

### ABNORMAL CHILDREN.\*

In a book having the above title Dr. Bernard Hollander deals in a most interesting and suggestive way with Nervous, Mischievous, Precocious, and Backward Children. It is stated on the title page that it is a book for "parents, teachers, and medical officers of schools." To these we may certainly add trained nurses, who are constantly brought into close touch with such children, and often have charge of them.

In his preface Dr. Hollander points out that the greatest event in the life of parents happens when a child is born to them. Their prayers go forth that he may prove a worthy successor, handsome in appearance, brilliant in intellect, and great in character, or, if a daughter, that she may be endowed with all the female graces and virtues. Alas! often within an hour, week, month, or year, though sometimes not until he is nearly grown up, he is the cause of great anxiety, not on account of temporary ailments, but because he or she is not like other children. A child may be born diseased, he may suffer at birth from a deficiency of brain, he may be late in development, he may acquire various disorders; certain diseases may arrest the growth of the brain or disturb its functions; or he may grow up normally, and even give promise of a brilliant future, yet, as he approaches adolescence, he may manifest mental unrest and peculiar conduct.

The book deals not merely with the subnormal child—the idiot, imbecile, feeble-minded, and backward; but also with the

\* Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd. 3s. 6d. net.

supernormal—the precocious and the talented child. Dr. Hollander contends that were as much attention devoted to the supernormal child as is already devoted to the subnormal—to the discovery of hidden talents as much as

to mental defect,—were special instruction provided in accordance with the individual aptitudes for children of unusual inborn ability, as is now provided for the mentally deficient, and were thus the right kind of man always trained for the right kind of work, the prosperity of the State would be vastly increased, and the individual himself rendered most happy.

It is Dr. Hollander's hope that the book will convince its readers that the "education of children is a problem not for parents and teachers only, but that the co-operation of the medical psychologist is an absolute necessity. It is for the physician to note in their earliest stage the symptoms which should put parents on their guard, to point out the causes of brain and mind failure, to show how to counteract the effects of evil heredity, bad environment, and disease, to advise what precautions can be taken, how to bring up such children, and what careers to choose for them in order to fit their capacities."

"According to official statistics, one person in 266 is of unsound mind, and at least one in 217 of the population is mentally defective. . . . In addition, over 3,000 cases of young persons of both sexes under the age of twenty years are regis-

tered as becoming insane every year in England and Wales, and insanity at this age, according to the Lunacy Commissioners' reports, is on the increase.

"Heredity," says Dr. Hollander, "is by far



MICROCEPHALIC IDIOT.



MODERATE HYDROCEPHALUS.  
Fairly sharp boy, but addicted to lying and stealing.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)