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DULL AND BACKWARD CHILDREN.

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THE terms "backward" and "dull" are purely arbitrary and signify merely, when applied to a child, that the individual using them regards the child as below the normal standard in mental attainments. They have a different meaning when used by different observers. Thus, the school teacher will give an educational value and will often dub a child as dull and backward if his educational standard is low in certain aspects, for instance, if he fails to make progress in

reading or spelling, or fails to appreciate the value of figures. The same child, as judged by his capabilities other than those in scholastic subjects, may be an average or even exceptionally useful citizen. In this lecture I propose to use the words "backwardness" and "dullness" in their broadest meaning, and not merely in a scholastic sense. In the great majority of cases backwardness in school attainments and the general mental outfit are correspondingly weak, but in some the failure to progress at school is due to a lack of certain mental attributes distinct from mental backwardness considered as a whole.

Regarding backwardness in this broad sense, we may next consider how its examples can be classified, for by some classification we can, I think, approach the subject