchral voice:

"My gosh, I pulled out the wrong tooth! I suppose we'll have to give him the gas all over again."—*Arthur Foster, condensed from Modern Tempo.*

* * *

Mental Age

THE oft-quoted statement that the average American has a mental age of fourteen years is grossly misunderstood.

Intelligence tests merely demonstrate the ability to learn and to solve problems. They take no account of knowledge, experience, skill, and common sense. They do not measure wisdom.

A glib but shiftless and irresponsible man might obtain a high rating in an intelligence test, whereas a substantial citizen, although considered a successful and desirable member of his community, might be classed among the fourteen-year-olds.

"Mental age," as used by psychologists, is a highly technical term. Although the psychologists are not in agreement, it is generally conceded that full mental maturity is reached at sixteen or seventeen years. The "capacity to learn" is then as high as it will ever be. If this is kept in mind, the fourteen-year average for the general public does not seem so bad.

But, though the growth of pure intelligence may cease at fourteen or sixteen, the accumulation of knowledge and experience continues as long as a person lives. Good citizens are people whose behavior can be forecast. The permanence of civilization is dependent on the actions of the masses—their thrift, patriotism, industry, and judgment. These are qualities that are developed throughout life.

Unfortunately, the fourteen-year idea has been so twisted out of its technical meaning that we have editors and builders of radio programs struggling to reduce standards so that their product may make a universal appeal. The stupidity of such efforts is clear when we realize that though the "mental age" of a fourteen-year-old girl and forty-year-old woman may be the same, there probably is as much difference between them as between a puppy and a wise old dog.—*The William Feather Magazine.*