

II.—THE EVOLUTION OF MORALITY.

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THE conception of Evolution has now established itself so firmly in the scientific and even in the popular mind that it becomes necessary for Philosophy to come to an understanding with it. If it may be said that generally the business of Philosophy is the investigation of the ultimate value of scientific conceptions, it must be peculiarly concerned with this, the latest and widest, generalisation of science. More particularly, it is of the utmost importance, for the satisfaction not only of the speculative but also of the practical interest, to determine the ethical implications of the Evolution-theory. Does it carry with it any ethical doctrine; and if so, how is this related to older theories, and how far does it take us in the interpretation of the facts of moral life? For an answer to these questions Evolutionists, even when not professed philosophers, have not left us entirely to ourselves. Their answers, however, are different, and even, in some points, contradictory. Limiting our attention to representative writers, we have three answers, more or less divergent. The bearing of the Evolution-theory upon human life and conduct has been investigated by its most original modern exponent in the *Descent of Man* (pt. i. c. 4), more elaborately by Mr. Herbert Spencer in his *Data of Ethics*, and still more recently and fully by Mr. Leslie Stephen in his *Science of Ethics*.

While these writers differ in their account of moral life, and in their definition of the ethical end, they are at one on the question of method. The reform in ethical method which they, and the "school" constituted by their followers, seek in common to introduce is, in words, the same as Kant's reform of metaphysical procedure, namely, to make it "scientific". Previous ethical theories, they say, have been either "empirical" or "*a priori*". Neither method is the true one. Apply the principle of Evolution to the phenomena of moral life, as it has already been applied to the phenomena of physical life and inorganic nature, and the former, equally with the latter, will fall into order and system. Morality, like Nature, has evolved; and neither can be understood except in the light of its evolution. Nay, the evolution of morality is part and parcel of the general

evolution of nature, its crown and climax indeed, but of the same warp and woof. In the successful application of his theory to moral life, therefore, the Evolutionist sees the satisfaction of his highest ambition ; for it is here that the critical point is reached which shall decide whether or not his conception is potent to reduce all knowledge to unity. If morality offers no resistance to its application, its adequacy is once for all completely vindicated. Thus we are offered, by the three writers mentioned, what Green calls a "natural science of morals". Mr. Leslie Stephen, indeed, expressly limits himself to the "scientific" view, not excluding a possible "philosophical" or "transcendental" account of the same facts. But Mr. Stephen, equally with Darwin and Spencer, implies throughout that the "scientific" or "natural" account of morality is the only fruitful one. I propose in this paper, after tracing summarily the results reached by this new ethical method in the hands of the three thinkers just named, to endeavour to arrive at some estimate of its adequacy as employed by them for the solution of the main problems of ethics.

Man's chief superiority to the lower animals, according to Darwin, lies in his "intellectual powers" and "social qualities". But even here, in his mental and moral faculties, Darwin recognises no essential difference between man and the higher mammals. "The difference . . . great as it is, certainly is one of degree, and not of kind. . . . The senses and intuitions, the various emotions and faculties, . . . of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well-developed condition, in the lower animals." Of these faculties, "the moral sense or conscience" is, he admits, "by far the most important". Approaching the question of its nature and genesis "exclusively from the side of natural history" (for the first time, as he says), he enunciates the following proposition as "in a high degree probable":—"that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well, or nearly as well, developed as in man". The origin of the moral sense is thus found in the social impulse, a primary animal instinct which demands its satisfaction as immediately as any other instinct. Its development is due to the obvious utility of such an instinct ; here, as elsewhere, the Law of Evolution is "natural selection". The social instinct being "one

of high importance to all those animals which aid and defend one another, it will have been increased through natural selection ; for those communities which included the greatest number of the most sympathetic members would flourish best and rear the greatest number of offspring ”.

But how shall we account for the peculiar authority of the moral, that is, the social, feelings ? The social instincts are not actually stronger than “the instincts of self-preservation”. “Why, then, does man regret, even though trying to banish 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 profoundly from the lower animals.” With the latter, the question is one merely of the relative strength of different impulses ; with man, there is clearly another consideration. As a reflective being, he cannot help instituting a comparison between the results which follow the gratification of his various impulses. The social instincts, he finds, are “ever present and persistent,” while the others are in their nature “temporary”. The former are also more capable of being recalled in imagination, and, to man as a social being, afford a greater satisfaction than the latter. On these differences is based the distinction between the actual and the legitimate strength of an impulse. Let a man gratify a peremptory selfish instinct, what will be his experience as he regards this gratification in the calm light of reflection ? “When past and weaker impressions are judged by the ever-enduring social instinct, and by his deep regard for the good opinion of his fellows, retribution will surely come. He will then feel remorse, repentance, regret or shame. . . . He will consequently resolve, more or less firmly, to act differently for the future ; and this is conscience.” “Thus at last man comes to feel, through acquired and perhaps inherited habit, that it is best for him to obey his more persistent impulses. The imperious word *ought* seems merely to imply the consciousness of the existence of a rule of conduct, however it may have originated.”

This theory of morality Darwin enunciates as the ethical corollary of the general theory of Evolution. His position may be called Utilitarian ; but Darwin himself distinguishes it carefully from Hedonism, whether of the egoistic or altruistic type. The result of reflection on human conduct and its motives is, he holds, the recognition, in man, of “an impulsive power widely different from a search after pleasure or happiness ; and this seems to be the deeply-planted social

instinct". Further, the object of this primary and enduring instinct is "the general good or welfare of the community, rather than the general happiness". "The term general good may be defined as the rearing of the greatest number of individuals in full vigour and health, with all their faculties perfect, under the conditions to which they are subjected." The "general good or welfare" and the "general happiness," it is true, "usually coincide"; "and, as all wish for happiness, the 'greatest happiness principle' will have become a most important secondary guide and object". But the direct and primary object of the social instinct is the welfare—in the sense explained above—of the community, narrower or wider, and ultimately of the race itself. In this alone it finds its proper satisfaction; and in proportion as the intellectual grasp of this becomes more comprehensive, the range of the social instinct, and thus of morality itself, is extended.

