

and classifications which generally accompany it.

There is one section of the book which is calculated to set people thinking on lines which reach rather further than the rest, indeed raise the deepest questions which may be suggested by the title. This is Prof. Julian Huxley's paper on "Man and Reality". He takes up the now well-known point connected with the name of Sir James Jeans—rather an *obiter dictum* when it was first uttered—that mathematical analysis seems to lead us to the idea of a mind of mathematical quality as the creating force in the universe. Prof. Julian Huxley, speaking as a biologist, replies that to him mind is an integral part of the universe, that something of the nature of mind must inhere in the essence of things. In this case the general conclusion would be that "the pressure of circumstances", what other thinkers have called the action of the "life-force", has driven mind to become more and more important and elaborate, until finally in man it has become self-conscious and the most important single characteristic of the most important embodiment of the life-force. This is Prof. Huxley's thesis, slightly paraphrased. We stress it here in contrast with the creative mathematical idea as the most profound and general topic which arises from the subjects treated in this symposium.

Those concerned with philosophical thought and teaching at the universities may well reflect on the need of coming more closely to grips with questions which go to the root of our view of the universe and man's position and prospect in it. The eager response which greets the occasional utterances of thinkers like Jeans and Eddington when they let themselves go, indicates clearly the public demand for guidance. It cannot be said that so far English philosophers as a whole have realised the need, or striven seriously to qualify themselves to meet it.

F. S. MARVIN.

### Reflexology

*General Principles of Human Reflexology: an Introduction to the Objective Study of Personality.*  
By Prof. Vladimir Michailovitch Bechterev.  
Translated by Emma and William Murphy  
from the Russian of the 4th (1928) edition.  
Pp. 467. (London: Jarrolds Publishers (London), Ltd., 1933.) 21s. net.

BRITISH and American workers in psychology owe a debt of gratitude to the translators and publishers of this book for making accessible

to them the life-work of the late Prof. Bechterev. Although somewhat overshadowed by the greater international reputation of Prof. Pavlov, Bechterev is an important and influential figure. He taught the essentials of behaviourist doctrine before the American school of behaviourists was born, and yet avoided some of the more indefensible exaggerations of J. B. Watson and his followers.

The essence of Bechterev's method is the abandonment of all reference to conscious processes, and the investigation only of reflexes and behaviour. Such non-subjective study has, in fact, added much to our knowledge of human psychology, not only as used by Bechterev and the behaviourists but also in the hands of other psychologists, since none but eccentrics resemble the 'subjectivist' of Bechterev's criticism in interesting themselves only in states of consciousness.

Every method of attack is justifiable in psychology if it leads to fruitful results in increased knowledge of human behaviour and thought. Every method becomes dangerous when its advocates begin to claim that it is the sole scientific method in psychology. Bechterev was convinced not merely that he was founding a new science but also that this was the only science of human personality and behaviour. The value and interest of many of the experiments of Bechterev and his followers must not blind us to the extravagance of this claim. Bechterev's work is indeed not free from the defects of prescientific psychology—such as anecdotalism and speculation. The fourth chapter, on energy, is a bad example of unscientific vagueness. He is content to define energy as "movement", he says that the "thing-in-itself" is merely "potential energy", and speaks of the energy of a nervous current as being "transformed into the molecular energy of the muscles".

The making scientific of our knowledge of human behaviour and thought is not to be accomplished by narrowing the field of study to reflexes and other externally observable data, and leaving the field of conscious data to uncontrolled speculation, but by the application to the widest possible range of psychological data of the proved methods of science—exact observation and experiment, measurement wherever this is possible and the sceptical testing of numerical results by statistical methods. To this desirable end, Bechterev's reflexology seems to have made a lesser contribution than might have been hoped.

R. H. T.