

THE NEW PRINCETON REVIEW.

61st Year.

MARCH, 1886.

No. 2.

GRAY.

THE eighteenth century, judged by the literature it produced everywhere in Europe outside of Germany and France, is generally counted inferior to that which preceded and to that which followed it. A judgment of especial severity has been passed upon its poetry by critics who lost somewhat of their judicial equipoise in that enthusiasm of the romantic reaction which replaced the goddess of good taste by her of liberty, and crowned the judicial wig with the Phrygian cap. The poetry of the period fell under a general condemnation as altogether wanting in the imaginative quality, and as being rather the conclusions of the understanding put into verse than an attempt to express, however inadequately, the eternal longings and intuitions and experiences of human nature. These find their vent, it was thought, in those vivid flashes of phrase, the instantaneous bolts of passionate conception, whose furrow of splendor across the eyeballs of the mind leaves them momentarily dark to the outward universe, only to quicken their vision of inward and incommunicable things. There was some truth in this criticism, as there commonly is in the harsh judgments of imperfect sympathy, but it was far from being the whole truth. If poesy be, as the highest authority has defined it, a divine madness, no English poet and no French one between 1700 and 1800 need have feared a writ *de lunatico inquirendo*. They talk, to be sure, of "sacred rages," but in so decorous a tone, that we do not even glance towards the tongs. They invoke fire from heaven in such frigid verse that we wish they might have been taken at their word and utterly consumed—they and their works together. Cowper was really mad at

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH ETHICS.

IF Principal Shairp of St. Andrews were alive and writing to-day he would not ask, as he did in 1868, why ethical science as pursued in Great Britain of late years is "so little attractive and so little edifying;" nor would he be constrained to confess that while the study of metaphysic has renewed its youth "to moral science no such revival has come."* Moral Philosophy has had its full share of the quickening influences that have been at work upon Philosophy in general: in proof of this one need only turn to the recently published Index to the ten volumes of *Mind*. The reasons for renewed interest in Ethics are easily understood. This science stands so closely related to the other philosophical Disciplines that increased attention to them cannot but affect it. One may feel discouraged about his progress in Ethics when Mr. Shadworth Hodgson tells him that it can only be "completely and satisfactorily studied by a combination of the three sciences of History, Nervous Physiology and the Metaphysical analysis of states of consciousness in the individual;" † but Mr. Hodgson is probably right. Political Economy and Ethics are separate sciences, but to a certain extent they cover common ground: what is ethically commanded in one department being economically commended in the other. Jurisprudence and Ethics are likewise closely related; although they ought not to be identified by making Jurisprudence a branch of Ethics as Bentham did, or Ethics a department of Law as Austin did. The two sciences, as Holland ‡ shows, deal in great measure with the same topics but from different points of view; and though this writer is probably incorrect in regard to the ground of distinction between them, he is much nearer the truth than Mr. Pollock who does not "see that a jurist is bound to be a moral philosopher more than other men." § The relation between Law and Morals, however, is itself a large question, and able thinkers like Pollock and Lorimer are found on opposite sides of it. But—to account still further for

* *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy*, p. 348.

† *Theory of Practice*, Vol. I., p. 27.

‡ *Jurisprudence*, p. 23.

§ *Essays on Jurisprudence and Ethics*, p. 23.

the interest taken just now in ethical subjects—it must be remembered that ever since Bacon's time the science of morals has been specially cultivated in Great Britain, and that every change of philosophical sentiment is reflected in the ethical history of that country. At this moment a certain pathetic interest attaches itself to the study of Ethics: for some who have fallen into despair in regard to religion and who regret that their interest in Theology is waning, are taking refuge in morality; and, dissatisfied with its old defences, are seeking to fortify it by means of the new appliances furnished by Evolution. Hence the question raised not long ago touching the possibility of an untheological morality, and the inquiry whether Ethics would survive the downfall of Religion. But the ethical revival owes its existence in part also to other causes than those already named.

To keep alive any deep interest in a scientific subject there must be either the enthusiasm enkindled by the hope of discovery or the stimulating influence of controversy. Both of these causes operate just now in Ethics. The revolution of philosophical opinion in Great Britain is very remarkable. Strong men, it is true, are standing upon old intuitional ground and are doing good work against the empirical evolutionists on the one hand and the idealistic evolutionists on the other; but it is idle to deny that the dominant word to-day is Evolution. Hegelianism is dead in Germany; but one begins to feel that through the combined influence of Empiricism and Hegelianism the Scottish philosophy is almost dead in Scotland. It is certainly true, as Mr. Seth remarks, that among the men of the younger generation "the thread of national tradition has been but loosely held."* Empiricism has hoisted its flag over the whole continent of thought and has given warning of its intention to take forcible possession of every inch of territory at its convenience. Meanwhile, the rich and inviting principality known as Moral Science has been invaded; and the exciting questions in theoretical ethics grow out of the struggle of rival philosophies for permanent possession. The Intuitionists are here; the Utilitarians are here; the neo-Hegelians are here; and now the Evolutionists have come.

It is easy to see that the department of Ethics opens a very interesting and at the same time a very difficult field of investigation to believers in the Spencerian philosophy. For an evolutionary

* *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 2.

philosophy of ethics is the necessary prelude to an evolutionary philosophy of religion; and short of this a philosophy cannot stop that aims at the unification of knowledge. But in order to write ethics under the rubric of evolution it is necessary to re-write psychology. This is very easy when speculative evolution satisfies, but particularly difficult when the attempt is made to rest conclusions upon a basis of fact. For we cannot see ideas in the making. There are no cabinets of unmoralised or half-moralised conceptions, serving as illustrations of the evolution hypothesis; and, in the absence of evidence like that to which the biologist appeals, the moralist of the evolution school has to make the most of the experience of savages and the psychology of brutes. The testimony of past human experience, exhibiting the passage of thought from the non-moral to the moral, cannot be found; and the advocate of the evolution-ethic is, consequently, engaged in the somewhat unprofitable work of studying pre-historic history.

