Sidis, Boris. PHILISTINE AND GENIUS. Boston: Richard G. Badger; Toronto: The Copp Clark Co., Ltd.

Sidis makes this small volume a rousing call to substitute reality, in whatever form it may appear, for the stultifying, too easily satisfying preconceptions with which the world occupies itself. These are the fashions in belief, in religion, in economic machinery, in sports, in education, with which we have long blinded ourselves. By holding to these, particularly in educational ideals we deny our children an opportunity for actual development, and that self knowledge and self control and ability to make use of one's powers which is the right of every child and which is his only road to real health. These false standards make pedants instead of teachers, tyrants instead of guides, shallow optimists who deny all evil that we may still revel in the form in which it appeals to our own particular self regard and self seeking. Under these standards our systems turn children into the same artificial automatons, making them philistines of outer polish and well formed habits, rather than the geniuses of genetic unfolding by which alone they can realize their lives. Also thus are sown within them the fears and anxieties which later make for nervous disturbances and mental breakdown. At the same time our blindness allows the waste and destruction and injustice and crime which go on in society. For this reason the author makes his stirring appeal for a different attitude and most of all for a reasonable cultivation of the child, allowing him to expand from within and prove his inherent right to be a genius. Precocity, he says, need not be feared and considered something pathological, but every child has the right to be aided in the evolutionary process by opportunity and guidance given to develop the higher interests instead of giving the early years over to those more primitive ones which progress should teach us to control.

The message is a true one in that it rouses to the facing of the real state of things underneath our false exaggeration of hollow ideals. Also because it lays such repeated emphasis upon the genetic approach as the only saving one in education. It may however be questioned whether the book has said all that is to be said of the existence of the more primitive impulses. After all, they, in their insistence, have been responsible for the building up of the false idealism as an unconscious defense against themselves and sufficient account must be taken of their right to existence while getting hold of these with the child and utilizing his education for their control. This both modifies and enriches the idea of the child as a genius and a precocious being by intrinsic right. Also it gives a fuller and more effective working basis for the psychotherapy which, the writer states, must meet the psychoneurotic results of the false standards. The book can, however, in its limited space, give only a suggestion of these things and in its vigor of appeal it leads to further constructive thought along these lines.

L. BRINK.