

For the Torch of Reason.

### Idealistic Fallacies.

BY HERMAN WETTSTEIN.

"What either consciousness and the objective reality is in itself we do not and cannot know," says Mr. B. F. Underwood, in the Torch of May 31.

Science had better retire, then, into "innocuous desuetude" for what use is there in seeking what is beyond finding out?

"The two (above mentioned) factors constitute a synthesis which is the basis of all knowledge," he continues. The synthesis being admitted, concedes knowledge of the same, as well as "the basis of all knowledge".

"What the world is except in relation to consciousness we do not know." Is not that enough? If we are conscious of a thing and know its nature, what can there be outside of our knowledge of it? Why assume something not the least in evidence or that transcends our knowledge?

"What consciousness is except in relation to what is perceived, and what is conceived as objective, we do not know." Consciousness is now beginning to be generally regarded by Science as one of the properties of matter, though in an inconceivably lower form than the mind we are conscious of through the process of cerebration.

"Our world is the perceptive and conceptive world." Would it not be the same world if our perceptions and conceptions were annihilated? Did it not "once upon a time" exist without them? If so, then it is evidently not a perceptive and a conceptive world. Only sentient beings are perceptive and conceptive. Where is the world's sensorium to make it as claimed by Mr. Underwood?

Our consciousness with its concomitant judgment tells us what the world is, as far as it can come within reach of our senses, hence it is not unknowable. Its relation to our consciousness covers the entire field of known existence. If there is anything beyond the known, what is it supposed to be?

"The so-called properties of matter are, in final analysis, states of mind." Were they also states of mind before organic life appeared upon the face of the earth? Think of divisibility, impenetrability, extension, etc., etc., being in their final analysis states of mind before there was any mind to take cognizance of them! Yes, and after, too! No philosophy which can transmogrify a physical property into a state of mind can have any standing in court (to paraphrase Mr. Underwood's words).

"Phenomena are facts of consciousness." An aurora borealis is a phenomenon. They occurred before organic life was evolved. How

could they at those periods in our world's history be facts of consciousness? And do these phenomena not now occur irrespective of whether they produce a state or a fact of consciousness or not? Do they depend upon any one seeing them? Isn't a rainbow formed whether it is seen or not?

There is nothing "in co-operation with consciousness that gives rise to the perception and conception of things objective". If there were, Science would have been on its track long ere this. Consciousness is all-sufficient in itself for the cognition of things objective.

"We know color only as a sensation." Yes, and that very sensation, analyzed by our knowledge of it, tells us what color is. We know everything as a sensation, but that sensation constitutes our positive and unquestionable knowledge of it. We see a man commit a murder. It is only a sensation, but that "sensation" passes for positive knowledge in court all the same. To consider a sensation insufficient for knowledge is to doubt the evidence of your senses.

"We know vibrations of the ether only as a conception." Would he also know them "only as a conception" if they should happen to hit him in the form of a lightning-stroke?

The relativity of knowledge is "a mountain made out of a molehill". It is "much ado made out of nothing"; "much cry and little wool", since it is a self-evident proposition that no one has ever disputed.

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### "Guided" Points.

BY JOHN P. GUILD.

A school is not prized by its size, but by its wise.

An infinite personality is infinitely impossible.

Proverbs are usually repeated in proportion to their absurdity.

If all the earth were gold, what would an ounce of dirt be worth?

The mathematical sciences get along without God, because they are able to prove themselves.

Any opinion that appeals to God for confirmation is very suspicious of its own verity.

A little farm well tilled; a little school well drilled; a little head well filled; a little hand well skilled; a little home well willed, is better than the biggest run wild.

When the people quit trusting the Trusts, there will be no Trusts.

Savings banks are shaving banks, and when people get shaved in them they get what they bargained for in such barbe(a)rous places.

The best way to kill your own folly is to exploit it; then if it don't kill itself, or kill you, some one else will kill it—maybe you, too.

### Travels.

BY PEARL W. GEER.

