

fous," and that it should sanction in their favour the principle of diminished responsibility. To give practical effect to this principle, it is suggested that such criminal defectives should be subjected to a modified asylum treatment "instead of or concurrently with legal punishment" (en place de la peine ou concurrement avec celle-ci). and further, that their liberation should be at the discretion of the judicial authority acting with medical advice, and should be on conditional licence, with some arrangement for regular supervision. By these means the author considers that it should be possible to avoid the dangers which attend the admission of the principle of partial responsibility in the existing state of the law ; and this admission, as he rightly points out, however objectionable on theoretical grounds, is certainly inevitable in practice.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

*The Relation of Alcohol to Feeble-Mindedness.* (*Brit. Journ. of Inebriety, vol. vi, No. 3, January, 1909.*) Potts, W. A.

In this paper, read as an introduction to a discussion at the Society for the Study of Inebriety, Dr. Potts summarises some of the many discordant opinions which have been advanced with regard to the influence of ancestral alcoholism in the production of mental defect, and refers to his own very interesting observations on the subject which have been published in the records of evidence taken by the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded. Dr. Potts worked out the family histories of 250 mentally defective children in the special schools at Birmingham, and as a control made similar inquiries regarding 100 normal children from the same districts in that city. While the result of his investigations led him to take the generally accepted view that the origin of congenital defect is usually complex, he also satisfied himself that parental—or rather ancestral—alcoholism is one of the more important causative agencies. Thus he found an alcoholic heredity in the direct line in 41·6 per cent. of the feeble-minded children, but only in 22 per cent. of the ordinary children of the same social status. In 5·2 per cent. of the former group both parents were intemperate, while in only 1 per cent. of the normal children was this convergent heredity observed. The author's general conclusion is "that the evidence is not clear that alcoholism, by itself, in the father will produce amentia ; but it is quite plain that in combination with other bad factors it is a most unfavourable element, while maternal drinking, and drinking continued through more than one generation, are potent influences in mental degeneracy."

A number of interesting criticisms of Dr. Pott's paper, contributed by Dr. Claye Shaw, Dr. Harry Campbell and others, give further proof of the wide differences of opinion which still prevail on this question.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

*Feeble-mindedness and Juvenile Delinquency.* (*Reprint from Charities and the Commons, May, 1908 ; published by the Wright and Potter Printing Co., Boston.*) Evans, E., and Dewson, M.

The ladies who have written this paper have given to it the subtitle of "A Study from Experience," the experience having been acquired in connection with the work of the Waverley School for the