Mr. Spencer, while professing to limit himself, like Darwin, to "the implications of the Evolution-hypothesis," offers us a theory of morality essentially different from that just described. He differs from Darwin in his account of the ethical end, of the place of obligation in moral life, and of the relation of the egoistic and altruistic sides of morality. His attitude to older theories is also different. While Darwin, without regard to the various historical theories of morality, elaborated an independent ethical theory on the basis of Evolution, Mr. Spencer undertakes his task with a "reconciling project" of an ambitious kind.

The subject-matter of Ethics is, in his view, "that form which universal conduct assumes during the last stages of its evolution". Conduct is "the adjustment of acts to ends," and in the growing complexity and completeness of this adjustment consists its evolution. Things and actions are "good or bad according as they are well or ill adapted to achieve prescribed ends," or "according as the adjustments of acts to ends are or are not efficient". And, ultimately, their goodness or badness is determined by the measure in which all minor ends are merged in the grand end of self- and race-preservation. As "evolution becomes the highest possible where the conduct simultaneously achieves the greatest totality of life in self, in offspring and in fellow-men, so . . . the conduct called good rises to the conduct conceived as best when it fulfils all three classes of ends at the same time". Thus "the ideal goal to the natural

evolution of conduct" is at the same time "the ideal standard of conduct ethically considered".

The universal end of conduct, therefore, is "life"—its preservation and development. But Mr. Spencer is not content, like Darwin, with this simple deduction from the theory of Evolution. He proceeds to interpret "life," on the old hedonistic lines. "In calling good the conduct which subserves life, and bad the conduct which hinders or destroys it, and in so implying that life is a blessing and not a curse, we are inevitably asserting that conduct is good or bad according as its total effects are pleasurable or painful." "No school can avoid taking for the ultimate moral aim a desirable state of feeling called by whatever name—gratification, enjoyment, happiness. Pleasure, somewhere, at some time, to some being or beings, is an inexpugnable element of the conception. It is as much a necessary form of moral intuition as space is a necessary form of intellectual intuition."

The modification thus given to the old Utilitarianism, however, by the application of the conception of Evolution, must be carefully noted. While former Utilitarian theories were empirical and inductive, Evolutional Utilitarianism is rational and deductive. The old Utilitarianism, which derived its principles of conduct from observation of consequences, or, at best, as with Mill, by deduction from rules which are themselves the result of previous inductions, "is but preparatory to the utilitarianism which deduces these principles from the processes of life, as carried on under established conditions of existence". For, since the moral estimate of conduct proceeds entirely upon the relative efficiency of the adjustment of the living being to the conditions of his life, that is, to his environment, physical and social; from the nature of these conditions and their variations, the nature of the corresponding conduct and its variations may with certainty be deduced.

Further, this view of moral principles, it is contended, not only places Utilitarianism upon a new and scientific basis, it also affords a ground of conciliation between "intuitional" and "derivative" theories of morality. For, while moral rules, thus conceived, are seen to be the result of the experience of the race, to the individual they still present themselves as "intuitions". Moral intuitions are not, any more than intellectual intuitions, simple and original; they are "the slowly organised results of experiences received by the race". But these results are not to be regarded as an external possession, as a "nautical almanac" which may

or may not be consulted by the individual. They are a part of himself, as the heir of all the ages which have preceded him. The experience of the race does not consist of isolated parts, or pass away; it becomes "organised and consolidated" in the individual consciousness.

But conduct—human conduct at least—has also a subjective side; the adjustment of acts to ends is, or may be, conscious. In describing this inner side of conduct, Mr. Spencer professes to trace "the genesis of the moral consciousness". Its "essential trait" he finds to be "the control of some feeling or feelings by some other feeling or feelings"; and "the general truth disclosed by the study of evolving conduct, sub-human and human," is that, "for the better preservation of life, the primitive, simple, presentative feelings must be controlled by the later-evolved, compound and representative feelings". Mr. Spencer mentions three controls of this kind—the political, the religious and the social. These do not, however, severally or together, "constitute the moral control, but are only preparatory to it—are controls within which the moral control evolves". "The restraints properly distinguished as moral are unlike those restraints out of which they evolve, and with which they are long confounded, in this—they refer not to the extrinsic effects of actions, but to their intrinsic effects. The truly moral deterrent is . . . constituted . . . by a representation of the necessary natural results."

Thus arises "the feeling of moral obligation," "the sentiment of duty". "It is an abstract sentiment generated in a manner analogous to that in which abstract ideas are generated." On reflection, we observe that the common characteristic of the feelings which prompt to "good" conduct is that "they are all complex, re-representative feelings, occupied with the future rather than the present. The idea of authoritativeness has, therefore, come to be connected with feelings having these traits." There is, however, another element in the "abstract consciousness of duty," viz., "the element of coerciveness". This Mr. Spencer derives from the various forms of pre-moral restraint just mentioned. But, since the constant tendency of conduct is to free itself from these restraints, and to become self-dependent and truly "moral," "the sense of duty or moral obligation [*i.e.*, as coercive] is transitory, and will diminish as fast as moralisation increases. . . . While at first the motive contains an element of coercion, at last this element of coercion dies out, and the act is performed without any consciousness of being obliged to perform it;" and thus

"the doing of work, originally under the consciousness that it *ought* to be done, may eventually cease to have any such accompanying consciousness," and the right action will be done "with a simple feeling of satisfaction in doing it". Since the consciousness of obligation arises from the incomplete adaptation of the individual to the social conditions of his life, "with complete adaptation to the social state, that element in the moral consciousness which is expressed by the word obligation will disappear. The higher actions required for the harmonious carrying on of life will be as much matters of course as are those lower actions which the simple desires prompt. In their proper times and places and proportions, the moral sentiments will guide men just as spontaneously and adequately as now do the sensations."

