REVIEWS

A TRILOGY OF EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Dr. Ed. Claparède: *Psychologie de l'Enfant et Pédagogie expérimentale*. (1916, Libraririe Kundig, Geneva.)

Maximilian P. E. Groszmann, Ph.D.; *The Exceptional Child*. (1917, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)

H. Addington Bruce: *Handicaps of Childhood*. (1917, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York.)

ON THE shelves of THE JOURNAL's office stand three books on Child Study, calling for the customary review.

As someone has said, three is a number convenient to reason about since it is the first in the scale of quantities that acknowledges two ends and a middle! We shall the more easily compare our authors. We place at one extreme (that of comfortable simplicity of statement) the presentation of Bruce on the *Handicaps of Childhood*, an excellent piece of popularization. At the other end of the see-saw, in a position somewhat more exalted and less accessible to intelligence, rises the offering of a facile and encyclopedic writer, whom the publishers have "featured" on the jacket of the book in a striking portrait of "the well-known child expert," M. P. E. Groszmann.

In the pivotal center, is the *Psychologie de l'Enfant* of Claparède (fifth edition), the appraisal of which appeals to us as a profitable preliminary to a discussion of the other two works.

Of course, it is distinctly a Swiss work. The author does not mind acknowledging the (to us obscure) labors of Doctor this and Doctor that, performed here and there in the small towns of the land of Pestalozzi. Should the reader smile at the parochial appearance of this field of survey, he should promptly be told that the ordinary High School (*i. e. Collège*) of Switzerland can give cards and spades to many of our supposedly full-fledged colleges and "universities." There, earnest education, intensive cultivation, without the blowing of any horns, is the rule. Yet Claparède is still restive under the inevitable red-tape of government schools. This very attitude assures us that what is to be put before us is likely to be the real meat of the problem of the child.

A REFLECTION OF SWISS EDUCATION

Although Claparède is a University teacher, and, moreover, is identified with an interesting foundation for experiments in education, now called The Institut Jean Jaques Rousseau, this does not imply over-devotion to a schoolroom point-of-view. For that dull and distressing interest in grades and marks that still flourishes in this country (to the extinction of the vital spark in child training) casts no shadow on his work. Claparède must be thought of as a biologist, and biologists are not often triflers with pedantic details. Sobered by the overwhelming intricacy of Nature, they desire to inform—not to astonish—the other fellow. This is exactly the cast of Claparède's thought. There is economy of style and of statement in this most substantial of offerings.

Far from imitating the anecdotal style of Rousseau,—symbol rather than exemplar of education in Switzerland—Claparède, eschewing all that spurious anthropology that inspired the “back to nature” preachments of the eighteenth century educator, is thoroughly of the twentieth.

Perhaps as significant as anything is his wistful reference to the principles of scientific management (under the head of Taylorism) echoing, throughout the work, his invocation of the spirit of Motion-Study as the ideal of child-training. The implication of this reference is somewhat confusing to the American reader, who is led to recall “piece-work” and trade-union disputes. But a glance at Claparède’s introduction, with his moving defense of those too often unappreciated teachers who have labored to promote truly observational psychology in education, will at once reveal in what sense *scientific management*—in place of pedantry—is his goal.

The plan of his *Institut* for experimental pedagogy would seem to leave no room for educational side-shows; but, like a factory manager, Claparède’s interest is in *rendement* or performance. We wish his constant reminders in this direction, and his denunciation of EXPERIMENTS AT THE COST OF THE PUPIL could be read by certain members of the National Educational Association who, too often, approve pedagogical systems where experiment is only an intriguing oscillation between two fads.

THE AUTHOR NOT A FADDIST

Claparède is restful with the spirit of real questioning regarding education, not with the slogans and shibboleths of those American teachers who, at the end of the nineteenth century, had run psychology into the ground and earned the kindly rebuke of William James in his *Talks to Teachers*. Claparède notes how strange this warning of James against psychology seems to the European; but he shows excellent historical sense in explaining the difference between Europe and our America, where Child-Psychology—as Claparède is too polite to say—is mostly Psychology and very little Child.

