

inconceivable thoroughly reasonable in the light of a new vision of the situation.

Those philosophers who were so sure about the principle of cause had professed to be honestly experimenting with the contrary type of situation where something is imagined to come into existence without any cause. They gave the impression that they were trying out fairly the alternative notions and that they were only following the logic in each case. But Hume perceived that they had spoiled their own experiments. The new proposal to be tested was that there is *no cause of any description* in the affair. But what had they done? No sooner had they excluded a cause than they imagined either the *thing itself* or *Nothing to be a cause*. They had ceremoniously ushered cause out of the front door but surreptitiously reintroduced cause by the back door. They simply could not do without a cause. The habit was so strong upon them that they were bound to have some cause or other figuring in the argument, logic or no logic. The image was in their minds all the while, so that the moment they debarred a cause distinct from the thing itself, they imagined the thing itself or nothing in the place of the missing entity. All the absurdity was thus of their own making. By injecting causes when they pretended to exclude every thought of cause they had "faked the experiment" and so proved nothing at all. It was still possible that a being might exist without a cause for its existence. All the so-called demonstrations against that possibility proved nothing but the inveteracy of the habit of thinking causes, and the obstinacy of the human mind in doing so.

Thus Hume showed that the logician's proofs for causality were not logical as had been pretended. It was hard for his contemporaries to appreciate *his* logic as the better. What is the sense of trying to think of things without causes? What is the point of throwing down arguments which aim to prove the causal principles? It all seemed mere wantonness of intellect, trifling with the ordinarily accepted notions. Far better drop all logic and stay by common sense which believed in causes without abstract reasoning. There was a prejudice against "mere logic" and even against the attitude of inquiry. To ask questions about a belief is but a step to *denying* the belief. And when men live in an atmosphere of prejudice and passion they cannot help regarding the dispassionate man, who is only seeking to understand, as a person animated by a negative passion to deny their beliefs,—because he is not impassioned *for* the common opinion, he is *against* it. Actually Hume never denied the existence of cause. Nor did he deny the existence of mind or God. He had simply questioned the logic of the arguments used by others to prove these beliefs. And he had done so because he had vision—he saw that the possibilities ruled out by the older thinkers with *their* logic were significant for a new view of the Universe. He cleared away the obstacles to this vision, but he had to do it by *his* logic.

We can see nowadays who were the denying spirits in that age. Those logicians who fought down by demonstrative reasons the notion that there *could* be anything *besides* the *mechanical* cause, they were the negators. They kept the mind shut to an interpretation of Nature which the world

was to make in the centuries after them. Hume, on the other hand, was appreciative of the view of Nature organised from within. He was in friendly relations with Buffon, Diderot, and others of the circle of the *Encyclopedia* in France, who were hinting at the process of evolution in living matter. It was his crime, then, to shatter the false logic which forbade the mind of man to entertain any other conception of processes in Nature than that of mechanics. His reasoning banished the negative dogmatism which stood in the way of the coming sciences of life. Hume's logic cleared that way and liberated the mind to new concepts of Nature.

But other sciences were favored in this checking of the arrogance of materialism. When Hume noticed the role of habit in our thought of causality, that is, how set and determined the mind seems to be to have some cause or other, he became interested in these habitual and instinctive tendencies throughout the realm of experience. He wrote all his books about Human Nature. And he noticed how many such necessities of nature, not of logic, there are in both knowledge and conduct. This was in itself the beginning of a science of man, and with us it is the science of psychology, stressing the peculiarity of the human being's processes and actions. Psychology is something other than biology or physics. And Hume's logic helped make it so.

Science in general has profited. Hume declared that the habit of thinking in terms of cause is only a natural "presumption of the mind" and suggested other such presumptions, that is, other possible ways of dealing with the material of experience. He pointed out clearly, and he was the first philosopher to do so, that whenever we argue at all from our past experience, when we think inductively, we are *assuming* without any proof the Uniformity of Nature. Did he on that account repudiate all reasoning from experience? No, he even ventured to treat history and the social sciences as *bona fide* sciences, although they more than any others have to interpret material that cannot be experimented with as in the physical sciences. Hume really taught, therefore, that the human mind gets all its knowledge by the help of such 'postulates' like this one of nature's regularity and consistency. His reasoning suggests the view that there will be valid science wherever the human mind has the aptitude to choose significant postulates and to utilize them for the marshalling and ordering of the data of experience. In one aspect of things, one set of ideas is properly axiomatic; in other aspects, we must be prepared to find other axioms pertinent. Here mechanism is relevant, there, perhaps, teleology. In any case, the outcome of the logic of Hume is to make all knowledge dependent upon the axioms and postulates. Hence there is no reason to suppose that mankind in its brief history has happily hit upon the only possible ways of knowing. No ventures in understanding according to new ideas can ever be ruled out "logically". Logic is not meant for ruling-out but for destroying precisely such dogmatic exclusions and blinding prejudices. It is intended to keep the mind generous about ideas. And so it encourages the attitude of always looking for better hypotheses and more relevant facts,