

For the Torch of Reason.

Phenomena Facts of Consciousness.

BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.

When there are several dictionary definitions of words, the selection of one of them to decide questions of philosophy is liable to be inconclusive.

When I say, with Huxley, that sound is a phenomenon of consciousness, I mean that it is a sensation—the product of two factors, vibrations of air and a sensitive auditory nerve.

No sound without an ear. No hearing, of course.

When I say that luminousness is a phenomenon, I mean that it is a sensation—the product of two factors, ethereal vibrations and retinal sensibility.

No light (luminousness) without an eye. No seeing, of course.

When I say that fragrance is a phenomenon, I mean that it is the product of two coefficients—emanations from the rose and the sense of smell. Fragrance expresses states of consciousness caused by some objects through the olfactory nerve.

In like manner, the sweetness of sugar is the product of an external substance and the sense of taste.

What we conceive as the qualities of matter are sensations or states of consciousness, due to the objective and subjective factors—to the external something and the conscious organism.

Sound, luminousness, fragrance, hardness, etc., so-called qualities of matter, are, in fact, states of consciousness. The hardness of the metal is a term that expresses the sensation produced in us by the resistance of something known only by its effect upon us.

All knowledge is relative.

These statements, to philosophic thinkers, are but axiomatic.

Reply to Congratulations.

It is pleasant to be congratulated, to be assured that your efforts to benefit and please others have not failed. Such recognition is the human sunshine that draws out and upward the "plant" of human endeavor and makes it blossom out into flowers and fruits. Such a sunshine of light and warmth has been brought over our nascent Liberal University in these beautiful days of Spring, by the glorious success of its closing exercises for the season. Those friends and visitors present so declared our program from start to finish, and the echo of their approval can not but come from thousands of well-wishers abroad. All friends of the new, higher Liberal Education all over the world can not but rejoice with them and us. Considering the means at their disposal the Faculty, Trustees and Students are justly proud of their work. They have labored steadily, and all pulled together without a note or thought of discord. The Students have learned to study and to appreciate their studies as they certainly never did before. They will return and

bring others. This state of things blossomed out finely in the commencement exercises. Everything went off grandly.

This result means much—may we not say everything for the institution? This year's work and its closing success is the solid foundation upon which all must now join to build a higher success in the coming year. The way now lies wide open to the certain realization of our highest hopes. Nothing can defeat us but the want of means to go forward. T. B. W.

Higher Education and Culture Must be Various.

In the Article on Free Universities in our last Torch it was shown that they could not be homes of a higher education unless they were free, and that they could not be free under either State (political) or Church (ecclesiastical) direction or domination.

The only escape from these evils was pointed out to be the establishing and conducting of Universities as a matter of freedom on the part of any parties who wished to make the undertaking under a general law, providing impartially for the purpose and allowing State, County or City aid only for those which were strictly Secular.

Every Liberal and Non-Sectarian should take this proposition into practical consideration in electing the next legislature.

One further thought should never be left out of the mind: That is, that only by this freedom from Church and State can "higher culture" escape death by STEREOTYPING. Such culture, to exist at all, must be various. Every phase of thought, feeling and view of life must have the opportunity of development in its own way, and under the support, guardianship and direction of its advocates or sympathizers. Then a free press will be able to find support for a VARIOUS literature, instead of uniform text books and a regulated mode of thought or feeling, because dictated into uniformity by our "educative authorities." Our State must not try to realize the beau ideal of the French statesman, that every person should think as the State and Church, every child should say the same lesson in France on the same day of its age, and when it grows up read the same books, think the same thoughts and obey the government with the same unquestionable alacrity. Thus the old regime carried into the intellectual world its stiff and formal method of landscape gardening, where every path and stream, rock and tree, shrub and flower was a mathematical manufacture, rather than an expression of ease and beauty of growth, and of pleasure in Liberty. Our higher culture must not be that, but the free and variegated growth of the popular life in its joy of Liberty. Every flower of feeling and thought must have its chance to open its varying expression to the sun, its chance to be selected and to add to the higher life of the people, which it is the purpose of the higher education and life to make possible—only possible by every variety of flower and fruit.

T. B. W.

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