

by the age-returns in the census, in the terms of criminal sentences imposed by judges, in the registration of temperature, rainfall, star-transits, and in various other ways, and the bearing of these inquiries on the attempts to prove thought-transference is duly set forth. The infinitesimal probability is also set forth, the fallibility of human testimony and the operation of normal extra-chance causes.

In Part IV it is shown that sound-assimilation is very potently influenced by suggestion. The perception of a word is not, as is commonly supposed, a purely auditory affair. The auditory impression may be slight and inadequate, but become assimilated by more powerful psychic factors (images, motor dispositions, etc.), which assume primary responsibility for the cognition of the word. This assimilating process leads to illusions. All the other senses are similarly capable of reporting facts that are not there.

There is to-day a wide-spread revival of interest in phenomena of the supra-normal (as we have usually understood "normal") order. Hence the value of a series of studies so expert, so many-sided, and so impartial as we find in this volume. It furnishes a valuable armoury for those who have committed themselves in opposition to such tendencies, and it demands the most strenuous attention of those who accept them.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

---

*Spirit Experiences.* By CHARLES A. MERCIER, M.D. London: Watts & Co.

"A little nonsense now and then  
Is relished by the wisest men."

This booklet has been sent to us for review. To review it seriously would be difficult, if not impossible. Professedly, if we may judge by the rather sensational amplification of the title as "The Conversion of a Sceptic! Startling and Astonishing Experiences of a Seeker after Truth—Unprecedented Marvels—Telepathy—Levitation—Communications with the Dead—Telergy—A Completely Novel Experience—Substitution," the writer offers it to the public as a sort of recantation of his published views on the subject of spiritualism. Whether it is, or is not, must be left to the individual reader to decide for himself. In reality it is a humorous skit on spiritualistic phenomena, its style and *motif* akin to that of a previous paper on "Dreams," which was read by Dr. Mercier at a meeting of the Association some years ago. The astounding occurrences which have made a convert of Dr. Mercier—and from what we know of that eminent psychologist, it is safe to assert that any agency capable of converting him from any view he may have adopted regarding any question whatever must be nothing less than astounding—are detailed in a manner, if droll, at any rate circumstantial, and can hardly fail to convince even the most hardened and uncompromising opponent of spiritualism of the error of his ways, and bring about his "conversion" to the true faith. The interviews with Hodgkins, who when in the flesh had been "a bit of a rip," and who spoke from a region where asbestos clothes were worn—"nothing else would stand the heat"—and where the daily fare was "roast

salamander, always cooked to death," and with Mrs. Shegessdit—a name full of significance—are diverting reading. And the real meaning of such performances as the three-card trick (no longer a mere "trick") and thimble-rigging (nothing to do with sleight-of hand), as explained on occult and spiritualistic principles, form a suitable climax in this amusing—and amazing—brochure.

---

### Part III.—Epitome of Current Literature.

---

*War Neuroses and Military Training.* (*Mental Hygiene*, October, 1918). Rivers, W. H. R.

In this report to the Medical Research Committee Dr. Rivers concisely sets forth some of the results of his experience. War neuroses, he finds, fall into three main groups: (1) Hysteria, though the term is admitted to be unsatisfactory; there is some definite physical symptom (paralysis, deafness, mutism, etc.), such as can be readily produced by suggestion in hypnosis. (2) Anxiety neurosis, but usually termed neurasthenia; there is physical fatigue and organic slackness with, on the mental side, irritability or depression. (3) Definite psychic manifestations; there are many varieties—including a manic-depressive tendency, morbid impulses such as to murder or suicide, obsessions, phobias—but the special feature is always a resemblance to the definite psychoses, but yet without the severity or fixity which renders any legal restriction on the patient necessary.

There seems nothing specially original in the grouping. Dr. Rivers proceeds, however, to bring forward some interesting considerations with regard to the varying incidence of these groups of disorders respectively on officers and on men. There is no reason to suppose that the third group are specially liable to affect either officers or men. But of the other two groups hysteria is almost exclusively confined to the men, while anxiety neurosis, though not similarly limited to officers, affects them much more frequently and much more profoundly. This difference, Dr. Rivers seeks to show, is largely explainable by the varying conditions of training and duties in the two classes. "The neuroses of war depend upon a conflict between the instinct of self preservation and certain social standards of thought and conduct, according to which fear and its expression are regarded as reprehensible." In cases of the first group the conflict is solved by some disability which incapacitates the patient from further participation in warfare. In the second group the conflict is not solved, but rendered more acute by weakening of the social factor through strain, etc. One cause of the difference is the superior education of the officers, which renders them subconsciously dissatisfied with the easy hysterical solution of the conflict. Another possible cause is the greater repression of fear in the officers' early education. The first aim of military training is to enable the soldier to act in harmony with the aggregate, and the agencies are habituation and suggestion. The next great aim is to enable him to withstand the strain of warfare, and the