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“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” \* \* \*

“The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. \* \* \* But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” (John iv. 20, 21, 23, 24.)

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back again with blessing into the hands of the givers. The space allotted to this paper does not allow me to pursue these suggestions further. Those who accept the main position assumed in it, will probably be willing to admit that the life and action of the whole Church is suffering not a little as the result of its present divided state, and that much blessing and enlarged work would immediately flow from a more earnest recognition of the deep bonds of union which already exist among all shades of opinion in her midst.

LEIGH MANN.

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### III.—DARWINISM IN MORALS.

*The Descent of Man.* By Charles Darwin, M.A., F.R.S.  
Two vols. 8vo. London: Murray. 1871.

It is a singular fact that whenever we find out how anything is done, our first conclusion seems to be that God did not do it. No matter how wonderful, how beautiful, how infinitely complex and delicate has been the machinery which has worked, perhaps for centuries, perhaps for millions of ages, to bring about some beneficent result—if we can but catch a glimpse of the wheels, its divine character disappears. The machinery did it all. It would be altogether superfluous to look further.

The olive has been commonly called the Phœnix of trees, because when it is cut down it springs to life again. The notion that God is only discernible in the miraculous and the inexplicable, may likewise be called the Phœnix of ideas; for again and again it has been exploded, and yet it re-appears with the utmost regularity whenever a new step is made in the march of Science. The explanation of each phenomenon is still first angrily disputed and then mournfully accepted by the majority of pious people, just as if finding out the ways of God were not necessarily bringing ourselves nearer to the knowledge of Him, and the highest bound of the human intellect were not to be able to say, like Kepler, "O God, I think thy thoughts after thee!"

That the doctrine of the descent of man from the lower animals, of which Mr. Darwin has been the teacher, should be looked on as well-nigh impious by men not mentally chained to the Hebrew cosmogony, has always appeared to me surprising. Of course, in as far as it disturbs the roots of our old theology and dispels the golden haze which hung in poetic fancy over the morning garden of the world, it must prove a rude and painful innovation. A Calvin, a Milton and a Fra Angelico, may be excused if they recalcitrate against it. Doubtless, also, the special Semitic contempt for the brutes which has unhappily passed with our religion into so many of our graver views, adds its quota to the common sentiment of repugnance; and we stupidly imagine that to trace Man to the Ape is to degrade the progeny, and not (as a Chinese would justly hold) to ennoble the ancestry. But that, beyond all these prejudices, there should lurk in any free mind a dislike to Darwinism on *religious* grounds, is wholly beyond my comprehension. Surely, were any one to come to us now in these days for the first time with the story that the eternal God produced all His greatest works by fits and starts; that just 6000 years ago He suddenly brought out of nothing the sun, moon and stars; and finally, as the climax of six days of such labour, "made man of the dust of the ground," we should be inclined to say that *this* was the derogatory and insufferable doctrine of creation; and that when we compared it with that of the slow evolution of order, beauty, life, joy and intelligence, from the immeasurable past of the primal nebula's "fiery cloud," we had no language to express how infinitely more religious is the story of modern science than that of ancient tradition?

Nor are we (I trust it is needless to add) alarmed or disturbed because the same hand which has opened for us these grand vistas of physical development has now touched the phenomena of the moral world, and sought to apply the same method of investigation to its most sacred mysteries. The only question we can ask is, whether the method has been as successful in the one case as (we learn from competent judges) it may be accounted in the other, and whether the proffered explanation of moral facts really suffices to explain them. Should it prove so successful and

sufficient, we can but accept it, even as we welcomed the discovery of the physical laws of evolution, as a step towards a more just conception than we had hitherto possessed of the order of things; and *therefore*—if God be their Orderer—a step towards a better knowledge of Him.

The book before us is doubtless one whose issue will make an era in the history of modern thought. Of its vast wealth of classified anecdotes of animal peculiarities and instincts, and its wide sweep of cumulative argument in favour of the author's various deductions, it would be almost useless to speak, seeing that, before these pages are printed, the reading public of England will have spent many happy hours over those "fairy tales of science." Of the inexpressible charm of the author's manner, the straightforwardness of every argument he employs, and the simplicity of every sketch and recital, it is still less needful to write, when years have elapsed since Mr. Darwin took his place in the literature of England and the philosophy of the world. Very soon that delightful pen will have made familiar to thousands the pictures of which the book is a gallery. Every one will know that our first human parents, far from resembling Milton's glorious couple, were hideous beings covered with hair, with pointed and movable ears, beards, tusks and tails,—the very Devils of mediæval fancy. And behind these we shall dimly behold yet earlier and lower ancestors, receding through the ages till we reach a period before even the vertebrate rank was attained, and when the creature whose descendants were to be heroes and sages swam about in the waters in likeness between an eel and a worm. At every dinner-table will be told the story of the brave ape which came down amid its dreaded human foes to redeem a young one of its species; and of the sagacious baboon which, Bismarck-like, finding itself scratched by a cat, deliberately bit off its enemy's claws. Satirists will note the description of the seals which, in wooing, bow to the females and coax them gently till they get them fairly landed; then, "with a changed manner and a harsh growl," drive the poor wedded creatures home to their holes. The suggestion that animals love beauty of colour and of song, and even (in the case of the bower-bird) build halls of pleasure distinct from their nests for purposes of amusement only, will be commented on, and afford suggestive

talk wherever books of such a class are read in England. Few students, we think, will pass over without respectful pause the passage\* where Mr. Darwin with so much candour explains that he "now admits that in the earlier editions of his *Origin of Species* he probably attributed too much to the action of natural selection," &c.; nor that † where he calls attention to Sir J. Lubbock's "most just remark," that "Mr. Wallace, with characteristic unselfishness, ascribes the idea of natural selection unreservedly to Mr. Darwin, although, as is well known, he struck out the idea independently, and published it, though not with the same elaboration, at the same time." Whatever doubt any reader may entertain of the philosophy of Evolution, it is quite impossible that, after perusing such pages, he can have any hesitation about the true philosophic spirit of its author.