The work is articulated; not a fluid mass like *L’Emile*. Above all it is not anecdotal. Do you want to grasp his approach to previous opinions: there is an eclectic outline of educational history in CHAPTER ONE.

In CHAPTER TWO, there is a statement of the problems of pedagogy, somewhat heavily laden with terms of the pediatric family; in which, however, “*pédagogie expérimentale*” deservedly stands out. This classificatory nomenclature is the part that is least helpful to the American student—and we tremble for perspiring schoolmarm in Summer Sessions. But to French minds, this chapter promises no difficulties; to them these partitions offer guide-ropes that make the mental traffic easier, although to some of us they will be as walls that conceal the objective. Even so regarded, there is an issue from this labyrinth: Claparède’s thread-of-Ariadne is his obvious tendency toward a distinct method, which leads us along and holds our hopes, in not unpleasant suspense.

CHAPTER THREE is much enlarged over the previous edition. It presents

splendidly and clearly those now well-crystallized deposits of mathematical, statistical and logical method whereby the immediate complexity of the human factor can be reduced to something like the picturesque simplicity of the Cartesian curve. The plot of the child-soul, as it were, becomes graphically intelligible. It is a vista that is presented with the skill that bespeaks the excellent orientation of the writer in biologic thought. All this is enhanced by well-chosen illustrations: the bell curve of Galton and similar frequency-curves, as pictured by massed rows of pupils in perspective, are ocular rest-camps. The chapter on Method would alone be a short-cut to those discussions of mental measurements that are the despair of ambitious, yet plodding school-teachers. Most presentations are only exemplars of how not to teach. What is more, Claparède does not desert his reader at the end of this third act, leaving him "*planté là*" at loose ends when the curtain goes down.

A BIOLOGIST'S VIEW OF EDUCATION-BY-INTEREST

The mind remains in well-ordered anticipation, when CHAPTER FOUR works out the dénouement of his pedagogic theory. It amounts to this:—mental development through the use of native biologic interests, like those evoked in the stimulus of games. To expand the idea, Claparède depicts the state called Interest with its full panoply of psychologic significance. His interpretation rests upon the biological formula that *interest*, as the Latin derivation reminds us, deals originally with something of importance to the individual—for which, thus, we may assume that he already owns a prepared mechanism of reaction. Education, we may infer, is training these interests (like the tendrils of a virginia creeper) to expand in a specific direction over the trellis of the Arts and Sciences. According to this biologist, education cannot afford to lose its point of attachment to the parent stem that feeds it—native interest. Needless to say, Claparède is not a defender of the sophister of Geneva to the point of favoring the exaggeration of the play-school idea until it becomes the as-you-will, *laissez-aller* type of education that has too often captivated American mothers who thought they were cheering the banners of John Dewey.

It is a pity that the Chapter on Intellectual Fatigue had to be omitted on account of the expansion elsewhere. Claparède promises us, however, a *thèse à part* on this and cognate topics. Perhaps it is just as well that he should have held it back, since in the present unformed and uninformed state of educational opinion on the very rudiments of intellectual fatigue, Claparède might well hesitate to enter the lists without taking an extra long breathing spell. Is it necessary to say that when he takes up anew the subject of Fatigue, having now so well tilted as the champion of Education-by-Interest, we may expect further victories over those who in theory and alas, in practice, refuse to admit "intellectual fatigue."

CLAPARÈDE: APOSTLE OF SANITY IN EDUCATION

It is useless in a review to try and sound the deep implications of Claparède's method of composing this treatise. It eludes immediate discovery because it comes from deep springs, being not at all like those shallow seeps from the groundwork

of education that the recent freshet of psycho-analytic outpourings on child study has occasioned. But a pretty little example of *multum in parvo* may be found on page 246, (Chapter III, Section 1) where he swings, as it were with one hand, Freud's silly explanation of infantile amnesia. Claparède's biological common sense and his refusal to be glamored by the Teutonic propaganda that has set so many American educators agape is shown when he very simply says: "We forget childhood memories because there is so little a mass of associations to form a cohesive body. It is not the inhibition of memories of childhood that we have to consider, but why so many should persist at all." Claparède here, facing a Freudian mare's nest, seems to echo the spirit of John Dewey's dictum that in philosophy we do not solve our problems—we get over them!

