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*The Monist*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (July 1897), pp. 554-570

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# The Basis of Morals

A Posthumous Paper of an Anarchist Philosopher.

Dyer D. Lum

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<sup>1</sup> Dyer D. Lum was an anarchist. He came of an old New England family and was born at Geneva, N. Y., February 15, 1839. The composite picture of his ancestry shows (as he used to express it) "the minute-man with his rifle ready for use between prayers," and on his maternal side the dim figure of an English crusader commemorated in the coat-of-arms of the Tappan family. He was a book-binder by trade. During the civil war he served as a volunteer and took part in some of the hottest battles of the Rebellion. When captured, he escaped from prison, and was at the close of the war breveted Captain of Cavalry. In 1876 his name appeared on the ticket headed by Wendell Phillips as Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts. Embracing in all political questions the most radical cause, we find him as a leader of the Greenback movement, then as a socialist, and at last an anarchist.

He was a fluent speaker as well as a ready writer, and contributions of his, both in prose and verse, appeared in various periodicals. It is characteristic of the broad range of his pen that one of these journals was *The Catholic World*. He served as a member of a committee appointed by Congress to investigate the throwing of the bomb, seven anarchist leaders of Chicago were tried for conspiracy, he rushed to their assistance and acted as their friend and adviser. His anarchism was not the anarchism of Spies, nor that of his more intimate friend Parsons with whom he had been associated on one and the same committee for the investigation of the labor troubles; but he saw in them victims of the cause of

“To philosophy gravity is nothing but the law of heavy bodies; and therefore morality can be nothing but the law of animal action.”—*Barratt*.

Morality has ever been a fruitful theme for speculation, and engaged the attention of the profoundest minds. A theory of moral sentiments and the rationale of “right” conduct has entered into every philosophical system of the past. From Plato and Aristotle to Darwin and Spencer rival theories have found valiant defenders, and their respective views of conduct underlain and colored to ponder over the musty tomes of by-gone speculation in considering this subject, for the wider generalisations of the doctrine of evolution here, as in all other problems, have opened new paths and grander vistas in hitherto unexplored directions.

The problem of ethics is primarily an inquiry into the source, rather than the course of action, for the source being definitely formulated, the course of actions may be clearly defined under the respective heads of “right” or “wrong” conduct, and its ultimate end deduced as a logical sequence.

The respective schools of ethics may be loosely classified as the empirical and the intuitive. While there is little difference between

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liberty, and that sufficed for him to befriend them. When after the trial the cause of anarchism became unpopular, Dyer D. Lum was naturally ostracised and lost many of his former friends. Financial troubles completed the failure of his last years, but he endured the most exasperating privations without complaint until the end. On April 6, 1893, he was found dead in a lodging-house on the Bowery in New York and the papers reported that he died of heart disease.

His essays, scattered through the back-numbers of various periodicals, characterise throughout the zealous love of freedom that marks his life. They are not always consistent, sometimes reckless, but then again indicating a deep insight, for he was a close student and a keen thinker. In his last years his interest became more and more concentrated on philosophical and psychological problems, involving the main question of practical life, the basis of ethics. His posthumous essay on ethics, which is here published for the first time, was deemed by himself as the maturest and best of all his writings, and he left it to the world as his last bequest.

that our much vaunted ego is but a bundle of social instincts and organic aptitudes, we may say in brief, morality knows no higher rule of conduct than this: *Within the lines of equal freedom—be thyself!*

More need not be said save emphasising the lesson. There are vistas opening of social perfection more far-reaching in ethical scope and beauty than prophet's vision ever saw or poet's lyre hymned. It affords us a guide by which we are enabled to see why coercive interference by means of sumptuary enactments work as great havoc with moral evolution as past interference with scientific research did with intellectual growth. In co-ordinating both, it presents an ideal whereby the purely egoistic impulse of our animal natures are subdued to social ends,—an Ideal furnishing alike the incentive and criterion of actions by which the greatest good to each and all may be realised on earth; an Ideal presenting to vision an ever increasing “glory of the human,” transcending all myths and schemes of social thinkers, “when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more;” an Ideal under which Equal Freedom is ever seen from age to age to be of wider circumference and personal bearing. And in its conscious application the aristocratic claims of priestly, political, and economic lords will slink back into the shadows unable to face the bright glare of the noonday sun of Reason shining on an emancipated people living in the mutual bonds of peace and fraternity following the normal evolution of sympathetic natures unchecked by artificial interference and held by reasoned judgment within the broad scope afforded by the *Law of Equal Freedom!*

