

ARTICLE V.

PHILOSOPHY IN AMERICA: ITS CHARACTER
AND MISSION.

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PHILOSOPHY, it may be rightly claimed, constitutes the chief glory of a nation's civilization. And accordant with the fact that genuine national progress springs from enlightenment, the philosophy of a people will be commensurate with its true greatness. The distinctive philosophy of nations will not, of course, appear in early stages of their advancement; it will the rather be a consummation. Aristotle, Porphyry, and Leibnitz do not stand before us as men suddenly and casually endowed to create philosophic thought, to construct systems at will. They are more clearly men upon whom a necessity is laid, in whom the aggregate intellectuality of the time seems to centralize, and who are therein capacitated to discern and construe the principles under the power of which their fellows had unconsciously (at least unintelligently) reached their deepest convictions, or even, in practical *régime*, seated themselves on thrones.

It is remarkable to how great extent man is guided by uncomprehended motives. He worships he knows not what. He leaves battle-field after battle-field crimsoned with his blood, in his struggle for liberty—felt to be his inalienable prerogative; finally victorious, he swings his colors to the breeze in a land surnamed the “free,”—all this, before he is able to make out that he is capable of unrestricted choosing, to demonstrate that he is possessor of a will so profoundly furnished as to afford secure foun-

dation for the prerogative he has so proudly vindicated. Man, then, may achieve his rights before he comprehends them, and take possession of his free country before he is prepared to prove possession of his free will. It is a suggestive coincidence, that a far-off German philosopher was just elucidating the philosophical validity of human responsibility and freedom when, along the sun-rising of this great western continent, our patriots were framing their independence declaration and proving by achievement their title thereto. Naturally enough, at the opening of their second century, having closed the first by a remarkable verification of capacity for self-rule, the American people are just beginning to ask, What did Kant say?

If, however, philosophy follows in the wake of achievement so vast, is she not a non-essential, or, at least, an impractical? Some reply may be gathered from the statement of an eminent French writer who confidently ascribes the defeat of his countrymen at Sedan to Germany's universities. More conclusive still, in regard to Germany, is the fact that she finally rose to a successful resistance of Napoleon himself, notably through the inspiring efforts of her great philosophic thinkers. It will be conceded that philosophy, though it may not be (intelligently) involved in the inception of a nation's existence, becomes in due time a necessity if that existence be reputedly prolonged. Increasingly as civilization advances is rationality called into requisition as its only safeguard, until rationality itself, becoming antagonized, is compelled to produce its own credentials and establish its own validity. It is, accordingly, becoming a vital question whether this American nationality has not reached such critical status, such multifariousness of immense interests with their besetting enigmas, that propagation of fundamental truths, the umpirage of a philosophy sound and practical, is absolutely indispensable, the *sine qua non* to progress, not to say, to salvation.

Without indulging in technical phrases or psychological reference, let us regard, somewhat carefully, what philosophy is. The term (philosophy) has preserved its dignity uncommonly well. Sophistry had a respectable birth, but long ago lost its birthright. Rationalism, of immaculate pedigree, has been degraded by service in unworthy causes; and it is no longer agreed that "rationalism" denotes a consensus essentially rational. Similarly other terms, *quasi*-buoys of a suspected regimen, have sunk to the level of that regimen. We note, with especial regret, that a term of so fair repute as "evolution" is unquestionably losing caste. An advocate who builds his scheme upon it appears to careful thinkers to outstrip facts rather than stand upon them; and to utilize a vivid imagination, if not, as well, a suggestively youthful credulity. It is no doubt a compliment to the general rationality of the race that the term "philosophy," while it may have been misconceived, has not appreciably lost repute. Misconception must have been exceptional and not the rule. Even in every-day parlance, men imply by the (so-called) philosophy of a matter its satisfying explanation; and it is only needful to follow out the inquiry, what is that sufficient reason, in order to enter a high road to a fundamental discussion and to demonstration of the fact that all men philosophize. Men, as men, are philosophers.

This will suggest in general the difference between philosophy and science. Science discovers, while philosophy demands. Science judges only what her instruments discern; and she undertakes a synthesis of all that the senses by means of instruments can attain. Her *data* being finite, her universe is a limited universe. But, whenever and wherever science declares a finite, philosophy has already set off the non-finite, from which it is distinguished. Philosophy recognizes not the probable but the essential; and, accordingly, merges truth in necessities. Science says, The world is old. Philosophy says,

Time had no beginning. Science says, The sun is many million miles away. Philosophy says, Space is unlimited. Science says, This is the cause of that. Philosophy says, The thought of a cause is the thought of a beginning; there is an absolute cause. At her best, science refers the discovered to the undiscovered.

"Great are the symbols of being, but that which is symbolized is greater;
Vast the create and beheld, but vaster the inward creator."

Nature, both in her minuteness and vastness, is equally beyond the reach of scientific scrutiny. The glory of the *undiscovered* doubtless far surpasses the glory of the discovered. If man cannot live by bread alone, the complete man cannot abide by science alone. Science, of course, in her own domain and by her peculiar methods may have difficulty in apprehending the validity of philosophy. An exclusive devotee of science may be inclined to ignore philosophic truth, if not to deny the actuality or even possibility of its existence. At the same time from the harvest-field of science come many of the strong advocates of the reality and authority of philosophy. Some of the scientific worthies of the present day, who are imperfectly instructed in philosophy, are irresistibly drawn to speculation, incoherently philosophical, beyond the limits of science. Certain it is, science, in her own domain, can find no rest for the sole of her foot. There appears less and less prospect that physics will ever rescue her ultimates from the arms of metaphysics. Matter and force, says a well-known physicist, in the last practicable analysis are but forms of consciousness. Another competent authority testifies that atomic and molecular investigation reaches a point where it becomes a matter of indifference whether the element be called (objectively) apprehensible, or simply transcendental. At the centenary of chemistry, a representative of the best learning in that branch acknowledged that the simplest possible statement of the ultimate process of chemical union has been furnished by a recent philosopher. Rightfully sci-

ence, on reaching her bounds, clasps the hand of philosophy, the one mutually recognizing and supporting the other.

