

## Book Reviews & Abstracts.

**GENETIC STUDIES OF GENIUS.** Vol. I. Mental and Physical Traits of a Thousand Gifted Children. By Lewis M. Terman. xiii + 648 pp. Vol. II. The Early Mental Traits of Three Hundred Geniuses. By Catherine Morris Cox. xxiii. + 842 pp. (George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd. 1926. 21s. net each vol.).

No attempt is made in these books to discuss the essential nature of genius, or to distinguish between genius and talent. In the first volume Professor Terman gives a detailed account of three hundred children in the Western States of America whose intelligence quotients were 140 or over. The research is incomplete, for these thousand cases are to be followed up, for at least ten years, with a view to discovering how far the future performance of the children will agree with their present promise. The purpose of this first report is to show in what way a group of "gifted" children differs from a group of normal non-selected children.

The book is a crowded storehouse of facts and statistics from which many inferences are drawn by the author, and still more may, no doubt, be drawn by the reader. None of them are startling : most of them confirm the findings of previous investigators. Galton demonstrated that genius ran in families in accordance with the laws of heredity. The present research abundantly confirms this view. Bright children do not always belong to distinguished families, but the probability of this doing so is enormously greater than for mediocre children. Nearly a quarter of the members of the American Hall of Fame are known to be related to one or more of the thousand subjects examined.

Another important inference is that gifted children are as a rule stronger, healthier, and better-behaved than normal children. The notion that bright children are neurotic, unhealthy, and difficult to manage is proved to have no foundation in fact.

A few of the most interesting findings may briefly be recorded. The average age of the father of a gifted child is 34 ; of the mother, 29. The gifted child is very frequently the first-born of a family ; his parents are long-lived, and very rarely is his heredity tainted with physical or mental disease. He is taller, heavier, better developed, and has a larger breathing capacity, than the ordinary child. It is a significant fact that only 8 per cent. of the

total number of bright children were bottle-fed during the entire period, while 48 per cent. were wholly breast-fed, and 44 per cent. were partly breast-fed—a proportion of breast-feeding which is much higher than for the general population.

The one salient exception to the clean medical record of the bright children is that more than half of them have undergone tonsillectomy, as compared with a quarter of the control group. This does not necessarily point to a greater frequency of enlarged tonsils : it may mean greater parental care and vigilance, and more thorough medical supervision.

Gifted children sleep more than their comrades.

The gifted child as a rule loves school, learns to read without formal instruction, does two hours' homework a week, and is rarely as far advanced in his lessons as his intelligence would warrant. Terman attributes this to the general tendency of teachers to keep back precocious children. Finally, the bright child shows his superiority most in general information, and least in history and civics. It must be borne in mind that these conclusions are drawn from the group of cases studied, and must not be regarded as necessarily true of any one particular child.

Gifted children exhibit as much variety in individual traits as do ordinary children.

The reading records show that the average gifted child of seven reads more books in a given time than the ordinary child of fifteen, and his range of reading is much wider.

Vol. II is of greater interest than Vol. I to the general reader, though not, perhaps, to the teacher and social worker. Dr. Cox, acting under the guidance of Professor Terman (who, by the way, edits the series), selected 300 eminent men and women who lived between the years 1450 and 1850 A.D. The field was restricted to those who were deservedly eminent, and again to those of whose childhood there were sufficient records to enable the author and her helpers to arrive at an estimate of their intelligence quotients. It was found convenient to make two estimates, one based on achievements up to the age of seventeen, and the other on achievements from between the ages of seventeen and twenty-six. The assessors applied to this material the norms and standards at which they had arrived by testing the intelligence and scholastic attainments of present-day American children. The

author has collected and has presented in this book the largest store of information with regard to the childhood of men of genius that has ever been placed before the public. That in itself, quite apart from the attempt to apply modern standards to ancient performances, invests this book with an interest and a value which are unique.

