

## Books of Special Interest

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH PHILOSOPHY. PERSONAL STATEMENTS. (Second Series.) Edited by J. H. MUIRHEAD. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1926. \$4.50.

Reviewed by RALPH BARTON PERRY  
Harvard University

THIS collection of autobiographical and philosophical essays is modeled upon the series (now numbering five or more volumes), edited in Germany under the title of "Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen," by Dr. Raymond Schmidt. Professor Muirhead has already brought out one volume (1924) including contributions from the late Bernard Bosanquet, C. D. Broad, Viscount Haldane, L. T. Hobhouse, C. Lloyd Morgan, Bertrand Russell, F. C. S. Schiller, and others. In both volumes there is an extreme diversity of method, ranging from the author's sketch of his philosophical sources and development, to the fresh treatment of some philosophical theme that he regards as of central importance; but in every case there is a personal flavor and a more or less confessional directness of statement which makes the essays enlivening, as well as instructive for purposes of historical orientation. Nothing could reveal more clearly the currents and cross-currents of present philosophical thought in Great Britain.

The twelve contributors to the present volume fall into four groups, the exponents of spiritual realism, the idealists, the realists, and a single representative of the standpoint of the natural sciences. To the first of these groups belongs the late Professor James Ward, whose paper on "A Theistic Monadism" recapitulates the well-known views set forth in his "Naturalism and Agnosticism" (1899) and in his "Realm of Ends" (1911). Assuming the independence of the external world, one may either "describe" it after the manner of science, or seek to "understand" it. Knowledge of the latter kind is impossible without imputing to nature real causality (activity) and real substance, such as are exhibited only in mind. There remains the question whether this mind behind nature is one or many, and here Ward adopts the monadistic or pluralistic rather than the monistic view, God being both the ground or creator of a manifold of free persons and the perfection which is their common goal. Professor N. R. Sorley adopts a similar view as alone capable of reconciling the "causal" and "moral" orders of the world, and of providing for both its unity and its diversity. God creates finite minds and their environment in order that the former may freely, but slowly and with difficulty, achieve the ideal values which he embodies. In Professor Clement C. J. Webb's "Outline of a Philosophy of Religion," there is a like insistence on the irreducible reality of human personality and experience, together with a recognition of the as yet insuperable difficulty of reconciling these with the "action of an eternally perfect Being, the ground of all existence." Professor A. W. Taylor's discussion of "The Freedom of Man" is an argument for the ethical importance of libertarianism and for the presence of genuine contingency in nature. All of the writers of this group thus stress the temporality and manifoldness of the actual historical or evolutionary process, while at the same time adopting a broadly theistic view of the ground and meaning of the world.

The idealists in the present volume also number four. Idealists are becoming increasingly difficult to identify, but there is no mistaking Mr. E. Belfort Bax. He affirms, as the "grand principle" of idealism, "that all that is and appears, that all reality, is in and for Consciousness," and protests against those idealists who seem to have forgotten that consciousness implies "an experiencing Subject." His idealism is further characterized by an emphasis on the ineradicable "logical" elements in experience, which condemns the rational Subject to a futile and endless struggle for self-realization. Mr. Douglas Fawcett construes the metaphysical principle in terms of a "Cosmic Imaging," which as "both conservative and creative" escapes the dilemma of "block-universe" or flux. Professor J. A. Smith is a repentant realist, who confesses his earlier error, but does not here refute it. The present essay is a brief summary of his new creed, in which he associates himself with "the great orthodox or catholic succession of modern Phil-

osophy" by accepting and expounding the teachings of Gentile. Professor Hoernlé, in a résumé of his previous writings, characterizes his philosophical attitude as "synoptic." He believes with Bosanquet that truth and reality are to be sought in wholeness, or in the "concrete universal"; and finds himself temperamentally inclined to treat all insights sympathetically, as contributing partial truths to that comprehensive understanding which constitutes philosophy. He insists that the moral, æsthetic and religious experiences have a "metaphysical import," and that self-conscious mind is peculiarly central and significant.

