

characters of different animals, are all exhibited in this remarkable work; and no lover of truth, or of those who, under continual opposition, persecution, and ridicule, alike from savants and theologians, continue to pursue their investigations, can fail to accord to the author the merit which he deserves, notwithstanding the errors, too hasty conclusions, and premature systematisation into which he unfortunately fell. *Sta, viator, heroem calcas*, may be inscribed on the tomb of Combe's great Master, as addressed to such as would indulge in profaning his memory by indiscriminate criticism and ridicule. The cerebral physiologist who, in visiting *Père la Chaise*, stands on the last resting-place of Gall may well pause with reverence in remembering that he treads upon a hero's dust.

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*Hume*. By Professor HUXLEY. Macmillan & Co., 1879.

"Metaphysicians, as a rule, are sadly deficient in the sense of humour," Professor Huxley says, "or they would surely abstain from advancing propositions which, when stripped of the verbiage in which they are disguised, appear to the profane eye to be bare shams, naked but not ashamed." One cannot help echoing this statement when one renews acquaintance, in Mr. Huxley's clear and vigorous exposition, with the close and strong reasoning of Hume on many points of philosophy which are still debated, just as if Hume had never written about them, and without any real attempt to answer his arguments. The old parrot-cries are repeated without those who utter them being at the pains to get upon the same ground of reality as those whose sceptical or subversive opinions they combat. But the insulted metaphysician who reads this volume might be attempted to rejoin that Professors are sadly deficient in the sense of humour; or they would surely abstain from lecturing all the world, in season and out of season, in the didactic style of an omniscient Professor to his class.

It is easy to understand the feeling which moved the Editor of the series of "English Men of Letters," of which this book is a part, to ask Professor Huxley to take Hume in hand. Hume was a strong sceptical solvent, and modern science, which is in some sort an embodiment of the principles which he enforced, has in the Professor a distinguished popular representative who has the reputation of

being sceptical concerning much which passes current as orthodox belief. In truth, however, the deep and calm scepticism of Hume, and his subtle and penetrating irony, pregnant with weighty argument, reveal a quite different temper from that which is disclosed by the intense, dogmatic, somewhat acrid, and pugnacious scepticism of Mr. Huxley. And the evidence of these profound differences of character may be observed on almost every page of this volume which contains an extract from Hume and a comment by his exponent, or—as is perhaps as often the case—his critic. For we may say at the outset that it seems to be a grave defect of the book that the Professor has not been content to suppress himself sufficiently, by making himself the lucid exponent of Hume's doctrines from the central standpoint of an appreciative sympathiser, but has handled them rather from the standpoint of a minute critic who, as an outsider, is too careful to explain this and that, and to show forth how they are right and how they are wrong. The consequence is that each extract is apt to become the text of a professorial disquisition, critical, commendatory, emendatory, or supplementary, and that in the end we get more of Mr. Huxley than of Hume. And inasmuch as it is an irresistible tendency of Mr. Huxley to try to make things clear, we have a great deal of what may justly be called elementary psychology, such as would be suitable in a lecture to students who were beginning their studies, but which might well have been left out of a book of this kind. Elementary instruction of this sort, for example: "a word is a spoken or written sign, the idea of which is, by repetition, so closely associated with the idea of the simple or complex feeling which it represents, that the association becomes indissoluble. No Englishman, for example, can think of the word 'dog' without immediately having the idea of the group of impressions to which that name is given," &c., &c.

Instead of this sort of instruction, clear and simple as it is, we should have liked to had a great deal more information than we get concerning Hume as a man, and concerning his place in philosophy—his philosophical filiation, so to speak. For Hume was, after all, begotten, not self-begotten, in philosophy, although the reader of this volume would not suspect it. We are not content, again, that Mr. Huxley should have limited himself to the philosophy, and should not have said a word about the historian.

To go on with fault-finding, let us say that we do not like

the recurrence of such expressions as these—"Hume sagely remarks," "Hume says with profound truth;" that we like still less the jarring obtrusion of indirect and oblique remarks by which Professor Huxley betrays that while talking of Hume and his times he is thinking of himself and his times; and that we see no evidence whatever in Hume's placid account of the failure of his first literary ventures of "the bitter disappointment and of the craving after mere notoriety and vulgar success" which Mr. Huxley discovers. If he was to tell the story at all, it is difficult to see how he could have done it with less show of feeling. At page 159 the Professor has violently wrenched some words of Hume to a style of thought and of meaning of which he was incapable, in order to introduce the following unwise digression:—

The doctrine that you may call an atheist anybody whose ideas about the Deity do not correspond with your own, is so largely acted upon by persons who are certainly not of Hume's way of thinking, and, probably, so far from having read him, would shudder to open any book bearing his name, except the "History of England," that it is surprising to trace the theory of their practice to such a source.

