

they are not the same, for she has no idea of the amount of difference). She immediately recognises the difference between harmony and discord, and has a limited perception of difference between all sounds, except those of a fifth or an octave."

It will be observed that this instance differs in some important particulars from that originally recorded by me, especially in the ability to discriminate between harmonies and discords, which in my subject's case was entirely wanting.

GRANT ALLEN.

IX.—NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS.

The Genesis of Disinterested Benevolence.—Disinterested benevolence, about the genesis of which so much has been written, is a name for two distinguishable things. It is in some cases meant to designate that feeling which prompts us in a special instance to do good to some individual object. In other cases, the same name is applied to the quality of the mind which predisposes to all special benevolent impulses. But these two are of course not the same thing, and when I inquire into their origin I shall have to consider them separately. This, however, I shall do in an order the reverse of that commonly adopted, beginning with the special sentiment, and then inquiring into the general quality of the mind.

Benevolence, in the first sense, may be defined as the wish that the object of this feeling may be well,—as the wish for the welfare of something. In so far as, with a certain class of beings, welfare is accompanied by pleasure or happiness, benevolence is a wish for the pleasure or happiness of the object. But I should think it a great mistake to define it in this latter way. It would reduce the field of benevolence by excluding all inanimate beings, and make the definition far too narrow. Benevolence, I assert, can be felt quite as well towards inanimate non-sentient beings as towards sentient organisms. It can be felt towards any being of which it is believed that its welfare or perfection can be procured. As the parent towards his child, the master towards his dog, so the sculptor feels benevolence towards his statue, the author towards his book. The perfection of it makes him happy, its imperfection or destruction causes him pain. Whether the object is a living being or not, whether it is real or imaginary, the sentiment of benevolence is the same in all cases.

Disinterested I shall call such benevolence, if its origin cannot be traced directly to some egoistical motive or to some other moral or æsthetic feeling. Gratitude, which is dictated by a feeling of equity, admiration, which takes its origin in an æsthetic judgment, or the aversion to inflict pain, which is the result of our habits, I shall not call disinterested benevolence, and in this short essay I do not inquire into their origin.

To explain the growth of the special sentiment of disinterested

benevolence I must assume a certain number of qualities of the mind, the existence of which, however, has generally been admitted. Whether these qualities are native or acquired is here of no importance; all I require is that they be found in man very soon after his birth. These qualities are, first, the impulse towards self-preservation and self-augmentation inherent to every living organism, and without which it could not exist and develop itself; the wish to be and to be more and more, in a word, to grow. The second quality of mind which I have to assume is the consciousness of existing, not only as a passive sentient being, but as an active being too. And these two qualities once admitted, there follows from them a third, which is the wish to exist as an active being either actually or potentially, to be either acting or capable of acting—the wish for power. The fourth quality is that known under the name of capacity of associating ideas, and the fifth the capacity and tendency of the mind to fuse or confuse such associated ideas, so as not to distinguish them any longer from one another. The first four qualities just enumerated have long ago been generally admitted and amply illustrated. The fifth, that of confusing ideas, has likewise been admitted; it has even been most admirably illustrated in the works of many a philosopher of great repute, but I am not aware that its importance for morals has ever been sufficiently insisted upon.

The specimen case of confusion is that between the ego and the body. All men in early life confuse the two notions of self and body, and most men continue to do so for ever. Here already the confusion produces a kind of disinterested benevolence; we feel well inclined towards our body irrespective of any advantage to ourself.

But it is not from this simplest form of the mental quality that moral benevolence takes its rise. Besides the confusion just spoken of, there is another, the outflow and consequence of that between body and mind, nearly as common among children and uneducated men. It is the confusion between the acts of ourself, of our mind, and those of our body; between intended effects and willed acts.

