

IN MEMORIAM

G. DAWES HICKS, F.B.A.

By the death of Professor G. Dawes Hicks, on February 16th, at the age of seventy-eight, philosophers have lost a typical philosopher of the older generation. Philosophy was the absorbing interest of his life, an interest that he was happily able to maintain until the very end. From his sick-bed he continued to act as sub-editor of the *Hibbert Journal* and was engaged in writing his famous "Philosophical Survey" for that *Journal* when death came, rather suddenly at the end. His mind seemed not to fail at all; he read omnivorously and argued clearly despite a growing weariness of body and often considerable pain. After his retirement he lived altogether at Cambridge, to which he was deeply attached. He took a keen interest in the new movements in philosophy, and it was one of his griefs that Cambridge philosophers did not care to visit him. No doubt the fault was not all on their side; Hicks was essentially a lonely man with a few strong and deep attachments. On more than one occasion during his later years Hicks told the present writer that the men to whom he owed most were T. H. Huxley and Robert Adamson. He loved to read aloud portions of T. H. Huxley's letters, and to recall his excitement at hearing Huxley lecture in his youth. The influence of Robert Adamson upon his life and thought was profound. In his early days he studied under Wundt and Hering. Later, when he came to live in Cambridge, he formed a friendship with James Ward.

Hicks was essentially a scholar and thinker; his knowledge was extraordinarily wide and thorough; his powers of criticism acute. He was in no sense a maker of systems; his gifts did not lie in the direction of speculative metaphysics and his chief work was done in the region of knowledge and philosophy of religion. He was a member of the Unitarian Communion, and had been in the ministry, at Unity Church, Islington, from 1897 to 1903. In his Hibbert Lectures he expounded the grounds of his theistic faith. At one time he professed himself a "Neo-Kantian"—a name that has surely covered a variety of theories at various times. To his own views he gave the name "Critical Realism," the adjective "critical" being used in a Kantian sense. He constantly inveighed against the habit of treating the knowing subject as an object among other objects; he insisted upon a threefold distinction between the activity of apprehension, the content apprehended, and the apprehended object. He strove again and again to make clear that by "the content apprehended" we were not to suppose he meant any *tertium quid* standing between the mind and its object. Perhaps the best way to understand his contention is to recall the scholastic distinction between *id quod concipitur* and *id quo concipitur*.

It matters little whether anyone accepts the doctrine of Critical Realism. What is important is that no one could fail to be stimulated in thinking critically who reads the numerous papers (mainly contributed to the *Aristotelian Society*) he wrote on this and allied topics. His mind was so acute, his knowledge so considerable, and his patience in detail so great, that to discuss with him was always to learn something worth while. There are not many of whom this can be said. The strongest impression, from this point of view, that Hicks made upon the present writer (who was not his student) was of his whole-hearted devotion to philosophical thinking, his passionate desire to promote the cause of philosophical studies, and his fine intellectual integrity. He was incapable of the arts of a showman or of adopting any devices designed to draw attention to himself.

L. SUSAN STEBBING.