The reader would probably be glad to learn the actual quotients assigned to some of the best-known of the 300 celebrities. Here they are (the intelligence quotient estimated from the achievements of childhood is placed first, and the quotient estimated from the achievements of late adolescence is placed second) :

John Bunyan, 105, 120; Cervantes, 105, 110; Sir Francis Drake, 105, 110; Michael Faraday, 105, 150; Oliver Cromwell, 110, 115; Raphael, 110, 150; Rembrandt, 110, 135; Oliver Goldsmith, 115, 115; Martin Luther, 115, 145; Ben Jonson, 120, 145; Van Dyck, 120, 135; Joseph Addison, 125, 140; John Bright, 125, 130; Abraham Lincoln, 125, 140; John Locke, 125, 135; Nelson, 125, 145; Sir Joshua Reynolds, 125, 125; Swift, 125, 130; Velasquez, 125, 140; Balzac, 130, 145; Robert Burns, 130, 130; Sir Isaac Newton, 130, 170; Rousseau, 130, 125; Sheridan, 130, 145; Beethoven, 135, 140; Edmund Burke, 135, 150; Darwin, 135, 140; Kant, 135, 145; Sir Thomas More, 135, 135; Bonaparte, 135, 140; Thackeray, 135, 140; Leonardo da Vinci, 135, 150; Wagner, 135, 150; John Wesley, 135, 140; Lord Lytton, 140, 145; Carlyle, 140, 155; Rubens, 140, 140; Francis Bacon, 145, 155; Charles Dickens, 145, 155; Disraeli, 145, 150; Emerson, 145, 145; Gibbon, 145, 155; Handel, 145, 155; John Milton, 145, 170; Byron, 150, 170; Descartes, 150, 160; Victor Hugo, 150, 170; Longfellow, 150, 160; Mozart, 150, 155; Scott, 150, 155; Wordsworth, 150, 155; Hume, 155, 160; Johnson, 155, 155; Tennyson, 155, 160; William Pitt, 160, 180; Pope, 160, 170; Wolsey, 165, 165; Voltaire, 170, 180; Coleridge, 175, 165; Bentham, 180, 170; Macaulay, 180, 165; Pascal, 180, 180; Goethe, 185, 210; Leibnitz, 185, 190; John Stuart Mill, 190, 170.

P. B. BALLARD.

MIND AND PERSONALITY. By William Brown, M.D., D.Sc., Wilde Reader in Mental Philosophy in the University of Oxford. Pp. x., 344. (London. University of London Press. 1927. 12/6.)

This book is an attempt to deal with the

problem of personality along special lines, to work out some sort of harmony by adjusting the points of view of psychology, psychopathology, philosophy, biology, logic, ethics, metaphysics and religious experience. Personality is left undefined, but the concept of *mental unity* is offered as a guiding line.

In his introduction, Dr. Brown ascribes great advances in recent years to Freud's analytic method of approach, which teaches us how the experiences that have special bearing upon development are conative and emotional in their nature and related to the most fundamental instincts and impulses. The old problem of mind and body of course has to be faced and the author dismisses in turn the purely mechanistic view, held by those who consider the only solid knowledge we have is that of the structure and functioning of the human body, and the theories of automatism, interactionism and parallelism. When regretting the division of physicians into those who exclude the mental and those who ignore the physical, Dr. Brown could have made a plea for the student, who is generally given a bias towards the belief that mechanistic explanations cover the whole of medicine, with no hint of its philosophical difficulties and practical disadvantages. The nature of the mind is gradually changing from the cradle to the grave; this may be paralleled by a difference of anatomical structure, but we shall, he says, have to wait a long time before physiology can give us much helpful insight into the structure of personality.