them as to the moral nature of particular actions, they differ widely when attempting to explain the source of authority inherent in the world-wide recognition of the moral *ought* as a “categorical imperative.” John Stuart Mill states this very explicitly when he says that both schools recognise “to a great extent the same moral laws, but differ as to their evidence and the source from which they derive their authority. According to the one opinion, the principles of morality are evident *a priori*, requiring nothing to command assent, except that the meaning of the terms be understood. According to the other doctrine, right and wrong, as well as truth and falsehood, are questions of observation and experience.”

The pre-evolutionary moralists were mainly intuitionists, whether finding the source of moral ideas in the *eternal reason* or *fitness* of Cudworth or Clarke, the love of order of Malebranche, the *love of being* of Jonathan Edwards, the *moral sense* or *conscience* of Butler, Hutcheson, and Mackintosh, the sympathy of Adam Smith, or the recognition by the intellect of *moral beauty* of Dugald Stewart. On the other hand, the inductive or empirical school from Leibnitz, Hartley, and Paley to Jeremy Bentham have revived the ancient Hedonims of the Cyrenaic sect by affirming “pleasure” or “happiness” to be the sole motive for action and criterion of “right” conduct, whether viewed from the personal standpoint (Egoism), or from that of “the greatest good to the greatest number” (Utilitarianism). The successors of Bentham, such as Bain, Grote, and J. S. Mill, under the all-absorbing influence of evolutionary conceptions, have so idealised Hedonism that but little of the pattern of the original texture is left, though a few crass theorists still exit as “survivals.”

In the works of late writers on ethics, such as Spencer, Sidgwick, Stephen, Simcox, Thornton, Barratt, Courtney, Maude, Sorley, Wake, Owgan, and others, it will be seen how great is the divergence, even among those who accept the empirical method, no two of which agree on several vital points. From the great expounder of Egoism and royal authority, Hobbes, to Herbert Spencer, how-

ever wide the variation, “pleasure” remains the controlling motive in conduct. While among the writers of what is generally called the Evolutional school, we find more or less dissent from the “ego-altruism” of the expounder of Evolution—Herbert Spencer.

In such a conflict of opinions among those whose names adorn the literature of the day, it may seem temerity to attempt to recast this much debated problem and to seek the guidance of Hera to pass the dangerous straits of Scylla and Charybdis, yet the conviction that the science of morality has yet to be formulated, forbids thought to cease tentative efforts. Pleasure or happiness, which one school makes the result, the other the source or motive of “right” conduct, discloses a hitherto impassable gulf which Evolution must bridge over. The pure egoism of Hobbes and his inane followers who are attempting to adapt the conclusions of the royalist to individualistic philosophy, as well as the utilitarians of Bentham, have both been supplanted by evolutionary ideas, and the present tendency to recast them upon an organic basis offers an opportunity to apply later thought to ethics, for the transition from Hedonism to modern scientific thought has not yet been clearly made. The evolutional school has achieved such a result in the old-time controversy relative to the “forms of thought” in reconciling the intuitive and empirical schools, by demonstrating that what may now be conceded as innate or intuitive was originally acquired by experience, and through heredity becomes organised into mental structure. The same must be done for Kant’s categorical Ought. Accepting evolution, therefore, as the philosophy by which all theories must be tested, we must seek such a reconciliation as will not only enable us to generalise a fundamental law from facts, but be subject to verification, and thus held within the lines of the knowable.

