

BOOKS RECEIVED.

BRITISH THOUGHTS AND THINKERS—INTRODUCTORY STUDIES—CRITICAL, BIOGRAPHICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL. By George S. Morris, A. M. Lecturer on Philosophy in the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore—S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago. 1880.

To trace the progress of the human mind and its highest aspirations, must always demand the close attention of an author of the highest intelligence and perfectly unbiased reasoning faculties; because it is easy to understand that, with such a mass of material to draw from, deductions of the most varied character may be drawn, which may accord with almost any form of belief or system of philosophy, by a mere judicious selecting and rejection of authorities.

The present author has evidently commenced his task with certain philosophical convictions strongly established in his own mind, and the purpose of his book is to place them in proper order before his readers, showing the high authorities that may be cited for their support and as evidence of their truth.

The aim of Professor George S. Morris is to assert the idealism which is innate in the universal mind of man, which is no accident, but a constituent and necessary element of human nature, and in fact, that which constitutes it. This idealism teaches mind to have faith in itself, to know itself. He refers to mind, or conscious intelligence, as an active function, not simply a passive possession; strictly passive, it were no longer intelligence, for then inactive, it would not have intelligence of itself. He states still further that intelligence is only of the intelligible, reason apprehends only what is rational—mind therefore can comprehend no world which is not permeated with its own attributes; the absolutely unintelligible, irrational, being inconceivable, and hence utterly incapable of being brought into relation to mind is for it no better than the non-existent.

Mind therefore seeks itself in the universe, chiefly in forms of law, order, purpose, beauty—it must reduce its conception of the universe, given first in the form of isolated, unexplained impressions, to the order and harmony of a rational and hence explicable apprehensible whole. And this search, this necessity of mind, again, precisely, is *idealism*.

Such in the view of Professor Morris, is the law, the universal tendency and the inherent necessity of mind.

Man having no exact conception of an idea apart from the mind which possesses it, cannot conceive rationality, except as the attribute and living function of a mind or spirit. The rationality therefore found in nature is an *absurdum* unless viewed as the direct or indirect effect and function of self-conscious spirit. The idealism (in theory) which holds fast to these axioms, acknowledges God, whose rational power and wisdom it detects in all things. So man in his humble way is brought into direct and sympathetic relation with the universal, all-pervading, all-explaining power.

Such being the strong belief of Professor Morris he naturally reads with horror, in the works of Mr. Herbert Spencer, of Man being merely sensitive flesh, and morality the irresponsible result of physico-organic evolution, and not the self sustaining work or requirement of the ideal true man.

As representatives of two opposite shades of opinion, it would scarcely be possible to select more appropriately, two men with more divergent views than Professor Morris and Mr. Spencer. The former sets no limit to the possibilities of his system of reasoning, while the latter insists that whatever is not cognizable, through the investigations of phenomena by the peculiar method, and

with the peculiar and generally recognized limitations of physical science, is arbitrarily held to be unknowable.

It is clear that Professor Morris approaches the subject of Mr. Spencer's system of philosophy strongly biased against it, and when he stigmatizes Spencer's views as gratuitous, extra-scientific, absurd, contradictory and dogmatic, we would caution students, for whom this work is principally written, to read the works of Spencer before accepting Professor Morris's conclusions.

The work which we now review will doubtless command a large circulation. It was founded on a course of lectures delivered at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and is, therefore, well adapted for students, but as a work for the general reader it will prove highly attractive, presenting in a small compass a synopsis of the works and record of the lives of such men as Edmund Spenser, Richard Hooker, Shakespeare, Bacon, Hobbes, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, Sir William Hamilton, John Stewart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and others.

Credit is due to Professor Morris for his skillful method of handling subjects presenting so many difficulties, and the general arrangement of the work is harmonious, consistent and intelligible. The appearance of this work at the present time is most opportune, and as an introduction to the line of thought which speculative philosophy has taken, from Lord Bacon's time to the present day, a more useful book cannot be selected. The deliberate opinions, so forcibly and ably engrafted throughout the work, while merely intended to point the way to correct views, considered from the position taken by the author, may even carry conviction with them. We, however, strongly advise the student to accept the book in the spirit in which it is offered, and to regard it as an invitation to reflection and more systematic study rather than as a substitute for it.

PHYSICAL NOTES.

POLAR ELECTRICITY IN THE HEMIHEDRAL CRYSTALS WITH INCLINED SURFACES.—MM. Jacques and Pierre Curie have shown that all the facts hitherto observed agree in showing that in all the non-conductive substances with inclined surfaces which have been examined there is the same connection between the position of the hemihedral facettes and the direction of the phenomenon of polar electricity. The physical signification of the above will be better understood by saying more colloquially, but more tersely, that the more pointed extremity of the hemihedral form corresponds to the positive pole by contraction, whilst the more obtuse extremity corresponds to the negative pole.—M. P. Thenard claims that the same phenomenon was observed by his son fifteen years ago.

PRODUCTION OF CRYSTALS OF CHROMIUM SESQUICHLORIDE OF A PERSISTENT GREEN COLOR.—M. A. Mengeot allows hydrochloric acid to act upon potassium bichromate dissolved in water. If the solution is allowed to evaporate for about ten months the bottom of the vessel is found lined with deep violet crystals of chromium sesquichloride, but among these large violet crystals are some small green crystals of a salt of chromium. According to all authorities the green salts are only formed at 100°; they are not crystalline, and they gradually pass into the violet condition. But the production of these green crystals takes place at common temperatures, and they have remained green for more than two years.

RESEARCHES ON BASIC SALTS AND ON ATACAMITE.—M. Berthelot considers that in this compound, $\text{CuCl}_2 \cdot 3\text{CuO} \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$, the water serves as the chief connecting link. A metallic salt may be completely precipitated and the resulting liquid neutralized without an equivalence between the precipitating alkali and the acid of the metallic salt, a portion of the latter being carried down in the precipitate. A great number of metallic salts behave in an analogous manner. M. Berthelot has also found that the transformation of the simple ethers into alcohols corresponds in a state of solution to a thermic phenomenon, which is almost *nil*.