

Postscript

News of the death of Gilbert Ryle on 6 October 1976 came as these pages were being passed for the press. It was inevitable that he should leave us in the middle of a conversation, and fitting that it should be one that he himself had started. His autobiographical reflections in this issue, the last of his writings that he saw through the press, will stand as a memorial to his work over many years for the Royal Institute of Philosophy and its journal. The 'now fairly rare qualifications' of which he speaks in the first paragraph are not the only valuable commodities that are made even scarcer by his death.

There will not now be the pungent postcard or glancing remark that this editorial might have drawn from one who was always ready with a riposte that was pointed yet never woundingly sharp. But the conversation will continue, and so will all the other conversations in which he was the rarest combination of good listener and trenchant contributor. Nobody knew better than Ryle that conversation brings progress in understanding only because it does not allow any of us to have the last word.