

## V.—PROFESSOR GREEN'S LAST WORK.<sup>1</sup>

THIS volume is the last fruit of the labours of the late Prof. Green, and though incomplete, and wanting, even in the part which is completed, the final corrections of the author, it is in some ways a fuller representation of his mind than anything which has hitherto been put before the public. In his Introduction to Hume, and his other published essays, he had indeed expressed the main principle of his philosophy, and had illustrated it very fully by a comparison with the main forms of Empiricism or Sensationalism. Perhaps the central ideas of Critical Philosophy have never been presented with greater force of evidence than in the former work. But in this volume he has, for the first time, given a positive and constructive statement of his ideas, freed as far as possible from controversial matter. The fact also that the book is about Ethics has brought another result with it, which will give it an additional interest for many: that so much of the man himself is expressed in it. The repressed strength of his moral and political interests, the severity and simplicity of his moral temper, the unpretending practical aims with which his Idealism was bound up, the deeply religious spirit which underlay all his views of life, must be brought vividly before any one who carefully studies these pages, and especially before all those who have ever come into any contact with the author. In this review it is not proposed to write anything in the way of criticism, but only to indicate what seems to be the general bearing of the argument—and even this can be done only imperfectly in the case of a book which is too full of meaning to admit of abridgment.

What is implied in the possibility of a moral philosophy, a philosophy which shall explain, but not explain away, the moral consciousness of men? There is implied in it—such at least is the view taken in this book—that man's life is not merely one among the other forms of nature, not merely one of the phenomena or series of phenomena, which are the *objects* of his knowledge. Yet the main effort of the prevailing school of English writers on these subjects is to explain the moral nature of man as a special modification of

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the general animal susceptibility of pleasure and pain, brought about by the influence of what is called the 'social medium'. Such a natural history of man rapidly reduces the moral sentiment and the consciousness of freedom and responsibility which goes along with it, to mere illusions, in regard to which the only problem is to explain how they arose. And if the anthropological moralist has the courage of his opinions, he will not be content with "reducing the speculative part of ethics to a natural science," but will proceed "to abolish the preceptive part of them altogether". For it is vain to preach to a being "who is merely the result of natural forces" that it is his duty "to conform to their laws".

This conclusion cannot be combated by any isolated treatment of the practical or moral side of man's life. For, if it be once admitted that man, as a perceiving and knowing subject, is a merely natural being, it will be found impossible to claim any exemption from natural law for his will. Hence the only way in which it is possible to maintain the reality of the ideas of duty and freedom, is that which Kant took, through the criticism of experience. Only if it can be shown that man, as a conscious subject, is something more than a natural object, will it be possible even to attempt a proof that his action is not an expression of nature and necessity. The aim, therefore, of the first book of the *Prolegomena* is to repeat briefly the Kantian criticism of knowledge, only removing those inconsistencies which were incidental to the first statement of it in Kant.

"Can the knowledge of nature be itself a part or product of nature?" Or, can a subject in whom such knowledge is realised be rightly treated as if he were one of the objects he knows? Can we, *e.g.*, legitimately regard his life as a series of 'modes of matter and motion'? To say that we can, is to commit a gigantic *hysteron-proteron*; for "matter and motion, just so far as known, consist in, or are determined by, relations between the objects of that connected consciousness which we call experience"; and if, in giving an account of either, we try to abstract from relations which exist only for a conscious subject, we will find that nothing remains. How then shall we explain the existence of a self by that which only exists *for* a self? The moment this difficulty is really felt, the problem comes to be rather how that which is only as it is for consciousness, should be so often imagined to be a sufficient, or indeed any, explanation of consciousness. The reason is undoubtedly to be found in the twofold aspect in which man is forced to regard himself.

For while there is a "sense in which man is related to nature as its author," there is also "a sense in which he is related to it as its child," and it seems impossible to do justice to the latter sense without sacrificing the former.

