

*Commemorative Dinner at University College on Monday,  
June 24th, 1929. Professor S. Alexander in the Chair.*

## XV.—THE FIFTIETH SESSION : A RETROSPECT.

*By H. WILDON CARR.*

IT seems fitting that the close of the fiftieth session of the Aristotelian Society should be an occasion for reviewing our work and considering our present position and outlook in the light of our history. There is nothing romantic in the story of our origin, but there is something very significant in the continuity of our work for fifty years and in the personality of those who have successively identified themselves with our ideals.

The ideal of the Aristotelian Society is the study of philosophy not as an academical subject but as the story of human thinking. Throughout our history we have never wavered from this ideal. We have never sought privileges for our members, we have never proposed to make our fellowship a professional diploma. Our one and only condition of membership is genuine interest in philosophy, and we have never asked of candidates any other qualification than evidence of understanding its problems. Our membership includes, and has included, individuals widely divergent in their religious, social and political interests, and also the representatives of the most opposite principles in philosophy itself, and no one has ever attempted to use our society for propaganda.

The first record in our minutes is of a preliminary meeting called to organize a society of students of philosophy. It was held at 17, Bloomsbury Square, on Monday,

April 19th, 1880. There were five persons present:— Mr. F. G. Fleay, in the chair, Dr. Alfred Senier, Mr. Herbert Burrows, Mr. Edward Clarkson and Mr. Alfred Lowe. Dr. Senier was an analytical chemist, with a laboratory in Bloomsbury. Later he became Professor of Chemistry in the University of Galway and a distinguished scientist. The idea of the society originated with him and the chemical students in his laboratory. He became the first secretary of the society. Mr. Herbert Burrows, who has since been widely known as a leader in the theosophical movement, was then closely associated with the Positivist Society. The resolutions passed at this meeting were: “ To constitute a society of about twenty and to include ladies; the society to meet fortnightly, on Mondays at 8 o'clock, at the rooms of the Spelling Reform Association, 20, John Street, Adelphi ” (later this Association moved to No. 8, both these houses have now disappeared). A list of names of prospective members, suggested by the Positivist leader Frederic Harrison, was approved. It included, besides those present, the names of William Clarke, Wyndham Dunstan and Percy Harding. Mr. Fleay was elected Vice-President, leaving the question of President to be decided later.

The first meeting of the now constituted Society took place a fortnight later, as arranged. The first discussion was opened by Dr. Burns-Gibson on the subject “ What is Philosophy? ” Previous to the discussion two important matters were considered, the name of the Society and its first President. Both questions were decided at the suggestion of Dr. Burns-Gibson. The Society was to be known as “ The Aristotelian Society for the systematic study of Philosophy,” or for most purposes “ The Aristotelian Society ”; Mr. Shadworth Hodgson was to be invited to be its first president. Both these resolutions deserve more

than a passing notice. Dr. Burns-Gibson's name is not in the list of prospective members submitted to the preliminary meeting, and he must, therefore, have attended the first meeting by invitation. He identified himself with the newly-formed society. In private life he was a medical practitioner, in philosophy a Hegelian and in discussion a brilliant dialectician. The philosophical interest of the other members was largely derived from the Positivist Society and from George Henry Lewes's then popular *History of Philosophy*. The liveliness and piquancy of the early discussions were due to the opposition of the groups which formed round Hegelian and Positivist leaders. Dr. Burns-Gibson, in proposing the name of the Society, had doubtless in mind Hegel's scathing remark on the English abuse of the term philosophical in applying it to meteorological instruments. It was, therefore, essential to find a name which would definitely prescribe the speculative character of the study which was to be the Society's ideal, and it seemed that this could best be secured by adopting the name of a philosopher eminently representative. There is only one such name in the history of philosophy and so we became the Aristotelian Society, not for the special study of Aristotle, or of Aristotelianism, but for the systematic study of Philosophy.

The invitation to Mr. Shadworth H. Hodgson to be president was also of the happiest augury for the new Society. Mr. Hodgson was then in middle life, a recognized philosopher of original and strongly marked personality. The only child of a Lincolnshire county family, he had been educated at Rugby and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. When he left Oxford he married, and after three years of domestic happiness he lost his wife in childbirth and with her the infant son. The overwhelming sorrow affected his whole future life. He turned to philosophy, in part it may

be for consolation, and he soon determined to devote himself to it as a life work. He settled himself in chambers on the second floor of a house in Conduit Street (No. 45, which has since been rebuilt) and he lived there till his death. In later years, when his library overflowed his accommodation, instead of moving to more commodious chambers, he remained where he was but took in addition another similar set of chambers in Hart Street, Bloomsbury. At this time, therefore, he was living as a secluded student in the heart of the Metropolis. Later, when he had made the Society his chief interest, he continued his stereotyped regular habits, dividing his time between his two sets of chambers in London, his two clubs, the Savile and the Athenæum, and his summer vacation resort in Yorkshire. He had published *Space and Time, a Metaphysical Essay; The Philosophy of Reflection; and the Theory of Practice*. He was an original thinker and a profound scholar, with a recognized position in the literary world. He accepted the invitation to be President of the new Society, and for fourteen years he allowed himself to be re-elected. When in 1894 he declined to be again nominated, and proposed Dr. Bernard Bosanquet as his successor, he did not retire from the Society, but continued to attend the meetings with unflinching regularity and take his part in the discussions.

