

L'Hystérie et L'Évolution Humaine. By M. DIDE, M.D. E. Flammarion. Pp. 250. Price 12 francs.

The author is more concerned with the portrayal of the hysterical character and the place he takes in a modern civilized community than in the description and elucidation of specific symptoms. The hysteric is a person whose mental growth has been arrested at an infantile level; his thinking processes, akin to the primitive, are infralogical, and his judgments emotionally rather than rationally determined. Fundamentally his state is due to affective poverty. In the sexual sphere this is shown in the female hysteric by her inability ever to arrive at its true goal—the maternal sentiment; while in the male there is a failure to sublimate this instinct towards social ends.

The hysteric masks his incapacity to feel by hypermotivity. There is, characteristically, a dissociation between the faculty of expression and the underlying sentiment. Imitation and suggestion, instead of sincere emotional drives, rule his conduct. Hence the hysteric's theatricalism, his tendency to fabrication and mythomania. These same motives, ultimately an expression of his inner dissatisfaction and emotional poverty, will cause him to grasp at any new cult or "ism", with its possibility of a new sensation. Or again, they will lead him to gambling, swindling or alcoholism. In the "crime passionnel" the motives found are not true jealousy, but egoistic vanity and envy.

Kretschmer's views are dismissed in a few short paragraphs. Janet's theory is more sympathetically reviewed. The author differs from Babinski in that he regards pithiatism as one of the most striking manifestations, but not the cause of hysteria. Psycho-analytical theories are considered to be on a level with the mythomania of the hysteric himself, and there is a hint that they may both have the same ultimate source.

Dr. Dide is an acute observer, and his studies of the varied manifestations of the hysterical character make excellent reading. This is a scholarly and erudite work with frequent philosophical digressions. It can be warmly recommended for leisure hours. It is not a text-book.

STANLEY COLEMAN.

The Psychology of Belief. By H. LUNDHOLM, Ph.D. Cambridge University Press and Duke's University Press. Pp. 245. Price 13s. 6d.

McDougall has stated that the psychology of belief presents three main problems: (1) the problem of the conditions which engender belief; (2) the nature of the state called holding a belief; and (3) the problem of the nature and proper classification of belief as a mode of being conscious. In the present work an attempt is made to explore the psychology of belief in all these three aspects. Lundholm's psychological principles, while closely approximating to those of McDougall, differ in one important aspect. He holds that during evolution adaptive behaviour becomes differentiated into general impulses as well as the special instincts of McDougall's psychology. The former are—primordial curiosity, the impulse to sleep and primordial deference. Primordial curiosity and deference are called into play by all significant physical events and invariably co-operate with the special instincts.

Lundholm's theory on belief-engenderment and the important part played

by primordial curiosity is most easily summarized by means of a hypothetical example: Suppose an infant coming across a significant physical event, an apple, for the first time. Under the influence of primordial curiosity he will play with it—that is, test it with his various senses. If, in the course of his play, he chances to taste it, the food-seeking instinct will be aroused. On the other hand, if no special instinct is awakened the incident will be forgotten, that is, the apple will not have become a percept—it will have no meaning. But in the former circumstances when the emotion of hunger next occurs, the food-seeking instinct will combine with the impulse of curiosity in an attempt to find an apple. In other words, the object perceived is the object striven for, and the object striven for repeatedly becomes an object of enduring belief.

For Lundholm there are two essential principles responsible for belief-enderment—the emotional and the rational. The instance given above is an example of the emotional principle. In the formation of the rational principle primordial curiosity undergoes a remarkable evolution, becoming the impulse which urges and accomplishes the relating of things, events and propositions in the most intricate and complex sense. In the hypothetical example of the apple, the emotionally conditioned belief that hunger can be satisfied by the fruit will be subsequently modified by the rational principle. For instance, the child will learn to discriminate between ripe apples on the one hand and green, rotten or maggoty apples on the other; again, he may learn, perhaps, the disadvantages of obtaining his apple from his neighbour's orchard.

