

The Psychology of Special Abilities and Disabilities. By AUGUSTA F. BRONNER, PH.D. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1917. Pp. vi, 269.)

The human mind is very prone to require downright yes or no answers to its interrogations. Is Johnny normal or is he feeble-minded; will he learn like other boys or will he be inserted in an institution? A helpful corrective to this routine-breeding simplicity in educational matters is found in Dr. Bronner's analysis of nearly fifty cases of backward and delinquent children of exceptional makeup whose difficulties and psychic characteristics have had thorough clinical study. The author is assistant director of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute of Chicago, over which Dr. William Healy, author of "The Individual Delinquent," presided.

Among normal but backward children are many who, it appears, are unfortunate enough to be handicapped by specialized defects in one or more of the mental processes; these defects, by preventing the mastery of particular subjects, throw their whole school life into confusion, subject them to continued retardation, confirm them in the conviction of failure, tempt them to truancies and delinquencies, and in the end rob society of well-disposed and serviceable citizens. On the other hand, among the higher grades of the feeble-minded there are individuals with really good abilities in one or perhaps two directions; but these abilities remain quite unperceived in the general imbecility of their natures. By failing to exploit some saving endowment in such youth we deprive society of competent members, in the economic sense at least.

The clear inference from the expert testimony adduced in these cases is the necessity of a thorough "educational diagnosis" of all children who find unusual difficulty in doing school work. This brief but scientific account of special abilities and disabilities should be read especially by the practicing teacher and the school officer through whose hands this little army of the Not Wholly Fit is hourly passing.

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MINOR NOTICES

Messrs. Duffield and Company have recently published a volume on *The Emancipation of the American City*, by Walter Tallmadge Arndt. The book deals in somewhat general fashion with the municipal reconstructions of the last twenty years, giving special attention to such matters as the home rule movement, ballot reform, the spread of direct legislation, the administration of the civil service system and various topics in municipal finance. The discussions are critical rather than expository and for the most part assume, on the part of the reader, some knowledge of the subjects treated. Neither in matter nor in method of presentation is there much that is new. In not a few paragraphs, moreover, the language, whether of criticism or of praise, is stronger than a dispassionate analysis of the facts would support. Nevertheless the book will make an effective appeal to those who like to drink their potions of reform propaganda with some ginger mixed in it.

For the general reader and the elementary student Prof. J. S. Young's *The State and Government* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, pp. 180) affords a brief excursion through the broad realm of political philosophy and governmental organization. On the whole Dr. Young has performed his task as capably as an enterprise of this nature could be performed, but the demands of brevity have been so rigorous that in many passages the virtue of clearness has had to be jettisoned. The theory of the social contract, with due mention of Hooker, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, for example, is reared and demolished in two pages, while the utilitarian theory of the state gets only a paragraph, and the juristic theory not even a line. Nor will the general reader derive a much more secure footing in the principles of political science from the author's discussions of government as a practical art. German colonies he tells us are "mostly in Africa." Portuguese colonies, likewise, are "mostly in Africa." Italy and Belgium have "parts of Africa." That is all we are told about the colonial systems of these four countries and it is surely not overmuch. The "general reader" could stand a more nutritious diet.

The War of Positions, by Lieutenant Colonel Paul Azan, with a preface by Brigadier General Joseph E. Kuhn of the United States Army (Cambridge: Harvard University Press pp. 186) is far more than a