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“ THE REIGN OF LAW
IN MIND AS IN MATTER,

AND ITS

BEARING UPON CHRISTIAN DOGMA AND MORAL
RESPONSIBILITY.”

PART II.

THE TRUE MEANING OF RESPONSIBILITY.

BY

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THE
REIGN OF LAW IN MIND AS IN MATTER

PART II.

THE TRUE MEANING OF RESPONSIBILITY.

“In the eternal sequence we take the consequence.”—H. G. A.

BUT it is said, if men are not free, if they *must* act in accordance with the laws of their being, if no act could therefore have been otherwise than it was, what becomes of virtue, what of morality?

If a man could not have done otherwise, where was the virtue?

This doctrine of necessity or certainty, it is alleged, is “fatal to every germ of morality.”

For what, if it is true, becomes of Responsibility?

You cannot, it is said, properly or consistently use either praise or blame, reward or punishment, if a man is not free. The opposite, as I shall show, is really the case.

Let me answer these questions as shortly as I have put them. Virtue is not that which is free, but that which is for the good of mankind, for the greatest happiness of all God’s creatures. Our goodness or virtue, it is said, if necessary or dependent upon our nature, is no goodness at all; but the goodness of God, which also is dependent upon his nature, and could not be otherwise, is the highest goodness of all. Man is good, because he might, it is supposed, be otherwise; God is

good, because he could not be otherwise. "The goodness of the nature of the Supreme, we are told, is necessary goodness, yet it is voluntary," that is, in accordance with the will, but which will is governed by the nature.

Still I do not suppose that if a man's nature and training were such that he *could not* do a mean thing, he would be thought the worse of on that account.

Morality concerns the relation of man to his fellows,—it comprises the laws and regulations by which men can live together most happily, and the more they can be made *binding* upon all, and not *free*, the better for all.

Responsibility only means that we must always take the natural and necessary consequences of our actions, whether such actions are free or not.

Responsibility, or accountability, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, means—and this is the meaning usually thought to be essential to virtue and morality—that it will be *just* to make people suffer as much as they have made others suffer; it means retribution, retaliation, and revenge. Some one has done wrong, some one must make atonement—that is, suffer for it; it does not much matter who it is, so that some one suffers, and particularly since it is supposed that the wrath of God has been appeased by an arbitrary substitute of the innocent for the guilty. This kind of responsibility or retribution is not only unjust, but useless.

External things or objects are moved by what we call Force; the mind is moved by motive, which is mental force; but equally in each case the strongest force prevails. "It may be, or it may not be," in any supposed two or more courses—not because this action is free or contingent, but according as one or other force or motive shall become the strongest and prevail. The strongest force always does prevail, and any uncertainty we may feel is only consequent on our want of knowledge. In Physics we know the force must always be made proportionate to the end we wish to attain; in

Mind this is overlooked, or left to what is called the Will ; but it is equally true. This fact is overlooked both by the Fatalists and by those who believe in the freedom of the will. The first hold that things come to pass in spite of our efforts ; the latter, that they are not *necessarily* dependent upon them. The will is governed by motive, and as the strongest always *necessarily* prevails, what we have to do is to increase the strength of the motive or moving power in the direction we wish to attain. The Rev. Daniel Moore speaks of "his consciousness as prompting him to put forth an act of spontaneous volition, and *thus* proving the moral agent free." "The force of instinct," he says, "is stronger than the conclusion of logic." Certainly it must be so in this case, or logic would say an act lost its spontaneity just in proportion as it was prompted or influenced. Praise and blame, reward and punishment, are the ordinary means taken to strengthen motives. If the will were free—that is, capable of acting *against* motives, or if it acted spontaneously—these means would be useless and unavailing.

It is not till an action is passed that our power over it ceases ; then God himself could not prevent it. We may always say we can ; *never* that we could. The motive may have been good or bad, but whichever it was, the strongest must have prevailed, and the action could not thus have been different to what it was.

Responsibility can have relation to the future only—the past is past. Punishment for an act that could not have been otherwise would be unjust, and as the act is past it would be useless.

Punishment, therefore, that has reference to the future, and that has for its object the good of the sufferer, or of the community of which he is a member, alone can be just and useful.

As every act was necessary, and could not have been otherwise, there is no such thing as sin, as an offence against God—only vice and error.

All vice and error must be to the detriment of the person erring, and punishment that prevents it in future must be for his good.