The readiness of so distinguished a philosopher as Shadworth Hodgson to accept the presidency of the Society and devote himself to its interests appeared to his literary colleagues to indicate an ambition in him to become the founder of a school and be accepted as a Master. How far such an idea may have been consciously or unconsciously a determining motive it is impossible to say, but it is certain that if he had any such ambition it was entirely supported by his conviction of the soundness of his own philosophical doctrine and his belief that it had only to be

understood in order to be sure of being followed. So far as the Society was concerned he was an ideal chairman, never autocratic, always sympathetic, with an admirable manner of seizing the essential point in discussion and preserving it from irrelevance. In later years he developed a somewhat wearisome habit of summarizing at inordinate length the paper a member had read, but in the early days he conducted the meetings so admirably that no one felt he was claiming to speak with philosophical authority.

His own life was curiously reflected in his philosophy. The chief dividing line in our discussions in the early years of the Society was between the Hegelians on the one side and the Positivists on the other. Hodgson's main polemic in his philosophic writings and in our discussions was against the attribution of agency to consciousness. This implied the rejection of all idealist theories of the Hegelian type. He condemned them as psychological philosophies. Agency, so far as we experience it, was in his view associated with matter, but matter, he held, is not an unanalyzable concept, and the first and paramount duty of the philosopher is the analysis of experience without assumptions. Philosophically, therefore, as well as personally, he was admirably fitted to mediate between idealist and positivist.

There was, however, something peculiarly pathetic in the aloofness of Shadworth Hodgson, both in his life and in his writings, from the main trends of the philosophical speculation of his time. The *Theory of Practice* is dedicated "Meis mortuis" and the *Metaphysic of Experience*, his most complete expression as well as his latest work, contains in the fourth and final volume a carefully elaborated scientific and speculative hypothesis concerning the possibility of immortality and reunion. There can be little doubt that the insatiable, perhaps unconscious, possibly suppressed, longing to find this desire not irrational was

the secret motive and driving force in all his philosophizing. Two incidents in my own friendship and intercourse with Hodgson bear this out. Both have left on my memory a deep impression. Soon after the *Metaphysic of Experience* was published I made it the subject of a critical discussion at one of the meetings of the Society. In the discussion I referred to the speculation about possible immortality in a slighting and deprecatory manner. I was innocent of any intention to offend, but I had failed to discern the strong personal interest in the speculation, and it seemed to me strangely to detract from the high value of the metaphysical arguments in the earlier books. I remember that I suggested it might be an interesting scientific speculation but that the probability of its truth was so remote as to be negligible. His resentment was so deep as to be painful. The other incident is my visit to him on his death-bed. In the summer of 1912 he wrote to me that he was too ill to leave his rooms in Conduit Street, and that he had had to cancel his usual arrangements for his summer vacation. I called to find him very ill, evidently nearing the end, quite conscious of his condition, and pleased to see me. We talked on philosophy, and I was trying to think with what sincerity I could comfort him in the thought that his work would not die and that his philosophy would receive from posterity the recognition he had so longed for in life. He prevented me. He said quite simply and very earnestly that he had hoped he would be recognized as a leader of philosophy, but these hopes were gone, and he had no regrets. A few days later I received news of his death. The Society was not then in session. Wyndham Dunstan and myself were present with his few distant relatives at the quiet funeral.

Such was the remarkable man to whom in very truth we owe the Aristotelian Society. It was his faithful devo-

tion and intellectual leadership which carried us through difficulties and established our position.

During the first four sessions the meetings of the Society were held at John Street, Adelphi. In 1884 the Society changed its meeting-place, and thenceforward for many years we met in the comfortable library of the Royal Asiatic Society at 22, Albemarle Street. The change was consequent on a crisis which had threatened to wreck the infant Society. Before I deal with this I will attempt to give some description of the Society in the early days. The room at 20, John Street, was an ordinary-sized office chamber. The abundant unattractive literature of the Spelling Reform Association was bundled aside to make room for chairs and benches. The chairman sat at a small writing-table, the secretary and vice-president at his right and left facing the audience. At first we had only three officers, a president, a vice-president and a secretary; later we decided to have three vice-presidents. Those who were punctual and lucky among us secured the few backed chairs, the rest of us sat uncomfortably on wooden school-benches. There was nothing casual about the attendance; the members were all as regular as if they were registered in a class, and besides the members the meeting included usually one or two visitors. The visitors were requested by the chairman to retire whenever questions of Society procedure were discussed, and they had often to spend half an hour standing up in a badly lighted vestibule. These discussions of procedure became so interminable that the Society in self-defence passed a resolution that business questions should be brought forward only immediately following the reading of the minutes and cease automatically if not concluded within half an hour. There were two lady members, both punctual and regular in attendance, who never so far as I remember took part in the philosophical discussions. They

