

## BOOKS FOR PARENTS

By Eva v. B. Hansl

**T**HERE are monthly lists of fiction and spring crops of poetry, but books on education and the kindred subjects of child training may still be listed by the year, in a more leisurely fashion, thank Heaven. The rapidity of their publication is increasing, however, and the time may not be far distant when these, too, will have to be reviewed week by week if the public is not to be inundated and remain uninformed! What is the cause of this cumulative increase in books of this sort? Is it because, as Angelo Patri has said, this is the first generation of parents who are asking questions (the earlier ones *knew* how to bring up their children and did it, mostly by hand and not by head!), or because the doctors, the psychologists, and other research workers are finding out so many new things about children that must now be told?

It would be as impossible to pick out the "best" of the new books in this category or to compare their relative merits as to add plums and pears in an arithmetic example. They are all concerned with the care and cultivation of children, but the special concern of one is their food; another, their morals; a third, the early unfolding of intelli-

gence; another, schooling; and so on. The one book which tries to cover most of the many varying phases of child training is "The Child: His Nature and His Needs", published by the Children's Foundation of Valparaiso, Indiana, and edited by M. V. O'Shea, professor of education at the University of Wisconsin.

It is a weighty volume, both as to avoirdupois and contents. Its aim is to give those who deal with children (mothers, teachers, social workers, and so on) a survey of present day knowledge concerning the child which doctors, biologists, psychologists, chemists, and others have been accumulating in this century of the child. The study has been compiled as the first contribution of this new Foundation because its trustees have reason to believe that "those who have been charged with the care and culture of the young have not been in close touch with those who have been busy in the study of childhood and youth. The investigator and the practitioner have not been walking side by side; in fact, they have had little or no communication with one another."

There are three parts to this book — the first deals with our present knowledge of child nature; the second with our knowledge of what constitutes the child's well being; and the third with the changing methods of education. Five of the six chapters which make up this last section, Dr. O'Shea has himself written; the sixth is by the Hon. John J. Tigert, commissioner of education. The other two parts are made up of contributions by various authorities in their respective fields. To list these contributors is to show why the book may safely be regarded as authoritative and as essentially correct, to date. There is, for instance, Dr. Bird T. Baldwin, director of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, writing the opening chapters on "Bridging the Gap

between Our Knowledge of Child Nature and the Training of Children" and Dr. Mary T. Whitley, head of the department of child psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University, contributing the next two chapters on the instincts and needs of childhood. They are followed by Dr. Walter F. Dearborn, head of the Psycho-Educational Clinic of the Graduate School of Education at Harvard; Dr. Henry Neumann, one of the leaders of the Ethical Culture Society, who writes about the moral equipment and development of the child; Dean Frederick Bolton of the College of Education at Washington University; Dr. E. A. Kirkpatrick, whose "Fundamentals of Child Study" is known to all child study groups of the last decade in the country; H. H. Goddard, known among other things for his study of the Kallikak family made when he was at the Vineland School for the Feeble Minded; Dr. William R. P. Emerson, "the Father of the Nutrition Classes"; Dr. William A. White, whose excellent book on "The Mental Hygiene of Childhood" is doubtless known to many readers of THE BOOKMAN; Dr. C.-E. A. Winslow, professor of public health at the Yale Medical School, who has done perhaps more than any one other person for the public health and sanitation of our American cities; Dr. William A. Healy, pioneer in the United States in establishing psychological clinics in connection with juvenile courts; Dr. Arnold Gesell, who established the Yale Psycho-Clinic in 1911 and last year wrote that comprehensive survey of "The Pre-School Child" and its needs; Dr. Leta S. Hollingworth, who has made so many original and most interesting studies of exceptional children; and Dr. Winfield Scott Hall, professor emeritus in the Northwestern University Medical School.

It is, as you see, a most comprehensive piece of work. Add to this the fact that it may be had for the light sum of one dollar and you will agree that no home can afford to be without it. Since it is evidently the intention of the editors and trustees that the book shall go into every home and raise the level of parental intelligence, they are especially to be congratulated upon reducing the vocabulary to the lowest common denominator — always a difficult achievement among scientists whose laboratory terms become the very A B C of their existence. This book avoids, also, the pitfall of compilations in that it is not guilty of overlapping in subject matter nor repetitious; in other words, it is well edited. A full bibliography for each chapter and a complete index add great value to the work as a book of reference for the parent-student. According to the introduction by Lewis E. Myers, the Founder, the 1925 Year Book will "deal comprehensively with the problems arising out of the changing economic and social conditions as they affect the well-being of childhood and youth in the American home". The book is profusely and entertainingly illustrated with photographs of real children.