To pray, therefore, to be delivered from such punishment—that is, for the forgiveness of sin—is praying for that which would injure us rather than benefit.

Let us take an illustration. A schoolboy may have been told that “we should not leave till to-morrow what we can do to-day,” so he eats all his plumcake before he goes to bed. He takes the natural consequences, and is ill the next day, and the master is very angry; but the boy says very truly, “Please, sir, I could not help it.” “I know you could not, my dear boy,” says the master, “but when you have had a black draft and a little birch added to your present *intestinal malaise*, it will enable you to help it for the future, and will teach you also that there is no rule without an exception.”

Responsibility means that we must take the natural and necessary consequences of our actions—of the “eternal sequence we take the consequence,” and which natural consequence may be added to by others to any extent, with the object of producing in the future one line of conduct rather than another; but it does not mean that a person may be justly made to suffer for any action that is past.

Responsibility or accountability also includes that if a person has done another an injury, he owes him all the compensation in his power.

Dr Irons says:—“To incur the consequences of our actions, and feel that it *ought to be so*—to be subject to a high law, and *feel it to be right*, this is moral responsibility” (“Analysis of Human Responsibility,” p. 25). I accept this definition entirely, but in a different sense to that accorded to it by Dr Irons. We accept the consequences of our actions, and feel that “we ought to do so,” and *therefore* “that it is right,” because it is by its consequences that a reasonable man

guides his conduct ; they govern his motives, and the motives govern the will. But this is on the supposition that the consequences of our actions will be always the same in like circumstances—that the causes, under like conditions, will always produce the same effects, which could not be the case if the will were free, and obeyed no law. It is this feeling, this intuitive perception of consequences, that people call feeling accountable—“the great and awful *fact* of human responsibility.” This feeling is transmitted, or becomes hereditary, and then it is called Conscience, and gives the sense of “ought.”

Dr Irons also says:—“It is a fact of our nature that wrong-doing, such as stirs our own disapproval, *is* haunted by the belief of retribution.” No doubt of it. In the early ages this retribution or revenge was the only law, and the fear of it was often the only thing that kept people from doing wrong, and this fear has been transmitted, and now haunts us ; but that is no reason why revenge, or retributive justice, as it is called, is right. A sense of duty and responsibility—that is, of what is due to our own sense of right, and of the consequences to ourselves and others—still influences, and ought to influence, our conduct ; but it cannot be otherwise than that the strongest motive *must* prevail, and when the action it dictates is past, it could not have been otherwise. It may have been very well for a young world, when man had to fight his way up from the lower animals, to entertain the delusion that things might have been otherwise, but we require now an entire reconstruction of the accepted modes of thought, which shall not only accept the inevitable in the past, but conscience must cease to blame us or others for what *must* have happened exactly as it did happen.

The great question, as we are told, is, whether the universe is governed and arranged on rational or non-rational principles ? and this question is asked by those

to whom free will is a necessary article in their creed. Certainly, if the mind or will obeys no law, then the universe must be governed on non-rational principles, for reason is based upon certainty, as opposed to contingency, in the order of nature. Science alone gives prevision, necessary to the guidance and regulation of action.

If prayer had the efficacy which is ordinarily assigned to it, it would make this "order of nature" impossible, there would be a constant breach in the chain of cause and effect, and prevision and the exercise of reason, which is based upon unbroken law and certainty, could not exist. "Requests for a particular adjustment of the weather," says the Rev. W. Knight, "are irrelevant, unless the petitioner believes that the prayer he offers may co-operate to the production of the effect." The same must be said of all prayers; they are efficacious only so far as they tend to answer themselves, and they themselves produce the effect desired. But wherever prayer is sincere, and not gabbled over by rote in our public service, this is generally the case. We are governed or moved by motive, and sincere prayer is the greatest possible strengthener of motive. Prayer thus acts through motive upon man, and through man upon matter and the universe. But in proportion as we recognise the Reign of Law, and we become conscious that there is a natural way by which all we desire may be brought about, prayer will no longer take the form of asking for what we can and ought to do for ourselves, but of simple aspiration and devotion to that unity of which we all form a part.