In the Kantian philosophy this difficulty is got over by a compromise. Man is supposed to 'make nature,' but not to 'create it'. The understanding supplies the forms by which the matter of sense is brought together in experience and determined as a world of objects, but the matter is given to the mind from without. This compromise draws its plausibility from the fact that it seems to preserve for us the idea of a world which is determined in its own nature, independent of our consciousness of it, while yet it admits the constitutive power of consciousness in relation to that world which exists for us. It does so, however, only by introducing a conception which is found ultimately to be unmeaning; the conception of an object which causes our sensations, but which, in itself, does not exist for consciousness. Kant thus from another side falls into the same difficulty which had led Locke to treat the 'real' or objective element in knowledge as presented to us by, or consisting in, simple feelings or sensations which are given apart from any 'work of the mind' in establishing relations between them. But of such feelings, apart from the relations, nothing can be said. They do not exist either as knowledge, or as conceivable elements in knowledge, and hence they are of no avail in explaining—what they were introduced to explain—that permanent reality which we attribute to things as independent of the process whereby *we* individually come to know them. For what underlies all such attempts to divide the indivisible unity of fact and thought in experience is simply the idea that the real is an unalterably determined order of relations, combined with the idea that consciousness is a shifting succession of feelings. But while we may admit the truth of the former idea, we can find no ground for the latter, except in a confusion between the *existence* of feelings as successive states of a sensitive subject and the *consciousness* of having them—a consciousness which is possible only for a subject which distinguishes itself from them, takes them out of their transitory existence, and fixes them as definite facts, in relation to other facts, in the system of experience. Our feelings, therefore, like external objects, exist for us, *i.e.*, they are intelligible objects for us, only as an element in an unalterable order of relations, which remains unchanged amid all changes in the objects among which it holds, and contains in itself the proximate explanation of these changes. But the con-

ception of nature as such an all-inclusive system of relations is not one that can "stand alone". It requires, to render it intelligible, the idea of something else beyond the beings related—something else which shall combine them together "without effacing their severalty". And such a combining energy can only be an intelligence. We cannot, therefore, separate nature as a system of objects and events from the intelligence for which it exists, as if it were something which first exists by itself and then copies itself on our minds. Rather we must hold that the same principle through which there exists a world to be known, is present also in us, and so constitutes the intelligence through which we know it. "Nature is the system of related appearances, and related appearances are impossible except through the action of an intelligence. . . . Does this then imply the absurdity that nature comes into existence in the process by which this person or that begins to think? Not at all; unless it is necessary to suppose that intelligence first comes into existence when this person or that begins to understand—a supposition not only not necessary, but which on examination will be found to involve impossibilities analogous to those which prevent us from supposing that nature so comes into existence" (p. 38).

If this view of things is true, and if we cannot regard nature as complete in itself apart from a principle of intelligence substantially identical with that which we know in ourselves, then we may fairly argue that man, in so far as such a principle of intelligence manifests itself in him, is not to be reduced to a merely natural existence, a mere part of the natural system. If he were merely a part of it, he could not know it. Or, at least, if we do regard him as a part of nature, we must be using the word 'nature' to express the whole system of related phenomena, *including* the spiritual principle which it implies. And then we must find some other word to express the system of relations *exclusive* of that principle. In any case, we must be careful to observe that a being in whom the spiritual principle, which is the principle of unity in the world, manifests itself, must not be brought under categories, such as the categories of substance and cause, which apply only to those things which are parts of the natural system; nor can he be conceived as an object existing under conditions of time and space in the same way in which they exist. No doubt, as has been already admitted, it is true that there is one aspect of his existence in which man may be regarded as part of the natural system, in so far as his life is "an order of events in time, consisting in the

