

form of re-education—is also probably more valuable when preceded by preliminary suggestive treatment.

The most reliable method has been found to consist in brief suggestive treatment, followed by rapid re-education. The suggestion may take any form, but it is essential that the patient should be convinced that it will produce an immediate recovery. The simplest form is the application of the Faradic current, as nearly every layman is willing to accept the suggestion that some form of electricity will cure him. Before the actual suggestion, the idea should be fostered that the physician understands his case and is able to cure him. His attitude must be authoritative in every respect. When the suggestion is employed, at the least sign of recovery re-education is commenced, and, before he can collect his thoughts, the patient is hurried along by persuasion until the disordered function is completely restored.

The writers explain their methods more fully under the headings of the various hysterical symptoms, and in conclusion they emphasise, as the author of the first paper does, the necessity for a thorough survey of the case before a decision is made as to what form of service will be most advantageous to the patient and the nation.

H. DEVINE.

*Mental Regression: Its Conception and Types.* (*Psychiat. Bull.*, October, 1916.) Wells, F. L.

The author, who is a Doctor of Philosophy and Psychologist at the McLean Hospital of Waverley in Massachusetts, bases his study in part on the literature and in part on original cases. "Regression" is a term that has been differently defined. It is here regarded as a turning back to a stage of development which is only normal at a less mature period of the individual's development. It is usually, though by no means necessarily, a reversion to the infantile, and its advantage is that it involves an economy of energy. It is sometimes termed the "shirking reaction," and it always detracts, in more or less degree, from the individual's fullness of life, or rather, we should perhaps say, it is the sign and result of defective fullness of life. It may be pathological, but is not necessarily so, unless it interferes with adaptations, though it can never be regarded as normal. The young woman, disappointed in love, who goes into a convent, and the old maid who becomes devoted to her parrot, are brought forward as typical examples of regression. It will be seen that there is some lack of clearness about the conception of a "regression," which the author fails to dissipate.

The exercise of the chief functions of life serves fundamental trends, and involves some degree of control over the external world. When the energy falls away to less fundamental (and usually more infantile) trends involving no such control, there is regression. The author discusses at length the group, now regarded as very large, of auto-erotic, or, as he prefers to term them, auto-hedonic, phenomena, of which masturbation is the prototype. Masturbation may be said to occur "when orgasmic sensations are produced in the genital tract by action or mental process of which the individual is aware, and without the contactual stimulus of another living creature." The author regards

masturbation as a normal and possibly even useful transitional stage between the diffused pleasurable stimulation of infancy and the sexual activity proper of adult life; but when it takes place in adult life it is regressive. With this group of phenomena may be associated introversion. Such introversion may be said to occur when thought is more or less satisfactorily substituted for conduct, and imagination for reality, as when a young man, instead of effectively courting his sweetheart, day-dreams about her. This is regression. "The more prominent the introversion the deeper the regression."

The prime feature in all regression is negation of effort, the return towards the child-state. The child needs no effort, because its parents care for it. Regression thus becomes a return to protection and domination, to all those influences which may have father symbols or mother symbols, including not only some forms of sexuality but also of religion, alike in what may be regarded as its normal shape as in its erotic aberrations of Mariolatry, etc. This theme is developed at considerable length. After discussing asceticism in this connection, the author passes on to masochism in the sphere of erotic reactions, following McDougall in grouping together asceticism and masochism under the instinct of self-abasement. The tendency of self-abasement is against progression and in the direction of regression. The author seems to use "progressional" as synonymous with "self-assertive." He is here open to criticism, for there are clearly limits to the "progressional" character of self-assertion, limits which seem to be overlooked when both religion and anti-militarism are regarded as always and necessarily regressive.

It can scarcely be said that this lengthy study—which, as will be seen, is mainly on Freudian lines—much advances the subject dealt with, but it remains interesting and suggestive.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

*The Psychiatric Study of Delinquency.* (*Journ. Nerv. and Ment. Dis.*, May, 1916.) Adler, Herman.

There is a tendency to regard delinquency as a manifestation of abnormality, if not disease. But while the attitude of the community is changing, and we are more and more coming to look on delinquency as comparable to disease and therefore to be treated with sympathy and constructive remedies, the law is still chiefly concerned in searching for "responsibility." We are apt to blame the law and exalt science. The truth of the matter is, says Adler, that medicine in general and psychiatry in particular, have not yet sufficiently advanced the subject to warrant definitions of such precision that law can note them. We still have insufficient knowledge to analyse human nature. It will take psychologists and neurologists a long time to explain the phenomena, just as Ehrlich said it would take a hundred years to explain the phenomena of immunity. With this in mind and using terms simply as symbols, as was done by Ehrlich for his side-chain theory, Adler proposes the following classification of "individuals with mental and social difficulties": (1) The group of defect or inadequacy, in which intelligence is below the lowest normal level (the feeble-minded, Kraepelin's