It is not to be supposed that writers like Mr. Spencer and Mr. Stephen will be allowed to have things their own way. Good work is being done in opposition to them by some of the Anglo-Hegelians: though their influence is probably very limited: and Mr. Seth remarks that "the cannonade appears to pass harmlessly over the enemy's head." Again both empiricists and idealists are finding out that Intuitionism is neither dead nor sleeping. The state of philosophy in Great Britain may, therefore, be described as a triangular fight, with Ethics as a principal battle-ground. What is true of Great Britain is also to a certain extent true of America. The title of this article, understood in a comprehensive linguistic sense, will justify reference to authors on both sides of the sea.

The fact that the study of human conduct is approached from opposite philosophical directions and that conflicting opinions are entertained not only in regard to what the end of action should be but also in regard to the method of arriving at a knowledge of that end, will naturally give rise to a variety of ethical methods. How, indeed, these methods should be classified is itself an interesting question, and one that is brought to notice by the titles of two of the most valuable contributions to the ethical literature of this generation. Mr. Sidgwick* divides ethical methods according to

* *The Methods of Ethics.*

the different ideas men have of the end of conduct: some finding it in personal happiness, others in the happiness of the community, while a third class say that the true end of life is moral perfection. Egoistic Hedonism, Utilitarianism, and Intuitionism are thus the three leading types of ethical theory. Whatever may be said regarding the adequacy of this classification, it served the purpose of securing boundary lines for the work in ethical criticism which the author had undertaken and which he has accomplished with such signal ability.

Dr. Martineau's* scheme is more comprehensive. He divides ethical thinkers into two classes: those who proceed by the subjective (psychological) method of interpreting the outside entities God and the world according to the analogy of experience; and those who adopt the objective (unpsychological) method of interpreting experience with the help of one or other of these entities. The unpsychological method may have as its presupposition either God or the world. If the former, it will be metaphysical, and this again may be of the immanent or the transcendental order (Plato, Des Cartes, Malebranche and Spinoza are historical representatives of the metaphysical method); if the latter, it will be physical as seen in the philosophy of Comte. The psychological method, again, may be divided into two heads, according as we seek to develop moral science by the interpretation of the conscience itself; or by tracing the development of the moral out of the non-moral in the study of psychological facts outside of conscience. "Idiopsychological" and "heteropsychological" are the epithets employed to denote these two methods. The idiopsychological method coincides with the author's own view, and the didactic portion of the work is contained under that head. The heteropsychological method exists in three forms, called, respectively, Hedonistic, Dianöetic, and Æsthetic Ethics; and is represented in Dr. Martineau's pages by the systems of Spencer, Cudworth, Clarke, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. This arrangement is ingenious and logical; though it is hard to avoid the feeling that the artistic purpose which it serves had something to do with its elaboration. It exhibits ethical systems in the light of new relations and at the same time gives the air of logical completeness to a work that, otherwise, in spite of its acknowledged greatness, would have to be regarded as fragmentary: being neither a

* *Types of Ethical Theory.*

complete history of Ethics nor a complete ethical system. The arrangement adopted leaves the author free to follow his plan of historical eclecticism without incurring blame for incompleteness; and to mingle history, criticism, and didactic statement without violence to the laws of logic. The author's own position, corresponding to the idiopsychological type, occupies the centre of the work, and is supported on the right and the left, respectively, by historico-critical accounts of systems representing the unpsychological and heteropsychological methods.

Less ambitious, but very serviceable and, for the author's purpose, adequate is the division made by Mr. Sorley into those methods which recognise Reason as a factor in determining the moral Ideal, and those which regard man's natural impulses as the only basis of moral science. Rationalistic and Naturalistic Ethics are, therefore, the two antithetical types of moral science according to this author whose recent book* is a very acute and searching criticism of the Ethics of Naturalism.

It must be remembered that there is something more than the logic of classification in the question under consideration. Ethical methods indicate ethical problems; and though the classifications referred to are logical enough, they fail to bring out some important phases of current ethical discussion. Still another classification will therefore be adopted here; but this can be better presented after a definition of Ethics is reached. What then is Ethics? It will not do to say with Sidgwick that it is the science which seeks to determine the rightness or wrongness of actions; for the entire field of human character is its province. Nor, with Martineau, that Ethics is the science of character; for character is what *is*, and Ethics deals particularly with what *ought to be*. 'Conduct' does not define Ethics; for Jurisprudence and Political Economy deal with conduct too. Nor can we say with accuracy that Ethics has to do with purposed conduct; for much purposed conduct is non-moral: whether I dine at mid-day or six o'clock, or drink tea or coffee at breakfast may be a matter of purposed conduct; but it would only be in exceptional cases that such purposed conduct would have any ethical significance. If, moreover, we say with Herbert Spencer that Ethics is the science that deals with the conduct of associated human beings we speak inadequately: for besides making Robinson Crusoe a non-moral

* *Ethics of Naturalism.*

being before he found "Friday," we overlook the relations that man sustains to God above him and the brute beneath him—relations that generate the moral obligations reflected in religious institutions and humane legislation. Professor Birks came nearer a satisfying definition when he said that Ethics is the science of ideal humanity—the only objection to it being that it does not necessarily imply self-determination and obligation. Self-directing agency is the presupposition of ethical science; and separates it by a sharp line from Physics. It is also assumed that action can and should be directed to the attainment of some end or should conform to some rule. It may be said, then, that Ethics is the science that deals with the character and conduct—that is to say the life—of self-determining agents in reference to an obligatory ideal. The different methods may be represented by the different positions assigned to the three leading ideas in this definition.

