

Book Reviews & Abstracts.

JUDGMENT AND REASONING IN THE CHILD. By Jean Piaget, Director of the Institut Rousseau and Professor at the University of Geneva. Translated by Marjorie Warden. London. Kegan Paul. 1928. 10/6d.

This book is the second of the trilogy which Professor Piaget has devoted to a study of the thought of the child as it finds expression in language. Every one who has talked much with children, allowing them to express themselves freely, must have had occasion to feel that his reasoning was not marching with that of his young companion, that what should be the clash of thought is a little like a contest between a whale and an elephant—sound and nothing more. Arguments which convince the adult leave the child quite unaffected, whereas reasons that satisfy the child seem to the adult irrelevant or absurd. Even up to the age of eleven or twelve normal children may consistently from given premises draw conclusions which to all normal adults are clearly false. For example, a child may in the same interview state that little boats float because they are light, and big boats float because they are heavy, both statements appearing entirely satisfactory to him and in no way contradictory.

Now to Professor Piaget such mistakes are not mere mistakes; they are not just the result of inattention or ignorance; they are the product of a way of thinking which has its own characteristics and its own laws. The fundamental characteristic is ego-centrism, or inability to enter into or realise any one's point of view except one's own. A simple example of this is found in the fact that a child may know that he himself has a brother, yet may steadily deny that his brother has a brother. Hence the child's judgments are all absolute; relational judgments involving the simultaneous awareness of at least two points of view present to him insuperable difficulties.

The causal relationship as we understand it makes its way very slowly into the child's thought world. Yet if asked he is always ready to supply a cause. Thus if we enquire of a six-year-old why the sun does not fall down, he may reply, "Because it is hot," or

"Because it is yellow." Such, to us, arbitrary and fantastic causes are to him satisfying. Description possesses explanatory value. Any feature which has been perceived along with another may be brought forward as an explanation of that other. For example, an effect may be cited as explaining a cause; *e.g.*, "The man fell off his bicycle, because he broke his arm."

These two facts belong together, but exactly how they belong together is not clear to the child. He sets them alongside one another, but he does not understand the nature of the inner relationship. He juxtaposes, instead of articulating and really synthesising. This tendency to juxtaposition shows itself clearly in his drawings; thus, in drawing a bicycle he will show pedals, chain, cog-wheel, gear, as well as the frame and the two wheels, but these details are placed alongside one another without the relationship being indicated. They go together, but the question of *how* they go together has not yet arisen for the child. The fact is self-sufficient.

Complementary to juxtaposition is syncretism which abolishes analysis in any real sense of the term by creating vague wholes in which everything is related to everything else. These may be regarded as phases of thought alternating over indefinite periods, and they show themselves in analogous forms and ways on different levels of thought. Thus, "In visual perception, juxtaposition is the absence of relations between details; syncretism is a vision of the whole which creates a vague but all-inclusive scheme, supplanting the details. In verbal intelligence juxtaposition is the absence of relations between the various terms of a sentence; syncretism is the all-round understanding which makes the sentence into a whole. In logic, juxtaposition leads to an absence of implication and reciprocal justification between the successive judgments; syncretism creates a tendency to bind everything together and to justify by means of the most ingenious or the most facetious devices."

As this quotation makes plain, Professor Piaget rightly draws a clear distinction between the different levels on which the child's thought moves, the progression of thought on these different levels not being necessarily harmonious. Thus on the plane of action a child

may often show that he knows what in the sphere of verbal intelligence is quite obscure to him.

It is impossible here to deal with the nature of the evidence on which Professor Piaget bases his theories. Suffice it to say that his work is a challenge to English investigators to repeat his experiments in order to see whether the results obtained in the English language confirm the hypotheses grounded on the French results. Meanwhile we congratulate Professor Piaget on the wealth of suggestion which his patient analysis of the child's mentality has produced.

A more adequate index would increase the value of the book.

MARGARET DRUMMOND.

THE CHILD AND SOCIETY: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF THE CHILD.
By Phyllis Blanchard, Ph.D. Longmans Green & Co. 1928. 10/6d.

As "an introduction to the social psychology of the child" this book has much to recommend it. Printed in clear type, it gives in readable form a comprehensive survey of the influence which his environment has on a child's development from birth to adolescence, determining the part he is to play in society when he grows up.

In the first part of the book, besides sections dealing with the significance of home and school in a child's life, there are chapters on such subjects as his religion, his reading and the effect on his conduct of the "motion picture." The well-known theories about Play are given in another chapter, while the question of intellectual equipment has careful consideration. Part II is concerned with "Failures in Socialisation," and here we have an analysis of the causes of misbehaviour and delinquency, with suggestions as to methods of correction. This section contains an interesting account of the movement for establishing Child Guidance Clinics and some of the work done in such clinics.