But on thinking the matter over, this theory seems so consonant with reason, that one feels ashamed of having suspected many excellent persons of being moved by mere malice and viciousness of temper to call other folks atheists, when, after all, they have been obeying an intellectual sense of fitness.

And so on in a digression, the whole of which it is not worth while to quote, notwithstanding that Mr. Huxley thinks it "may not be wholly unprofitable." To us it seems to be an interpolation which is as unprofitable as it is in bad taste, and to bring out in a striking manner the great difference of temper and judgment between Hume and his commentator.

Professor Huxley has wisely made Hume speak for himself, so far as possible, by giving numerous extracts from his essays, and in the selections made of passages for extraction he appears to have been particularly happy. The reader will get in them the marrow of Hume's philosophy, and without doubt they, with the interpolated comments, expositions, and criticism, will together furnish useful and instructive reading for the student of philosophy. All points raised are handled in so clear and vigorous a way that he cannot fail to understand what is the issue. The book might be used as a sort of primer in philosophy of the non-metaphysical kind.

Unfortunately, Mr. Huxley's irritable and pugnacious indi-

viduality will not suffer him to go on calmly with his exposition for any length of time, but must needs drive him out of his way into remarks which will give his enemy occasion to triumph over him, and—what is worse—quote what he says as proof of the narrow dogmatism and intolerance of the scientific school. Comte he cannot abide, and he makes an early opportunity to gird fiercely at him, mentioning him as one who illustrates “the connexion of scientific incapacity with philosophical incompetence,” and as “propounding solemn nonsense.” When we consider the philosophical relation of Comte to Hume, and the high place which the great Positivist assigns Hume in the scientific hierarchy, it is no little wonder how so great a fool in philosophy should have shown so much insight in this respect. The particular “vilipending” of psychology by Comte, which Mr. Huxley calls solemn nonsense, was probably suggested by or actually derived from a passage in Hume, which is quoted by the Professor two pages further on. What need, again, in quoting a passage from Locke’s “Essay concerning Human Understanding,” to speak of the essay as “probably unknown to this full-crammed and much-examined generation?” And is it wise or in good taste to speak of science having brought to the front a heavy artillery “warranted to drive solid bolts of fact through the thickest skulls?” If anything is likely to make science offensive, and to hinder its good work going on favourably, it is this ill-advised way of writing about it. Lastly, why should Mr. Huxley imply that he is one of the *enfants perdus* of the outposts of Science? It seems to us that these *enfants perdus* have gone to their rest a long time ago, after suffering real martyrdom, and that their successors of to-day, who have entered into the fruits of their labours, have very little to complain of, being in danger rather of becoming *enfants gâtés*.

Hume traverses so large an extent of the field of thought that Mr. Huxley finds it necessary, in his way of treating his subject, to limit himself to the discussion of—1. Necessary Truths; 2. The Order of Nature; 3. The Soul; 4. Theism; 5. The Passions and Volition; 6. The Principle of Morals. His little book is really a series of disquisitions on these subjects, extracts from Hume being made the texts of them. The last subject he has treated very briefly, having dismissed it in a few pages, although Hume considered his “Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals” to be “of all his writings, historical, philosophical, and literary, incomparably

the best." To discuss Hume's opinions and his commentator's criticisms on these wide subjects would carry us far beyond the limits of this notice; we must end our review of a volume which has many excellencies with a regret that we do not get more of Hume than we do, and that the Professor did not select another occasion for giving his opinions, *ex cathedra, de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*. The reader must not form his judgment of Hume's taste and temper from the tone of Mr. Huxley's comments and criticisms, but from the well selected extracts with which he has been happily provided; otherwise he will do Hume no little injustice.

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*A New Theory of Trance, and its Bearings on Human Testimony.* By GEORGE M. BEARD, M.D.

(Read before the New York Medico-Legal Society.\*)

A lecture, delivered under such auspices on so important a subject, deserves and has obtained our careful consideration.

Every one knows that there are certain states into which persons may fall, in which some of the mental powers no longer respond to external stimuli, while others display unusual activity. Motor power may be in action; one or all the senses may be closed. The brain being the organ of which these various faculties are the functions, in the opinion of all physiologists, there must be corresponding vascular and nervous inaction and activity in various portions of that organ. It is only the physiological mode of expressing the well-known facts of the state referred to, whether called trance, somnambulism, hypnotism, mesmeric coma, &c. Few, however, would be content to rest on this rudimentary state of knowledge.

From the title of this treatise by Dr. Beard we expected to find a novel explanation of the cerebral or mental condition present in Trance, and allied abnormal states, but we must confess to having experienced great disappointment.

The explanation which the writer gives is surely one which has long been familiar to medical men—namely, that it is a functional disorder of the nervous system, in which one part of the brain is active and another is dormant, by which the will is for a time suspended. The question has been not as

\* "The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease," Chicago, Vol. iv., No. 1.