

## VII.—PHILOSOPHY AT OXFORD.

No one looking at the books of the last ten or fifteen years can repeat the complaint that the English are indifferent to philosophy. Mill, Herbert Spencer, Bain, Lewes, Jevons, H. Sidgwick, the English translators of Comte, have issued volume upon volume—books which are not only printed, but circulated and read—and which have given rise to animated controversy. The widespread interest excited among us by philosophical discussion has no parallel in any other part of Europe; it would be impossible in Germany, which a short time since had the monopoly of speculation.

To this literature, Oxford has made contributions. But the university of Duns Scotus and Occam is no longer the *foyer* of Anglican speculation. The leaders of thought in England are outside us. We but participate in the thought process. It reaches us through the books which are written; which we read; which interest us a little on their own account; chiefly, in as far as they furnish material for examination papers.

Of this transfer of the speculative function, from the seat of learning to the capital, various causes have been assigned. The once reigning explanation, set on foot by Adam Smith and the economists, which ascribed it to the benumbing power of endowments, is no longer tenable in view of the surprising activity which Oxford has recently developed. The periodical press—daily, monthly, quarterly—is known to be largely in the hands of Oxford men. The *furor* for lectures and examinations, though here Cambridge takes the *pas*, is largely fomented by Oxford energy. And within the precincts of the place, at no period in our annals has the teaching of the young been so various, so extended over the elements of many branches, so carefully brought home to each individual student, as it is at present. The one thought of the leading spirits among us is how we can enlarge the field of our studies, and incorporate those branches of knowledge which still remain undomesticated in Oxford.

It is not then because philosophy is endowed here that it pines. For other things are equally endowed, and they do not decay in consequence.

The new school of economists have therefore inverted the doctrine of Adam Smith. For fifty years we meekly submitted to be told that we did nothing because we were overpaid. That idea took root, and flourished in the public mind. No sooner was it full-grown and about to bear fruit in disendowment, than it was found that the economists had changed their minds. Instead of too much money, it has been discovered



that it is the having too little money that has impoverished learning and science in the university. The new pamphlets, which discuss university reform on commercial principles, concur in one point, viz. : that more money spent on it is all that is wanted to make any subject whatever flourish and abound among us.

I for one cordially concur in desiring a redistribution of the endowment fund in our university. But I am not so sanguine as to think that any such redistribution would do anything towards raising a school of philosophy in this place, or in elevating our general studies to the point of contact with philosophy. The causes of the atrophy of philosophy here are not to be found in its being disendowed. Indeed, it inherits its share of endowments. There are the philosophical chairs, and it has the fellowships in common with any other pursuit. But as, taking the widest view of speculation, the theological chairs may fairly be counted as its opportunities, philosophical thought may be said to enjoy quite exceptional encouragement from endowments.

The truth is that whatever influence for good or for evil endowments may exercise over other branches of learning, philosophical speculation is of a nature not within the control of commercial cause and effect. The genuine philosopher is as Carlyle's hero. When you call for him he will not come, and, when he comes, we thrust him from us. Philosophical lore, learning in the history of philosophy, the literature of the subject, may be obtained on demand. Philosophy is like religion ; it is a temper, a habit of mind—not so much anything *per se*, as a form under which we think our thoughts and live our life. Philosophical speculation, inasmuch as it implies an unaffected and unbribed interest in truth—truth useless and loved for the pleasure of contemplating it—cannot be had to order.

The cause of the decay of philosophical interest in the university is to be found in considerations of wider scope. I can do no more than very briefly indicate them.

The speculative spirit in Oxford has always been bound up with theology, and animated by religious interests. To go no further back than the first quarter of the present century ; there existed at that period in the university a pronounced and independent movement of mind. This had its focus in Oriel common-room. This very select society had become such by having imposed a new test of qualification for admittance. Instead of attainments it required originality of mind. Intellect, not scholarship, was the mark of a Fellow of Oriel. Not only did it become the highest distinction in the university to be a Fellow of Oriel, but the fellows were really men



