

Did Russell write this?

- a new unsigned review

The Russell Archives has long had on file several unsigned reviews in the London Nation. We thought they were by Russell from the style of the writing, the opinions expressed, and the fact that Russell's records of payments received from the Nation could not be matched up with any signed articles. The letters to Lady Ottoline Morrell during the period (1911-1914) confirm his authorship of these reviews. Indeed, Russell seems to have told her of nearly everything he wrote during these years. He even mentions two reviews of which, until recently, we had no record. One has now been found, thanks to Mr. Robert Zich, friend of the Russell Archives at the Library of Congress. On 28 October 1912 Russell told Lady Ottoline that "This morning I wrote a review of a worthless little book by Emile Boutroux on W. James. . . ." A Belgian bibliographer, Mr. Pierre van Cutsem, once sent Russell a list of unsigned reviews in the Cambridge Review and asked him to identify any that he had written. (Russell did not identify any, but no copies were provided him.) In the list was a review of Boutroux's book. The list meant nothing to me until I read the letter to Lady Ottoline mentioning the review of Boutroux. As Russell was reviewing popularly at this time only for the Nation, the Cambridge Magazine and Review, the mention of Boutroux caught my eye in recently re-reading van Cutsem's letter. I asked Mr. Zich, who has often done similar research for the Archives, to find the review. He promptly did and supplied us with a copy. The style seems to be good contemptuous Russell throughout, but we are reprinting the review below so readers may judge for themselves. If anyone feels strongly for or against Russell's authorship, I would like to hear.

- K.B.

Emile Boutroux. *William James*. Translated from the second edition by Archibald and Barbara Henderson. Longmans Green & Co. [1912]. 3/6 net.

It is just possible that this book was worth writing in good French; it is quite certain that it was not worth translating into indifferent American. M. Boutroux seems to have thought that the French nation could not be expected to appreciate William James in his native uncouthness; in place of the transatlantic wildness, the roughness, the homely humour, the simple democratic friendliness, which make his writings delightful, we find here a smooth surface, a polished blandness, a style in which tradition and literary convention make all real thought impossible. The result is a portrait bearing about as little resemblance to the original as Voltaire's intelligent Huron bore to the fierce savage of the backwoods. After a brief biographical notice, the rest of the book is concerned with William James's contributions to psychology and philosophy, summed up in a set of neat dogmas, and finally reduced to a form in which they can be placed in the academic tradition without the risk of altering any man's lectures. There are, we are told, two common methods of introspection, of which the first perceives "the multiple

without unity," while the second perceives "the one without the multiple." But "the true introspection is the living synthesis, the intimate fusion, the concrete unity of these two methods. It has for its object the actual, the immediate datum of consciousness." The book abounds in statements which may be true or may be false, but are merely recommended by the assumption of omniscience which is implicit in the style. For example: "It requires courage to say it: the Galileo or the Lavoisier of psychology, the man who shall unveil the truly fundamental principle, if he is ever to appear, will be a metaphysician." Or again: "The more we force ourselves to see things in a natural way, and not to use our eyes like a rude microscope or telescope, the more we see that beings are one with their relations." This dogmatic manner is hardly avoidable, perhaps, in a short account of another man's philosophy; but if so, it may be doubted whether such short accounts can serve a useful purpose.

The translators have not always realized that error cannot be avoided by looking up each successive word in the dictionary; for example, they often translate "l'être," by "the being" when they should translate it by "being."