Everywhere, Claparède gives each author a run for his money. To read Claparède is to get over a great many problems, and to benefit by penetrating, with this wise Cicerone, many of the deceptions and mirages evoked before our eyes by the vaporous clouds of near-thought that have been exhaled over the waters of education. For the coming Revolution in educational methods we think Claparède would give us the campaign book and be, for the educational revolution, what Rousseau was (on a lower plane) for the French Revolution.

THE fascination of child-study—like the witchery of kodakery—depends upon order, selection, focusing and point of view. The result should be a just balance in the finished picture. If Claparède exhibits an orderly "travelogue," touching the natural history of education, Groszmann, on the other hand, has given us a collection of educational picture post-cards. For, somewhat scattered and choppily assembled bits of intellectual flotsam and jetsam compose *The Exceptional Child*. We imagine that to watch the author at his work and to be guided by his success with actual children would be even more profitable than to scan too anxiously this bag of chips from his workshop.

It is an encyclopedia *in parvo* of the great and growing problem of the child. Groszmann may be counted on to be aware of all the trends of opinion and to be all-comprehensive in his acknowledgement of them; although here and there a little too lenient with manifestly fly-by-night theories.

Where does this lead to? We should say, on the whole, that the outcome of reading—perusing would be a more manageable task—this book is that one realizes how much, how very much, pro-and-con one has to wade through, in order to be in the swim as an educator, to-day. Groszmann follows the fashion even to the extent of professing to be unfashionable on special points, like the use of the Binet-Simon scales.

A MANUAL OF SUPER-TESTS

His opinion of the Binet-Simon Test is pungently suggested in such a "bold-face" heading as "THE AUTHOR'S LARGER SYSTEM." The Binet-Simon tests may, as he thinks, be indecisive in regard to the pupil who is tested, but they are quite a touchstone in regard to the tester. Some, like Claparède, take Binet-Simon with

a grain of salt, and acknowledge, as does also Addington Bruce, that this contribution to educational "standards and specifications" is a notable one—and they rest at that point. Later, under another head and with a new breath, they may take occasion to point out that Binet & Simon have *not* evolved a new scheme to satisfy the market that clamors for a successor to the phrenological chart. But who needs to imitate the positiveness of Goll and Spurzheim's Phrenology nowadays?

Emerson, protesting against the arbitrary school of his day says: "I refuse to take a high seat and adapt my conversation to the shape of heads."

Now, Groszmann very properly refuses to be bound by the Binet-Simon scale, but he improperly fails to see that his own scale, although larger in its pretention, is not necessarily larger in results. Almost everybody now has some modification of his own; the real point is that none of these scales in the hands of any one not the inventor can be satisfactory, unless he or she is willing "to make it one's own." But for this consummation, there is sometimes lacking that biological facilitation of the type of Interest which we call "*amour propre*." Whereas, enthusiasm for something of which one can say "It is my own invention," may lead to a blossoming of undreamt skill in helping children out of their difficulties of adjustment. It is in this sense that even the exaggeration of the Mental Testing fad has helped-on educators to a higher stage of self-realization. In classic phrase "there is a treasure hidden in it."

The man who takes a Comenius-like interest in standardization, book-keeping and classification of mental traits, may, (through sheer captivation of his own pride) find himself a teacher in spite of himself. This is ostensibly true of the Binet-Simon scale, and the same is true of other scales, including "the larger system."

A REPERTORY OF CHILD-ANOMALIES

Although dealing very directly with the "exceptional" child, it is fair to say that the book sheds a light on all education, because all children are, in a sense exceptional. Or, to put the matter in a slightly different light, all children exhibit transitory exceptional phases that deserve scrutiny, and mental preparation on the part of the parent. Hence it is a boon to any educator (including any intelligent mother) to attempt to compass Dr. Groszmann's book. Like the field of the farmer in Aesop, it should be dug and delved into because "there is a treasure in it."

