

LITERARY.

PHILOSOPHY IN UNDRESS.

No. III.

WE propose in this paper to make a remark or two about Mr. Dewey's second article, *Mind* No. 42. Alas! we are getting into very deep waters indeed, and we fear that we shall be swept so far out to sea that the "plain man" will only be able, by straining his sight, to see our head bobbing up and down, and may even doubt whether the head is of a man who keeps himself afloat and directs his own course, or of one simply carried along, willy nilly, by the fierce impetuosity of the tide. But let us at least try to keep within sight of the shore. Milton sang of "fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute." Questions of philosophy are sure in the long run to take some such shape as that. At first sight it is not obvious what connexion the apparently simple question, What is Psychology? can have with such high themes. Is not Psychology the science of man considered as a knowing, feeling and willing individual? and can we not give an account of the various forms of knowing, feeling and willing, leaving all deeper problems to Metaphysics? Usually, people have answered in the affirmative. But these modes of activity are all modes of self-consciousness. To know is to know what truly is—or why speak of knowledge?—to feel is to be conscious of what is presented to us as harmonious or inharmonious with ourselves, and to will is to direct oneself to what we think of as the needed complement of our real self. Consciousness would thus seem to be the realizing of what in idea we truly are, the coming to be for us of the true nature of the universe. But, you say, the universe is, after all, not we ourselves: we are finite, limited beings, and beyond what we are conscious of ourselves as being is the great unknown reality, which millions of ages can only partially reveal to us, and which, because we are finite or incomplete, we shall never come to be conscious of. A man who should know all reality, and feel himself in proper harmony with the universe, and will the absolute good, would not be man but God. Granted; but the consciousness of the whole must in some sense be present in us, or how should we be aware that we have not become what in idea we are? No doubt we are in actual realization, finite, limited, imperfect, but we must have in our consciousness the idea of the infinite, unlimited, perfect: we must know God, although we are not God. Can there be any foundation for the proposition, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable," unless we have in our minds the consciousness of such a Being? It is in consciousness, therefore, that Infinite and Finite alike exist for us. Nay more, the consciousness of the Infinite is bound up with the consciousness of the Finite; we know ourselves as imperfect because we know that we are not, as God is, perfect. As DesCartes truly said, "our consciousness of self presupposes in some sense the

consciousness of God." Now, if for us Finite and Infinite alike are in our consciousness, must not the science of consciousness be the science of reality in its completeness, the science of Finite and Infinite? And this science is Psychology. Hence, as it would seem, Psychology is the central science. If we seek to treat of the finite or individual self, we forget that the consciousness of the finite self is bound up with the consciousness of the infinite self. Now, it is consciousness that makes us men, and hence a Psychology that treats of man as if he were conscious only of his individual self must be a false Psychology. We cannot, in short, regard Psychology as a special science, because consciousness is for us the sole guarantee and revealer of reality as a whole.

In what has just been said we have tried to give in our own way the gist of Mr. Dewey's argument. In *Mind*, No. 41, he tried to convince the English Psychologist that unwittingly he was an absolute idealist; in *Mind*, No. 42, he aims to convince the absolute idealist that unwittingly he is a Psychologist. We very much doubt of his success in the latter any more than in the former case. But we are willing to meet our young friend half way. We think that he is right in saying that Psychology is not a "special science," dealing with man merely as an "object." Man cannot be dealt with simply as an "object," because as man he is an object for himself. Hence Psychology, as a supposed science of the "phenomena" of consciousness, is neither a special science nor a general science; it is a science of what has no existence except as a fiction in the mind of the English psychologist. The main value of English psychology has been in throwing light on organic processes and so preparing the way for a true psychology. But we do not think that Mr. Dewey has made out his case for the identification of psychology and philosophy. Psychology is a branch of philosophy, but it is only a branch. Would Mr. Dewey really say that psychology includes philosophy of nature, ethics, aesthetics, logic and philosophy of religion? Yet all these imply consciousness, and have no meaning apart from consciousness. Psychology seems to us that branch of philosophy in which attention is directed to the process by which man becomes conscious of himself as contrasted with the infinite, and to the special limitations, organic and other, in which that contrast consists. That ultimately man's finitude is bound up with the infinity of God is a sufficient reason for refusing to regard philosophy as merely an account of the conscious processes and organic conditions under which man's consciousness is realized, but it is no reason for identifying psychology with philosophy as a whole. In man, says Mr. Dewey, the universe is "partially realized, and man has a partial science; in the absolute it is completely realized, and God has a complete science (*Mind*, No. 42, p 657)." But surely man must have a science of the universe as completely realized in God. God's "complete science" is not science for us, unless we know in some sense what this "complete science" is. Now this is what we call the