

subjects of the author's own special researches. Thus we have very full accounts of the life-cycles and of seasonal and local variations in planktonic Cladocera and Rotifera, of the wonderful sporocysts of *Leucochloridium*, of the post-embryonic development of Hydracarina, and of the Polyzoa. A particularly attractive chapter is that dealing with the habits of the water spider *Argyroneta*.

Naturally there are omissions and occasional errors in dealing with groups with which the author is not personally so familiar. That favourite of the amateur microscopist, the rotifer *Meliceria ringens* (which we ought now, deplorably enough, to call *Floscularia*) does not build its wonderful tube with *faecal* pellets, although some of its congeners do. The author frequently quotes the work

of British zoologists, but there are lamentable gaps, showing that he is less in touch with their work than with that of their Continental colleagues. If he had been a more assiduous student of NATURE he would not have overlooked Lowndes' remarkable discovery of *Bathynella* in England, nor would he have failed to notice Gurney's fine monograph of the British freshwater Copepoda published by the Ray Society.

Prof. Wesenberg-Lund expresses the hope that the work may be found of use by the teaching profession. It would certainly be of much use both in schools and in universities in Great Britain to any teachers who would take the slight amount of trouble necessary to acquire a reading knowledge of the Danish language. W. T. C.

## Medical and Psychological Aspects of Sociology

### A Social Problem Group?

Edited by Dr. C. P. Blacker. Pp. vii + 228. (London: Oxford University Press, 1937.) 15s. net.

IN addition to a foreword by Mr. D. Caradog Jones, who explains the interrogation mark of the title by the intention to raise questions in the reader's mind, and a masterly introduction by the editor, this volume contains nine essays dealing with various aspects of the subject.

The first article, by Dr. A. A. E. Newth, senior school medical officer of the City of Nottingham, on the mentally retarded child, is based on a study of 1,872 children attending elementary schools in the area, of whom 1,388 were feeble-minded and 484 idiots and imbeciles. In his contribution on mental disorder and the social problem group, Dr. Eliot Slater, assistant medical officer to the Maudsley Hospital, has analysed 155 cases of adults receiving public assistance, and comes to the conclusion that apart from mental disorder the social problem group includes considerable numbers of psychopathic persons.

Dr. Tylor Fox, medical superintendent of the Lingfield Epileptic Colony, in a paper based on the study of 250 epileptic children of both sexes, maintains that no answer can be given to the question whether epileptics should rank in the social problem group.

The relation between inebriety and the social problem group forms the subject of a paper by Dr. C. W. J. Brasher, illustrated by cases under his observation at Woodlands Park, where he was formerly medical superintendent. He comes to the conclusion that psychiatrists are generally agreed

that parental and especially maternal inebriety has a profoundly injurious effect on the physical and mental development of the offspring, and that by some means the hereditary disposition to alcoholism is transmitted. Mrs. Sybil Neville-Rolfe, secretary-general to the British Social Hygiene Council, who writes on the biological aspects of prostitution, maintains that the prostitute is a social problem, and should be studied as such, mentally subnormal, psychopathic and over-sexed women forming a considerable proportion of those in the lower ranks of prostitution.

In his article on recidivism and the social problem group, Dr. W. H. de R. Hubert, psychotherapist to Wormwood Scrubs prison, claims that there is a definite relation between recidivism and the social problem group, although there are many gaps in our knowledge of the subject. Mr. E. J. Lidbetter's essay on the social problem group as a public charge contains a number of pedigrees showing the relation between psychological abnormality and destitution. Miss Janet Galloway, psychiatric social worker at the Maudsley Hospital, who writes on neurasthenia and unemployment, has made an elaborate analysis of 52 cases, including family histories, educational attainments, past occupations, military service, age at marriage, number of children, duration of unemployment and neurasthenia, income, housing conditions, food and treatment. The final contribution, by Mr. Caradog Jones, entitled "A Note on the Definition of the Social Problem Group", contains a survey of the previous articles.

The book may be warmly recommended to those interested in eugenics, anthropology, sociology and criminology.