modifications of his sensibility". But in so far as it is a *consciousness* of these events in a related series (and what we call *our* life—the life of the self—is essentially a life of consciousness), it cannot be reduced to those events themselves, nor can any of its modifications, even the simplest, be accounted for simply as an event in time. This is equally true of *perception*, the function in which consciousness is usually supposed to be most dependent on something else than itself, as of those higher functions of thought and knowledge, in which it seems to be most independent. For perception is not sensation, nor is indeed sensation any part or element of it, though it is the consciousness of *the fact of our having* a sensation in relation to other facts. Its object, indeed, is represented as in time, but just for that reason, it implies and is a consciousness which is not *in* time, but *for* which time is. It is true that "the very consciousness which holds together successive events as equally present, has itself apparently a history in time". "But this apparent state of the case can only be explained by supposing that, in the growth of our experience, in the process of our learning to know the world, an animal organism which has its history in time, gradually becomes the vehicle of an eternally complete consciousness." What is called the history of our consciousness is the succession of feelings which, *as* parts of our consciousness, are taken out of their succession and fixed in reference to a subject which is not one of them, and which, therefore, has properly no history. Hence, if we talk of man's intelligence as a cause, we must call it a "free cause," a cause which does not depend on some other cause for being what it is, which cannot be externally explained like an event or object, which is what it is through other objects or events. In other words, we cannot transfer the term 'cause' "from the relation between one thing and another within the determined world, to the relations between that world and the agent implied in its existence," without observing that, in the latter case, what is before us is not an external relation of one thing to another, but a correlation of elements which imply each other. "There is no separate particularity in the agent on the one side, and the determined world as a whole on the other, such as characterises any agent or patient, any cause or effect within the determined world"; for "the world has no character but that given it by this action; the agent has no character but that which it gives itself in this action" (p. 81). This which is true of the spiritual principle of all things, is equally true of man in so far as spiritual life—the life of intelligence—is developed in him. Nor are we to take this

as meaning that his life is in part spiritual and in part natural, for, though natural processes do in a sense condition his life, yet, as mere natural processes, they form no part of it. In the first place, the very functions which would be merely natural "if they were not organic to an end consisting in knowledge, just because they are so organic, are not in their full reality natural functions. . . . For one who could comprehend the whole state of the case, even a digestion that served to nourish a brain which was in its turn organic to knowledge, would be essentially different from digestion in an animal incapable of knowledge." And, in the second place,—what is more important,—nothing can come within the circle of self-consciousness, which is man's proper life, without being determined by it; nothing is *for* him, which is not *by* him. And, therefore, his existence as a "free cause" is not affected by the processes of animal evolution by which his physical existence may have been developed. "If there are reasons for holding that man, in respect of his animal nature, is descended from 'mere' animals—animals in whom the functions of life and sense were not organic to the eternal or distinctively human consciousness—this does not affect our conclusion in regard to the consciousness of which, as he now is, man is the subject, a conclusion founded on analysis of what he now is and does" (p. 87).

Having thus, in the First Book, secured his ground in the "metaphysics of knowledge or experience," the author, in the Second Book of the *Prolegomena*, proceeds to treat of the "metaphysics of moral nature," and in this sphere he guides himself by the same principles. As he has shown that the sensational conditions of knowledge do not affect its nature as the product of a self-conscious intelligence, so now he seeks to prove that the fact of our action being conditioned by impulses does not affect its character as self-determination. As perception is different from sensation, so is the desire of a wanted object different from an impulse based upon animal wants. An animal want cannot become a *motive* of action for us, unless "upon the want there supervenes the presentation of the want by a self-conscious subject to himself, and with it the idea of a self-satisfaction to be attained in the filling of the want," (p. 94). Though, therefore, the want is presupposed, it is entirely changed in its character by its becoming an object which a self identifies with its own good. As "life is not a mechanical or chemical process because mechanical and chemical processes are necessary to the living body," so "moral action or action

from motives is not a natural event because natural want is necessary to it". Nor can we even say that the animal want is *part* of the motive, part of what determines the conscious being to action; for, as mere animal impulse, it does not determine consciousness at all. Hence, "our self-determination, even when it has merely animal wants for its content, is not a natural event, determined by other natural events before it". It, like perception and knowledge, is the action of a consciousness which cannot be determined by any cause that does not derive its character and its influence as a motive from that consciousness itself. This is the true sense in which we can be said to possess free-will, as opposed on the one hand to what is called 'liberty of indifference' or action without motives, and on the other to Determinism, the theory according to which man's action is determined by the desire that happens to be strongest. Against the former, it needs only to be pointed out that rational or self-conscious action is always action from motives, and that the question of freedom is, therefore, merely the question whether the intelligence or conscious self is constitutive of its own motives. Against the latter it has to be maintained that a mere desire is not a motive except in so far as it is identified by a conscious subject with itself, *i.e.*, with the good or part of the good in which it seeks its satisfaction, and that, as so identified, it can no longer be compared with the other desires as stronger or weaker. Man is determined by his desires only so far as he makes their object *his* object, or seeks his own satisfaction in them. We may admit that there is a sense in which the common saying is true that a man's action is the result of his character and circumstances. But this does not make him a necessary agent; for the circumstances are what they are for him by the action of consciousness, and the character is the man as he has framed to himself an idea of good, of a universe of satisfactions, in which he seeks to be realised.