All this is accomplished in brief space and yet the book is by no means a mere summary of facts or theories. Starting off with the conviction that "social adaptation depends, to a

large extent, upon the proper conditioning of the emotional responses," Dr. Blanchard sets out to show from her knowledge and experience how this must inevitably be so. Other factors may be, and are, of great significance in the development of character, but since his use or misuse of the advantages life offers him depends upon a man's emotional attitude, the latter is of supreme importance. For example, a man of a high level of intelligence may fail to become effective in society because of emotional instability. Granted the formation of desirable "behaviour patterns" in early childhood, satisfactory conduct is guaranteed, according to Dr. Blanchard. The sources of unsatisfactory conduct can be traced to undesirable behaviour patterns and the obvious method of correction is to substitute new and good habits of emotional response. The book is, in effect, a plea that we should be "willing to face the facts as to the child's native abilities or disabilities, and bend our energies to the careful nurture of all his capacities, emotional as well as intellectual, so that adult years will find him prepared to fit into society at some point adapted to his level of intelligence without any impairment of his efficiency through ill-adapted habits of emotional response."

This definite standpoint and purpose round which the argument centres, gives "The Child and Society" a unity and interest which it would otherwise lack. It does, indeed, prevent us from being oppressed by the feeling, which is apt to arise as we read the book, that we have heard all this before, many times. Our interest is sustained by the development of the central theme, as well as by occasional refreshing passages like, for example, that in which the child's claim to be allowed to escape for a little from reality by watching "the movies," is advocated.

The arrangement of the book is good, giving as it does, a full bibliography of books and articles written on different aspects of child life and its problems, as well as an Author and a Subject Index. There is also a Glossary which does not seem to serve any useful purpose. It is an insult to even a beginner in the study of Social Psychology to be told in a glossary that taboo means "prohibited: forbidden," while the explanation of correlation as "a mathematical expression of relationship" is hardly enlightening. The Topics for Dis-

cussion, too, are disappointing. Most of these are expressed in the form of questions and the wording is unfortunate, savouring as it does of the examination paper. "Can you give examples of . . . ?" "What are the chief theories of play?" etc.

These are, however, minor defects in a book which is valuable because it not only describes the lines along which scientific study of the child in his environment has proceeded, but also indicates new avenues of approach to the subject. If the Behaviourist Psychology on which the central argument of the book is based is itself open to question, that is a further incentive to thought and inquiry, and the hope expressed in the Preface that "this introduction to the social psychology of childhood may prove stimulating to further thinking along these lines" is abundantly fulfilled.

EVERYDAY PROBLEMS OF THE EVERYDAY CHILD. Douglas A. Thom, M.D. D. Appleton & Co. 1928. 350 pp. Price 2 dollars 50 cents.

This is a book that should live through many editions and still be in demand, for few upon whom depend the training of children can afford to be without its valuable advice.

Dr. Thom's work is concerned with the normal child. Every child, in the course of his journey from infancy to manhood, encounters difficulties that may tend to upset his balance, for a longer or shorter period of time, according as they are more or less compelling in their influence. The normal child thus becomes, temporarily, abnormal, as do we all in moments of emotional stress. The child in a raging temper, for example, is, for the time being, in an abnormal condition, and this condition will tend to become more and more his usual state of mind as outbursts of temper become more

and more frequent. Eventually, therefore, the child whose temper remains uncontrolled will attain hardly to adult life; and he will acquire many undesirable tendencies, and if in the end he becomes actually unbalanced, small the wonder! The average adult, in the face of such a situation, is dismayed and is totally unable to deal with the refractory child. It is for the help and guidance of many who feel at such a loss that Dr. Thom's book is written.

It is simply written and abstruse technicalities are entirely avoided. Every phase of child life is provided for; almost every possible difficulty is dealt with, and this in no uncertain manner, but with the authority born of personal knowledge and experience. Dr. Thom illustrates his book with examples from the lives of children with whom he has had to deal in his Clinic at Boston, and one feels that he *knows* and does not merely theorise.

Whole chapters are devoted to such problems as undesirable habits, obedience and discipline, anger, jealousy, sense of inferiority, sex troubles and many other difficulties met with in childhood. The author deals with the child's mind, the root causes of the difficulties, the attitude that should be adopted by the parent or teacher, and the course of action that should be pursued to remedy the evil. He tackles each problem in a straightforward and efficient manner, leaving a conviction in the mind of the reader of the wisdom and experience of the man who writes. His solutions are logical and rational and free throughout from the sentimentality which is to-day so often showered upon young children, with deplorable results. Much would be gained if all parents would read Dr. Thom's book and act systematically in accordance with the sound advice given in it.

An index and an excellent bibliography are included in the book.

S. J. HARDCASTLE.