It is to be expected, then, that empirical science, now customarily and conveniently called "science," pursuing exclusively her own methods of discovery, with legitimate induction and deduction therefrom, will and can only end in the declaration *non intelligo*. Happy the searcher for wisdom who is wise enough to recognize that there are other modes of intelligence (beside the scientific), and who is saved from the absurdity of maintaining that what cannot be measured scientifically cannot be known at all. Science at her best leaves the greatest questions open. It has been one misfortune of our unphilosophical age to assume that these open questions were irresolvable. So far as modern life is in accord with such non-philosophical position, it is restive (not to employ a stronger term). Very many, however, are guided by convictions¹ which enable them to pursue a course contrary to mere theory when they find that their logic blinds and subjugates. When such a personality as George Eliot sacrifices reputation, life perhaps, to an incompetent ethical theory, she enters a career which clearly "stingeth like an adder." This manner of thinking calls itself Pessimism, claiming fortification more or less in the attainment of science. Should the question be pressed as to the science theory (seemingly optimistic) that "the fittest survive," it can be said that such a theory adopted as a principle of national propagation, under any available definition of *fitness*, would inevitably (under scientific application) lead to

¹ Spending some time at Oxford, a few years ago, on our way to chapel service one morning, the writer asked two of the Fellows, whom he accompanied, if they did not recognize the inconsistency of attending such services, inasmuch as they had argued the previous evening that we have no valid intelligence of theistic and religious matters. They replied that they admitted the inconsistency; still, did not prefer to act otherwise than they did.

anarchy, and annihilate the recognition—consequently the protection—of rights on equal footing.

We may note various indications of the dawning of philosophy on this side the Atlantic. A very general persuasion exists, even in the common mind, that our thinking in regard, indeed, to high and most important matters, lacks, in greater or less measure, thoroughly defensible foundations. And this is not so much a conviction that our ideas at bottom are insubstantial as that our defences call for a rational resetting. Our nation began by saying, "We hold these truths to be self-evident." But the day is at hand when the validity of our rights will require philosophical defence. Phidias had adorned the Parthenon with the world-renowned treasures of Greek art, before one arose—not at all of artistic garb—who taught the Athenians that they deemed themselves wise, but were not. The sophistic products flourished rank in Athens before the era of veritable philosophy. And is it not a want of (a thirst for) valid reasons which has rendered our generation in marked degree typical of the sophist age? We have produced as complete a type of the genus sophist as has gloried in absurdities and mocked at sanctities, for twenty centuries. It is a peculiarly American phenomenon, the tall weed of our free soil. The age which produced Thrasymachus and Gorgias, however, produced the expounders of Greek thought. Let us be assured that we are not destined to promote rivals in sophistry alone. So far as the possibility for such irrationality exists it argues the absence of correct thinking; but it argues as well an unsophisticated tendency to grasp at the merest straws, which perhaps, with a considerable percentage of folly, involves also unmistakably a desire for truth, in a word, for a better philosophy.

In recognizing that America has no philosophy (no American philosophy), it is confessedly just to mention that New England has possessed a school, familiarly known as Transcendentalism. Its historian and eulogist tells us

that the school was, and is not. With all deference to the merits of the writers concerned, we may doubt whether the history of philosophy will esteem them distinctly a school. Indeed, so far as they represented ideas transcendental, antagonistic to mere phenomenalism, there is no lack of perpetuators of similar tenets; and in this regard the impulse is unimpaired. So far as it might be a wing of the Strauss-Baur criticism of the New Testament, the school may be regarded as having gone down in connection with the failure of that criticism. Without assuming to pronounce upon other points, the general intellectual movement, however, we may regard as clearly in the direction of systematic thinking, and, as such, one of the marked evidences of the incoming of a true philosophic spirit.

The most famous of this group of thinkers, who has made Concord a centre of philosophical inquiry, who has perhaps most strictly represented the transcendental phase,—gazing with rapt vision upon the mountain-tops, but disdainful of the paths which join them to the valleys, preferring the enchantment which distance lends; catching the eternal glory which beams from the stars, yet having no *penchant* for mastering the laws under which the heavenly bodies are balanced in cognizable weights and spaces; recognizing a self-evidencingness in the immortal and divine, a transcendency in the very cowl of the mechanical worshipper, which was its argument,—but impatient of creeds and doctrines by which minds less exclusively transcendent might ascend upon an intelligible stairway from the seen and temporal to the spiritual and eternal;—while he has contributed little or nothing toward a symmetrical totality of knowledge, for by endowment, *hence* by preference, he discarded systems, Emerson has in two respects furthered the development of genuine philosophy: (1) by his unflinching recognition of the highest truths of religion and ethics, as if they were matters of self-demonstration, as unqualifiedly evident as the exist-

ence of inert matter or non-intelligent force, and so preparing the way for modes of thought which compass both heaven and earth; (2) by his extreme reluctance in accepting any system, he has inculcated an exacting sensitiveness which will be of great service in securing an accuracy self-evidencing in the upbuilding of philosophy into systematic form.

The recent up-coming of institutes or schools of philosophy for discussion of fundamental questions, the freshening interest apparent in our colleges among students in these higher departments, and the tendency of our theological seminaries to attain more and more a rational substratum for all matters of belief, must be regarded as evincing in philosophy manifest indications of advance. And perhaps some estimate may be entertained regarding the probability of any existing philosophy proving itself possessor of the field. Is any one of the present philosophies so complete, or of such character, that we may fairly judge that this country, as it becomes thoroughly informed, will naturally adopt it?

