

A Lover of the Chair is so wholly worth reading; nor merely for its art, but centrally because here philosophy may be found in its pure and first form and concerned with its essential concern. For Philosophy is philosophizing, and its subject is human nature where it is most truly humane, seeking out that steersmanship of the soul whereof the undying form is the truth that is the Ideal Man.

HARTLEY ALEXANDER.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA.

SOCIETIES

EASTERN DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION: PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL MEETING

THE next meeting of the Association will be held in New York City, at Columbia University, December 28th to 30th. In addition to papers on miscellaneous topics, there will be a symposium on the subject: "The rôle of the philosopher in modern life, with reference both to teaching and to research." This discussion will be led by Richard C. Cabot, professor of social ethics, Harvard University; Thomas Reed Powell, professor of public law, Columbia University; John M. Mecklin, professor of sociology, Dartmouth College; James B. Pratt, professor of philosophy, Williams College; and Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, professor of philosophy, Columbia University. Abstracts of their papers follow:

ABSTRACT OF PROFESSOR CABOT'S PAPER

Can we make philosophy tell more definitely on our students' lives?

1. Philosophy courses are now elected by students without any idea of painful reform.
2. It is difficult but necessary to get students to *practise* the task of conceiving new ideas or arranging old ones as they would practise a musical instrument.
3. Belligerent discussion and truth seeking.
4. Need of taking our task more seriously.

ABSTRACT OF PROFESSOR POWELL'S PAPER

The contribution of the philosopher to the solution of the problems of the social sciences may begin by shedding light on the questions whether the social sciences are sciences and whether their problems are susceptible of solution. The philosopher, as an out-

sider, may be expected to be free from a number of assumptions unconsciously accepted by students of special aspects of social relations. He can therefore help them to uncover these assumptions and trace them to their origins. He can show them the extent to which their methods are common to a number of disciplines and put them in touch with developments elsewhere that have a bearing on their special work. He can teach them to be more critical of their modes of reasoning and of their canons of judgment. He can tell them when they set artificial boundaries to their inquiries and can hint to them what lies beyond. He can help them to see how much of their judgments is based on technical, expert knowledge, and how much is mere personal preference. If he approaches them in a humble spirit he can teach them to be humble.

To do effectively what is here suggested, each individual philosopher should acquire familiarity with some one of the special fields of inquiry in which students of society claim a proprietary interest. Law has a special claim to attention because it is made up of a series of human judgments which are for their purpose authoritative. Here issues are really settled, so far as concerns the case at bar. Out of a series of antecedent facts arises a new fact which must be taken account of. Much of the law is philosophy in action. Whether good or bad philosophy, it actually does a genuine job. In so far forth it is so, whether it is so or not. Law is solid food for philosophers to sharpen their teeth on. A study of authoritative human judgments is a study of ethical ideals or of practical compromises that are matters of fact and not merely of aspiration. Philosophers may perhaps profit from walking in places where they are sure to know when they stub their toes. In learning enough about law to be able to help lawyers improve their methods and their product, philosophers may gather material which is of use for their philosophical inquiries and may acquire greater skill in keeping their feet on the ground while their heads are in the air.

ABSTRACT OF PROFESSOR MECKLIN'S PAPER

After a brief sketch of the difficulties that have always beset philosophy both in teaching and in research, an attempt is made to suggest how these difficulties may be avoided or minimized, on the one hand through the introduction of scientific method and on the other through the cultivation of a sense of social responsibility. It is freely granted that anything like scientific cooperation at the higher levels of metaphysical speculation, where the eternal paradoxes lie and where temperamental differences will always make themselves felt, is impossible. It is not so much the finality of the conclusions

reached nor their scientific character that appeals to the average reader of books on philosophy as the poetic insights, the fascination of the great mysteries of existence, the attractions of style or the personal charm of the writer. It is suggested, therefore, that we must seek in the field of the history of thought the means for the cultivation of the disciplinary effects of scientific method which it seems impossible to attain in the realm of pure metaphysics. A plea is made for the study of the history of human ideals from the broad social and human point of view as opposed to the traditional methods inherited from Hegel. It is insisted, furthermore, that the critical study of the history of ideas should throw light upon the issues that vex us in the present social order.

Attention is called to the fact that the great fruitful ideas, if not the great systems, have originated during those periods when men have felt the pressure of the social problem, as is the case to-day. The concentration of philosophical interest upon phases of the social question and the consequent discounting of the traditional system-builder is, therefore, a hopeful sign. It is a recognition of the fact that what men want is not so much a reasoned interpretation of the universe as light upon immediate and pressing social issues. This temporary departmentalizing of philosophical activity will undoubtedly introduce new vigor and offset the charge of the futility of the philosophers's calling. Finally, by adding "line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," we may hope in time to gain the material that will make possible something like a satisfactory attainment of the final metaphysical synthesis that is always the goal of the philosopher.