having an individual stamp. There was the widest diversity of opinion, and a fermentation of thought maintained among them, which was as a stimulating leaven in the mass of university torpor. Of course there was much disputatiousness, much "logomachy," much sophistry. But at bottom their intellectual effort went to sound and probe the sources of the thought and feeling of their age. Thus this effort was a truly philosophical effort, inasmuch as it sought to pass by the war of opinion to the causes of opinion. It was lamentably crippled, incomplete, shapeless. There was no light on this arena. The wrestling of these heroes was as the wrestling of men bound with chains in the vaults of a dark prison. A philosophy must be the concentrated expression of the life of the period. The thinking of these men did not amount to a philosophy, for they could not grasp in its totality the self-consciousness of their generation. The movement of mind, of which I speak, was not even a school, for it contained men of directly opposite opinions, and included Hampden with Keble, Arnold (Dr.) with Newman, Blanco White with Whately. What was wanting to these men was knowledge. They wanted a knowledge of the past, a knowledge of the present, and of the thread by which the present is tied to the past. They were imperfectly acquainted with the condition of their own England. Of Hegel or Schleiermacher they had never heard the names. Of Chateaubriand, de Maistre, or de Bonald they had probably never read a line. But they were themselves doing blindly and in a corner what Schleiermacher and Chateaubriand were doing in the full blaze of day. They were assisting at the resuscitation of religious sentiment, at the attempt to re-unite Christianity with the thoughts of the age. So the movement had this attribute of a philosophy, that it went down below the surface of popular opinion and sentiment in search of the principles on which such opinion and sentiment could be based.

This was the first stage of Oxford thought in the nineteenth century, which may be taken as occupying the first thirty years of the period.

Out of this *first* phase of intellect, which was neither a philosophy nor a school of thought, but a vague state of inquiry, arose the *second* which filled the second quarter of the century. This second phase is connected with the well-known name of Dr. Newman. In this second period the vague intellectualism of the previous generation had become a school. It had definite opinions, and worked in a prescribed direction. This—the Tractarian movement—was primarily a religious movement, and so far does not belong to the chapter of university history which I have undertaken to write. This movement presents



itself to the political historian as an uprising of the Church of England, a mere resuscitation of the Church spirit which had been dormant since the extinction of Jacobitism about 1760. And such, in fact, it was. Yet as far as our university interests were involved in it, this church movement was merely the outside form which was taken on by an intellectual movement. The agents of the church movement, little as they thought it, were determined by the secular process of thought which was working itself out through the theological controversy which raged from 1830 to 1848.

The best heads of the party, Mr. Ward, Mr. Thomas Mozley in the *British Critic*, above all, Dr. Newman, endeavoured not merely to justify their position by argument, but fairly tried to find the intellectual standing ground on which their *de facto* convictions rested. They did not like Blanco White re-examine these convictions in their essence, but they did try to go back to their logical antecedents. The first movement, prior to 1830, failed of being a philosophy because it had not breadth enough to compass and express the feeling of its generation. This second—the Tractarian—movement, fell still further short of being an adequate representative of the mind of the period. It not only did not comprehend its age, but it developed itself in antagonism to its age. The first period had tried, feebly and without knowledge, to formulate the thought of the time. The effort of Dr. Newman was directed to produce a principle which should counteract the popular prejudices. He sought not to expound and verify the elements of belief which were floating in his atmosphere, but to nullify and counterwork them. His intellectual effort was one, not only of re-action, but of counter-action. In an honest endeavour to get nearer to the truth of things than the conventional Philistinism of "liberal" politicians, Dr. Newman dug down and found a little below the surface the disused principle of "authority." Disgusted with the cant phrases of reform oratory of his day, he missed the deeper principle of Reason, which all the while lay below the surface of the Whig political tradition. He broke not only with the constitutional principles of 1688, but with reason. He threw off not only the scum of democratic lawlessness, but the allegiance which the individual understanding owes to the universal reason, and too hastily concluded that authority could supply a basis for a philosophic belief. Long before Dr. Newman gave in his adhesion to the Papal Church, the philosophic basis of his mind had anticipated the Syllabus and the Encyclical.

It is unnecessary to speculate on what might have been the next form of thought in the university, had Dr. Newman's school carried on the movement which he initiated and con-



ducted. The union of the principle of authority with unlimited freedom of metaphysical speculation has been tried before in the history of Europe, and has produced no riper fruit than chicane and mystification, the volatilisation of thought, casuistical probabilism, with the result of the general humiliation of the intellect in the presence of the practical wielders of power and wealth.