Some are inclined to claim that Empiricism has promise of possession. It may be called the philosophy of science, or, as well, the philosophy of facts. And this is an era when every thing must stand the test of fact, and avoid the unsparing mills of science, which not only grind faster than the old-fashioned mills of the gods, but even essay to grind the very gods themselves, and exceeding fine. But, while we regard the scientific method as valid for its purpose and founded *in* a true philosophy, there is no rational evidence of speculation, based on empirical concepts, rising to general recognition as philosophy by philosophers. The revering of science, as chancellor of all accredited intelligence, may be anticipated on the part of those, the maximum of whose attainment scarcely involves a minimum of fundamental truths; albeit they may be facile penmen for the public press, declaimers with extreme

attractions, or even specialists of surpassing excellence in historical or scientific research.

We have a recently-fledged word, "scientist," which seems to be struggling for recognition; what recognition is undetermined. That a man should have genuine reputation in several sciences is becoming less and less likely. He will be, for instance, an astronomer, or a botanist, or a chemist; but will not be an authority in all sciences. To reason rationally of the results and foundations of science is not science. There may be prospect, however, that the term will be required to designate a new departure or sect, the "scientist," founding religious views upon the speculations of science.

Another term, "agnosticism," indicative of a sort of philosophic precocity,—a term common in the newspapers but scarcely admitted to the dictionary,—perhaps deserves mention. The word indicates a want of knowledge, and its sudden appearance may be a symptom hopeful rather than otherwise. Socrates regarded the acknowledgment of ignorance as the best clearing of the way to valid comprehending. So far as agnosticism is what its name fairly implies it is a friend of progress. To declare this and that unknown only awakes inquiries. Shall we not investigate farther? Have we demonstrated that this cannot be known? Of course to conclude that $x+y$ cannot be ascertained is to assume to know rather than not to know, and is in so far gnosticism or dogmatism, and not agnosticism. To declare an object unknowable cannot be the legitimate province of an agnostic. This will require a finality of intelligence as to our capacities, a perfect mastery of psychology, man's powers of apprehension, of postulation, of recognition. But where is this consummate intelligence assumed? By the professedly humble agnostic. We have only to hold the would-be agnostic to his creed. Let agnosticism say, "I don't know all that can be known. I do not perfectly comprehend the possibilities of the human soul. I do not know what is 'unknowable.'" These

confessions denote advance toward an honest philosophy.

The Scottish philosophy contains much that is worthy of choice. Amid our eagerness few possessions are more desirable than "common sense." Sensible in many respects, surely, a return to the teachings of Reid. And our esteemed champion (not to say representative—for, having inhaled much from beyond the Rhine, he no longer represents simply the tenets of his native land) of these teachings has adequate grounds for commending them. The fact is, this philosophy long ago won its way across the Atlantic. During a large portion of the century just closed, the philosophy of Scotland has held the chief place in our colleges. Indeed, even in ancient days, the common-sense view was advocated by Aristotle; and it will continue to be recognized, without doubt, as a permanent factor in the development of human thinking.

But the Scottish philosophy is no longer chiefly prevalent in our country. Even more completely has it been supplemented at home. For half a century German philosophy has been rapidly taking the field. Within a score of years, in Scotland, more rapidly than here. But for one reason, I fancy, Scotland had held her own. She did not seem to see, as Kant saw, that her philosophy was not competent to meet the rising naturalism. Kant plainly declared the hopelessness of Reid and his school, with any claim of mere common sense, thwarting that influence. Scotland, with little knowledge, and not a little suspicion, of German philosophic thought, for several generations maintained an unavailing struggle. Had not Scotland found in Germany a normal development of her thinking, in truth a defence against her own assailants, she had been compelled to expound for herself a more critical regimen. However but one Kant was needful.

In part by reason of better knowledge of modern languages America has somewhat preceded Scotland in reaching other sources. One of the first to direct the way was a graduate of Dartmouth College, Dr. James Marsh (sub-

sequently president of the University of Vermont) who caught from Coleridge the echo of Germany and contributed not a little to introduce continental views. From that date there has been a gradually enlarging apprehension of the merits of Kant and his successors. The difficulty of mastering these profound teachers, and the seemingly impractical character of so-called metaphysics, were doubtless, to a considerable extent, ground for neglect on part of our college graduates of studies in that field, very rarely an alumnus devoting himself to a thorough course in philosophy. Our knowledge consequently has been chiefly second-hand; drawn from historians of philosophy, or from such fragmentary translations as were available.

Two unfortunate circumstances should be mentioned. Kant's great work, his "*ganzes kritisches Geschäft*," to which all his other writings are either propædeutic or merely collateral, consists of three "critiques" which together constitute a single body of doctrine, any one of which is intelligible only as part of, and as connected with, the organic unity of the whole. The attention of English readers has been drawn almost exclusively to the first of these, the Critique of Pure Reason, the only one whose translation has been generally available. And the opinion has been very common that this discussion, which is merely the phenomenal or negative side of his philosophy of our rational intelligence, embraced the sum total of that philosophy. Kant's use of the designation Pure Reason (*Reine Vernunft*) is of course misleading to one who does not go far enough to see that it is employed both in a specific and in a general sense, and so accounted for, by Kant himself. To this critique of the speculative reason our commentaries upon Kant have been almost exclusively devoted. And commendable work has been done toward making intelligible what cannot be completely comprehended in its isolation. Even Dr. Bowen, in his excellent history of modern philosophy, expounds but two

of the critiques, giving us the natural world and the moral world, separate and antithetic, but affording no clue to Kant's philosophy of their symmetrical unification.

In some respects the third critique is the clearest and greatest. Here Kant finally rises to the height of his argument. The starry sky is no longer vacant as contrasted with the majesty of the moral universe. "The heavens are telling the glory of God." We seem to reach the concluding action of a great opera. Indeed, Kant would appear to have caught inspiration from Handel in the final chorus of the Messiah. Kant evidently glories in his demonstration. Having passed laboriously through the kingdom of nature, with its origins inaccessible to the sense, he has at last achieved his freedom. God, Freedom, and Immortality; he repeats them over and over. He seems to see with the vision of a saint. He is satisfied that we have knowledge of God, Freedom, and Immortality, not as speculative, phenomenal, probable, but as realities,—man, as a rational being, apprehending them as necessarily existent and merged in the eternities.

