

that was ever hatched. With regard to the bell-glass experiment, spoken of as most conclusive on the point of intellectual capacity, let me ask how it would fare with your contributor, or with Sir John Lubbock, if either happened to be enclosed in the shaft of a mine, the only egress being, not upwards, as all experience teaches it ought to be, but by a tunnel, say two hundred and fifty feet long and fifty wide, leading straight down into the bowels of the earth? The head of the philosopher, in that case, would stand a fair chance of being turned as completely as the poor bee's seems to have been in the bell-glass experiment.

3. In feeding weak hives in spring, I am in the habit of giving a tap or two on the skep when the feeder is inserted. At first the bees don't understand my polite attention, and if I didn't make off pretty sharply would give me a warm reception. But learning by experience that the gentle concussion means "Breakfast's ready," in the course of a few days they and their welcome visitor are on the most friendly terms possible. I might add other facts in support of my conviction that they have the power of taking in new ideas and conforming to altered conditions, but only very slowly, to a limited extent, and strictly in the lines of the bee-world constitution.—I am, Sir, &c., G.

[Some at least of Sir John Lubbock's experiments with the honey were made in the latter part of September.—Ed. *Spectator*.]

CÆSARISM AND ULTRAMONTANISM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Will you allow me to call the attention of your readers to one point in Mr. Fitzjames Stephen's article on "Cæsarism and Ultramontanism," in the March number of the *Contemporary Review*? That article you reviewed on its appearance, and the Archbishop of Westminster has replied to it in the current number of the *Contemporary*. The subject is, therefore, still of interest, and not too old to be out of date.

In his article, Mr. Stephen, speaking of the arguments for the existence of God, says:—"By way of showing how persistently such arguments are used, I may observe that in a volume of 'Essays on Religion and Literature,' just published under Archbishop Manning's auspices, I find Locke's argument put forward very nearly in Locke's own words, by the Rev. William Humphrey."

Take with Mr. Stephen's statement of the almost verbal agreement of my argument with Locke's the fact that I have not opened any work of Locke's for the last fifteen years, that when I did read Locke I did not study him, and that I could not now give any adequate account of his system—and this verbal agreement would be a very curious coincidence—save on one hypothesis, viz., that both Locke and I drew from the same source.

My argument—the ordinary argument from causality, re-motion, and super-excellence—was derived from the scholastic philosophy, and if a reference is needed, may be found in the writings of the greatest of the Doctors of the Schools, St. Thomas Aquinas. It is, then, curious, if not careless, to quote the argument as Locke's instead of as St. Thomas's. But it is not even St. Thomas's. He did not ex-cogitate it, and did not claim it as his own. It is the well-known argument of the Socratic philosophy, and in particular, of Aristotle. It is not the result of revelation, but the offspring of the Greek wisdom. The argument, therefore, might with as much reason be quoted as mine as called Locke's argument.

It appears to me, and I venture to propose it for the judgment of your readers, that Mr. Stephen's designation of the old scholastic argument, itself borrowed by the schoolmen from the Greek philosophy, as Locke's argument, justifies me in impeaching him of either superficiality of knowledge, or singular inaccuracy of language.—I am, Sir, &c., WILLIAM HUMPHREY.

St. Mary-of-the-Angels, Bayswater, W.

BOOKS.

HUME AND THE UTILITARIAN ETHICS.

WE have in a former article aimed at tracing the system of thought most in vogue at the present day to the speculations of a thinker of the past, but we then confined our attention to the intellectual aspect of this philosophy. It remains to consider its moral side, and here, as before, we propose to make our observations centre in a comparison between the man whom we consider as in some sense its originator, and him who filled in our day the place of its most popular and distinguished exponent. A greater contrast than these two men it is not easy to imagine. David Hume

passed through life without knowing any emotion stronger than friendly feeling or kindly good-will. The man whom a late autobiography has revealed to us was, if we may speak our mind, rather the servant than the master of emotion. Yet he was intellectual heir to the placid, prosaic being who would utterly have misconceived all that was not purely intellectual in him, and both were agents in carrying on the movement of thought which our own day has seen in the ascendant.

