

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS.

Knowledge, Belief and Certitude, an Inquiry with Conclusions. By FREDERICK STORRS TURNER, B.A. (Lond.). London, Swan, Sonnenschein & Co.; New York, The Macmillan Co. 1900. 8vo. Pp. viii + 484. Price, \$2.25.

This is a plain, straightforward bit of work, possessing the good qualities that, as a rule, mark first-hand thinking. Here and there Mr. Turner may be disposed to magnify his office in somewhat *naïve* fashion; but he is so much in earnest that one can forgive him readily.

The problem by which our author has been oppressed may be stated succinctly thus: What is Real Knowledge? In addressing himself to its solution, Mr. Turner distinguishes between what he calls 'abstract' and 'real' knowledge. He finds that the former is common to the many disciplines indicated usually by the generic names science and philosophy. In this connection he says a number of sane things about science, a majority of them, to be sure, quite familiar already. The manner in which he runs amuck among the philosophical dignitaries and their honored idols does him no small credit, if he be aware—which I do not think he is—of the enormities he commits. Some of the references to psychology look suspiciously second-hand, and the cavalier treatment of Wundt hardly reassures one regarding Mr. Turner's insight into contemporary problems and tendencies. Yet, be this as it may, our author suffers nothing on the score of tradition; and, if he contrive to annoy some few, he will, for similar reasons, amuse a great many more.

The portion of his book on which he lays the greatest store on the score of originality, is entitled 'Real Knowledge.' It may be of interest to note the precise import he bestows upon this rather optimistic phrase. For we all remember the proverb about the place where angels fear to tread. 'Real Knowledge,' then, is the "science of ends, of human causality, so far as man is a cause by his own will and according to his own design (351). * * * In all its stages the *end* both is, and leads to, real knowledge. * * * It seems to me that now in this knowledge of ends we have a full and sufficient answer to those psychologists and philosophers

who call in question the reality of the first fundamental certitude, that of the Self." (361-62). Thus, knowledge of the Self is 'real knowledge.' Again, "it is not too much to say that the knowledge of our own causal power is on a level with the most certain and the most important knowledge which we possess. This is real knowledge; compared with which mathematics and metaphysics seem shadowy and unsubstantial" (386). With this the 'nescience of science' is to be sharply contrasted. "Science is not a unity nor a system, but merely a general name for a number of separate sciences. All attempts to frame a tenable theory of the universe by means of abstract objective knowledge, or science, are necessarily doomed to failure" (439). On the other hand, positive conclusions are possible, to wit: "The first positive conclusion we have reached is that real knowledge is a state or mode of the conscious being of real living men and women. * * * The second positive conclusion is that this real knowing is a knowing of real persons, real things, real events. * * * The third positive conclusion is that the knowing and the known are united in the reality" (477-78). Such are Mr. Turner's constructive results, so impressive to him that he ends, "not with a feeling of self-complacency, but with joyful confidence in the truth that has been revealed to me (479)."

Needless to tell, all this happens to be one huge *ὑστερον πρότερον*. Mayhap, human experience must, by the very nature of the case, partake of this character. But a writer who would reveal the inwardness of 'knowledge, belief and certitude' can not be said to have solved his problem by the mere statement of a few among its obvious implications. No doubt, he may accomplish something along such a line—he may be assembling the factors involved. Just because this appears to be Mr. Turner's situation, his interesting book would serve better than some pretentious manuals as an introduction to philosophy for students whose intellectual fates had been committed to a skilled teacher. For it is not given to every author to be so frank when he sees men as trees walking.

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