

would call for a superman, and such a stature Dr. Lowy would be the last to claim. But he has certainly produced a valuable, readable and acute discussion, covering a very wide range of topics, of the psychological factors which lie at the root of the troubles which disorganize, disintegrate and devitalize the social body. Though I have several reservations regarding the author's proposed remedies in detail, yet I emphatically agree with him that many of these troubles are remediable and, in principle, easily remediable. We are to-day needlessly squandering a vast amount of human spiritual energy, and the social psychologist can point the way to greatly enhanced human happiness, both for the individual and for the social group.

No one with knowledge of the facts will be likely to challenge the statement that the volume of psychological disability to-day is vastly in excess of the facilities which exist for dealing with it. Even in the mental hospitals, only a small proportion of patients suitable for psychological treatment can in fact receive such treatment. Non-institutionalized sufferers form a far larger proportion of the general population than is commonly suspected—indeed the proportion is so high that adequate therapeutic provision for them is beyond the realm of practical possibility. Prevention is always better than cure, but where the evil is widespread and increasing and cure is impossible, prevention becomes simply imperative. Dr. Lowy makes a very comprehensive survey of the field in which such preventive psychiatry should operate, and one can easily agree with him that this work is unlikely to be undertaken to an adequate extent without considerable encouragement and initiative on the part of the State. Perhaps the most immediate need is that for greatly increased popular enlightenment on the subject. This need not involve the danger, no doubt anticipated by some, that an increased interest in psychological aberrations will itself breed such aberrations, for there is a large accumulation of sober, simple, un-sensational and scientifically authenticated facts which clamour for immediate application to the important business of living together efficiently and happily. There are encouraging signs of a growing demand for such popular psychological enlightenment, and it is important that this demand should be met by a form of instruction well conceived both as to method and to content.

A further edition of this book, which we may confidently expect, will provide an opportunity for the weeding out of several teutonisms which have escaped the reviser's eye. J. LEYCESTER KING.

## EXPERIENCES OF A WOMAN FARMER

### Four Years Harvest

By Frances Donaldson. Pp. 115+16 plates. (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1945.) 7s. 6d. net.

SOME four years ago Mrs. Donaldson, tiring of town life, started farming. She had neither previous experience nor close association with the land; all the preparation she allowed herself was a six months course at the Moulton Agricultural Institute, Northampton. She did not even give herself the twelve months apprenticeship on somebody

else's farm, usually recommended as the least costly way of gaining experience; she straightway purchased and stocked a Midland clay farm of 375 acres. At the end of the first year she wrote a book, "Approach to Farming", describing her experiences as a beginner; she also gave some talks for the B.B.C. and had some very direct things to say about the process and the announcers which a man would either not have noticed or not have mentioned. That part of her work was clearly successful, and her farming was satisfying enough to induce her to continue; now at the end of the fourth season she gives us another book in which she sets out quite frankly both her successes and her failures.

The human aspects of farming loom far more largely in the book than the technical problems, and Mrs. Donaldson not only knows her mind but also has a vivid way of expressing it. She was not at all impressed by the 'technicians': "I think there is no one so smug, so unreasonably conceited, so bigoted and so invulnerable . . . in order to strengthen his self-importance he is driven to obscure, to render exclusive and immeasurably difficult that which he knows". Nor are officials more pleasing in her sight, with one single exception who, "curiously enough, was a man of distinction, personality and brains". The filling up of forms, which under the present system of controls in Britain has become almost a new industry, invokes some scathing comment: "there is something peculiarly nasty about form filling. If you wish to apply for a few yards of piping to lay some water on to a field you have to fill in the same form as you would use if you wished to build a £100,000 factory". Yet at the end of the book Mrs. Donaldson advocates nationalization and more form filling, more control, which of course would mean more officials. If all this came about we should await with interest another book from Mrs. Donaldson setting out her further experiences with the very considerable clarity she commands.

The reader will have judged that the author is a lady of marked personality and will readily understand that, having selected a farm staff that she liked, found some good farming friends to advise her, and arrived at a system of farming that she liked, she is making a success of it. This is all to the good, for there is no doubt that an infusion of women into the agricultural community would strengthen it. For many years now there have been successful women farmers; but it is only in recent times that the general public has known much about them. But it should not be inferred from Mrs. Donaldson's book that farming can be successfully tackled by any woman after only six months training. She has been fortunate in her time of starting: it has been a period of rising prices and of considerable willingness on the part of members of the agricultural community to help each other, while the War Agricultural Committees have been in a position to undertake work requiring big implements such as combines and dryers, the advantage of which Mrs. Donaldson gracefully acknowledges. There was a similar favourable period in the War of 1914-18 and for a time afterwards. But then came the slump. Whether that will happen again no one can tell. Meanwhile any woman who thinks of taking up farming would do well to read Mrs. Donaldson's experiences, for she will learn from them about the wide range of difficulties, technical and human, with which she will be confronted, and of the ways in which they were overcome. E. JOHN RUSSELL.