But we must turn from these topics which properly concern the journals of physical science, to the one whose treatment by Mr. Darwin gives to a *Theological Review* the right to criticise the present volume. Mr. Darwin's theories have hitherto chiefly invaded the precincts of traditional Theology. We have now to regard him as crowning the edifice of Utilitarian ethics by certain doctrines respecting the nature and origin of the Moral Sense, which, if permanently allowed to rest upon it, will, we fear, go far to crush the idea of Duty level with the least hallowed of natural instincts. It is needless to say that Mr. Darwin puts forth his views on this, as on all other topics, with perfect moderation and simplicity, and that the reader of his book has no difficulty whatever in comprehending the full bearing of the facts he cites and the conclusions he draws from them.

In the present volume he has followed out to their results certain hints given in his "*Origin of Species*" and "*Animals under Domestication*," and has, as it seems, given Mr. Herbert Spencer's abstract view of the origin of the moral sense its concrete application. Mr. Spencer broached the doctrine that our moral sense is nothing but the "experiences of utility organized and consolidated through all past generations." Mr. Darwin has afforded a sketch of how such experiences of utility, beginning in the ape,

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\* Vol. I. p. 152.

† P. 137, note.

might (as he thinks) consolidate into the virtue of a saint ; and adds some important and quite harmonious remarks, tending to shew that the Virtue so learned is somewhat accidental, and might perhaps have been what we now call Vice. To mark his position fairly, it will be necessary to glance at the recent history of ethical philosophy.

Independent or Intuitive Morality has of course always taught that there is a supreme and necessary moral law common to all free agents in the universe, and known to man by means of a transcendental reason or divine voice of conscience. Dependent or Utilitarian Morality has equally steadily rejected the idea of a law other than the law of utility ; but its teachers have differed exceedingly amongst themselves as to the existence or non-existence of a specific sense in man, requiring him to perform actions whose utility constitutes them duties ; and among those who have admitted that such a sense exists, there still appear wide variations in the explanations they offer of the nature and origin of such a sense. The older English Utilitarians, such as Mandeville, Hobbes, Paley and Waterland, denied vigorously that man had any spring of action but self-interest. Hume, Hartley and Bentham, advanced a step further ; Hartley thinking it just possible to love virtue "as a form of happiness," and Bentham being kind enough elaborately to explain that we may truly sympathize with the woes of our friends. Finally, when the coldest of philosophies passed into one of the loftiest of minds and warmest of hearts, Utilitarianism in the school of Mr. Mill underwent a sort of divine travesty. Starting from the principle that "actions are only virtuous because they promote another end than virtue," he attained the conclusion, that sooner than flatter a cruel Almighty Being he would go to hell. As Mr. Mill thinks such a decision morally right, he would of course desire that all men should follow his example ; and thus we should behold the apostle of Utility conducting the whole human race to eternal perdition for the sake of— shall we say—"the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number"?

At this stage, the motive-power on which Utilitarianism must rely for the support of virtue is obviously complex, if not rather unstable. So long as the old teachers appealed simply to the interest of the individual, here or hereafter,

the argument was clear enough, however absurd a misuse of language it seems to make Virtue and Vice the names respectively of a systematized and an unsystematized rule of selfishness. But when we begin to speak of the happiness of *others* as our aim, we necessarily shift our motive, and appeal to sympathy, to social instincts, or to the disinterested pleasures of benevolence, till finally, when we are bid to relinquish self altogether in behalf of the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number, we have left the Utilitarian ground so far away, that we find ourselves on the proper territories of the Intuitionist, and he turns round with the question, "Why should I sacrifice myself for the happiness of mankind, if I have no intuitions of duty compelling me to do so?" The result has practically been, that the Social Instincts to which Utilitarians in such straits were forced to appeal as the springs of action in lieu of the Intuitions of duty, have been gradually raised by them to the rank of a distinct element of our nature, to be treated now (as self-interest was treated by their predecessors) as the admitted motives of virtue. They agree with Intuitionists that man has a Conscience; they only differ from them on the points of how he comes by it; and whether its office be supreme and legislative, or merely subsidiary and supplemental.

It is the problem of, How we come by such a conscience, which Mr. Darwin applies himself to solve, and with which we shall be now concerned. Needless to say that the Kantian doctrine of a Pure Reason, giving us transcendental knowledge of necessary truths, is not entertained by the school of thinkers to which he belongs; and that as for the notion of all the old teachers of the world, that the voice of Conscience is the voice of God,—the doctrine of Job and Zoroaster, Menu and Pythagoras, Plato and Antoninus, Chrysostom and Gregory, Fénelon and Jeremy Taylor,—it can have no place in their science. As Comte would say, we have passed the theologic stage, and must not think of running to a First Cause to explain phenomena. After all (they seem to say), cannot we easily suggest how man should acquire a conscience from causes obviously at work around him? Education, fear of penalties, sympathy, desire of approval, and imaginary religious sanctions, would altogether, well mixed and supporting one another, afford sufficient explanation of feelings acquired, as Mr. Bain thinks,

by each individual in his lifetime, and, as Mr. Mill justly says, not the less natural for being acquired and not innate.

