

**ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY AND
ITS EDUCATIONAL
APPLICATIONS
(PUBLISHED IN ITS FIRST EDITION
AS ECHO PERSONALITIES)**

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Abnormal psychology and its educational applications (published in its first edition as Echo personalities) by Frank Watts

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FRANK WATTS

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SOME PRESS NOTICES OF FIRST EDITION

"This excellent little book contains much that is valuable for those engaged in training the young."—*Inquirer*.

"Of deep interest to others than teachers."—*Athenæum*.

"This is a very clear and admirable study . . . his handling of the problem of repression in education seems to us excellent. We hope this little book may find its way into the studies of our teachers."—*Challenge*.

"This is a book which will be found of use and interest to teachers in particular, though all who are interested in the education of normal and abnormal children should find it stimulating and suggestive."—*Lancet*.

"Mr. Watts has given us a distinct contribution to educational literature."—*Teachers' Times*.

"No progressive educator should be without this little book."—*Psychological Bulletin*.

Abnormal Psychology

And its Educational Applications

(Published in its First Edition as
Echo Personalities)

BY

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PREFACE

WITH the exhaustion of the first edition of *Echo Personalities* I have yielded to the advice of many friends to re-issue this book with a title more likely to indicate the nature of its contents. The favourable reception of the previous edition probably means that many parents and teachers who were unable to detect a connection—which was certainly not obvious—between the older title and the training of children may read the revised edition and find it useful.

Some changes have been made. The chapters have been subdivided, the third and fourth being extended. Chapter V on the Psychology of the Supernormal Mind, has been cut out altogether and awaits more adequate treatment.

F. W.

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Abnormal Psychology

CHAPTER I

THE SCOPE OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

§ 1. THE PRE-SCIENTIFIC VIEW OF MENTAL ABNORMALITY

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY is the somewhat precocious offspring of the recent happy union of medicine and general psychology, those two sciences which divide the difficult task of providing a knowledge of the ways and means whereby humanity may continue to keep itself sound in body and sane in mind. According to the view of many the scope of the psychology of the abnormal should be limited merely to the investigation of the phenomena of psychopathology. Now, it is seriously to be questioned whether this limited view of the scope of the subject is the most profitable one. It is beyond doubt, however, that the deliberate and systematic study of the subject for the sake of the light it may throw upon the functioning of the normal mind is quite a modern undertaking. A few brief remarks will serve to make this point clear.

The conception of the study of the abnormal as an aid to the understanding of the normal was

naturally impossible while the obvious and more startling differences between normal and abnormal minds obscured their fundamental similarities; indeed, as long as the abnormal was thought to comprise factors at once mysteriously incomprehensible and unique, so long was the serious and disinterested study of the subject held to be a matter suitable merely for the trivial and indolent attentions of the more eccentrically minded among philosophers, litterateurs, and doctors. It is noteworthy, therefore, that all the terms used in the pre-scientific period to denote abnormal qualities and conditions of mind were terms which stressed the facts of difference between the abnormal and the normal, and the appearance in English of the word "abnormal" itself, suggesting *some* relation at least with the normal, between the years 1830 and 1840, may well seem to herald in its origin and first use a view and treatment of mental anomalies more in accordance with the dictates of common sense.¹

Until almost as late as our own times, it was the universal custom to explain unusual types of mind among men and women by reference to the agency of gods or of demons, just as the manifestations under notice were of a benevolent or a malevolent character. The sacred writings of all peoples may be made to yield abundant examples of this method of explanation. The Jews, for example, depicted King Saul in his periods of ungoverned fury as the prey of an alien and malignant spirit,

¹ In the *Dictionary of Medicine* compiled by Hoblyn in 1835, the term "abnormal" does not appear, but a variant of the term, namely, "anormal," makes its maiden appearance in print instead,