

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 1918.

SOME "INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURES."

- (1) *The Self and Nature*. By DeWitt H. Parker. Pp. ix+316. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, 1917.) Price 8s. 6d. net.
- (2) *Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its Historical Relations*. By Prof. J. Gibson. Pp. xiv+338. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1917.) Price 10s. 6d. net.
- (3) *The Problem of Creation: An Attempt to Define the Character and Trend of the Cosmic Process*. By the Right Rev. Dr. J. E. Mercer. Pp. xiii+325. (London: S.P.C.K., 1917.) Price 7s. 6d. net.
- (4) *Originality: A Popular Study of the Creative Mind*. By T. Sharper Knowlson ("Thomas Sharnol"). Pp. xvi+304. (London: T. Werner Laurie, Ltd., 1917.) Price 15s. net.

(1) IN reading Prof. Parker's book we breathe that delightful and invigorating atmosphere of the New World which seems the vital condition of American philosophy. We are not startled with new doctrines or confronted with strikingly original theories. The problems are all familiar enough, whether they are old or new, yet the author makes us feel that we are out on "an intellectual adventure," and though we are journeying through a well-charted country we are bent on discovery. The book is pervaded throughout with the spirit of William James, the father of all such as dwell in philosophical tents and go forth on philosophical pilgrimages. James produced no system, introduced no new method, stereotyped no principle, had none of those qualities we associate with the founders of schools, and yet no philosopher of our generation lives on in his influence so definitely and so directly as he. The joy of living is in every word he has written. Few philosophers contradicted themselves more often or set forth with the full confidence of conviction so many inconsistent theories, yet few have had so many and so varied a following.

Prof. Parker's book is a general treatment of metaphysical problems, especially of the central problem of the nature and unity of mind, and the method is described as "radical empiricism extended through the imagination." To summarise the author's views on the problems would serve no purpose, and would destroy the main charm, which is the personal freshness of the treatment.

(2) By way of contrast there is something of the stolid British nature, as well as sound and original philosophy, in Prof. Gibson's study of Locke's theory of knowledge. It is a work of deep and penetrating scholarship, which must have occupied many years of the author's life, and yet it is written with a lucidity and charm which make the reader unconscious of the erudition.

The "Essay" of the great English philosopher still suffers, we are told, "from the twin assumptions that it can be understood without

being studied, and that its full significance can be summed up in a small number of simple propositions." This is true, no doubt; but of what great classic could not the same be said? Prof. Gibson means, we suppose, that he would like to see Locke's "Essay" more regularly included among the set books of Philosophy Honours Courses. There are only two ways of approaching the study of the great philosophies. One is to study a special work as a compendium of precise knowledge. In this way the Catholic seminaries teach the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. The other is to study a philosophy as the historical expression of an ever-changing problem, ever-changing because, like life itself, it never attains finality. If Locke's "Essay" suffers peculiar injustice because it is generally taken as read, on the other hand, when it is closely studied for its own sake, we have to be constantly on guard lest we read into it concepts and developments of concepts which did not become explicit until long after. To understand the philosophy of a bygone age we must recognise that for that age it was fully concrete. We must install ourselves within the historical conditions, and not merely know the historical relations. Then we shall cease to lament the absence of our cherished concepts, and not continually bewail the "unfortunate" orientation of the author's mind.

Prof. Gibson has brought out with great clearness the predominant concept which determined the form and direction of Locke's philosophy—the idea of composition. To the philosophers of his age the main task of philosophy seemed to be the discovery of the simple ideas out of which the complex and complicated ideas had arisen, and to reveal the nature of the aggregation and agglutination. This notion of composition dominated the intellectual outlook as completely as the notion of evolution dominates the thought of our time.

What we seem to miss in this thoroughly scholarly and most useful introduction to the study of the father of English philosophy is the true note of the historical concept. The chapters on the historical relations, excellent as they are, are not historical judgments in the full philosophical meaning; they are comparisons with systems which preceded and systems which have followed.

(3) The "intellectual adventure" to which the Bishop of Tasmania invites us in his "Problem of Creation" is of another order. We have the feeling of being on a personally conducted tour rather than on a voyage of discovery. We are shown the wonders of Nature, taken into perilous places, made to look into volcanoes, and cross torrents; we get thrills, and yet all the time we feel we know that there is no real danger. Dr. Mercer, nevertheless, propounds a serious argument, and very ably sustains it. He holds firmly the principle *ex nihilo nihil fit*, and his purpose is to reconcile it with the orthodox view of creation, with the concept of God, and with the ethical principle of freedom. He also discusses its bearing on the problem of evil. Dr. Mercer is not, however, always a guide to be depended

upon when he expounds scientific theory. It is a little disconcerting, for example, to find (p. 5) Dr. A. A. Robb's theory of time and space referred to as a form of the theory of relativity. The misprint *Rolls* for *Robb's* is perhaps pardonable carelessness, but the account of Einstein's principle of relativity is so slight and inadequate as to be positively misleading.

