

# **BACKWARD CHILDREN**

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Backward children by Arthur Holmes

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**ARTHUR HOLMES**

**BACKWARD  
CHILDREN**



# BACKWARD CHILDREN

*By*

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Conservation of the Child*

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH SERIES

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TO MY WIFE

WHOSE QUIET DEVOTION TO STUDY  
UNDER DIFFICULTIES HAS SO MANY TIMES  
INSPIRED MY FALTERING  
DILIGENCE

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

We are these days reading and hearing a good deal about backward children. When is a child backward? May he be backward in some ways and forward in others? Are children backward by birth, or are they made so by neglect or bad methods of training? What are the signs of backwardness? Is there any way of determining accurately whether or not a given child is permanently arrested? Could the parent and the teacher help an unfortunate child if they could early detect his shortcomings? What part do physical causes play in mental and moral backwardness? Is retardation in childhood and youth ever due to the use of stimulants such as tea, coffee, cocoa and alcoholic beverages? What part does food play in determining whether or not a child will be normal intellectually and morally?

These questions and others like them are of supreme importance to-day to teachers and parents. People are seeking light from every source on the problems of the backward child. It is the purpose of this volume to discuss all these matters in a scientific but at the same time simple, concrete and practical way. The author, Dean Holmes, has had unusual opportunities to study the subject of backwardness in its various aspects, theoretical and practical. He is one of the very small number of persons in this country who have dealt with the subnormal child in the laboratory and the clinic as well as in the home and the school. He has given us new conceptions of what backwardness



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means, and especially of its varieties, its causes, and practical remedies therefor in home and school.

There is not much literature available in English on the subject of backward children, and even the few books and articles that are accessible deal with the subject in a rather general way. Dean Holmes, however, as the title of his volume indicates, treats concrete cases of backwardness. He pictures vividly the typical varieties of children who give parents and teachers trouble. He goes into sufficient detail so that the type can be easily recognized. Instead of discussing the characteristics of the various types in abstract terms, he simply lets us see a genuine representative of each type. Physical characteristics are described, and shortcomings depicted. The method of treatment is given in the same detailed way; and many of these cases have been followed by Dean Holmes far enough so that he has been able to observe the results of the remedies that have been applied. This is the mode of procedure throughout the book, which gives it a very objective, concrete and practical value.

The parent, teacher, medical inspector, or clinician can use Dean Holmes' book in much the same way that a botanist, say, would use a key to the flowers he is identifying and classifying. Most books dealing with human nature do not describe types so that they can be recognized by the non-expert. But this is one of the virtues, and it is an important one, of *Backward Children*. It has the further virtue of being written in a sympathetic spirit. The author feels tenderly for these children who in one way or another

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can not adapt themselves to the situations in which they are placed. No one will doubt that he is eager to instruct those who have to deal with such children how to discover the cause of their abnormality, whether of intellect or of character, and then how to apply effective remedies.

The book is written in a simple graceful style without affectation or pretense. It is particularly free from technical or professional terminology so that the layman can read it with ease and with pleasure.

M. V. O'SHEA.

Madison, Wisconsin.