One real piece of value is the author's Classification Chart of exceptional children. Here the stress is upon pseudoatypical children—implying that many parents need no longer be faced with the bald question: "Is my child feeble-minded or is it not?" There are many mansions in the House of The Exceptional Child, and all the more room for individualized treatment.

The book has a good index and needs it. The Medical Symposium, from a galaxy of special workers, is a very eclectic addition of one hundred and forty-four pages, alone worth the price of the book.

As a whole, *The Exceptional Child* has not the disadvantage of being, or really pretending seriously to be, authoritative—dismal word in education—

but, on the contrary, shows the flux and seething in the various tendencies of education and that they are already drawing the hitherto calm medical circles into the pedagogic whirlpool.

WHAT is of interest to the student of abnormal psychology, in works like these, is not so much the actual opinions of the writers—for they are subject to change and evolution—but their testimonials touching the importance of studying ANOMALIES in child development. This means, in other words, enriching the current conception of the Abnormal. That this is a slowly growing conception is only too evident from the history of what was once called Morbid Psychology, and in the present-day mis-beliefs that are attached to the word *abnormal*; even as if it implied something outside the pale of Sanity.

Yet, we know that the exceptionally bright child and the retarded child lie equally in the province of the Abnormal—technically speaking. He, whom we might call the Anomalist in psychology, is still unfortunately, viewed as an “abnormal psychologist”—non-technically speaking—as if he were a psychologist off his beat. Yet he differs from his fellows, not so much in his preoccupation with the “morbid,” as in his reaping of benefits in that field for psychology as a whole.

THE FIELD OF THE ANOMALIST

So it happens, that, under the banner of the Behaviorists—those stern Pilgrims in psychology, who regard overt Behavior as the criterion of the human soul—we are coming upon the ANOMALIES of human conduct as if by accident, while engaged in a drive for that promised land where there are “norms” and psychometric curves for every kind of human activity. That is to say, while maintaining a mathematical ideal (worthy of the aspirations of Thomas Hobbes, seeking to put psychology on the same plane as geometry) the hosts of Behaviorism are only skirting the bogs and quagmires of anomalous, erratic conduct, side-stepping the introspective methods that would explain and control those seeps from the subconscious: the very ones that contribute the Unexpected and the Incalculable element to “humane Nature.” The misfortune is that the psychological laboratories have not detached, from their main forces, any group of trained minds to reduce these true problems of Psychology to anything like practicability, i. e. for easy communication with the real inside meaning of human conduct—in case it is at all exceptional. This is, indeed, the reason for the continued existence of a separate exploration, called Abnormal Psychology. It is, for one thing, the science that leads us to look *behind* the marks and the grades of the child, when he returns from school to the home-table, with tear-stained face and lost appetite; something has gone wrong—a bad report the cause, and a meaningless bulletin of criticism from the teacher the only help offered to the perplexed parent. . . . Then is the time that Abnormal Psychology comes into play, whatever may have been the suggestions of the Binet-Simon tests in school, or of the child’s previous exemplary behavior. But what a rudimentary psychology of the Abnormal still passes current!

For the advancement of Abnormal Psychology both Claparède and Grosz-

mann are opening the way, by showing the need. They are also filling in the gap between the mathematical conception in Educational Psychology, and the conception of something deeper, worthy of exploration, that is not mathematical, as yet. We refer to hidden wishes, sub-conscious desires, motions, mistaken prejudices on the child's part—things that John Locke warned us to pay heed to, as early as 1696—for they are the quantitatively indefinable realities of the human spirit. Of all these realities the Behaviorists are, as yet, not sharply aware. As a speaker at a meeting of the American Psychological Association wittily remarked: "The Behavior laboratory bears the sign 'All ye who enter here, check your souls at the door.'"