The second unfortunate circumstance has attended our access to Hegel. His emphatic declarations as to the validity of Christianity and its paramount claims, as compared with other systems of religion, aroused intense hostility. A comparatively young man (some twenty-seven years of age), accepting in general the views of Hegel, takes issue with his master as to the historical basis of Christianity, and publishes a copious work on the "Life of Jesus," in which with a dashing display of material he essays to verify his position. This book appeared about fifty years ago, a short time after Hegel, in the fulness of his strength, had suddenly fallen a victim of cholera. As to its merits Strauss found not a few who proclaimed them; and the animosities enkindled were of the bitterest. The extravagant assumptions of Strauss acquired a *quasi*-political prestige, and to his party was referred much responsibility for the calamities of 1848. These results,

ascribed as due to Hegel, of course rendered Hegelianism execrable.

Able replies¹ to Strauss appeared forthwith. These so fully turned the tide of opinion that he, in his later days, recognized with some bitterness the meagre representation of German scholars who sustained his claims. The notoriety of Strauss and of his book, however, was very far extended. Mischief outruns decorum. Minds which do not achieve the greatest things magnify the lesser. In Great Britain and America for a number of years no follower of Hegel was so well heralded as Strauss. In England his book appeared in translation; and, among the opponents of revealed religion, he was hailed as a harbinger of great things. These occurrences, perhaps most of all, tended to prejudice our Christian community against Hegel. The result has been a general distrust of his philosophy. In Germany the odium resulting from the radical doings of the few led those generally who regarded Hegel as the friend of sound reason and of Christianity to avoid conflict and suspicion by dropping all connection with the school as such—a school of philosophy which in number and ability of its adherents has far surpassed any other in modern times.

Meanwhile philosophy in Germany had been losing ground, Hegel perhaps in chief being subject to criticism. Amid the disturbances which redounded so unfavorably, Schelling appeared as a prophet of better things, bringing heavy accusations upon the head of Hegel, which animadversions seem, however, to have taken effect mainly in the Strauss wing, and to have accomplished little permanent injury² to the cause antagonized. Most conspicuous, brilliant, and candid among Hegel's critics was Trendelen-

¹ For instance, Tholuck's *Glaubwürdigkeit der evangelischen Geschichte, zugleich eine Kritik des Lebens Jesu von Strauss*, 1836; zweite Auflage, 1838; Hamburg. Replies by Ulrici and others are better known in this country.

² Vide Michelet's *Entwicklungsgeschichte der neuesten Deutschen Philosophie*. Berlin: 1843, which was called forth as a rejoinder.

burg. He stood a little later at the head of philosophy in Berlin, almost idolized by the hundreds of young men who crowded his auditorium. He was quite generally regarded as the ablest living philosopher. Could he break the system of Hegel he would be the foremost of modern thinkers, at least with no superior but Kant; and some thought he would surpass Kant also. But protracted critical sifting of Trendelenburg's statements began to result in convictions that he had not succeeded in breaking down either of the philosophers, or of producing instead something of greater permanent worth. It seemed to be the general opinion of those who heard Trendelenburg and at the same time attended expositions of Hegel that, while Trendelenburg added to the specific definitions of motion (or energy), especially to the *rationale* of its scientific interpretations, still, generically, his position was Hegel's. Trendelenburg, gradually failing to satisfy the public, is at last brought to the defensive, and the adherents of Hegel begin to rally. Hegel's critics have failed to agree. The Philosophical Society of the German capital proposes a monument. The funds are secured; and the University (of Berlin) joins the Society in the services of unveiling and of presentation to the city. Philosophers representing a considerable number of different nationalities were present, bearing testimonies as to the supremacy of Hegel. The differences have become unobtrusive. It is suggestive, however, of the prevailing sentiment that the faculty of the theological department of the University was well represented at the festival, and in the person of Dorner and others responded to the sentiment, Hegel's Contribution to the Establishment of Christianity.

The dedication of the Hegel monument was destined to mark unmistakably an epoch in the recognition of his fame. A person leaving the United States, where Hegel was recognised as alien, if not hostile, to Christian doctrine, encountered among the university students in Germany declared hostility to a philosopher who would teach

the consistency of certain Christian doctrines. Hegel was antagonized there for reasons quite different from those on account of which he has been disparaged here. This only illustrates, by specific instance, the total lack of unanimity among the (usually superficial) critics of Hegel, which is in marked contrast with the very general agreement as to the import and merit of his teachings among scholars who have studied him thoroughly. The dividing of those who recognized his power did not result from differences of opinion as to what he thought, or from a rejection of certain portions of his teaching, but rather from difference of view as to its application.

There has been not a little misconception concerning Hegel's method, many assuming that he had undertaken, or invented, something novel. Here Hegel is his own explanation. His method is not more dialectical than historical. In the history of thinking he found the method, a method operative in all minds; gradually apprehended by the pre-Socratic philosophers; by Plato distinguished rather than defined, and, strictly speaking, operated unconsciously; consciously operated and partially explained by Kant (*Bedingung, Bedingtes, Vereinigung*); interpreted in its elements by Fichte. It is at the foundation of all scientific judgments, differentiation and integration, and is no more a peculiarity of Hegel's philosophy than was the pulse-beating of Harvey peculiar to him because he discovered the energizing currents of the blood; and to set it aside in the process of thought would be no more wise than the rejecting of levers and cords with their mechanical laws in interpreting the organic movements of the human body.

