

Psychology.

The Mental Defective: a Problem in Social Inefficiency. By Dr. Richard J. A. Berry and Dr. R. G. Gordon. Pp. xi + 196 + 8 plates. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1931.) 8s. 6d. net.

It is almost impossible for a lay mind to form any conception of the tremendous financial drain on the country's resources caused by the socially inefficient or higher grade mental or moral defective. Dr. Berry and Dr. Gordon have set out, in their book, to give a plain and straightforward account of the various grades of mental defective, so that the lay mind may understand the most difficult of social problems, the elimination of the defective from our midst.

The authors provide us with three preliminary chapters—the two on the evolution of brain and the making of mind being particularly well set out, although it is very doubtful if the most educated layman will understand what the authors mean when they describe the "synaptic junction between the axon of the connective or internuncial neurone and the dendrons of the effector neurone". The anatomy is really too complicated for a layman. The photographs of the higher-grade defectives give a false impression. It is notoriously difficult to pick out defectives from photographs, if not actually impossible.

The best chapter in the book is that dealing with policy. This chapter ought to be read by all members of county councils dealing with the defective in their midst. The running of model colonies for defectives and, more important still, for border-line cases who are socially inefficient is a step in the right direction, but one which, we feel, will take a long time to penetrate to the right quarter.

Brain and Mind. By Arthur Lynch. Pp. 36. (London: The Pioneer Press, 1931.) 6d.

WHEN philosophical conclusions are categorically expressed in the first person, it shows that their author is in earnest. Yet individual convictions, however strong, can scarcely pretend to carry universal assent. Philosophers, in particular, are hardened people: the very history of their subject compels them to be sceptical as to the decisive value of any particular system. To base a philosophical theory on the assertion that "psychology is the matrix of the sciences" is nothing new in itself. Scores of psychological schools are attempting the same thing from various angles; while in the more abstract domain of thought, the Russellian and the Brouwerian interpretations of mathematics and logic, in spite of their conflicting results, have shown some remarkable specimens of analysis of mental processes. The claims of Col. Lynch need therefore strong justification: the position of their author will be much clearer if he himself confronts his conclusions with those of other schools of thought. Otherwise an unassuming critic is bound to find in them some vague reminiscences of earlier readings. T. G.

The Will to Live: an Outline of Evolutionary Psychology. By J. H. Badley. Pp. 267. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1931.) 10s. 6d. net.

THE author gives us what he considers is a useful dissertation on psychology in general, suitable for boys and girls who have just left, or are about to leave, school. We think a better title might have been chosen; comparatively few children of school-leaving age show any great interest in 'the will to live', but might be very interested in modern points of view in psychology simply told. The book is very well laid out and, generally speaking, presents a very readable account of psychology. We should prefer to see the word 'complex' used in its narrower meaning; in ninety per cent of cases when the word complex is used in modern psychology it refers to what the author would prefer to term a 'buried complex'. We think the author might have given a rather fuller account of Adlerian theories, for they appeal considerably more to the lay mind as a distinctly healthier view than either those of Freud or even Jung.

Agriculture.

Principles of Tropical Agriculture. By Dr. H. A. Tempany and G. E. Mann. Pp. 328 + xxiii. (Kuala Lumpur: The Incorporated Society of Planters, Malaya, 1930.)

MOST books published in English on agriculture in the tropics seem to assume that the greater part of the tropical zone has a high and constant rainfall, and that the so-called 'planting crops' form the chief agricultural enterprises in the hotter parts of the world. The result is to give a very unreal picture of tropical agriculture. The present book is no exception to this rule. It has been written as a textbook of general principles to be taught to students in Malaya. For this purpose it is, on the whole, very well suited, for the conditions with which it chiefly deals are those found in this typical wet tropical area. On the other hand, the portions dealing with the far more frequently occurring dry tropical conditions are very perfunctory, and it is doubtful whether the book should be recommended to a student whose future interest is likely to lie in such areas.

One at least of the authors has had very wide experience in the West Indies, Mauritius, Java, and Malaya, and hence, naturally, the chief tropical data cited are from these areas. It is rather a pity, however, that these have not been supplemented to a greater extent from the work done and information obtained in West and East Africa and, particularly, in India—especially as regards soil conditions and manurial methods found useful there, even with the type of crop and condition with which the book chiefly deals.

For the narrow purpose for which it has been chiefly written, the book will probably be found of great use, and an advance on anything hitherto available; but as a general manual of the principles on which tropical agriculture is based it will be found of comparatively little service. H. H. M.