Determinism naturally goes with a kind of Nominalism, which begins by denying the reality of any such general powers in man as intellect, will, or desire, except as general names for the separate classes of mental acts, and which naturally goes on to deny the reality of the self as distinguished from these classes. To such a theory it is to be answered that, if the self is nothing real apart from the particular feelings, desires, perceptions, it is equally true that *they* are nothing real except in relation to the one self. Now this self is a centre of unity, to which we refer, on the



one hand, our consciousness of the world as it *is*, and on the other hand, our consciousness of the world as it *should be*—i.e., of a world whose realisation depends on the previously given idea of it. And as mere fleeting sensations are translated by consciousness into a system of related objects so the appetites and impulses are changed by it into a "world of wanted objects," or the idea of a complete good in which there lies a full satisfaction for the self. Thus there is for each conscious subject "a world of feeling, however limited in its actual range, yet boundless in capacity, of which he represents himself as the centre". Every one of our desires, whether their objects be sensuous or spiritual, by being brought together in one consciousness, is determined and modified by the others in a way impossible to a purely animal subject, for which each impulse passes away with its satisfaction. "The conception of general well-being is a medium through which each desire is at once qualified and reinforced by all the rest." Hence we are unable to treat desire as a mere general name for a number of isolated particulars, which externally limit and conflict with each other, but must rather regard it as a unity in which each particular is determined in its relation to the other particulars, *through* its relation to the universal which includes them all. The will is often represented as if it were something like a material object moved by different forces of desire. But if we distinguish it from the desires at all, we must rather take it as the unity which specifies itself in them, yet in all its specification remains one with itself.

And the same principles must also be applied to the separate functions of thinking and knowing on the one side, and of desiring and willing on the other. These are not to be treated as separate activities, which are what they are independently of each other. On the contrary, we must regard them as "two equally primitive and co-ordinate possibilities" of man's being, which "have a common source in one and the same self-consciousness," and which, therefore, mutually imply each other. "No desire which forms part of our moral experience would be what it is, if it were not the desire of a subject which also understands: no act of our intelligence would be what it is, if it were not the act of a subject which also desires." This becomes clear if we consider, in the first place, that there is a general agreement between our intellectual and practical consciousness, in and so far as each "implies a relation between a subject and a world of manifold facts of which it is at first conscious



simply as alien to itself, but which it is in constant process of adjusting to itself". In the intellectual life we begin with a consciousness of fact, but the "same self-consciousness which arrests successive sensations as facts to be attended to, finds itself baffled so long as the facts remain an unconnected manifold"; hence it is constantly seeking to make the facts its own, *i.e.*, one with its consciousness of itself, by tracing their relations to all other facts in the "cosmos of experience". In like manner, our will or practical consciousness begins also in a "consciousness of opposition between a man's self and the real world," and is a continuous effort to overcome it "by giving a reality in the world, a reality under conditions of fact to the object which, as desired, exists merely in idea". The activity of the intellectual and practical consciousness thus deals with the same dualism, which they seek in different ways to reconcile, by "taking the world into the self, or by carrying the self out into the world". Furthermore, it may be shown that desire is involved in the process of knowing, and the action of the understanding in the process of willing. Nor can we even say that willing is *more* than thinking, but only that it is a *different kind* of thinking from that which is speculatively directed. It appears, therefore, that the division which we make between the faculties of thought and action, like all the other divisions which we make between particular desires and ideas, must be taken as merely relative, and we cannot talk of these faculties any more than we can talk of the particular desires and ideas as externally determining each other. Or if we do so, we must constantly remember that such language is somewhat misleading, since it is apt to make us forget the unity of the self, which expresses itself in these different ways. For "thought and desire are not to be regarded as separate powers, of which one can be exercised by us without, or in conflict with, the other. They are rather different ways in which the consciousness of self, which is also necessarily consciousness of a manifold world other than self, expresses itself" (p. 142). Intellect, desire, and will, are simply the man thinking, desiring, and willing, "and carrying his whole self with him" into each of his actions.