Utilitarianism has a much more old-fashioned sound than Positivism, and belongs indeed to that pre-physiological school of thought which is ranked by some with astronomy before Newton, and chemistry before Lavoisier. It will not be denied, however, to be a part of that movement which issues in Positivism, and we think it illustrates indirectly the definition we have given of the word. Positivism, we said, is that system of thought which has renounced the conception of Cause, and it is plain that this renunciation shuts in knowledge to the connected groups of our sensations and their succession. If we cannot know anything of a cause for our feelings out of ourselves, we can know only our own feelings in their proper order of combination and sequence. Now, Utilitarianism applies this code to the world of Morals. One thing, say those who uphold it, we are sure of—that all men love pleasure, and hate pain. This principle, properly applied, will explain all the phenomena which you have invested with so much mystery, there is no need of any heroic genealogy for the beings which at once proclaim their parentage to any patient investigator. In the words of Hume, "This distinction of the useful and pernicious is the same in all its parts, with the moral distinction, whose foundation has been so often and so much in vain inquired after. . . . Why do philosophers infer with the greatest certainty that the moon is kept in its orbit by the same force of gravity that makes bodies fall near the surface of the earth, but because these effects are, upon computation, found similar and equal? And must not this argument bring as strong conviction in moral as in natural disquisitions?"

This is the only passage in Hume's philosophical writings in which we can recall any important illustration from the field of Natural Science. The exception is significant. Hume refers in his *Inquiry on the Human Understanding* to the system of Newton, under the title of the *New Philosophy*. Newton's system of the universe is not what we should now call a Philosophy, but it is the fact of its being a new thing on which we here lay stress. The work of astronomers, it has been happily said by a scientific man of our day, consisted in "sweeping the cobwebs off the sky." It is difficult to bring home to our imaginations, familiar as we are with the conception of gravitation, the enormous impetus which must have been given to all speculation by the discovery that these movements of the heavenly bodies, which had once seemed so mysteriously bound up with the fate of human beings, which had afterwards demanded such wonderful crystal spheres or mighty whirlpools as their machinery, were after all, as Comte says, nothing but "weight properly generalised"—it is difficult to realise the strange clearance of the heavens, and expansion of all that was simple and familiar on earth, which must have seemed to every thinking mind a finger-post in the direction of all right inquiry. Its influence on moral science is strikingly illustrated by the passage we have cited. Just as we have thought mere weight a mysterious thing when we have seen it at a distance, Hume evidently reasoned, so Usefulness, on a gigantic scale, has disguised itself from our eyes, and demanded all sorts of epicycles and vortices to screen from us the homely reality which we are surprised to find in so dignified a position. Morality, according to this view, becomes a science not of ends, but of means. Right and wrong have no other meaning but their tendency on the one hand to advance, on the other to retard, the happiness of the human race. For the greater part of the domain of morals this derived force is plain. Why is cruelty wrong? For no other reason than that it gives pain. Why is truth a duty? Only because trustworthy knowledge is an indispensable condition of general welfare. Hume did not shrink from pursuing this analysis into regions where most would shrink from following him, though we may say that nowhere is the connection more close between happiness and duty than in that homage to the sacredness of marriage which we are least inclined to resolve into anything but itself. If the family is not a unity, not this or that element of rightness, but the very capacity for rightness is gone,—the school of all right action is in the relations which cannot exist if they are not sacred. We would suggest to anyone who fails to realise the force of this observation a comparison between that state of society which is painted by Juvenal and Martial, and the monkish ideal

of a holy life; he who does not see that this mutilated standard of duty and of happiness arises out of the condition of Pagan life which preceded it, may assure himself that he will not find moral sequence anywhere in history. But while we feel entire security as to the safety of the test applied by Hume to this department of morals, we cannot deny that the cool, easy tone about it which fitted him (although himself a man of pure morals) for the gay society of Pre-revolutionary Paris, is recalled by some part of his reasonings, and cannot be altogether disregarded in our attempts to estimate his moral philosophy.

Two great changes intervene between David Hume and the man with whom we have coupled him,—two changes which make the half-century which separates them a chasm in the history of human thought. The eighteenth century, we have said, seems to us emphatically the metaphysical age, and that change in the current of general interest which makes the laws of the outer world the absorbing intellectual occupation of our time, is strikingly exhibited in comparing the writings of Hume and Mill,—the writings from which we have in a few lines given the only important physical illustration, and those in which the whole thought is at once coloured and moulded by the influence of natural science. But this contrast is shown rather on the intellectual side of their common philosophy; that which we would now point out has a different source, and is manifested in a different direction. We think it would be impossible to forget in reading any work of Hume or Mill that the one came before and the other after the French Revolution. That wonderful all-pervading influence of modern democracy, which entered with the French Revolution on a phase so distinct that for some purposes it may almost be regarded as dating from that era, is conspicuously absent from the pages of Hume. We feel at almost every sentence that we are following the thoughts of one by whom the problems which oppress the mind, and the compassion which loads the heart of average humanity in our own day, were as little dreamt of as the primordial forests of America by the predecessors of Columbus. Addison had shown his step-son "how a Christian can die" nearly thirty years before Hume published the later writings to which we have almost exclusively referred in these articles, but Addison is more truly his contemporary than many a man whom he may have met; his is the morality of the *Spectator* and the *Guardian*, the morality which finds its Scriptures in Cicero's *Offices*, and is illustrated by observations on the hardship of intercourse with "serious, melancholy people," and our universal tendency to "remove the poor as far from us as possible." The most characteristic specimens of the fine, full-blooded, eighteenth-century Paganism which passed away for ever at the French Revolution are to be found in the "Dissertation on Pride and Humility" in his *Treatise of Human Nature*. The Paganism of our age takes so different a form that, from certain points of view, the two phases of the same thing are more unlike than the later phase is to Christianity.

