study of specific birth-rates, age compositions and mortality statistics of both groups in urban and rural areas, is wisely non-committal. At the same time, he points out that, whereas the crude birth-rates of both populations now run practically together, the mortality rate of the Negro has much greater potentialities for decrease. Indeed, as the Negro attains a higher standard of hygiene, and becomes more inured to "white" diseases, etc., the eventual course of his mortality rate is likely to drop to a marked degree. The ultimate relative composition of both groups is therefore bound up with these and other less ponderable factors, such as the future agricultural policy to be adopted in the Southern States, where the Negro is most prolific.

Viewing the question from the sociological angle, as they do, the authors naturally have much to say about the observable social and economic consequences of culture-contact, and are concerned more with "status," "social distance" and "racial attitudes" than with problems of genetics and biology. Nevertheless, in the light of Professor Holmes's third possibility, the rise of a hybrid stock, it seems curious that so little attention is paid to the purely biological implications of the situation. That racial intermixture brings forth new social types and new social strata, the mulatto, a "buffer class," and so on, one is fully prepared to recognize. Where we still lack adequate knowledge, however, is in regard to the actual physical and physiological results of miscegenation, particularly in so far as first generation crosses are concerned. Does a new "racial" as well as a new "social" type emerge, how far can that type be regarded as standardized, and, most important, are its intellectual and bodily characteristics inherently superior, or not, to those of its begetters? All these are questions which emphatically cannot be answered merely by reference to or consideration of social factors and historical accident; and excellently as the contributors deploy and analyze the very illuminating cultural evidence to hand, there is somehow a sense of incompleteness that attaches to a work on race and race relations which omits any serious reference to the eugenic side of its subject-matter. Environment, one agrees, is likely to be an influential foster-parent to the child; that she is also its uterine mother seems still more than a little dubious.

K. L. LITTLE.

PSYCHOLOGY

Vernon, Philip E., M.A., Ph.D. *The Measurement of Abilities.* London, 1940. The University of London Press. Pp. 308. Price 10s. 6d. net.

THE measurement of abilities is a vital part of the work of all teachers, vocational guiders and many medical practitioners. Consideration of the measurements made is important to employers, parents, social workers and sociologists. But until recently even the most scientifically careful among us have been content with standards of measurement which were scandalously inaccurate. We neither knew what we were measuring or how, exactly, we were measuring it. In recent years a good deal of research into the statistics of mental measurement and into the content of tests and examinations has been undertaken. Much of this is, however, of considerable theoretical complexity, and beyond the reach of those not mathematically inclined, or whose own training was finished before the newer methods were developed. The material is, moreover, largely scattered among many British and American periodicals, and difficult of access.

Dr. Vernon's book begins with an exposition of the statistical theory necessary for anyone responsible for either examining or mental testing, and goes on to discuss the validity and reliability of various systems of marking and of the diagnostic and prognostic value of most of the better-known types of mental tests and ordinary examinations. It is written primarily for teachers, psychologists and doctors, and has the very great merit of being the work of a teacher who really understands the difficulties of his pupils—one of the rarest attributes among teachers of mathematics. So often the first

and simplest steps, which seem almost self-evident to the expositor, are left insufficiently explained, and the abashed pupil, feeling stupid, is ashamed to ask about them. Dr. Vernon makes each stage perfectly clear as he goes along, and gives worked examples of the problems he is discussing, without however falling into the error of insulting the intelligence of his readers. The statistical methods for handling frequency distributions, the theory of sampling, and the measurement of correlation are all explained, and what conclusions can validly be drawn from material obtained by these methods. Teachers will read with great interest, and probably some dismay, what the author has to say about school marks.

In the second section of the book, dealing with mental tests, are brought together the results of recent research and discussion concerning the abilities measured by the current tests, how far the various tests are adequate to their purpose, and what pitfalls can be avoided in using them. Many suggestions for improvement in methods are made, and a most useful list is given of the mental tests available in this country, with particulars of age limits, times, publishers, prices, and norms of scores.

The final chapters are devoted to an examination of examinations. The relative merits of the essay type most normally used in this country and the newer, more objective type, are discussed. The new-type examination is widely employed in America, but has so far been rather neglected in Britain. Dr. Vernon considers that more attention to its possibilities might be given here, and he gives valuable advice for those about to construct such tests. To illustrate his points he includes a complete examination paper for students of mental measurement and statistics. Incidentally, this would make a useful test for readers of the book who are newcomers to its problems and would like to discover what it has taught them. A glance through the bibliography which ends the volume reminds one that a large body of investigators are slowly accumulating a mass of facts and theories relevant to the work of practising teachers and clinicians, which the greater number of these people totally neglect.

It is to be hoped that this book will be widely read. Much injustice is done to examinees through the sheer inefficiency of examiners, and a thorough study of the arguments presented should at least form a starting point for improvement both in obtaining and interpreting measurements of abilities.

EVELYN LAWRENCE.

Brown, William, D.M., D.Sc., F.R.C.P. *Psychology and Psychotherapy*. London, 1940. Edward Arnold. Pp. 260. Price 12s. 6d.

THIS is the fourth edition of a book originally published in 1920. It was substantially rewritten for the third edition of 1934, and has now been reissued with the appendices on correlational psychology omitted, and two new chapters on "Sublimation" and "The Problems of Later Life," added.

It is one of those books of which it is difficult to visualize the possible readers as any kind of group. Dr. Brown, in years of academic and clinical experience, has evolved a personal standpoint which is based on an attempt to see in logical relationship and some wholeness the views of many differing psychological authorities. It is doubtful, however, whether this standpoint can be adequately explained in a short book, especially when part of its space is devoted to such material as a semi-popular address on the psychological problems of later life delivered under the auspices of the Alliance of Honour. The relation between the theories of Freud and those of other contemporary writers, the relation of mind to body, the treatment of the neuroses, are highly technical problems needing lengthy exposition. They have here to be condensed and deprived of much of the illustrative material which would enable the arguments to be fairly judged. The case histories included are too brief to illustrate in any detail the therapeutic methods employed. One gets the impression that slight treatment, largely by suggestion, is often regarded as sufficient on