The conflict between the interests of society and those of the individual, which is the source of the feeling of Obligation as coercive, is not absolute and permanent. A "conciliation" of these interests is possible. Egoism and Altruism both have their rights; we cannot, with Darwin, merge the former in the latter. Egoism, indeed, is the first necessity of life. Since "a creature must live before it can act," it follows that "the acts by which each maintains his own life must, speaking generally, precede in imperativeness all other acts of which he is capable". So also when we regard conduct on its social side, we find that "the acts required for continued self-preservation, including the enjoyment of benefits achieved by such acts, are the first requisites to universal welfare". There is, in short, a "permanent supremacy of egoism over altruism," and "a rational altruism requires insistence on that egoism". On the other hand, "from the dawn of life, altruism has been no less essential than egoism. Though primarily it is dependent on egoism, yet secondarily egoism is dependent on it." When we study the history of evolving life, we find that "self-sacrifice is no less primordial than self-preservation," and that, throughout, "altruism has been evolving simultaneously with egoism". "From the dawn of life egoism has been dependent upon altruism, as altruism has been dependent upon egoism; and in the course of evolution the reciprocal services of the two have been increasing."

Thus "pure egoism and pure altruism are both illegitimate"; and "in the progressing ideas and usages of mankind" a "compromise between egoism and altruism has been slowly establishing itself". Nay, a "conciliation has been, and is, taking place between the interests of each citizen and the interests of citizens at large; tending ever

towards a state in which the two become merged in one, and in which the feelings answering to them respectively fall into complete concord". Thus "altruism of a social kind . . . may be expected to attain a level at which it will be like parental altruism in spontaneity—a level such that ministration to others' happiness will become a daily need". This consummation will be brought about by the same agency which has effected the present partial conciliation, *viz.*, sympathy, "which must advance as fast as conditions permit". During the earlier stages of the evolution sympathy is largely painful, on account of the existence of "much non-adaptation and much consequent unhappiness". Gradually, then, and only gradually, as these various causes of unhappiness become less, can sympathy become greater. . . . But as the moulding and re-moulding of man and society into mutual fitness progresses, and as the pains caused by unfitness decrease, sympathy can increase in presence of the pleasures that come from fitness. The two changes are, indeed, so related that each furthers the other." And the goal of evolution can only be perfect identity of interests, and the consciousness of that identity.

Mr. Leslie Stephen, the latest authoritative exponent of the Ethics of Evolution, institutes, in his *Science of Ethics*, a really independent inquiry; while agreeing partly with Darwin and partly with Mr. Spencer, he resumes their task, and seeks, unhampered by their *dicta*, "to lay down an ethical doctrine in harmony with the doctrine of evolution". Following Darwin in his insistence upon Altruism as the ground-form of morality, and upon Sympathy as a primary animal instinct, he agrees with Mr. Spencer in giving a hedonistic interpretation of "Welfare," the end of the evolution, and accordingly, in offering, as the ethical deduction from the Evolution-theory, a "re-statement or re-construction" of Utilitarianism. Mr. Stephen's theory is further interesting as pressing to its logical issues the biological view of morality implied in the theories of both his predecessors, and also as recognising and facing, with great candour, the difficulties of that view.

The foundation upon which Mr. Stephen would base his reconstruction of Utilitarianism is a deeper view of society and of its relation to the individual. The old Utilitarianism conceived society as a mere "aggregate" of individuals. The utilitarian was still an "individualist," though he spoke of "the greatest number" of individuals; the individual was still his unit. Now, according to Mr. Stephen, the true

unit is not the individual, but society, which is not a mere "aggregate" of individuals, but an "organism," of which the individual is a member. "Society may be regarded as an organism, implying . . . a social tissue, modified in various ways so as to form the organs adapted to various specific purposes." Further, the social organism and the underlying social tissue are to be regarded as evolving. The social tissue is being gradually modified so as to form organs ever more perfectly adapted to fulfil the various functions of the organism as a whole; and the goal of the movement is the evolution of the social "type"—that is, of that form of society which represents "maximum efficiency" of the given means to the given end of social life. In short, we may say that the problem which is receiving its gradual solution in the evolution of society, is the production of a "social tissue," or fundamental structure, the most "vitaly efficient".

In describing the ethical end, therefore, we must substitute for "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" of individuals, the "health" of the social organism, or, still more accurately, of the social tissue. The true "utility" is not the external utility of consequences. Life is not "a series of detached acts, in each of which a man can calculate the sum of happiness or misery attainable by different courses". It is an organic growth; and the results of any given action are fully appreciated only when the action is regarded, not as affecting its temporary "state," but as entering into and modifying the very substance of its fundamental structure. The "scientific criterion," therefore, is not Happiness, but Health. "We obtain unity of principle when we consider, not the various external relations but, the internal condition of the organism. . . . We only get a tenable and simple law when we start from the structure, which is itself a unit."

At the same time, the two criteria—health and happiness—"are not really divergent; on the contrary, they necessarily tend to coincide". The general correlation of the painful and the pernicious, the pleasurable and the beneficial, is obvious. "'The useful,' in the sense of *pleasure-giving*, must approximately coincide with the 'useful' in the sense of *life-preserving*. . . . We must suppose that pain and pleasure are the correlatives of certain states which may be roughly regarded as the smooth and the distracted working of the physical machinery, and that, given those states, the sensations must always be present." And in the evolution of society we can trace the gradual approximation to coincidence of these two senses of "utility".