Hegel is not an innovator. He resembles Plato, who with consummate artistic skill has hidden his own personality behind the deliverance of others, bringing forth from the chaos of conflicting opinions, which, to the vision of the multitude, were only "without form and void," the one truth which the multitude could not see; the light

which was, but was undiscovered. The thinking of the multitude being prevailingly true, the differences, rightly seen, are not destructive. But this thinking of the many does not involve the consciousness of its own interpretation. Hegel too arose as an interpreter. Old civilizations had gone down (men could not keep their works of art); new civilizations had arisen (could men defend their sacred beliefs?). Kant says, in substance, "This is the human soul. I have tested and adjusted its lenses. It has capacity to see liberty, eternity, divinity, and is itself intrinsically co-ordinated with them." Hegel takes the glass and turns it upon the world-stage. He looks down through history. The contending schools of thought bring forward each its part. He apprehends the resolution of seeming discords. The very discords rightly read contribute to the harmony. Hegel becomes the father of the history of philosophy. Similarly he sought the rational import of the on-goings of nature. He questions the results. And here his attainments were "colossal" (quoted from Trendelenburg). He finds the sciences fragments of one symmetrical system of thought and reality. Kant had interpreted for us the process of knowledge; Hegel interprets the product. Kant teaches how we reach the phenomenal and the real; Hegel, what this phenomenal and real is as the one intelligibly and absolutely existent, in which, while the material and spiritual are both included, and in a proper sense related, they are nevertheless strictly distinct. Kant's exposition of the capacities of human intelligence and Hegel's systemization of the total product of this intelligence (finitely, absolutely, and uniquely considered) are, by quite general consent of those competent to judge, esteemed the greatest work, each of its kind, that man has ever produced.

This general intimation of the eminence of these two philosophers is not presented because they exclusively have merits which will certainly command recognition, but rather for the reason that they have been peculiarly

subjects of animadversion, here, as elsewhere, the best and greatest things being liable to be overlooked, if not contemned. Fichte, Schelling, and others have contributed largely to the upbuilding of their national philosophy; but they are not meeting us under the ill omens which attended Kant and Hegel; still, the former can only be understood in their relations to the latter. In fact, the philosophy of Hegel, which represents the culmination of German philosophy as a system, is at the foundation of (all) the superabundant philosophical literature of Germany, which has developed during the half-century since his decease, and which can only be rightly appreciated in its subsequence to that philosophy. And this interpenetrating power of her philosophical thinking appears at other points, not to say everywhere, in the subsequent literature of Germany, (seen may-hap more readily by outside nationalities), in her novelists, moralists, and theologians. Indeed, you cannot give a critical ear to the debates in the Reichstag without encountering immediately a philosophical *modus* of statement and argument which you do not meet in assemblies and parliaments elsewhere.

This power of the profoundest thinking to rule for itself does not leave it an open question whether we are to participate in the results of German philosophy. Whether, however, we shall mechanically import our philosophy, having satisfied ourselves which is the best product, must, of course, be answered negatively. Such a procedure were unprecedented. The fact that we are rational is sufficient guarantee as to what we shall organically appropriate; and it requires no prophetic vision to discern that we are on the eve of an exhaustive inspection of German thought, of enhancement, more or less, of the rational achievement of man's highest powers; and we may be able to speak somewhat positively of the auspices under which a thorough and reputable pursuit of philosophy will be ushered in; for it must be borne in mind that, while in a special sense we possess unequalled advan-

tages, inheriting as we do all the greater results of a greater past, in a sense equally important, upon us is imposed a more arduous task. The past century (and partly because it has opened other centuries) has added immense resources. Yet only at the price of unremitting diligence can we so analyze and utilize what is committed as to be worthy of our day.

As to opportunity for propagation, we shall doubtless be as nearly as possible untrammelled. Liberty to speak and to publish will be practically complete. At any rate, there is no probability of a restriction of proper discussion. And, inasmuch as the tendency of freedom under a growing intelligence is normally toward higher ethical standards, notwithstanding temptations, we cannot doubt that the philosophical teachings which are competent will commend themselves by exhibiting normal results of genuine culture. With a true liberality, which will give a just estimate and recognition to all the diverse shades of truth, philosophy will become cosmopolitan rather than sectional, in fact, will lose, or even fail to acquire, its national designation. It seems improbable that there shall ever be a philosophy any more American than is our geology or our astronomy.

The relations between philosophy and science will be reciprocal and mutually helpful. Philosophy will hold science within her legitimate limits and science will receive recognition as arbiter, in her own field. While it is not practicable, or essential, that the philosopher should personally manipulate the appliances of science (for the specialist requires undivided effort), it is of the highest moment that he should have accurate intelligence of scientific progress. While this requirement increases greatly the task of the student of philosophy it is possible to overestimate the importance of scientific details and the actual value of the latest news. Results of consequence to the philosopher are of unusual occurrence, and merit recognition only after time has permitted mature verifica-

tion and acceptance by the best authorities. As a rule the more recent a conclusion the greater the liability to correction. Valid and accredited attainments of science, which alone are of any philosophical utility, can be so stated as to be fully comprehensible by the general scholar. Often, indeed, the actual import of specific scientific attainment can be reached only by a thoroughly philosophical examination. And should scientific experts be inclined to assume some magical ability and exclusively dogmatic intelligence as to philosophical bearings it may be the part of philosophy to weigh such sacerdotal claims.

If it is not essential that the philosophical critic should be an expert in science, it is necessary that he should be made familiar with the method and attainments of the principal sciences. Especially, however, is a thorough knowledge of biological and anthropological results requisite, the former including discussion of the non-vital and vital, and the latter, more particularly, that of the mind as modified by its environment, especially by the body. As there does not appear to be evidence that mind as such can ever be reached mechanically, there seems no prospect that any mental investigation (properly speaking) can be carried on extrinsically. We may reach the means, molecular and otherwise, utilized by the mind, and so interpret exquisite adaptations beyond any limit assignable; but careful analysis will constantly discriminate between mere adaptation and the originative. We must depend entirely upon consciousness to furnish results so far as they are strictly mental. Still, the mind is so far modified by, and dependent upon, its physical surroundings, that careful instruction as to these relations should be included in every preparation for the study of philosophy.