The structure of the mind is described in accordance with McDougall's theories of instincts, and a nice distinction is drawn between complexes and sentiments in regard to the effect upon them of analysis. The complexes, dependent upon repression, can be got rid of by analysis; do sentiments, regarded by Dr. Brown as normal and healthy, run any risk of being interfered with? Perhaps the question arises from a tendency of the author towards an arbitrary dichotomy between normal and abnormal, the normal being what is approved by him. Sentiments, if there is anything in psycho-analysis, are unconsciously motivated, although consciously recognised, and they may be as anti-social and as harmful to the individual as a complex.

Dr. Brown rightly defends modern psychology against the charge that it tends to weaken the sense of moral responsibility, its task being

the modest one of attempting to trace antecedent factors of wrongdoing in the criminal's heredity, mental constitution and environment. It certainly does not countenance the view that all criminals suffer from mental illness, nor that mental illness is an invariably sufficient excuse for crime.

The chapter on mental development in childhood is rather commonplace, and the special advice of sex instruction prompts one to ask what the fuss is about. Surely the difficulties of sex instruction arise from adult sentiments, involving secrecy and emotional emphasis, and if we could only strip ourselves of these sentiments—or complexes—the child would experience no more trouble in this subject than in any other. Dr. Brown discusses the risk of "shock" in giving sex instruction, and does not seem to think the existence of such a risk calls for explanation. What is there in the mind of the child that should make this particular knowledge cause shock? The only possible answer is that the foundation for shock has already been laid by adult mis-handling.

The chapters on psycho-pathology begin with an account of physical factors, with the warning, however, that these are in little danger of being underestimated; medical men are more in danger of neglecting the psychological avenue of approach. Suggestion and hypnosis, psycho-analysis, and mental dissociation are adequately handled, but occasionally there crop up points of view which seem based upon personal dispositions of the author. Thus Freud's derivation of conscience from the Oedipus complex, against which several arguments can be adduced, is met by the generalisation that these repressive tendencies belong to the pathological and not to the normal, and so far as they are conscience are not true conscience. Psychology, says Dr. Brown, can explain excess or deficiency of conscientiousness but not, apparently, a "normal" conscience, since that is a matter of ethics. The distinction between normal and pathological is a graded one and not enough to justify thrusting the one outside the domain of psychology. Dr. Brown's exposition and criticism of psycho-analytical principles are straightforward and helpful; he stops short of complete agreement, but leaves no doubt as to his belief in the soundness and practical value of the methods. Since his approach to the subject has been cautious and guided always by personal experience, preceded

by adequate knowledge of general psychology and philosophy, his opinions and criticisms carry weight. Psycho-analysis has suffered as much from the absence of effective criticism as it has from ignorant abuse.

Our author's interests are plainly drawn most of all to the philosophical point of view. He asks what is the significance and importance of the emotions in the formulation of the moral ideal, and from this point departs more and more from psychology in the direction of philosophy and metaphysics. Aristotelian ethics are, as he says, based almost exclusively upon psychological data, and yet he claims Aristotle as a supporter of *intuitionism* resulting from the purification, by experience, of a moral insight which had always been present as an essential potentiality of the human soul. In considering ethics and the study of values, Dr. Brown regards certain philosophical and religious mental states as the normal; here he might bear in mind a principle laid down by Jung that people of any one psychological type inevitably regard their own attitude to the universe as the normal, and can rarely admit the equal validity of the attitude of people of other types. Neither Dr. Brown nor his readers can escape from the working of this principle.

The scope of Dr. Brown's task is so immense that one questions whether any specific science is in a position to have its teachings integrated with that of the others for his purpose. If we look at psychology alone, the knowledge gained during the last two decades through the work of Freud has not yet been assimilated to the general body of psychological knowledge, still less to remoter sciences. Wide reading and much thought are shown in this attempt to gather together a number of divergent lines; it is well done, but we are left with the feeling that the chasm separating us from a knowledge of personality is greater than we thought.

MILLAIS CULPIN.

AN INTRODUCTION TO FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY IN THE CRIMINAL COURTS. By W. Norwood East, M.D. (J. & A. Churchill. 1927. 16/-.)

