

THE ENGLISH CONVICT. A statistical study by the late Dr. Charles Goring. London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1919. Price 3s. net.

Some 3,000 criminals in Parkhurst prison were subjected to the most careful observation and anthropometrical tests, and the results subjected to scientific analysis. The conclusions arrived at would seem to be as authoritative as it is possible to attain to, and the report lately published furnishes a document of the greatest interest and importance. Stated broadly, the conclusions arrived at are that the criminal type, marked by physical and mental stigma as described by Lombroso, does not exist; that, as individuals, criminals possess no characteristics, physical and mental, which are not shared by all people. "Criminality is not a morbid state akin to physical disease which can be diagnosed and established by pure observation." On the other hand, the "criminal" man is to a large extent a "defective" man physically and mentally, and this "defectiveness," like many other human qualities, is determined more by nature than by nurture. The general result of the investigation points to the existence of what is termed a "criminal diathesis," that is to say, a composite of mental and physical defectiveness. This composite or "diathesis," like other constitutional characters, is subject to heredity. The tendency to be convicted and imprisoned for crime is inherited at much the same rate as are other physical and mental qualities and pathological conditions. The influence of parental contagion is on the whole inconsiderable in relation to the influence of heredity and of mental defectiveness, these two being the most important factors in the production of crime. All English criminals, except those technically convicted of fraud, are markedly below the general population in stature and bodily weight. Offenders convicted of violence to the person are characterized by an average degree of strength and of constitutional soundness above the average of other criminals and of the law-abiding class. Thieves, burglars and incendiaries, who constitute 90 per cent. of all criminals, are inferior in stature and weight, and are puny in their general bodily habit in comparison with other criminals, and with the law-abiding population. These are the sole facts on which the theories of criminal anthropologists rest.

First convictions show a predilection for the age period of 15 to 25, which Dr. Goring concludes to be significant. Comparing this fact with the age incidence of liability to various diseases, he is inclined to interpret the facts as evidence that a "mental constitutional proclivity is the primal source of the habitual criminal's