**Dr. Martineau's Types of Ethical Theory.**[1]— This work is not confined to ethics. In the first volume the author is chiefly occupied with metaphysics and the history of philosophy. In the second volume, he expounds his own ethical system and reviews a number of English ethical theories. The work embraces a wide scope, and is marked by extensive erudition, critical skill, and analytic power. Dr. Martineau's ethical theory is a form of the intuitive. He analyses the facts of the moral consciousness. He accepts the idea of Duty and all that it implies, as it is commonly accepted by religious moralists. He is equally averse to a physical or metaphysical derivation of Morals. Accordingly, his first volume is directed to the examination and criticism of such theories, which he terms Unpsychological.

The author's leading division of ethical systems is into *Psychological* and *Unpsychological.* The latter are again subdivided into *Metaphysical* and *Physical.* "If the primary assumptions are taken from within, and you proceed by light of self-knowledge to interpret what is objective, you have a psychological system of Ethics. Invert the procedure and you have an unpsychological system. This may be of two kinds, according as you begin with assuming real, eternal, intellectual entities, and thence descend into the human world; or only phenomena and their laws. If the former, you have a metaphysical; if the latter, a physical system, of Morals."

Psychological Ethics, Dr. Martineau remarks, are *altogether* peculiar to Christendom. This he traces to the fact that, whereas the Greek genius was essentially objective, in the Christian religion, "the interest, the mystery of the world were concentrated *in human nature.*" But the new habits of self-knowledge ripened into no systematic ethics, and the tendencies of Greek speculation have reappeared in modern philosophy, in the *physical* absolutism of Hobbes and Comte, and the *metaphysical* of Spinoza and Hegel, the *pantheistic* and *pamphysical* poles of doctrine between which philosophy still oscillates. One main cause of this, Dr. Martineau finds in the Augustinian theology. Only where the Augustinian system has not prevailed or has receded in favour of a milder theology, has the psychological tendency reasserted itself, as in this country, in Bishop Butler.

The Metaphysical systems are subdivided by the author into

[1] Oxford: Clarendon Press.

*Transcendental* and *Immanental*, according as the eternal ground of phenomena is regarded as greater than, or coextensive with, Nature. The doctrine of Immanency, he holds, excludes theism, while that of Transcendency leaves it still possible; "but whether the margin of being and power beyond the phenomenal universe be rightly termed God depends on something more than this mere overlapping of the scope of nature;—depends on the presence or absence there of those moral attributes which constitute *a Person*."

This view of the relation of these doctrines may, I think, be questioned. On the one side, it may be said that *personal* existence, quiescent as yet in the recesses of the Divine Will, is the *only* kind of existence which such a margin of being and power can be conceived to have. On the other side, it may be urged, that in an *infinite* Person there can exist no dormant powers, which have not found full expression and utterance in the infinitude of their manifested activity.

As a type of the Transcendental systems, Dr. Martineau selects Plato: as a type of the Immanental—Spinoza. Before proceeding to the latter he expounds the systems of Descartes and Malebranche. Lastly, under the *Physical* division of the Unpsychological theories, he treats of the system of Comte. The philosophy of each of these thinkers is reproduced with great clearness of thought and felicity of expression, and their ethical doctrines are reviewed in the light of their speculative conclusions. The examination and survey of these philosophical systems form the contents of the first volume, which is therefore, in the main, historical and critical.

The second volume deals with Psychological Ethics. The subdivisions are *Idiopsychological Ethics* and *Heteropsychological Ethics*. The method of introspection is employed in both; but, Idiopsychological Ethics seek to define "the inner facts of conscience itself": Heteropsychological theories attempt to "find the phenomena under other categories." All theories of the latter kind are "reducible to three." "The scheme of Epicurus and Bentham, which elicits the moral nature from the sentient; that of Cudworth, Clarke, and Price, which makes it a dependency on the rational; that of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, which identifies it with the æsthetic, practically exhaust the varieties of doctrine."

Under the head of Idiopsychological Ethics, the author presents his own ethical views He holds an intuitive perception of right

and wrong. The object of moral judgment is not the outward action but the inward spring. The phenomena of our moral life arise when two incompatible impulses appear in consciousness and contest the field. "We are sensible of a contrast between them other than that of mere intensity or of qualitative variety: . . . that one is *higher, worthier* than the other, and, in comparison with it, has the clear *right to us*." This quality is their "moral worth." "Among our springs of action then, there prevails a moral scale according to the order of excellence; and a prudential scale according to the order of strength." The former is "identical and constant for all men; the latter, variable with different persons." Dr. Martineau has constructed a table of the springs of action, arranged according to the moral scale. This list begins with the lowest, the secondary passions, and ascends through the appetites, parental and social affections, affection of compassion and other springs, to the primary sentiment of reverence which is highest on the scale. (The springs are Primary, when in the form of unreflecting instincts; Secondary, when their gratification is sought as a preconceived end.) From hence the author derives the resulting rule, "*Every action is* Right, *which, in presence of a lower principle, follows a higher: every action is* Wrong, *which, in presence of a higher principle follows a lower.*" He does not include either self-love or conscience among the springs of action. Self-love is "nothing but the abstract sum of all the likings already reckoned in the original springs themselves." Conscience is "the pervading consciousness of higher authority running through the whole scale of impulses." Various leading ethical conceptions, as Justice, Veracity, are analysed in accordance with the theory. We cannot, however, stay to consider the sufficiency of this analysis, but must press on to the estimation of the theory as a whole.

