

55 (11 August 1892) 114-115**Dynamics of Rotation: An Elementary Introduction to Rigid Dynamics.**

By A. M. Worthington, M.A., Headmaster and Professor of Physics at the Royal Naval Engineering College, Davenport. Longmans, Green & Co. 1892.

CSP. identification: MS 1365. See also: Burks, *Bibliography*; MS 1377 (draft). This notice is unassigned in Haskell's *Index to The Nation*, vol. 1.

This little volume of only 155 pages will be very useful to those persons who have a slight knowledge of the most elementary principles of mechanics, giving them in a dozen sittings, or not many more, all that is necessary to render their previous knowledge applicable to practical problems. It is written, too, in no perfunctory way; but the author has seriously addressed himself to the problem in practical psychology of how to bring a mind uncultivated in mechanical conceptions into a state comparable with that of a good mechanical engineer, and has produced a successfully working solution of it. Having judiciously divided his subject, so as to separate the difficulties which the learner must encounter, he begins, under each branch, by pointing out either familiar phenomena or else simple experiments to be performed; and by reflection upon these—by comparing and analyzing them under the guidance of the author—the student is gradually brought to a conception mathematically clear, which is at the same time firmly attached to well-recognized facts of observation. The result, we are confident, will be found to be that, considering the small amount of mathematics this little book supposes or teaches, the mastery it imparts to the student will be very satisfactory. As a good instance of the author's care, the mathematician should look over the explanation he gives of the gyroscope. We do not know where we have seen another, equally elementary, that has been so clear and detailed as this.

The merits of the work are such that we must forgive a few little slips of logic. Some persons might object that it does not cover the whole ground, in that, not only in the broad realm of rigid dynamics, but even in the narrower province of the dynamics of rotation, it does not teach all with which every man of good ordinary education ought to be well acquainted. But we are inclined to think that the author has exercised sound judgment in restricting his subject as he has done.

55 (25 August 1892) 152**The Philosophy of Spinoza.**

[Series of Modern Philosophers. Edited by E. Hershey Sneath, Ph.D.] By George Stuart Fullerton. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1892.

CSP. identification: MS 1365. See also: Burks, *Bibliography*. This is unassigned in Haskell's *Index to The Nation*, vol. 1.

The idea of this series of books is to present the substance of the leading systems of modern philosophy in selections from the original works. Its object is to facilitate the study of the history of philosophy in colleges, as well as to meet the wants of clergymen and others who desire to make a pretty thorough, but yet not a professional, study of philosophy. Whether the plan, although it is skilfully executed

in this volume, attains its ends as nearly as careful and extended but free expositions would do, may well be doubted. A student who does not want Locke's 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding' (which he can easily procure for about the price of the abridgment) on his shelves, nor Hamilton's 'Reid,' nor Kant's 'Critique of the Pure Reason,' is a person who will not understand selections from these works, and whose wants would be better served by such expositions as modern scholars to whom the several works are specially sympathetic would be able to set forth.

Of no writer is this nearly so true as Spinoza. Nobody but a ripe philosopher, profoundly versed in the history of thought, is fit to read Spinoza's 'Ethics.' A collegian will be sure to miss the essence of it, and any amateur metaphysician whose ideas have not been matured on a special side by deep reading in theology will be almost sure to fall into the same error. The reason is that Spinoza did not understand himself—that may be said of nine out of ten great thinkers, but above all of Spinoza—and consequently was a miserable expositor of his own ideas. That which will chiefly attract the attention of any inexperienced reader of the 'Ethics' is its argumentation and its pseudo-mathematical form; and if he is well versed in modern logic, these can only excite his scorn. If he is not so versed, the kernel of the book will remain still more completely shut away from his apprehension.

