

ment on some vista of the human soul or beauty of nature. Logic is the way which the mind of a reflective thinker takes to win an imagination of new possibilities of human experience. It is an avenue to the discovery of a new world. This the philosophers would celebrate in verse, if they had the power and gifts, but it must remain unsung and almost unknown because those who have such arts and graces quite ignore this art of thought.

The veritable triumphs of logic are not in the public eye. They are rarely on record in any argument in print, and almost never in forays of social wit in conversation. They occur in those sessions of silent thought that precede the finding of new visions that afterward call for a life-time of labor to delineate. They come in the critical moment in a genius' career when all that is dimly forecast is gathered into the logical focus in order to be thrown out as a beam of illumination upon the whole world.

An example may be ventured, of the many that are to be found in the annals of philosophy. It is from the thought of David Hume. When he was a very young man he suffered from religious tribulations which he could only meet by earnest reasoning. "It began", as he said to a friend "with an anxious search after arguments to confirm the common opinion; doubts stole in, dissipated, returned; were again dissipated, returned again; and it was a perpetual struggle of a restless imagination against inclination, perhaps against reason." This restlessness of mind was due to wide reading in pagan and religious literature, and in the ancients and moderns. The "common opinion" was that God must exist, as the First Cause of the Universe, and as a Supreme Mind. From one source or another Hume had caught sight of the possibility that Nature might be altogether ordered from within, and that it was which made him dubious of the notion that God must exist as the outside Cause. He had a conception of Nature's origin and process as being something more marvellous than human mechanics, and consequently, he saw less value in a God whose relation to the world was only the mechanical one popularised in Eighteenth Century Deism. Nature with her internal order and workings seemed a better thing than such an external Deity. And then, too, from readings in certain religious philosophers, who had reflected soberly upon the limitations of the human mind in knowledge, Hume appreciated that the self or soul is one of the least-known things in our experience, and so he came to doubt whether our understanding of God is much advanced through conceiving of Him as merely a Mind. Hume expected to get a better idea of God than what was then accepted,—a dangerous expectation to publish at a time when theology claimed itself fully competent to give men a true knowledge of God, and of his relations to man and the world. However, his challenge was directed solely to the philosophers. It was they who professed to have logical demonstrations for the existence of such an externalised God. They pretended to give arguments absolutely cogent and decisive, so that the mind is forced to their deistic conclusion. Hume went straight for those arguments. With the acumen and infinite pertinacity of genius, he put them to the test by asking endless questions until his own mind was logically satisfied.

What proof is there for a Supreme Mind and Cause of the World? The answer of a host of philosophers who were agreed on this point was as follows: There *must* be a cause for everything that exists. It is an absolute necessity. And so the world needs a First Cause. Moreover, the fittest cause for a world which contains beings of mind is a Being who is Himself Mind in a perfect and supreme degree. But why, Hume asked in his imaginary dialogue with the philosophers, why is a Cause Always Necessary? The rest may follow if this is true. But is this an imperative necessity of reason, that everything in or out of Nature shall have a cause for its existence? Would not Nature do by herself without anything beyond her? No, the answer came, this would never do, in any case. A cause for every existing thing without exception is *logically* necessary. And there are proofs for this proposition.

Hume examined these logical proofs very carefully, for he was determined to be convinced only by reasons that he could clearly see for himself and not by the mere form of words. The proofs were all done in the manner of Euclid when no direct demonstration was possible: the contrary of proposition to be proved is supposed to be true; it proves itself contradictory and absurd; and so the mind is compelled to abandon it and come back to the original proposition, which thus is established because everything else goes to pieces. Everything in the proof, then, depends upon the absurdity of the contrary views. If they did not turn out to be really absurd, the original view would be unproved. It is a strange way to truth when we have to see clearly not the truth itself but the absurdity of its opposite. A philosopher is bound to be discontented with such logic.

But on to the proofs. The first one was this: If anything were ever to exist *without a cause*, then *it itself* would be its own cause. It would produce itself. But this seems absurd. And since the idea of a self-causing reality is absurd, we must conclude that every thing which exists must have a cause *distinct from itself*.

Another proof on the books was as follows: If anything ever were to exist without a cause, then it would be produced by nothing, that is, it would have *Nothing for its cause*,—but Nothing is no positive reality and the thought of its causing something is utterly absurd. Again we are forced to think that there simply must be *something* positive and distinct from the thing itself which will cause it to come into existence. So it is always necessary to think of a cause.

Here it was that Hume's superiority as a philosopher showed itself. When all the language of men and all their habits and prejudices of thought tended to fool them, he kept his mind fixed steadily on the idea instead of the words. He kept his grip on the point at issue. And his master-stroke was not a counter-argument, but a quiet, searching scrutiny of those so-called absurdities. He still wanted to know something—how they happened to be absurd. The spirit of the scientist dwelt in him—he tried to explain these things which all the other philosophers had too hastily accepted at their face-value. His was the finer logic of science which makes what had once seemed impossible and