

Review

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history, and, in his second, a meagre abstract statement of æsthetic theories detached from the illuminating considerations of time, place, and circumstance. The result in the mind of the student will be, it is to be feared, a confused mass of ideas about Beauty, without order or organic connection either logical or historical. Time and space are wasted in both volumes over matter not strictly relevant, while the main issues are not satisfactorily worked out. Professor Knight's own point of view is not quite readily ascertainable. His apparent indefiniteness in æsthetic seems to belong to an apparent indefiniteness in his theory of Reality. We are told of an "underlying *ding-an-sich*," to which Beauty leads us, and of an "Archetype of Beauty," after which Art is the endeavor, without any clear idea being given us of what these terms imply for Professor Knight. We hear of "Beauty which cannot appear or disappear, but which always is, always was, and always will be at the very core of things, and at the centre of the universe;" we hear that art conducts us to "the sphere of the One, which is also the realm of the infinitely vague, a realm where Truth, Goodness, and Beauty reside in their elements, and which we are only able to interpret by analogy, while we see it 'through a glass darkly.'" Perhaps this means something which would be most illuminating if one could understand it, but it is not easily understood. To the present writer, at least, it does not appear that Professor Knight has made any real contribution to the theory of æsthetic.

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ALBERT BRISBANE. *A Mental Biography. With a Character Study.* By his Wife, Redelia Brisbane. Boston, Mass. : Arena Publishing Company, 1893.

Albert Brisbane (born 1809, died 1890) was an independent representative of the social side of the Transcendental movement, with whose best-known leaders he had at one time a relation of a certain sympathy in views and of some personal friendship, although never of any closer discipleship. He himself was known as a disciple of Fourier, for whose social theories he during a considerable period attempted to win a hearing in this country. He was rather a man of personal experience than a scholar, rather a maker of humane projects than a consecutive or constructive thinker, and rather a wanderer than anything else. It is in his character as wanderer that this book, the product of the devotion of the wife

who cared for him in his old age, chiefly presents him to us. The writer was married to him in 1877. Taking a deep interest in his thoughts as the product of his career, she persuaded him at one time to dictate to her a series of confessions, which she was able to guide into autobiographical channels. The result is a somewhat fragmentary account of his youth and early maturity.

Such a book attracts not from any value as an exposition of doctrine (for to such a value it makes no claim) but from its simplicity as a confession, and as a revelation of a type that has now passed away. This natural Transcendentalist (for such, in our vague American sense of the word, our subject was, despite his unwillingness to accept metaphysical formulas) was born in Batavia, New York, "within hearing of the roar of the cataract of Niagara." His father was of Scotch, his mother of English descent. From the former, Brisbane acquired a scepticism in matters of religion; from the latter's varied home-teaching he gained a wide curiosity as to the things of the world and of life. A great love of nature attracted him to early meditations on universal problems. At fifteen years of age he was visited by a mighty "intuition," as to the problem of his life, which was henceforth to find "What is the work of man [*i.e.*, of humanity as an organic whole] on this earth?" This intuition was from the start, as he later remembered it, at once universal and fairly definite. It was distinct from mere personal ambition for political success of any sort. It was a vast desire to know the place and business of the human race viewed in its wholeness. In the light of this intuition, Brisbane, as a youth, devoted some time, under his father's general supervision, to study in New York city. The study resulted in a good knowledge of modern languages; but there was little systematic general education at this stage of his career, or, for that matter, later, although in time, through his extensive curiosity, he plainly acquired much information. In 1828, in pursuit of the now ardently desired solution of the "mystery of man's destiny," Brisbane went abroad, listened in Paris to Cousin's lectures, and then, in 1829, proceeding to Berlin, heard Hegel, and took personal instruction in the Hegelian philosophy from Michelet. Both in Paris and in Berlin, and later everywhere in the journeys here recorded, Brisbane appears as both skilful and fortunate in his social relations, however busy he might be in study. The result of the study of Hegel's doctrine, in view of the crabbedness of the Berlin teachers, and the hopeless unpreparedness of Brisbane's enthusiastic young mind,