Much greater assistance will be secured through the medium of philology. Language is the garment clad in which philosophy walks the earth. Indeed it may be regarded as a *propylaeum*, through which we proceed to the soul's higher temples. The science of language ena-

bles us to trace the variations in different centuries of the philosophical terms, and thus the progress in attainment of ideas. The laws of linguistic growth and decay and the conditions, in general, which determine the precise import in a particular century or generation, must be matters of increasing interest to the student of philosophy, as he seeks results more and more critical. The finer shades of meaning which inevitably result from deeper insight render the translation of philosophical writings more difficult than any others. This argues the necessity for pursuing the philosophy of a country in the language of the country. The two great philosophical literatures to be mastered, (it is scarcely needful to add), are the Greek and the German. Both languages are better adapted to accurate philosophical expression than the English. While it seems quite impracticable to render German philosophy into English, on account of the considerable number of terms which have a weight which is not matched by any English term, it is an error to suppose that the German is more difficult to understand. The fact is the language is more transparent and simple; and this has affected the progress in philosophy materially. It is a greater pleasure to read philosophy in German than in English. With the improving facilities for instruction in the German language it will be a serious misstep for us to seek knowledge of German philosophy through translations. Gradually, of course, the considerable number of terms in English whose import usage has not yet made uniform will acquire greater precision; more accurate work bringing more perfect implements.

The science of human speech is inseparable from that of human thinking. The latter science lies at the foundation of valid philosophizing. And as we seek the solution of higher and higher problems the powers and limits of our intellections must be reinvestigated. Probably the most important questions, at present exciting discussion, are directly or indirectly psychological. The elucidation

of the mental process regularly precedes that of the mental product, and will continue to make a knowledge of psychology the immediate and indispensable antecedent of a course in philosophy.

Properly, then, we proceed from the knowing to the known. And if the former prepares the way for the latter, the latter, by reversion, finally absorbs the former. And we reach the unique field of philosophy and its inquiry, What is the one reality which constitutes the known? It appears to be an ineradicable canon of the knowing capacity (not to say universally present) that our intelligence has to do with realities, and, as far as we know at all, that we know things as they are,—as far as we know rationally we know really. Scepticism, if intelligent, will always reach insurmountable elements. Rationality, as long as it is true to itself, possesses the weapons of its own defence. It may be prostituted, and maligned as the most vacuous of all things; but it is only uninstructed and unconscious of its prerogatives. It is destined to rise to supremacy and assert itself as monarch of all existence. Should we assume an escape from what is valid, and take ground that we will only, in general, recognize the universe; still, this one absolutely existent universe is the result of our rational intelligence. What is this universe which not only our thinking involves, but which, as well, involves our thinking? It is virtually and simply the inevitable and all-inclusive problem of philosophy. Man does not shrink from it. He hails it and encounters it, as if by a divine *afflatus*. He struggles with it, as if for bread. Who can truly say the conquests are unworthy? Does not man by his rationality establish his prerogatives and his throne?

What is this attainment? What does man know? First, doubtless, comes the inquiry, What *has* man known? And here, at length, appears what will give the chief character to philosophy in America. It will be first of all, if not chiefly, historical. It will then, of course, be an investi-

gation of facts; and, in so far, at least, it will cease to be decried as merely speculation. What, then, is the actual outcome of the best thoughts of the greatest minds on the highest matters? The geologist seeks the remains of our physical frame in the strata of the earth. From these *data* he reads the history of the human body. The philosopher investigates the strata of man's intellectual remains, and from these (putting together the bones of man's intelligence) he will interpret his progress. It is the study of man as man; and not more the what that men have thought than the why. Upon this problem every product of man's mind will have its bearing. The more distant the date the more valuable the element preserved. The ideas of the Greeks will be tested and retested with increasing intensity of interest. Among the Greeks themselves, forsooth, we find regard for their predecessors, and historical summaries of best results. Furthermore, in nothing has Germany gained larger wealth for her philosophy than in her power to master and appreciate the teachings of the past. It is indisputably true then that the first great work for us is to elaborate thoroughly what already exists. And such study of the history of philosophy will not be merely a garnering of impractical issues; it furnishes helpful answer to a multitude of questions that are at present in the air. In fact it is one valued result of such investigation to reveal to us the various modes of men's thought and argumentation as constant quantities. It were difficult (if not impossible) to find a tendency in speculation which is peculiar to our (or to one) age. Even the forms of delusion and of scepticism have their history—in truth, appear perennially as incomplete or perverted growths accompanying the normal advancements of our defensible knowledge.

Clearly, then, this study of the achievement of human thinking, begun in Greece and carried forward to an honored eminence in Germany, is destined to become in America, for numerous reasons, the broad and conspicu-

ously important foundation of our philosophical activity. And, with advancing attainments (intellectual) its claims must appear increasingly great. How can we best meet the requisitions? How can the history of man as a thinker be fittingly advanced in our educational institutions to the position it merits? As a primary measure, it will be needful that our colleges offer competent instruction. If it cannot be said (and it may be too early to urge an opinion) that the youth of this country are inclined to philosophical investigation, it seems certain that the instructor who, with superior preparation for his task, grasps the genesis of human actions and can follow man down through the centuries, amid his struggles, failures, and triumphs, tracing his convictions, his purpose, and his growing comprehension of truth, as they permeate his art, his religion, and his literature, will not lack an auditory. It would not, in truth, be surprising if, on this side the Atlantic, where philosophy has attained grander dimensions and men higher opportunities, there should be a call for studies of this grade and kind more general and more emphatic than any other civilization has had.

