

Wensday, an a grate numbre of diferrent artikles are two be soled hear—pianoes, sowing machines,' etc." In arithmetic the tests cover the mechanical application of processes, mental arithmetic, selection of rules and powers of reasoning. In English they show the powers of understanding the meaning of words, spelling, the construction of sentences, history and geography. Tests of this type are very helpful alternatives and may have a clinical value for the estimation of backwardness in individual children, since exact norms are given, but for this purpose the user of the tests must be careful to adhere exactly to the full instructions for their application if he is to utilize the results in a comparative manner.

E. SHRUBSALL.

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*Sex Hygiene.* By OLIVER WALDO LINCOLN. London: John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd., 1925. Pp. vi + 33. 1s. net.

From the scientific point of view this little book does not merit the slightest attention. But productions of this kind are of importance, for the harm which they do is only too well known to every practising psychiatrist. The book is mainly concerned with the alleged evil results of masturbation. All kinds of ill-effects are stated to follow this practice, and descriptions are given (including one of "neurasthenia") which would terrify a boy or girl who had indulged even occasionally in masturbation. For the author draws no distinction between the occasional and the excessive practice of that habit. It is talk of this kind which has done so much harm. The book asserts that masturbation is practised to a far less extent by females than by males. All the available scientific evidence directly contradicts this view. The author appears to have an obsession on the subject, and he attributes the alleged deterioration of the British race chiefly to this cause. If a hundredth part of what he asserts about masturbation were true, the whole human race would have ceased to exist. The book is written in the style of fifty years ago. Even a "lady medical practitioner" is not to be trusted to give sex instruction to school girls, unless accompanied by the school nurse, or by "another suitable lady of high character." Parents are advised to impart sex teaching to their children by means of illustrations drawn from botany. In this connection the author actually suggests that the terms "lady flower" and "gentleman flower" are to be preferred to those of "female" and "male." It is difficult to write with patience of such absurdities as these.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

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*The Women Characters in Richard Wagner.* By LOUISE BRINK, Ph.D. New York and Washington: Nervous and Mental Diseases Publishing Co., 1924. (Monograph Series No. 37.) Med. 8vo. Pp. xv + 125. Price \$2.00.

When religious apologists, unable to stomach the sensuality of the "Song of Songs," gave this love poem a spiritual interpretation in terms of their own orthodoxy, they were doing what all critics of

works of art are apt to do when they are incapable of pure æsthetic appreciation. We are all of us prone to seek an understanding of the lower in terms of the higher, to regard all human activities in terms of the highest moral artistic or social standards that mankind has achieved. But with the triumph of the biological sciences in the field of pure zoology, in the realm of sociology, and latterly in the domain of psychology, the historical method seems to have come into its own, and the interpretation of phenomena not only in these fields but even in the realm of art has been in the direction of explaining the most complex phenomena in terms of simpler processes that have been found by research to have preceded them. The two methods of approach are strikingly exemplified by the way in which the problem of the *Ring of the Nibelung* of Richard Wagner has been dealt with, on the one hand by Mr. Bernard Shaw, and on the other hand by Dr. Louise Brink, whose book is before us.

Mr. Shaw, in the *Perfect Wagnerite*, while analysing with characteristic lucidity the history of the Nibelungs, treats the whole story as a statement of Wagner's socio-economic outlook, the struggle of the vital forces in romantic youth against the greed and intellectual dominance of tradition embodied in a capitalistic society. Whether Shaw is justified in making of the Ring a Fabian tract is not of interest to us in this review, but that he approaches, howbeit on a different plane, the solution suggested on psycho-analytic grounds by Dr. Brink is a matter of no small interest.

Dr. Brink, while accepting the broad Freudian position of mental development, goes somewhat further in that she adopts the view that the Saga embodies the struggle of the Folk mind in its endeavour to express in the form of poetry its own psychological unfolding.

Limiting our review to the domain to which the authoress has confined herself—that is, the women characters of the Ring—we find that Wagner's theme is the psychological struggle in woman's bid for complete biological expression.

The Rhinegold opens the first act of the human drama at the infantile level of simple uncritical pleasure gratification. The Rhine maidens are engaged in guarding the treasured gold, innocently gambolling in the green depths of the Rhine, into which the sun occasionally throws a ray of light to illuminate the treasure. Here we have the psycho-analytic lowest level of infantile anal interest, the confusion of the nutritional with the excremental interest and its later false identification with reproduction and with creativeness. Hence the gold becomes something to be possessed as the very source of power. But above, Wotan, first of the gods, is preparing to enter the castle which the giants have built for him. Fricka is the spouse of the god, and represents the bourgeois narrow and unemancipated woman. Salvation cannot come from her, nor from the daughter of this marriage, Sieglinde, who, marrying her brother Siegmunde, offends against Fricka, the upholder of the established moral order. Fricka derides Wotan for entertaining the notion that Siegmunde should have full possession of Sieglinde by slaying Hunding. Woman must, therefore, undergo a further development before she can be free to love, and that love can only

be obtained by union with a hero who shall himself surpass the gods in being indifferent to the gold to which even Wotan himself had become partly enslaved. From Sieglinde the hero is to spring, and Brunnhilde, still tied to parental authority and love, shall sleep through the fires of adolescence until that very hero will come to deliver her. Only the complete man who can slay the dragon of material gratification and yet remain indifferent to the gold that it has been guarding can wed the woman who, in her turn, has freed herself from the thralldom of father- and daughter-love. But the curse of the past still pursues not only Brunnhilde, but Siegfried the hero also. The brother-sister motive which psycho-analytic researches have brought out explains the ultimate tragedy of the Ring and the death of Siegfried. The rich and intricate texture of the Ring has been very fully dealt with by Dr. Brink in her psycho-analytic treatment, and by a frank statement of the incest motive as it affects the women characters of the story, she has thrown a considerable light where before there appeared little more than a confused and tangled undergrowth of dim folk-lore. That the whole of Wagner has not been exhausted goes without saying. The woof and the warp of Wagner's orchestral embroidery still remains a subject for wonder and delight, and however the analyst may correlate the story of the Ring with vicissitudes of the musician's own love life and of his musical-poetic expression of the great Nordic myth, we can but make one comment on this music-drama: "There's magic in the web of it."

The critical comment one is obliged to make on this volume is firstly that the argument is unnecessarily long-winded and that the theme is frequently repeated without enrichment; further, that the translation of Wagner's own libretto is frequently dull, if not always intelligible, and that Dr. Brink's own language painfully suggests a translation from German into American.

E. MILLER.

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*The Cerebro-spinal Fluid in Clinical Diagnosis.* By J. GODWIN GREENFIELD, M.D., B.Sc., M.R.C.P., and E. ARNOLD CARMICHAEL, M.B., Ch.B. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1925. Demy 8vo. Pp. viii + 272. Price 12s.

Our knowledge of the composition of the cerebro-spinal fluid and the pathological changes which it undergoes in disease has increased vastly during recent years, but the results of research are so disseminated through medical literature that the student has hitherto found it an arduous task to search out the various articles. Drs. Greenfield and Carmichael have simplified that task, and have produced a volume embodying not only a collection of the more important recorded facts relating to normal and abnormal cerebro-spinal fluid, but also the results of their own investigation of a large number of fluids in different diseases, and an excellent bibliography as a guide to those in search of even more detail.

The first section of the book deals with the various substances present normally and abnormally in the fluid, and their variations in health and disease.