was very naturally an utter disappointment. With characteristic longing for novelty, the disillusioned student felt that he "had seen enough of Christian civilization for awhile, and that it would be a relief to make an excursion east to Turkey, and look at barbaric civilization." The Turks proved more suggestive than Hegel, and, though painful to look upon, were after all not so disappointing as the Berlin circle, since one knew in advance what to expect of them. The contrast of the two civilizations, Eastern and Western, was seen to turn upon the place of woman in the social order, and Brisbane returned with a mind full of vague but ardent thoughts concerning the social ideal. Henceforth one finds in him essentially the sensitive scrutinizer of society,—a man altogether too unsystematic to work out any one theoretical plan suited to his own ideals, and altogether too critical, meanwhile, to be satisfied permanently with the doctrine of anybody else (even Fourier's system, which he later for awhile adopted, failed in the end wholly to content him). His value as an individual apparently lay, so far as this book presents him, precisely in this his sensitiveness to social conditions, whose variations he loved to watch, whose crises he often, as interested foreign observer, studied at very close quarters, whose every color he examined with all the love of a naturalist, but whose symptoms he never learned, as leader or reformer, practically to control or even deeply to affect. For he plainly lacked the leader's ruthlessness and the reformer's dogged perseverance. It is indeed a pity that so open-eyed an observer, who feared nothing, who was absolutely free from religious and other similar traditional prejudices, who loved the flavor of danger, and knew and was fond of all sorts and conditions of men, did not take fuller contemporary notes of his wanderings and of the great events that he later witnessed. The period of Brisbane's personal relations with Fourier, which are here sketched at some length, closed his first stay abroad. He returned in 1834.

The later periods of Brisbane's career are narrated with greater inequality. There are many decidedly attractive moments and episodes, but once for all it is rather the personality than the doctrines which excite the present reviewer's interest in this volume; and one can only wish that Brisbane's personal reminiscences had been even more fully, and certainly more consecutively, recorded. One gets some noteworthy glimpses of the Transcendental movement. Brisbane's own efforts at practical reform in this country do not, however, appear in a very dramatic light. Later visits to

Europe show us something of the days of 1848. The closing chapters of the volume are devoted to some of Brisbane's theories, first upon his social ideals, of which the present reviewer has no expert judgment, and then of his speculations upon more or less general and cosmical topics. It is a pity that the notes upon these matters were not submitted, in advance of publication, to some student of the physical sciences, who might have counselled the omission of certain quite unnecessary and elementary errors, without the presence of which Brisbane's more speculative views would have been no less attractive. The work, as a whole, will interest a good many lovers of uncommon types of humane experience.

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EVOLUTION AND RELIGION. By A. J. Dadson. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1893. Pp. 348.

The impression left on the mind after reading this book is one of regret that it should have been written, or that, having been written, the title which it bears should have been chosen for it. Its principal fault is perhaps that the author does not possess the range of knowledge necessary to the proper handling of the subject he has undertaken. The writer's acquaintance with biological subjects is not extensive. For his science he has apparently drawn on the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, a volume or two of the International Scientific Series, Haeckel's "History of Creation," and a few similar books. The facts collected from these sources are set forth in the first part of the book under the title of "Evolution," and they are made the basis of much bitter language in the second part of the book under the head of "Religion." The Christian religion and "the Christian's god" are in particular subjected to a style of criticism which reminds one of the debates at the Hall of Science, Islington, in the early days of the late Mr. Bradlaugh. The time has gone by for the treatment of so large a subject in this narrow partisan spirit. From those who, in dealing with religious systems, profess to approach in a scientific spirit the largest and most imposing class of phenomena connected with our social evolution, we expect something more nowadays. To profess, as the writer does, to see nothing more in these systems than a set of baleful influences constituting "a curse so great that the aggregate of all the evils that have afflicted man is small in comparison," is but to admit that he does not possess essential qualifications for treating his sub-