

them, we see no reason why the general reader should not be spared some of the iteration and excessive elaboration in which they abound. For modern taste the stories probably gain on the whole by Lady Gregory's condensation, though in some instances she has dispensed with characteristic passages which we should have preferred to keep. Thus, in the account of the "Wedding of Maine Morgor" (which is much reduced in Lady Gregory's version) the Irish text relates that, upon the approach of Maine and his retinue to the house of Gerg, the people crowded to see them so eagerly that sixteen men were smothered! This little feature, which occurs elsewhere, and may have been an habitual touch with the Irish story-tellers in describing a struggling crowd, is omitted by Lady Gregory, perhaps from a feeling of triviality. But the passage in question is no more extravagant than others which she keeps. In the description of the combat between Cuchulain and Ferdlad it is said of the wounded warriors that "if it were the custom for birds in their flight to pass through the bodies of men, they could have passed through their bodies on that day." Lady Gregory lets this stand, though it occurs in one of the most pathetic episodes of the great *Táin*, and we approve of its retention. Only we should be disposed to treat all such passages alike, for we regard them as particularly characteristic of Irish story-telling. We recognize, however, that Lady Gregory had to use her discretion on scores of similar points. One case of excision of a different sort, which we have observed, was certainly unfortunate. In the account of Cuchulain's delightful interview with Emer (on page 26) the passage of the original is omitted in which the task is imposed upon him of "killing three times nine men with one blow, and yet so as to save one man from each nine"; and later, on page 31, it is referred to as if it had been included.

Although Lady Gregory's text often adheres closely to the Irish for pages in succession, it does not purport to be a translation, and we have not undertaken to make a systematic test of its accuracy. One slip that we have noted is perhaps worth recording. Part of the point is missed in the explanation of the name of "Fand" (page 285) as "the tear that passes over the fire of the eye." "Fand" means simply "tear." The "fire of the eye" is the rendering of "Aedh Abrat," the name of Fand's father. Such errors as this do not matter greatly, and could be easily corrected in a later issue of the book. The same is true of little inconsistencies in spelling, perhaps mere printer's mistakes, like the variation between *Celtchair* (page 256) and *Celthair* (pages 254, 261, etc.). Irish proper names are likely to puzzle the reader enough at best, even if the same word is always spelled the same way.

All things considered, we hold Lady Gregory's work to be of great interest and value. She has succeeded in making an English rendering, at once beautiful and substantially faithful, of the principal cycle of Irish sagas. We are glad to see the announcement of a similar treatment of the Ossianic stories by the same author.

At the end of Lady Gregory's volume there is a note by Mr. Yeats on the "poet speech" of the ancient Irish and Norsemen. It is always a matter of interest

when a poet undertakes, even casually, to define the essence of poetry. We may not learn anything new about poetry, but we are sure to get some light upon the poet; and Mr. Yeats's note, which suggests such a definition, is worth quoting, if only for what it reveals of his doctrine and temperament. He gives some account of the "Kennings" which were common to the poetic style of the ancient Irish and their Germanic neighbors, and defends them as marking "at worst an over-abundance of the esoterism which is an essential element in all admirable literature." Then he goes on to praise this "esoteric speech," which "brings the odor of the wild woods into our nostrils." We doubt if most readers of either Celtic or Germanic poetry will have associated the "Kenning," especially in its more developed forms, with the freshness of outward nature. But Mr. Yeats sees in it almost the heart of poetry, and sketches with reference to it a brief history of the imagination in literature. "The earlier we get," he says, "the more copious does this traditional and symbolical element in literature become." Greek and Roman culture, he holds, with its magnifying of man, set it aside for a while. But the earliest literature was all myth and symbol and enigma. Imagination was all in all. "Is not poetry," he asks, "when all is said, but a little of this habit of mind caught as in the beryl-stone of a wizard?" Thus he bases a plea for symbolism on the study of what is commonly regarded as an artificial element in Celtic and Germanic poetry. We do not mean to discuss his doctrine, which is in accord with the tendencies of some of his later verse. But we may say that we fear the effects of this theory of poetry just in proportion as we admire Mr. Yeats's rare poetic endowment.