Dr. Norwood East has produced a volume of remarkable interest and value, not only to the medical practitioner, but to everyone concerned with the care of defectives and the administration of the criminal law. His early chapters on "Ascertainment" and

"Criminal Responsibility" could not be bettered in respect of expert knowledge and practical advice on methods of examination, on the proper functions of a medical witness and on the considerations which should enter into the advice he gives the Court. He emphasises a point which would reassure the public greatly if it were better known, i.e., that a prison doctor, although a state official, regards the prisoner primarily as a *patient*, and is absolutely impartial in his examination, which is, moreover, conducted with every safeguard against entrapping a prisoner into making a statement to his detriment.

In a lucid series of chapters, Dr. East describes the main forms of psychosis and the common varieties of crime to which they may give rise. Like the late Dr. Sullivan of Broadmoor, he lays great stress on the dangerous potentialities of *dementia praecox* and the comparative unimportance of epilepsy. His exposition of the complex subject of epileptic "forgetting" is particularly clear and helpful, and he is equally illuminating on the difficult problem of distinguishing the malingerer and the hysterical from the truly insane.

On the subject of defectives, Dr. East is a sure guide on disputed points. He confirms other recent findings on the small number of defectives found within prison walls. His own figures from Brixton show 1.3 per cent. certifiable under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1.3 per cent. subnormal but not certifiable, and 1.5 per cent. insane. The Boys' Prison at Wandsworth, naturally, gives a rather higher proportion, but even here only 10 per cent. belong to these three groups. He insists that it is essential in dealing with crime to distinguish between mental deficiency and inefficiency. "The Mental Deficiency and Lunacy Acts provide for the rational treatment of the defective and the insane criminal, but a large group of mental inefficients consisting of subnormals, cases of undeveloped psychosis and psychoneuroses remain outside the scope of the Acts. It is important to bear them constantly in mind and not attempt to stretch the definition of mental deficiency to include any of them; otherwise the true defective may suffer from the consequent administrative and judicial difficulties and complexities

that will arise."

The author gives some interesting case histories of "moral imbeciles," and he upholds the view that the moral imbecile need not be defective in intelligence and could not always be defined as "feeble-minded." "In short, they appear to be uncontrolled by wisdom, by moral perception and moral sentiment, whether the instinctive factors are at fault or not." The psychological basis of moral imbecility remains obscure, and Dr. East suggests that we may be dealing with "a symptom-complex founded on different psychological bases." A warning is added as to the great need for care in diagnosis of this group. Persistent disturbances of conduct due to bad environment and training, immaturity or compulsion neuroses should be carefully excluded. It is reassuring that Dr. East approves the attitude of the Central Association for Mental Welfare in regard to sterilization, and by inference in many other important points bearing on the welfare of defectives.

L. FAIRFIELD.

**THE CHILD'S PATH TO FREEDOM.** By Norman MacMunn, with a foreword by T. Percy Nunn, M.A., D.Sc. (J. Curwen & Sons, Ltd. 1926. 5/-.)

This is a book with an ideal. Mr. MacMunn had a vision, a vision for which the educational world at the time was totally unprepared, and for which as a general rule it is almost equally unready to-day. If in 1927 his basic ideals are regarded by some with enthusiasm, by more with toleration, but by the great majority with scepticism if not antagonism, in 1914 they were treated as a violation of a grimly-rooted and completely satisfactory system, and entirely revolutionary.