The first method emphasises character and conduct—Life. The problem is, Given human conduct as we see it exhibited, to find the moral ideal. Certain regulated relations called morality have been evolved in the struggle for life. If society is to continue it must be moral. Tendencies are visible in the social organism—tendencies looking toward greater happiness, more complex existence or more altruistic conduct. What human life ought to be we infer from what it is going to be. We get the ethical end in the temporal outcome. The thither of tendency is the thither of end and should be the thither of effort. The method is simple:—Crystallise existing concrete morality and you get the commandments. Read the tendencies of society and generalise for the ethical end, which may be the health or happiness of the social organism. Then say to the individual, 'If you wish to have society realise its end you must keep the commandments.' This is the way that the evolution-ethic inculcates preceptive morality. Unfortunately for morality it prefaces its 'ought' with an 'if.' Still more unfortunately for moral responsibility, moreover, even this hypothetical 'ought' can be uttered only at the cost of philosophical consistency. For, upon the principles of this philosophy, the moralist can do nothing more than observe facts as they are and predict facts as they will be. There is no logical place in the system for moral ideals or moral obligations.

The second method starts with the moral ideal. Nothing is simpler than to say that Happiness is what we want and Holiness is

the shortest road to its attainment. And a very effective morality can be built upon the basis of Hedonism; but we get prudence, not obligation, as the outcome. Nor is the matter changed so far as obligation is concerned when the ideal is Altruism. It is easy to say, 'This or that conduct tends to promote the happiness of others and therefore you ought to follow it.' But the 'ought' immediately raises the inquiry why the happiness of others should be a matter of any concern—showing that instead of getting obligation as an inference from the end, we need obligation as a factor in determining the end. It will be said, however, that sympathy is part of our nature, and that, therefore, we best consult our own interests in caring for others: but again it is prudence and not obligation that is preached. Altruism may be Egoism in disguise. You give a beggar one or two of the small coins in the cash-pocket of your overcoat, and buy the cheapest pleasure in the market. You give a cast-off garment to some freezing mortal of your own size and sex, and feel satisfaction,—not intense, not lasting, perhaps: but considering the outlay the returns are immense. For quick returns and large profits there is no stock that pays so well in the account of pleasure as loose pennies and old clothes. If, therefore, you commend to me as my chief good the seeking of the happiness of other people on the ground of sympathy, you are really commending benevolence in the form of self-love. It is a very effective motive, no doubt, but it is not moral obligation.

It makes no difference what the alleged end of conduct may be, it will be impossible to generate the idea of Right and the sense of obligation out of the adaptation of means to ends. Just here President Porter's able volume on Moral Science seems open to criticism. "For," says this distinguished writer,* "the moral relations are not original categories, but are the necessary result of a special application of the category of adaptation or design." A rash interpreter of Dr. Porter's system would begin by saying that Intellect recognises the end, that Right is the means to the end, and that we are under obligation to do right if we would realise the end—obligation being expressed in the terms of the hypothetical and not the categorical imperative. He would probably justify this interpretation by saying that the words 'right' and 'ought' stand for moral relations that are not original categories, but the result of an application of the

* *Elements of Moral Science*, p. 138.

category of design. They presuppose the end as already recognised, and cannot be constituent elements in determining the end itself. Yet Dr. Porter says that the intellect recognises the end that is "best"—implying that some ends would be unworthy: though it is hard to see how the intellect can decide between ends that are fit and those that are unfit to be chosen, without some original category of Right to appeal to. He also says that the intellect imposes this end as a law upon the will, so that the imperative intended by Dr. Porter is not the hypothetical imperative expressed in the words 'Do so-and-so if you would realise this end,' but the categorical imperative expressed in the words 'Realise this end.' When he says this, however, he practically abandons the statement that moral relations are the result of an application of the category of design. There is inconsistency here, but it is valuable, nevertheless, as showing that we cannot set out with the ethical end and derive moral obligation from it, or, indeed, do more than give advice; and that the idea of obligation must antedate and determine the moral ideal.

The writers just referred to treat the ideal as an end to be realised rather than a rule to be complied with, and there is a difference among moralists concerning the place to be assigned to the Good and the Right, respectively, in ethical systems. Something will be said presently regarding the relations that these ideas sustain to one another. Meanwhile, however, the old question, Why ought I to do right? suggests itself; and it will not appear to be as absurd as Dugald Stewart supposed if it serve to show the logical priority of the Categorical Imperative.

We are brought then to the third method in ethics: the true method—if the seeming dogmatism is not offensive. We must start with moral obligation expressed in categorical terms, or we shall never get it without a compromising 'if.' It is easy to understand the two uses of the word 'ought' when it is said, 'You ought to pay your pew-rent,' and 'You ought to read *Silas Lapham*.' Yet in these two uses there are fundamental distinctions that divide into two classes all of those ethical systems that recognise man as a self-determining agent. It may be that it is only in recent times that special attention has been turned to the idea of 'oughtness,' yet the frequency with which this somewhat awkward word is used in current ethical literature is evidence that the idea for which it stands is a subject of deep interest. Does it express a command or only a sense of reluctance? Does it signify "utility made compulsory" or

is it transformed prudence? Is it the *sic volo, sic jubeo* of the individual will, or is there a metaphysical background of idealistic evolution or of Divine government that gives it significance? The different opinions that prevail in answer to these questions may be taken as illustrative of the state of English Ethics at this moment.