Objectively considered, then, moral laws may be identified with the conditions of social vitality, and morality may be called "the sum of the preservative instincts of a society". That these laws should be perceived with increasing clearness as the evolution proceeds, is also a corollary of the Evolution-theory; as the social type is gradually elaborated, the conditions of its realisation will be more clearly perceived. But morality has also a strictly subjective side, which is yet to be considered. Corresponding to social welfare or health—the objective end—there is, in the member of society, a social instinct or sympathy, with that welfare or health for its object. The old opposition between the individual and society is fundamentally erroneous, depending as it does upon the inadequate mechanical conception of society already referred to. Nor is the identification of individual and social interests in the mind of the member of society the result of mere Association. "The difference between the sympathetic and the non-sympathetic feelings is a difference in their law or in the fundamental axiom which they embody." "The sympathetic being becomes, in virtue of his sympathies, a constituent part of a larger organisation. He is no more intelligible by himself alone than the limb is in all its properties intelligible without reference to the body." Just as "we can only obtain the law of the action of the several limbs" when we take the whole body into account, so with the feelings of "the being who has become part of the social organism. . . . Though feelings of the individual, their law can only be determined by reference to the general social conditions." Social sympathy is therefore a primary and direct instinct, not a secondary and indirect result of association. As a member of society, and not a mere individual, man cannot but be sympathetic. "To be reasonable, he must be sympathetic;" without sympathy he cannot "develop as a reasonable agent". The growth of society implies as its correlate "the growth of a certain body of sentiment" in its members; and, in accordance with the law of natural selection, this instinct, as pre-eminently useful to the social organism, will be developed—at once extended and enlightened. "Every extension of reasoning power implies a wider and closer identification of self with others, and therefore a greater tendency to merge the prudential in the social axiom as a first principle of conduct."

Thus what is generated in the course of Evolution is not merely a type of conduct, but a "type of character"—not merely altruistic conduct, but "the elaboration and regula-

tion of the sympathetic character which takes place through the social factor". We can trace the gradual progress from the external to the internal form of morality; from the law "Do this" to the law "Be this". Moral progress may be regarded as a "process of generalisation . . . a vast induction carried on by the race as organised in society," resulting in the discovery that "the most general rules of conduct must be expressed in terms of character"; accordingly we see how approval of a certain type of conduct "develops into approval of a certain type of character, the existence of which fits the individual for membership of a thoroughly efficient and healthy social tissue". This, according to Mr. Stephen, is the true account of Conscience, which is not a "separate faculty," "an instinct co-ordinate with other instincts," but "a function of the whole character . . . a mode of reaction of the whole character". "Moral approval is the name of the sentiment developed through the social medium, which modifies a man's character in such a way as to fit him to be an efficient member of the social tissue. It is the spiritual pressure which generates and maintains morality;" the representative and spokesman of morality in the individual consciousness. "The conscience is the utterance of the public spirit of the race, ordering us to obey the primary conditions of its welfare."

Here, also, Mr. Stephen finds the true basis of Obligation, which is to be conceived as coercion not from without but from within. So far as a man "can properly be called virtuous, it is because the outward has become an inward law; it is no longer a law in the juridical but in the scientific sense; it is not a rule enforced by external sanctions, but the 'law' of his character, or the formula which expresses the way in which he spontaneously acts. Society does not force him to act against his will; it has annexed and conquered his will itself." He is obliged by, because he shares, "the organised opinions of the society to which he belongs".

So far Mr. Stephen's theory might seem, in the main, a development of Mr. Spencer's; but he does not see his way to assent to Mr. Spencer's absolute Optimism. Morality, he finds, is unconditionally "useful," *i.e.*, conducive to the welfare or health of society, but "not to the individual". Thus "difficulty arises when we change our point of view from society to the individual. . . . Virtue is a condition of social welfare; but why should I be virtuous?" This question, Mr. Stephen thinks, is one which cannot be answered.

His point of view, we must remember, is that of Hedonism ; and regarding the problem from that point of view, he pronounces it "intrinsically insoluble". "The attempt to establish an absolute coincidence between virtue and happiness is in ethics what the attempting to square the circle or to discover perpetual motion is in geometry and mechanics." Instead, therefore, of constructing a future Utopian society, in which virtue and happiness will perfectly coincide in individual as well as in social experience, he "thinks it better frankly to abandon the hopeless endeavour".

Comparing the three theories just sketched, we must distinguish between that of Darwin, on the one hand, as alone the legitimate and simple deduction from the theory of Evolution, and those of Mr. Spencer and Mr. Stephen, on the other, as attempts to find in the doctrine of Evolution a new and scientific basis for Utilitarianism. As an ethical theory, indeed, Darwin's is a mere fragment, but it is so just because its author refuses to speak beyond his record. So far as it goes, it is the outcome of a fair and unbiased endeavour to account for the phenomena of moral life, as for all other phenomena, on the hypothesis of Evolution. On that hypothesis, the ethical End may be described as "the general good" or "welfare"; and this, again, "may be defined as the rearing of the greatest number of individuals in full vigour and health, with all their faculties perfect, under the conditions to which they are subjected"; or, in the words of Mr. Spencer, as "the greatest totality of life in self, in offspring and in fellow-men". In other words, the ethical End is simply the attainment of the maximum of life, alike in length and breadth. The point of view of Evolution is that of *existence*; and if the Evolutionist is entitled to say that the "*fittest*" must survive, he can only mean the fittest for the life-struggle, or the fittest to *exist*. Mere "survival" in the universal struggle for existence is the motive and end of Evolution.

