

*“Another Peirce Book” continued from page 9*

writer” (R 1118: 3). This fun, however, took place before the appearance of the book mentioned above, a book which ought to retain our attention because, although it was published after he graduated from Harvard, Peirce was intimately acquainted with it.

Indeed, the copy discovered by Lewis on Weiss’s shelves appears originally to have belonged to Peirce’s younger brother Ben (Benjamin Mills Peirce, who died prematurely in 1870), who probably had to study Bowen’s textbook in his senior year at Harvard (1864). The inside front and back covers of the book are inscribed with Ben’s name, in ink and in pencil. The book otherwise contains a large number of penciled marginalia, all of which appear to be in Charles Peirce’s hand, not his brother’s. One of them, inscribed at the top of chapter 11 (on “Demonstrative Reasoning and Deductive Evidence”), says, “Mr. Bowen tells me today (Nov. 23, 1866) that the doctrine of this chapter is the only one to which he lays peculiar claim. C. S. P.” Presumably, therefore, Ben gave Charles his copy of the book, which Peirce read with great attention in 1866, and had occasion to talk about with Bowen himself.

Most of Peirce’s marginalia are quite critical of Bowen, challenging the accuracy of his knowledge of the history of logic

(especially medieval), blaming him for making too much of Hamilton, pointing out the insufficiency of a number of logical reasonings, and accusing Bowen of not understanding induction. The remarks are written spiritedly, just as one would expect of a confident young man proud that his own knowledge had begun to surpass that of his professor. In his seventh Lowell Lecture (October–November 1866), Peirce associated Bowen with other New Englanders “having a peculiar genius for philosophy,” such as Edwards, Channing, Parker, Bushnell, Emerson, James, and Abbot, a “list of names very creditable both individually and for the variety of minds they show” (W1: 455). Six years later, in an 1872 *Nation* review of educational textbooks, Peirce wrote less sympathetically that “the work of Professor Bowen, a convenient though not very intelligent compend of the logic of Hamilton, Thomson, etc., is nearly without value in educating the mind” (W3: 4). However that may be, Weiss’s copy is quite valuable in educating our mind about the young Peirce’s logical upbringing, and in making us aware that deeper study of Bowen’s teaching may reveal more about Peirce’s early philosophical development (for one thing, Bowen rejected Kant’s transcendentalism). Paul Weiss gave the book to Nathan Houser, who deposited it in the Max H. Fisch Library at the Peirce Edition Project.

*“Scientific Fallibilism” continued from page 5*

Gilman, the president of Johns Hopkins University, and to write him that Peirce was “very desirous of getting the chance of giving a course of lectures this autumn.” A reply, if there was one, would certainly have been negative. Peirce, at any rate, was seriously considering lecturing as a way to make a living.

Although we remain ignorant of the occasion that prompted Peirce to compose the lecture, an interesting remark buried under heavy deletions on the eleventh sheet of R 860 does at least suggest a lofty and surprising purpose. As part of his demonstration that nominalism continually bumps up violently on metaphysical grounds against science’s positive doctrines while realism offers room “for anything that science may find reason to conclude,” Peirce makes the point that Newton’s contention that time and space are real entities was the result of an inference founded on observed facts, one of them being absolute velocity of rotation. Foucault’s pendulum experiment proved that motion was not merely something relative, and consequently absolute motion, absolute space, and absolute time are real. Gauss and Riemann, Peirce continues, agreed that observation alone, and not metaphysical preconceptions, could ascertain the reality of absolute motion and decide whether two balls, propelled together in the same direction perpendicular to the line joining them, would tend to either approach toward or recede from each other. Peirce shared that belief, as testifies the following transcription of a deleted passage (ignoring its alterations): “But I have ascertained that there are several fundamental facts of physics which have hitherto baffled all explanations,—which are perfectly explained by supposing those balls to recede, and that this theory predicts another fact, hitherto unsuspected, which is found to be verified by observation. Other phenomena are predicted by the theory; and my object in giving these lectures is to collect the means to make the necessary experiments for testing the predictions.” Accordingly, the present lecture was to be the first of a series intended, at least initially, to bring Peirce the financial means not

only to prove experimentally the reality of absolute motion, absolute space, and absolute time, but also to vindicate realism over nominalism as the only philosophy capable of animating effectively the spirit of inquiry. With this program in mind, Peirce devoted the rest of the lecture to show how the nominalists’ cocksureness was sure to block the path of inquiry, while the realists’ non-skeptical fallibilism opened it, notably by contrasting the fallibilist and infallibilist representations of three of the leading conceptions of science—force, continuity, and evolution.

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## NOTES

1. CP 6.492–93 and 1.141–75.
2. R followed by a number indicates a manuscript listed in Robin’s *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce*.
3. *The Thought and Character of William James*, 2:413n. 23.
4. These sixty-seven pages are (using the ISP numbering; i.e., numbers Bates-stamped on an electroprint copy of the microfilm in 1974 by members of the Institute for Studies in Pragmatism): RS 104: 109; R 860: 2; R 885: 4; R 1574: 655; R 860: 3–6, 8, 7, 9–14; R 885: 5; R 860: 15–18; R 589: 11–14; R 955: 7, 9–11, 13–40, 43–52. This sequence has only one gap: one or two pages appear to be missing between R 860: 7 and 9, given that the textual transition between the two is somewhat questionable, and given that the “10” minute mark is inscribed on p. 7 while the “15” minute mark, deleted on p. 9, is restored on p. 10, leaving too short a page interval for a five-minute duration. The six alternative sequences that followed R 860: 18 before they were superseded are reconstructed as follows. First (original) sequence: R 860: 19–21, R 1573: 268 (= R 278: 107); second sequence: R 839: 179, R 862: 8–9; third sequence: R 839: 179, R 862: 4–7; fourth sequence: R 839: 179, R 862: 3 (incomplete); fifth sequence: R 955: 57–58, R 890: 7; sixth sequence: R 955: 2–6, 12, R 865: 6–12.
5. R 955: 41–42, R 954: 7–16.
6. R 955: 40–52.
7. R 1347: 6. An outline of the second part of the lecture is found in R 1009: 32.
8. Ernst Mach, *The Science of Mechanics*, La Salle, IL: The Open Court Pub. Co., 1893.
9. R 590: 27–42.