These remarks sufficiently suggest the contrast between the experience of Hume and his spiritual descendant which shows itself in their philosophy. Both consider that morality, or virtue, or duty (from whichever side you approach that central ideal of life), is nothing more than the right means towards happiness. But when you go on to ask *whose* happiness, though both would have answered "that of the majority of human beings," they had such different sets of human beings before their imagination, that the kinds of qualities to be evoked by the two aims are virtually quite different. Hume was considering the happiness of well-bred, well-dressed gentlemen and ladies; a kind of happiness one may contemplate without reflecting that it sometimes demands the sacrifice of another person's. We are very far from meaning to imply that this necessity would not be revealed by actual intercourse. While the blame which a recent biographer of Rousseau has cast upon Hume for publishing the circumstances of the groundless attack made upon him by the man he had loaded with benefits, seems to us a little hard (for it is scarcely a fault to fail in exhibiting a most unusual degree of magnanimity), we think the experience of that quarrel might have suggested to Hume a doubt whether that "humanity, or fellow-feeling with others," which he assumes as an ultimate principle in human nature, and on which he founds his system of morals, is quite adequate to the strain it has to bear when the question is whether one's own reputation shall suffer or another person's. Still it was quite possible for him, in sitting down to write an essay on morals, to banish from his imagination all claim on self-sacrifice,—a word, we think, which does not occur once in his essays. In dealing with the questions evoked by images of destitution, however, no one can shut his eyes to the fact that duty

may need a stronger anchor than what Hume meant by Humanity. Least of all was such a forgetfulness possible to one whose sympathies with the lowly and suffering find expression in the strangely illogical sentence, "An injustice it is that some should be born to riches and the vast majority to poverty, *whether admitting of a remedy or not*"—sympathies which here seem to take the upper hand of reason with what is usually considered a feminine vehemence, for surely the inevitable, whatever else it may be, is not unjust. Mill's ideal of duty is so much larger than what Hume meant by "personal merit" that the basis which was quite sufficient for the slight thing gives way beneath the weighty superstructure it now has to support.

Hence it results that Utilitarianism, in passing from Hume to Mill, passes into a stage in which what we hold to be its radical inconsistency becomes apparent. Why does the fact that a particular line of conduct tends to the happiness of the human race constitute an obligation on me to conform to it? "Surely," Hume replies, "you are sensible of a preference for the sight of happiness rather than misery, and then also for the imagination of it in those you cannot see." But Mill, with a view at once wider and deeper of all that must be endured and may be won for humanity, would have felt this kind of language altogether too feeble to indicate a sanction for duty. It is much pleasanter to see people happy than miserable, no doubt, as long as one is tolerably happy oneself. For the elect spirits of humanity we may go further: they find their solace, when their own happiness is irretrievably wrecked, in working to further that of the many, or perhaps the few, who will never repay their efforts by one thought of gratitude. But *this* kind of greatness of character, we are convinced, is never severed from greatness of intellect. In order to feel the happiness of others an object large enough to be worth an arduous struggle, we must be able to contribute to that happiness to some appreciable amount. The aim of not giving pain, which is almost all that could be directly striven for by ordinary people, could never overcome the actual sensation of pain, if the taste for seeing cheerful faces is all we have to work with. It is not the characteristic of average humanity to desire to communicate a happiness it cannot share, and which it can only very imperfectly and partially bestow.