sat together at the back, though otherwise, I believe, they were strangers to one another. One I remember chiefly by the jingling which accompanied her movements, due to loose strings of beads which hung from her waistband and over her skirt. The other lady was Miss Handley. She sat in rapt admiration of the president, who was to her the embodiment of wisdom. She became, to Shadworth Hodgson's embarrassment, the one whole-hearted disciple and follower which the Society produced for him. She occasionally contributed papers. She published a little book of elementary philosophy in the form of a dialogue for use in schools. It was intended as an introduction to the study of Mr. Hodgson's works. Her story is a sad one. She lost her very small income in a school which she attempted to carry on with the aid of a widowed sister, and was reduced to absolute destitution. Mr. Hodgson and some of her friends in the Society did what they could to help her. It was to no purpose. Mr. Hodgson himself gave her a small but sufficient annuity, the capital value of which he bequeathed to her, and other friends answered her continual appeals, but anything we did was anticipated, and in the end the relieving officer had to remove her to the infirmary to prevent her dying of starvation and neglect. In the early days of the Society her sad and slight figure, swathed in shawls, and the old hackney coach which conveyed her to and from the meetings, were among the familiar features.

The active members of the Society at that time, besides the president and secretary, were: Dr. Burns-Gibson, who had a commanding presence and was an impressive speaker; Mr. W. C. Barlow, a Swedenborgian pastor; Mr. E. P. Scrymgour, an Anglican clergyman and lecturer in English Literature at King's College; Mr. Ernest Belfort Bax, the noted socialist and philosopher; Mr. William Clarke, a jour-

nalist, later one of the founders of the Fabian Society, and a contributor to the original volume of Fabian essays. These, with those already mentioned, were more or less regular attendants. I remember also Mr. Percival Chubb, Mr. Fenton and Mr. Casson. Mr. Frederic Harrison, Lord Haldane (then Mr. R. B. Haldane) and other distinguished members attended occasionally. In particular I remember Dr. Thomas Davidson infecting us with his enthusiasm for Rosmini. The programme of the session's work was arranged in advance under two divisions. A certain number of evenings were given to the reading of papers on particular philosophers, the others were given to the discussion of philosophical problems—Substance, Cause, Perception, etc., with their dependent ideas. On these occasions there was no introductory paper, but members came with definitions. These were handed in to the chairman and read out and discussed. Shadworth Hodgson presented the Society with a finely bound manuscript volume in which these definitions were to be inserted. The volume is in the Society's possession. In these discussions Burns-Gibson would play the part of Socrates, asking innocent questions and involving the unfortunate defender of some special definition or theory in inextricable confusion.

Such was the general character of the meetings at John Street, Adelphi. The programme was drawn up with the idea that every member should at least once in the session read a paper or open a discussion. In the fourth session a more continuous form of study was inaugurated by the selection of a book (Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was chosen for that session) and arranging its complete discussion in a series of meetings, each member taking charge of a section.

Lord Haldane, who became so intimately associated with us in later years, particularly after his presidency in 1907,

was elected a member in March, 1883. This was the year in which the translation of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and as Idea*, by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, was published. The session of 1884-5 was devoted to a detailed discussion of it, and Mr. Haldane opened the discussion on November 3, 1884, in what to me was a very memorable and impressive discourse.

Before I pass from this early formative period in our history I must remark one thing which has always on reflection appeared surprising and at the same time peculiarly significant. When the Society was constituted there was living among us a philosopher of world-wide reputation and everywhere regarded as representative of philosophy in England, Herbert Spencer. No one ever suggested either associating him personally with our Society or treating philosophy on the lines laid down in his writings. There were no Spencerians in our little company to tilt against the Hegelians and Positivists or to challenge the philosophical method of the president. This was not from any lack of recognition of the great philosopher himself, but rather, I think, the fact that his whole conception of the philosophic task as a summarizing, classifying and co-ordinating of the methods and results of the physical, biological and psychological sciences, valuable as it might be, had no sort of relation to the speculative problems which to us were the essence of philosophy. We kept before us the ideal of philosophy as a study which could not be dissociated from its history. However this may be, as matter of fact I can only recall three names of members of the Society throughout our history who would have classed themselves as Spencerians (Mr. Lewin, Mr. Quelch and Dr. Leeson), and they seemed to find themselves simply bewildered at the unfamiliar problems they found us discussing. It is true we passed a resolution of congratulation which we for-

warded to Herbert Spencer on the completion of his great scheme of a synthetic philosophy, and we also recorded a vote of condolence on his death, but to us he represented the dogmatic scientific spirit and not the speculative historical character of philosophy.

