

REVIEWS

CARACTERE ET PERSONALITE. By E. Peillaube. (Tequi; 20 frs.)

Character is the measure of man as seen in his capacity for rational control of the self and the direction of his life. It is essentially plastic and susceptible of education and re-fashioning. Character, though consisting mainly in will, has a foundation in temperament, which in turn has a physical basis as well as a correlative psychological bias. Temperaments vary and show a tendency to fall into groups or types corresponding in some degree with the bodily habitus, as has recently been shown by Kretschmer, Ledos and other writers.

Character itself is seen as the result of the interplay of various forces, such as heredity, environment, acquired habits, crystallization of ideas, profession in life, and finally imagination as representing the romantic side of the interior life.

The first part of this book deals with temperament and character, current doctrines of which are examined and when necessary criticized in the light of sound philosophy. In the second part the author deals with the problem of Personality, mainly from the empirical standpoint, as distinct from the philosophic conception of personality as such. Here again the empiricist theories of Hume, Kant and others are examined and rejected, on the grounds that they fail to show the distinctive aspect of personality, which lies in the awareness of the essential continuity of the self amid the changing fortunes of character. The volume concludes with a discussion of will and liberty, and education of the will.

The psychopathology of will and its relation to the problem of liberty is ably discussed, together with the question of determinism. It is to be deplored that death prevented the inclusion of a final chapter on the spiritual sources available in the refashioning of character. Nevertheless as it stands the author has achieved a valuable synthesis of the scientific and philosophic aspects of the subject.

G. A. ELINGTON, O.P.

THE CHEMISTRY OF THOUGHT. By Claude A. Claremont. (Geo. Allen & Unwin; 8/6.)

This is a book which we feel will interest a larger circle of readers than those whose interests are mainly in psychology and education. Thinking is a process involving certain elements—the stuff of thought—which are manifested in various ways for various ends, but we usually take it for granted, without stopping to consider the nature of the process.

Psychologists have attacked this problem before now. The "Würzburg" school of experimental psychology, led by the late Professor O. Külpe, introduced the psychology of the higher thought processes with a special technique of controlled introspection. In England Prof. Spearman is known for his theory of "noegenesis."

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Mr. Claremont approaches the problem from a different angle, though adhering all the while to strictly psychological methods of observation. He makes no attempt at a philosophical interpretation. Observation, especially of the activities of children in the Montessori School, provide him with the clues for his theory. In this field he can speak with the authority of a director of the Montessori Training College in London.

Thought is constructed of certain elements, a preliminary list of which is given, with the proviso that it is not to be considered final; other elements may yet be discovered. The chief place among these elements is given to the Complex Unit, the Direct Perception of Causality and the Character element which enters into thinking. With these principles in mind the author considers in turn various aspects of thinking, such as are manifest in the solving of problems, cross-word puzzles, inventions, writing, art, music, drawing, and so forth, with the view of obtaining further evidence in support of his theory.

A chapter on the novel in regard both to writers and readers thereof is very illuminating in this respect. Certainly the theory, as the author himself says, invites criticism, but it strikes one nevertheless as true, though here and there a detail might be discussed.

Interspersed in his account we find much valuable criticism of current psychological conceptions and prejudices. Taken in all this study is an important contribution to the psychology of thought.

G. A. ELLINGTON, O.P.

A LITTLE BOOK OF CHEESE. By Osbert Burdett. (Howe; 3/6.)

Mr. Burdett writes wittily and wisely and with rare zest of the great names of Stilton, Wensleydale, Rochfort, Camembert and Brie; he also describes invitingly many lesser cheeses (such as Primula, which comes from Norway, and Cacciocavallo, a Neopolitan cheese made of mare's milk); but he does more than this. He emphasizes and laments the great decline which has come to cheese-making and cheese-eating during our own age. He tells how the shops and factories (for these do most of the cheese-making now), equally insane on a quick turnover, sell their Cheddar (which to be truly wholesome and good needs to be at least eleven months old) after only two or three months, at which age it is indeed little more digestible than the india-rubber it resembles. He tells also how people have come to prefer the synthetic and bad to the good in cheeses as in fruits, where tinned pears and peaches are bought before the fresh. Once there existed in England a kind of regional cheese-culture: every district, every county was proud of having its own cheese; and there was great wonder and beauty in cheese then. Now all but two or three of these cheeses have been killed by the diabolical march of