

importance of staff conferences, at which junior as well as senior medical officers should be present; the place of the medical women in the teaching of nurses; the terms of appointment of medical women with regard to promotion. It was noted that there are already medical women in charge of mental hospitals. Housing accommodation for the senior medical women and the importance of telling junior medical women of the need for work in mental hospitals was also discussed.

The following resolution was then passed: "That this meeting, which included fifteen members of the Medical Women's Federation, form a group concerned especially with the mental aspects of medicine and with the interests of medical women practising in this branch."

A committee of nine was then elected, the Chairman being Dr. Elizabeth Casson. That committee has now been made a Standing Committee on Psychological Medicine of the Medical Women's Federation, and has been strengthened by the addition of Dr. Kate Fraser, of the Scottish Board of Control.

It was agreed to prepare a memorandum on the work of medical women in mental hospitals, to encourage the appointment of medical women in such hospitals. Information has been received from women doctors in Great Britain, Ireland, America, Germany and Sweden on work of this kind in their countries, and the sub-committee is awaiting the result of a questionnaire sent out to different nations by the International Medical Women's Federation.

The Hon. Sec. of the sub-committee is Dr. Isabel Wilson, 42, Harley Street, London, W. 1, who will be glad to hear from any fellow-members of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association who are interested in the subject.

Part II.—Reviews.

The Psychology of Murder: A Study in Criminal Psychology. By ANDREAS BJERRE, LL.D. Translated from the Swedish by E. CLASSEN, M.A., Ph.D., M.R.S.L. London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1927. Demy 8vo. Pp. xii + 164. Price 9s. net.

The study of the criminal, from any scientific point of view, is a comparatively new branch of science. Such study, in its inception, naturally adopted general and statistical methods. It is now recognized that no real advance can be made apart from the intensive investigation of individual offenders. Only of late have

adequate means for such investigation been at our disposal. Our knowledge is, at present, but superficial, our methods are tentative. Yet we may attempt to accomplish something, and it is our duty so to do, for the sake of our successors. The present volume is a notable addition to our science, and is the outcome of work done by the author at the Stockholm Central Prison.

The science of the psychology of the criminal cannot, however, confine itself to the investigation of isolated individuals. Like other sciences, if it is to be fertile, it must endeavour to classify its observed phenomena under certain groups. Some generalizations must be made, even if these are hypothetical and tentative. The author holds that the determining factor in all crime is "weakness," by which term he means a general incapacity for satisfying the demands which life makes upon all men, irrespective of social environment. This incapacity is found among murderers in three main types, each of which may be regarded as a method of escape from reality. He gives us a careful study of an example of each of these three modes of escape.

To the mode of escape most frequently selected he gives the name of "self-deception." The universal tendency to attempt escape in this way is exhibited without restraint by the criminal. The selected example is that of a man called Winge (all the names in the book are fictitious), who, after various experiences in the underworld, some of which appear to have been of a homo-sexual character, committed (with the assistance of a companion) the murder of a postman, in order to obtain possession of a sum of money officially carried by the victim. The perpetration of the crime exhibited that lack of precaution against detection which has so often been observed among murderers. The author would seem to consider that the fear of punishment has little deterrent effect in such offences. Both before and after the crime Winge appears to have surrendered himself to a curious, self-deceptive optimism, entirely unrelated to existing facts. However apparently desperate his situation, he was always expecting something to turn up as a relief therefrom. A striking feature of this chapter is an analysis of the peculiar religiosity often found in offenders, and which, although it cannot be regarded in the light of true religion, is very far from being mere hypocrisy. It may be a primitive form of seeking support from some power outside ourselves. The murder, in Winge's case, had not been his first offence against the law, and the author makes wise remarks upon the importance which should be attached to all first offences. Incidentally, the theory is maintained that lurid newspaper reports of crimes do not (as is often supposed) give birth to criminal instincts; but they may fortify such instincts as are already existing.

The author next deals with a mode of escape which he terms "anguished fear." The criminal Gunnarsson, who seems to have been a rustic Don Juan, murdered a farm girl, whom he had caused to become pregnant, with circumstances of sadistic ferocity. The crime was committed in order that his mother might not know of his relations with the girl. The result of the investigation revealed

the operation of an intense mental conflict, originating in a feeling of inferiority. There was also a well-marked dependence upon the mother. The author appears to accept the main conceptions of modern psychological theory, the unconscious, mental conflict, repression and the like. He inclines somewhat to Adler's variant of the Freudian hypothesis. He rejects the complete psycho-analytic view, considering that the term "sex" is employed in too wide a sense. But he recognizes the immense importance of impressions received in early childhood, and he is fully alive to the danger of reading the investigator's complexes into the mind of the patient.

Finally, the history of Malmström is taken up. This is the case of a man who murdered his wife, because she had become aware that he had committed arson, after having had incestuous relations with their three daughters. It is the least convincing of the three chapters. The term, "shamming" applied to the mode of escape from reality herein described is unfortunate, for it carries a connotation of deliberate malingering, whereas the author means an attempted conformity with the ordinarily accepted rules of conduct. It is not easy to see why this case should not have been included in one of the two former classes. The chapter, however, contains a very useful discussion of the nature of confessions made by criminals, and of the value to be attached thereto.

The author holds that modern criminology does not sufficiently distinguish between the act and the doer thereof. He considers that the phrase "to understand all is to forgive all" contains a fundamental falsehood. But he maintains that conduct is determined, in each particular case, by circumstances, environment and upbringing. What better statement of his own position could the strictest determinist ask for?

It is a matter for great regret that Dr. Bjerre's early death prevents us from having the advantage of further works from his pen. We can but hope that certain lectures, which he mentions, will be given to us by an editor. What inspiration may we draw from his most able example? Studies of the mentality of murderers are, of course, carried on in this country, but these are confined to points of immediate moment. Before trial, investigations are conducted, with a view to the determination of the murderer's "criminal responsibility." After trial, there may be investigation to ascertain the propriety of mitigating the death penalty. Neither occasion is suitable for such intensive inquiry as that described in this book. But there remains a considerable number of murderers who have escaped the full penalty of the law, and whose mentality awaits, and would well repay, full investigation. May we not hope that this investigation may be conducted by workers as fair-minded, as careful, and as competent as Dr. Bjerre?

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.