COMTE'S PHILOSOPHY.

The Philosophy of Auguste Comte. By L. Lévy-Bruhl. Authorized translation [by Kathleen de Beaumont-Klein]. With an Introduction by Frederic Harrison. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1903. 8vo, pp. 363.

Throughout the greater part of the sixth decade of the nineteenth century, there seemed to be some prospect—to many of those who were then laboring to render philosophy, and especially logic, exact and scientific, it appeared as a danger—that the philosophy of Comte, or the first section of it, might become as dominant as nominalism has been since the overthrow of scholasticism. This was feared, not so much because that philosophy was a tissue of contradictions from beginning to end, as because, while teaching the relative, temporary, partially false character of all human knowledge, expressly including the Positive Philosophy itself, nevertheless the very essence and soul of it lay in a recommendation not to pursue certain lines of inquiry, and in a disposition to bring brute force to bear to prevent those inquiries from being pursued. That was the very stamp of Comte. That was his catholicism. Nor were these prohibitions the result of long examination anxiously attentive to all that could be urged on both sides. They sprang, on the contrary, from just such one-sided thought and partisan blindness as produced the revocation of the

edict of Nantes and other events of French history. While such a terrible danger was hanging over human science, those who felt it to be such were naturally unwilling to say anything that might be taken for an approval of Comtism. But now that that system is utterly exploded, and that it seems impossible that—in this country or in England, at least, where the sacredness of individualism is felt—there ever should arise any real danger to inquiry from inquiry itself, it is time to apply ourselves to learning what there is to be learned from the many pregnant suggestions of that extraordinary thinker.

France, during the nineteenth century, produced no philosophical ideas of greater value than Comte's law of the three stages of thought and his classification of the sciences. There was an obscure Dr. Charles Burdln, who died, we believe, during the fifties, from whom, it has been very positively asserted by reputable writers, Comte appropriated both these doctrines. It is impossible to believe that Comte was a conscious plagiarist; for even if his morals had been less strict than they were in literary matters, of all the victims of the plagiarist the easiest to delude is himself. But it is almost equally difficult to admit that such writers as those who repeat the charge should have done so without weighing their words.

To say that a broad philosophical conception is altogether new, is almost equivalent to a condemnation of it. That anybody has given it its definitive form can hardly ever be said. Comte's conceptions of the "theological," the "metaphysical," and the "positive," were very hazy, indeed. What he called a "theological" account of a phenomenon was a view which attached to the phenomenon one of the familiar ideas of human life—an idea in Hegel's naïve stage. A "metaphysical" account was one which regarded an abstract concept as being illuminative apart from its predictive value—roughly corresponding to Hegel's second stage. What Comte meant by a "positive" account was one which avoided doing what it has quite commonly been the triumph of science to do, as in the kinetical theory of gases, the oscillatory theory of light, the ionic theory of electrolytes, and the like—namely, to pass beyond the general formulation of facts to likening them to diagrammatical ideas, and thus to explaining them by theories which probably contain some admixture of error. Neither Comte nor Hegel sees anything to commend in this. Poincaré and his like are Comtists in this respect, while Boltzmann and the older physicists generally are of a contrary faith. But that there are three stages in the comprehension of phenomena is now generally admitted, whether this be a more logical division, or represent a subjective tendency to divide by three, or whether it be an objective law, as Comte seems to think it is.