Another fault of this series is that not sufficient attention is given to the biographies of the philosophers. Light may be thrown upon any doctrine from the life and personality of its author; but this is particularly true of Spinoza's. Imagine a not very little but rather short Jew, somewhat shabby, but scrupulously neat and almost prim, too formal, though in forms of his own. walking with short steps, talking in short-clipped syllables, of colossal conceit. His morality is stern, not to say narrow. He so values his self-respect that he not only will not accept a pension from his own people, on condition of living like a respectable member of the synagogue, but he will not accept a pension from Louis XIV. without conditions; he refuses his consent to a fortune being left to him, and when the will of the proposed giver enjoins his heir to take care of Spinoza, the latter reduces the yearly payment from 500 florins, which the heir himself had proposed, to 300. In fact, Spinoza carries his love of independence and detestation of being under obligations so far that he will not accept any employment proper to an educated man, but practises a handicraft. He lives his life among artisans and the lower middle class, and meets no other persons except his own devoted admirers. To a man of genius, such a life would have been utterly unendurable; but Spinoza, however extraordinary his ideas, was a sluggish mind. He passed his days in a narrow circle of ideas, concerning which he was continually inventing quilllets or catches, more or less puzzling, which he took for arguments. The great ideas of pantheism could not have come to him in that way; but how they did come he does not tell us. He thought that a matter of no consequence, and would have been unable to give any accurate account of it. Nobody has yet elucidated the real nature of pantheistic thought, nor shown its relation to matters of experience. The account usually given, like Spinoza's own, remains on the surface. But we cannot go

further into such a subject here than just to remark that the service he performed was to render certain conceptions, as that of the Absolute, more sharp and clear than they had before been, but not to prove any truth.

Prof. Fullerton repeats doubts concerning Spinoza's love affair which appear to us perfectly gratuitous. He did not practically leave Amsterdam when the lady was twelve years old, but when she was seventeen; and the whole history seems to be from every point of view exceedingly probable.

55 (8 September 1892) 190-191

Dreams of the Dead.

By Edward Stanton. Boston: Lee & Shepard. 1892.

CSP. identification: MS 1365. See also: Burks, *Bibliography*: MS I. 159.14. This notice is unassigned in Haskell's *Index to The Nation*, vol. 1.

There is a stage of scientific inquiry, ineluctable as the calentures of youth, whose work is pure play of fancy. The wonderful molecular theory which has served our age as master-key to the arcana of nature, would never have come into our possession if Democritus and Epicurus had not first dreamed it. Copernicus had never dared his leap, the audacity of which we cannot easily appreciate, if he had not had Pythagorean fancies of a central fire to egg on his mind. Concerning a future life and the nature of spirit, we know about as much to-day as Democritus and Epicurus did about the cosmos. We are most of us hoping now that our descendants, at least, may some day find out in this world something positive about the other. Meantime, speculation must mew its plumage for a new flight; for it is surprising how feeble all the attempts of the Dantes and the Aquinases have been—the Aquinases vainly trusting to the flappers of ratiocination to raise them from the earth; the Dantes hampered by preconceived downdragging baggage; and both too much occupied with ideas of Hell to wing their way freely in a spiritual ether. Swedenborg might have helped us, if he had not been so positive and peremptory. Dogma weighs down; it is unsubstantial suggestions and light interrogations that are wanted to bear the mind aloft.

The author of 'Dreams of the Dead' makes no effort to persuade his reader; he insists upon nothing—he just sets forth his reveries, with an unaffected power that makes itself felt. Were the book a product of art, it would bespeak an imagination not less than extraordinary; but be it the production of a one-book man, the brooding of many years, and it is none the less valuable to the public. The author quotes on his title-page those lines of young *Hamlet*, "For in that sleepe of death, what dreames may come," etc. He has raised the thought that the dead dream, that the disintegrating brain has its flickering consciousness, and he has clothed this idea with so vivid a form that it refuses to be exorcised or shaken off. Had he argued it scientifically, as there was every temptation to do (for, after all, what solid facts are there against it?), he would have failed to impart to it such a clutch upon the imagination as he has effected by a simplicity and unpretentiousness very seductive. What an awful variation upon the pur-