Ter beschrijving van de Ethische richting, in the *Theol. Tijdschrift* for March, 1875, and Prof. F. W. van Bell, *De godsdienst als een levensrichting, die de geheele persoonlijkheid van den mensch aangaat*, in the November number of the same journal. Prof. Van Bell's paper is short, clear, and incisive; he argues from the basis of the ordinary empirical psychology. Dr. Hooijkaas is not so clear, but there seem to be deeper psychological glimpses vouchsafed to him than to his clever young opponent.

THOMAS M. LINDSAY.

XI.—NOTES.

Sense of Doubteness with Crossed Fingers.—The familiar psychological experiment known to every school-boy, and noted already by Aristotle in the *Metaphysica* (p. 1011, a 33), has often in late years been made the subject of explanation in physiological books, though with little success, as far as I have seen; the explanation consisting generally in a laboured re-statement of the difficulty. What seems to me the true explanation suggested itself once when I tried the experiment, determined carefully to mark the precise phenomenon. Crossing the second finger backwards over the forefinger of the left hand held vertically with thumb uppermost, so that the under-side of the second finger (usually in contact with the third finger) rested on the upper-side of the forefinger (side next to thumb) I placed a penholder between them, bringing it first into contact with the second finger only. Causing it then to touch the forefinger also, I was struck by perceiving this second contact coming in, as it were, higher up in space, though the forefinger was then lower down. So when the forefinger was first touched, the contact with the second finger was felt as coming in lower down, though the second finger stood then higher up. The spatial reference is still more distinct when the eyes are shut and the judgment is guided by the character of the touches alone; but the most decisive form of the experiment is with other people's fingers, their eyes being shut and the question being simply put: Does the second contact seem to you to come in higher up or lower down in space than the first? The report is always the same; and the interpretation is obvious. We perceive the contacts as double *because we refer them to two distinct parts of space*. The upper-side of the forefinger and the under-side of the second finger (sides understood as above) are to us distinct parts of space, because normally these two surfaces are not in contact with one another; and they cannot normally be touched simultaneously except by objects which are, or are held to be, two (supposing, that is, bare contact only). Contrariwise, the under-side of the forefinger and the upper-side of the second, being normally in contact with one another, mean to us one and the same space, so that when they are held apart by aught intervening, the suggestion is of a thing filling one and the same space, in other

words, a single thing. It is here implied that every part of the tactile surface has a definite spatial character of its own, and about this as a fact there can be no question, whatever difference of opinion there be as to whether such character is original or derivative.

EDITOR.

Mr. G. H. Lewes on the Postulates of Experience.—In treating of the ultimate foundations of Inductive Certainty (*Logic of Deduction*, p. 273), I laid it down as essential that we should postulate or beg the Uniformity of Nature; maintaining that we could give no reason for the future resembling the past, but must simply risk it. Observation can prove that what has been, *has been*; but it cannot prove that what has been *will be*. When we run the risk and find, after the thing has happened, that our anticipation is correct, we feel re-assured, and think less and less of the danger of being found wrong; but this hardening operation does not make a logical proof.

Against this view of the postulate of Uniformity, Mr. Lewes brings the view, that to say "Nature is uniform," is an *identical proposition*; there is no hazard in it at all (*Problems of Life and Mind*, ii. p. 99). Now, to oppose an identical proposition is to bring about a contradiction in terms. Yet, at first sight, there seems no such contradiction, in saying that Nature follows one course to-day and another to-morrow; does one thing in London and another in Pekin. I should call Nature inconsistent with herself, in that loose sense of consistency that we apply to human actions; but I do not see any self-contradiction in saying that, a million of years hence, the boiling point of water at the ordinary pressure of the air is to be raised to 250° Fahrenheit.

According to Mr. Lewes, the true expression of Nature's uniformity is: "the assertion of identity under identical conditions; whatever is, *is* and *will be*, so long as the conditions are *unchanged*; and *this* is not an assumption, but an identical proposition." But now as to the conditions, in what light does Mr. Lewes view *Time* and *Place*? Are these among the conditions, or are they not? If these are conditions, I fully grant the identity; because the assertion then is that what is happening *here* and *now*, *is* happening; and nothing else is happening. But is he prepared to set aside time and place as not being conditions, as not needing to be taken account of at all? If he does, he gets the advantage of being able to affirm the Uniformity of Nature in the full extent required as a basis of Induction; but I deny that he affirms an identical proposition. It seems to me that to pass the bounds of time and place, *is* a hazard; and this is the real point at issue. I can only repeat that, as it seems to me, there is no self-contradiction in supposing that, though the physical conditions of an effect remain as they are, the effect may not be constant through all the eternity of years and all the infinitude of space. For this reason, I call the Uniformity of Nature a postulate or an assumption, and refuse to call it an identical truth.

A. BAIN.