Two topics in current discussion bear vitally upon moral obligation: the Freedom of the Will and the Genesis of Moral Ideas. New light on the old topic of Free Will need hardly be looked for. Dr. Martineau's distinction between spontaneity and freedom will not settle the question: nor will the doctrine of occasional freedom taught by Bishop Temple and President Porter. Mr. Sidgwick thinks that the facts point to determinism but holds, nevertheless, to indeterminism because he believes it necessary to moral responsibility. Mr. Leslie Stephen argues very forcibly to the effect that determinism is no barrier to moral responsibility, and takes ground that is familiar to Calvinistic theologians. Physical determinism, it must be remembered, however, is a very different thing from the determinism of character; and the late Mr. Green was undoubtedly right when he said that "to a being who is simply the result of natural forces an injunction to comply with those forces is simply unmeaning." To be a moral being one must be a self-determining being, however his self-determinations may be accounted for. In ordinary daily life the sphere of self-determination is easily recognised. If, for example, we tell a boy fourteen years old that he ought to grow to be six feet tall and develop remarkable musical genius, he may very properly reply, 'I belong to an unmusical family and both of my parents were short. I take my place in the procession of humanity where it is assigned me and by no choice of mine. I can not help the conditions of heredity and environment that determine my height of stature, color of hair and lack of musical talent.' If, however, we tell him to be careful how he handles his gun, he will probably recognise the advice as sensible and admit that his previous carelessness had made it timely. A loaded gun is something within the sphere of his self-determination. He can throw it over his shoulder or blow down the barrel just as he pleases. Moral responsibility clearly lies within the sphere of self-determination: but what is self-determination? We recognise that a man is the cause of his own voluntary acts; but we know that these voluntary acts depend upon his genius, character and antecedent states of mind and body.

So that while a man's acts are self-determined these self-determinations may be themselves determined by antecedent conditions. If we go behind the volitions to inquire whether any conditions determined these self-determinations we shall probably end in a theory of will that destroys the significance of character altogether; or else we shall adopt one that is equivalent to some form of determinism. Just what form is a very important question: for physical determinism is materialism, is automatism, is opposed to all purposive action and is incompatible with ethical science. According to this theory the whole story of life, mind, consciousness, reason, morality, and religion is told in the terms of matter and motion. Volitions take their places as middle terms in a series of phenomena, conditioning and conditioned by turns. For causes first or final we make vain search. The everlasting tread-mill of antecedent and consequent goes round and round, but we can neither rest nor make progress. There are motions molar, motions molecular, rates of motion, motions calculable in foot-pounds, and motions interchangeable. The problem, therefore, to-day is not by any means the simple question concerning freedom of the Will; but whether Ethics is or is not a department of natural philosophy. The hinge of this discussion, as Green remarks,* is not "the question commonly debated with so much ambiguity of terms between 'determinists' and 'indeterminists'; nor the question whether there is or is not a possibility of unmotivated willing; but the question whether motives of that kind by which it is the characteristic of moral or human action to be determined are of properly natural origin or can be rightly regarded as natural phenomena." Green discusses the question of motive and the relation of desire and will with great subtlety, though without removing all the difficulties. He shows us that Esau's motive in selling his birthright was not the mess of pottage, nor the physical appetite of hunger, but a deliberate and conscious realisation of himself as in thought enjoying the pleasure afforded by the mess of pottage. But he ends in identifying desire and will, as so many have done before, and, in explanation of Esau's act, falls back upon Esau's character. Green makes valuable protest against the materialistic determinism of the day and teaches the determinism of character, in which he does not differ much from Jonathan Edwards, notwithstanding his Hegelian metaphysic, his more refined psychology and greater subtlety of discrimination.

* *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 93.

The advocates of physical determinism believe also in the empirical origin of moral ideas. Grave interests both in morals and religion are involved in this psychological discussion. The earlier school of empirical psychologists proceeded upon the assumption that the genesis of moral ideas may be traced in the experience of the individual. They relied mainly upon the doctrine of the association of ideas and made little or no account of heredity. Professor Bain represents this type of thought with very distinguished ability; but it has in great measure been superseded by the evolution-hypothesis which, of course, maintains that moral ideas owe their origin to development, but allows a longer time for the process. In this way it escapes some of the difficulties urged against the older empiricism—admitting that ideas may be intuitive and *à priori* so far as the individual is concerned, though having an empirical origin in a remote and perhaps pre-human ancestry. But evolutionism has its own difficulties to contend with. It has never explained how the moral can come out of the non-moral, any more than it has shown how life came out of the non-living and consciousness out of the unconscious. There are many “hitches” in the evolution ethic, as Dr. Martineau shows; and it is well for us that there are; for serious consequences would result from its scientific establishment: although this would be disputed by those who just now are beginning to adjust the doctrine of moral obligation to the demands of the evolution theory. Apologetic of this sort, however, is premature. It is not denied that an instinctive morality would exist for a time at least even though it could not be rationally defended, just as men would still eat and drink and perpetuate the race though it were conclusively shown that life is not worth living. But obligatory morality is incompatible with the theory of its evolutionary genesis. “It is absurd” says Dr. Martineau “to pretend that no practical interest is affected by the idea we may form of the genesis of the moral sentiments.” Dr. Martineau is right: we lay a sharp axe at the roots of our religious nature when we discredit our moral intuitions.