The fifth session opened on October 15, 1883, with the presidential address on "The Two Senses of Reality," in my view the best of the whole series of Mr. Hodgson's addresses. Before the second meeting we knew that the Society had to meet a critical situation due to the secession of Dr. Burns-Gibson and other of its important and conspicuous members, including the member whose influence secured us our meeting-place. An independent notice had been sent to members calling a meeting in the same room we were accustomed to meet in, proposing to form a new philosophical society on a freer basis. I was never able to learn either then, or later from Burns-Gibson himself, what at that time was his particular grievance and why he had turned against his old friend Shadworth Hodgson, whom he had himself proposed and introduced to the Society. I rather imagine it was temperamental. Shortly before the rupture with the Aristotelian Society he had quarrelled violently, and apparently quite irrationally, with his intimate friend, the universally beloved Thomas Davidson. Even to me, with whom he never quarrelled, he was sometimes excessively cordial and at other times unaccountably reserved and suspicious. The ostensible ground of his new movement was that the Aristotelian Society had become or was becoming a school for the inculcation of Hodgsonian philosophy. If it was true, no one more easily than he could have supplied the corrective. In response to the notice sent out by the seceders a new Society was formed and met for a short time at the John Street meeting-place. It named itself the Philosophical Society, was very informal, and con-

tinued its activities for many years. Neither at its origin nor in its later development was it a rival of the Aristotelian Society.

The committee of the Aristotelian Society had at once to decide on a policy, and to the change which was then brought about the Society's later development is due. Two things were urgent: to find a new meeting-place, and to attract new suitable members. The committee issued a circular setting forth the nature and ideals of the Society and at the same time applied to the Senate of the University of London for recognition, with the request to be granted a meeting-place in the University rooms at Burlington Gardens. The response was friendly, but the grant of a room was not found practicable, and the committee accordingly made the arrangement for our meeting-place in Albemarle Street with the Royal Asiatic Society. The direct result of the circular was not encouraging. We received an accession of new members, but more, I think, through individual efforts than as a response to the general appeal of the committee.

The indirect effect of these efforts was, however, by no means unimportant, for it brought our Society to the notice of philosophical thinkers throughout the land. At first there was no change in the character of our meetings. We carried out the programme of the session, which included the complete study of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The following session was devoted to the study of Berkeley and Hume, and the next succeeding, to the study of Schopenhauer. Our attendance was rather smaller than it had been in the days when we met at John Street, Adelphi. This was due to the fact that the new members who had joined us were not all, like those who had left us, living in London, and able to attend with regularity. One thing was certainly an advantage. We had no longer the heated debates on

points of order which had so frequently marred the unanimity of the meetings in the old days. From the small and intimate meetings at the new meeting-place there arose a practice which many of us look back upon as one of the most delightful privileges attached to our membership. Mr. Hodgson had been in the habit of sending members "at home" invitations to his rooms in Conduit Street on specified dates for a philosophical conversazione. These meetings were a little formal, but now that our meeting-place was only a few steps away, he would, when the meeting adjourned at 10.30, invite the few of us who remained to accompany him to his rooms, and there in comfortable chairs we would form a circle round his hearth-fire and sit talking sometimes past midnight and into the small hours of the morning.

Although there was little outward change in the character of our meetings the new policy was insensibly effecting a change in the Society. We had invited the co-operation of all philosophical thinkers in our work whether they could avail themselves of our discussions or not, and we must, if we were to succeed, make their co-operation a possibility. Though there had been no considerable response yet we had to find some way of widening the scope and extending the usefulness of the Society. Two important additions to our membership had come, in direct response to the committee's appeal—Professor Alexander Bain, of Aberdeen, and Professor Butcher, of Edinburgh. Professor Butcher, so far as I remember, never attended a meeting or contributed a paper, though he remained a member to the end of his life, but Professor Bain took at once a lively interest in us, and whenever he was in London during our session came to our meetings. We had therefore to find some way in which members living out of London and unable to take regular part in discussions could yet benefit by their mem-

bership. Gradually we came to fill the chief part of our programme with papers from members who could only come up for the occasion. Another cause was also working to bring about a change. Our little nucleus of active members was continually itself changing. At the end of the fifth session, the first in the new meeting-place, Dr. Senier, our original secretary and the founder of the Society, left England for Germany, and consequently had to resign his secretaryship. When subsequently he returned to this country it was to take up a professorship in Galway. Mr. Rhodes, who took over his work, had soon after to resign on account of serious illness. It was then, in November, 1886, that I became secretary of the Society. About the same time Mr. Dunstan left London to reside in Oxford. This proved of particular good augury for our future, for he used his influence to interest the Oxford philosophers in our work. It was at this time also that we decided to publish proceedings, and we appointed Mr. Dunstan our editor. We began tentatively with the publication of abstracts of papers contributed during the session. This led directly to the issue of our first series. We were able to publish only a selection of papers, and the volumes were not issued annually, as at present, but in parts. The changed character of our Society from its original ideal of a students' seminar to that of a society for original philosophical research will be evident from some of the papers which were contributed in the eighth session, 1886-7, the first session in which the duty had fallen on me, as honorary secretary, of arranging the programme. They were "The Political Philosophy of T. H. Green," by David G. Ritchie; "Neo-Kantism in Relation to Science," by G. J. Romanes; "Recent Psycho-physical Researches," by J. M. Cattell; "The Relation of Language to Thought," by F. C. Conybeare; "Hegel's Rechtsphilosophie," by S. Alexander;

“The Ultimate Questions of Philosophy,” by Alexander Bain.