Such might have been the case had the movement conducted by Dr. Newman continued and developed itself logically. But it did not continue. It was arrested suddenly by events which belong to church history, not to the history of philosophy. When the leaders quitted the university and the national church the rank and file of the party were at first stunned by the blow. But this was only a temporary dispersion. They soon re-assembled their forces. Intellect was gone from among them, but on a review of their strength they found that its loss was compensated by numbers and discipline. What under Dr. Newman had been a school of theological thought, became in the next generation an ecclesiastical party. This is the *third* phase of the Oxford movement, and it is in the middle of this that we are at present living.

It has been necessary to retrace so much of our past university life in order to deduce the true cause of the present stagnation of philosophical thought among us. In the *first* period, 1800-30, there was free movement, but blind groping, working its way out of the mist of insular prejudice in which the French universal empire had enveloped the "nation of shopkeepers." In the *second* period, 1830-48, though the terms of the controversy were religious, there was yet a philosophical principle at stake. The controversy on "private judgment" involved, if it did not elucidate, the question of reason *v.* authority. The dispute as to the merits of the Reformation was not a mere theological quarrel, it inevitably carried the thoughts of the disputants to the ultimate criterion of belief. At any rate, as the warfare was conducted by the press, by argumentative pamphlet, or learned volume, there was life which was favourable to thinking. It may be quite true that theological discussion is never on the level of philosophical discussion, as it is always more or less coloured by party spirit, or affected by church interests, and that hence it is never regarded with the respect which is accorded to disputed speculation in any other field. Still discussion, even though contaminated by the impurities of party passion, is yet water from the well of mind. Discussion breaks up the stagnation of fixed opinions. In one of his latest writings Dr. Newman has described the ordinary state of the average Englishman's mind.



"Great numbers of men refuse to inquire at all, they put the subject of religion aside altogether; others are not serious enough to care about questions of truth and duty and to entertain them; and to numbers, from their temper of mind, or the absence of doubt, or a dormant intellect, it does not occur to inquire why or what they believe; many, though they tried, could not do so in any satisfactory way." (*Grammar of Assent*, p 380.) This sentence indicates with tolerable precision the scope and the limitation of the inquiry which Dr. Newman inaugurated. "To numbers from . . . the absence of doubt, or a dormant intellect, it does not occur to inquire why, or what, they believe." That is, we believe something first, and then we inquire why we believe it. The *credendum* is given, and we are to find rational grounds on which to rest it. This is the limitation of Newman's religious thought. But it is thought, for it inquires. It inquires, indeed, not into truth, but, some propositions being assumed true, it desires a quasi-philosophical representation of them in the intellect. Any how intelligence is at work upon the mental content. This was the service Dr. Newman rendered to philosophy in Oxford. We may invert Bacon's dictum and say "a superficial religion leads away from philosophy, a deeper religion leads to it."

All this mental movement ceased with Dr. Newman's abdication. Instead of spiritual conflict through the press, the weapons of our warfare now are carnal and political. Discussion is extinct, and controversy has taken its place. Even of controversy there is little; the theologians have betaken themselves to denunciation. The university, with a democratic constitution, is under the terrorism of an ecclesiastical Ring, whose final triumph would be clerical domination. This disturbed atmosphere is obviously most unfavourable to speculative thought. The philosophic energy is of the nature of contemplation. It is always found to be in an inverse ratio to outward activity. It requires as its conditions retirement from strife, detachment from interests, above all mental freedom. It cannot be expected to exist in a place where the more active minds find themselves engaged in drilling minorities of resistance; where those who, forty years ago, would have been occupied in searching the fathers or schoolmen for arguments, are now the wire-pullers of a division in congregation or of an election to the hebdomadal council!

This diversion of energy from theological debate to platform intrigue and manœuvre is one cause of the weakness of philosophical speculation among us. But it is only one cause. Another and a weighty influence, which is secretly undermining not only philosophical thought, but the genuineness of all



study among us, remains to be noticed. This is the false direction of elementary teaching given to it by the system of honours and prizes.

It is sometimes thought that there is an essential connection between progressive knowledge and teaching. Beginners inevitably think so, for every beginner finds himself helped by going over and over the elementary ground. But after progress has reached a certain point, to be constantly dwelling upon the alphabet of the science, ceases to be a function of the understanding, and becomes mechanical routine. Now the prize-system as worked by us is a system under which the pupil is carefully excluded from contact with progressive knowledge, or knowledge in a state of movement and fermentation.

