

The Animal Mind. By Margaret Floy Washburn, Ph. D. Professor of Psychology in Vassar College. New York: The Macmillan Co. \$1.60.

A book seldom appears at such an opportune time as has Professor Washburn's book just published, for there is much discussion in current periodicals of the subject of the reasoning powers of animals. Most of the articles on the subject show a great ignorance not only of the subject but of the proper method of attacking the problem. To mention only one point: the average writer makes no distinction between *mind* and *reason*, and thinks that if an animal possesses mind it must also have the power of reason. The author begins with a chapter on the difficulties and methods of animal psychology. The fundamental difficulty comes from the fact that the mind of each being "forms a region inaccessible to all save its possessor." We can never know any mind but our own. This is a difficulty in human psychology, and, of course, a still greater difficulty in animal psychology, for the animal has no language in which to give us an account of its experience. All our knowledge of the animal mind must be inference from its behavior. And it is in making this inference that even the trained psychologist makes his greatest mistakes. The first method employed in the study of the animal mind was the "anecdotal" method. It was entirely unreliable, for it gave us only sentimental accounts of the doings of favorite pets, or reports of the actions of wild animals—stories in which fact, fable and inference are found hopelessly confused. A better method is that of experiment, in which an animal's actions are subjected to definite conditions and control, and the type of consciousness possessed by the animal is inferred from its behavior. This method becomes the ideal one when applied to the study of an animal which has been known and observed from its birth. In the second chapter the author discusses the two criteria of mind—the behavior of the animal and its nervous structure and the evidence relating to the mind of the simplest animals, the amebæ. Then follows a description of the mental life of animals up to the vertebrates. The book closes with a bibliography of 476 titles.