In the ninth session (1887-8) we had our first symposium. To whom we are indebted for the brilliant idea of this successful innovation I do not know. Since that time symposia have had a place in every sessional programme and indeed have become a special feature of our Society's method. It was when we introduced it quite novel. I think the term symposium had been already used by the editor of the “Nineteenth Century” for a political discussion in his journal, but to us it was an original idea. Our first symposium was certainly comprehensive, both in its subject and in the selection of contributors. The subject was: “Is Mind Synonymous with Consciousness?” and the contributors were Shadworth Hodgson, D. G. Ritchie, G. F. Stout, Bernard Bosanquet and S. Alexander. The papers were all commendably short (fortunately, as I remember, for the secretary, who had undertaken to manifold them). The symposium was published in the Proceedings, First Series, Volume I, No. I, 1888.

We now decided to publish Proceedings regularly and include in them as many of our papers as the funds at our disposal would allow, and this enabled us eventually to originate and carry out the plan of printing the papers and distributing them in advance of the meetings, a procedure which has proved so valuable an aid to adequate discussion. It had to be tentative at first, but the quality of the papers read, and the standing of their authors, enabled the committee to invite papers without requiring them to be submitted.

In 1894 Shadworth Hodgson announced to us his wish not to be nominated for re-election as president. There was no special reason for his retirement except that he felt the Society had passed its adolescent stage and was fully

grown up. We elected Mr. Bernard Bosanquet, and he was re-elected at each of the three following sessions. In 1898 he in his turn declined to be nominated for re-election, and I think it was the difficulty we found in finding successors able or willing to give the continuous attendance and devotion to the Society, the example of which had been set by Mr. Hodgson, which led to the present practice of choosing a new president every session. Mr. Bosanquet had been so regular an attendant at the meetings that his taking the chair while Mr. Hodgson took his place at the table made little outward change. There was, however, a general feeling of expansion, a feeling of a wider sympathy and broader outlook in our discussions under Mr. Bosanquet's presidency. It is not difficult to understand the reason. Though Mr. Hodgson had never imposed his own philosophy on the meeting, it could never be ignored, and was something of which everyone who read a paper felt bound to take account. All this altered under the new president. I remember in particular one notable instance. Miss Constance Jones, who had joined the Society in 1892, and frequently contributed, read a paper in the first session of Mr. Bosanquet's presidency on "The Rationality of Hedonism" (Proceedings, Old Series, Vol. III, No. 1). At that time we circulated proofs of the paper in advance. Mr. Hodgson opened the discussion in the somewhat unusual way of reading a long and carefully prepared criticism of Hedonism, and he was followed by Mr. Rhodes, who read a similar paper. Poor Miss Jones was overwhelmed. The heavy artillery of moral reprobation was trained upon the theory she had so amiably expounded and defended, as she thought, against all possible objections. She was attacked as a kind of monster of iniquity advocating a view which it was declared would justify all the horrors of the arena and the iniquities of the Inquisition. With the most admir-

able tact Mr. Bosanquet administered a severe rebuke to the objectors and brought the discussion to the highest level of philosophical calm.

When we began the publication of Proceedings we were assisted and also at times somewhat disconcerted by the friendly rivalry of the philosophical journal "Mind." Our Proceedings, published at irregular intervals, had practically no circulation outside the Society, and members who contributed original papers naturally preferred to have them published in "Mind," with its wider circulation. It was equally important to us that we should have the selection of the papers we were to publish and not be limited to those refused by "Mind." This led, in 1897, to an arrangement with "Mind" in consequence of which we brought our first series of Proceedings to a close.

From 1897 to 1900, when the new series of Proceedings began, the original papers read to the Society were published in "Mind." There was no formal agreement, but a mutual understanding between Mr. Stout, the editor of "Mind," and myself, as secretary of the Society. I was able, in preparing the session's programme and sending out the committee's invitations, to arrange at the same time for the publication of the papers. The arrangement worked satisfactorily. The editor of "Mind" was assured of eight articles a year as a minimum, and no question ever arose involving the rejection of an article offered to him by us. We were furnished with advance proofs for distribution to our members. Actually the number of Aristotelian papers published in "Mind" during the arrangement was nine or ten annually, and the Society subscribed for a copy of "Mind" for each of its members. It seemed likely that this would lead to a definite association of the Aristotelian Society with "Mind," but the arrangement came to an end in 1900 when the Mind Association was formed.

The Mind Association was formed by the leading philosophers in Oxford and Cambridge, at the suggestion of Professor Sidgwick, with the intention of relieving the generous guarantor of the Journal, Professor Alexander Bain, who for many years had had to meet a deficit. It was a well-conceived idea designed to pledge those interested in the maintenance of the high standard of an independent philosophical journal to its support by regular advance subscriptions. The Association has succeeded even beyond the expectations of its founders.

