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ment, save that of mere denial, which of course is a very easy process, whatever may be the truth that is set forth or affirmed. Mr. Holyoake, an authority on the Atheistic side—himself an Atheist—has well said of the mere Negationist, "His stock in trade is the simplest possible. He has only to deny what somebody else holds and he is set up in the art of controversy." This is very true. Denials are of course simple enough. Pulling down or destroying is very easy work. An idiot may spoil a painting in five minutes which it took a man of genius a life time to produce. But we cannot allow the Atheist to take this position. For he often affirms very much indeed and his affirmations require proof equally with those of the Theist. And besides in philosophy the human mind cannot rest in a mere negation. Thus, if Atheism be the true philosophy of the universe, it must prove itself to be so, by boldly facing all the facts of existence, and giving us such an explanation of them as it is able to furnish. Unless it can do this, it can never satisfy a thinking, enquiring mind. The position taken by a certain modern school, that we should rest content with the facts of nature, and make no attempt to draw inferences from them, is absurd, and the task which it enjoins impossible. No sane man can long be content to contract his thoughts within the narrow boundaries of the region of sense, and to rest in the confines of the visible. Facts are valueless, except as far as they shadow forth a philosophy relating to that which lies behind them, and the business of which is to explain them and to trace their causes. Any attempt to drive back the human mind from this inquiry must inevitably fail, as it has always failed in the history of the past. As Professor Huxley has well said, "The term positive, as implying a system of thought, which assumes nothing beyond the content of observed facts, implies that which never did exist, and never will."* And even Herbert Spencer, who cannot be accused of any predilections in favour of Theism, remarks: "Positive knowledge never can fill the whole region of thought. At the uttermost reach of discovery there must

*Lay Sermons p. 178.