We feel that we ought to take the consequences of our actions, and that it is right we should do so, because we have no other rule to discriminate between right and wrong. It is not in actions themselves, or in the motives that dictate them—being all equally necessary—that the right or wrong consists, but in

their consequences to ourselves or others. If, as a rule, the actions are attended with pain, they are wrong; if with pleasure, they are right. This is God's simple and intelligible revelation to all the world alike. The Moral Governor carries on his moral government, not by calling people to account ages after, when the record of every idle word would be rather long and prosy even in eternity, but by immediate intervention—by the direct punishment or reward or pain or pleasure attending their actions.

Jeremy Bentham says:—"No man ever had, can, or could have, a motive different to the pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of pain." This has not been generally accepted, because it has not been understood. It has been supposed to refer only to physical or bodily pains, and not mental. We must discriminate also between pleasure and what are usually called pleasures. The stern delight of fortitude would hardly be called a "pleasure;" still delight is a highly pleasurable sensation. Men have certain impulses to action to attain certain ends. When these ends are legitimately attained, pleasure attends the action; when the ends are not attained, then there is pain. It is these ends that are pursued, not pleasure or pain, but pleasure or pain attending for our guidance and compulsion. The aggregate of these pleasures we call happiness—of the pains, which are the exception, misery.

These impulses, which we call propensities and sentiments, have various objects, and are more simple and calculable than is generally supposed. They are self-protecting, self-regarding, social, moral, and æsthetic. They are all connected with the brain, and the impulses to action are ordinarily strong in proportion to the size of the parts of the brain with which they are connected, the dynamical effect being dependent upon statical conditions in mind as in matter. The impulse to action is pleasurable, becoming painful if not gratified. Appetite is slightly pleasurable, hunger is painful, and

the pleasure of eating is in proportion to the appetite or hunger. All the other feelings have their appetites, hunger, and gratification, with the pleasures and pains attending them. The object of the intellect, the action of which is very little pleasurable in itself, is the guidance of these feelings towards their proper ends, and involves the element of choice in the selection of means. Locke says, "The will is the last dictate of the understanding," but it is not the dictate of the understanding itself, but of the impulses it may set in motion. It is the feelings, not the intellect, that ordinarily govern the will. Bentham's "pursuit of pleasure or avoidance of pain" means the pleasures or pains attending the action of all our mental faculties. If the propensities predominate in a character, then the pleasures are only of an animal nature; if the moral feelings predominate, then our pleasures are as intimately connected with the interests of others as with our own; and these feelings may be so trained and strengthened as to give the interests of others a preference over our own (*i.e.*, we may have more *pleasure* in promoting the interests of others than our own). It is these moral feelings that make the principal distinction between men and other animals, subordinating individual interests to that of the community. They enable men to combine and co-operate; upon which their principal strength depends. They probably do not so much differ in kind from those of other animals as in degree. They are dependent upon parts of the brain, which in animals are either absent or merely rudimentary. The pains of conscience are often stronger than any mere physical pains, and the pain attending the breach of his word and the outrage to all his highest feeling must have been greater to Regulus than the fear of any *physical* pain, or other consequences to which he could be subjected by his enemies. Of course a man without these higher feelings would have sneaked away—there was no free-will in the matter. But we do not admire Regulus the less,

though few of us perhaps would be able to follow his example. The habitual exercise of the highest, or unselfish feelings as they are called, regardless of immediate consequences, produces the highest happiness, although it may sometimes lead, as in Regulus's case, to the barrel of spikes; and this is only to be attained, not by free-will, but by careful training and exercise. It is exercise that increases structure, and the strength of the feeling, and its habitual or intuitive action, depends upon its size. We love that which is loveable, and hate that which is hateful; and if we are to love our neighbour he must make himself loveable, or love falls to the colder level of duty. The poor toad, notwithstanding the jewel in its head, æsthetically is not beautiful, and it has few friends or admirers, and few find out its virtues, and the blame that belongs to others is laid upon its poor ugly back. We never inquire if the toad made itself, or if it was its own free-will to be ugly. It is precisely the same with everything else—that which gives us pleasure we love, and that which gives us pain we hate, with small reference to whether this pain or pleasure was voluntarily given to us or not. It is the same with all consequences; as they are required for the guidance of our actions, they follow just the same, whether our actions are voluntary or not. Whether we burn ourselves by accident or voluntarily, the pain is just the same—the object of the pain being to keep us out of the fire. This is true responsibility or accountability which governs the will, which is not free—no freedom fortunately being allowed to interfere with God's purposes in creation.