That teaching is not *per se* destructive of the love of knowledge may be admitted. It is sufficient to turn to the precedent of Germany in the last generation. The great manifestation of speculative intellect in that country, in the period which was closed by 1848, was professorial. Schleiermacher and Hegel, to name only two names, were eminently teachers. Did not Niebuhr apply to his class, Pyrrhus's words to his soldiers, "Ye are my wings!" And did not Gervinus write that "the best audience which a thinker can address, the richest soil which he can propose to himself to cultivate, is the ingenuous youth who fill our universities." Was it not the emulation of teaching, the mutual rivalry of the small universities, which stimulated the research of the biologist, or inspired the deep-musing idealist, in that heroic age of German leadership of thought which is now a past age? Every thinker desires to communicate his thoughts; and how much closer and more encouraging is the sympathy of disciples to whom you can speak than that of a public for whom you can only write!

But among us there is a zeal of teaching which is not inspired by progressive knowledge. The whole of the literary and philosophical teaching in Oxford is in the hands of young men—the tutors of the colleges. As a class these men abound when they begin life in energy and ability. They overflow with zeal, and the ambition to act upon their pupils. But the zeal is not the zeal of the enthusiastic votary of science, who sees a vista of infinite progress opening before him, and desires to associate younger minds in following up the track. The young teacher as turned out by us has never been on any such track. He is an honour-man and a prize-man; *voilà tout!* and he knows the sure road to make others win honours and prizes, the road by which he himself won them. Even if he has better aspirations, he must not indulge them. He is embarked on the career of teaching, at twenty-five, say; and he finds him-



self at once the slave of a great teaching engine, which drives him day by day in a round of mechanical work. There is no stepping aside; if you fall out of the ranks, you perish. Study, or research, or self-improvement, is out of the question. The most conscientious tutor has the least leisure for his own purposes, as he is most anxious to do justice to his pupils. The desire of knowledge in the tutor who has once entered the lists of competition with the other tutors, if he ever possessed it, first becomes dormant, and then dies out. The teacher must not lose a moment in teaching a subject, in searching out its foundations, in inspiring his pupils with a love for it, with a desire to pursue it in a spirit of thoroughness. He must crowd into the year and a half of preparation a miscellaneous assortment of ready-made propositions upon the leading topics of philosophy, history, politics, and literature. Our system has gradually become one which carefully excludes thoroughness. It is the exaltation of "smattering" into a method. If the teacher goes about to give instruction in a subject, the pupils fall away from him. Their instinct tells them that time so spent is time lost. Hence the prize-student never goes near the professors. Many of our professorial chairs are filled by eminent men, masters in their department, and willing to give instruction in it. The existence among us of such men is of incalculable value. Few as they are, they are the salt without which the university would indeed have little savour. But they are entirely outside the practical working of the Oxford schools. If there are any professors who undertake the work of preparing young men for the examinations, they act thus in the capacity of tutors, and are less sought after in this capacity than younger men fresh from the schools, whose zeal is more alert, and whose interest is fresher. It is a recognised fact that the younger tutors are better than the middle-aged men, and that advance in thought and knowledge creates a gulf between the teacher and his scholars, who carefully keep away from such men, as persons who cannot help them towards the attainment of a first-class. What the aspirant for honours requires is a *répétiteur*, who knows "the schools," and who will look over essays for him, teaching him how to collect telling language, and arrange it in a form adequate to the expected question. It soon becomes indifferent to the teacher on what subject he lectures. The process of training for the race is the commanding interest. Training, be it observed, not intellectual discipline, not training in investigation, in research, in scientific procedure, but in the art of producing a clever answer to a question on a subject of which you have no real knowledge.



Such being the general conditions under which teaching here is carried on, it is easy to see what must become of Philosophy. For speculative effort, there is no place in such a system. For an original thinker to stand forward to expound a philosophy, to demand of his followers habits of meditative thought, to rouse the spirit of inquiry, to offer a connected scheme of life and mind, or a synthesis of the sciences, would be impossible. He would lecture to the walls. A professor may write, and address the public, but this is not professorial action; it is not localised in Oxford more than in London where his book is published.