“Science,” says G. H. Lewes, “is built up from *abstractions*, and these are built up from *concretes*; but no abstractions must contain more than is warranted by the concretes.” How true this is needs but a moment’s reflexion to see. Facts alone can but constitute the raw material, so to speak, of science, which begins with general-

or intuitive sanction, may be seen in the unconscious development of the sympathetic feelings proceeding *pari passu* with the evolution of greater freedom. Refer to the execution of Ravallac for the assassination of Henry IV., in 1610. It was a gala day for Paris. Both the desires for pleasure and expediency were surfeited with happiness. From by-street and alley the countless multitude thronged, eager to feast their eyes on the writhing of the tortured victim. In the centre of the public square stood the scaffold. From every window overlooking the scene ladies of high rank competed with the ardor of an opening night at the Royal Opera. The prisoner is bound to the wheel, and every limb separately broken. Then, stretched upon the scaffold, his regicidal hand is cut off, his stomach ripped open, and his entrails burned before his eyes. Still living, faintly gasping under this accumulation of torture, four strong horses are attached to his quivering and broken limbs, and by aid of whips and prods they succeed in dismembering the body in which the spark of life had lingered to the last, his final, despairing cry of agony being greeted with the enthusiastic plaudits of the populace and the waving of perfumed lace-handkerchiefs from the windows. Since, then, by the same general law by which “all things strive to ascend, and ascend in their striving,” social progress has been marked in recognition of greater freedom, not through, but in spite of, the schemes of our social thinkers and moral regulators, and with it we find a development of the sympathetic nature which would cause the most depraved man or woman in our greatest cities to turn pale with horror to-day at such a sight.

In the view here maintained as the basis of moral actions we are presented, moreover, with an ideal for the future, as well as a criterion for past and present, affording a Moral Type under which all social relations become tinged with an ethical character, forecasting an ultimate end ever rising in clearer vision, in more effulgent glory as the recognition of the law of equal freedom is applied to every relation of life, whether religious, political, economic, or social. With a clear understanding of the limitations of personality, and

universe of sense and feeling is seen to be an ideal unity. Then we will have solved for us Cervantes's Quixotic paradox:

"I have heard it preached," quoth Sancho, "that God is to be loved with this kind of love for Himself alone, without our being moved to it by hope of reward or fear of punishment; though for my part I am inclined to love and serve Him for what He is able to do for me." 'The devil take thee for a bumpkin,' said Don Quixote, 'thou sayest ever and anon such apt things that one would almost take thee for a scholar.' 'And yet, by my faith,' quoth Sancho, 'I cannot so much as read.'

Kant sought a law purely formal, "an *a priori* principle of the will" without material, or experimental content, but the limitations of thought rendered this impossible. But his law, "Act according to that maxim which you would wish, at the same time, to be a universal law;" or, "Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a universal law,"—ceases to be formal inasmuch as it prescribes *something* as matter, or content, of thought, but it fails to show *why* it should be universal. But in the law of equal freedom we have such a generalisation, though arrived at empirically, which, if it does not contain what we *ought to do*, reveals to reason what we ought *to be*, so far as the limited freedom of Self gives scope to will. We may, therefore, regard this as an innate, an *a priori* principle contained in the very essence of personality. Kant's law, to have an intuitive basis, must be founded on egoistic desires, yet discernible by intelligence to accord with race-maintaining conduct. Personality is primary, social relations secondary, and therefore can never suppress the former, though it may, and does, modify the egoistic impulses to altruistic, or remote, ends, but in so doing leads to higher personality.

One out of the many verifications of this fundamental rule of conduct and underlying transient feelings of pleasure, expediency,

isations. We abstract from facts particular data in which there is common agreement, and this abstract generalisation we term law; not in the sense that law determines phenomena, but is determined by them—is their formula.

A scientific conception of social relations must follow the same method of procedure. In ethics our facts are subjective relations affecting conduct, and the generalisation or "law" we seek must be an ideal abstraction; one not alone determined by present phenomena, but by the past, and affording us a Type for which we may scan the future, thus rising to a higher abstract conception, yet in accordance with its concretes, by which both the source of "right" conduct may be defined, and its ultimate end determined. Conduct, past, present, and future; the crude conceptions of the primitive races, the highest aspirations of living souls, as well as the ultimate aim of human conduct—the goal of progress—must be brought under the scope of one general law, which, while in agreement with all the multitudinous facts of past phases of social life, and explaining their shortcomings, will present us with a moral Type consonant with the empirical genesis of what may be admitted to have now become incorporated into organic form; but at the same time affording an inspiration which will illumine the present with the conscious recognition of an Ideal in which may be seen reflected "the glory of the human."