At this point of the history, the gradual extension of the Darwinian theory of Evolution brought it into contact with the speculations of moralists, and the result was a new hypothesis, which has greatly altered the character of the whole controversy. The doctrine of the transmission by hereditary descent of all mental and moral qualities, of which Mr. Galton's book is the chief exponent,\* received, in 1868, from Mr. Herbert Spencer the following definition, as applied to the moral sentiments:† "I believe that the experiences of utility, organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding modifications, which by continued transmission and accumulation have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition, certain emotions responding to right and wrong conduct, which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility." This doctrine (which received a very remarkable answer in an article by Mr. R. H. Hutton, *Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1869) may be considered as the basis on which Mr. Darwin proceeds, approaching the subject, as he modestly says, "exclusively from the side of natural history," and "attempting to see how far the study of the lower animals can throw light on one of the highest psychical faculties of man." His results, as fairly as I can state them, are as follows :

If we assume an animal to possess social instincts (such, I suppose, as those of rooks, for example), and also to acquire some degree of intelligence corresponding to that of man, it would inevitably acquire contemporaneously a moral sense of a certain kind. In the first place, its social instincts would cause it to take pleasure in the society of its fellows, to feel a certain amount of sympathy with them, and to perform various services for them. After this, the next step in mental advance would cause certain phenomena of regretful sentiments (hereafter to be more fully analyzed) to ensue on the commission of anti-social acts, which obey a transient impulse at the cost of a permanent social instinct.

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\* Reviewed in the *Theological Review*, April, 1870.

† Letter to Mr. Mill, in Bain's "*Mental and Moral Science*," p. 722; quoted in "*Descent of Man*," p. 101.



Thirdly, the approval expressed by the members of the community for acts tending to the general welfare, and disapproval for those of a contrary nature, would greatly strengthen and guide the original instincts as Language came into full play. Lastly, habit in each individual would gradually perform an important part in the regulation of conduct. If these positions be all granted, the problem of the origin of the moral sense seems to be solved. It is found to be an instinct in favour of the social virtues which has grown up in mankind, and would have grown up in any animal similarly endowed and situated; and it does not involve any higher agency for its production than that of the play of common human life, nor indicate any higher nature for its seat than the further developed intelligence of any gregarious brute. So far, Mr. Darwin's view seems only to give to those he has quoted from Mr. Spencer their full expansion. The points on which he appears to break fresh ground from this starting-place are these two: 1st, his theory of the nature of conscientious Repentance, which represents it as solely the triumph of a permanent over a transient impulse; 2nd, his frank admission, that though another animal, if it became intelligent, would acquire a moral sense, yet that he sees no reason why its moral sense should be the same as ours, or lead it to attach the idea of right and wrong to the same actions. In extreme cases (such as that of bees), the moral sense, developed under the conditions of the hive, would, he thinks, impress it as a duty on sisters to murder their brothers.

It must be admitted that these two doctrines between them effectively revolutionize Morals, as they have been hitherto commonly understood. The first dethrones the moral sense from that place of mysterious supremacy which Butler considered its grand characteristic. Mr. Darwin's Moral Sense is simply an instinct originated, like a dozen others, by the conditions under which we live, but which happens, in the struggle for existence among all our instincts, to resume the upper hand when no other chances to be in the ascendant. And the second theory aims a still more deadly blow at ethics, by affirming that, not only has our moral sense come to us from a source commanding no special respect, but that it answers to no external or durable, not

to say universal or eternal, reality, and is merely tentative and provisional, the provincial prejudice, if we may so describe it, of this little world and its temporary inhabitants, which would be looked on with a smile of derision by better-informed people now residing in Mars, or hereafter to be developed on earth, and who in their turn may be considered as walking in a vain shadow by other races. Instead of Montesquieu's grand aphorism, "La justice est un rapport de convenance qui se trouve réellement entre deux choses ; ce rapport est toujours le même quelque être qui le considère, soit que ce soit Dieu soit que ce soit un homme," Mr. Darwin will leave us only the sad assurance that our idea of Justice is all our own, and may mean nothing to any other intelligent being in the universe. It is not even, as Dean Mansell has told us, given us by our Creator as a representative truth, intended at least to indicate some actual transcendent verity behind it. We have now neither Veil nor Revelation, but only an earth-born instinct, carrying with it no authority whatever beyond the limits of our race and special social state, nor within them further than we choose to permit it to weigh on our minds.

Let me say it at once. These doctrines appear to me simply the most dangerous which have ever been set forth since the days of Mandeville. Of course, if science can really shew good cause for accepting them, their consequences must be frankly faced. But it is at least fitting to come to the examination of them, conscious that it is no ordinary problems we are criticising, but theories whose validity must involve the *invalidity* of all the sanctions which morality has hitherto received from powers beyond those of the penal laws. As a matter of practice, no doubt men act in nine cases out of ten with very small regard to their theories of ethics, even if they are educated enough to have grasped any theory at all ; and generations might elapse after the universal acceptance of these new views by philosophers, before they would sensibly influence the conduct of the masses of mankind. But however slowly they might work, I cannot but believe that in the hour of their triumph would be sounded the knell of the virtue of mankind. It has been hard enough for tempted men and women heretofore to be honest, true, unselfish, chaste or sober,

while passion was clamouring for gratification, or want pining for relief. The strength of the fulcrum on which has rested the virtue of many a martyr and saint, must have been vast as the Law of the Universe could make it. But where will that fulcrum be found hereafter, if men consciously recognize that what they have dreamed to be

"The unwritten law divine,  
Immutable, eternal, not like those of yesterday,  
But made ere Time began,"\*—

the law by which "the most ancient heavens are fresh and strong,"—is, in truth, after all, neither durable nor even general among intelligent beings, but simply consists of those rules of conduct which, among many that might have been adopted, have proved themselves on experiment to be most convenient; and which, in the lapse of ages, through hereditary transmission, legislation, education and such methods, have got woven into the texture of our brains? What will be the power of such a law as this to enable it to contend for mastery in the soul with any passion capable of rousing the most languid impulse? Hitherto good men have looked on Repentance as the most sacred of all sentiments, and have measured the nearness of the soul to God by the depth of its sense of the shame and heinousness of sin. The boldest of criminals have betrayed at intervals their terror of the Erinnyes of Remorse, against whose scourges all religions have presented themselves as protectors, with their devices of expiations, sacrifices, penances and atonements. From Orestes at the foot of the altar of Phebus, to the Anglican in his new confessional to-day; from the Aztec eating the heart of the victim slain in propitiation for sin, to the Hindoo obeying the law of Menu, and voluntarily starving himself to death as an expiation of his offences, history bears testimony again and again to the power of this tremendous sentiment; and if it have driven mankind into numberless superstitions, it has, beyond a doubt, also served as a threat more effective against crime than all the penalties ever enacted by legislators. But where is Repentance to find place hereafter, if Mr. Darwin's view of its nature be received? Will any man allow himself to attend to the reproaches of

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\* Sophoc. Antig. 454.