The Third Book of the *Prolegomena* is occupied with the contrast of the good and the bad will, and with the determination of the moral ideal. All will involves self-identification with an object, and, therefore, the goodness and badness of the will must depend on the nature of the object. But the important point to determine is whether in the case

of the good will the object is external to the activity by which it is realised, and can be characterised independently of it. According to strict Hedonism, the object of desire or will is always pleasure, and therefore, there is no *intrinsic* difference of the good and the bad will. Such a doctrine, however, is offensive to the unsophisticated moral consciousness, and its plausibility is mainly due to a confusion. The undoubted truth, that the individual always finds pleasure in the attainment of the object which he seeks as good, has been supposed to carry with it the consequence that the object sought is itself always pleasure. On the other hand, if we say that there is an *intrinsic* difference between the good and the bad will, we seem to be involved in a kind of circular reasoning. For then it appears as if we should be obliged to explain the good or moral ideal merely as the end of the good will, while yet we have no definition of the good will except that it is directed to the good as its end. This circle is, in a sense, necessary if we are not to give man's moral being an end external to itself, and so reduce it to a mere means or instrument. But it may be at once explained, and, for practical purposes, escaped, if we consider that, though we cannot say man's end is anything else than to realise the faculties of his being as a self-conscious subject, and though we cannot know what these faculties are except from their realisation, yet that from reflection upon that realisation so far as it has gone, we can in a measure estimate both what the faculty is, and what is the direction in which it may be further developed. "We cannot indeed, describe any state in which man, having become all that he is capable of becoming—all that according to the divine plan of the world he is destined to become—would find rest for his soul. We cannot conceive it under any forms borrowed from our actual experience, for our only experience of activity is of such as implies incompleteness. . . . Yet the conviction that there must be such a state of being, merely negative as is our theoretical apprehension of it, may have supreme influence on our conduct, in moving us to that effort after the Better, which, at least as a conscious effort, implies the conviction of there being a Best" (p. 180). This view must, however, be taken in connexion with the general conception of man's life, previously developed, according to which "as our knowledge, so our moral activity was only explicable on supposition of a certain reproduction of itself by the eternal mind as the self of man, a reproduction of itself to which it makes the processes of animal life organic, and which is qualified and limited by

the nature of these processes, but which is so far essentially a reproduction of the one supreme subject, implied in the existence of the world, that the product carries with it under all its limitations and qualifications the characteristic of being an object to itself" (p. 181). For, if this be true, we can understand how the beginning of morality for man lies in his presenting to himself some object in which he thinks that he discerns his 'good,' or the complement of his being; and how it is that, through many deceptions arising from the discordance between *that* which he seeks and *that in* which he seeks it, he is continually coming to clearer insight into the nature of that moral good which alone can satisfy him. From a consideration of the nature of the self to be satisfied we can say that the good, or the object of the good will, must have certain characteristics; it must be permanent, like the self of which it is the satisfaction, and it cannot therefore consist in a series of isolated pleasures that perish with the using, and leave the self not richer, but rather poorer. It must be a good which is realised in persons, and is inseparable from their self-consciousness, as that in which alone a divine self-consciousness can reproduce and express itself. It must be a social life of persons, since "social life is to personality what language is to thought," and it is only in participating in the life of a community, that the individual in spite of his finitude, can realise the infinite possibilities of his nature. Nor must these persons be conceived as passing phenomena of a general life of humanity, which uses them as its vehicles, but is not realised in them; for, "to speak of any progress, or improvement, or development of a nation or society or mankind, except as relative to some greater worth of persons, is to use words without meaning" (p. 193). Finally, as there is no realisation or development in a process *ad infinitum*, a process not relative to an end, we must conceive that neither the persons, nor the good realised in them, can ever pass away. "On the whole, our conclusion must be that, great as are the difficulties which beset the idea of development when applied to the facts of life, we do not escape them, but empty the idea of any real meaning, if we suppose the end of the development to be one in the attainment of which persons—agents who are ends to themselves—are extinguished, or one which is other than a state of self-conscious being, or one in which that reconciliation with the claims of persons as each at once a means to the good of the others and an end to himself,

already partially achieved in the higher forms of human society, is otherwise than completed (p. 199).