Still the subject is too vast to receive more than an introduction in our ordinary college curriculum. An introduction there should be, however, which will constitute equally a beginning for a thorough course in philosophy and, where such course is not sought, the best practicable aid to other subjects. There is notable authority for regarding Aristotle as the best foundation for philosophic work. Such an estimate is based of course upon his recognized position as at once consummation of the ancient, key to the mediaeval, and introduction to the modern. Trendelenburg in his latest years exemplified this view. After achieving the mastery of modern philosophers, and with no intended depreciation of their attainments, he devoted himself to expositions of truth from the Aristotelian stand-point. Aristotle can be treated in this masterly way, however, only after he has been properly

reached by progressive approach historically conducted. Such an introductory course every college may have ; it seems to me, should have. It would be, in short, a course in the history of philosophy which would begin with mythology and cover specifically the growth of human intelligence in Greece through what is denominated the Socratic period. In this preliminary work students can be led to read for themselves selected chapters of the historians of philosophy, a few by preference accomplishing some exposition of the original texts. Such an historical beginning is perhaps all that can be well attained in our collegiate institutions. Some may offer further instruction—some even venture to give a general survey of the field. And such a survey would have its value. No college, however, will be likely to afford opportunity for a mastery of German philosophy. Without this, a sketch would be at best a source of confusion.

Following, then, the work in our colleges, what is further demanded in this country is a thoroughly equipped school of philosophy, which shall forestall the necessity of going abroad for instruction. At least one such school is a requirement so imperative that no doubt among the commendable accomplishments of this people we shall speedily possess it. And to be a centre for practical equipment in philosophy, courses of lectures, readings and investigations covering a period of years (certainly four or five years, with further opportunity for special studies) subsequent to the ordinary college work, should be provided. If, as before intimated, modern tongues can only be thoroughly understood through their relation to the ancient, still more essential is it to a mastery of modern (in particular German) philosophy that we comprehend what has gone before, the antecedent explaining the consequent. Of no system is this more true than of the system of Hegel, who, himself, indeed, stands in very full sense as founder of the historical method, and a thorough understanding of whom, without such preparation, would seem to be practically impossible.

But the attaining of *data* as to results and methods (of right thinking) is evidently preliminary. The purpose for which man's rational endowments exist—powers which have unlimited range and competency—is *ab origine* to ensure his safety in an environment of law and energies, that incessantly tend not more certainly to build up than to destroy. The prevailing purpose of philosophy in America will be less the mere securing of information than the mastery of issues. Its mission therefore will be manifested when men rise to practical application of fundamental truths to life—to the intense struggle for subjugation of the earth, where supremacy finally comes through most rational uses of highest gifts. Already our national contests involve questions of far-reaching philosophical import. What is the theory of our finances? Have we a monetary system which, strictly speaking, affiliates with our government, which, namely, forms an organic part of a national sovereignty that rests in the hands of the body of citizens? Is it not rather the fact that our exchequer has been mechanically added? The national banking system, it is true, embraces certain elements of an organic nature. But from time to time, in our chief commercial city or in Congress, has appeared convincing evidence that our finances are not subject to administration by the body politic. There is no symmetrical arrangement, for example, by which any general appetite for increased issue of currency can be detected and a properly balanced sufficiency provided. Whether or not such adjustment of supply and demand can be regulated as uniquely as in our physical digestive system may be an open question. Whether we should perfect our exchequer so that it is a normal organic factor of our democratic government, certainly is not.

Certain problems connected with our foreign trade cannot be settled scientifically, or by mere statistics representing this and that instance, nor by recognition of any one principle. Only a complete philosophy of the situa-

tion can avail. No freedom of trade which is not morally directed and no national control which tramples on rights (proper) can be defended. How is the despotism of competition to be overcome? It would seem very evident that the present historical and socialistic tendencies are to be followed by an ethical school in economic science.

Of course it may be argued that some of the more difficult questions relating to property, taxation, and suffrage are not mainly ethical. It can be maintained in reply that these are matters which cannot be (at any rate ought not to be) decided empirically. If we have not a philosophy adequate to resolve the problems of property possession, of the power of the community (or nation) to distribute and tax, and of individuals to claim suffrage or control, imperative certainly is the attainment of such *rationale*; or, at least, the showing that no philosophy is adequate, before surrender of such interests as, for instance, the suffrage (whether for women as well as men) to decision by experiment.

Doubtless the determination of these fundamentals is to depend upon our estimate of man himself. The greater the creature the greater the system. "The chief end of man" becomes, it appears, a philosophical question. In fact the main proofs of the greatness of man, and of his fitness, consequently, for a magnificent destiny, must come from philosophy,—investigation as well of sundry claims that he is conditioned in his characteristics, by some developmental law, under which he comes into being. The incompetency of empirical science to reach the absolute reality leads her representatives constantly to underestimate. A partial explanation passes for a sufficient explanation. A principle, for example, of natural selection among flora and fauna appears to be adequate cause or origin of the different species, until its incompetency as such cause has become clear. Probably no one who is well informed as to scientific progress will now claim that

natural selection competently explains the origin of any species whatever.

Hume's theory as to the adequacy of the senses to discover cause would present some ground for empirical science assigning only such causes as are apparent and accordingly constantly coming short of a sufficient reason. The recent treatment of a theory of evolution as if it were such sufficient reason illustrates this sort of violence to the law of causation. The theory has only to be extended to an exposition of all facts and adjustment of all truth and it immediately becomes evolved into a system of philosophy. What evolution needs is evolution. There appears to be comparatively little involved (completely determined) as to application of this scientific canon (which for circumscribed work of various kinds appears to be sufficiently convenient) which has not been recognized for a long time, for instance, by Aristotle in his theory of progress in nature which included large recognition of laws of heredity and of surroundings. Even in Aristotle's day appeared the same tendency¹ to an irrational oversight of what is requisite in any adequate cause.

This investigation of man will inevitably be carried further. The present, not to say popular, attempts at "psychical research" are bringing forward evidence of the transcendent powers of the human spirit, of the fact that mind is not subject to material conditions but rather rises above the limitations of spatial dimension. Of course one of the earliest matters for critical inquiry will be the ever importunate question concerning immortality. Irrespective of revelation or desire or fancy, what does philosophy teach? Has it been general rationality that has led to the very general recognition of life as unending?

