

A MONISTIC CONCEPTION OF MIND.

BY THE EDITOR.

SCIENTISTS are agreed that the world-conception of science must be unitary, it must be monism. But the difficulty so far has been the formulation of the character of the one so as to show the contrasts which obviously prevail in this unity. It is easy enough to see that states of temperature are not components of heat and cold, for the thermometer has taught us that there are degrees of temperature; but not everywhere can we comprehend at a glance how the obvious facts upon which any kind of dualism attempts to establish itself can be resolved into a unitary conception.

In the present number of *The Open Court* Mr. W. P. Whery points out the trinity of matter, energy and mind, and treats mind as a kind of universal attribute of existence which of course can be done if we stretch the definition of mind so as to suit this purpose. The editor of *The Open Court* has published a synopsis of the philosophy for which he stands and which he has endeavored to build up as *the* philosophy, the philosophy of science which should be as much a science as chemistry or mathematics; and indeed the true philosophy would be a combination of the two branches of scientific thought, the purely formal sciences and the sciences of the various realms of experience. In this pamphlet¹ he has sketched his world-view in the briefest possible compass and the main points which stand in contrast to Mr. Whery's views shall be briefly indicated.

Mind, as we understand it, is absent in plants as well as in all purely physical phenomena. It originates in animals, viz., in creatures possessing sentiency. Accordingly we can not endorse what

¹This synopsis has appeared first under the title *Philosophy as a Science* and in a second edition *The Philosophy of Form*. The former contains a full catalogue of the author's publications. The second is somewhat enlarged on a few important points and yet is limited to 50 pages. (Open Court Publishing Company. Price 10 cents.)

Mr. Whery says concerning certain phenomena which in our opinion are non-mental.

The first obvious contrast in all existence is that between subjectivity and objectivity, or states of innerness and external manifestations, the former developing into irritability, sentiency, feeling, consciousness and self-consciousness, the latter being motions which obey in all details the laws of mechanics. The *that* of existence is called "matter," the actions of existence are summarily called "energy." They may be at apparent rest as stresses or strains, which means a tendency to act restrained by a counter-pressure. This is potential energy and when energy actually produces a change of place it is called kinetic energy.

Matter and energy are not things which as such can be produced anywhere; they are generalizations of all the many phenomena that take place in the domain of objectivity, and every one of these phenomena is in a definite place, in a definite time and of a definite form. Time and place are formal relations. Accordingly we can summarize the universal features of objective existence under the three heads, matter, energy and form.

The several sciences investigate all the branches of objective existence, and so far as they are concerned with concrete actualities they are the science of experience, but so far as they concern the nature of pure form we deal with such sciences as mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, logic, etc. They are not based on sense experience but are mental constructions.

Objective and subjective existence are now commonly regarded in scientific circles as two sides of one and the same process, and this theory has been formulated as the principle of parallelism. But it is understood that there is not a parallelism of two things running side by side like two geometrical parallels, but that these two sides of existence are two aspects of one and the same reality. The two aspects are as different as the outside and inside of a curve. They are different in character. Nevertheless neither exists without the other. Thus every transaction in existence would not be unlike a mathematical line AB. AB would be a subjective state while BA presents itself as a definite form of matter in motion. The whole world appears to us as definite forms of matter in motion. It consists of objects and we can never observe with our senses souls, feelings, emotions or any subjective states. We only see bodies hustling around and changing. On the other hand within ourselves we consist of more or less dim states of consciousness reaching down into states of subconsciousness and strongly influenced by

subliminal or unconscious states. Here the whole world appears as a tapestry woven of thought.

The questions of idealism and materialism are gratuitous philosophical somersaults. The objectivity of the outside world confronts us and we call the *thingishness* or the *that* or the *actuality* of existence by the general term "matter," and the changes of the several objects we call energy. The reality of sense-impressions cannot be doubted, and it is superfluous to propose the question whether reality is real.

Objective experience knows nothing of mentality, but it describes and explains the order of the world as an intrinsic quality which in objective existence is as necessary as the wonderful arrangements of mathematics in pure thought. For instance magic squares are as if preconceived by a master mathematician, and yet their interrelations are products of an eternal and intrinsic necessity.

Where we have sentiency combined with the intrinsic mechanical order that universally prevails in nature, mind originates. The intrinsic order produces first sentiency and then mentality. As explained in detail in the pamphlet referred to, animal organisms render possible an interoperation of the subjective elements so as to let inner states cooperate and render potential feelings actual. Further, the preservation of form in organic structures becomes memory as soon as it is accompanied by sentiency, in which case if the same sense-impression presents itself to the senses it is felt to be the same and thus becomes representative of the object that causes it. As soon as sense-impressions become representative they become mental phenomena. This is the origin of mind.

There is no need of entering into further details but we ought to insist on the significance of the higher development of the human mind which as a rule is so greatly neglected by monistic thinkers as to cause the impression that monism is practically materialism.