Speculative philosophy, then, of the first order has no place in our lecture-rooms. So my history of philosophy in Oxford seems to sum itself up after all in the laconic formula of the often-cited chapter in Horrebow. But even under the *régime* of examinational tyranny under which we are living, all life is not extinct in our philosophical studies.

For such philosophical teaching as exists among us we must look to the "school" of classics, or "*Litteræ Humaniores*." We have in Oxford no "moral science tripos." Philosophy has no substantive existence of its own. It is an appendage of our classical training. "Classics" have always been the strength of Oxford education. They are still. Distinction in the final school of "*Litt. Hum.*" is still the crowning ambition of a student's career. And it has been one of the best traditions of the place that in the study of the classics "things" were of higher value than "words." Even in the feeblest times we have held on as well as we could to the substance of the classical writers. Thus it has come to pass that of the great encyclopædia of Greek thought which goes under the name of Aristotle, we have never let go our hold on the *Logic* and the *Ethics*. I will not inquire how much of the vitality of these two subjects among us is due to the fact that the matter of them is eminently "examinable" matter. Every practical examiner knows that while it is difficult to frame a question that shall bind an examinee to a definite answer upon Plato, Aristotle possesses this useful quality in the highest degree. Be this as it may, the Aristotelian logic and ethics have survived among us, and around this branch of our classical reading has gathered what philosophical study we have. The prescribed philosophical curriculum as it stands at present is as follows:

*Logic.* The outlines of Moral Philosophy. The outlines of Political Philosophy. Under the head of *Logic* candidates are recommended to study the following subjects:—The nature and origin of knowledge; the relation of language to thought; the history of logic in Greece to the time of Aristotle; the theory of syllogism; scientific method, including a comparison of the methods of different sciences and the principles of historical evidence. Questions will be set in *Trendelenburg's Elements*



Log. Arist. and in Bacon's *Novum Organum*. Under the head of Political Philosophy candidates are recommended to study the following subjects:—The origin and growth of society; political institutions and forms of government with especial reference to the history of Greece and Rome; the sphere and duties of government; the leading principles of political economy.

The following books are prescribed for the examination:—Plato's *Republic*, *Protagoras*, *Phædrus*, *Gorgias*, *Laws* 3, 7, 10. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*. Locke on the Human Understanding, with either Butler's *Sermons* or Hume's *Inquiry* concerning the principles of Morals. The transcendental *Ästhetik* and *Analytik* in Kant's *Kritik*, and the *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, with the two chapters of the *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, entitled severally *Von den Grundsätzen*, and *Von den Triebfedern, der reinen praktischen Vernunft*. (The above list of books is a list out of which the candidate is to choose three books, one of which must be Plato and one Aristotle.)

Candidates will be expected to show such knowledge of the history of philosophy, or of the history of the period of philosophy to which the philosophical authors offered by them, either as stated, or as special subjects, belong, as shall be necessary for the profitable study of these authors.

The above are the requirements of the "classical" examination. In addition, the candidate *may* bring up as a voluntary supplement one out of the following special subjects:—

1. Aristotle *De Anima*.—2. The philosophy of the Eleatics, Heracliteans, and Megarians, with the *Theætetus* and *Sophist* of Plato.—3. The philosophy of the Stoics and Epicureans with the discourses of *Epictetus*, and *Diogenes Laërtius*, b. 10.—4. The philosophy of Hume and Berkeley, with Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge*, *Alciphron*, and *Theory of Vision*, and with Hume's *Inquiry* concerning Human Understanding.—5. Political economy, with one or more treatises to be selected by the candidate.

Whatever faults a fastidious critic might find in this bill of fare, at least he must admit that there is enough of it! If the Oxford curriculum contains all this, it must be mere calumny to say that philosophy has no place among us. There is enough here to fill up not merely two years, but ten years of any student's life! If there are classes of young men who are learning these things, there must also be teachers who are teaching them. Class-rooms which resound with these names, and handle these inviting themes, must be rich in interest of the loftiest kind, and must provide the best intellectual stimulant.