Comte holds, and it is generally too hastily admitted, that his classification of the sciences is, and can only be, the immediate offspring of his law of the three states. Dr. Arnott had already formulated essentially the same classification, with the same ladder-like relationship between the different sciences, without having any notion of three stages of any kind. There is quite another conception which differentiates the Arnott-Comte classification from all others. It is that the others are simply classifica-

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tions of the different conceivable branches of knowledge. They are mostly classifications of the objects that can be known, and, moreover, almost all relate to what is possible rather than to actual fact. Every one of them is concerned with science either in the sense of *inquiry* (*scientia*), or in Coleridge's sense of "systematized knowledge." This is true, for example, of Whewell, of whom one might have expected something different. But for Arnett and Comte a science is an historical development, the collection of those phenomena that are connected with the fact that a social group have been devoting their main energies to the pursuit of inquiries so closely allied that the persons who compose it understand one another, their conceptions and their sentiments, as it is impossible that others should. As soon as the word science is thus made to mean a congeries of actual phenomena, the sciences become susceptible, for the first time, of what we call a "natural" classification—that is, a classification which displays, in a useful way, the principal general relations which we have learned from observation concerning the more important resemblances and differences of the objects classified—in short, what, in a reformed sense of Comte's word, may be termed a *positive* classification. Now the fact which it seemed both to Arnett and to Comte to be most desirable that such a classification should exhibit, was the well-known fact that one science will very often depend upon another—very largely for its axioms while contributing little to that other unless it be material for study. All classifications of the sciences that have been made since Comte's (some fifty in number) have been methodologically useful pretty nearly in so far as they have recognized that principle.

Not only the 'Cours de Philosophie Positive,' but also the 'Politique Positive' and other of Comte's works, are brimful of thoughts that are *warm* (as they say in Hide and Seek) to living truths, although these are invariably most inaccurately analyzed and formulated. For example, nothing can be truer than that a hypothesis is good for nothing unless it is, as Comte says, "vérifiable," provided this means that the hypothesis is of such a nature that, if true, it will lead to correct anticipations as to the characters of percepts and diminish the number of surprises; but Comte's definition, that a verifiable hypothesis is one whose substance is of such a nature as to be capable of being itself directly perceived, makes his maxim an arbitrary and indefensible limitation of useful knowledge. The past, for example, is of its nature incapable of being directly perceived, and therefore, according to Comte (too literally taken), we ought not to believe at all that there ever was any past, and, as he proposes to give up the use of the word "cause" altogether, so he ought to have given up the preterit definite and indefinite of all verbs. Then his law of the three stages would relate in the main to nothing real, but to mere phantoms of the brain, and would fall under the interdiction of the high priest of Positivism. He never attempts to define his ideas without similar failure.

Since M. Lévy-Bruhl's book, though its author is not a Positivist, carries the approval of Mr. Harrison, the leader of the remnant of the school in England (none of them very great minds, one infers from

their writings), the rest of the world ought to be content with it. It is truly a useful compend, in which great attention has been paid to the accurate representation of Comte's opinions. We doubt its causing anybody whose philosophical opinions are important to think better of Comte than he did before, since the impression that it produces is that of a piece of special pleading, one-sided and insincere. We cannot deliberately suppose that it really is insincere, but we have in sundry places been tempted to think so. Upon the reviewer, who had not looked into Comte's writings for many years, and who may, perhaps, serve as an average sample of M. Lévy-Bruhl's readers, the effect of the book has been markedly to lower the reviewer's estimate of Comte and quite sensibly to raise his estimate of Spencer. It is a well-constructed work, and is written in a very agreeable style. The translation is also agreeable despite an occasional Gallicism, such as the oft-recurring construction "substitute to" (*substituer à*). The print and paper are agreeable, too; but the proof-reading is not excellent, and, where French occurs, is bad.

Imperial Fiscal Reform. By Sir Vincent H. P. Caillard. London: Edward Arnold. 1903.

This work is written from the Chamberlain point of view, and contains a large array of facts and figures regarding British industrial conditions, presented, however, in a manner not to afford the least indication that the present fiscal system of the nation should be abandoned. The burden of the income tax, the changed conditions of British industry in recent years, and the growing importance of other nations (such as Germany and the United States) in foreign markets, which the United Kingdom once considered almost exclusively its own, do not call for the extended argument which Sir Vincent Caillard indulges in. No free trader will hesitate to admit the facts which he adduces, but he fails to produce the slightest evidence that these facts are the result of a mistaken tariff policy in the past, or that they can in any appreciable measure be removed by a resort to "Imperial fiscal reform"—that is, to some form or other of protection.

