

**Education and the Mores: A Sociological Essay.** By F. Stuart Chapin, Ph.D., Sometime University Fellow in Sociology. New York; Columbia University. Longmans, Green & Co., Agents. 1911.

**Industrial Causes of Congestion of Population in New York City.** By Edward Ewing Pratt, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Economics and Statistics, New York School of Philanthropy. New York: Columbia University. Longmans, Green & Co., Agents. 1911.

The first of these essays discusses with intelligence the conservative function which education performed in early society, and shows quite clearly that education to-day, especially that given in our common schools, has not transcended this function; that it yet is engaged in transmitting to the rising generation the point of view and the social standards required under conditions now passed; and consequently is not very effective in aiding the young to adjust themselves to the new environment of to-day.

The second essay, as its title so well indicates, enters thoroughly into an analysis of the industrial causes which have controlled the location of industries and the consequent location and distribution of the population in our greatest city. As an intensive study of a given phase of sociological conditions in a limited field, it is suggestive and valuable.

C. S. GARDNER.

**Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic.** By Henri Bergson, Professor at the College of France. Authorized Translation by Claudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1911. \$1.25 net.

Bergson's remarkable power of keen analysis is manifest in this little book. His thesis may be roughly stated thus: The comic is an effect produced upon one when he sees automatism where he naturally looks for living adaptation; laughter is a social function, is a social reaction for the correction, the chastisement, and life is always in danger of falling into automatism, so to speak, of this fault. Automatism tends ever to atism. Hence the important function of laughter.

Thus rudely stated the thesis will, doubtless, not commend itself to the reader. But one who will read this delightful essay

will close the book convinced that it is true, or, if not convinced, at least impressed with its extreme plausibility. At any rate, it will afford the reader a few hours of intellectual fascination if he enjoys a keen and clear analysis over which is shed the light of a brilliant imagination. The main outlines of Bergson's general philosophy can be seen beneath the surface of this pellucid discussion.

C. S. GARDNER.

**Inheritance of Acquired Characters.** By Eugenio Rignano. Translated by Basil C. H. Harvey, Assistant Professor of Anatomy, University of Chicago. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company. 1911.

No one but an expert biologist could express an authoritative judgment upon this work, and to this the writer can make no pretension. The author maintains with great learning and cogency of reasoning that acquired characters are transmitted. Hitherto two general theories as to the germ plasm have held the field. The first is that it is thoroughly distributed or disseminated throughout the body and that the habits which are thoroughly formed in the individual organism in its experience affects the germ plasm and are in this transmitted to the organism's offspring. The second is that the germ plasm remains distinct from the rest of the body, is transmitted from generation to generation without being modified by the experiences of the individual organisms, but that variations or mutations of species occur because accidental variations happen to be in harmony with environment, which preserves them while eliminating the variations which are not suitable. Rignano rejects both and introduces a third theory, that the germ plasm remains distinct from the other elements of the body and indirectly controls the development of the body from a central zone, but is reacted upon and modified by the individual experiences of organisms. In this way acquired characters are transmitted.

It is an exceedingly able and interesting discussion, and one that has important bearing upon psychology and sociology.

The essay, added as an appendix, on "Affective Tendencies," is very suggestive, especially to students of psychology.

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