

splendid material to the student of method, who is interested in the history and fate of axioms.

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*Introduction a la vie de l'esprit.* Par LEON BRUNSCHVIGG. Paris, Alcan, 1900.—pp. 175.

The preface and table of contents of this volume give so clear an indication of its purpose, that they may well be quoted. "Philosophy," we are told, "is the methodical reflection of the spirit upon itself." It therefore "demands only the inner witness of the thinking being," and "is accessible to every man who brings to it attention, so that an exposition of it suffices" (*il suffit qu'elle soit exposée*). In pursuance of this plan, Professor Brunschvigg briefly outlines what is virtually a system of idealistic philosophy.

The first chapter on "The Conscious Life" is a compact and able little summary of psychological doctrine, upon a somewhat shifting basis. Many assertions, like the definition of spirit (pp. 37, 46) as a "totalité des idées," indicate a Humian foundation of Braunschvigg's psychology; but the underlying tendency of the discussion is toward the treatment of psychology as a doctrine of the activity of spirit, whose distinguishing functions are analysis and synthesis.

The second chapter, treating of "The Scientific Life," is the least satisfactory of the book, but this is not surprising when one remembers that the idealist is usually, though not necessarily, least successful in his discussion of nature philosophy. The total lack of any consideration of causality is the most curious feature of the book; the definition of space as "relation of exteriority" is a mere tautology; the doctrine of time as succession lacks any reference to the connection between time and causality; and, finally, the teaching that time, like space, is a form of the outer world is in obvious opposition to the assertions of the book itself that the conscious life is a succession of ideas.

The latter chapters are the best of the book, direct, graceful, and often effective in style, and alive with what the author calls "la fécondité morale." The æsthetic life is defined, after the manner of Schopenhauer, as "the unity of the spirit with the object of its contemplation," and a consequent "interruption of the individuality." This loss of individuality in the æsthetic experience is, however, distinguished, with fine discrimination, from personal sympathy in which "we preserve all our will and subordinate it to that of another"; whereas in the æsthetic appreciation of the characters of fiction "we are Hamlet, Bérénice, Eugénie Grandet—we disappear to become other selves." It is through this interruption of the individuality, the author teaches, that "beauty transforms the soul which has created it" and that "sympathy is born within us." "Without doubt," he adds, "the sympathy born of beauty is . . . a platonic and inactive admiration, almost a form of egotism, yet it is none the less a necessary in-

roduction to the knowledge of humanity. And thus beauty initiates us into humanity.”

The moral philosophy of the book combines a Kantian doctrine of freedom with the teaching, more characteristic of later systems, of the moral world as a universe of inter-related selves. The essence of the moral life is freedom, which is alike a “mode of decision,” and “the end of action” (p. 123); but such spiritual freedom is impossible to us unless we “envelop humanity in our will of freedom.” Thus the law of morality is no external authority, but the “bond which unites the individual to humanity.” The discussion in the final chapter of the religious life is a brilliant illustration of the common tendency to confuse religion, which is a personal relation, either with philosophical reflection or with moral activity. The first of these confusions is manifest in the suggestion that religion is the recognition of that fundamental unity which “has no need of *raison d'être*, because “it is *raison d'être*”; the second appears in the definition of religious thought as *une volonté de perfection spirituelle*” (p. 166); both recur in the implication (p. 195) that the ideal of the religious life is the communion of all beings in the principle of unity.

In conclusion, one can hardly fail to question the effective utility of the book. The idealist in philosophy will find, to be sure, a brilliant and often forcible statement of doctrines which he already believes; but the opponent of these doctrines encounters hardly a trace of argument, and is unlikely to admit that the mere exposition of idealism is an adequate proof of it. The book is of little use to the professional reader, because of its lack of historical comment and its almost total suppression of argument; and its condensation unfits it for the use of the young student except as a summary of more detailed expositions or lectures. There are indications that this was its original use.

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*Problems in Ethics or Grounds for a Code of Rules for Moral Conduct.*

By JOHN STEINFORT KEDNEY. New York and London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900.—pp. vi, 252.

One finds it difficult to know just what to say about the value of a book of this sort. It is the work of a Protestant Episcopal clergyman, who has written extendedly on theology, and has devoted a good deal of study, apparently, to German metaphysics. His conclusions on the subject of ethics are contained in the present volume, which, though not written primarily for this purpose, the author hopes may be of use as a text book. It is, however, of no possible value for teaching purposes. Its style is that of the preacher rather than the teacher or controversial writer; that is, it is the style of the man who has been used to expressing himself according to his own fancy, not of the man who has been compelled to make sure that he was understood. Moreover, the structure of the book is unsystematic; the chapters have no organic relation to one another. There is practically