In 1900 we started the New Series of Proceedings in annual volumes, and the history of the Society since is recorded in those volumes.

We still perpetuate our old association with "Mind" in the annual joint sessions with the present Mind Association. These summer congresses originated, I think, in a conversation between Dr. Schiller, the treasurer of the Mind Association, and myself. The constitution of the Association required that there should be an annual business meeting and that this meeting should be held successively at Oxford, Cambridge, and London. The obvious drawback in such a proviso was the difficulty of depending on sufficient interest in the members of the Association to make the journey and assure the success of the meeting. The Aristotelian Society had on two occasions, once at Oxford (November 16, 1891), and again the following year at Cambridge, held meetings out of London. The success had not been encouraging. It occurred to me, however, that if the annual (and only) meeting of the Mind Association were made the special occasion of a joint discussion of outstanding problems in philosophy and psychology the result might be different. The idea was carried out. Later the Psychological Society of London joined with us. In 1913 the joint session accepted the invitation of the University of Durham

to meet in that city the following year, so enlarging the circle. In 1920 we invited the Société française de Philosophie to Oxford and received a return invitation from the Société to meet in Paris in 1921-2.

This concludes my retrospect of our history. I would like to add some more intimate reminiscences of my personal friends and some of my own reflections on the status of philosophy in the intellectual world when the Aristotelian Society was formed.

In 1880 the only teaching of philosophy in London was at University College, where there had been founded the Grote chair of mental philosophy and logic, then held by Professor George Croom Robertson. He had been the editor of "Mind" since its foundation in 1876. He was never a member of the Aristotelian Society. I cannot remember that I ever met him, and I do not think any of the original members of the Society were his students. His conspicuous absence, however, was often a subject of comment and its possible reason discussed. The most probable reason was his friendship for Shadworth Hodgson and his reluctance to allow his academical position to seem to constitute a claim to special recognition. It is less easy to explain his failure to respond when the Society sent out its special appeal to the general philosophical world. Probably this was due to his knowledge of the secession and his reluctance to appear to be taking sides against any of his many philosopher friends.

My own introduction to the Society was through the Professor of Literature at King's College, Rev. E. P. Scrymgeour. There was no chair of philosophy at King's College, but there was a regular matriculation and full evening class course of study. I was then a young man just entered into business on my own account, and had been for some years a regular evening class student at King's College. Many of

my life-friendships were formed at that time, and one was with Mr. Scrymgour. He held the appointment of perpetual curate at St. John's Church, St. John's Wood, and he lived in the parsonage there with his maiden sisters. He was a scholar of wide learning, and he devoted his life to study. He was somewhat singular in his habits. I would sometimes spend an evening with him, leaving at what to me was a late hour, to find his day just beginning. He sat down, in fact, to regular study when the noise of the traffic ceased, and slept during the busy morning hours. He was not a professional philosopher. He regarded philosophy as just one form, and that not the highest or completest form of human literary expression. He had imbibed profoundly of the Hegelian spirit, but I do not think he could be classed as a Hegelian of the right or of the left; he had found for himself a middle path. He had excogitated his own supreme triad, a literary triad—Poetry, Philosophy, Humour. This meant that, in his intellectual hierarchy, Aristophanes stood above Socrates, and Swift above any of the great eighteenth-century English philosophers. Of the nineteenth-century writers he had for Coleridge almost a reverent admiration, and he regarded John Stuart Mill with unqualified contempt. He had a high appreciation for Browning long before that poet gained popular recognition, at a time when Robert Browning was chiefly famous as the husband of Mrs. Browning. He had little sympathy with the Oxford Hegelians T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley. He was quite unimpressed with Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, and offended, I think, by the sheer destructiveness of its dialectic. He was a regular attendant at the meetings and a vice-president. In discussion he was weighty but generally obscure and often unsympathetic. A close friend of Mr. Scrymgour's was Mr. Hawksley Rhodes, a civil servant, who also attended with great regularity. He seldom

took any active part in the debates, but he followed the discussions with keen interest. Mr. Scrymgour, Mr. Rhodes, myself and my friend Mr. A. F. Lake, then a fellow-student and afterwards my brother-in-law, formed a distinctive group in the young Society.

The person whom I remember as most brilliant in debate and clear in exposition was Mr. W. C. Barlow, the Swedenborgian. In the early years he was a constant attendant and one of the first vice-presidents. I never heard why he discontinued his membership. Probably he resigned for some ordinary reason such as removal from London, but I find no note in our records of his resignation or the reason.

The first printed list of members issued at the close of the third session in July, 1882, contains the names of twenty ordinary and one corresponding member. The latter was Dr. William T. Harris, the indefatigable Hegelian scholar and editor of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, then of Concord, Massachusetts, later of St. Louis. He appears to have communicated a paper to the Society on Hegel, and I remember that several of us were subscribers to his *Journal* and to his translations of the German transcendental philosophers. It is interesting to note that one of the translations he planned at this time, Hegel's *Science of Logic*, has been published this year in Professor Muirhead's *Library of Philosophy*, and although this is an independent translation an editor's note informs us that the actual translation which W. T. Harris sponsored is being also published in America.