¹ For instance : Aristotelis Opera (Bekkeri), vol. ii. Τῶν μετὰ τὰ Φυσικά. Α. 7. (30). Ὅσοι δὲ ἰπολαμβάνουσιν, ὥσπερ οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι καὶ Σπεύσιππος, τὸ κάλλιστον καὶ ἀριστον μὴ ἐν ἀρχῇ εἶναι, διὰ τὸ καὶ τῶν φυτῶν καὶ τῶν ζῴων τὰς ἀρχὰς αἰτία μὲν εἶναι, τὸ δὲ καλὸν καὶ τέλειον ἐν τοῖς ἐκ τούτων, οὐκ ὀρθῶς οἰοῦνται. τὸ γὰρ σπέρμα ἐξ ἐτέρων ἐστὶ πρότερον τελείων, καὶ τὸ πρῶτον οὐ σπέρμα ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τὸ τέλειον.

Was it incontestably rationality which caused the ablest critical philosopher of modern times to announce the existence of an absolute postulate of our moral nature that man is destined for such unending life? Doubtless here there will be deep-sea soundings, grapplings for possibilities and necessities, with their inter-lying actualities, doubtless proof upon proof that man is sailing in the guiding breeze of eternity, lighted now by stars that are never to set.

The questionings also concerning man's freedom, the "prolegomena of ethics," and his recognition of a Divine Being seem destined to be test of his rational power; and it may appear that those who deny our knowledge of a God are only arguing as to a single method of apprehension and involving, in reality, verifications of the absolute existences they presume to set aside. Agnosticism may simply imply the incompetency of science. What the real powers of spirit to illuminate spirit, and of service to develop a God-consciousness are, is yet to be seen in their verities. No doubt our spiritual vision may be perfected far beyond its ordinarily actualized and recognized capacity. Still, if Kant's argument be valid as to the possibility of design (as such) ever becoming an empirical content, it would indicate as well the impracticability of attaining specific *data* through illumination by a universal spiritual presence. If something definite is attainable (for instance as a canon of criticism) in the employment of spiritual discerning or consciousness for determining Christian truth, such attainment must have a critically determined psychological basis. Any theology which presumes to discard symmetrical alliance of truth with truth, and systematic progress toward unique results, will be more liable to be in its day pre-eminently "new" than to survive the power of rational encounter and through preservation become especially old; it may, indeed, prove, if never becoming specifically old, to have had, nevertheless, previous existence as a claim of olden time.

It is obviously the fact that New England in special has tended constantly toward a remarkably philosophical theology. Edwards will certainly receive ' recognition in the field of philosophy, being in some sense a representative (perhaps we should say precursor) of the Scottish school. While New England has given comparatively little attention to philosophy as philosophy, she has developed a remarkably philosophical tendency. Not only is she fairly well adapted for the reception of more profound and critical philosophizing but likewise for the rejection of any tenet which is not susceptible of a rational exposition.²

But, as well, the discussion of religio-philosophical problems is upon us. What recognition shall be given to so-called natural religions? How far do theistic apprehensions effectuate general results? Shall we distinguish revelation as universal and special? In the definitions of revelations what is the character and function of inspiration? If we attempt to rise above the difficulties that are apparent and imminent we must attain to satisfactory materials with which to carry up our building.

Our present conflict with a religious sect whose managers seem disposed to exhibit themselves as victims of persecution, calls for a more exhaustive exposition of the principles involved. To what limit does freedom of conscience command protection? In general we require a more complete interpretation of the relations between religion and political government? Do we imply by the separation of church and state that a Christian man (for example) is to regard his duties to the state as exclusively secular? Or do we merely mean that the state is deprived of certain arbitrary methods in regard to religion (church),

¹ For President Porter's opinion, see Morris's Ueberweg's History of Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 443.

² For a statement which is probably representative of the present attitude of England see editorial article, " Psychology and Philosophy," in *Mind* for January, 1883.

while the latter is unrestricted in its prerogative to absorb (christianly) the political power? Do we not stand in need of a really comprehensive statement of the relation (irrefragable) of Christianity to civil government?

This suggests the relation of education to the state—another matter to be determined from the philosophy of the situation. And here several problems are involved, problems presenting great difficulties and differences of view. But our purpose is accomplished if it has been made evident that there is immediate demand for a philosophy whose mission it shall be to encounter environing dangers; that we shall enter the field of fundamental truth from the practical side and as a defensive measure; and that the rational treatment of the problems which beset us—and nothing short of it—can secure perpetuity of our national life. While practical problems will undoubtedly inaugurate philosophy, theoretical inquiries will accompany. Individuals will be occupied with ontological and aesthetic questions, and the ultimate integration of principles. Of course the recognition of all known truth in its necessary unification will continue to be the prerogative of the few. As the field becomes enlarged, enlarged capacity is required; and where this is not secured the possibilities of sophistry become enlarged also. Very likely we have not yet seen sophistry in its most powerful rôle. The possibilities of error are unlimited. But Apollo is, no doubt, still competent to plant his foot upon the Python.

It is the geologist and not the plowman who apprehends the symmetry of the structure of the earth. Indeed, our senses do not immediately perceive its revolution. A recent writer shows convincingly that Mr. Emerson unconsciously opposed system (after all) from the standpoint of system. Religion in general is called rational by those who construe religion in particular as folly. Atheism which has recently been called "a disease of the speculative faculty" is less rational than theism. *Mind is better known than matter.* At the recent celebration of the semi-

centennial of the incumbency by Michelet of the chair of philosophy at Berlin University, he stated that the result of his discussions for fifty years (mainly in the philosophical society), with men of every diversity of view, had furthered him in the preparation of his final work, "Philosophy as an exact system of knowledge."

To the apprehension of the multitude, men's opinions may seem unlimitedly diverse, antagonistic, and mutually destructive. The tree of human knowledge may appear a mass of leaves and twigs quivering in every breath of air, and pointing and bending in every conceivable direction. But, rightly seen, the tree abides in its uniqueness; and the environing winds that buffet, it only strengthen it for a higher growth.