Broadly speaking, however, we have much to learn from Mr. MacMunn, his attitude to the child, and his experience as to results. It is, however, scarcely necessary to add that his method as it stands is not practicable in the average elementary school of to-day; at the same time, we must allow, and even urge, that there is much suggested within the pages of "The Child's Path to Freedom" that should find place in every class-room. The spirit of Mr. MacMunn does indeed exist in the present day edu-

tional system under the forms of industrial work with beginners, Dalton plans with older children, and many excellent modifications of these where they are effectually, sanely and systematically carried out. All this is doing much to enlarge the outlook of children and to ensure that each is put in the way of being able to develop his own personality, so that specialisation during later school life is possible, and ensuring that all are not now turned out, as it were, "to pattern." Much, however, yet remains to be done, and we agree that in very truth does the outlook of the existing educational powers need itself an education. At the same time, growth in these matters is continuing, as we see experimentalists tolerated to-day, if not with enthusiasm at least with interest, and greater things are yet before us if we but continue in the spirit of what we are taught here. It is a book well worth reading—we may not agree, but at least we shall learn; we may not adopt, but we shall be able to apply; Mr. MacMunn's psychology may not convince us in dealing with our own Tom or Betty, but we shall be the better for its study and our children will stand to gain. The child is not necessarily right *every* time, but he is right sometimes. Our experience counts for a good deal, but we are not infallible, and if the study of this book will help us towards realisation such as this, and the reconstruction of our sense of values it will not have been written in vain.

S. J. HARDCASTLE.

**FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL HYGIENE.** (British Social Hygiene Council, Inc. 1926.)

"Now that we see that progressive evolution has occurred in the past, and may be continued into the future, by that very vision we are become responsible for its continuance and proper guidance in our own race." In this sentence, Professor Julian Huxley sounds what is the keynote of the whole volume. He writes as a biologist, on the biological approach to social hygiene: Dr. Cyril Burt on the contribution of psychology: Dr. Malinowski on that of anthropology: while Professor Winifred Cullis discusses the influence of the home, and Professor Percy Nunn that of education and tradition. Sir Arthur Newsholme writes of "The

Community and Social Hygiene": and Professor Arthur Thomson opens the series with some general considerations on health and its attainment of which "the generalised moral is this, that social organisation is not necessarily a good thing in itself. It requires to be scrutinised not only in terms of wealth and health . . . but in terms of higher values—the good, the beautiful and the true, with their outcome in the evolution of man's personality." "We must look to it that we do not shut ourselves off from the ultra-violet rays of the spirit."

Thus from different points of view all the writers who contribute to this volume see the possibilities of a society which is not merely allowed to grow, Topsy-wise, but is built with a conscious sense of responsibility for the observance of truths which science makes clearer every year.

Professor Huxley says that "eugenics is the stepchild of politics. It deals only in long views and fares badly in consequence, just as afforestation has fared badly for the same reason. So far as social hygiene is concerned, politics deal only with improvement in the conditions of living, with housing, wages, education, sanitation, hours of labour, and the like. It deals only with each generation as it comes along. Any serious attempt to understand the reaction of one generation to the next is still beyond it." And yet it is shown "that venereal diseases could be stamped out in a generation if only a right public opinion in the matter could be developed."

It is hoped that this collection of papers will be widely read. It should certainly help to form public opinion rightly, for on a number of questions on which public opinion wobbles lamentably there is a striking measure of agreement between these writers. Not the least striking is the summary of evidence prepared by Physiologists and Psychologists and the statement of the British Social Hygiene Council which is based upon it.

LIONEL ELLIS.

**MENTAL HYGIENE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MIGRATION OF PEOPLE.** (U.S.A. Public Health Bulletin, No. 148.)

We have received this publication from the Treasury Department, Public Health Service at Washington, and find in it a forcible reminder of the complicated questions confronting

a nation with so vast an immigration problem. The first part of the report reviews the facilities in the States for the care of the feeble-minded and insane, and discusses the principles underlying the methods of treatment and training.

The chapters dealing with "Ten decades of immigration" are of much interest, and the practical carrying out of the law of 1917 which requires mental and physical examination of aliens before admission is described with much sympathy for the special difficulties of the examining medical officer. Altogether, the report is an interesting summary of the attempt to preserve the U.S.A. from race-deterioration.