But the reality is very different from the show upon paper. The "special subject," which figures so large upon the programme, does not come into play at all. As a candidate can obtain his first-class quite as well without, as with, a special subject, it would be supererogatory to offer it. It would savour of presumptuous vanity in him to parade himself as an Admirable Crichton before the examiners with a pageantry of acquisition, which was useless for the sole purpose of the examination—that of awarding the honours. Besides, the special



supplementary subject cannot be offered unless the candidate has already presented a "third book"—itself an extra. The special subject then stands in the Calendar for ornament rather than for use.

Even after this gaud has been stripped off, and the "third book" with it, there remains a substantial quantum of "philosophy" in the examination, which must stop the mouth of the calumnious critic, who would charge neglect of the subject upon the university.

Let us look into the case a little more closely. For his whole preparation for this ordeal, the examination in "*Litteræ Humaniores*," the student has at most two years—academical years; many have only one and a half years. Philosophy is only a portion of what he has to prepare. Under the head of the "*Histories of Ancient Greece and Rome*," a table of requirement is presented, which I need not transcribe here, but which in compass of matter is not behind that which prescribes the philosophical apparatus. But history and philosophy are not the only employment of the student's two years, if he can afford two years. There is a third element called in the syllabus, "*The Greek and Latin languages*." It is true that this magnificent denomination shrinks, in the fact, to what the student calls his "texts." Now even if we allow that this part of his preparation has been spread over the first year of his college course, and even was begun at school, yet a large part of his two final years must necessarily be claimed by conning texts so difficult as the "*Ethics*," "*Republic*," *Thucydides*, *Herodotus*, *Polybius*, *Tacitus*, with the closeness and frequency which will enable him to dash off in three hours accurate translations of long passages from them at sight. And failure in this branch of the examination, it is generally held, though there is some difference of opinion and practice on this point, cannot be compensated by other merits. The "texts," therefore, besides the time demanded for them, constitute what we may call a preference mortgage on the student's industry. When all time thus claimed has been deducted, how little of the two years is left for the stowage of all that rich cargo of philosophy!

I wish to have it borne in mind by my readers that I am not now bringing under consideration the Oxford literary curriculum in its whole results on the mind and character. I am to speak only of that single element which enters into its composition under the name of philosophy. I have never, in the capacity of examiner, analysed the papers which are handed in in the examination-rooms as the results of these two years' preparation, without astonishment at the combination of scholarship, varied



knowledge, command of topic, and scientific vocabulary, which the candidates can bring to bear upon the questions ! I have felt a thrill of awe at standing in the presence of such matured intellectual development detected in young men scarcely out of their teens ! The thought has been inevitably forced upon me : If these minds are already arrived at this stage at twenty-one, where will they be at forty ; surely these young men have used their time well, who in the third part of (say) two years have exhausted the process of human thought from Thales to Hegel ; they can have nothing more to learn !

A nearer acquaintance, however, with the whole result of the system dispels the illusion. If from the papers we turn to the minds from which all this clever writing has emanated, we shall find no trace of any philosophical culture in them. The question, or thesis, is on a philosophical subject, but the process by which the question has been answered has been not a philosophical action of mind, but a purely literary or compositional process. Looking at the paper of questions which are set would be enough to convince us that they could not be answered by mere knowledge of the subject—such knowledge as could be acquired in the third part of two years. Quite another way must be taken in the preparation of the candidate. For two years the pupil is thus forced along a false road of study in which neither science nor philosophy encounter him. Memory is really almost the only faculty called into play. Were they facts with which the memory is thus charged, the inadequacy of the system would be apparent at once. But in the preparation for this examination, instead of facts, the memory is charged with generalised formulas, with expressions and solutions which are derived ready-made from the tutor. The first principle of philosophical, nay of intellectual, training, viz., that all should be educed from the pupil's own mind, is here inverted ; all is poured into him by his teacher. The teacher does as much, and the pupil as little, as possible. The utmost that the student can acquire from the system is that he has learned to write in the newest style of thought, and to manipulate the phrases of the last popular treatise. This innocent *jeu de mots*, however, furnishes a favourite text for the ecclesiastical platform, on which we have Oxford "teaching" denounced as sceptical, infidel, anti-Christian. If those who hold this language wished really to secure the interests of sound learning in the university, they would direct their efforts not against "scepticism," but against the pretentious and hollow superficiality of the training for the philosophical school. Out of this training some few stronger natures may emerge unscathed, A still smaller number of the



most vigorous may even be braced by re-action against the oppression to which their minds have been subjected. But in the average Oxford prize-men we too plainly recognise the symptoms which indicate that he has suffered from the forcing-house ; mental pallor, moral indifferentism, the cynical sneer at others' effort, the absence in himself of any high ideal. He knows of everything, and truly knows nothing. For him intellectual enjoyment is passed away ; the taste for reading which he brought to college he has lost there ; he has lost reverence without acquiring insight ; he remains an intellectual *roué*, having forfeited the native instinct of curiosity, of which, as Aristotle says, Philosophy was born.