The evolutionist must recognise, as Guyau* does, that his morality is without obligation and without sanction. Has he then any basis for morality at all? Can evolution indicate an ethical end? This inquiry opens the larger question concerning the Good and the

* *Esquisse d'une Morale sans Obligation ni Sanction.*

place it holds in ethical science. Making the question broader than that suggested by evolution and adopting a division of ethical methods referred to before, let us ask first whether the ethics of Naturalism can furnish a moral ideal? Mr. Sorley's discussion of this question is eminently satisfactory. The ethics of Naturalism regards man as influenced by the motive of pleasure or by this motive in connection with other impulses. If pleasure motive action it is useless to say that something else than pleasure is the end; and it is absurd to say that a man ought to seek pleasure if he is so constituted that he can seek nothing else. Psychological Hedonism cannot be transformed into ethical Hedonism. It is likewise impossible to make the transition from Egoism to Utilitarianism. Start with the proposition that man always acts with his own pleasure in view, and you cannot pass from it to the duty of making the happiness of other people his object. Reason or Authority may teach us to consider the happiness of others, but Naturalism refuses to consult either. It starts with the proposition that pleasure motives conduct, and it is impossible for it, therefore, to reach Altruism. There are, however, benevolent as well as self-regarding impulses. Hutcheson and others inculcated benevolence as a natural impulse commending itself to the moral sense. But Mr. Sorley shows that these writers either commend Benevolence as promoting the happiness of him who exhibits it, in which case they fall back upon Egoism; or they defend it on rational or intuitional grounds, and abandon Naturalism altogether. "Conscience, I say, not thine own but of the other." Here is the difficulty. How is the chasm between "thine own" and "the other" to be bridged? The Utilitarianism of Mill and Bentham cannot do it. We turn then to Evolution to see whether it reveals an identity between the individual and society sufficient to form the basis of an altruistic morality. If the interests of the individual and of society were shown to be identical, then, supposing that it were in some way known that general happiness is the end of conduct, the individual would have a strong motive for trying to promote it; though Mr. Sorley goes too far in calling this motive obligation. But the identity of interests has not been made out; and if it were, Evolution would only furnish an egoistic motive for realising an altruistic end. That altruistic end, however, needs proof. Mill tried to prove it but failed. Can Evolution establish the Utilitarian end? Or, if it cannot, can it offer a defensible substitute for it? Mr. Sorley answers both questions in the nega-

tive. He reminds us that Mr. Spencer regards Happiness as the supreme end and conformity to the laws of life as the immediate and practical end; that other writers of the same school regard the increase of life as the end; and that therefore the philosophy of evolution is oscillating at this moment between pleasure and activity as the moral ideal. If it be said that Pleasure is the ideal, the Pessimist will reply that the increase of life is not attended with a corresponding increase of pleasure; and though the Pessimist is probably wrong, it, nevertheless, cannot be shown that the increase of life and the increase of pleasure are coincident. In a subsequent chapter, full of very careful reasoning, Mr. Sorley also shows that activity cannot be the end of human existence, whether by activity be meant adaptation to environment or tendency to variation, or increase of life; and he concludes by saying that "the theory of evolution—however great its achievements in the realm of natural science—is almost resultless in ethics."

The naturalistic evolutionist has nothing to do with ideals. He witnesses the world-process and sees the growing complexity of phenomena. He cannot say that this constant change is a process from lower to higher unless he already have an ideal by which to judge it. Evolution cannot make ideals with which to measure itself. Logic and mathematics know nothing about better and worse; and these are the sciences with which the evolutionist chiefly has to do: he can classify and count. Mr. Stephen regards the health of the social organism as the moral ideal. He gets this by translating *is* into *ought*: the tendencies of the social organism are toward health and happiness; therefore, this ought to be the goal of moral effort. Writers like Mr. Spencer and Mr. Stephen show how hard it is to get rid of intuitionism and what a grip teleology has upon the human mind when they speak so constantly of the end toward which things are moving, and, in their optimistic moods, prophesy the social millennium. As Dr. Martineau says, they theorise in one language, but they feel in another. It would be worth while, if space allowed, to ask what basis Mr. Stephen has for the inculcation of morality, in view of what he considers the moral ideal. Society survives, it may be said, because it practises the cardinal virtues. We know this because the cardinal virtues are here, and a moral law has been disengaged during the process of evolution, in which they are commended. But vice is here too. It gives great trouble and shows no lack of vitality. How does Mr. Stephen know that some immorality has not likewise been conducive to social well-being, and, as Mandeville

would say, that private vices are not public benefits? On what principle, other than the wholesome prejudice engendered by education, does Mr. Stephen discriminate between persistent tendencies of our nature, and say that some are good and others bad? If immorality should prove conducive to the health of "social tissue" Mr. Stephen would not hesitate to commend it; for according to him the great command of Nature is not 'Be pure,' or 'Be perfect,' but "Be strong." Between Samson and St. John Mr. Stephen would choose Samson every time. "Nature," he says, "wants big, strong, hearty, eupeptic, shrewd, sensible human beings and would be grossly inconsistent if she bestowed her highest rewards of happiness upon a bilious, scrofulous, knock-kneed saint, merely because he had a strong objection to adultery, drunkenness, murder, and robbery, or an utter absence of malice, or even highly cultivated sympathies." * This is candid if not choice.