The second main part of the treatise deals with beliefs as enduring mental dispositions guiding human conduct. It propounds a hypothesis according to which a belief, as a unit of structure, is a thinking-striving disposition, its conative constituent being deference to a psychological object as the seat of certain known properties. Belief-formation thus represents the investment of an object with deferent impulsive energy; the abandonment of belief the detachment of this energy.

The third section discusses the subtle problem as to whether there are any attitudes of mind in which we apprehend without either believing or doubting the object apprehended. It is thought that there are probably two such states—that of logical contemplation and that of æsthetic contemplation. In both cases the major motive is a rational impulse derived from primordial curiosity. The total conation of the two attitudes, then, would be primordial curiosity supported by deference to the elements of the æsthetic or the logical proposition. It is noted that in the attitudes approximating apprehension without deference, no special conation ever enters. This indirectly leads to the conclusion that special conation, although it does not necessarily determine the reality of things, yet determines their reality-concern.

The two chapters on the formation of false beliefs in the manic-depressive psychosis and schizophrenia lay themselves open to criticism. In the former we are told a state of dissociation takes place, probably due to a toxin—"a poison of the nature of a depressant drug working upon the higher centres of the nervous system". Delusions here are paramountly emotionally induced beliefs, comparable to the beliefs of the child and of the primitive man. As an explanation of the remission we learn that as the toxic influence upon the brain gradually wears itself out, the rational processes re-assert themselves and the delusions become rectified. The credulity of the dreamer and the distortion of the dream-content "that Freud has attempted to explain in a somewhat fantastic vein" are examined along similar lines.

Schizophrenia, on the other hand, is probably not due to a toxin, but to inborn egotism. The mind of the schizophrenic is not disintegrated, but perversely integrated. It is this perversely integrated that results in false beliefs emotionally conditioned and impervious to the rational principle.

An important feature, making the whole a really valuable work of reference, is the detailed reviews and elaborate criticisms of the theories held by leading psychologists. Also a wealth of quotations from poetry, drama and fiction throw interesting side-lights upon the subject. Lundholm's treatise can be confidently recommended to anyone who cares to speculate upon the psychological basis of true and false beliefs. It should prove particularly useful to those engaged upon a psychological investigation of delusions.

STANLEY COLEMAN.

Freud and Marx. By R. OSBORN. Victor Gollancz, Ltd. Pp. 285. Price 8s. 6d.

Osborn presents a comparative study of psycho-analysis and Marxism. He attempts to illustrate the interrelationships between the subjective life of man as described by Freud, and the objective world of economic processes, whose laws of development Marx has investigated. For the psychologist the most interesting portion of the book will be the two chapters dealing with the unconscious mind and dialectical materialism. He brings forward evidence to show that unconscious mental processes are essentially dialectical in character and consequently at variance with the laws of formal logic, which represent the material world as rigid and static. On the other hand, the conscious ego, which reflects reality, gives a picture which is largely undialectical. For the development of this undialectical, static image of reality two main factors are held responsible. The first of these is a conscious process, and may be termed the isolating character of scientific thought. The scientist abstracts certain factors relevant to his inquiry from their environment, and tends to give them an independent and absolute existence. The second is an unconscious one, and proceeds from the clash between reality and id impulses. From this point of view the distortion of the material world by the conscious ego takes on the nature of a defence mechanism. It represents the environment as harsh, rigid and unyielding in order to strengthen the repression of the id.

For those whose main objection to psycho-analytic tenets is that they run counter to formal logic this book provides a strong counter-argument. Where there is so much that is of interest and value it seems a pity that a more detached and scientific presentation could not have been obtained. It is feared that the uncompromising and violent revolutionary sympathies reiterated throughout the book may alienate many readers.

STANLEY COLEMAN.

The Background of Spiritual Healing. By A. GRAHAM IKIN, M.A., M.Sc. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. Pp. 224. Price 6s.

Originally presented as a series of lectures, their project was to convince an audience, practising spiritual healing from the religious approach, that God, besides working through them, is also working through the developments of science, more particularly psychotherapy. To this end, therefore, their subject-matter is largely a résumé of the psycho-analytic theory, or such of it