But, as Prof. Sidgwick says (MIND i. 59) "the doctrine that resolves all virtues and excellences into the comprehensive virtue 'of going on, and still to be,' can hardly find acceptance". In order to an ethical theory, we must distinguish $\epsilon\upsilon\ \zeta\eta\nu$ from $\zeta\eta\nu$, "desirable" life from mere existence. Darwin himself introduces this further consideration in characterising the end as "Good" or "Welfare". Hence we are compelled to ask—What constitutes life desirable? This additional, and properly ethical question, suggested but not discussed by Darwin, is explicitly raised by Mr. Spencer

and Mr. Stephen ; and the answer which readily occurs to both is the old answer of Hedonism—Life is good or desirable in so far as it is pleasant. Darwin's "General Good or Welfare" is interpreted as "General Happiness"; and the result is the new or Evolutional Utilitarianism.

Taken as a "re-statement of Utilitarianism," this position is an indefinite advance on older statements of the theory. Its view is directed to the inner character and motive, not to mere external consequences. Its method is deductive, not merely inductive. It regards society as an organic unity, and not as a mere aggregate of individuals. By the application of the theory of heredity, it even offers a ground of reconciliation between Utilitarianism and Intuitionism. But what concerns us here is not the merit of the new Utilitarianism as compared with the old, but the legitimacy of Evolutional Utilitarianism as such. We have to ask whether the theory of Evolution affords a secure foundation for this superstructure, whether the physical theory of Evolution and the ethical theory of Utilitarianism are essentially akin,—the one being the logical corollary of the other,—or whether they are only artificially brought together.

Life, it is said, means Happiness, and the evolution of life means increase of happiness ; preservative actions being necessarily pleasurable, and pernicious actions necessarily painful, the evolutional and the hedonistic tests obviously coincide. Now, in order to the legitimacy of such an affiliation of Hedonism and Evolutionism, two points must be proved : first, that life is essentially desirable in respect of the happiness it yields, or that life-preserving and pleasure-giving actions coincide—the general theorem of Optimism ; and, secondly, that increase of life is synonymous with increase of happiness, or that the tendency of Evolution is optimistic. Of neither of these positions is clear proof offered. This has been so clearly and forcibly brought out by Prof. Sorley in his *Ethics of Naturalism* (chap. vii., on "Hedonism and Evolutionism") that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it at length.

With reference to the former point, Mr. Spencer contents himself, in the main, with mere assumption, and scornful denunciation of the thorough-going pessimist ; and, for the rest, constructs a Utopia in which the happiness of the individual and the interests of society will perfectly coincide. Mr. Stephen, on the other hand, acknowledges a permanent conflict between the two. "The path of duty does not coincide with the path of happiness. . . . By acting rightly, I admit, even the virtuous man will sometimes be making a

sacrifice ;" it is "necessary for a man to acquire certain instincts, amongst them the altruistic instincts, which fit him for the general conditions of life, though, in particular cases, they may cause him to be more miserable than if he were without them". And even Mr. Spencer acknowledges "a deep and involved"—though not a permanent—"derangement of the natural connexions between pleasures and beneficial actions, and between pains and detrimental actions".

But, it is contended, such a statement will not be "conclusive for the virtuous man. His own happiness is not his sole ultimate aim ; and the clearest proof that a given action will not contribute to it will, therefore, not deter him from the action." The individual, as a member of the social organism, forgets his own welfare or happiness in that of society. From the hedonistic point of view, however, we cannot thus merge the individual in society. We must not be misled by the metaphor of the "social organism,"—for it is only a metaphor after all, and a metaphor, as Mr. Stephen fears, "too vague to bear much argumentative stress". As Prof. Sidgwick remarks, it is not the organism, but "the individual, after all, that feels pleasure and pain". It is true that "the development of the society implies the development of certain moral instincts in the individual, or that the individual must be so constituted as to be capable of identifying himself with the society, and of finding his pleasure and pain in conduct which is socially beneficial or pernicious". Yet the individual can never wholly identify himself with the society, simply because he remains, to the last, an individual. It is said that the antagonism of individual and social interests is incidental to the transition-stages of the evolution, and that with the development of sympathy and the perfect adaptation of the individual to his social environment, complete identity of interests will be brought about. But, so long as the interest is merely that of pleasure, perfect identity of interests is impossible. The metaphor of the "social organism" is here particularly misleading. As Prof. Sorley remarks, "the feeling of pleasure is just the point where individualism is strongest, and in regard to which mankind, instead of being an organism in which each part but subserves the purposes of the whole, must rather be regarded as a collection of competing and co-operating units". From the point of view of pleasure, society is not an organism but an aggregate of individuals ; and, if we speak of the "health" of the society, we cannot mean *its* happiness, but simply the general conditions of the happiness

of its individual members. As Mr. Stephen acknowledges, there is a permanent dualism between the "prudential" and the "social" rules of life, "corresponding to the distinction of the qualities which are primarily useful to the individual and those which are primarily useful to the society". The former code cannot be incorporated in the latter.

On the whole, therefore, while we admit the general correlation between pleasurable and preservative, painful and pernicious actions, as well as the general harmony of the well-being of the race with that of the individual, we must conclude, with Prof. Sidgwick (*MIND* i. 65), that "this double harmony between pleasant and preservative, and between individual and universal well-being, is ideal and future; that it does not represent accurately the present, and still less the past, experience of the human race"; and, accordingly, that the claim to "scientific" character based upon it by Evolutional Utilitarianism has not been made out.

