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THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR PHILOSOPHY.

This Congress assembled at Heidelberg on the 31st August last and the meetings lasted until 5th September. The state of Baden and the town and the University of Heidelberg united in giving the members a very hearty welcome. The usual *fêtes* and excursions were held, and here among the kindly people of the South one could catch a glimpse of the Germany of the past, the Germany of the era of philosophical idealism, the disappearance of which is so much lamented by the publishers of metaphysical literature.

Great Britain and Ireland were but slenderly represented, contributing only some half-dozen to a total of a good 300 members; and the

honour of maintaining English as one of the four languages employed in discussion was left almost entirely to America. It is noteworthy that the scope of the Congress was narrowed by the almost complete absence of the experimental psychologists. At the same time some almost extraneous topics were included, as, e.g., the problem of a universal language. M. Couturat was there to advocate his own improvements on the existing schemes. As to much of the work of the Congress, ranging, as the papers did, from contributions to symbolic logic, to investigations into minute points of history, it is impossible to generalise briefly. In many debates, however, the current of thought showed a strong tendency to set in one particular direction, namely, towards a discussion of Pragmatism. But however it may be with the leaders of thought abroad, among the mass of those interested in Philosophy on the Continent the consideration of this doctrine does not seem to be so far advanced as with us. Consequently there was very little that was novel in the discussions which resulted, though it was interesting to see reproduced once more all the familiar features of the early stages of the controversy—the light-heartedness of the innovators and the intolerant indignation of the older school. Probably the Congress would have been better able after those preliminary exercises to appreciate the exact significance of the paper with which Prof. Royce opened the first public discussion. Prof. Royce was willing to admit “that the empirical truth into which our sciences inquire, is relative to the observers, to their functions and to their individual needs; so that Instrumentalism and Relativism” (moments in the Pragmatist doctrine) “express a very important part of the nature of the truth that is knowable to man, concerning human life and concerning the physical world”. Nevertheless there is, he maintains, a sphere within which *absolute* truth is found. This is the domain of “Pure Mathematics and Modern Exact Logic,” the truths in which have, by the researches of Mr. Russell and others, been put into a position which cannot be defined in terms of any form of Relativism. But, says Prof. Royce, the fundamental relations which pure mathematics and exact logic discover are still “relations that determine the Form of our activities” and hence “may be called the Form of the Will itself”. Thus he hopes to appease the partisans of voluntarism. At the Congress, however, Mr. Schiller, on behalf of the Pragmatists, repelled these overtures for peace and, in the fury of the conflict which immediately broke out again, little more was heard of them.

Much disappointment was felt by members when it became known that Professors Mach, Lippe and Bergson, the latter two of whom had agreed to read papers, were unable to attend. The meetings closed with a discussion on ‘the conception of Law,’ and we were indebted to our president, Prof. Windelband, for leading the debate. Next Congress will meet at Bologna in 1911. The fifth is due four years later—in 1915. Surely by that time some British university should be ready to open its doors to the philosophers.

G. R. T. Ross.