This confusion is to be found in the laws of all rude and semi-barbarous nations. Their criminal codes punish the result of an act irrespective of the intention of the agent; they make, for instance, no difference between murder and manslaughter. In more civilised countries, where generations of lawgivers have for centuries developed the theory of criminal responsibility, the law is even now far from perfect. The result of an act, even when not intended, continues to be taken into account for punishment. A man who would be let off with a small fine for an illegal act producing no direct harm would be fined more heavily, or even imprisoned, if by such an act some harm was unintentionally done. Even if the legislator wished to correct this irrational state of the law, the general opinion of the uneducated majority would prevent him from doing so. It will be long ere the theory of criminal responsibility is generally understood.

But if in criminal law, which it is the interest of so many persons to clear up, the confusion still exists, how much the more will it con-

tinue in those matters where no great interest is at stake? If a man kills another man, fear of punishment, fear of his own conscience, will prompt him to consider whether the death was intended or not, whether he is guilty of murder or of simple manslaughter. But if a man by mere chance does some good to another man, there is nothing which incites him to a similar mental effort, while on the contrary the agreeable sense of power which the consciousness of the effect produces, the gratitude of the benefited individual and the approbation of society, will make the idea that he is the author of the benefit pleasant to him and prevent him from too closely analysing his motives. He will easily assume that he is the author of the benefit, and so it happens that when an act of his body has produced a beneficial result upon some one else, an average man thinks that he himself has done good to that individual.

From this confusion real disinterested benevolence will take its origin. The agreeable sense of power, produced by the unintended beneficial effect, will continue as long as the agent can remember that effect. This, however, will only be the case if the benefit persists for some time, so that it may hereafter be remembered, and it will be all the more the case, if that benefit continues for a long time so as to be actually perceived. There is then an inducement so to act that it may persist. This inducement is of course very weak at first, and will produce no action if there is not a considerable spontaneous energy. But there is already a germ of benevolence, the wish that a benefit conferred upon some individual may subsist. And if this sentiment under favourable circumstances produces further action, this time intentional, it will become stronger thereby; far more power is felt to be exerted and more interest is consequently felt in the effect. The wish to maintain the effect increases in proportion to the exertions already made, and it may finally become strong enough to overcome counteracting influences of considerable moment.

But this is not all. As it is a condition of the persistence of the beneficial effect, that the being upon whom it has been produced continues to exist, a secondary wish, very slight at first, will be generated, that the whole individual may continue to be. At the same time that the wish for the persistence of the beneficial effect becomes stronger, this secondary feeling augments and may produce action tending to the conservation and the welfare of the individual benefited. But as soon as the fact is realised that good has been done to the whole individual, this new secondary benefit will become the starting-point of a growing disinterested benevolence, directed no longer towards a single quality but towards the whole being. The secondary feeling may now grow much quicker than the primary one, which may in due time be entirely forgotten, and nothing will remain but true disinterested benevolence towards the individual. A benefit conferred by mere chance has produced true devotion.

To illustrate my meaning, which otherwise might remain obscure, let me adduce an example. A man had to throw away some water, and, stepping out of his house, threw it upon a heap of rubbish, where

some faded plants were nearly dying. At that moment he paid no attention to them, took no interest in their pitiable state. The next day, having again some water to throw away, the man stepped out at the same place, when he remarked that the plants had raised their stems and regained some life. He understood that this was the result of his act of the day before, his interest was awakened, and as he held a jar with water in his hand, he again threw its contents over the plants. On the following day the same took place; the benevolent feeling, the interest in the recovery and welfare of the plants augmented, and the man tended the plants with increasing care. When he found one day that the rubbish and plants had been carted away, he felt a real annoyance. The feeling of the man in this case was real disinterested benevolence. The plants were neither fine nor useful, and the place where they stood was ugly and out of the way, so the man had no advantage from their growth. Nor had the man a general wish to rear plants, for there were a number of other plants sorely in want of care, but to which the man did not transfer his affection. He had loved those individual plants; the benevolence towards the effect he had at first produced had by confusion become benevolence towards the plant itself, and the first feeling had been entirely forgotten.

In this case there was a complete confusion between the effect and the recipient of it, rendered easy by the fact, that by continuing the special benefit, the whole welfare of the plant was assured. But such is not always the case. If the benefits have all been of one and the same kind, if the benefactor has been prevented from extending the sphere of his beneficial action, the feeling of benevolence will remain in its primitive state, directed towards one quality of the individual. However strong it may become, it will never extend to the whole being.