Conscience, and bow his head to her rebukes, when he clearly understands that it is only his more durable Social Instinct which is re-asserting itself, because the more variable instinct which has caused him to disregard it is temporarily asleep? Such a Physiology of Repentance reduces its claims on our attention to the level of those of our bodily wants; and our grief for a past crime assumes the same aspect as our regret that we yesterday unadvisedly preferred the temporary enjoyment of conversation to the permanent benefit of a long night's rest, or the flavour of an indigestible dish to the wholesomeness of our habitual food. We may regret our *imprudence*; but it is quite impossible we should ever again feel penitence for a *sin*.

But is this all true? Can such a view of the moral nature of man be sustained? Mr. Darwin says that he has arrived at it by approaching the subject from the side of natural history; and we may therefore, without disrespect, accept it as the best which the study of man simply as a highly developed animal, can afford. That glimmering of something resembling our moral sense often observable in brutes, which Mr. Darwin has admirably described, may (we will assume) be so accounted for. But viewing human nature from other sides besides that of its animal origin, studying the mind from within rather than from without, and taking into consideration the whole phenomenon presented by such a department of creation as the Human Race, must we not hold that this Simious Theory of Morals is wholly inadequate and unsatisfactory? Probably Mr. Darwin himself would say that he does not pretend to claim for it the power to explain exhaustively all the mysteries of our moral nature, but only to afford such a clue to them as ought to satisfy us that, if pursued further, they might be so revealed; and to render, by its obvious simplicity, other and more transcendent theories superfluous. The matter to be decided (and it is almost impossible, I think, to overrate its importance) is: *Does* it give such an explanation of the facts as to justify us in accepting it, provisionally, as an hypothesis of the origin of Morals?

It is hard to know how to approach properly the later developments of a doctrine like that of Utilitarian Morality, which we conceive to be founded on a radically false basis. If we begin at the beginning, and dispute its primary

positions, we shift the controversy in hand to the interminable wastes of metaphysical discussion, where few readers will follow, and where the wanderer may truly say that *doubts,*

“immeasurably spread,  
Seem lengthening as I go.”

All the time which is wanted to argue the last link of the system, is lost in seeking some common ground to stand upon with our opponent, who probably will end by disputing the firmness of whatever islet of granite we have chosen in the bog; and will tell us that the greatest modern thinkers are doubtful whether twice two will make four in all worlds, or whether Space may not have more than three dimensions. Yet to grant the premisses of Utilitarian ethics, and then attempt to dispute one by one the chain of doctrines which has been unrolling from them during the last century, and which has now reached, as it would seem, its ultimate, and perhaps logical, development, is to place our arguments at an unfair disadvantage. To treat scientifically the theories of Mr. Darwin, we ought to commence by an inquiry into the validity of the human consciousness; into the respective value of our various faculties, the senses, the intellect, the moral, religious and æsthetic sentiments, as witnesses of external truths; and, finally, into the justice or fallacy of attaching belief exclusively to facts of which we have cognizance through one faculty—let us say the intellect; and denying those which we observe by another—say the æsthetic taste or the religious or moral sentiments. He who will concede that the intellect is not the organ through which we appreciate a song or a picture, and that it would be absurd to test songs and pictures by inductive reasoning and not by the specific sense of the beautiful, is obviously bound to shew cause why, if—after making such admission in the case of our æsthetic faculties—he refuse to concede to the religious and moral faculties the same right to have their testimony admitted in their own domain.

Proceeding to our next step, if we are to do justice to our cause, we must dispute the Utilitarian's first assumption on his proper ground. We must question whether the Right and the Useful are really synonymous, and whether Self-interest and Virtue can be made convertible terms

even by such stringent methods as those of extending the meaning of "Self-interest" to signify a devotion to the "Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number" (always inclusive of Number One), and of curtailing that of Virtue to signify the fulfilment of Social, irrespective of Personal and Religious obligations. That the common sentiment of mankind looks to something different from Utility in the actions to which it pays the tribute of its highest reverence, and to something different from noxiousness in those which it most profoundly abhors, is a fact so obvious, that modern Utilitarians have recognized the impossibility of ignoring it after the manner of their predecessors; and Mr. Herbert Spencer has fully admitted that the ideas of the Right and the Useful are now entirely different, although they had once, he thinks, the same origin. But that the idea of the Right was ever potentially enwrapped or latent in the idea of the Useful, we entirely deny, seeing that it not only *overlaps* it altogether, and goes far beyond it in the direction of the Noble and the Holy, but that it is continually in direct antithesis to it; and acts of generosity and courage (such as Mr. Mill's resolution to go to hell rather than say an untruth) command from us admiration, not only apart from their utility, but *because* they set at defiance every principle of utility, and make us feel that to such men there are things dearer than eternal joy. As Mr. Mivart says well, the sentiment of all ages which has found expression in the cry, "Fiat Justitia ruat cœlum," could never have sprung from the same root as our sense of Utility.