Naturalism can furnish no moral ideal. But do we fare any better at the hands of Reason? Mr. Balfour † would answer, No. He is correct however in saying that we cannot get behind the idea expressed by obligation. To say, 'I ought to speak the truth because veracity benefits society' only raises the question, 'Why ought I to consider the well-being of society?' The first obligation is as evident as the second. But when Mr. Balfour says that the moralist's principal function is to expose ultimate ends for inspection, and show what for each of us they actually are rather than what they ought to be, he is making the intuitions lead the way to scepticism. The choice of a supreme end is, as Dr. Hopkins says, a matter of moral obligation. Left in the world with a category of obligation and no moral ideal, we should be face to face with Pessimism, as Dr. Royce declares. If there is an ideal that every man has intuitively, that settles the matter. But the "warfare of moral ideals" seems to indicate that the ultimate end is not to be reached by bare inspection. Mr. Balfour's reasoning makes every man a law unto himself. Dr. Royce's looks toward pessimism; or, more correctly, the implication of it is, that prior to the publication of his very readable book ‡ the world was on the verge of ethical despair. It must be confessed, however, that if the world were in the condition described by this writer, no hope of immediate improvement could be looked for

* *Science of Ethics*, p. 409.

† *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, p. 335.

‡ *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*.

simply because the world's "moral insight" is not adjusted with sufficient delicacy to take in all the fine things he has to say. Where then are we to look for the moral ideal? Appeal must not be made to the nature of God: for, says Dr. Royce, the order is: Ethics first, Theology afterward. We must not appeal to any physical fact, or metaphysical entity, or native instinct: for Dr. Royce is afraid that God may change his mind, or Universal Reason go insane, or the consciences of all men become hopelessly corrupt; and he wants to know what under these circumstances we should do. But why does Dr. Royce borrow trouble in this way? Of course if such a cosmic panic were to occur we should probably go down; but, meanwhile, we may as well stand by the universe and be willing to share its fortunes. Dr. Royce wants a moral ideal that is self-evident, and dependent upon no outside physical or metaphysical fact. Plato, Jesus, and moralists without exception have fallen short of a moral ideal satisfying these conditions. To some it will not appear strange that Dr. Royce has not been successful where, according to his account, all previous thinkers and even the Saviour of mankind have failed; and while he could hardly be expected to feel the force of this adverse antecedent presumption, it is a little remarkable that he does not see that his criticisms of other systems are equally applicable to his own. That system proceeds upon the basis of the physical and psychological fact that associated human beings entertain conflicting opinions; and that the doubt which difference produces, implies that men are trying to harmonise them. The fact that men *are* trying to harmonise conflicting wills is the basis of the inference that they *ought* to try. We should try perhaps to realise the Universal Will—whatever that may mean: but Dr. Royce must see that his new gospel is also only another attempt to found "the lofty Ought upon the paltry Is."

'Ethics first, Theology afterward' is not as good a rule as it seems. First truths are not like stones in a muddy crossing, that we step on one at a time: or if they are, it is because they are equally good for either direction. Morals and Religion are closely related, but they rest on separate intuitions; and we can argue from either to the other. Hence in seeking the moral ideal it is hard to keep clear of Theology. Consider man as a machine, and ask what he is for. There is but one answer: the glory of God. Kant was a poor theologian, but too good a thinker not to see this. To live for God's glory is therefore the highest motive. But a man's motive is

not the same as his end. What he wishes to do is not the same as why he wishes to do it. It may therefore still be asked, What ought man to desire? Dogmatic theologians and utilitarian philosophers are sometimes in strange fellowship, both finding the Good in an end outside of the individual Self. Utilitarians say, though they have had difficulty in proving their thesis, that the chief end of man is the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Mr. Sidgwick thinks, however, that the duty of benevolence is intuitively known, and tries on this ground to carry Utilitarianism a step beyond Mill as Mill had carried it a step beyond Bentham. But in order to prove Utilitarianism, it must also be shown that the Desirable is Happiness. If Happiness be the desirable thing it may be said, 'Seek the happiness of others and you will thereby promote your own. Altruism is true Egoism. Let each member of the firm think of the other partners: that is the best way to secure a fortune for himself.' Suppose, however, that Moral Perfection is the Good? How then would the law of Benevolence work? Altruism will still be true Egoism, in a measure; but the world has little respect for the man who repents of other people's sins, and preaches purity to his neighbors without striving after self-improvement. But what is the relation between general Happiness as an objective fact and individual Benevolence as a subjective feeling? Is Benevolence a duty because it makes others happy, or do we make others happy because Benevolence is a duty? If the former, then Benevolence is simply a means to an end; and what is wanted is some intuition telling us that the maximum happiness of the world is the end to be realised: such an intuition we do not seem to have. If the latter, then the promotion of general happiness is simply the natural consequence following the intuitively given duty of Benevolence. And unless it can be shewn that Benevolence is the only duty intuitively known, and that all other duties are derived from it, men will ask why this virtue is taken as the moral ideal, and whether it would not be better to say at once that the ethical end is Perfection. Mr. Sidgwick does not seem to have succeeded in finding an intuitive basis for Utilitarianism.