When we try more definitely to describe the end, or still more to draw from it particular precepts for moral conduct, we seem at first to be reduced to a standstill. For there are, properly speaking, no special rules of morality, which hold good *absolutely*, or which are not liable to modification from the further development of human capacity. Are we then to fall back on the tautology that the unconditioned moral imperative commands us only to obey the unconditioned moral imperative? Practically, this difficulty is met by the fact that there is a certain established order of morality, a certain code of 'respectability,' in which the good has already expressed itself, and which is to be regarded as unconditionally binding, as against any mere desire for pleasure or aversion from pain; as in short unconditionally binding against every desire, except that "desire for the best in conduct" which has produced the present code, and will from time to time suggest its improvement. Further light may be had by considering the development of this code in history, in view of what has already been said of the nature of the self-consciousness which is the subject of development. In its earliest form, the moral end appears as some permanent social well-being of persons, which may be conceived in a very external and material way, and may be limited to a narrow circle of individuals, but which still bears in it recognisably the general characteristics of moral good as already described. This first form is gradually changed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, by the enlargement of the area of persons included within the social bond, and by the deepening and purifying of the idea of good, in which satisfaction for these persons is sought. These two processes are interdependent, for the true good can be found only in that in which rivalry is impossible, and the consciousness of such a good can reach its purest form only when men have recognised each other as members of one all-embracing community. Thus we find the area of justice and of charity gradually extending from the family to the nation and to humanity, and at the same time the idea of good rising from being to well-being, and from all kinds of outward good to the intrinsic qualities of soul which are exercised in their attainment or enjoyment. The decisive turning-point in this latter respect may be found in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, writers to whom mainly we owe two great steps in the moral culture of mankind. For they first gave a general

systematic view of the qualities of the virtuous life, and they also first distinctly expressed the idea that it is in the development and exercise of these qualities, and not in any extraneous end, that the good of man consists. The results of this effort of Greek speculation were permanent. For, notwithstanding all that subsequent deepening and widening of man's moral life which has been the result of Christianity and other influences, the general principle of morality must still be expressed in the form in which it was first brought to a consciousness of itself in Greece. "And when we come to ask ourselves what are the essential forms in which the will for true good (which is the will to be good) must appear, our answer follows the outlines of the Greek classification of virtues. It is the will to know what is true, to make what is beautiful, to endure pain and fear, to resist the allurements of pleasure (*i.e.*, to be brave and temperate), if not, as the Greek would have said, in the service of the State, yet in the interest of some form of human society; to take for oneself, to give to others, of those things which admit of being taken and given, not what one is inclined to, but what is due" (p. 276). In what follows this quotation, the author has illustrated this view—in some of the most striking pages of the volume—by a detailed consideration of the virtues of courage and temperance, showing how the Aristotelian ideas of these virtues have been purified and widened in modern Ethics without losing their fundamental identity.

The general result of this Book of the *Prolegomena*, in the analysis of which we cannot here proceed further, is to show that there is an ideal of good bound up with the consciousness of self, and involving the consciousness of other selves as partaking in one common life, which grows with the individuals partaking it, and with which they grow. This ideal is present and implicit in the first practical self-consciousness of man, in so far as he is not driven into action by wants like the animals but directs himself by motives, *i.e.*, by ends which he sets before him, and in which he seeks to realise and satisfy himself. He seeks objects only as he subsumes them under the idea of good, and the first objects which he so subsumes are always inadequate to the idea. Hence, by partial disappointments and partial satisfactions, he is gradually awakened to a consciousness of himself and of the good he wants. Growing self-consciousness makes him seek higher objects, and higher objects bring clearer self-consciousness. The most critical turning-point in this progress is that in which the adequate end of the social

community is recognised as no other than the development of mind and character in the self-conscious beings who are its members. And the end—so far as we can think of the end—must lie in the widening of the community to all self-conscious beings, and the elimination of all activities except those in which the good of one is the good of all the others.