Proceeding a step farther downward to the point where-with alone Mr. Darwin concerns himself—the origin of such moral sense as recent Utilitarians grant that we possess—we come again on a huge field of controversy. Are our intuitions of all kinds, those, for instance, regarding space, numbers and moral distinctions, ultimate data of our mental constitution, ideas obtained by the *a-priori* action of the normally developed mind; or are they merely, as Mr. Hutton has paraphrased Mr. Spencer's theory, "a special susceptibility in our nerves produced by a vast number of homogeneous ancestral experiences agglutinated into a single intellectual tendency"? Is our sense of the necessity and universality of a truth (e.g., that the three sides of all

triangles in the universe are equal to two right angles), and the unhesitating certainty with which we affirm such universality, over and above any possible experience of generality,—is this sense, we say, the expression of pure Reason, or is it nothing but a blind incapacity for imagining as altered that which we have never seen or heard of as changed? Volumes deep and long as Kant's *Kritik* or Mr. Spencer's "Principles" are needed, if this question is to receive any justice at our hands. All that it is possible to do in passing onward to our remarks on Mr. Darwin's views, is to enter our protest against the admission of any such parentage either for mathematical or moral intuitions. No event in a man's mental development is, I think, more startling than his first clear apprehension of the nature of a geometrical demonstration, and of the immutable nature of the truth he has acquired, against which a thousand miracles would not avail to shake his faith. The hypothesis of the inheritance of space-intuitions through numberless ancestral experiments, leaves this marvellous sense of certainty absolutely inexplicable. And when we apply the same hypothesis of inheritance to moral intuitions, it appears to me to break down still more completely; supplying us at the utmost with a plausible theory for the explanation of our preference for some acts as more useful than others, but utterly failing to suggest a reason for that which is the real phenomenon to be accounted for, namely, our sense of the sacred obligation of Rightfulness, over and above or apart from Utility. Nay, what Mr. Mill calls the "mystical extension" of the idea of Utility into the idea of Right is not only left wholly unexplained, but the explanation offered points, not to any such mystical extension, but quite the other way. The waters of our moral life cannot possibly rise above their source; and if Utility be that source, they ought by this time to have settled into a dead pond of plain and acknowledged self-interestedness. As Mr. Hutton observes: "Mr. Spencer's theory appears to find the feeling of moral obligation at its maximum, when the perception of the quality which ultimately produces that feeling is at its minimum."

But we must now do Mr. Darwin the justice to let him speak for himself, and for the only part of the Utilitarian theory for which he has made himself directly responsible;

though his whole argument is so obviously founded solely on an Utilitarian basis, that we are tempted to doubt whether a mind so large, so just and so candid, can have ever added to its treasures of physical science the thorough mastery of any of the great works in which the opposite systems of ethics have been set forth.

Animals display affection, fidelity and sympathy. Man when he first rose above the Ape was probably of a social disposition, and lived in herds. Mr. Darwin adds that he would probably inherit a tendency to be faithful to his comrades, and have also some capacity for self-command, and a readiness to aid and defend his fellow-men.\* These latter qualities, we must observe, do not agree very well with what Mr. Galton recently told us† of the result of his interesting studies of the cattle of South Africa, and at all events need that we should suppose the forefathers of our race to have united all the best moral as well as physical qualities of other animals. But assuming that so it may have been, Mr. Darwin says, Man's next motive, acquired by sympathy, would be the love of praise and horror of infamy. After this, as such feelings became clearer and reason advanced, he would "feel himself impelled, independently of any pleasure or pain felt at the moment, to certain lines of conduct. He may then say, I am the supreme judge of my own conduct; and, in the words of Kant, I will not in my own person violate the dignity of humanity."‡ That any savage or half-civilized man ever felt anything like this, or that the "dignity of humanity" could come in sight for endless generations of progress, conducted only in such ways as Mr. Darwin has suggested, nay, that it could ever occur at all to a creature who had not some higher conception of the nature of that Virtue in which man's only "dignity" consists, than Mr. Darwin has hinted,—is a matter, I venture to think, of gravest doubt.

But, again passing onward, we reach the first of our author's special theories; his doctrine of the nature of Repentance. Earnestly I wish to do it justice; for upon it hinges our theory of the nature of the moral sense. As our bodily sense of feeling can best be studied when we touch hard objects or shrink from a burn or a blow, so our spiri-

\* P. 85.

† *Macmillan's Magazine*, February, 1871.

‡ P. 86.



tual sense of feeling becomes most evident when it comes in contact with wrong, or recoils in the agony of remorse from a crime.

“Why”—it is Mr. Darwin who asks the question—“why should a man feel that he ought to obey one instinctive feeling rather than another? Why does he bitterly regret if he has yielded to the strong sense of self-preservation, and has not risked his life to save that of a fellow-creature?” The answer is, that in some cases the social or maternal instincts will always spur generous natures to unselfish deeds. But where such social instincts are less strong than the instincts of self-preservation, hunger, vengeance, &c., then these last are naturally paramount, and the question is pressed, “Why does man regret, even though he may endeavour to banish any such regret, that he has followed the one natural impulse rather than the other? and why does he further feel that he ought to regret his conduct?” Man in this respect differs, Mr. Darwin admits, profoundly from the lower animals, but he thinks he sees the reason of the difference. It is this: Man has reflection. From the activity of his mental qualities, he cannot help past impressions incessantly passing through his mind. The animals have no need to reflect; for those which have social instincts never quit the herd, and never fail to obey their kindly impulses. But man, though he has the same or stronger social impulses, has other, though more, temporary passions, such as hunger, vengeance, and the like, which obtain transient indulgence often at the expense of his kind. These, however, are all temporary in their nature. When hunger, vengeance, covetousness, or the desire for preservation, has been satisfied, such feelings not only fade, but it is impossible to recall their full vividness by an act of memory.