How far the current theories of ethics approach this standard, we may the better understand by a rapid criticism, which will also the better enable us to grasp the fundamental law constituting the basis of action, and determine both the nature of "right" and give shape to the requisite determining rules of conduct. For this purpose we may divide current theories of ethics under four heads:

(I) Egoistic Hedonism; (2) Universalistic Hedonism (Utilitarianism); (3) Intuitive Ethics; (4) Evolutional Ethics.

*I. Egoistic Hedonism.*—Hedonism, from the Greek [...], "pleasure," makes this the sole motive for action.

When Mill says, "Happiness is the sole end of action," the Egoist limits this to the individual ego; in the words of Barratt, "The individual ever acts to secure his own pleasure." It is unquestionably true that life consists in adaptation to environment, and that pleasure accompanies adaptation. The fundamental principle of Evolution, natural selection, carries with it the necessary conclusion that normal life involves at least the absence of continuous pain, which may be positively defined as pleasure or happiness; further, it may be conceded that in the moral world good and evil are the synonyms of pleasure and pain, but it does not thereupon follow that "pleasure is the only motive power."

Egoistic Hedonism ascribes to Self an independence it does not possess. Notwithstanding the stress now laid upon what Hobbes ignored, the Social Organism, the objection remains. We smile to-day at the last century conception of the mind as a *tabula rasa*, as typified in Condillac's marble statue, yet the Egoistic theory commits a similar error in virtually separating personality from hereditary conditions which determine it. By positing personal pleasure as the source of action, its logic tends to exalt self above that which has conditioned it, above the brute, and merges all conception of "right" into temporary self-gratification, and in thus making the criterion purely egoistic, eliminating conscious recognition of overlying social requirements. But the chain of sequences in states of consciousness to which in thought we ascribe personality is dependent rather than independent, more controlled by, than controller of, actions. The *ego* is the expression of the organism, having its roots deep in its *affective* nature; in other words, it is the consensus of psychical functions of an organism. In the moral realm it is but a cell in the social organism, shaped by antecedent causes determining both organic functions and its function.

Pleasure is a *resultant* from adaptation rather than its cause. Cattle ruminating in a meadow present us with an instance where pleasure and adaptation are one, but egoistic desire for pleasure cannot be predicated as their actuating motive for gratifying the

the abolition of artificial restrictions, whereby there may be free scope to "the survival of the fittest."

Notwithstanding such eminent Utilitarians as Hume, Bentham, Mill, and Bain agree that "morality is determined to make sentiment" (Hume); where "proof is impossible as it is needless" (Bentham); as "no reason can be given why the external happiness is desirable beyond the fact that each one desires his own happiness" (Mill); because "it is an ultimate and final assumption" (Bain);—we may confidently deny its scientific accuracy. If *sentiment* be the basis, whence the sentiment and the reasons for its varied expression? In finding the genesis of sentiment and sympathy as concomitant phenomena in the evolution of life we discover their natural basis. The Hedonist theory of action resembles a Bridgewater Treatise on the adaptation of the eye to sight, both ignoring evolutionary antecedents; the ghost of a "moral sense" figuring in the one, as "design" does in the other. Neither Hobbes nor Paley are teachers to-day.

Ethics is not a mere collection of empirical facts, but a science correlated with other sciences and like them genetically based in physical nature, an abstracted phase of general evolution whose concretes present a twofold aspect, and which finds its place in social physics, having both static and dynamic expression. While wider extension is ever given to "the empire of the dead" in shaping the present, it is only in the sense that "the child is the parent of the man," and does not consist in *instituting* infantile conditions into permanent status. Only in thus finding the basis of morals in physical nature does life in all its fulness truly "consist in a correspondence between outer and inner sequences" by social rather than "a pre-established harmony"; and the future course of evolution becomes irradiated with the conscious light of an ultimate sin, and the "conscious pain" of unrealised desires and aspirations seem to have their rounded end not "in sleep," but in "subjective morality"—the perfection of the race. Thus the long-sought reconciliation between science and religion becomes complete, and the