It possesses certain decided advantages over other intuitive theories. It supplies us with a general rule: *that* action is right which follows the higher principle. In the next place, it is correct in not viewing conscience or the moral law as a separate spring. We cannot wait for conscience to originate action, though it rightly claims supreme authority over the choice of different courses of action. Lastly, the theory can, better than other theories of the kind, accommodate itself to the doctrine of Evolution. It can explain the origin of the moral consciousness, by pointing to the first occasion upon which the conditions of its exercise arose.

But there are several serious, and I believe, unanswerable objections to it. We are not told *why* one spring is superior to the other, or in what its superiority consists. Again the validity of the moral scale for all men is *asserted*, but the *possibility* of this universality is not explained. Lastly, there is a third, and it appears to me, a fatal objection to it. According to the theory, the rightness of an action arises entirely from the rank or relative position of the spring from which it flows. Since it is the hierarchical superiority of the spring which makes the corresponding action right, it will follow that the superior spring ought *always* to prevail, no matter how external circumstances may change. The spring, once registered as superior, retains its superior authority, under all circumstances. No exception can arise. If there is any case, in which, the action to which an inferior spring urges, is right, and that corresponding to a superior spring wrong, their relations are for the moment reversed; the inferior is, for the time at least, superior, and the reason of the momentary superiority must be sought in objective circumstances; circumstances which render a given course of conduct right, notwithstanding the hierarchical superiority of the opposed spring. Now there is scarcely one of the superior springs which under easily conceivable circumstances ought not, on occasion, to yield to an inferior. Were the theory correct, such cases could not possibly arise. The theory is an inversion of the truth. So far from the superior spring determining the morality or rightness of the act, the rightness if not of the feeling itself (for which perhaps we are not responsible), at least of yielding to it, depends on the nature of the act, and the circumstances to which it relates.

What conceals the force of this objection, and leads us to believe that there is an *innate* and *invariable* superiority in certain springs of action over others, is, that in human nature, the so-called superior springs seldom err by *excess* though often by *defect*. Men as a rule are not inclined to be benevolent or grateful overmuch. But there is no theoretic objection to assuming that men may be, and some men in actual fact are, influenced by feelings of benevolence or gratitude, not only in excess of what the occasion demands, but also in cases where there exists no real claim to their benevolence or gratitude. Here certainly they ought to follow the inferior principle of self-interest. Benevolence to the unworthy is positively wrong, and a good-natured or benevolent fool, is sometimes pitied, but more often despised. Dr. Martineau's

theory is too subjective. The theory which derives moral obligation from a hierarchical superiority in the *objects* of human activity—self, family, state, church, is more plausible.

But while dissenting, for the reasons given, from the theory contained in it, this is by no means the least valuable part of Dr. Martineau's work. His examination of the springs of action abounds with reflections, in which acute psychological observation and great practical wisdom are combined. Few who are engaged in the instruction or guidance of others, but may derive from it valuable practical hints.

The chapters on Heteropsychological theories contain a penetrating criticism of the ethics of Hedonism and Evolution. Dr. Martineau's criticisms are always keen and just. The work concludes with an exposition and critical survey of the systems of Cudworth, Clarke, Price, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. The task is ably performed, and is in every way worthy of the eminent author.

*Queen's College, Cork.* GEORGE J. STOKES.

---

**On Gen. iii. 5** (comp. ii. 9; iii. 22).—An attractive explanation of the phrase "knowing good and evil," is mentioned by Riehm, and assigned by him to the authorship of the great Hebrew scholar, Hupfeld (review of Budde's *Die bibl. Urgeschichte* in *Theol. Studien und Kritiken*, 1885, p. 764). In Gen. iii. 5 the serpent is the speaker; he flatters the woman with the prospect of "becoming as gods, knowing good and evil." This is merely, it would seem, according to Hupfeld, a periphrasis for "everything"; remember how the Sirens try to tempt Odysseus by promising to satisfy his curiosity out of their boundless knowledge (*Od.*, xii. 188). That "good and evil" is a Hebrew idiom for "everything," is shown by Gen. xxiv. 50; xxxi. 24; 2 Sam. xiv. 17, comp. 20. A parallel idiom is "small or great," Num. xxii. 18, comp. 38; and precisely the same idiom occurs in Homeric Greek (*Od.*, xviii. 229). Hupfeld thinks, however, that in the name of the tree, as well as in the Divine words in iii. 22, "good and evil" has an ethical meaning. The serpent in fact cheated the woman by giving a new though a possible sense to the name of the tree. "As gods, knowing everything," is, perhaps, a more probable interpretation of the words in iii. 5, than "as gods, acquainted with the distinctions of morality."

T. K. CHEYNE.

---