“Thus as man cannot prevent old impressions from passing through his mind, he will be compelled to compare the weaker impression of, for instance, past hunger, or of vengeance satisfied, with the instinct of sympathy and goodwill to his fellows which is still present, and ever in some degree active in his mind. He will then feel in his imagination that a stronger instinct has yielded to one which now seems comparatively weak, and then that sense of dissatisfaction will inevitably be felt with which man is endowed, like every other animal, in order that his instincts may be obeyed.”\*

Leaving out for the present the last singular clause of this paragraph, which appears to point to a Cause altogether outside of the range of phenomena we are considering,—a Cause which, if it (or HE?) exist at all, may well “endow” human hearts more directly than through such dim animal instincts as are in question,—leaving out of view this hint of a Creator, we ask: Is this physiology of Repentance true to fact? It would be hard, I venture to think, to describe one more at variance with it. The reader might be excused who should figure to himself the author as a man who has never in his lifetime had cause seriously to regret a single unkindly or ignoble deed, and who has unconsciously attributed his own abnormally generous and placable nature to the rest of his species, and then theorized as if the world were made of Darwins. Where (we ask in bewilderment), where are the people to be found in whom “sympathy and goodwill” to all their neighbours exist in the state of permanent instincts, and whose resentful feelings, as a matter of course, die out after every little temporary exhibition, and leave them in charity with their enemies, *not* as the result of repentance, but as its preliminary? Where, O where, may we find the population for whom the precept, “Love your enemies,” is altogether superfluous, and who always revert to affection as soon as they have gratified any transient sentiment of an opposite tendency? Hitherto we have been accustomed to believe that (as Buddhists are wont to insist) a kind action done to a foe is the surest way to enable ourselves to return to charitable feelings, and that, in like manner, doing him an ill-turn is calculated to exasperate our own rancour. We have held it as axiomatic that “revenge and wrong bring forth their kind;” and that we hate those whom we have injured with an ever-growing spite and cruelty as we continue to give our malice headway. But instead of agreeing with Tacitus that “*Humani generis proprium est odisse quem læseris*,” Mr. Darwin actually supposes that as soon as ever we have delivered our blow, it is customary for us immediately to wish to wipe it off with a kiss! In what Island of the Blessed do people love all the way round their social circles, the mean and the vulgar, the disgusting and the tiresome, not excepted? If such beings are entirely exceptional now, when the careful husbandry of Christianity has been employed for eighteen

centuries in cultivating that virtue of mansuetude, of which the ancient world produced so limited a crop, how is it to be supposed that our hirsute and tusky progenitors of the Palæolithic or yet remoter age, were thoroughly imbued with such gentle sentiments? Let it be borne in mind that, unless the great majority of men, after injuring their neighbours, spontaneously turned to sympathize with them, there could not possibly be a chance for the foundation of a *general* sentiment such as Mr. Darwin supposes to grow up in the community.

This whole theory, then, of the origin of Repentance, namely, that it is the "innings" of our permanent social instincts when the transient selfish ones have played out their game, seems to be without basis on any known condition of human nature. Ostensibly raised on induction, it lacks the primary facts from which its inductions profess to be drawn; and Mr. Darwin, in offering it to us as the result of his studies in Natural History, has surely betrayed that he has observed other species of animals more accurately than his own; and that he has overlooked the vast class of intelligences which lie between baboons and philosophers.

The theory of the nature of Repentance which we have been considering, is a characteristic improvement on the current Utilitarian doctrine, in so far that it suggests a cause for the *human tenderness*, if I may so describe it, which forms one element in true repentance. If it were true of mankind in general (as it may be true of the most gentle individuals) that a return to sympathy and goodwill spontaneously follows, sooner or later, every unkind act, then Mr. Darwin's account of the case would supply us with an explanation of that side of the sentiment of repentance which is turned towards the person injured. It would still, I think, fail altogether to render an account of the mysterious awe and horror which the greater crimes have in all ages left on the minds of their perpetrators, far beyond any feelings of pity for the sufferers, and quite irrespective of fear of human justice or retaliation. This tremendous sentiment of Remorse, though it allies itself with religious fears, seems to me not so much to be derived from religious considerations as to be in itself one of the roots of religion. The typical Orestes does not feel horror because he fears

the Erinnyes, but he has called up the phantoms of the Erippytes in the nightmare of his horror. Nothing which Mr. Darwin, or any other writer on his side, so far as I am aware, has ever suggested as the origin of the moral sense, has supplied us with a plausible explanation of either such Remorse or of ordinary Repentance. In the former case, we have soul-shaking terrors to be accounted for, either (according to Mr. Darwin) by mere pity and sympathy, or (according to the old Utilitarians) by fear of retaliation or disgrace, such as the sufferer often notoriously defies or even courts. In the case of ordinary Repentance, we have a feeling infinitely sacred and tender, capable of transforming our whole nature as by an enchanter's wand, softening and refreshing our hearts as the dry and dusty earth is quickened by an April shower, but yet (we are asked to believe) caused by no higher sorcery, fallen from no loftier sky, than our own every-day instincts, one hour selfish and the next social, asserting themselves in wearisome alternation! What is the the right of one of these instincts as against the other, that its resumption of its temporary supremacy should be accompanied by such portents of solemn augury? Why, when we return to love our neighbour, do we at the same time hate ourselves, and *wish* to do so still more? Why, instead of shrinking from punishment, do men, under such impressions, always desire to expiate their offences so fervently, that with the smallest sanction from their religious teachers they rush to the cloister or seize the scourge? Why, above all, do we look inevitably beyond the fellow-creature whom we have injured up to God, and repeat the cry which has burst from every penitent heart for millenniums back, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned!"

Putting aside the obvious fact that the alleged cause of repentance could, at the utmost, only explain repentance for social wrong-doing, and leave inexplicable the equally bitter grief for personal offences, we find, then, that it fails even on its own ground. To make it meet approximately the facts of the case, we want something altogether different. We want to be told, not only why we feel sorry for our neighbour when we have wronged him, but how we come by the profound sense of a Justice which our wrong has infringed, and which we yet revere so humbly, that we often prefer to suffer that it may be vindicated. Of all this, the

Utilitarian scheme, with Mr. Darwin's additions, affords not the vaguest indication.

