

Ethics in Modern Art

By Marjorie Bowen. (Conway Memorial Lecture delivered at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, on April 19, 1939.) Pp. x+50. (London: Watts and Co., Ltd., 1939.) Paper, 1s. net; cloth, 2s. net.

THIS lecture must have been a stimulating and provocative discourse, for surely many hearers must have itched to refute and debate its many inconsistencies. For example, while apparently condemning 'escape' stories, Miss Bowen praises the effect of music and poetry in taking us away from our petty troubles, trivial fears and everyday worries—surely an appeal for 'escape'.

The reviewer feels that, while admitting the complete freedom of modern art, plastic or otherwise, Miss Bowen would seem to consider that this freedom should be one-sided, and that the percipient of art should support monetarily that which to him is repulsive.

For art to have an ethical value, we must surely have some *rapport* between artist and percipient. If the artist can use his keener vision in such a way as to reinforce that of the percipient, then we admit his power, ethical or the reverse, in influencing his fellows. But the public liking for purely objective stories and pictures seems to show that the artist of the more intense school has lost *rapport* with the normal man, who dismisses the detailed character study and self-representation school as long-winded and faintly repulsive. The many works of this nature are meat for the few, and the rest of the world will ignore them.

Miss Bowen pleads for aesthetics in education: "Children could be taught aesthetics, to understand and to value the work of the artist. . . . Children should see, hear and read the ugly, the trivial, the silly as little as possible". Surely this was the system of the Victorians, used according to their lights, which produced the intolerance of novelty so deplored by Miss Bowen. On the same page we are told that the child is not to study great poets, nor to have fine music offered it, nor have great pictures analysed for it. As aesthetics are to be studied, and the great and the trivial alike are to be avoided, we have here the apotheosis of mediocrity.

There is much in the lecture with which all must agree, and the rest of it, being controversial, arouses the more interest.

PSYCHOLOGY**Incentives and Contentment**

A Study made in a British Factory. By Patricia Hall and H. W. Locke. Pp. xii+190. (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1938.) 2s. 6d. net.

THIS book describes the results of some research work carried out in a pioneer factory, which has attempted to put into practice a system of democratic government. The object was to discover those factors involved in the production of good work allied with contentment.

An analysis was made of the factors around which satisfaction and discontent centre; for example,

remuneration, promotion, suitability for the job, the value of creative work, conditions inside and outside the working situation. The many motives that might play a part in actuating human endeavour were also considered. Lastly, the important subject of leadership, both managerial and in the workroom, was discussed, and this led on to the subject of the 'difficult' employee.

There is an interesting reference to the psychological department, which endeavours by vocational studies to reduce the number of maladjusted workers, by taking into account such factors as temperament, ability, interests.

This research has shown quite clearly that if incentives are to be effective, and contentment real, they must be contingent upon the satisfaction of those abiding instincts and desires that are present in every man and woman. It also emphasizes the importance of selecting for managerial posts people who have the power of leadership and can enter sympathetically into the point of view of their subordinates.

The book is one to be recommended to all students of industrial problems.

Fifty Years of Psychical Research

A Critical Survey. By Harry Price. Pp. xii+383+15 plates. (London, New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1939.) 10s. 6d. net.

ALTHOUGH this work purports to be a critical survey of the work undertaken by psychical research workers during the last fifty years, and even to be a continuation of the late Mr. Frank Podmore's history of modern spiritualism, it is, if the truth be told, nothing of the kind. It consists of a miscellaneous collection of material, written in a popular style and forming more than anything else a kind of abstract or digest of some of the more sensational cases of recent times. There is no attempt to present the subject-matter in historical sequence with due regard and appreciation of the factors underlying the changes in technique and experimentation during the course of time, and moreover a good deal of space is given to accounts of cases of no conceivable scientific or even historical importance, whilst others of considerable psychological value are omitted altogether.

Regarded as a well-documented and popular guide to the less serious side of psychical research during the last fifty years, this work will doubtless fulfil a useful purpose; but it cannot be claimed that it is in any sense a well-balanced, historical or critical account of a period in psychical research when much has been done and foundations laid for a better and more scientific approach to the problems in dispute. In order to meet this claim, what is required is a long and detailed account of the work accomplished, together with a running commentary dealing with the developmental history of experimental methods and a careful evaluation of the results obtained, with suggestions for improving both technique and constructive criticism. E. J. D.