**A STUDY OF MASTURBATION AND ITS REPUTED SEQUELÆ.** By John F. W. Meagher, M.D. (Bailliere, Tindall & Cox, 1924. 6/-).

The time is ripe for a clear and sane pronouncement upon the true significance of masturbation, and so this little book will be welcomed both by members of the medical profession and by lay people. After a discussion of the habit in children and in adults, the author proceeds to review its symptoms and sequelæ, prevalence and treatment, and in chapter V, gives a helpful comparison between masturbation and coitus.

We are glad to find points of special importance being clearly emphasized, among these being the necessity for regarding the habit as physiological in childhood, as being indeed a stage of sex-development; the importance and value of dealing with the accompanying remorse; the grouping together of masturbatory reveries and masturbation as one and the same thing; the futility, if not the immorality of suggesting illicit intercourse or marriage as a cure for masturbation.

Such criticism as we venture to offer is directed towards contradictory phraseology, and does not imply any divergence of views. For instance, although in one part of the book the term sex-sublimation is used, and advice is given along these lines, yet, on page 54, under the heading of "religion as an aid," the author recommends that everyone should strive to do his or her best to suppress or repress the sex impulses. Again, although in Chapter I it is stated of masturbation that "It is an infantile way of seeking sex-gratification," later on, under "effects on character," p. 35, the effects of the habit are discussed, instead of

associating the traits mentioned with an infantile type of personality who masturbates because his outlook on life is infantile. It would also, in our opinion, have been helpful if less had been said about the negative course of struggling against and conquering the habit, and the attention had been more pointedly concentrated upon the positive course of slow, steady growth away from the infantile and towards the full stature of manhood and womanhood, since the latter course yields more stable results. The book is, nevertheless, warmly recommended to all who wish to gain an insight into the subject and to glean advice upon the treatment of individual cases.

A. M. HUTCHISON.

**REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON THE TREATMENT OF YOUNG OFFENDERS.**  
(H.M. Stationery Office, 1927. 2/6.)

This report has been eagerly awaited since the appointment of the Committee in January, 1925. The Committee have reviewed the whole question of the treatment of offenders under the age of 21, and they divide these into two groups, those under 17, whether neglected or delinquent, and those between 17 and 21, who are offenders. We have no doubt that the report will be studied closely by all who are dealing with young offenders, and we only propose to refer to one or two of the most important points.

The Juvenile Court system is upheld by the Committee as the best method in this country for dealing with juvenile cases, and the Committee advise that the present system be rapidly extended and immediate appointments on all benches be made of magistrates especially suited for the work; that some means be devised of sharing experiences among magistrates, so that there may be a certain uniformity of treatment, and that the general procedure be simplified.

Perhaps the recommendation of major importance in regard to Juvenile Courts is that their jurisdiction should extend to the age of 17. The Committee evidently had some difficulty in deciding up to what age the Juvenile Courts should have jurisdiction, and we think they were on the whole wise to reject the suggestion of 21. They recommend, on the other hand, that 18 should be the age below which sentence of death cannot be passed. Other recommendations for the extension of Probation, the

Borstal System, After-Care, and the transfer of the guardianship of a neglected child or young person to an Education Authority, all follow on the lines of advanced opinion.

For readers of this paper, the most interesting part of the report deals with the facilities for the examination and observation of young offenders. The Report says:—

"We have been much impressed by the views expressed to us as to the need of much greater facilities for the examination and observation of young offenders. To the Court is entrusted the very important function of deciding the right treatment to be applied to each particular case. Once the principle is admitted that the duty of the Court is not so much to punish for the offence as to readjust the offender to the community, the need for accurate diagnosis of the circumstances and motives which influenced the offence becomes apparent. For instance, it is not possible for the Court to determine whether release on probation or some form of institutional treatment is called for without the fullest enquiries as to the antecedents and surroundings of the offender. These enquiries can often best be pursued if there is a remand in custody. But more important still is the need for estimating the personal factors, including especially mental and physical health. There is always the possibility of mental deficiency, the discovery of which would lead to special treatment. The increase in recent years of that distressing complaint encephalitis lethargica has emphasised the need of careful examination. It is well known that persons who are suffering from the sequelae of this disease are liable to lose their mental or moral balance and appear before the Courts as offenders. . . .