THE "SOUL" NOT YET PLUMBED

Outside that door, in every-day-life, the Anomalist must continue to work with the soul of the child; and it is to him that we must turn for an answer, primarily, to the genuine problems of childhood. He must study causes, not results, in education. It is he who must say: "We may not be able to do anything for you adults, but we can do something for your child to prevent you from brow-beating and shell-shocking the sensitive spirit, which you cannot penetrate with your home-made behavior tests." It is he who should acquaint parents with the conception of Lockean trauma—the idea that gave John Locke his inspiration for the phrase "association of ideas." . . . "Many children imputing the Pains they endured at School to their books, they were corrected for, so join those *Ideas* together, that a Book becomes their Aversion, and they are never reconciled to the Study and Use of them all their Lives after; and thus Reading becomes a Torment to them, which otherwise possibly they might have made the great Pleasure of their Lives." (Page 283, "Human Understanding," 3rd Edition, London 1705).

This whole terrain of the "association of ideas" (in the original "anomalous" sense, which was evidently that of Locke) is the field of the anomalist, where, pedagogy and psychology are in a fair way to meet.

Now, justifying the above statements—which sound like a digression—is the work of Addington Bruce, *Handicaps of Childhood*. This balances, by sheer human interest, the technical weightiness of Groszmann's *The Exceptional Child*; for Bruce's work drives home the conception of anomalies as part of the development of the child and fits the reader at least to sense them.

THE author of *Handicaps of Childhood* has powers of exposition of no mean order; the special powers, as it were, of the journalist who, having no deep interest at stake in what he is writing about, treats his topic as an "events-man." Thus, he is able to impart a smooth and easy-going aspect to his short chapters, devoted to such topics as I. Mental Backwardness; II. The Only Child; III. The Child Who Sulks; IV. Jealousy; V. Selfishness; VI. Bashfulness and Indecision; VII. Stammering; VIII. Fairy Tales That Handicap; IX. "Night Terrors."

Readers of *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology* can guess the contents of each chapter, but can scarcely estimate the effect of putting such data in tabloid form before parents and educators.

Bruce's *Conclusion* palpably brings us to one of the most important spheres of Abnormal Psychology,—always before the Anomalist—the sphere of the emotions. . . . “From what has been said in the foregoing pages, it is an irresistible inference that the greatest of all handicaps a child can have, short of being born hopelessly deficient, is to be born into a home where he will be exposed to mind-deadening or emotion-stressing influences—a home where he will receive neither adequate mental stimulus nor adequate moral training. Under such circumstances, so profound is the influence of the early environment, his growth to a normal manhood is impossible, unless other and more favorable influences from outside the home affect him with sufficient force to offset the home surroundings.” (P. 303).

This shows, as it were, the “reverse of the medal”: Emotional Interest as a mis-educating force. (Claparède).

AN EXCELLENT POPULARIZATION

Bruce is not complex, but very readable alongside of Groszmann: scientific anecdotes of child study lighten the pages. In pursuit of human interest, he not only tells of children that have been helped specifically by this or that physician, of this or of that school (the Freudians have the lead) but he “comes down to brass tacks” sufficiently so that the eyes of Anxious Mother are opened to the existence of SOMETHING IN THE DEPTHS of the child's life that is more worthy of attention than what appears so plainly on the surface.

It is not to be pretended that Bruce is profound. He would miss his functions if he were less journalistic. He is the Frank H. Spearman of psychology. Like Spearman, who wrote about the strategy of great railroads and captains of industry, Bruce habitually pays his compliment to all the leading figures in psychology and psychological medicine, even featuring many theories that are destined to have only a transitory “*succès d'estime*.” But, like Frank Spearman's words about each and every magnate in the railroad game, it all helps to orient the reader; and while we cannot readily think of Frank Spearman or Addington Bruce as strenuous enough to drive for a reform in his particular province, (like Claparède) or to “saw wood” with continual experiments (like Groszmann), yet the application of the journalistic style to a problem like child study, no less than to the railroad question, is of obvious utility; it keeps the public awake and aware, and open-eyed for the day of reform.

In this sense Bruce's work is a prospectus, which advertises those possibilities of child study that may be obtained by simplifying and digesting the implications of Groszmann and of Claparède.

Before taking leave of our authors, it should be said that the result of a tour of the Museum of Education with the help of these three books, should be to bring us closer to an appreciation of the growing importance of studying so-called anomalies of the child, such as dreams and the emotions—concerns that could bear even more emphasis than these authors have space to give to them.

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