homogeneous units into a heterogeneous organism. While our individual functions are determined by the Cosmos, our general functions arise in the social medium, hence morals emerge. We are thus brought to see why it is that social instincts control and restrain egoistic "impulses." In the physical world we find "Nature, red in tooth and claw," making "the struggle for existence" a relentless conflict for position, in which the weaker are sacrificed that the stronger may survive, because the conditions are unalterably fixed to which life must conform. But in the social realm the conditions of life no longer present similar rigidity. Being a province wrested from physical nature by the interaction of social forces, the conditions governing the struggle for existence are more largely artificial than natural. We further see that all social progress has consisted in the removal of restrictions by which more equal opportunities have given greater scope to the development of natural capacities. Thus the struggle for existence under social relations becomes transformed into a constantly progressive social selection of wider freedom to each, leaving to the Social Organism the interblending of diverse efforts to the uplifting of the race into a grander harmony than the external world can present, and the harbinger of a future when morality and sociality will be seen to be intercontrovertible terms evolved under one general law.

We thus find the genesis of the idea of "right" consisting subjectively of a constantly evolving moral sense, so to speak, of equal claims and equal dues; and objectively as adaptation to the requirements of ideal social relations; hence, giving us the basis of morality in the process of natural selection as *the Law of Equal Freedom*. This cannot be identified with the Hedonistic formula of pleasure as the source of action without indulging in a looseness of expression unwarranted by scientific accuracy; for here we have a universal law meeting the prescribed requirements based upon facts, and found upon verification to contain nothing not in its concrete as shown in social growth; and demanding for more perfect adaptation but

affective desires of organic structure and the adaptation the result. The actuating cause lies back of the desire.

Are pleasures to be compared and scheduled in order to determine the requisite maximum of "right" conduct, or left to impulse? That pleasure is not the motive is seen in the well-known "paradox of hedonism," which is given by Dr. Courtney thus:

"If there is one thing more certain than another, it is that to do an action because of the pleasure it brings is precisely the way to lose the pleasure. Pleasure, therefore, which is what we are told to aim at, is exactly that which we must not aim at if we desire to secure it. A paradox, indeed, when the end of human activity is found to be secured only on the express condition of not making it the end of activity."

There is nothing better established by the new Psychology in supplanting the methods of metaphysical introspection by that of scientific research, than that underlying all personality are the organic, or systematic, sensations; "a voiceless deep" existing in all organic life, the crests of the waves of which only possess the phosphorescent light of clear consciousness. It is by the variation of environment that these systematic sensations are often raised to the surface, when the *ego* first becomes conscious of them. These often affect us, producing, for instance, a sense of general depression, and in which the sum of all psychic states that we dignify with the term *ego*, the *me*, takes on a new character. Indisposition, downheartedness, gloom results, and the supposed controlling ego is presented with the paradox of seeking pleasures in the absence of pleasure!

However loudly pleasure may be asserted to be the sole spring of action and criterion of "right," it remains doubtful whether as the source of action it has not produced as much pain as adaptation. More, it still remains to be proven that the most complete

adaptation to environment can as yet bring more than the physical pleasure of well-fed cattle. The problem which confronted Gautama Buddha, the ternal hunger and the thirst of the mind, ever more keen and painful to sensitive souls the more it is gratified, the unceasing correlation between higher aspiration and ungratified desire, the wide desert of mental pain in which pleasure constitutes but oases to inquiring souls, still remains unanswered by Egoistic Hedonists. However applicable their theory may be in seeking greater comforts and pleasing “affinities,” as a rule for determining conduct it signally fails.

“Those mighty spheres which gem infinity  
Are only specks of tinsel fixed in heaven  
To light the midnights of their native town.”