"There is also the help which psychological knowledge and training can give in estimating the mental equipment of young people who are charged with offences. Though psychology is still a comparatively new science a great deal of attention is being given to it and many medical men constantly apply its principles in their private practice. It is well known that boys and girls whose parents are in a good position and who become delinquent at school or elsewhere are frequently taken to neurologists and other specialists, and proper treatment is applied. Those who appear before the Court are often suffering from the same causes, and it is not right that the mental aspect should be ignored in the treatment of their case. The real value of psychological method has been somewhat obscured in recent years by sharp controversies about particular theories. It is fortunately not our function—even if we have the knowledge—to take any part in such controversy. We only wish to make it clear that in our opinion all the resources of approved medical science in relation to the functions of the mind should be available under any system of observation such as we envisage." (p. 43.)

And the Committee go on to recommend that in order to provide places where conditions could exist for scientific observation, the State should establish three observation Centres, in London, in the Midlands and in the North. The

#### Report states:—

"We have studied the methods adopted in other countries in meeting this problem, especially in Belgium. We have received a good deal of information about the Observation Centre for lads at Moll and the similar Centre for girls at Namur, and several members of the Committee paid a special visit to Belgium to study the methods on the spot. The Central Observation School at Moll, which was opened in 1915, owed its origin to the passing of an Act a few years earlier which gave the Juvenile Courts power to commit children to the care of the State. To enable the State to fulfil its obligations a systematic method of observation was felt to be essential. To this school young people are sent from the Courts as a preliminary step and their subsequent treatment depends on the results of the observation there. The school is organised on the basis of separate Houses according to age, and there the lads live for several months under a carefully organised system of work and recreation, though there is considerable freedom of choice left to the individual. An ingenious system of tests is applied to ascertain as far as possible the particular boy's tastes, abilities, and proclivities. As a result of the treatment some of the lads are returned to their homes after a stay of a few months (about 10 per cent.), some are boarded out (about 10 per cent.), some are sent to voluntary Homes (about 4 per cent.), some are sent to a State school (about 52 per cent.), and some to a special institution (about 21 per cent.). Moll is under a Director of exceptional qualifications and enthusiasm for the work, and it is apparent that in this as in other instances the success of an institution largely depends on the personality of its head.

"The Moll system would not fit in with English methods in every respect, but its main principle seems to us to supply an example of the sort of examination which is required in this country. In order to justify the employment of the best possible staff we think it would be right to adopt a scheme which would provide for the examination and observation, when necessary, of all persons under 21 and be available for the Juvenile Courts as well as the Adult Courts. There would be no objection in principle, and administratively it would be a great advantage if Observation Centres could provide for all offenders under 21, because it would be possible to employ the same expert staff." (p. 44.)

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the value of such Observation Centres and we believe that though this recommendation of the Committee involves immediate and considerable expense, it is of such importance and likely to lead to results of such consequence that even in the present economic stringency, it should at once be carried out, at least in London.

#### REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF PRISONS AND THE DIRECTORS OF CONVICT PRISONS FOR THE YEAR 1925-26. (H.M. Stationery Office, 1927. 1/6.)

The harmful effect of the short sentence, the prevalence of recidivism and the unsuitability

of prison conditions for persons of low or abnormal mentality are subjects which recur in almost every one of the Governors' and Medical Officers' reports which are contained in this volume.

" During the year under review the general prison population continued, as before, to show a tendency to a slow decline.