Instead of finding the moral Ideal in an end outside of self others find it in self-realisation, which may take the form either of Happiness or Perfection. Insurmountable difficulties encumber all forms of Hedonism; but if moral Perfection be taken as the end these difficulties disappear, and the elements of truth contained in other views are harmonised. The glory of God may be the supreme motive

with a man who makes his own moral perfection his end. A perfect being would love his fellow-beings and seek their welfare. What the perfect being would do the imperfect being ought to do. The Utilitarian end can thus be best realised by making Perfection the moral ideal. This view gives the desire for happiness its proper place also. Writers like Mr. Frederic Harrison say that Christianity makes men selfish; that Christians are looking for a soft place, with sweet music and no worry; and that they make up for their lack of worldliness by their other-worldliness. But this is true only to the extent that Christians do not have and are not taught to have a contempt for happiness. The Bible is not one-sided. It teaches us to seek the welfare of our neighbor, and some may think that Paul was a sort of religious Jeremy Bentham, but he was not. It tells men to be perfect as God is, but it does not present this ideal apart from all regard for personal happiness. Right might be obligatory, but it would not be operative, if there were no hereafter. And it would be impossible to believe that the good go to Hell and the wicked go to Heaven upon any other hypothesis than that the Devil rules the Universe. With Perfection as the Good the closest relation is also seen to exist between the Good and the Right. What we do at first by conforming to rule is done by-and-by instinctively. The Law, at first put before us as an external command, by-and-by becomes the internal principle of life. We realise the Good by conforming to the Right.

The Right and the Good are not mutually exclusive; though Dr. Calderwood and Dr. Martineau appear to think that the moralist must take his choice between them in seeking a corner-stone for his ethical structure. The Right does not supersede the Good; for along with a Rule defining conduct, there may be an unrealised Ideal directing and inspiring it. The Good is not subordinate to the Right; for holy character rather than right conduct is the ethical end. Nor should Right be subordinated to the Good. Dr. Hickok makes worthiness of spiritual approbation the end; right, therefore, is what is conducive to its attainment. But to make the ideas of Right and Good sustain the relation simply of means and end is to do injustice to the idea of Right as a separate and independent intuition. Janet protests strongly against Utilitarianism; but his system of "rational eudæmonism," as he calls it, is open to the same criticism: for he makes Happiness an important element

in his idea of the Good, and then says that a thing is right because it conduces to the Good. If happiness—no matter how refined or holy—be allowed to form part of the moral Ideal, it will always be hard to save the theory that embodies it from the general condemnation of Hedonism. This is the Achilles' heel in Dr. Hopkins's admirable treatise * at which Dr. McCosh aimed his glittering spear, in a friendly controversy carried on between these distinguished men about fifteen years ago.

In seeking to define the place occupied by the idea of Right in contemporary English ethics it is not necessary to deal with those writers who take an empirical view of moral ideas and with whom Right means what serves a purpose, what the State enjoins, or what ministers to general well-being. The larger class of moralists, however much they may differ in other respects, agree that the idea of Right is ultimate and unanalysable. They may differ regarding the question whether we know what is right, that is, whether the category has any content; but to the extent of the category at least, the larger number of professed ethical thinkers are intuitionists. Mr. Sidgwick regards Benevolence as an intuition and seems to hold that the other virtues are so many minor premises subsumed under this major. This it should be said is very different from the position taken by those who say that all virtue is summed up in love. The latter view is held by men who would not hesitate to say that the cardinal virtues are known to be duties apart altogether from their being the natural outcome of Benevolence. If I love my neighbor I will not steal his watch; but the rightness of honesty does not depend upon the obligation of love. Love is the fulfilling of the law, but it is not the making of it.

Dr. Martineau does not agree with Mr. Sidgwick in reducing the area of intuitive morals to the duty of Benevolence; neither does Mr. Sidgwick agree with Dr. Martineau in making the judgment of Right terminate upon the rank of motives rather than upon actions. The relations of these two thinkers to each other present a very interesting phase of current ethical discussion; and so far as the point referred to is concerned, it is pretty safe to say that each is right in criticising the other, and that both are unsuccessful in their rejoinders. Dr. Martineau's position can be indicated in a single sentence. After giving a tabular view of the springs of action in an ascending order,

* *The Law of Love and Love as a Law.*

he says : "*Every action is RIGHT which in presence of a lower principle follows a higher : every action is WRONG which in presence of a higher principle follows a lower.*"

Other writers maintain that besides having the à priori idea of Right we know intuitively what is right. Dr. Calderwood holds that the Practical Reason gives us certain moral intuitions which, like the categories of the Speculative Reason, can neither be added to nor subtracted from, can neither be proved nor improved. It is easy to understand, therefore, what he means by saying that Conscience cannot be educated. If Conscience be defined as the power by which moral intuitions are known, in other words, as the Practical Reason, Dr. Calderwood is right. General usage however assigns to Conscience a much wider area; and of course if all moral judgments and feelings are included within the domain of Conscience, it will not do to say that it cannot be educated. After all, the connotation of the word 'conscience' is not a matter of fundamental importance. It will be very commonly agreed by those who do and those who do not maintain the educability of conscience that while certain moral categories may be given à priori the filling-up of these categories must be left to our judgment, and that herein there is room for error. What one misses in Dr. Calderwood and, indeed, in other intuitional moralists like him, is a full account of the à priori moral categories. How much intuitional morality have we to start with? This is what we want to know. If a complete list of moral intuitions were given, then, in order to find out what is right, it would be necessary to refer each proposed action to its proper intuition. The moralist's difficulty would then consist in proving empirically the minor premises in syllogisms whose major premises are intuitively indicated. We know intuitively that we should love our neighbor, but what, in view of the growing complexity of life, the love of our neighbor would lead to is not self-evident; and in finding our answer to this question we may be led into a region of very difficult and complicated inquiry. There is great room, therefore, for what Professor Fowler calls "Progressive Morality" in the attainment of a better knowledge of what is implied in the relationships of life, and in the acquisition of a more sensitive and delicately adjusted conscience. And notwithstanding the fact that Rational Ethic has been supplemented by a Revealed Ethic there is, even in the latter, the same liability to erroneous judgments. The Bible states principles, such as we find, for example, in