We are told that "no cogent reason has yet been advanced why men should not follow their own wicked impulses, as well as others follow their virtuous ones." The best of all reasons I think has been assigned—viz., that painful consequences attend the vicious impulses, and pleasure the virtuous ones; so that unless a man prefers pain to pleasure, he has the strongest of

all possible motives for good conduct. We indefinitely increase the pains as additional motives, and where no punishment is deterrent, as in some exceptional cases, restraint, or even capital punishment, is justly resorted to.

The writer in the *Edinburgh*, to whom we have before alluded, says: "If these anti-Christian and atheistic sentiments should gain the wide acceptance which Dr Strauss and his school anticipate for them, what is to prevent a reign of universal chaos? What is to stave off the utter shipwreck of human society? What hope can survive for man when every redeeming ideal is destroyed; when blind destiny is enthroned in the seat of God; and when the universe is come to be regarded by all mankind as a dead machine, whose social law is, that

'He may get who has the power,
And he may keep who can.'

That universal anarchy will then begin, and that the unchained passions of a human animal, devoid of the usual animal instincts of restraint, will plunge both himself and the social fabric he has for ages been erecting into ruin, no one in his senses can reasonably doubt. And such is the consummation for which writers like these are diligently working. Such is the chaos into which a merely destructive criticism, and a 'positive' science which, in the domain of religion, is purely negative, and is therefore falsely so called, are hurrying the deluded votaries of a godless secularism." This "godless secularism," as if there were any part of the creation from which God could be excluded, would appear to point clearly to the authorship of this article, as none but a person whose "calling" was supposed to be in danger could write like this, except it were the American newspapers on the eve of a presidential election. The *New York Herald* has also its pious as well as its political side. In commenting lately upon the death of a rather notorious character, it says: "He

calmly fell asleep without a struggle, when, no doubt, angels accompanied his soul to the peaceful shores of eternity, there to dwell with his Maker for ever." The *Edinburgh* used to be considered an organ of advanced liberalism, but think of being able to find a writer in the present day who evidently knows *something* of science, who believes that social order and progress depend upon a creed, and *such a creed!*

"It is the business of morality or moral science," says Herbert Spencer, "to deduce, from the laws of life and the conditions of existence, what kinds of actions necessarily tend to produce happiness, and what kinds to produce unhappiness; and having done this, its deductions are to be recognised as laws of conduct." Morality relates, notwithstanding the high-flown language usually used with respect to it, simply to the laws and regulations by which men may live together in the most happy manner possible—the laws, in fact, of their wellbeing—and as it is the "law" of their nature to seek their happiness or wellbeing, the interests of morality are fortunately sufficiently assured. Of course this will be called a "godless secularism," and it is said that these natural motives will be very much strengthened if we add to them the rewards and punishments of another world; but the highest morality is independent of such low personal motives, and people do what is right because it is right—that is, because it promotes the best interests of the community at large—of others besides themselves. As to the laws of "an eternal and immutable morality," the laws of morality have always varied according to the varying interests of mankind, and with advancing civilisation; as the family has extended to the clan, the clan to the country, the country to the world. What has been right in one age and country has been wrong in another, as the interests of the community were different at one time and place to what they were in another. It is rather singular that we should hear most of eternal and immutable

morality from those whose whole theological system is based upon vicarious atonement, upon the sacrifice of the just for the unjust.

Coleridge says: "It is not the motive makes the man, but the man the motive." This is ordinarily adduced to prove that as man makes the motive, and the motive governs the will, the man must be free, and his will also; but it is just the reverse. Objectively, a man is judged by his motive; subjectively, it is man—that is, the man's nature that dictates the motive. If he is of a benevolent disposition, this furnishes the motive to kindly action; if he is conscientious, the motive to act justly. The appeal of outward circumstances will be answered according to the nature of the man, and whatever you may want to get out of him, if it is not in him, you cannot get it out of him. A man does not always act in accordance with his conscience, or sense of right and wrong; he acts according to his nature, and the strongest feeling predominates, whether that be conscience, fear of punishment, or self-indulgence at the expense of others. A man with the nature of a pig will act like a pig, whatever may be his knowledge of his duties to others. To say that he has the *ability* to act otherwise, is to say that a pig might be an angel if he pleased, or at least act in accordance with those higher human attributes which he does not possess. As to an appeal to his free-will, there is no free-will in the case, any more than a blind man is free to separate different colours. All the preaching in the world would not turn him into the higher man, any more than it would the pig itself. He might be taught to talk piously, but he would not be less a pig underneath. Very little can be done towards a change of nature in one generation. I am quite aware of the effect of what has been called "conversion," but it does little more than keep people outwardly correct in their conduct, and give selfishness another direction; that is, turn worldliness into other-worldliness. A man, however,