“A human being is the possibility of many contradictions,” says Schopenhauer, and nowhere is this more manifest than in the interaction of the two great opposing principles which converts every soul into a battle-field. Organic desires underlie and are *anterior* to development of intellect; the new born babe manifests will before a sense-impression has been registered. In more mature years the animal and the human are never in accord within us, because the war unto death between organic desires and intellectual judgement has begun. But pleasure, as the source or action, has its root in the gratification of our desires, and often persists long after reason has demonstrated its folly. The Hedonistic assumption, then, in so far as it applies to man (where, indeed, moral relations are confined) is based upon organic impulses and not upon his higher intellectual, or human nature, to which it is often directly opposed.

A more rigid examination of actions show us that race-maintaining conduct, rather than individual pleasure, is that upon which nature places her seal of approval, and that, in the evolution of species, the pleasures as well as the life of the individual are ruthlessly sacrificed, or left to decay, as soon as race-maintaining

the so-called instinct of self-preservation;<sup>2</sup> for it is but the reverse method of expressing adaptation of environment, a generalisation of the reaction of the organism to conditions essential to all sentient existence. The expressions: life, adaptation, self-preservation, are identical propositions; the latter two being but objective and subjective methods of expressing the modes of the first. Instead of saying that self-preservation is an instinct seeking adaptation to maintain sentient existence, we may view their separation but as an artifice of the logical understanding by which we contrast two aspects of phenomena, and which has no existence outside of the conditions which constitute it.

But adaptation and self-preservation have a far wider range than that of individual life. Self-preservation is fulfilled in the life of the species rather than in that of the unit, the adaptation requisite being that of race-maintaining conduct. This is very clearly seen in a comparative study of longevity among species. The strongest of all instincts, one having its roots in the fundamental laws of life, is the sexual, and upon the fulfilment of this race-life depends. Now, as a matter of fact, running through all sentient life from moner to the most complicated structure, duration of individual life is seen to be commensurate with the length of time requisite for the sexual instinct to fulfil race-requirements. This is a universal rule, from the bee which copulates once and dies in the act to the elephant, and some birds, whose life extends through two centuries. When that period is reached where race-maintenance no longer requires the individual, decay begins and death results; the “rounded end of life” is met notwithstanding personal yearnings.

The crowning glory of evolutionary thought is the logical precision it has given to Comte’s conception of the Social Organism. Change has been progress because it has consisted in growth from

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<sup>2</sup> “The so-called instinct of self-preservation is a fiction. The only impulse at work there is the shrinking from pain; and this in the matured expression leads to the intelligent act of self-preservation.” G. H. Lewes; *Problems*, I, p. 162.



Evolution finds in the Social Organism, “in whom we live, move, and have our being.”

Conscience is thus seen to be the accumulated and registered experience of the past, not a moral faculty bestowed by an external, unrelated power. Instead of a judge seated within passing sentence upon actions in accordance with “external reason,” it is the voice of approval or reprimand of the general mind. Consequently the voice of the moral sense, in the light of evolutionary knowledge, becomes but the accumulated convictions of past generations, woven by time under social reactions into structural form, and made organic by the habits of ages. The child born at this stage of progress among us comes into existence with a far wider scale of emotional keys in its nature than our ruder ancestors; keys capable of responding to the slightest sympathetic touch, and producing, as it were, a harmony in action which we term moral, and which alone merits the name divine.

The Hedonist, ignoring the primary impulse, proclaims an effect a creative cause. The Intuitionist, perceiving the fatal weakness in this argument, assumes a metempirical cause, lying outside of and beyond varification, to account for what the known facts of human nature fully explain.

4. *Evolutional Ethics*.—From the character of the criticisms offered it is clearly seen that a strictly scientific theory of morals is to be sought in the fundamental laws of our nature. The continuity of sentient existence presents no break, and the subjective aspect of relations which we abstract in thought as morals, in constituting the flow and glory of conscious life, must have root below the surface level of consciousness, in the great sea of the Unconscious and find its correlative aspect in the physical world. All instincts, before becoming organised as such, imply a *raison d'être*, an antecedent impulse, the origin of which enters into every biological problem. Underlying all specialisation of function known as instinct, we find

ends have been met. Consequently it is a theory which thus places “the cart before the horse.”

2. *Universalistic Hedonism, or Utilitarianism*.—The most eloquent and at the same time most idealistic of all this school, John Stuart Mill, says:

“Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.”