St. Paul's doctrine of Expediency : but the application of these principles to concrete cases is often difficult ; and sometimes the individual must be contented to reach decisions which, however binding upon his own conscience, cannot be made the law for others. Thus we are brought to the edge of that group of perplexing questions in practical ethics where so much must be left to the exercise of private judgment ; and that cannot be satisfactorily discussed without recognising, within proper limits, the Autonomy of the Christian's Conscience. It does not fall within the scope of this paper to deal with the practical issues embraced in this topic. Suffice it to say that Theoretical and Practical Ethics cannot be separated by any hard and fast line ; and that both stand in very close relation to Theology : though whether the latter point would be conceded by an ethical writer would depend very much upon the view he might have on the more general question concerning the Metaphysics of Ethics.

"Morality without Metaphysic" is the cry of a class of men who have discarded dogmatic Christianity and lost faith in God. They have no interest in the question whether the moral sentiments "did not all grow, were not once inchoate, embryo, dubious, and unformed."* In place of this they talk of "sweet reasonableness" and tell us until we are weary of it that "conduct is three-fourths of life." But we can escape metaphysics only by being shallow. We want to know what conduct is right, and what Right means? Janet says that short of Hedonism there is no way to deliver morals from metaphysics. And Principal Tulloch says : "At the root, Metaphysic and Theology are one and rest on the same basis ; nay Morality in any true sense appears to rest on no other basis."† Far more worthy of consideration than Mr. Arnold and the school he represents are those who seek to discover the genesis of our moral sentiments in antecedent experience. They also repudiate Metaphysics : but in vain. For in spite of the equivocal epithets sometimes applied to their theories, they must in the last analysis confess that they are Materialists, or else, under the name of Force or the Unknowable, they must invest the power that lies behind phenomena with psychical or "quasi-psychical" attributes. Mr. Fiske has recently made known where he chooses to stand. He is an

* *Literature and Dogma*, p. 27.

† *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, p. 17.

empirical evolutionist but he believes in the immortal soul and the living God; and holds that "from the first dawning of life we see all things working together toward one mighty goal, the evolution of the most exalted spiritual qualities that characterise Humanity."* Here again we come to Metaphysics: Mind and Thought are evolved, because Mind and Thought are attributes of the Unknowable. From this view of evolution which lays stress upon the physical Fact in phenomena, it is easy to pass to that view of evolution that lays stress upon the Idea that gives shape and sequence to phenomena. Hence in spite of the opposition between the materialistic and the idealistic evolutionists, there is or may be also a close affinity between them. Taking Mr. Fiske as a fair interpreter of the former school it would be safe to say that Spencer is simply Hegel upside down.

The empirical and the intuitional positions regarding the origin of moral ideas are far apart and Principal Tulloch well says: "According to the one side morality can never be anything but an idealisation of brute instincts however its origin may be specially explained; according to the other side, it is the revelation within man of a spiritual sphere—a life above him." † But men are asking whether these conceptions may not be harmonised; and it is not improbable that some are turning with interest to the new Hegelianism because they think that it will enable them to place an empirical interpretation upon the facts of the phenomenal world without sacrificing the rational and spiritual elements of their nature, which, as the more thoughtful minds are beginning to see, are not only valuable for their own sake but are the necessary conditions and postulates of empiricism itself. Whether this be so or not, this type of apologetic is finding increased expression in books of which Dr. Caird's *Philosophy of Religion* may be taken as a specimen.

Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* is the ablest discussion in our language of ethical problems considered from the stand-point of post-Kantian idealism. A knowledge of this book is indispensable to a complete knowledge of the present state of philosophical opinion in this department. Whether one agree with the author or not in his metaphysics of knowledge he must admit the fairness, patience and logical power with which he handles the difficult problems discussed in this volume. He fights the Intuitionist's battle against the Utilitarian and the Hedonist. His discussion of the Will is one of the most

* *The Destiny of Man*, p. 13.

† *Modern Theories in Philosophy and Religion*, p. 252.

profound contributions to the literature of this difficult theme. He treats of the relation between pleasure in the attainment of the Good and pleasure as the Good to be attained; and handles the subject with rare power of discrimination. His tone is serious and decidedly religious; and, in his affirmation both of the finite and the infinite Self as distinct from Nature, he occupies theistic ground. It is true that he grounds the existence of the finite self in a metaphysic that makes knowledge a matter of relations and phenomenal existence real only as known. Nature exists only as known, and because it would exist even though the empirical Ego did not exist to know it, there must be an infinite Ego to whom the universe stands related as the object of Knowledge. God thus becomes the necessary alternative to one who will not or cannot believe that he alone exists. The reader of Green will have good reason for declining to accept his metaphysics of knowledge: though up to this point it would be possible to hold it without any serious sacrifice of theistic positions. When, however, instead of making our finite personality the mark of essential and substantial distinction between God and the soul, Green goes on to identify the two and to affirm that the finite self is a modification or manifestation of the Infinite Self, it is easy to see that we are far on the road toward the post-Kantian Pantheism and that it is time to dismiss our guide. Fortunately for us at this juncture the services of Dr. Martineau are available. The publication of his work is a most opportune event. Nowhere is he more satisfactory than in his affirmation of an unmistakable Theism as the basis of authoritative Ethics. It is to be hoped that men will heed his words. If Morality is to live it must have the living God behind it.

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