

Essays in Social Psychology.

- (1) *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. By W. Trotter. Second edition. Pp. 264. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1919.) Price 8s. 6d. net.
- (2) *The Century of Hope: A Sketch of Western Progress from 1815 to the Great War*. By F. S. Marvin. Second edition. Pp. vii + 358. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1919.) Price 6s. net.

(1) **D**R. TROTTER has not changed anything to speak of in the body of his remarkable book, which was published in 1916, but he has added a postscript of much interest. It deals first with the discouraging fact that "in a belligerent country all opinion in any way connected with the war is subject to prejudice, either pro-national or anti-national, and is very likely in consequence to be of impaired validity." The manifestations of the herd-instinct in the German people were in accordance with the type to be seen in the predaceous social animals; the manifestations of the same instinct in the British people were of the socialised type of gregarious animal—"possessing the power of evolving under pressure a common purpose of great stability." Societies in the past have failed in stability and full functional effectiveness; these defects have been due to "the drift of power into the hands of the stable-minded class, and to the derivation of moral power and enterprise from the mechanisms of leadership and class segregation." To avoid this there must be a continually progressive absorption of the individual members of the society into the general body—a movement towards a complete moral homogeneity and integration. "The only way in which society can be made safe from disruption or decay is by the intervention of the conscious and instructed intellect as a factor among the forces ruling its development." But the unanswerable question is whether the purposive foresight of the intellect will be able, more effectively than in the past, to free itself from instinctive inhibitions.

(2) Mr. Marvin has added to his stimulating book a time-chart of developments in "thought" and "action"—or culture and politics—in the last century, and he has made a number of improvements in the body of the text. On the general thesis he stands to his guns. The hopefulness of the last century has not been exhausted; on the contrary, the sources of hope are unimpaired. In mechanical science and invention, biology and hygiene, psychology and education, sociology and statecraft, literature and religion, and in other

lines of development, there have been advances in the past century which seem on the whole to have made for the fuller realisation of the higher values which the racial consciousness at its best has always cherished. What Mr. Marvin's book shows, it seems to us convincingly, is that the momentum continues in a progressive direction. There is no doubt much to discourage, but all the departments of higher human activity are full of live seeds of good pedigree, and in their promise there is progress.

Our Bookshelf.

The Assessment of Physical Fitness: By Correlation of Vital Capacity and Certain Measurements of the Body. (With Tables.) By Prof. Georges Dreyer, in collaboration with George Fulford Hanson. Pp. xi + 115. (London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1920.) Price 10s. net.

ALTHOUGH various observers had made attempts to measure the respiratory capacity of the human body, the real pioneer work in spirometry was done about eighty years ago by John Hutchinson. Hutchinson worked out the vital capacity in relation to height, body weight, chest circumference, and age, attaching most importance to the first. He also made many observations as to the effect of disease upon the vital capacity, especially as regards phthisis. After the publication of his method of spirometry, considerable discussion arose both in this country and on the Continent as to its value in clinical medicine. By some clinicians it was held that the normal variations of health were so great as to preclude its extended use. The value of Hutchinson's figures in regard to height were early called in question, either as being too large or not of so great a value as figures calculated from the trunk length or sitting height. In the main, the results obtained by various observers were in favour of Hutchinson. In the little monograph by Prof. Dreyer and his colleague extensive tables are published showing the relationship of the vital capacity to sitting height, weight, and chest circumference. As Dr. F. S. Hobson has shown (*NATURE*, August 26), these tables will be of particular value to all those who are in any way interested in correlating the vital capacity with physical fitness. It is of interest that Prof. Dreyer and his co-workers have drawn conclusions contrary to those of Hutchinson in regard to the value of the sitting height, and also that age is looked upon as a factor of little or no importance up to about fifty years.

Handbook of Patent Law of All Countries. By W. P. Thompson. Eighteenth edition, completely revised. Pp. vii + 157. (London: Stevens and Sons, Ltd., 1920.) Price 6s.

THE assistance that such a book as this must give to inventors and patent agents fully justifies the issue of a new edition brought up to date with