Sir Vincent Caillard's treatment of his subject is sketchy, owing, no doubt, to the fact that his material is worked up very largely from a series of magazine articles. But, allowing for this, his book is strikingly devoid of anything approaching a synthetic grasp of the situation. He has signally failed to perceive what facts were germane to his argument, and what were not. For want of a proper correlation of the matter employed, he displays at no stage of his work any real intuition of the causes which are now, and which have been, governing British trade. In short, Sir Vincent Caillard jumps at conclusions in a way which fairly entitles him to the description of going off "half-cocked." This is amusingly indicated by his remarks regarding Mr. Morgan's shipping combine. He says:

"The American shipping combine of 1902—by which, as Mr. Elzbacher graphically puts it, America 'scooped off the ocean the very cream of our merchant fleet'—has made its appearance, and dealt a severe shock to our insular self-complacency. This sud-

den carrying of the commercial war into the heart of our country—the very region which had been so confidently pointed to as proof, in spite of all that might be said to the contrary, of the maintenance of our commercial supremacy, and the superiority of our fiscal policy—is the most patent evidence of the effect of the tariffs, subsidies, and trusts which are revolutionizing economic conditions, and of the futility of our pathetic constancy to free-trade principles to combat them. It was almost amusing to note the outburst of wonder at Mr. Morgan's audacity, the inflated panegyrics of his genius indulged in by his admirers, the dismal possibilities of his failure indicated by skeptics. But Mr. Morgan is only the personal expression of the economic conditions of the times—a 'Napoleon of finance' certainly, but in the sense that, as Napoleon in his time in the arts of war, so now Mr. Morgan in commerce, takes advantage of possibilities unperceived by old-fashioned academic critics in this country. These, following the exact precedent of Napoleon's adversaries in his earlier campaigns, elect to be bound by 'rules of the game' laid down by their ancestors under a totally different set of conditions, which they regard as orthodox principles and a departure from them as detestable heresy, and pour forth the vials of their incredulous wrath upon the brilliant general who outflanks and defeats them by perceiving the change in conditions and taking advantage of his perceptions. They absolutely decline to be instructed by history, and, because England has flourished by free trade under circumstances which certainly do not exist now, and which may never exist again, they resolutely turn their backs on the lessons which the study of a period previous to that of free trade might teach them."

Now Sir Vincent Caillard is possibly not to be blamed for taking the view of Mr. Morgan's shipping combine which so many of his countrymen took at the time. But the events of the last two years have shown the absurdity of that view; and the grotesqueness of enforcing an argument against free trade by a comparison with one of the worst fiascos among the industrial trusts is apparent. The use made of this incident discredits Sir Vincent Caillard's whole argument. It indicates that he is not a cool, dispassionate observer of passing events, but a person predisposed to alarmist views.

Take another example: "It might be, for instance—I do not say that it is actually the case, but it is not absurdly improbable that it may be—that the excess of imports partly represents repayment to this country of capital invested abroad. If this were so, it is clear that, although the increased imports mean increased well-being to the consumers, and therefore, apparently, increased wealth, nevertheless, since they consist of consumable commodities, the ultimate effect, in so far as they represent repayment of capital, must be the impoverishment of the country."

This is certainly an extraordinary bit of economic reasoning. How does the consumption of the imported commodities differ from the consumption of the capital they represent, when that capital, instead of being brought home, is left employed in foreign countries? In the latter case, it destroys itself in order to recreate itself in larger amount; and if it is brought home and consumed, it also recreates itself, unless dispensed in charity.

Again, speaking of the mutton export possibilities of Australia, Sir Vincent Caillard says:

"New South Wales, with 40,000,000 sheep, comparatively neglects the export trade in mutton, and keeps her sheep mainly for their fleeces, the carcasses being generally converted into tallow. It is, however, affirmed by official experts that, with im-

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