The Fourth and last Book of the *Prolegomena*, which we must notice very summarily, is devoted to the question of the practical value of Moral Philosophy. It begins with discussion of the value of having a moral ideal, and especially of that self-questioning as to motive, which is commonly called conscientiousness, and which involves the comparison of self with such an ideal. What, in other words, is the value of conscious and reflective, as opposed to what is called unconscious, morality? "A man's approach to the ideal of virtue is by no means to be measured by the clearness or constancy of his reflection upon the ideal." There have been many benefactors of humanity who have improved and elevated man's life, but who have been absorbed in their schemes for the bettering of men's estate almost to the exclusion of all reflection upon their own motives. At the same time, the highest moral purity cannot be attained without those searchings of heart which arise from the humbling yet elevating comparison of ourselves with the highest ideal of virtue. Nor can we separate this purifying of motive from the outward efficiency of effort after particular goods, though it may not be always easy to trace the connexion between the improvement of action and elevation of the character of the motives. It is somewhat perplexing to see what seems to be great efficiency for ends in themselves good, going along with mean motives; but in most cases, this only means that selfishness has found its account in making itself the instrument of something higher than itself. And the real originative power of a moral act is probably, if we could see the whole, exactly proportioned to the purity of its motive. While, however, it may be allowed that the purification of motive is as real a part of moral progress as the performance of outwardly good actions, and that reflection is the necessary instrument of such purification, this does not yet carry with it the practical value of the kind of reflection which is involved in the establishment of a moral theory. And, indeed, if practical influence be claimed for this kind of reflection, yet it must not be estimated too highly, at least if we mean by that *direct* influence. In the main, the work of moral theory must be defensive.



Reflection in this sense is needed mainly to heal the wounds of reflection itself—to save men from the dangers of that kind of sophistication by which intellectual doubt aids in weakening the moral force of resistance to passion. Nor is it easy to get from any theory the means of directly determining cases of moral difficulty (such as that of Jeanie Deans in the *Heart of Midlothian*) when what is in itself a good impulse comes into conflict with the ordinary rules of morality. In the face of such an emergency, moral decision must necessarily be the intuitive expression of character. Still a true moral theory may aid in the formation of a character which will make the right decision possible. It may do this service in a reflective age by enabling men to recognise the essential truth of the imaginative forms in which the moral and religious consciousness has to express itself. It may also help to solve casuistical difficulties which arise from the conflict of different authorities which have a traditional claim upon our respect, by making us reflect on the real basis of such claims in the moral consciousness which all these authorities partially express.

The last two chapters of the *Prolegomena* contain a comparison of the hedonistic theory with the theory of the good as consisting in the perfect actualisation of human capacity, in relation to their respective *practical* influence. It is pointed out that the hedonistic criterion was useful in the hands of Bentham, because he insisted so strongly on the *equal* claims of all to a share of happiness, and not because he defined happiness as pleasure. The nature of the reforms which he was mainly concerned in urging did not make it necessary to have any very exact definition of the nature of happiness. Such a definition, however, it is maintained, becomes necessary when we advance beyond the broad legal aspects of conduct. And in connexion with the proof of this, Mr. Sidgwick's theory (which admits that reason is so far constitutive of motives as to generalise the desire of pleasure and bid us seek it for all and not for self) is carefully criticised. In opposition to this theory, the author repeats his argument that the good, as the end determined by reason, is not only quantitatively but qualitatively distinguished from the end determined by sensuous feeling. And the book ends with the guarded conclusion that in those not very numerous cases where a criterion is wanted "for estimating those claims upon us which are not enforced by the sanction of conventional morality," such a criterion "is afforded by the theory of ultimate good as a perfection of the human spirit resting in



the will to be perfect (which may be called in short the theory of virtue as an end in itself) but not by the theory of good as consisting in the maximum of possible pleasure".