The later phase of Utilitarianism rests its motive power on something more certain and general than this desire. It assumes the unity of the human race as a reality. Those who have been educated to feel this oneness with their kind a great fundamental truth find the welfare of that entity of which they form a part as real an object to them as their own, and it only needs a general perception of this truth to bring home the same conviction to every one. "The social state," says Mill, "is so natural and necessary to man, that he never naturally conceives himself otherwise than as the member of a body," an assertion which seems to us true or false, according to the meaning which it puts upon the word *natural*. If selfishness and envy are unnatural, the words are profoundly true, and no doubt Mill's whole teaching does more or less imply that all the faults of human character are in a very important sense unnatural, that all are the result of bad arrangements in the present constitution of society, and will disappear altogether when these are set right. This belief forms a very important element in his views, and a marked distinction between him and Hume, who would have smiled at the enthusiasm which should look forward to any higher state of general morality than that which mankind has attained already. We will only remark here that the statement joined to our quotation,—to the effect that this sense of brotherhood increases with the progress of civilisation,—does not seem to us borne out by history.

We have neither excuse nor space to dilate upon what we conceive to be the true statement of the doctrine which Mill makes the basis of Utilitarianism, which is contained, we think, in the chapter on the "Moral Sense" in Darwin's *Descent of Man*. But we cannot quit what seems to us the distortion of a truth, without pointing out its distinct and complete enunciation. According to this view, the sense of membership which Mill thinks is to be the goal of human progress is the starting-point of sentient life. The animal has many instincts, some rousing keen but passing sensation, like hunger, but one—the social instinct—which, often overcome by these gusts of temporary desire, keeps its predominance by a quality which they do not share,—that of permanence. The sense of kindred, if it is ever present is always present; other feelings come and go, but that which makes any creature feel a link to its kind is a part of the experience of every moment, and any recollection of this experience having been neglected for one less enduring (as in the case where the migratory conquers the maternal instinct in swallows,

frequently manifested to us by nests full of their dead young,) must recur to the memory with all the power of an unsatisfied claim in the most abiding part of the nature. The analysis we have here abridged translates, we believe, into merely intellectual language all that can be so translated of the primitive origin of the conscience, and we have the further reason for having touched on it here, beyond its inherent importance, that in a sense we may assert this, as well as so many other ideas which seem specially characteristic of our day, to have been foreseen by Hume. He first, as far as we know, of all modern philosophers, pointed out that the distinction between the instincts of animals and the reason of man was a baseless fiction, and that the primary impulses of humanity are common to man and the lower animals. And if we may expand germ-thoughts into their complete development, we may claim him as a forerunner not only of the group of thinkers who have in our day carried on his own speculations, but of the one whose influence on those speculations, great as it is, is only indirect, and who was occupied in a region of investigation for which he had no taste whatever. Surely to say thus much of any thinker is to set him in the front rank of those who have enlarged the intellectual inheritance of our kind!

We have left ourselves no space to justify fully the conviction we have expressed of the inconsistency of this later phase of Utilitarianism, or the conviction which we feel more important, of its merely negative character, but we must touch upon both. The inconsistency of Mill's view of Utilitarianism seems to us to be two-fold. In the first place, the system which resolves morality into something else, needs morality as its sanction. Every man is a part of mankind, we are told, and the influence of education and sympathy will bring this truth home to him so vividly that it will cease to be possible for him to act as a solitary being. But how is education to produce this result, apart from that leverage implied in the word *ought*, which is the very word Mill proposes to explain? If I hesitate to sacrifice my comfort or ease to that of another person here and now, how will you persuade me to make the same sacrifice for others only present to my imagination? To realise our oneness with our kind is to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is no question between contending schools that this is the whole of duty, but what is the motive force to bring us to it? To say that this will be achieved,—that envy, grudging, resentment shall be laid aside, indolence and indifference overcome, and courage and self-sacrifice inspired by such a formula as our all being parts of one whole, seems to us like saying that with some improved machinery in steam-ships it would be possible to do without fuel.

It appears to us an even greater inconsistency in a system which professes to resolve morality into something more ultimate than itself, that it should admit a hierarchy of aims which is nothing more than Morality in disguise. It would be a puerile kind of argument which should be directed against a name, and though we are never quite sure how far John Mill complicated questions of things with questions of nomenclature, we cannot doubt that he always means more than this,—that he is not in his *Essay on Utilitarianism* merely urging, as he sometimes seems to urge, "You ought to use the word 'pleasure' in the sense I put upon it, in which it includes every aim whatever." He is, we are sure, opposing an opinion about facts, not merely advocating a simplification of language, when he asserts that pleasure and the absence of pain are the only things to be desired for their own sake, all others being desirable as a means towards them. But when he asserts—as he was, we believe, the first of his school to assert—that pleasures vary not only in intensity and duration, but also in absolute value, we fail to see what reality of experience, advocated by the opposite school, he does not concede. We do not think this hierarchy of aims is entirely unassailable on its own ground; we cannot agree to his assumption that there exists such a test of aims as the steady preference of one whose experience puts him in a position to compare them. There are such things as mutually exclusive pleasures. Can the same person appreciate, for instance, the satisfaction of gratified spite and the satisfaction of perfect forgiveness? There is no question that both these things are ends, and as little, we should think, as to which of them was preferable to the other. Supposing the comparison possible, however, what is the result? The whole worth of this analysis of duty into the means of pleasure depends on the question whether the substance thus obtained is more elementary than that from which it was obtained. If, after all, the thing you say is a compound is found in the substances into which you have resolved it, your analysis, whatever other use it may have, has not given us anything elementary. If one