I cannot but think that, had any professed psychologist dealt thus with the mental phenomena which it was his business to explain, had he first assumed that we returned to benevolent feelings spontaneously after injuring our neighbours, and then presented such relenting as the essence of repentance, few readers would have failed to notice the disproportion between the unquestionable facts and their alleged cause. But when a great natural philosopher weaves mental phenomena into his general theory of physical development, it is to be feared that many a student will hastily accept a doctrine which seems to fit neatly enough into a system he adopts as a whole; even though it could find on its own merits no admission into a scheme of psychology. The theory of Morals which alone ought to command our adhesion must surely be one not like this, harmonizing only with one side of our philosophy, but equally true to all the facts of the case, whether we regard them from without or from within, whether we study Man, *ab extra*, as one animal amongst all the tribes of zoology, or from within by the experience of our own hearts. From the outside, it is obvious that the two human sentiments of Regret and Repentance may very easily be confounded. A theory which should account for Regret might be supposed to cover the facts of Repentance, did no inward experience of the difference forbid us to accept it. But since Coleridge pointed out this loose link in the chain of Utilitarian argument, no disciple of the school has been able to mend it; and even Mr. Darwin's theory only supplies an hypothesis for the origin of relenting Pity, not one for Penitence. Let us suppose two simple cases: first, that in an accident at sea, while striving eagerly to help a friend, we had unfortunately caused his death; second, that in the same contingency, an impulse of jealousy or anger had induced us purposely to withhold from him the means of safety. What would be our feelings in the two cases? In the first, we should feel Regret which, however deep and poignant, would never be anything else than simple Regret, and which, if it assumed the slightest tinge of self-reproach, would be instantly rebuked by every sound-minded spectator as morbid and unhealthy. In the second

case (assuming that we had perfect security against discovery of our crime), we should feel, perhaps, very little Regret, but we should endure Remorse to the end of our days; we should carry about in our inner hearts a shadow of fear and misery and self-reproach which would make us evermore alone amid our fellows. Now, will Mr. Darwin, or any other thinker who traces the origin of the Moral Sense to the "agglutinated" experience of utility of a hundred generations, point out to us how that experience can possibly have bequeathed to us the latter sentiment of Remorse for a crime, as contra-distinguished from that of Regret for having unintentionally caused a misfortune?

But if the origin of repentance, in the case of obvious capital injuries to our neighbour, cannot be accounted for merely as the result of ancestral experience, it appears still more impossible to account in the same way for the moral shame which attaches to many lesser offences, whose noxiousness is by no means self-evident, which no legislation has ever made penal, and which few religions have condemned. Mr. Wallace, in his *Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection*, appears to me to sum up this argument admirably.\* After explaining how very inadequate are the Utilitarian sanctions for Truthfulness, and observing how many savages yet make veracity a point of honour, he says: "It is difficult to conceive that such an intense and mystical feeling of right and wrong (so intense as to overcome all ideas of personal advantage or utility) could have been developed out of accumulated ancestral experiences of utility; but still more difficult to understand how feelings developed by one set of utilities could be transferred to acts of which the utility was partial, imaginary or absent"—or (as he might justly have added) so remote as to be quite beyond the ken of uncivilized or semi-civilized man. It is no doubt a fact that, in the long run, Truthfulness contributes more than Lying to the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number. But to discover that fact needs a philosopher, not a savage. Other virtues, such as that of care for the weak and aged, seem still less capable, as Mr. Mivart has admirably shewn,† of being evolved out of a sense of utility, seeing that savages and

\* P. 355.

† *Genesis of Species*, p. 192.

animals find it much the most useful practice to kill and devour such sufferers, and, by the law of the Survival of the Fittest, all nature below civilized man is arranged on the plan of so doing. Mr. W. R. Greg's very clever paper in *Fraser's Magazine*, pointing out how Natural Selection fails in the case of man in consequence of our feelings of pity for the weak, affords incidentally the best possible proof that human society is based on an element which has no counterpart in the utility which rules the animal world.

It would be doing Mr. Darwin injustice if we were to quit the consideration of his observations on the nature of Repentance, leaving on the reader's mind the impression that he has put them forward formally as delineating an exhaustive theory of the matter, or that he has denied, otherwise than by implication, the doctrine that higher and more spiritual influences enter into the phenomena of the moral life. The absence of the slightest allusion to any such higher sources of moral sentiment leaves, however, on the reader's mind a very strong impression that here we are supposed to rest. The developed Ape has acquired a moral sense by adaptive changes of mental structure precisely analogous to those adaptive changes of bodily structure which have altered his foot and rolled up his ear. To seek for a more recondite source for the one class of changes than for the other would be arbitrary and unphilosophical.

But now we come to the last, and, as it seems to me, the saddest doctrine of all. Our moral sense, however acquired, does not, it is asserted, correspond to anything real outside of itself, to any law which must be the same for all Intelligences, mundane or supernal. It merely affords us a sort of Ready Reckoner for our particular wages, a Rule of Thumb for our special work, in the position in which we find ourselves just at present. That I may do Mr. Darwin no injustice, I shall quote his observations on this point in his own words.

“It may be well first to premise that I do not wish to maintain that any strictly social animal, if its intellectual faculties were to become as active and as highly developed as in man, would acquire exactly the same moral sense as ours...If, for instance, to take an extreme case, men were reared precisely under the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees,

think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters, and no one would think of interfering. Nevertheless, the bee, or any other social animal, would in our supposed case gain, as it appears to me, some feeling of right and wrong, or a conscience. For each individual would have an inward sense of possessing certain stronger or more enduring instincts, and others less strong or enduring; so that there would often be a struggle which impulse should be followed, and satisfaction or dissatisfaction would be felt as past impressions were compared during their incessant passage through the mind. In this case, an inward monitor would tell the animal that it would have been better to have followed the one impulse rather than the other. The one course ought to have been followed. The one would have been right and the other wrong.\*

Now it is a little difficult to clear our minds on this subject of the mutable or immutable in morals. No believer in the immutability of morality holds that it is any *physical* act itself which is immutably right, but only the *principles* of Benevolence, Truth, and so on, by which such acts must be judged. The parallel between Ethics and Geometry here holds strictly true. The axioms of both sciences are necessary truths known to us as facts of consciousness. The subordinate propositions are deduced from such axioms by reflection. The application of the propositions to the actual circumstances of life is effected by a process (sometimes called "traduction") by which all applied sciences become practically available. For example, Geometry teaches us that a triangle is equal to half a rectangle upon the same base and with the same altitude, but no geometry can teach us whether a certain field be a triangle with equal base and altitude to the adjoining rectangle. To know this we must measure both, and then we shall know that if such be their proportions, the one will contain half as much space as the other. Similarly in morals, Intuition teaches us to "Love our Neighbour," and reflection will thence deduce that we ought to relieve the wants of the suffering. But no ethics can teach A what are the special wants of B, or how they can best be supplied. According, then, to the doctrines of Intuitive Morality, considerations of Utility have a most important, though altogether subordinate, place in ethics.