is not the less responsible—*i.e.*, is not the less liable to take the consequences of his actions, whatever his nature may be; the consequences, if painful, being intended to improve that nature, and push him forward to a higher grade. The conviction that different circumstances act upon different individuals according to their nature—which nature depends upon race, organisation, civilisation, and education—is gradually extending, and it must continue to extend, till all admit that no action could have been otherwise than it was under the circumstances. If you want to alter the action, you must alter the man or alter the circumstances, and cease to trust anything to free-will.

In the early days of our missionary societies, a savage presented himself for baptism. Among other things he was asked how many wives he had. He said five. He was told that Christianity only admitted of one wife, and that he could not be received into the Church. The next year, when the missionary was on the station, he presented himself again as a candidate, with only one wife. He was asked what had become of the other four. He said he had eaten them. This is among the conditions to which wedlock is liable in some other countries. The way in which the marriage ceremony is initiated among the bushmen of Australia is equally simple and humane, not to say loving, and it is less costly than with us. The man, having selected his lady-love, knocks her down with a club, and drags her to his camp.

Sir Samuel Baker has lately told us of the interesting customs of the people whom he has lately sought to emancipate and bring within the borders of civilisation in Africa. The king, who attacked his stronghold in his absence, and whom he afterwards defeated, had just celebrated his accession to the throne by burying all his relations alive. If the young child of a chief dies, the nurse is buried with it—sometimes alive, sometimes she has her throat cut—that she may look after it in

the next world. Sir Samuel found the natives very much opposed to slavery, and solicitous to aid him in putting it down. They objected to it because the traders took their wives, daughters, children, and followers *without compensation*. One of the strongest objectors offered to Sir Samuel to sell his son for a spade; *this* he thought the right thing.

These little differences of thought and custom between these interesting people and ourselves will scarcely, I think, be laid altogether to free-will. The people and circumstances surely had something to do with it.

But even this seems matter of opinion. Thus the Rev. J. A. Picton, agreeing with me, says, "Is the will as free to give its casting vote for generosity and righteousness in a Troppman, or a Nero, or a savage, as in a civilized St. Francis, or a Washington?" But why not, if the will rules the motives, and not the motives the will? On the contrary, the *Spectator* thinks that we can, by a heave of the will, without motive, and undetermined by the past, alter our whole life. It says, "Certainly we should have said that if there is one experience more than another by which the "I" is known, and known as something not to be explained by "a series of states of feeling," it is the sense of creative power connected with the feeling of effort, the consciousness that you can by a heave of the will alter your whole life, and that that heave of the will, or refusal to exert it, is not the mere resultant of the motives present to you, but is undetermined by the past—is *free*."—(Feb. 21, 1874, p. 234.) It certainly must have required a very considerable "heave of the will" to have enabled the *Spectator* to arrive at such a state of consciousness, and it must have been quite "undetermined by the past" experience, or present reason! I have no such consciousness of truly *creative* power, that is, of something made out of nothing.

Quite as great differences as between these savages and ourselves exist in the very midst of our civilisation.

There are a class of people amongst us whose animal propensities so decidedly predominate, that, turned loose upon society, they cannot help but prey upon it.

There are others whose animal and human faculties are so nicely balanced that their conduct depends entirely upon education and circumstances.

Others are so far a law unto themselves that if they fall it must be inadvertently, or from strong temptation.

All these may plead "Not guilty" to our ordinary notion of responsibility. Each may say truly, *whatever* he had done, "I could not help it." What, then, would be our conduct towards them? Why, exactly that, and no more, which would enable them to prevent it for the future. The first we should confine for life, or if it was a very dangerous animal, perhaps put it out of the way altogether (capital punishment). But if society will breed such animals, it ought to take the responsibility, and be obliged at least to go to the expense of keeping them for life. To the second we should apply just that discipline that would incline the balance of motive and action in favour of society for the future. The third would require only to be put into the path of right to go straight for the future. "Turn to the right, and keep straight forward," are the only directions required to be given to them.