element in happiness is the sense of moral rightness, we gain, in learning that moral rightness is measured by its tendency to further general happiness, a most important test, indeed, but not a more fundamental truth. And to say that one kind of aim is absolutely preferable to another seems to us in effect to concede that moral rightness forms a part of happiness. This becomes plainer if we look at the question from the side of pain rather than of pleasure, a side from which a much truer view of it is gained in all its aspects. For the word 'pleasure' recalls the vaguest of all our emotions, as the word 'pain' recalls the most definite, and the antithesis between two things so different in vividness has always seemed to us a source of large error. What are the moments of life we would recall? The release from anxiety, the reunion after long absence, the first gleam of kindness after alienation,—these, and the like, which would, we suppose, be remembered by most persons as the best parts of life, are surely rather the end of pain than the beginning of pleasure. So far as this is true, it simplifies speculation to consider rather what we avoid than what we pursue, and if any one doubts as to that which is most intolerable in experience, being the sense of having done wrong, it is because he has either lived up to an ideal which, under such circumstances, cannot be the highest, or has been given up to the life of sense, which blinds the eye and deafens the ear to all moral distinction whatever. That this experience of a awakening to our own attitude as unjust, cruel, or false, is *at the moment* the most unendurable we can imagine, is more, perhaps, than any one will say who will be perfectly candid with himself. Violent bodily anguish, we believe, has a certain irresistible intensity which for the time makes every other seem dim; but that which we remember without reluctance the day after it is past must be pronounced more tolerable than that which, across an intervening tract of busy years, we still recoil from as on its first aspect. And if any one who has known this and other evils feels that all are to be welcomed in exchange for this, he cannot come to a different decision for humanity. What has awakened him to his wrong-doing was probably the sight of some disastrous consequence, but what he feels in realising his own wrong-doing is a worse thing to endure, for one man or for many men, than any suffering which is its cause. Now, whether, in asserting this fact, you say, "The sense of wrongness is an evil worse than any pain whatever" (as we hold to be the natural expression of the truth), or whether with Mill you say, "The sense of having so acted as to diminish general welfare is itself a pain which any one who knows it will adjudge greater than all other pains," seems to us a mere matter of nomenclature. Of course, if you call every end a pleasure, you have no difficulty in proving pleasure to be the only end. But the moment the proposition ceases to be identical, it ceases, we think, to be true. If you allow that such a thing exists as an end which is not pleasure, we believe the first claim to some distinctive term will be presented by that which strengthens common-place men and women to confront all that most people understand by pain with resolute calm.

Why, then, it may be asked, have we quoted from a great work on natural history a statement of the genesis of the conscience as containing valuable truth, while that same statement, only slightly varied, seems to us in a work on Moral Philosophy either meaningless or erroneous? The answer, happily, can be given in one word. In Mr. Darwin's connection of animal instinct with human conscience there is nothing exclusive. He takes his stand on no denial. He is speaking of facts which may or may not be open to question, but which at least are positive. He says that some aims are transitory, others permanent, and argues that the permanent must in the long run overcome the transitory. But on the question whether these permanent aims do not belong to a region altogether apart from that of the transitory ones, he is silent. Mill, on the other hand, puts forth a theory which, based as it is avowedly on the assertion that pleasure is the only aim, loses all shape and coherence, if you withdraw from it the denial that we can get a step beyond certain feelings in our own minds.

We believe that this Darwinian genesis of the conscience points in a direction lying beyond the world of our own feelings. If you look below humanity for its origin, it seems to us that you are led to look above humanity for its goal. In the narrow sense of logic, indeed, there is no logical difficulty in refraining from this progress, nor can it be denied that the majority of thinkers in our day actually do so refrain. Nevertheless, it appears to us that, in a future phase of thought, the negative philosophy which it has been the aim of these articles to touch upon will be seen to have neglected the strongest indications in laws of the outward world and of existence below ourselves, concerning the laws of an inward world and of existence above us.