

## Forty-nine

**I**N my time I have found delight among the metaphysicians, especially those who are most ingenious in their dialectic. McTaggart, for example. I used to attend some of his more elementary lectures at Cambridge, and enjoyed every moment of them. He would stand with his head to one side, looking like a colossal pink schoolboy reciting a lesson, with a kind of owlish innocence about him; and, after many instances that would involve pink elephants or unicorns, would exile into limbo the materialists and dualists and then proceed to establish in the upper air his own crystal castle of idealism. Reading him even now, I recover some of that old delight. It is the superb technique and the smiling confidence, like those of a juggler, that give me such pleasure. I am no disciple of Professor Ayer - and have no pretensions to philosophy - but I never felt that McTaggart was really telling me anything about life, that he was busy revealing the truth. Not that I could ever discover any flaw in his argument. What he set out to prove, he proved, so far as I was - and still am - concerned. I would never have dared to contradict a single statement he ever made. Always I floated easily with him up to that castle hanging in mid-air. But I never really believed a word of it. I came away from him, however, refreshed and enriched by the

experience as if I had spent an hour with a benevolent wizard. Are they all gone now, these illusionists of logic, these verbal jugglers? Are there no undergraduates anywhere who are turned once or twice into gaping Aladdins?