Philosophical initiative being thus crushed between the upper millstone of ecclesiastical terror, and the lower millstone of the competition machine, has its one refuge in literature. Oxford continues to contribute its share to philosophical publication, a share, however, in which translation or criticism greatly preponderate over original investigation. My report would not be complete without a mention of some of the books most recently published.

(1.) The first place is due to Mr. Jowett's translation of Plato,\* a work of stupendous labour by one whose activity in other directions is never impeded by the drudgery of the desk. As a translation these volumes belong to the province of the philological critic. The introduction and appendices bring them into our catalogue of philosophical books. Among the "additions" which the title-page of this second edition speaks of, may be mentioned the criticism of utilitarianism in the introduction to the *Philebus*, and that of Hegelianism in the introduction to the *Sophist*.

(2.) Messrs. Green and Grose have reprinted Hume's philosophical works.† The introductory dissertation by the first-named editor is of such extent and mark as to call for substantive notice. I must express my regret that an introduction to another book should have been chosen as the vehicle of matter which is considerable enough to form an independent treatise. From a publisher's point of view an octavo volume, a reprint of a classic, is disproportionately distributed, when, of its 560 pages, 300 are occupied by the modern editor's words. From

\* *The Dialogues of Plato* translated into English, with analyses and introduction by B. Jowett, M.A., second edition revised and corrected.—Five vols. 8vo. Oxford "Clarendon Press," 1875.

† *Hume's Philosophical Works*, edited with preliminary dissertations and notes by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose.—4 vols. 8vo. Longman, 1874, 5.



an editor's point of view, it is a doubtful recommendation of the author you are reprinting to erect against him an apparatus of hostile criticism so elaborate and destructive as Mr. Green's of Hume. The effect of this introduction, on the mind of the reader who has gone through it, is to convince him that he need never again look into Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature* ! Lastly, from an author's point of view, it is certain that whatever reputation was to be earned in such a field, Mr. Green has foregone by hiding his talent in an introduction. He will hardly get credit for the amount of patient thinking, or for the labour of comparison and verification of passages in Hume, and in the discursive Locke, which he has gone through. It may be conjectured that the editor began with the mere intention of prefacing so much as was necessary to show Hume's relation to his predecessors, and that, once embarked upon this explanation, thoroughness of mind compelled Mr. Green to investigate Hume's position to the bottom.

The first impression created upon the reader of this introduction is that it is "an attack upon Locke." Thus impressed he will regret that the great Archegus of rational thought in England should be thus ungraciously treated by one of his own sons. Further study of Mr. Green's pages will lead him to see, that, if Mr. Green is ruthless in exposing Locke's inconsistencies, it is not for the sake of a triumph over Locke. Locke, indeed, comes out of the fire greater by all the pains here taken to find out once for all how far his system was self-contained, how far it went, where it stopped short. The reader will begin by siding with Locke against his critic. It will slowly dawn upon him that Mr. Green has a higher object in view than mere iconoclasm. This "introduction" is nothing less than a treatise on the insufficiency of empirical metaphysics, of the philosophy of experience. Locke, and Berkeley, and Hume are, each of them, only an historical point in the development of the theory of our popular logic, as represented in the present day by the school of Mr. Mill. It is the unstable and inconsistent character of the theory which is really the subject of Mr. Green's dissertation. He takes the most minute pains to show what each of the three contributed to the empirical theory ; where they overstepped their premisses ; where they made assumptions from which they had previously excluded themselves.

