Part II.—Reviews.

Difficulties in Child Development. By MARY CHADWICK. London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1928. Demy 8vo. Pp. 412 Price 15*s.* net.

In no department of thought has the change produced by the Freudian hypothesis been greater than in that of our conceptions of childhood. How far we are entitled to adopt the Freudian theory as our guide will be considered later.

Children, in former days, were taught that they owed gratitude to their parents for the gift of life. Normal childhood was always represented as a period of perfect and undisturbed happiness. Quite apart from any views which we may hold on the psycho-analytic theory, it is obvious that this conception of childhood is due to adult forgetting (it is not necessary to employ the term "repression"). Those of us who will take the trouble to recall, and who are honest enough to analyse the memories of our own childish experiences will realize that childhood, far from being a time of complete happiness, is a period of constant struggle for adjustment. This struggle between what we desire to do and what we are able to do is inevitable, and has, indeed, advantages. But the struggle is often made unnecessarily and damagingly difficult by reason of the ill-judged actions of the adults who deal with the child. The subject-matter of this book is a description of some of these mistakes, of their evil results in after life, and of the way in which they may be avoided.

Miss Chadwick is an orthodox Freudian. She accepts the full psycho-analytic theory, including the Œdipus complex with all that depends thereon; and she points out that this complex has two sides. From this point of view she describes some of the errors, often quite inadvertent, of which adults are guilty in dealing with the children who are so dependent upon them. Cruelty to children need not be of the gross physical variety. There may be psychical ill-treatment, there may be psychical neglect. Whatever may be our opinion about Freud, we can see that the manner in which an infant's nutritional demands are met may have a marked effect upon that infant's character. Common sense, as well as convention, demands that a child should have early and systematic training in cleanliness; but this training can be given without the introduction of the idea of shame and guilt. Bad habits of various kinds must be checked, but this can be accomplished by means other than the severe and summary methods which once were popular.

The fact is that we are inclined to expect too much from children,

many of our demands being not only too extensive, but also inconsistent. We desire that our children should exhibit unquestioned obedience and complete docility towards ourselves, at the same time expecting them to learn to display firmness and independence in other situations. We rebuke children for showing curiosity about our doings, while refusing to allow them any mental or psychical privacy. We condemn them for speaking hastily, while we are often guilty of hasty speech to them. Miss Chadwick discusses certain types of parents, the jealous, the over-conscientious, the sadistic, the untidy, and the over-indulgent and sentimental, the last-named often being those who have themselves been starved of love. The deleterious ways in which these parents may affect their children are described. The dangers of an over-development of that fantasy world into which children often go in order to escape the tyranny of adults are pointed out, as are the bad results produced by the threats which adults only too often make to children. The ill-effects produced by being an only child are noticed.

The book advocates a policy of greater liberty for children, but not a policy of licence. Children must be trained, but they possess equal rights with their parents; they must have freedom to develop, and such freedom must not be accorded only when convenient to adults. Child training has hitherto partaken too much of the old tribal system, the traditional influence of the "old man of the tribe" has been unduly prominent.

The book should be read with interest by all; it will be read with satisfaction by some, with annoyance and pain by others. The reader's attitude will depend upon his personal complexes. In its analysis of human motives the Freudian view is, beyond all question, humiliating. But regarded from the scientific aspect no real pain should result from a fearless facing of the facts, if such they be. The psycho-analytic hypothesis is, when all is said, a theory. Like other theories, the test for its acceptance or rejection is whether it provides an adequate explanation of the facts. Like other theories, it has been, and still is, subject to expansion and to modification. It may be that too sweeping statements have been made by some of Freud's followers, that undue generalizations have been made (as is the case with parts of this book) in connection with the psycho-analytic theory. Time and experience will correct these. But the nature of much of human conduct is not affected by the analysis of the motives which produce that conduct. Parental love still exists, and is still admirable, whatever may be its origin. Freud's is a normal, and not a pathological psychology; but it must not be forgotten that this book deals largely with pathological parental conduct. It is a warning to parents, but it is not intended as a description of the conduct of every parent. As the author herself says, "The wisest of parents are those who thoughtfully look ahead, while remembering their own childhood, know and understand the mind and impulses of the child, guide it and love it all the while."

Great advances have been made in our care for the physical welfare of children. There are indications that their psychical

welfare is now being appreciated as of, at least, equal importance. Parents are exhibiting a desire for instruction in this department of their duty. It is to be hoped that the existing infant welfare centres will be developed in this direction. It is also to be hoped that the care of children's mental welfare will be undertaken by members of our profession; but this will not happen unless we take pains to become acquainted with all the current work on this subject.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

Éducation, Dégénérescence et Prophylaxie Sociale. Par HENRI DAMAYE. Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1927. Crown 8vo. Pp. vii + 266. Price 12 fr.

This little book is the fifth of a series by the same author, dealing with the social aspects of neuro-psychiatry. Dr. Damaye is an ardent advocate of mental prophylaxis, and his books are obviously intended for the enlightenment of the public as well as the medical practitioner.

The author insists that there is nothing distinctive about the ætiology or pathogenesis of mental disorder. The mechanism is the same as in disorders of the other organs and tissues of the body and obeys the same laws. Thus, whether the brain or any other organ of the body be affected, there are two main ætiological factors, *viz.*, (1) the constitutional or atavistic causes, and (2) the accidental or personal causes. Among the constitutional causes may be mentioned severe acute or chronic infections and intoxications in the parents or ancestors, *e.g.*, syphilis, tuberculosis, alcoholism, etc. Other factors mentioned are traumata and emotional disturbances in the mother during pregnancy, premature birth, difficult labour, etc. The chief occasional or personal causes referred to are infections and intoxications, emotional disturbances, head injuries, etc. The constitutional factor may produce an actual degenerative lesion in the cell; but more commonly it produces a congenital weakness, so that the cell is in a state of biological inferiority. In consequence less resistance is offered to intoxications and the ordinary nutritional defects of everyday life. The ultimate cause of this constitutional cellular lesion or weakness may be traced to some pathological condition in the parents, the grandparents, or great-grandparents, or to the accumulated defects of the ancestors. Should the inherent weakness in the cerebral cells be only slight, it will require a correspondingly more powerful occasional cause in order to produce the clinical picture of mental disorder. These milder degrees of cellular weakness, moreover, permit of reparation after the occasional cause has ceased to operate. On the other hand, atavistic causes, accumulated through several generations, tend to produce actual degeneration of the cellular elements and to give rise to the constitutional psychopathic syndrome. Occasional causes only produce mental disturbances when there is already a predisposition from atavistic