The realists are notably represented by Professor G. E. Moore's "Defense of Common Sense," an argument which many would deem senseless but none would deem common. It consists of a back-handed and cryptic refutation (in the author's inimitable manner) of solipsism and idealism, showing that while many philosophers have held views contradictory to the reality of other selves and of the physical world, none have avoided assuming their reality. Next, he affirms that he sees no good reason for believing in God or in immortality; and, finally, he elaborates his doubts regarding the analysis of that physical nature and those other selves which he accepts in principle. Professor G. Dawes Hicks describes a progression which is the reverse of that of Professor Smith, in this case "From Idealism to Realism." "Real things may be, and are, directly perceived without owing either their being or their nature to the circumstance of such perception." The "content apprehended" in perception is a selection from among the total characteristics of the real object, a selection made by the "discriminating" act of cognition. Mr. C. E. M. Joad adopts a similar view of perception, emphasizing (after Russell) the "neutral particulars or events" which are the common constituents of the physical object and the content of apprehension. To this realistic theory of knowledge Mr. Joad adds a conception of "vital force" which he thinks necessary to account for unconscious desire, art and evolution, and which he thinks is dispersed and resisted by an opposite principle of "brute substance" or matter.

Professor J. Arthur Thomson, the sole representative of naturalism, developed a view termed "methodological vitalism," which affirms the need of accepting, over and above bio-physics and bio-chemistry, "distinctively biological categories," such as the capacity to profit by experience, and the tendency to progression and creative synthesis which marks the course of evolution.

Not less interesting, and perhaps more convincing, than the essays themselves, is the Editor's Preface, in which Professor Muirhead says: "That knowledge is in some sense an immediate revelation of a reality other than that of the knowing activity itself, and that this activity is not the creator of its own world, may be said to be the starting point of all recent British philosophy." If realism may thus claim to be victorious over idealism, it is because contemporary realism, in conceiving the physical world in terms of the content of experience (or as differing from the latter as whole part, rather than as one substance from another) has met idealism half-way. Similarly naturalism, as represented by such thinkers as Professor Lloyd Morgan and Professor Thomson, has dispossessed spiritualism only through conceding that nature itself is a hierarchy, which transacts itself at certain crucial points such as those at which life and mind "emerge." Even with the irreconcilable idealists, among whom must be numbered several of the contributors to the present volume, there is a notable tendency to construe that self-conscious mind which furnishes the metaphysical archetype, in terms of the actual processes of nature and history. The result is that the old doctrines, such as realism and idealism, materialism and spiritualism, empiricism and rationalism, which in their clear-cut opposition once defined the factions of philosophical polemics, have come to resemble the grin of the Cheshire cat, preserving only a vague and half-remembered quality without sharp boundary or articulation.

The Americans question their visitors day and night, saying "What do you think of us," till in the end the visitors confess. —*Plato's American Republic*, by Douglas Woodruff.



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## A Letter From Spain

By ISABEL DE PALENCIA

THE character of a man who is so strong that he is, at least, able to overcome his inner self, is admirably defined in Ramon Perez de Ayala's new work "Tigre Juan," and its sequel, a novel in two volumes in which this interesting writer enforces, and further develops, his conception of what the novel ought to be, already initiated in his books of more recent years. The time has indeed gone completely by when readers were satisfied with knowing what the characters in a book might do; nowadays they wish to be told what they think and feel. This implies that they have become representative, not of a certain man or woman affected by such or such a problem, but of humanity itself in its different aspects and values.

Such a method of depicting the eternal strife, between man and himself, in lieu of merely against his neighbors and surroundings, naturally requires a mind so endowed with creative power as to be enabled to form living individuals, out of abstract emotions, and so gifted with a poetic sense that the beauty of the vision is not lost on its way to earth. In "Tigre Juan" the image of the eternal Don Juan, the irresistible conqueror of women's hearts, is reduced to its right proportions. The whole work is besides all this rich in every shade of a writer's art: finest irony, deep sentiment, powerful descriptions, emotional strength are there, and, to crown all, the highest possible expression in the way of style; a style such as few novelists have, at any time, had at their command: fluid, choice, appropriate, and withal precise and of so abundant a vocabulary that one marvels over the possibilities of human language when handled by a true artist.

A man finds some written sheets of paper in a drawer, he puts them together, finds they are the impressions and memories of some one who left them there forgotten, and a book works out of the ensemble. Such is the beginning of Pio Baroja's latest work "El Gran Torbellino del Mundo" in which the miseries and absurdities of the time are spread out before our eyes, in simple form. Larrañaga, the supposed author of the diary, tells us of his impressions on different subjects: literature, politics, and love, such as he himself has received them from different characters, in his passage over Europe after the war, a Europe devastated by selfishness, rapacity, stupidity, and yet flourishing anon in tender beauty through the goodness of a few guileless souls. Paris and its everlasting rush after pleasure, gives the writer occasion for bringing down his fist, metaphorically speaking, on several consecrated, and to the majority, infallible idols of the world of art and letters. Writers, painters, bohemians, fashions and customs provoke scathing remarks while always there is that horror of cruelty, that frank acknowledgment of what is really fine and worth while, so characteristic of this most original and powerful of modern Spanish writers.