The very imperfect outline which has just been given of a volume so rich in matter, cannot do more than indicate its general line of argument. The points in which probably the greatest originality and freshness of remark will be found, are the discussion of the nature of will in the Second Book, the account of the development of the ethical ideal in the Third Book, particularly the comparison of Greek and modern ideas of virtue, and the fine and subtle ethical observation shown in the sections on purity of motive and on casuistical difficulties, in the Fourth Book. The strong practical insight of the author into the difficulties and furtherances of the spiritual life is shown in almost every page, and is the feature which distinguishes this from most of his previously published writings. It is a book which is not easy to review for any one before whom it brings so vividly, even in the peculiarities of phrase, the constant self-questioning fairness and unwillingness to pass over any difficulty which were characteristic of the writer. Whether it will carry conviction to those of another way of thinking, it may be difficult to say. But we think that no attentive reader can fail to be struck with the singular desire to give full justice to every opponent, and the absolute avoidance of anything like harsh or polemical expression, which are its characteristics.

We shall only make one criticism. The method pursued in the investigation of the moral ideal may be described as that of Aristotle modified by Kant. Following the latter, the author asks what are the conditions of experience, and especially of moral experience. But, like the former, he takes his start from the concrete moral experience reached in the social community of the family and the state. And as this ethical experience is not, as by Aristotle, taken to be completed in the definite form of a municipal state, which once for all has exhausted the moral capacity of man, but is viewed as still in process of being realised in a growing community which is gradually learning to recognise the claims of all self-conscious beings, so the ethical ideal is seen to involve a far more thorough transmutation of the natural man, a far stronger demand upon the individual to die to his lower self that he may live to the higher self and to mankind, than could be recognised by an ancient philosopher. At the same time, the author, while, like Kant,

he bids us reason backwards from our intellectual and moral experience to that spiritual nature in which lies the possibility at once of knowledge and of moral action, is also like Kant in refusing to say much of that spiritual nature in itself. That "the source of the categories cannot be brought under the categories," and that the moral acts in which the self is realised cannot be treated as natural events, he maintains with great force of argument. But he is unwilling to go much further—either in the direction of speculation about the nature of the self-conscious principle to which he has referred all things, or in positively working out any view of nature and human history as the manifestation of spirit. In regard to the theoretical aspect of the subject, after pointing out that reality is that which exists for a thinking consciousness, he adds (p. 54), "as to what that consciousness is in itself, or in its completeness, we can only make negative statements. *That* there is such a consciousness is implied in the existence of the world, but *what* it is, we can only know through its so far acting in us as to enable us, however partially and uninterruptedly, to have knowledge of a world or an intelligent experience." And in a similar sense, speaking of the practical ideal as the realisation of human capacity, he declares that in its completeness we cannot say *what* it is. "We cannot conceive it under any forms borrowed from our actual experience, for our only experience of activity is such as implies incompleteness. Of a life of completed development, of activity with the end attained, we can only speak or think in negatives, and thus only can we speak or think of that state of moral being in which, according to our theory, the ultimate moral good must consist" (p. 186). This language will probably seem to many to be at variance with some of the results subsequently arrived at by the author himself as to the nature of the moral ideal as determined by the idea of the self. And it seems to be inconsistent with the value which is assigned to the Platonic and Aristotelian criticism of morality, as not only enabling these philosophers to understand the life of Greece, but to lay a basis for a universal morality. It is true that we cannot explain the spiritual principle, which is implied in all explanation, by reference to anything else than itself, but this does not imply that we only know *that* it is, and not *what* it is. Our knowledge of the self is rather the type to which all other knowledge imperfectly approximates, than an inferior kind of knowledge. And, on the other hand, if it is possible for us to carry back the world of experience to conditions that

are spiritual, there seems to be nothing that should absolutely hinder us from regarding the world *positively* as the manifestation of spirit, and from re-interpreting the results of science by the aid of this idea,—however difficult it may be to realise satisfactorily such an idealistic reconstruction of science. And in like manner, if it is possible to carry back our moral life to its conditions, and to regard it as the realisation of the self, there seems to be no absolute hindrance in using this idea positively, not only as a key to the history of the past, but also to determine, in outline at least, the idea of moral perfection. Nay, it seems as if this volume, even in view of its own disclaimer, was itself a proof that this result can be in some measure realised.

EDWARD CAIRD.