The only effort that I know of to induce our legislators to apply science in this direction, in the discrimination of character and the classification of criminals, was made by Sir George S. Mackenzie, in February 1836. He petitioned the Right Hon. Lord Glenelg, the then Secretary for the Colonies, that a classification might be made of criminals in accordance with the above threefold division. This was accompanied by certificates from a long list of eminent men that the Science of Mind we possessed was quite adequate to the purpose. Sir George says, "that a discovery of

the true mental constitution of man has been made, and that it furnishes us with an all-powerful means to improve our race. . . . That man is a *tabula rasa*, on which we may stamp what talent and character we please, has long been demonstrated, by thousands of facts of daily occurrence, to be a mere delusion. Differences in talent, intelligence, and moral character, are now ascertained to be the effects of differences in cerebral organisation. . . . These differences are, as the certificates which accompany this show, sufficient to indicate *externally* general dispositions, as they are proportioned among one another. Hence, we have the means of estimating, with something like precision, the actual natural characters of convicts (as of all human beings), so that we may at once determine the means best adapted for their reformation, or discover their incapacity for improvement, and their being proper subjects of continued restraint, in order to prevent their further injuring society." Sir George says, with reference to cerebral physiology, that "attacks are still made on the science of phrenology; but it is a science which its enemies have never, in a single instance, been found to have studied. Gross misrepresentations of fact, as well as wild, unfounded assertion, have been brought to bear against it again and again, and have been again and again exposed." This kind of injustice I firmly believe to be quite as applicable, if not more so, to the present time as it was then. The testimony then given by the anatomists, surgeons, eminent physiologists, and others, was generally to the effect that "the natural dispositions are indicated by the form and size of the brain to such an extent as to render it quite possible, during life, to distinguish men of desperate and dangerous tendencies from those of good disposition;" and that "it is quite possible to determine the dispositions of men by an inspection of their heads with so much precision as to render a knowledge of phrenology of the utmost importance to

persons whose duties involve the care and management of criminals." And, allow me to add, it will be found of equal importance to all persons who have the care and management of any one, whether schoolmasters, doctors, or parsons. For want of this knowledge of cerebral physiology, James Mill was very nearly killing his son, John S. Mill, or making him an idiot for life, by overworking a brain whose activity already amounted almost to disease. The brain gave way, however, when he was above twenty years old, and he had one of those fits of mental depression which are well known to attend its overwork. It is a singular fact that neither he nor any of the reviewers of his autobiography seem to be aware that it was not Marmontel's "Memoires" or Wordsworth's "Poems" to which he was indebted for recovery, but to his wanderings in the Pyrenean mountains, the love of natural beauty, and the rest of brain. It has been J. S. Mill's ignorance of cerebral physiology, and his diversion of the public mind from the subject by his "Logic" and "Examination of Sir William Hamilton," that has mainly helped to bring back Berkeley and the reign of Metaphysics, and to put off the true science of Mind, based on physiology, half a century.

The discrimination of character is not so great a mystery as some people suppose. Statistics show that people act very much alike under the same circumstances. People fall in love, and marry according to the price of bread, and even the number of people who put their letters into the post without an address are the same in a given area; knowledge is constantly narrowing the space between general rules and particular cases.

Of course Sir George Mackenzie's advice could not be taken; public opinion was not prepared for it; neither is it at present, as is evidenced by the return to torture (flogging) during the last few years, and the whole spirit of the public press. Take an illustration from one of our first-class Journals. The *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 9, 1874, says:—

“Imprisonment is not only fast losing its terrors, but, owing to the kindness of magistrates and judges, it is becoming a real boon to the dishonest and violent, to whom it is doled out, like funds from the poor-box, according to their necessities. The other day ‘a novel and suggestive application,’ it is stated, was made to the Recorder in Dublin by a female prisoner, aged twenty-nine years, who had been forty-eight times convicted of indictable offences, and pleaded guilty to a charge of stealing 7s. 6d. from the pockets of a drunken man in the streets. The Recorder was proceeding to sentence the prisoner to twelve months’ imprisonment, when she earnestly implored him to make the sentence one of five years’ penal servitude, alleging as a reason for desiring the change that she might then have a chance of earning an honest livelihood, whereas if she only got twelve months’ imprisonment she could do nothing but return to the streets. The Recorder, ‘believing her to be sincere in her desire to lead an honest life, complied with her wish.’ This was very kind to the prisoner, but rather hard on those who will have to support her for five years instead of for one, because she requires the lengthened period for her own convenience. It is of course most desirable that prisoners, when they leave gaol, should ‘earn an honest livelihood;’ but imprisonment is intended as a punishment, and not as a boon.”

