

object in the known or knowable world, but he is also a subject of knowledge, and it is only for such a subject that an object or a world of objects can exist. It is with this aspect of man that criticism has to deal. Its problem is to find out the principles without which there can be no knowledge either of matter or of mind. The great defect of the philosophy of Locke, and of all forms of empiricism is, that it regards the acts of the mind as if they were nothing more than states of the individual consciousness. If that were true, knowledge of objects would manifestly be impossible, for the mind would be capable of coming to a knowledge of itself without having any consciousness of a world outside of it.

The true problem, then, is to find out a criterion of the validity of knowledge from an examination of our consciousness of objects. All our knowledge of particular things presupposes certain universal principles which are implied in the nature of consciousness and its relation to objects in general. If we can but discover these principles we may employ them as a test of our special ideas and beliefs. Thus, *e. g.*, in all our consciousness of the world, we find it represented as a unity and even as a systematic unity. All things, beings and events are therefore conceived to stand in some kind of relation to one another. Both to the scientific and to the ordinary consciousness the world is one in its manifoldness, permanent in its changes, inter-related to its co-existence. Thus all forms of rational consciousness are "built on one plan." It is on this fact that criticism is based. Criticism brings into explicit consciousness the principles implied in all our knowledge of particulars. The need of such criticism arises from the failure of the first immediate constructive effort of thought. The only way of escape from doubt and difficulty is to discover the ultimate idea upon which all knowledge rests. Now all the principles of the sciences are particular developments of the general presupposition of all science, *viz.*, that the world is an intelligible whole. The full meaning of this principle, however, is not always seen; and hence a particular application of it, which is found to be adequate within the realm of the special science, is supposed to be adequate even beyond that realm. But when an attempt is made to extend this limited idea to the spiritual world, doubt is cast upon the very existence of the world. If, *e. g.*, the soul is conceived as an object externally determined by other objects, it must be regarded simply as an attribute of the body or as a series of phenomena occurring in it. Hence it has no freedom or self-determining power. On the same principle God can be nothing but a name for the aggregate of external objects.

The truth is that the special sciences rest upon an artificial separation of certain aspects of the world from the world in its totality. It is impossible to explain the true nature of the inorganic world without reference to the organic world; impossible to explain either, apart from consciousness. Nor can the material world be understood apart from the principle manifested in the life of self-conscious or spiritual beings. "If man is not merely the child of nature, capable of complete explanation by its physical and vital agencies, then nature cannot be taken as a system which is complete in itself apart from man, or in which the presence of man is but an accident. The

strange conclusion of those physicists who, finding themselves unable to explain consciousness as one of the physical forces, were driven by the necessity of their logic to the hypothesis that consciousness produces no result at all in the world which it contemplates, illustrates this difficulty. . . . There are no alternatives but either to press the physical explanations to their last result, and so to reduce the spiritual world to the natural: or to admit that there is, properly speaking, no such thing as a merely natural world. . . . We must 'level up' and not 'level down'; we must not only deny that matter can explain spirit, but we must say that even matter itself cannot be fully understood except as an element in a spiritual world."

This hurried and imperfect abstract of Mr. Caird's argument cannot be expected to be conclusive or even perfectly intelligible, but it may help to correct the current fallacy that a true Idealism has any kinship with the doctrine that reality may be reduced to the transient states of the individual subject, and to indicate the importance of a thorough study of a book which no one who lays any claim to philosophical culture can afford to neglect.

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—*The Week.*

### THE CONVERSAZIONE.

In order to save time we had written out a report of the proceedings of the conversazione some days before the affair was held; and as, when writing, the snow lay thick on the ground, and as the air was cold and bracing, we had taken it for granted that such would be the state of the weather on the 14th. Accordingly we had begun our account of it with the remark that "no finer weather could have been wished for the conversazione on the 14th. The night was clear, and the twinkling stars overhead sparkled with delight as if in sympathy with the glad hearts of the students, and their friends who joyously passed to and fro through the corridors of Queen's to the bewitching music of the band." But alas! in this case the festival in our mind's eye was, at least so far as the weather is concerned, very different from the real article.

All day long the rain descended in torrents, and by evening the streets which before had been covered thick with snow were converted into streams, in whose waters the slush lay very deep. The hearts of the boys were heavy as they worked during the day at decorating the building or drove about the city in soaked clothes doing duty on the Refreshment Committee. However everything was prepared as thoroughly, though not as easily, as if it had been a typical Canadian winter's day, and when at eight the guests began to arrive, the spirits of the boys slowly rose, and, forgetting the storm outside, all devoted themselves to enjoying that which had been prepared for them by the committees.

By the profuse and artistic use of bunting which had been put up during the day, the halls and class-rooms looked very gay, and their appearance reflected great credit on *those few of the students* who directed their energies to the decoration of the college. The sides of the staircase were lined with the rifles of the College