

study in the United States, mainly dealing with the psychological researches of Dr. Stanley Hall as to the contents of children's minds; the results are well classified according to the age and sex of the children. An excellent bibliography of child study concludes the volume, which is full of points of interest for those who wish to study the mental evolution of children.

L'Instabilité mentale: Essai sur les Données de la Psycho-pathologie.
Par G. L. DUPRAT. Paris: Alcan, 1899, pp. 310, 8vo. Price
5 francs.

This book belongs to a class which, happily or unhappily, we meet with much more frequently in France than in our own country. The author is a professor of philosophy and a doctor of letters; if he is not also a graduate in medicine he certainly has a knowledge at first hand of the facts of mental disease, as well as a wide knowledge of its literature, and has himself contributed original articles to medical journals. He here attempts the task of viewing the facts of modern morbid psychology from a philosophical standpoint.

At the outset he frankly declares his object and his position. The book, he states, is simply a philosophic essay; he is not adding to science, but criticising scientific results and examining scientific first principles. He thus cuts himself off from those who, like Féré, endeavour to find a physiological basis for the phenomena of morbid mental troubles; he wishes to establish the priority of the rights of psychology to explain disturbances within its own sphere. Further, he finds that mental instability, taken in the broadest sense, is the characteristic of all psychopathic states; psychological instability he regards as primordial, and the source, not the result, of the various disorders of sensation and movement. He argues that thought is always tending to vary, and that, in the absence of any constant principle of systematisation, guiding mental evolution, the mind becomes the prey of its own natural instability. The whole argument of the book may thus be said to be stated in its title. The author expresses special indebtedness to Janet's *Automatisme psychologique*, in so far as that book may be said to reveal the mental services which psychology and pathology can render to each other; he is, however, by no means in agreement with Janet in matters of detail.

The greater part of the book is devoted to the monotonous application of the formula, in the first place to the various forms of mental activity, and in the second place to the leading forms of mental disorder. There is little difficulty in showing the wide prevalence of mental instability, except in regard to a certain number of psychoses, where stability is too obvious a phenomenon. In regard to these (melancholia, systematised delusions, obsessions, &c.) the author argues that the higher mental activities are really unstable; so unstable, in fact, that they have disappeared altogether, and that lower mental centres are free to effect rigid co-ordinations of their own. This

explanation may be taken for what it is worth; at all events, the formula is saved. The concluding chapter contains various remarks, excellent but not specially novel, concerning the importance of training and education in the prophylaxis of mental disorders.

We have patiently plodded through Professor Duprat's book, for the excellent equipment of the author and the serious manner in which he has approached his task, seem to deserve respectful consideration; but it can scarcely be said that the net result of the perusal is large. The formula is so wide that it is easy to accept it; it is equally easy to assert that it scarcely carries us very far. It remains still possible for the physiologists to step in and attempt to carry the analysis further back; and we may be allowed to agree with the distinguished psychologist (Münsterberg), who has recently declared that "the renunciation of a physiological basis for every psychological fact means resigning the causal explanation altogether." Nor can it be said of Professor Duprat, as of some greater philosophers, that in the effort to apply a formula he has said many wise and admirable things by the way. No doubt there is a class of minds to which the mere application of a formula is a source of satisfaction; and, bearing in mind the existence of that class, it may be safest to sum up in the cautious words of President Lincoln: "If anyone likes this kind of thing, I should say that this is the kind of thing he will like."

L'Ignorance et l'Irréflexion: Essai de Psychologie objective. Par L. GÉRARD-VARET. Paris: Alcan, 1898, pp. 296, 8vo. Price 5 francs.

This book belongs to much the same class as that we have just noticed. It is written by a graduate in philosophy and doctor of letters, who proposes to deal, from a literary and philosophic standpoint, with a certain group of scientific facts. The chief distinction at a first glance is that M. Gérard-Varet has by no means so ample a scientific equipment as Professor Duprat; on the other hand, he has more original and suggestive ideas to offer, and even when his views are not new he is often able to put old facts in a fresh light.

The subject is a somewhat novel one. The author proposes to deal with ignorance as a factor in moulding the beginnings of human conceptions, activities, science, and culture. The ignorance he is dealing with, it must be understood, is by no means a merely negative quality; on the contrary, it involves freedom from the paralysing influence of knowledge, and draws energy from its own inner visions and imaginations. At the same time the more deeply ignorance draws on its own resources the more profoundly convinced is it of the small part played by itself, and the more persistently it assumes external powers to account for the phenomena it becomes conscious of.

The author begins his historical investigation at a point midway between primitive and scientific conceptions, and then pushes his way backwards to the more elementary phases of thought. After a