The essential difference between this school and the Egoists is in seeking *general* happiness, which they find in utility or expediency, wherein consists:

“The rules and precepts of human conduct, by the observance of which an existence such as has been described might be, to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind, and not to them only, but so far as the nature of things admit, to the whole sentient creation.”

But even to this ideal picture exception must be taken, for like its ally, the theory of Egoism, it is open to objections.

Based upon the assumption that what was at first willed because it was desired, comes to be desired because it is willed, it leads to the fixity of habit, and thus ignores the patent fact that conduct however fixed is not stationary, but ever evolving to broader relations. Utility as a causative motive fails to explain this underlying impulse to broadening out the idea of “right” beyond the utility of any existing age. Time was, for instance, when slavery was useful and expedient, as well as merciful to the doomed captive, for without it mankind might hardly have acquired the habits of industry. While not claiming that at that period of social growth slavery could be called “wrong,” the utilitarian hypothesis fails to

account for the genesis of the idea that it is in fact “wrong” and not “right,” an idea which had to battle for ages with what utility had fixed into permanent status as “right,” and consequently, this growing moral protest as “wrong.”

Its distinction between virtuous and vicious actions is not clear, as the same act in the same age may be classed as both in different countries. The one as well as the other tends to become fixed in custom as expedient, and hence “right” as comparative morality abundantly shows. Hence, we have contradictory codes simultaneously existing and against which a growing moral protest rises from the unconscious, which is not seen to be either useful or expedient until long after it has manifested its presence and undermined the existing utilitarian “right.”

The expedient in our age is thus seen to become by unconscious growth inexpedient in a later, thus leaving conduct on the shifting sands of a temporary requirement, not subject to general law, and hence beyond the domain of scientific examination. The aim being the greatest amount of possible happiness, the realisation of this should be the cessation of all effort, while in fact the greater the attainment the larger the desire becomes, and the fixed boundary is seen to be inadequate; the fuller life’s cup becomes with the realisation of happiness, the more it is embittered from happiness denied. As in the nervous structure, the keener the sensibility the more acute is pain, so in the psychical nature, the further we explore the sea of happiness the wider grows the expanse of the unattainable, and heavier on the soul rests the philosophy of disappointment.

Expediency or utility, like pleasure, follows action, instead of being its source; and in basing a philosophy of conduct on the reverse statement of facts, the tendency is to institute as “right” what time has often subsequently decided to be “wrong.”

3. *The Intuitive School.*—The intuitionists affirm for man a “moral sense” by which there is assumed an original quality in actions irrespective of their consequences, through which “right” is immediately cognised by the conscience. While admitting what none deny

that “right” actions conduce to the well-being of mankind, they claim that this is because they are in accord with “eternal reason” reflected in conscience. The moral quality of an act, therefore, becomes independent of experience which can but confirm this inherent nature and is cognised by an inner sense which distinguishes man from animals, enabling him to make his own affections objects of thought. This, the logical presentation of the claim, directly controverts the doctrine of Evolution, by drawing a sharp line of demarcation between human and animal intelligence, by giving to the former an innate and metempirical perception of an external moral order of the universe, adding to the known functions of the organism a supernatural gift or faculty by which at all times man has been, or could be, enabled to perceive absolute truth; and this irrespective of their differences in seeking it in the intellect or in the emotions.

The Intuitive School is fundamentally metaphysical, or speculative, being based upon no known concretes by which its assumed generalisation may be made subject to verification. It takes man at the high mark of culture and by introspection assigns to all men similar potential capacities. It is unscientific because its alleged facts and laws are never reduced to verification, being arrived at deductively from an evolved social sense, is beyond and above science, metempirical, confined to the subjective sphere without genetical connexion with the eternal world. More, it is at direct variance with what we know of the lower races. Consciousness gives only results, never processes; these are secreted in the subconscious, more and more recognised as overshadowing the conscious, and to which we owe genius, inspiration, impersonal creations. But this “power not ourselves which maketh for righteousness” exists as such in consciousness only, and we cannot say it precedes it. That which in every great thought and deed overflows the submerged consciousness, which from the simplest irritability of organic matter has flowered in sociality,—this the doctrine of