Hume's own work, according to Mr. Green, leaves upon the mind the impression of a much less serious attempt to undertake a constructive explanation than that of Locke. Not that Hume was merely trifling with the topic, but that his aim was rather to show the inconsistencies involved in metaphysical thinking as it stood in his day. He did not seriously affect to



be reconstructing knowledge on a basis of fact. We find in him much more of the ancient sceptic than of the positive philosopher. If there sometimes appears in him something of the charlatantry of his age in declamation against "metaphysical jargon" in the name of common sense, this is partly real, partly an ironical concession to popular prejudice. The modern positive philosopher seems to agree with Hume in that he plumes himself upon not going in quest of any "thing-in-itself" behind what appears to his senses. But all the while he does so, he is supposing a real order of things having a permanence and uniformity of its own quite independent of his perceiving it. This, which is the modern theory of the physical sciences, is very far from being Hume's position. Hume followed Berkeley in setting aside the material order; he went beyond him in annihilating Berkeley's supposition of the reality and knowability of spirit and its relations, including even the self-spirit. Under the disguise of an introduction, Mr. Green has in fact issued a declaration of war, from an idealist point of view, against the reigning empirical logic. To this challenge, Mr. Lewes's *Problems of Life and Mind* may serve as the ready-made rejoinder.

(3.) "The *prolegomena* which precede the translation have not been given in the hope, or with the intention of expounding the Hegelian system. They merely seek to remove certain obstacles, and to render Hegel less tantalisingly hard to those who approach him for the first time." Such is the modest notice by which Mr. Wallace (of Merton) introduces us to one of the most finished essays on a philosophical subject which recent years have produced.\* Thinkers, at least in our day, are seldom good writers; many of them notoriously dark, awkward, illogical. In the case of J. S. Mill, indeed, the vigour and lucidity of the understanding was mirrored in the style. But the style wanted classical grace and literary polish. In Mr. Wallace's essay there was no scope for originality, but while there is no lack of vigour, the graces and amenities of composition have been studied as far as is compatible with the higher duty which a teacher owes to the matter which he has to impress.

What Mr. Wallace fears is true, that the Hegelian system is not made as clear as day by his *prolegomena*. The true Hegelian resents explanation. As the genuine Cameronian gradually narrowed the circle of the elect till it embraced only

\* *The Logic of Hegel*, translated from the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, with *Prolegomena* by William Wallace, M.A.—8vo. Oxf. Clar. Press, 1874.



himself—"or aiblins twa"—so to the Hegelian disciple what has become intelligible is no longer a part of the true faith. And Mr. Wallace is almost intelligible throughout. A few flights into the region of hallucination may be allowed to an Hegelian expositor who wishes to preserve his credit with the elect, whose motto is "credo quia absurdum!" I do not suppose that any exposition can be devised that shall make clear the identity of thought and being, the central point of the Hegelian system. It can only be acquired by time and slow assimilation. It is, as Hegel himself said, like learning to walk upon our heads.

(4.) It was stated above, as a sign of the times, that interest in natural theology had almost died out. Mr. Jackson's *Philosophy of Natural Theology*\* must be named as an exception, though the theological character of the volume does not admit of more than a mention of it in this place. I may, however, add that, though a theological argument, it is one of most remarkable fairness. Mr. Jackson says of himself, "It was my most anxious wish and endeavour to be honest; to advocate what I thought true, without disguising the difficulties of my own conclusion, or assailing its antagonists by gratuitous insinuation."

MARK PATTISON.

### VIII.—THE EARLY LIFE OF JAMES MILL.

JAMES MILL was born on the 6th of April, 1773, at Northwater Bridge, parish of Logie Pert, county of Forfar or Angus.

The spot of his birth is not far from being a central point in that part of Strathmore, extending into the two counties Forfar or Angus and Kincardine or the Mearns, called "Howe of Angus," and "Howe of the Mearns." The strath or plain is four to six miles wide, and lies between the Grampians and a line of coast hills of much lower elevation.

Northwater Bridge is a bridge on the Northwater or North Esk, a river inferior to the Tay and the Dee but still a considerable stream, rising not far off in Glenesk in the Grampians and flowing across the county from west to east, entering the sea three miles north of Montrose. Of its various bridges, the oldest and most important is the one that gives the name to Mill's birth-place; a three-arch stone bridge built about two

\* *The Philosophy of Natural Theology*, an Essay in confutation of the Scepticism of the present day, by the Rev. William Jackson, M.A., F.S.A.—8vo, Lond., Hodder and Stoughton, 1874.