

of the plant in the juvenile stage; on the right, an adult plant is depicted. This is an ingenious method, for it will assist farmers and gardeners to catch their weeds in time. Below the two photographs are very simple descriptions using no technical terms. Here are described the plant itself, other popular names, general habit, shape of 'seed' and 'true' leaves, habitat, height, general appearance of flowers, habit of stems, and other points of recognition. Approximately eighty weeds are beautifully illustrated and well described.

The fact that the reviewer was able to go through the entire book in a matter of a few minutes, and, looking first at the right-hand pages, immediately recognized every adult plant, and, looking at the left-hand pages, recognized most of the juvenile plants, convinces him that the book will serve a very useful and important purpose for farmers and gardeners. Students of elementary botany will also find the book of considerable assistance in the identification of common plants.

L. J. F. BRIMBLE

THE PLACE OF DANCING IN RELIGION

Religious Dances in the Christian Church and in Popular Medicine

By Prof. E. Louis Backman. Translated by E. Classen. Pp. xii+364. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1952.) 35s. net.

AT all periods mankind has danced to get rid of surplus nervous emotion—to obtain release. During the First World War a United States hospital unit took over a British general hospital soon after the Germans had launched mustard-gas attacks. The sights and sounds were particularly distressing, and the nurses, new to war conditions, in many cases became hysterical, though doing their duties magnificently. When the matron organized dances, the nervous tension was released and the troubles ceased. It is only to be expected that, as dancing has this tension-relieving effect on a large number of people, it should appear in various forms in religious rites.

Even in prehistoric times it would seem that dancing had a place in the various cults. Both in ancient Egypt and in Greece dancers are shown in the pictures of religious festivals; again, we read in the Old Testament how David danced before the Lord. Many other examples could be given. Naturally, then, when Europe became Christian, dancing was absorbed into the new cultus, though the Church naturally looked on it with disfavour, and from time to time attempts to exclude it were made. Nevertheless, it was not only the populace who frequently expressed their religious emotions by dancing; the clergy and choir, too, sometimes danced during the services. The Easter dances before the high altar in the cathedral at Seville are well known and still take place, and many less famous though equally ancient ones still happen in churches or churchyards at certain times of the year in many parts of the world, including England. It is true that nowadays these old rites are tending to disappear, but that is owing to the dull uniformity which is being imposed on mankind by modern conditions.

Prof. E. L. Backman, of the Royal University of Uppsala, has brought together a wealth of informa-

tion on this subject, and the resulting volume is of great interest. The Church authorities in England were on the whole very averse to dancing becoming part of the cultus, and England has perhaps fewer examples to show than is the case on the Continent. Nevertheless, during Queen Elizabeth's reign men and women danced to the music of pipes and drums both inside churches and in the churchyards. I rather feel, too, that Prof. Backman might have mentioned the queer ritual dance which takes place yearly at Abbots Bromley in Staffordshire, where the participants carry reindeer antlers in front of their faces. It is true the dance is in all probability older than Christianity; but it has been so much Christianized that the antlers are kept in the church in the charge of the parson. Altogether, the book makes very good reading, and the translation would seem to be excellent.

M. C. BURKITT

THE NEUROTIC IN SOCIETY

Social Psychiatry

A Study of Therapeutic Communities. By Dr. Maxwell Jones, and A. Baker, Dr. Thomas Freeman, Julius Merry, B. A. Pomryn, Dr. Joseph Sandler, Joy Tuxford. Pp. xix+186. (London: Tavistock Publications, Ltd., in collaboration with Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1952.) 18s. net.

NEUROTIC maladjustment is so prevalent and individual psychotherapy so prolonged that the psychiatrist has always sought more rapid methods of cure. During the Second World War, for example, physical treatments were pushed forward and patients subjected to insulin, prolonged narcosis and electrical convulsions. The 'cures' by these means have proved disappointing. Now the accent is on social psychiatry. This is the production of a special environment where the patient can adjust and find ways by which he can later take his place in society.

Dr. Maxwell Jones and his associates have written this book describing experiences in such communities: at Mill Hill, where an effort syndrome unit was established, at Dartford ex-prisoner of war hospital, and at Belmont Hospital for chronic neurotic unemployed. In these it was found impossible, owing to the numbers, to give individual psychotherapy, and lectures were discovered to be less useful than discussion groups where the patients were able to release their emotion. "Psycho-dramas" which are little plays, describing his own life, written by a patient were also found beneficial. Inmates do a four-hour day in industrial work, and are placed in industry by a resettlement officer when they are discharged. The results are claimed to be good; and six months after leaving hospital two-thirds of the patients have made a fair adjustment, or better, and one-third a poor or very poor adjustment. This is an interesting experiment, but one should reserve judgment until follow-up results for a longer period are published.

It is a pity when they have such interesting material that the authors have used such a repetitious and even slovenly style: for example, on p. 178 the old mistake of thinking that 'protagonist' means the opposite of 'antagonist' is made. The book records valuable facts on community life, and one looks forward to the publication of the final results later on.

CLIFFORD ALLEN