ABSTRACT OF PROFESSOR PRATT'S PAPER

The philosopher's duties are twofold; toward the general public and (if he be a teacher) toward his students and his institution. Toward the general public the philosopher has the same duties as have other intelligent citizens—to formulate an opinion on important questions and to use his influence in what he regards as the right direction. Whether he has duties *qua* philosopher which go beyond this will depend on the extent to which he can be said to be in possession of special knowledge or skill bearing on public questions. The philosopher as such may be regarded as a specialist in four fields—Psychology, Ethics, Logic, Metaphysics. As psychologist the philosopher may properly be regarded as a specialist on certain aspects of certain public questions; and with this special knowledge goes a corresponding duty. It is very doubtful whether in any of his three other capacities he has anything of special value to offer to the public.

He should refrain from spending more than a little of his time on practical issues for still another reason, namely because he has other things of importance to do; and if he devotes himself largely to solving the world's practical difficulties he will perforce neglect some of his more special duties and will bring pure philosophy into disrespect. The practical applications of philosophy are merely its by-products. The chief function of the philosopher consists in championing and keeping alive the spiritual life of man. Especially in the age in which we live is there great need of this.

ABSTRACT OF PROFESSOR WOODBRIDGE'S PAPER

An examination of the social effectiveness of philosophy can hardly fail to be an excursion in philosophy itself. We are led to make estimates and appraise ends. We turn a critical eye on our activities and seek some justification of what we choose. This implies the possession or discovery of standards. It implies, that is, a philosophy possessed or in the making. Philosophy and criticism can not be divorced.

Since this is so, it is clearly desirable and important that people generally and youth particularly should not criticize life extemporaneously. Criticism may not profitably be left to individual experience and reflection, unsupplemented and unilluminated by an appreciation of the great systems of ideas which have repeatedly and profoundly influenced opinions and beliefs. The study of philosophy is an essential part of the discipline of the mind.

No one seriously questions the validity of propositions of such generality and obviousness as the foregoing. Difficulty does not touch their validity, but does touch their conversion into practise. To make philosophy an essential part of the discipline of the mind has not been found easy. In this matter we are evidently confronted with one of the recurring problems of education which can not be solved once for all, but which must be repeatedly solved as best we can. The verbal solution is easy enough: since the study of philosophy is so essential, it should be made the essential subject in education. This is, however, impracticable. Disregarding wholly the need and pressure of other subjects, there are not enough teachers of philosophy with sufficient experience and power. For philosophy, in so far as it is the attempt to develop standards which effectively criticize life, can not be taught dogmatically. It must foster in minds the habit of reflection, rather than fill them with accepted knowledge. It demands in the teacher maturity, experience, a wide acquaintance with the arts and sciences, and a liberal mind. Otherwise it is apt to become idiosyncratic or a means of propaganda. It is not likely,

therefore, that philosophy can be made widely effective socially by teaching it as a part of the curriculum of education.

It may, however, become widely effective by influencing education generally. Whether philosophy is a real force in society depends less upon the teaching of it than upon the character of the system of education which prevails. By bringing to bear upon education able and sound criticism philosophers are likely to be heard. They can, through a sympathetic understanding of their age and its needs, help significantly to clarify them, and make leaders in education critical and conscious of what they are doing. Philosophers can do much to promote the freedom of the mind and to keep alive that sense of reality without which the aims of education become obscure and its methods illusory.

In a more restricted field, and particularly within their own borders, philosophers can do much to keep the habit of logical analysis sustained. It is among the commonest things in life that both popular beliefs and scientific and philosophical opinions are determined by the logical consequences of presuppositions fully as much as by the exigencies of life. The remedy for this is the sustained habit of analysis, which will show how far conclusions are motivated by the logical procedure from presuppositions and how far they are motivated by a consideration of facts. Such analysis can not be made once for all, but must be repeatedly made in view of social changes and the emergence of new ideas and discoveries. In spite of much current enthusiasm for what is called social philosophy and social psychology, there are remarkably few competent and dispassionate analyses of popular and scientific presuppositions. Such analysis would do much to clarify present tendencies and develop standards of sound criticism.

All this implies something besides teaching classes in philosophy. It means writing and publishing. And it means writing of a different sort from that which now largely prevails among our philosophers. They write too much for one another, with the result that they are not widely read and have little influence. Much of their subject-matter and many of their problems have only antiquarian interest. There is intended here no depreciation of genuine historical research or of abstruse studies. There is not enough even of these. But to be socially effective philosophers must write for society, about the things which interest society, and in a language society can understand. In this direction, education and criticism always afford abundant opportunity.

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Secretary.