What is undoubtedly the most comprehensive study of the psychology of the little child is the "Psychology of Early Childhood" by William Stern, translated from the third revised German edition by Anna Barwell. Not since Herr Wilhelm Preyer made his famous studies into "the Soul of the Child" at the beginning of the nineteenth century and Dr. John B. Watson cut off his thrilling and profitable studies of the behavior of infants to take up a career in advertising, have we had even an attempt at a really thorough study of the developing intelligence and

personality of man in his infancy. Like Rasmussen, the Danish psychologist, Dr. Stern has used his own children for purposes of study and has been most intelligently aided and abetted in this by his wife, Clara Stern, who kept remarkably full diaries of the things her children did and said that showed signs of mental growth.

Since I am no psychologist, I cannot review the book critically. I can only record that I have found it fascinating reading, and warn all prospective readers that, before they have finished it, if they haven't a "child-under-six" in the house they will feel impelled to procure one at all costs in order to find out if what Herr Stern says is true! The subjects he takes up are: the equipment of the newborn child, the development of his powers, his method of gaining experiences, his emotions in his first year (Mr. Briggs might find his answer here the next time he wonders "what an infant thinks about"!), the development of speech, of memory and fantasy. One chapter is given up to detailed observations of children looking at pictures, concluding with valuable educational hints; another to the child's natural play; and yet another to his enjoyment and his creative activity. The book concludes with observations concerning "thought, intelligence, effort, emotion, will and the various forms and directions of endeavor".

Another overwhelming but not so pleasant contribution to the psychology of childhood is Oskar Pfister's "Love in Children and its Aberrations", translated, also from the German, by Eden and Cedar Paul. He begins, this "Pastor in Zurich", by surveying the attitudes of various nations and religious systems toward love, and ends up with a very frank and Freudian discussion of abnormalities in the expression of the love instinct in children of

today. His purpose is "to open my readers' eyes to the aching spiritual needs of childhood which are largely misunderstood by contemporary educationists and are, therefore, in many instances, wrongly handled". This is not a book for the parent-beginner in psychology; much prerequisite study of normal behavior is required for the digestion of so many abnormalities! "Education", claims the author, "cannot be complete unless we deal, also, with the world of consciousness behind the scenes and beneath the floorings of the stage!"

But you know the effect of getting behind the scenes — you never see the play as a whole again; it has become a mass of details in make up, papier mâché, and other theatricalities. We must see the child as a whole. To take too long a look at any one phase of him mars our vision. Symptom hunting, like a little knowledge in abnormal psychology, is a most dangerous thing in bringing up children.

A sharp contrast to Pfister's book, albeit the theme is similar, is Benjamin Gruenberg's "Parents and Sex Education". The contrast lies in its size and in its sanity and wholesomeness! This, the first volume of a series prepared under the direction of the American Social Hygiene Association, deals with the child under school age. "Heaven forbid!" you may say. "Must we think of sex education even with the toddler and the runabout?" So it would seem. But the education which Dr. Gruenberg advises is not so much a matter of information as to biological facts as of the shaping of attitudes on the part of the child toward his own body, toward members of his own and the opposite sex, toward dirtiness of word or act. And these things he learns best from Mother, his confidante, and from the general tone of the

household and the part that Father plays, as well as from everybody's relation to everybody else. "In order to take advantage of the fact that instruction is easiest during the earlier years, in order to furnish the child the satisfactions of a legitimate curiosity which cannot safely be ignored, and, in order to keep open the channel of confidence and communication between parents and child, guidance should begin with the earliest years." But, even if your child is over six, it's not too late to make a start. Here is an indispensable little book, chock full of common and uncommon sense.

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The Child: His Nature and His Needs. Edited by M. V. O'Shea. The Children's Foundation, Valparaiso, Indiana.  
 Psychology of Early Childhood up to the Sixth Year of Age. By William Stern. Supplemented by Extracts from the Unpublished Diaries of Clara Stern. Translated by Anna Barwell. Henry Holt and Co.  
 Love in Children and its Aberrations. By Oskar Pfister. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. Dodd, Mead and Co.  
 Parents and Sex Education, Volume I. By Benjamin Gruenberg. The American Social Hygiene Association, New York City.