The twenty ordinary members contain only two of those who were present or represented at the inaugural meeting, Wyndham R. Dunstan (now Sir Wyndham Dunstan), a vice-president, and Alfred Senier, the honorary secretary. The Positivist Society is, however, represented in the list by Dr. J. H. Bridges, who had read a paper on Comte,

and by Mr. Frederic Harrison. Among the names is that of Mr. C. Hicks, of Guildford, of whom I retain just a faint recollection, and who was the father of Professor Dawes Hicks. Another name is that of George Whale, later well known in London literary circles as a member of the Johnson Club and also of the Rationalist Press Society. He was a very active member of the Society at that time. Mr. Thomas Whittaker is also on the list. He was a member for many years, though unable by distance from London to attend the meetings.

The real strength of the Society came with the adhesion of the recognized teachers of philosophy, or rather of those professionally interested in the study courses in the universities. The Society from this time took on a new character; not that we now became academic, on the contrary, our unacademical character was emphasized and turned to advantage. The work which was being done in the universities could now be discussed in the open forum. This received a curious illustration in the failure of our tentative idea of holding some of our meetings in Oxford and Cambridge. I have already mentioned the meeting at Oxford on November 16th, 1891, and it affords an excellent illustration of the academical and unacademical attitudes. The meeting was held in Jesus College. Mr. Samuel Alexander was in the chair, as our president, Mr. Shadworth Hodgson, was the reader of the first paper of the symposium. The subject was "The Origin of the Perception of an External World," and besides the president, Mr. Bernard Bosanquet and Mr. D. G. Ritchie contributed papers. The symposium is published in *Proceedings, Old Series, Vol. 2, No. 1, Part 1.* and in addition to the three original papers there is published Mr. Hodgson's reply to the other two and Mr. Bosanquet and Mr. Ritchie's rejoinders to Mr. Hodgson's replies. The Oxford Magazine

published a farcical description of the meeting, the papers, and the discussion, to the no small perturbation of the president, who was quite incapable of enjoying its humour. The article was entitled "The External World on the Aristotelian Society." Since the chairman and all the contributors were Oxford men, the meeting really proved the impossibility of carrying the atmosphere of Albemarle Street into the seat of learning. One quotation which I will cite from the Oxford Magazine account of the discussion very aptly reproduces the general impression. "Professor Case hesitated whether to call the Aristotelian Society or their hosts the external world, for the one was an extraneous body, the other purely exoteric, but he welcomed the visitors to the last home of Aristotle."

As I record this, the thought comes to me that after all the Aristotelian Society must have appeared to the Oxford mind as an external world. Why, they must have asked themselves, were we, with our varied interests in the business metropolis, exercising ourselves with the history of philosophy, from the days of ancient Greece to the most modern theories, with no utilitarian incentive, and in the almost pathetic faith that by clear thinking we might be able to solve the great speculative problem of the nature of existence? To them philosophy was a special study, justified indeed by its profound interest, but requiring in the student, and seeming indeed to insist on, aloofness from the commonplace world. One day (the incident I now refer to was many years later) I was staying in Oxford with my friend Hastings Rashdall, and he surprised me in conversation by putting to me the quite ingenuous question: "Whatever was it that made you become a philosopher?" There was, of course, nothing extraordinary in the question, but the manner of asking it surprised me at the time and surprised me still more on reflection. It is true I

am a professor of philosophy now, but it is not because I made choice of the profession. I had never myself thought of philosophy in the professional way as one among other pursuits. To me it had always been a natural human interest. That I should be called on to give a reason for choosing philosophy as though I might equally well have chosen philology, pedagogy, jurisprudence, cosmology or theology was as if I were called on to say why I read Fielding, Carlyle, Scott and Dickens in preference to the well-classified parliamentary blue-books. It is true that I discovered, as everyone discovers, that philosophical expression is only acquired by hard discipline, that the student of philosophy needs all the guidance he can get from the professor, and that there is strong necessity for the organization of the philosophical sciences by the universities, but all this concerns our degree of attainment; it has absolutely nothing to do with our interest in philosophy itself.

I should now like to mention some of those who joined later and have passed away, and particularly of some who made the work of carrying on the Society a possibility in the difficult years. The Society had a rule, I am not sure whether it is a present rule or not, that unless a quorum of five members was present, no meeting should take place. In the first years of my secretaryship this rule was a veritable nightmare to me. I had always a fear that I should perhaps come and find the reader of a paper and no one to listen to him or able to discuss it. This never actually happened, though our meetings were often small and sometimes opened in faith. The reason was that we had always a nucleus of regular attendants. Some of these I delight to recall. One was Mr. Arthur Boutwood. He joined the Society in 1890 and very soon became identified with it. He was for some years our treasurer. When he left London to live in the country he was unable to attend often, and

in the last years of his life he had ceased to be a familiar figure, but he continued his membership. He contributed many papers. He was endeared to us, however, by his infectious geniality, his abundant good humour and the delightful turn he gave to our discussions.