Cases of this kind are by no means rare, but they are generally misunderstood. We assume that A feels benevolence towards B, and that if he lays so much stress on a single quality of the latter, this arises from an error of judgment as to what is good for B. In reality the error of judgment is ours, and the man whose folly we condemn is intellectually quite in the right. Having never learned to love B but only to love one of his qualities, A favours this latter even to the detriment of the holder.

In the first example adduced by me, benevolence took its origin in a chance act, no effect at all having at first been intended. This is not necessarily the case. A benefit may be intended in a limited degree, for instance as an equivalent for a benefit received. The spring of action here is gratitude, based on equity. But while this benefit is conferred, a benevolent feeling, first, towards the special quality furthered, and, finally, towards the whole individual, may arise in exactly the same manner in which it arose from a chance act. Gratitude will be forgotten and disinterested benevolence felt instead. One moral feeling has here given rise to another; equity to disinterested benevolence. In our social system this latter genesis will be most common; it is only where social relations are rare, that benevo-

lence will commonly be produced as a consequence of a chance act. But in all cases, it will be a necessary condition to the perfection of the feeling, that it be extended to the whole individual, as else it may often tend rather to injure than to favour this latter.

My meaning, I hope, is now sufficiently explained. It remains to be seen how far my theory is in accordance with the known facts about benevolence. For this I hold to be the indispensable test of every psychological theory—that it will offer an easy explanation of the facts known from experience; and this test I shall now apply.

The strongest feeling of benevolence on record is probably the love a mother bears to her infant child. The strong feeling that she has given it life, that the child is her creation, explains the energy of the affection. This is further strengthened by the consciousness, that by nourishing and tending her child she confers constantly new benefits, indispensable to its welfare. But as the child grows up, this benevolent feeling may, with mentally undeveloped persons, lose much of its power. When the child becomes independent, when it is no longer in want of the maternal care, the maternal affection will cool down or turn towards a younger child still in need of its mother's help. This is already apparent in the lower races of mankind, but much more so among the higher animals. Among these latter a mother will risk her life to defend her young, but when they are grown up, she does not care for them in the least.

Among uneducated people paternal affection is seldom very strong towards an infant. Some culture of mind is necessary to realise all the indirect benefits the father at first confers. But when the direct influence becomes considerable, the paternal affection augments and may assume a very great energy. Among animals paternal affection, I think, exists only in those species in which the father assists the mother in rearing and feeding the little ones, as for instance among birds.

During the proscriptions of Marius and Sulla, there were many sons who out of fear gave up their father, but it was never known that a father had denounced his son; a fact that somewhat startled the Roman moralists, who were unable to explain it. Upon my theory the explanation is easy enough. In Roman society the son could confer no benefit upon his father, and the mere feeling of gratitude for the benefits received from the parent was not sufficient to counter-balance the fear of the bloody edict. Filial affection can indeed become very strong, but whenever it does, it is easy to perceive that the parent has in some way become dependent on the child—has received benefits from him.

The relations between man and wife are such that the two are called upon to complete one another—that they have a fair opportunity of conferring great benefits without a corresponding sacrifice or exertion. The facility renders the feat all the more attractive, and strong affection follows upon it.

That friendship is based upon numerous mutual benefits is a fact daily seen. Prevent a friend from doing you good, impress him with

the idea that he is of no use to you, and his affection will cool. But ask a man for little services he is ready to render, let him know and keep in his mind that he has conferred a benefit upon you, and he will like you all the more for it, become interested in your welfare, and finally feel real devotion for you. I have never known the experiment to fail.

In public life those who receive the greatest benefits from the community are not the men most ready to make any sacrifice for the general good. Patriotism, I think, is not exactly rampant in workhouses, though the inmates owe everything they enjoy to the munificence of the public. The pauper who has done no good to his country, who, on the contrary, is a continual burden to it, feels no benevolence towards it.