(4) "Thomas Sharnol" describes his adventure as "a popular study of the creative mind." It deals with the problem which is the most deeply interesting of all the problems of philosophy, yet the impression the reader is likely to derive is one of bewilderment in regard to the precise concept of "originality" he is invited to study. The book is an amazing pot-pourri of opinions, sentiments grave and gay, quotations from, and references to, writers of all sorts, past and present. The main philosophical motive which serves to hold the attention amidst the author's exuberance is the notion with which Bergson has familiarised us, that life is an impetus finding expression in the new forms it creates. Combined with this is the notion of the structure of unconscious mind which we owe to the discoveries of Freud and Jung. The book is very uneven, sinking at times to sheer triviality, yet pleasantly written and always good-humoured. It is intentionally addressed to the thoughtful man of general culture, and not to the student of technical philosophical problems.

H. W. C

PHYSICS TEXT-BOOKS.

- (1) *A Text-book of Physics for the Use of Students of Science and Engineering.* By J. Duncan and S. G. Starling. Pp. xxiii + 1081. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1918.) Price 15s. net.
- (2) *Advanced Text-book of Magnetism and Electricity.* By R. W. Hutchinson. Vol. i., *Magnetism and Electrostatics.* Pp. vii + 372 + Index xii. Vol. ii., *Electrodynamics.* Pp. vi + 468 + Index xii. (London: University Tutorial Press, Ltd., 1917.) Price, 2 vols., 8s. 6d.
- (3) *Lecture Notes on Light.* By J. R. Eccles. Pp. vi + 217. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1917.) Price 12s. 6d. net.
- (4) *A Manual of Physics, Theoretical and Practical, for Medical Students.* By H. C. H. Candy. Second edition. Pp. viii + 451. (London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1918.) Price 7s. 6d. net.

(1) **E**NGINEERING students too often look upon physics as little more than a necessary evil, and a book that connects the scientific aspects of the subject with its modern practical applications fills a real need. The authors of this volume—one an engineer and the other a physicist—are to be congratulated on the successful way in which they have accomplished this task.

The book, which is both theoretical and practical, gives a course in dynamics, sound, light, heat, magnetism and electricity, which the authors claim is suitable for intermediate examinations. A student, however, who knew all in the book would be

well beyond this stage. Few of the objectionable features of examination text-books occur, and the treatment is lucid and up-to-date. Modern high vacuum pumps, internal-combustion engines, periscopes, range-finders, kinemacolor, dynamos, X-rays, and radio-activity, are all considered. Strangely, there is no reference to wireless telegraphy, and some criticism might be offered of the treatment of Newton's "Laws of Motion." Minor details apart, however, the book is most satisfactory and should make a strong appeal to all engineering students.

(2) This is a text-book for final degree examinations, and it will probably appeal to the student who has but little outside assistance. The explanations are very full, and definitions and statements of special importance are printed in heavy type. There is a large collection of problems, taken chiefly from university examination papers, and some of these have been fully worked out. Brief directions for practical work are also given in the text.

The treatment mostly follows on stereotyped lines, but references to modern developments are interspersed, and the chapters on radio-activity, the passage of electricity through gases, and electronic theories are well written, and it is here difficult to find any of the more important developments of the subject that are left untouched.

(3) This book was originally written for the pupils of Gresham's School, Holt, and it probably forms a satisfactory supplement to the author's course of lessons; but it is nevertheless unlikely to make any general appeal.

The master is supposed to "lecture on the lines of the notes and draw the diagrams on the board," whilst the boys enter the diagrams in special copies of the book with blank left-hand pages. The present volume is intended as a guide to the master, and the diagrams—some very carefully drawn—are inserted. The wording throughout is somewhat loose, but in spite of this the author wishes his definitions to be "learnt by heart." On p. 117 the "edge of a prism" is defined! Further, we are told that, "since light travels in straight lines, any one of these straight lines is called a ray of light." The objection to the corpuscular theory is that, "if the corpuscles travelled with this immense velocity, they would possess considerable momentum, of which there is no evidence"; whilst, after three lines of explanation, the wave theory is dismissed as "the one that is now in vogue."

(4) Students working for the First Examination of the Conjoint Board, or even possibly for the London University First Medical, will find in this book most of the information they need. In addition to the ordinary theoretical work, about forty pages of the book are devoted to brief instructions for carrying out a number of illustrative experiments. The style is simple throughout, sometimes even at the expense of accuracy, and descriptions of out-of-date pieces of apparatus still occur. Nevertheless, those who have never studied physics before will find the book very useful. The present edition appears to be a