This brings us to the second point in the proof of Evolutional Hedonism, *viz.*, that the tendency of Evolution is optimistic. Now, although the tendency of evolution is towards a more and more complete correlation of "painful and pernicious, pleasurable and beneficial," on the one hand, and of the happiness of each with that of all, on the other; yet, looking at the facts of progressive morality, we must admit that moral progress is not synonymous with increase of happiness. For here, as in the former case, it is to be noted that happiness is a matter of individual experience; and in so far as the individual suffers by the general evolution, the hypothesis of Hedonism is disallowed. A candid regard for the facts of evolving morality will lead us to agree with the cautious conclusion of Mr. Stephen rather than with the unqualified optimism of Mr. Spencer. "I see no reason to suppose," says Mr. Stephen, "that pain will be eliminated, or that it will be so distributed that there shall never be a divergence between the painful and the pernicious, either to man or society. From the scientific point of view, we may hold that evolution implies progress—progress, at any rate, to a point beyond our present achievements; and, further, progress implies a solution of many discords, and an extirpation of many evils; but I can, at least, see no reason for supposing that it implies an extirpation of evil in general, or the definitive substitution of harmony for discord".

Such a recognition of a moral pain implied in moral progress—forced upon us by the facts of the case—necessitates

our giving up the hedonistic position, and our advancing to another, more adequate to the actual nature of morality. If "virtue may be painful and vice pleasant," pleasure is not the ultimate in moral life; pain may take its place in the moral development, and may even derive its significance from that advance which it renders possible. Nor does it follow, because the more highly-evolved state is, on the whole, the more pleasant, that its pleasantness constitutes its entire or essential character as the more highly evolved, or that "the actual progress in morality is always determined at every point by utilitarian considerations"; and unless this is made out, we must once more demur to the conclusion of Evolutional Utilitarianism.

On the whole, then, we seem compelled to conclude, with Darwin, that an impartial study of the evolution of morality does not corroborate the hedonistic interpretation. While we must recognise a hedonistic element in morality and in its evolution, we cannot admit that Hedonism, even in its evolutionary or "scientific" form, is a final and adequate account of morality. After we have accepted the Evolution-theory as a true account of the history of life, it remains to ask—How shall we interpret "life"; how determine "progress" or "improvement"; how define the "tendency" of the evolution? These questions cannot be answered by an off-hand identification of "life" with "happiness," and of "improvement" with "increase of happiness"; whatever hypothesis is adopted must be verified by careful comparison with the facts. They are questions to which the Evolution-theory itself does not supply an answer. To take the first, "social vitality" is said to be the End of evolution. But what is the true or typical "life" of society, or rather of man as a member of society? Merely to say that "life" is the End, and that "life-preserving" conduct is moral, is to leave the properly ethical question untouched. We must still ask, What *kind* of life is it which is to be preserved—which is worth preserving? Mr. Stephen's answer to the same question—that the moral standard is "social health"—is equally unavailing. Taken metaphorically, it is an obvious tautology. For "healthy" simply means "normal"; and we must still ask, Who is the healthy man; what is the norm or standard of life? If, on the other hand, we press the literal meaning of the term, its inadequacy at once appears. Intemperance is *not* "proved to be immoral by the same methods which prove it to be unwholesome". Thus the old central question of ethics—

that of the "standard of life"—remains unanswered. Evolution, in short, is silent on the proper questions of ethics; and Evolutional Utilitarianism, far from being the result of an impartial study of the evolution of morality, is an ethical theory read into the evolution. The affiliation of the Utilitarian theory with the doctrine of Evolution would be an obvious advantage to the former, as providing it with a "scientific" basis; but I see not why a "rational" theory of morality is not at least as fully entitled to such advantage. The advantage is, however, in any case only apparent. The ethical theory, of whatever type, must in the end be judged on its own merits; the doctrine of Evolution can legitimately afford help to none. "Within the sphere of scientific thought," and particularly within the limits of the theory of Evolution, Darwin's is the only legitimate position. His only error is in offering it as an ethical theory. From the point of view of Evolution, that is, from the scientific point of view, all ethical theories are equally probable or improbable. The final interpretation of "Good" or "Welfare," that is, the determination of the ethical End, is beyond the scope of science. It is a philosophical question in regard to which, while his successors have made bold to speak, Darwin had the wisdom of silence.

Having thus narrowed the Evolution-theory of morals to its earliest or Darwinian form, and genuine developments of that by later writers, I will now seek to make good the above general criticism by examining shortly its answer to the three historical questions of ethics—the nature of the ethical End or Standard, of the "moral sense" or Conscience, and of Obligation.

(1) The ethical End or Standard is defined as "social welfare"; but, as society can be said to "live" only in the life of its individual members, social welfare is ultimately reducible to personal welfare—the welfare of the individual members of society. Now, we have already seen that, in order to an ethical theory, we must not regard the mere quantity, but also the quality, of the "life" which forms the moral end; we must ask. What is the *kind* of life, fitness to preserve and develop which constitutes the title to survival? And as soon as this question is raised, we see that the kind of life which is ultimately worthy of survival is not mere physical life, nor yet the life of mere sentiency, but self-conscious life. It is *this* life that, from the first, asserts its supreme claim; it is this, in all the breadth and depth of its rich content, that guides and moulds the course of the evolu-

tion from first to last ; and it is in terms of this alone that moral progress can be understood.