Another member who became to me a close personal friend was Dr. W. L. Gildea, a Catholic priest of the Spanish Chapel, in George Street, Manchester Square. He joined the Society in 1889 and left us in 1896. He was very scholarly, well versed in St. Thomas and scholastic theology generally. He was a skilful dialectician and quite sympathetic in his approach to modern theories. He read papers and took part in symposia. On one occasion he opened a symposium on the subject, "Is there Evidence of Design in Nature?" in which Mr. G. J. Romanes and Mr. Alexander took part. On another occasion he contributed, with Mr. Fairbrother and Mr. Sturt, to a symposium on "The Freedom of the Will?" My choicest recollection of Dr. Gildea is, however, the most singular appeal ever made to me in simple earnestness to consider the advantages of conformity with the Church. "You know, Mr. Carr, the service of God is by no means exacting—about twenty minutes a day would suffice."

The mention of Mr. G. J. Romanes reminds me of the charm which his presence at meetings always infused into the discussions. He became a member in 1885. He died in 1894. He lived in London and attended very frequently. His first paper read to the Society was in 1886 on the subject "Neo-Kantism in its Relation to Science." It was an attack on Dr. J. S. Haldane's essay in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* and a strong defence of mechanism and materialism in science. Unfortunately this paper does not exist, as it was read before we had begun the publication of Proceedings. A friend of Romanes's who joined the

Society at this time was Rev. Aubrey L. Moore, of Keble College, Oxford. The two friends are always associated in my mind. Dr. Aubrey Moore contributed papers, but his residence at Oxford made him only an occasional visitor.

About this period of the Society we had the addition of a lady member, whose death after one year caused great sadness. This was Miss Constance Naden, a young lady personally and intellectually of great attraction. She had passed brilliantly her university course at Birmingham and had published two volumes of poems, but her great interest was philosophy. During the year she was with us she came to all our meetings and took part in our discussions. When she died in December, 1889, she was preparing a paper for the Society, and we published the finished portion.

Another member who attended regularly at this time and contributed excellent papers was Dr. R. J. Ryle. At that time he was living at Barnet, within easy reach of London. Afterwards he moved to Brighton and we saw him seldom, though he continued in membership with us. The Society was indebted to Dr. Ryle for the introduction of another member, Mr. E. C. Benecke. Mr. Benecke was the kindest soul it has ever been my privilege to have known. He joined the Society in 1893, and until old age and infirmity made it impossible for him to leave his home on winter evenings he never missed a meeting. He was of a retiring and timid disposition, and I do not think would ever have come to us but for the personal introduction of Dr. Ryle. We never had a more loyal and devoted member. He was a nephew of Mendelssohn and himself a very talented violin player. His philosophy had been formed under the influences of the great mid-Victorian writers, George Henry Lewes, John Stuart Mill, and the scientific philosophers of that period. A few years later

a friend of Mr. Benecke's, Mr. Kaibel, joined us (1896), and he also was a constant attendant for many years.

The last person I shall mention is one whom we all remember, for he passed from us only a short time ago, the late Professor Joseph Brough. I shall speak only of my recollection of him in the early days. He joined us in 1889. He was a friend of Miss Naden and of Mrs. Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, who joined the Society at the same time. He was then professor of philosophy at Aberystwyth, and consequently only an occasional visitor. In later years, after his retirement, when he came to live in London, he was a regular attendant. He delighted us by his quiet humour. He would sometimes intervene in a discussion with a grave remark which seemed at first as remote as imaginable from the subject in hand till suddenly by a turn of expression the relevance would appear, and his triumph was complete. I remember him, however, as having furnished the occasion of the solitary and unique event in the history of the Society, which Shadworth Hodgson was never tired of relating, of a member maintaining a thesis in a paper to the Society and confessing at the close of the discussion that he had been converted.

My retrospect has been so personal that perhaps it will not be unfitting, and at least it will be forgiven, if I close with a reflection on myself and what the Society has meant to me. I am, I suppose, the only one among you who not only has contributed to the continuity of the Aristotelian Society but who in a very real sense owes the continuity of his own life to the Aristotelian Society. I began my life in the City and I am ending it in the University. If this appears to you an inversion of the natural order you must place the blame on our Society, for it is that alone which has made it possible. I am now a professor

of philosophy, and I have the rather singular privilege among professors that, at an age when most of us are retired and dignified with the title of Emeritus, I have the honour to be retained in two universities in full activity, however inadequately I perform my duties in each. Why could the Aristotelian Society secure this professional recognition for the most unacademical of its members? I think I can give you the answer. It is because we made the discovery that in one subject at least which enjoys academical status it is possible to be unacademical without being amateurish. Possibly I have overstressed the unacademical character of our Society, but it does not mean that we have tolerated cranks or ever been tempted to depart from the strict classical tradition. We have faithfully followed the path indicated in the second of our rules: "The objects of this Society shall be the systematic study of Philosophy; first, as to its historic development; second, as to its methods and problems."

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