After Paris the reader is led on to other scenes: Holland, Denmark, the grey coasts of the Baltic, then Germany. A love passage is here intermingled with the descriptions of towns and people. This love passage comes to an untimely end in the last chapter, in the same simple way that it began. Fate has thrown a young and delicate girl across the path of a crabbed old bachelor and the threads of existence of both have been united. No mighty destructive passion this, but deep affection which when destroyed by death leaves terrible emptiness behind.

Pio Baroja's new book, like all his previous works, is devoid of all effort after style. In its stead one is caught in the grip of his appealing simplicity, of his powerful personality, in the dynamic strength tempered by the acute vision and fine perception, and in the agile satire of this most interesting author.

"Santa Mujer Nueva," by Antonio Porras, is a novel located in Andalusia in the shape of images and visions, well constructed, rich in description, and sufficiently emotional to keep up interest throughout. This is an author who promises further development.

Two new books of poetry have been published lately, one by Martinez Baena, actor and poet, in which the most varied themes have been singularly well exposed. Few writers of sonnets can indeed rival this author in style. The other work is written by Constantino Cabal. The book

of this fine upholder of Spanish tradition is entitled "Los Dioses de la Vida," one of the most interesting aspects of the work being the reconstruction of pre-historic Asturias. With a thorough knowledge of his subject the poet gives us interesting data of the folklore of the old cantabric region. Legends, superstitions, rites, and traditions enrich the pages of his work and awaken one's curiosity in the popular literature of the land.

The collection of Medical Manuals of the publishing house Reus has been further increased by the appearance of a work on "Medical Hydrology," by Doctor M. Rodriguez Pinilla, professor of this subject in the University of Madrid. All the questions arising on this interesting theme are thoroughly and efficiently treated by this author.

## Composer and Poet

RICHARD STRAUSS: BRIEFWECHSEL MIT HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL.

Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 1926.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL

IN this volume of letters is told the story of one of the most remarkable and fruitful collaborations between poet and composer that the world of literature or of music has to show. Of no other partnership—except Gilbert and Sullivan, but that is of another order—can it be said that the mention of the composer's name almost at once prompts association, in the minds at least of all serious students of music, with the name of the librettist. The men who wrote the words for Verdi's operas, for Mozart's, except so far as these composers drew their "Stoff" from the classics, are forgotten. But the name of Hofmannsthal deserves to live as long as the music of Richard Strauss, and it is pleasant to think that the composer, in permitting the publication of these letters and in having the volume edited and introduced by his son, is himself paying tribute to the service of a brother-artist.

The account of the way in which the collaboration began is told by Dr. Strauss's son and is of great interest. In 1900 Strauss had written "Feuersnot," which although intended for representation was rather the experiment of a symphony-writer than a serious attempt to master the technique of the music-drama. Then came the German performances of Oscar Wilde's "Salome," and Strauss seized on this as a text. The success he achieved gave him encouragement to devote himself more to the stage, but the problem was where to find suitable material. It was then that the composer met the poet, and there began that twenty years' collaboration to which all those who have delighted in "Rosenkavalier" have been stirred by the melodramatic force of "Elektra," have felt the magic spell of the "Frau ohne Schatten," have enjoyed "Ariadne auf Naxos," owe so much. In constant correspondence the two artist's exchanged ideas, the composer criticizing the poet, the poet making suggestions for a melody here, a recitative here. Together they consulted, in 1907, over a project for an opera on the story of Semiramis, which came to nothing. The following year there was a little misunderstanding, but it was soon removed, and the evolution of the "Rosenkavalier," fascinating to study in detail in these pages, began. It was Strauss who insisted that the poet should make his audience really laugh, not merely smile; it should be a rollicking comedy; this shown the poet cutting away a page, effective enough as poetry, in order not to have the music too long drawn out, and the composer with a melody, a musical phrase, in his mind, asking for just the right words, and getting them.

The coöperation over "Ariadne" caused a great deal of correspondence, and the composer's cold attitude to the first sketch of Hofmannsthal's libretto, in contrast to his uniform enthusiasm over the "Rosenkavalier," drew from the poet a mild expression of disappointment, which Strauss immediately dispelled by a charming epistle. In fact, as the letters progress the relations between the two become closer and closer, so that we find them almost engaged in a joint creation of the figure of Joseph in "Josephslegende." What further music-dramas we may expect from this coöperation it is not possible to say—there are hints in this volume of more than one that has not yet been carried to fruition—but the achievement so far is, so far as joint enterprises are concerned, without parallel, both for its actual importance and for the perfection of understanding between the two artists.

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