From the very nature of the case, therefore, a theory of physical Evolution can offer no contribution to the determination of the ethical End. Moral distinctions are incapable of being reduced to physical. They are essentially spiritual—distinctions within self-consciousness ; to a life without this they cannot apply, and from such a life the moral life cannot be developed. Hence the obvious inadequacy of terms borrowed from physical life, like "organism," "tissue," &c., when used to characterise moral life. Moral welfare may indeed contain physical elements ; and the moral evolution may, in concrete fact, be inseparably bound up with the physical. Further, physical life is the first necessity ; a man—or a society of men—must *live*, that they may live well or morally. This, the mere ground or "raw material" of moral life, is all that the theory of physical Evolution contemplates. Moral welfare cannot at any stage be identified with physical welfare, or constituted by physical elements. Still less can the moral evolve from the physical ; if morality is to evolve, the evolution must from the first be moral, and not merely physical. The higher cannot be explained by the lower—the moral by the non-moral, morality being simply "that form which universal conduct assumes during the last stages of its evolution". In any experience from which morality, as we know it, has evolved, there must have been already present a moral and an immoral. As the evolution of physical life implies a germ of life at the first, so the moral evolution implies a moral germ. The earlier forms of moral, as of physical, life are potentially the later ; and the lower must, in either case, be interpreted in terms of the higher—must find in it their explanation—not *vice versa*. In other words, the moral evolution implies moral factors, as the organic evolution implies organic factors. Moral progress implies a moral, and not a merely physical ideal, present and operative from the first, though only gradually, and not till the last fully, revealing itself.

(2) Corresponding to this account of the ethical End as social welfare is the evolutionary theory of the "moral sense" or Conscience as "social sympathy". While this view of Sympathy, as primary and direct, is a great advance on those "development"-theories which regard it as the secondary and indirect result of Association, it is yet, as a theory of Conscience, open to the same criticism as the account of the End just considered. As moral cannot be identified with physical Welfare, nor evolved from it, so moral Sympathy

cannot be identified with, or evolved from, mere animal feeling or instinct. As the End is constituted by self-consciousness, and exists only for the self-conscious being, so the feeling which appropriates it, though it may contain a physical or animal element as its ground, is not a mere animal instinct, but an interest in persons. Here as elsewhere, the Evolution-theory does not account for "origins". Once there, Evolution by natural selection may explain the "persistence" of the "moral sense"; but its germ is necessarily presupposed, and even in germ it is, like its object, constituted by self-consciousness.

Further, the Evolution-theory is unable to explain that superiority of the social to the egoistic instincts, upon which it so strongly insists. As mere instincts, they are at once opposed to one another, and on the same level. Accordingly Evolutionism fails, as the old Utilitarianism failed, to bring home the social End to the individual. Its watchword is self-preservation—competition, each for himself, in the universal "struggle for existence". Perfect community or identity of interests is possible only when the common welfare is constituted not physically, but spiritually, that of each not excluding, but including, that of others; and appropriated not by mere physical instinct, but by that Self-consciousness which has constituted it. Hence the inadequacy, in this reference also, of terms borrowed from physical life. The claim of society upon the individual is not to be explained by the figure of the "social organism". Such a category is manifestly inadequate to express spiritual relations. The individual, as self-conscious, as a person, refuses to merge his proper individual life in that of society; the centre of his life is not without, but within. The unity or solidarity of the individual and society must be conceived spiritually, or so that the wider social life which he shares may not destroy, but only be focused and concentrated in the personal life of the individual. Self-sacrifice may have a certain place even in the physical evolution; but it is only as expressive of spiritual relations that we can fully understand the peculiar watchwords of moral, as distinguished from those of merely physical, life—the meaning of self-sacrifice, of losing our life that we may find it, of dying to self that we may live to God and our neighbour.

(3) In the treatment of Obligation, we have the great illustration of our contention that to offer Evolution as an explanation of morality is to eliminate its essential character. "Oughtness," since it cannot be evolved, must be explained away. Accordingly, we have seen that both Mr. Spencer

and Mr. Stephen agree with Darwin in maintaining that Obligation, in the accepted sense of the term, is only temporary, applying to the transition-stages in the evolution of morality, and destined to disappear with the completion of the process. Moral life is in its ideal, they hold, perfectly spontaneous, and is ever tending to become more entirely so. Moral "law" is thus reduced to "law" in the scientific sense; and human life is merged in the life of nature. Morality is simply the "law" of life—the line of its necessary development; what always and necessarily *is*, and ever more fully tends to be, not what *ought* to be, but never is. "Thou *shalt*," the Imperative of moral life, becomes unmeaning. "Thou *must*;" for thou canst not otherwise: it is the very law of thy life; otherwise, thou wilt not "survive". The moral necessity and the physical are one.

Once more we must insist on the impossibility of such a reduction of the moral to the physical. The conception of Duty or Obligation, present in moral life in some form from the first, must remain to the last. It is the very essence of morality; and moral progress, far from liberating man from a sense of obligation, only brings with it a deeper and larger view of duty and a more entire submission to it. While it is true, as Mr. Stephen points out, that moral progress means advance from an external to an internal form of law, and also a growing identification of the moral subject with that which he sees ever more clearly to be his true good, yet the notion of Duty can never wholly disappear. Its disappearance would mean either sinking to the level of the brutes or rising to the divine. To man the moral ideal must always present itself as law—"Thou shalt". As Kant says, to act without a sense of Duty or Obligation does not become our station in the moral universe. It is this characteristic of moral life that separates it for ever from the life of nature. Moral life cannot, as moral, become "spontaneous" or simply "natural". The goal of the physical evolution and that of the moral are not the same. A perfectly comfortable life, that is, a life in which the discomfort of imperfect adaptation to the conditions of life would no longer be felt, would not be a perfect moral life. Thus, as from the non-moral the moral was evolved, so into the non-moral it would ultimately disappear.

What, then, is the net-value of the doctrine of Evolution, as a contribution to ethical theory? It is claimed that it gives us a new view of morality, a new ethical method; that it provides Ethics for the first time with a "scientific" basis.