I have been very fortunate in having the opportunity to visit the different Liberal societies of the East, where I find much positive and constructive work being done. Of all I have attended I find that the Chicago Liberal Society, the Ohio Liberal Society of Cincinnati, the Friendship Liberal League of Philadelphia, and the Brooklyn Philosophical Society are apparently the best organized and draw the largest crowds, and all seem to do an equal amount of good. The Chicago organization is the youngest and is different from all the rest. It more nearly conforms to the line of work adopted by the Oregon Secular Churches. Dr. Gregory is the lecturer, and around him the society grows. The officers and members are all loyal to the cause for which they work. Mr. C. E. Levi deserves great credit for the work he is doing in Cincinnati, where with others he has made the Liberal society a credit to the cause. This society does not have a regular lecturer, but depends on getting the very best talent obtainable. The Philadelphia society is run on a similar plan and is largely attended by an intelligent class of people. They have had much to contend with and a disturbing element has tried to wreck them, but the society is now on a splendid footing, largely on account of the work done by Mr. Longford, Mr. Wilbur and many others. At the Brooklyn Philosophical Society I saw the largest audience of intelligent people I have seen for some time. I didn't have much of an opportunity to find out the workings of the society, for the whole afternoon was given to Mr. Pentacost and there was no discussion. This is one of the oldest societies and one of the best respected. Mr. Henry Rowley deserves great credit for what he has done on behalf of this organization.

At the Washington, D. C., Secular Society I had one of the pleasantest times of my whole trip. The meeting I visited was not very well attended, but the enthusiasm can not be excelled anywhere. The population of Washington changes every four years, and it is hard to build up anything permanent. I think the Washington society needs more young people.

The Manhattan Liberal Club is different from them all. There you will find your cranks who are fond of fight. It seems to me that each person who attends the Liberal Club goes there with the firm conviction that he alone has the correct solution for all things, and the others are all wrong. It is an interesting time one may have there and there is much to be learned by one who will go there with an un-

prejudiced mind. It is hard to advocate any idea in that organization and not have it contradicted by a majority of those in attendance. That makes things lively and the society does a great deal of good.

The Liberal Society of Manchester, N. H., I hope to visit. The others which I haven't visited have adjourned for the summer, so I shall be deprived of the pleasure of meeting with them. It is indeed encouraging to see so much organized work being done in the Liberal ranks.

I found Mr. Henry Rowley at the Brooklyn Philosophical Society, where I had a short chat with him, and then met him later at his office in the Park Row Building, in New York. Mr. Rowley ranks as the best Liberal orator in New York now, and his lectures are well received wherever he has faced an audience. He spends a short time each day reading, and as a consequence he has a store of knowledge on which he draws on whenever he consents to lecture, and the preparation of the lecture is no trouble to him. Mr. Rowley is deeply interested in the Liberal University, and he took particular pains to inquire into every detail of our work which pleased me greatly. At the conclusion of the interview he showed that he was satisfied with my answers to his questions, for he decided to support our institution with a very liberal yearly allowance, one-half of which is to be forwarded to us every six months. He not only does this but he knows of others who he is certain will do as he does on his recommendation. If others will only do in proportion to what Mr. Rowley is doing we will be allright.

Miss Schachtel said that if I would call to see her she would give me some money for some stock in the Liberal University Company. She didn't know that I would be pleased to call without any money consideration, but I accepted the bribe anyway. Now Miss Schachtel made me promise to not write any eulogy on her for the Torch, and that is about the worst punishment I have had to endure lately. I had so many nice things in mind to say about her, and all of them true, that she is real cruel to deprive me of this opportunity of showing what I can really write in praise of a lady. But since she requests it, I won't say a word but leave the reader to judge what I would have said.

We went to the theater to see the play "Quo Vadis," the play with only one really sensible character in it, namely Pretonius. The others are so devotedly religious that reason stands no show with them. When Eunice said that a new power (Christianity) had arisen in the world, the assembled audience cheered with enthusiasm. It is