must be furthered in order to make any scientific progress in criminological problems. Most illuminating are the remarks made upon medical expert testimony, and the attitude taken up by the law in relation to it. Under the heading of "A chapter of blunders" cases are cited as evidence of "how completely the law fails to meet present-day social needs and scientific demands in dealing with the criminal classes." Constructive formulations are suggested which, if acted upon, would bring the legal and scientific aspects of the problem much more in unison. To all modern psychopathologists the present legal views and practice in relation to responsibility and insanity are anachronistic, and this excellent and readable contribution should be productive of educative advance, and is highly welcome from such an authority as Dr. William White.

C. S. R.


The author, in his preface, mentions two authorities to whom he is chiefly indebted, Sully and Freud, but it is clearly the work of the latter which has mainly influenced the development of the theory forming the central theme of the book. This theory, which is reached by a careful analysis of simple examples of laughter, commencing with its manifestations in the infant, may be described as follows. Laughter is a response which arises within the behaviour of the instinct of 'love' when an obstruction of some kind is first encountered and then suddenly overcome; it marks the escape of psycho-physical energy mobilised to meet the obstruction, but not actually required for that purpose, and therefore for the moment surplus. 'Love' here corresponds fairly closely to Freud's 'sex.' In a succession of chapters this formula is applied to various types of laughter, wit and the comic. Many of the applications are plausible and sometimes convincing; a few are strained and likely to arouse considerable scepticism.

A useful appendix contains a historical summary of the numerous theories of laughter which have been proposed by various authors, and there is an extensive bibliography.

B. H.


This book contains the substance of a course of lectures delivered at Cambridge and elsewhere, and it had been Dr. Rivers' intention to revise the manuscript and to alter its form. Owing to his untimely death, however, the task was never completed, and the arrangement and publication of the lectures has been undertaken by Prof. Elliot Smith, who has also contributed a preface and an appendix.

Rivers' views are essentially based on those of Freud, but the theory