Of the value of the conception of Evolution, as correcting dogmatic and abstract views of morality, there can be no question. It gives concreteness to ethical theory, by insisting that it shall, before all things, be true to experience. And as a statement of moral experience, as a "natural history" of morality, it is an indefinite advance upon all previous efforts of the kind. But faithfulness to experience is not synonymous with empiricism, either in the moral or in the natural sphere. Moral experience does not, any more than experience in general, explain itself. Accordingly, although the Evolution-theory of morality may be true and valuable as a statement of moral experience, it cannot be said to touch the proper question of Ethics. Its limitations are common to it with all scientific theories. To quote the words of an eminent representative of science, Mr. G. J. Romanes, in the *Contemporary Review*, June, 1888:—"All that is done by the theory of natural selection, or by any other possible theory of a scientific kind, is to suggest, with more or less probability, a *modus operandi*; but who, or what, it may be that is ultimately concerned in the energising of the process is a question which natural science can never be in a position to answer". Thus limited, a "scientific" view of morality, as of all else, is possible. But, within these limits, an ethical theory is, from the standpoint of science, confessedly impossible. Here, as elsewhere, philosophy, accepting the "scientific" statement at its true worth, that is, as an orderly statement of the facts under investigation, raises its own further question as to the essential nature and explanation of these facts. The facts of moral life having been shown by science to be such, to have such a history, it remains for philosophy to ask, What is implied as their ultimate basis; how is this experience possible; what is the nature of the ideal which moral life, from first to last, is one unceasing effort to realise?

But we are asked by the advocates of the evolutionary or historical method, How else can you discover the nature of the moral ideal than by investigating the historical facts of evolving moral life? And it is true that in a sense we may be said to gather the character of the ideal from the process of its realisation, that in the evolution of morality we may see the gradual manifestation of the moral ideal. But it is the ideal that explains the evolution, not *vice versa*. As in evolution generally, so in the evolution of morality, it is the presence, at every stage of the process, of the End which is fully realised only with its completion, that affords the explanation of the evolution itself. Conduct is defined by

Mr. Spencer as "the adjustment of acts to ends"; and it is always the end that explains the adjustment. If, therefore, there be one final and supreme End, it will explain all lower adjustments, simple and complex, or the evolution of conduct as a whole. We cannot understand the moral evolution, any more than the natural, until we read in it a Purpose or End—a *τέλος* or final cause—immanent in the process of its realisation. Or rather, the moral End must, as Aristotle said, include all others; the moral must be the universal End.

Such a view is indeed implied in much of the language used by Evolutionists. Thus Mr. Spencer speaks of "right conduct" as the conduct of the "ideal" or "straight" man; while Mr. Stephen regards "actual morality" as approximating to a "type" or ideal, which he otherwise characterises as "that underlying code to which actual morality is an approximation," and the evolution of morality as a series of attempts, ever more successful, to solve the problem of the "type" not only of conduct, but of character—in other words, to realise the ideal of human nature. Now it is this Type or Ideal of moral life, of which experience only gives us the "hint," as it were, that the moralist has to investigate; and while experience may be his only teacher as to its actual content, he must view it in its true relation to that experience, as being, not its outcome and result but, its ground and presupposition.

And if the Evolution-theory teaches us to regard human conduct and character, not as standing apart from the rest of the universe, but as sharing in one universal movement, and to regard the end of evolution in general and the end of human life as reciprocally inclusive and not as reciprocally exclusive; it does not teach us that human life is a mere term in the process of nature. It is true, man does not live a separate and independent life. His conduct, even his character, of which his conduct is the expression, take their place among the evolving phenomena of the universe. But moral life refuses to be identified with the life of nature, or to be interpreted in its terms. As a moral agent, man is not under the necessity of nature. Freedom or Will-power—a notion which natural science cannot recognise—is a notion at the very basis of ethical life; and it implies a different attitude in man to the universal course of things, and necessitates a different interpretation of Evolution as applied to human conduct and character. Self-conscious evolution is essentially different from unconscious evolution, and the former cannot be stated in terms of the latter. While all lower

life evolves by strict ~~unconscious~~ necessity, man, as self-conscious, is free from its dominion, and has the power consciously to help on, or consciously to hinder, the evolution. Hence it is that we are at once conscious of the inadequacy of such categories as "adaptation to environment," "survival of the fittest," &c., as applied to moral life. They may find a certain application to its facts, but their value is rather as illustrations than as explanations; they are only imperfect analogies drawn from a lower plane of existence. For moral life, while it contains physical and sentient elements, is in its essence self-conscious or spiritual, and is to be determined, not by natural or biological but, by spiritual categories. This is not to say that the theory of Evolution is to be abandoned when we approach the consideration of moral life, but only that here, as, indeed, ultimately everywhere, the evolution must be conceived, not naturally or empirically but, spiritually or rationally.

As to the ethical End, we have already seen that the theory of Evolution has no necessary logical connexion with Hedonism. What a fair interpretation of evolution suggests as the End is not Welfare in the sense of *Well-being* or happiness, but rather Welfare in the Aristotelian sense of *Well-doing* or *Well-living*; not a state, but an activity, a life, due fulfilment of all the functions which together constitute man's "life". And the proper life of man must be determined by his proper or peculiar function; *his* life is not that which he shares with the lower animals—a merely physical or sentient life—but that which is peculiarly his own, the life of reason, the realisation of his proper, which is his rational, self. This is the "type" of life which is ever seeking realisation, which alone is worthy of preservation and development; and only by recognition of it as the goal can we understand the evolution of morality. If, even in the case of unconscious life, the ultimate reference must be to the so-called "self" or organism rather than to the environment, which apart from the organism has no significance; it is still more obviously so with self-conscious or spiritual life. Even Darwin's "strongest" and "most persistent" impulse or instinct is not the ultimate here. Beneath all stimuli from without and impulses from within, what "persists" and demands realisation is the rational total Self; and in the persistent urgency of its demand is to be found the secret of moral progress, whether of the individual or of the race.