" Probation, allowance of time in which to pay fines, and the operation of the Mental Deficiency Act, were, as for some years past, the chief factors in this decline; while the increased efficiency of the agencies for the assistance of all classes of prisoners on their discharge, combined with the training given to as many as possible during their imprisonment, also contributed in a perceptible degree." (p. 6.)

And later in the report (p. 33) the Medical Commissioner states :

" As I reported last year, the intelligent application of the Mental Deficiency Act (1913) by Prison Medical Officers has resulted in the permanent diminution of the prison population by a large but unknown number—possibly 200 daily.

" A logical extension of a similar measure to those persons who are to some degree feeble-minded, though not so much so as to be certifiable under the Lunacy or Mental Deficiency Acts, either by some form of indeterminate sentence or permanent segregation in some form of special institution or farm colony would undoubtedly, in my opinion, lead to the elimination from the unsuitable environment of a prison of a further large contingent of weak-minded habitual petty offenders.

" With the practical elimination of such, a prison would then be what it ought to be, a place for hard work, discipline and education, with a view to rehabilitation on completion of the sentence."

It is interesting to read the protest made against the practice of some Justices of convicting prisoners about whose mentality they have doubts, instead of remanding them and asking for a medical report before dealing with them. The Report states (p. 32) :—

" This practice of conviction first and mental examination afterwards is not very common, and would probably disappear altogether if the Justices had the matter brought to their notice."

The point is, we think, of real importance, and we hope that steps will be taken to press for a more constant recourse to mental examination in doubtful cases. The Medical Officer of Birmingham Prison has some interesting remarks to make on the intelligence of prisoners. He says (p. 37) :

" Much attention has been given during recent years to the estimation of the intelligence of offenders. It has been shown that the estimates formerly given as

to the percentage of offenders who are of defective intelligence were far too high; on the use, that is to say, of any reasonable standard of measurement, for a scheme could be devised which would bring the majority of persons, whether offenders or otherwise, within the category of intelligence defectives. This most necessary work must, of course, continue; for the elimination of possible defect of intelligence must be one of the first steps taken when dealing with any case; but defect of intelligence is not the only nor the most frequent nor the most important mental abnormality acting as a causative factor in the production of delinquency. It is becoming clear that defect of intelligence is not to be compared in importance to emotional abnormality. It is to the estimation of these emotional abnormalities that our work must now be directed. All persons suffer, to some extent, from emotional abnormality. Our task is to determine the nature of, and, if possible, to correct the mental abnormalities of our offenders; we have to consider the connection of the emotional abnormality with the offence committed. The task is far more difficult than that of the measurement of intelligence; but it should not be insuperable.

" The facts necessary for the solution of the problem are becoming clearer, but the problem can only be solved by the careful and intensive investigation of individual cases, and this implies the provision of the necessary investigators."

Brixton Prison Medical Officer also pleads for special institutions for the borderline case :

" Both in his own and in the public interest, the borderline case of persistent delinquent tendencies should be secluded until there is a reasonable prospect that he will not resume his anti-social habits. I am quite confident that, if the necessary change in the law were effected, most Courts would welcome the opportunity to send such cases to a suitable institution. I believe also that public opinion is ready for the change. After all, the proposal involves no new principle. At present the lunatic and the mental deficient receive indeterminate sentences by quite summary procedures. It is felt that this is best for the patients, as it is obviously best for society. Why should the all-but insane and the all-but deficient be treated so very differently?" (p. 39.)

The same need is voiced by the Holloway Prison Medical Officer (p. 42) :

" During the year there has been a fall again in the prison population, but I regret to say that there has not been a corresponding fall in the numbers of abnormal mental cases. As I have pointed out in previous reports, the need for fresh legislation in reference to subnormal mental cases is long overdue, and if other provision was made for those cases we now term 'uncertifiable cases of mental defect,' a very large part of Holloway might be closed."

This Report is further of value in that it contains the Resolutions of the International Penitentiary Congress (Prison Congress, August, 1925) with comments on the British practice and point of view.