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\* Descent of Man, pp. 33, 34.



It is the office of experience to shew us *how* to put the mandates of intuition into execution, though not to originate our moral code,—*how* to fulfil the duty of conferring Happiness, though not to set up Happiness as the sole end and aim of Morality.

Now if Mr. Darwin had simply said that under totally different conditions of life many of the existing human duties would have been altered, we could have no possible fault to find with his remarks. In a world where nobody needed food there could be no duty of feeding the hungry ; in a world of immortals there could be no such crime as murder. Every alteration in circumstance produces a certain variation in moral obligation, for the plain reason (as above stated) that Morals only supply abstract principles, and, according to the circumstances of each case, their application must necessarily vary. If the triangular field have a rood cut off it, or a rood added on, it will no longer be the half of the rectangle beside it. It would not be difficult to imagine a state of existence in which the immutable principles of Benevolence would require quite a different set of actions from those which they now demand ; in fact, no one supposes that among the Blessed, where they will rule all hearts, they will inspire any such manifestations as they call for on earth.

But Mr. Darwin's doctrine seems to imply something very different indeed from this. He thinks (if I do not mistake him) that, under altered circumstances, human beings would have acquired consciences in which not only the *acts* of social duty would have been different, but its *principles* would have been transformed or reversed. It is obviously impossible to stretch our conception of the principle of Benevolence so far as should enable us to include under its possible manifestations the conduct of the worker bees to the drones ; and I suppose few of us have hitherto reflected on this and similar strange phenomena of natural history, without falling back with relief on the reflection that the animal, devoid of moral sense, does its destructive work as guiltlessly as the storm or the flood.

On Mr. Darwin's system, the developed bee would have an "inward monitor" actually prompting the murderous sting, and telling her that such a course "*ought* to have been followed." The Danaïdes of the hive, instead of the

eternal nightmare to which Greek imagination consigned them, would thus receive the reward of their assassinations in the delights of the *mens conscia recti* ; or, as Mr. Darwin expresses it, by the satisfaction of "the stronger and more enduring instinct." Hitherto we have believed that the human moral sense, though liable to sad oscillations under the influence of false religion and education, yet points normally to one true Pole. Now we are called on to think there is no pole at all, and that it may swing all round the circle of crimes and virtues, and be equally trustworthy whether it point north, south, east or west. In brief, there are no such things really as Right and Wrong ; and our idea that they have existence outside of our own poor little minds is pure delusion.

The bearings of this doctrine on Morality and on Religion seem to be equally fatal. The all-embracing Law which alone could command our reverence has disappeared from the universe ; and God, if He exist, may, for aught we can surmise, have for Himself a code of Right in which every cruelty and every injustice may form a part, quite as probably as the opposite principles.

Does such an hypothesis actually fit any of the known facts of human consciousness? Is there anywhere to be found an indication of the supposed possibility of acquiring a conscience in which the *principles* of Right and Wrong should be transformed, as well as their application altered? It would seem (as already alluded to) that, as a matter of fact, the utility of destroying old people and female infants has actually appeared so great to many savage and semi-civilized people, as to have caused them to practice such murders in a systematic way for thousands of years. But we have never been told that the Fuegians made it more than a matter of good sense to eat their grand-fathers, or that the Chinese, when they deposited their drowned babies in the public receptacles labelled "For Toothless Infants," did so with the proud consciousness of fulfilling one of those time-hallowed Rites of which they are so fond. The transition from a sense of Utility to a sense of Moral Obligation seems to be one which has never yet been observed in human history. Mr. Darwin himself, with his unvarying candour, remarks that no instance is known of an arbitrary or superstitious practice, though

pursued for ages, leaving hereditary tendencies of the nature of a moral sense. Of course where a religious sanction is believed to elevate any special act (such as Sabbath-keeping) into an express tribute of homage to God, it justly assumes in the conscience precisely the place such homage should occupy. But even here the world-old distinction between offences against such arbitrary laws, *mala prohibita*, and those against the eternal laws of morals, *mala in se*, has never been wholly overlooked.

I think, then, we are justified in concluding that the moral history of mankind, so far as we know it, gives no countenance to the hypothesis that Conscience is the result of certain contingencies in our development, and that it might at an earlier stage have been moulded into quite another form, causing Good to appear to us Evil, and Evil Good. I think we have a right to say that the suggestions offered by the highest scientific intellects of our time, to account for its existence on principles which shall leave it on the level of other instincts, have failed to approve themselves as true to the facts of the case. And I think, therefore, that we are called on to believe still in the validity of our own moral consciousness, even as we believe in the validity of our other faculties, and to rest in the faith (well-nigh universal) of the human race, in a fixed and supreme Law, of which the Will of God is the embodiment, and Conscience the Divine transcript. I think that we may still repeat the hymn of Cleanthes :

“That our wills blended into Thine  
 (Concurrent in the Law divine,  
 Eternal, universal, just and good),  
 Honouring and honoured in our servitude,  
 Creation’s Pæan march may swell,  
 The march of Law immutable,  
 Wherein, as to its noblest end,  
 All being doth for ever tend.”

FRANCES POWER COBBE.