

## Reviews

**Wayward Youth.** By August Aichhorn. The Imago Publishing Co., London. 9s.

This new edition of a great classic is very welcome. As the basic text on the application of psycho-analysis to the study and treatment of delinquency, it has remained unchallenged for 25 years. The tremendous influence which it has exercised during that time was impressively demonstrated two years ago, when criminologists from all over the world combined to produce *Searchlights on Delinquency*, a volume of essays, in honour of Aichhorn's 70th birthday. The editor of that book, K. R. Eissler, has written a biographical sketch of Aichhorn especially for this edition.

Aichhorn was first and foremost an intuitive worker of genius, and had made a reputation with his Vienna institution for delinquent boys, some years before he discovered psycho-analysis. But in this new science he found at last the rationale he needed for the methods of rehabilitation which he was working out in practice. He was no protagonist of either "discipline" or "freedom" in the abstract, but believed in adapting the form of treatment to the psychological needs of each particular child. Thus the delinquent who had been overprotected at home, and so had never needed to accommodate himself to the problems of life, would be continually brought face to face with them and with the frustrations implicit in them. The child whose delinquency could be attributed to harsh treatment, on the other hand, would be met with love and tolerance in order that he might regain confidence in his ability to meet and tackle life at a mature and law-abiding level.

Modern writers are inclined to question whether any case of delinquency is due to simple "spoiling", as in the first example—D. H. Stott's observations on "spoiling" in his book, *Delinquency and Human Nature*, are of particular interest in this connection. Nevertheless the distinction is an important one, for it indicates that an explanation of delinquency cannot be found unless both the psychopathological factors and the indoctrinatory factors arising from the social environment are considered. Aichhorn does pay lip-service to the importance of social causes as precipitating factors, but like most analysts, proceeds to confine all his investigations to psychopathological aspects.

In spite of the fact that it was published as long ago as 1925, *Wayward Youth* is remarkably up-to-date in outlook, for Aichhorn's intuitive genius enabled him to appreciate the significance of many things long before modern research had caused the rest of us to begin to lay stress upon them. For example, he draws attention to the delinquency which is due to continual changes in a child's early home setting, and so anticipated the important speculations of Bowlby and Bender about what Bowlby has called "the affectionless thief".

Aichhorn also had some penetrating things to say about group treatment in correctional institutions, and worked out ideas about group classification and personal interaction in therapy, which modern group therapy had subsequently to rediscover. It is interesting that in his later years, when others were beginning to realize the potentialities of the group method, he became increasingly sceptical about it himself.

This book is not a systematic treatise. It tends to be a little disconnected, and even inconsistent. This is because it is an account of practical work done, rather than of theory. But its greatest virtues, its brilliant clinical insights, arise from that very fact.

H.J.

**Psychology in the Service of the School.** By M. F. Cleugh. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

*Psychology in the Service of the School* is, as its name implies, primarily addressed to teachers, but it should be said at once that it is not concerned with school work and progress, methods of teaching, intelligence and attainment testing and such aspects of educational psychology. In writing it Dr. Cleugh is rather aiming to guide teachers in their handling of problem cases and she is particularly concerned to clarify their minds as to the type of case which can suitably be referred to the Child Guidance Clinic. "Teachers", she says, "are in a key position with regard to these clinics . . . and it appears to me of the highest importance that they should themselves be well-informed, and know what are the main issues at stake in considering whether a child should or should not be taken for psychological examination and treatment."

This book, which is packed with excellent examples, is written in a practical and very readable manner. Little attempt is made to elucidate the deeper springs of conduct. Dr. Cleugh indeed advocates a "common sense" approach, with careful fact-finding, as the teachers best method before recourse is had to expert psychological assistance, should this prove necessary. To guide the teacher in making his appraisal of difficult children she discusses such topics as the treatment of aggressive and regressive reactions and gives a chapter to the meaning of maladjustment, which she defines as follows:

"A maladjusted child is one who persistently and over a long period of time has proved unable to adapt himself to the demands of his environment. Compared with other children of similar age and social background and making due allowance for mental age, he stands out to an extent which is reached only by one or two children in a hundred, and so is exceptional."