On the other hand, a man in the higher ranks often enters the public service, either to earn in an easy way a sufficient income or out of ambition, and in order to gain fame. If such a man by his energy or by some distinctive talent becomes useful to the State, in most cases he will become a really patriotic citizen. The official will devote more than the strictly due time and energy to the fulfilment of his task, the statesman will give up his personal ambition, and often risk what must be dear to him, popularity and power, in order to carry the measures he thinks necessary to the welfare of his country.

And when some extraordinary man has made a discovery, has introduced a measure or proclaimed a truth beneficial to the whole world, the sentiment that he has been useful to so many millions of people gives a distinctive character to his benevolent impulses. Such a man, the benefactor of humanity, will refuse his sympathy to no part of it; he will at once feel benevolence towards any man with whom he comes into contact. He knows that he has done him some good, and is well inclined towards him.

I hope I have now shown that my theory agrees with the facts known by experience, that it can bear the crucial test. That being so, I think myself entitled to hold that the genesis of every single benevolent sentiment is that some good is done to an individual, either unintentionally or from another motive than that of disinterested benevolence, as from gratitude, sense of equity, religious feeling or hope of advantage, and that the benefit itself being loved by its author, this love or disinterested benevolence is by confusion extended to the individual upon whom the benefit has been conferred and maintained. It now remains for me to explain, how from single benevolent feelings there arises a general benevolent disposition, how the benevolent character is formed.

I think we shall again have to trace back the origin of the benevolent disposition to confusion. After having felt benevolence towards a number of individuals of a class, we come to confuse them with one another, and to transfer part of our feeling to the whole class. When any member of it presents itself, benevolence is at once excited.

That such is the case will appear more clearly if we remember how often we are favourably disposed towards a perfect stranger, simply

because in his outward appearance, his manner, his voice, or any other characteristic, he is like some other person we love. We have a confused but strong benevolent feeling towards a cluster of attributes belonging to the friend we have learned to cherish. Some of these attributes are suddenly and strikingly presented to us, and we feel well-inclined towards them. We confuse the attributes with the present possessor of them, and benevolence is felt towards the stranger. In this case the genesis is so clear, the confusion so glaring, that they cannot be overlooked. In other cases they will not be so apparent, but the process will be the same. The cluster of attributes—man, Englishman, or man of a certain type—is liked, because a number of persons dear to us possess these attributes. Men of another type or nation are often not liked at all, even by such people as are generally considered benevolent. The difference in this case is stronger than the likeness, and no confusion is made. What holds good of men holds good equally of all other beings. I have observed this genesis in myself; formerly rather hostile to dogs, now that I have a dog myself, I feel well inclined towards the whole canine species, but most to that part of it which has some characteristic feature in common with my favourite. This then is the genesis of the benevolent disposition, that after having by confusion become well inclined towards certain things, we feel the same benevolence towards each of their attributes; when we find these attributes in other things, we feel equally well inclined towards them, and by confusion extend this benevolence to the individual possessing the attribute. Hence it follows that the greater the diversity among the individuals towards whom we acquire a benevolent feeling when young, the wider the range of our sympathies, of the benevolence we feel at once towards those with whom we come in contact—a fact of some importance in educational science.

I do not know whether I shall have convinced my reader of the soundness of my theory. Limited space and an inadequate power over the language may have prevented me from attaining this end. But the question is so important that even the mere suggestion of a possible theory might be accepted as of some use towards the final solution of the problem, and as such I offer the foregoing pages.

PAUL FRIEDMANN.

Mr Sully on Pessimism.—I hope that the appearance, in a recent number of this Review, of Professor Bain's observations on Mr Sully's important work will not make it seem presumptuous in me to offer a few further remarks upon it.

Were I to pass the most general criticism I could think of on Mr Sully's book, I should say that its true subject hardly corresponds with its title: it is in fact better than its promise. To be sure, most of its historical and critical matter is concerned with Pessimism; but along with this, and continuing when this is done with, runs a discussion of wider scope. Optimism, too, has its history briefly