That is, punishment is retributive, and not reformatory. But I wonder society does not discover that this rough and ready method of dealing with criminals does not pay, and that forty-eight convictions in a person only twenty-nine years old is a very expensive way of taking its revenge. No, I suppose it would never do to admit that a man’s conduct was the result of his mental constitution and the circumstances in which he was placed—that there was no freedom in the matter, except the freedom to act in accordance with the dictates of the will. It would be most dangerous doctrine to allow that no man *could* have acted differently to what he did act—that the strongest motive, whatever it was, *must* of necessity have prevailed; and that all we had to do, therefore, was to alter the constitution and circumstances, and prevent such motives, whether of conscience—that is, sense of right—or of fear, that would enable him to do differently for the

future. No, the *vengeance* of the law must continue still to be visited upon our Bill Sykeses, and Fagins, and Artful Dodgers, although it is well known to others besides M. Quetelet that "society prepares crime, and the guilty are only the instruments by which it is executed." We must still continue to dole out so much suffering for so much sin, without reference to cause and effect, either past or future; for is not a man responsible for his actions—that is, may we not justly retaliate and make another suffer as much as he has entailed upon us? To the popular mind vengeance seems a divine institution; and it is impossible 'to love our enemies and to do good to those who spitefully use us and persecute us,' as long as this vulgar notion of moral desert prevails. It is only Science—the Science of Mind—that can put an end to this; and that there is a Science of Mind is at present not even recognized by the President of the Social Science Association. When we have a Science of Man we may have a Science of Society, and we shall then advance as rapidly towards its improvement as we have done in Physics since Bacon's time. Induction is equally applicable to mind and matter, any supposed difference is consequent upon our ignorance. Free-will and spontaneity will disappear as our knowledge extends, and all will be brought within "the reign of law." When we have a Science of Mind we shall cease to take the absorbing interest we now do in kitchen-middens and the dust heaps and bones of the past, and shall take to the study of cerebral physiology, upon which the laws of mind depend. Our attention will not be given, as now, exclusively to short-horns and south-downs, or to horses and dogs, but to improving the race of men. If we wish to induce any special line of conduct which we call moral—that is, more to the interest of society at large than another—we must collect and direct the force of mind that will produce it. This can only be done and become habitual by growing the organization

upon which it depends. Preaching and dogma go only a very little way towards it ; and education, upon which so much reliance is now placed, will not do much more. Education has a refining influence, and so far as it may tend to direct the propensities, and call the higher feelings into activity, it is of value. Its influence is very much overrated ; for, as we have said, it is the feelings and not the intellect that govern the will, and reading, writing, and arithmetic have little direct influence upon them. It is on this account that many well-disposed people are so anxious to add religion to the instruction in our common schools. By religion here little more is meant than, "Be good, my boy, or Bogie 'll have you," and surely it is not worth dragging religion into all the dirt, and familiarity which breeds contempt, of our common schools for this, to the injury of all that deserves to be called religion in after life. It would be much better to teach the natural consequences—the real responsibility that attends all the children's actions—how, if they lie, no one will believe them ; if they steal, no one will trust them, &c., attended with short and sharp immediate punishment. Future rewards and punishments have a very remote bearing upon immediate conduct, and I doubt the policy of turning the Almighty into a sort of head policeman, with his eye always upon them, ready to strike if they do wrong. This may beget fear, but never love, and children soon find out that as far as the immediate consequences to themselves are concerned it is not true, and this damages their faith in their real liability.

But the Science of Mind will introduce a truer knowledge of what really constitutes Education, which means the developing and perfecting of all our faculties, social, moral, religious, and æsthetic,* as well as the intellect. This only will make a complete man, this only will make him find his happiness and there-

* See "Education of the Feelings," 4th edition. Longmans & Co.

fore his interest in virtue, and enable him to do his duty here, without either hope of heaven or fear of hell. The study of the nature of each mental faculty, and its direction towards its legitimate objects, is what is required by Education. Of how much may be done by education is seen in the cultivation of musical talent.

Social evolution follows the law of organic modification. It is the exercise of the feelings we wish to predominate that alone will strengthen them and increase the size of the organs with which they are connected. The commercial age in which we live—its machinery and facility of intercourse—is making all men better off, and binding all together by a common tie of interest. When a man is well off and happy he desires to make others so, exercising his benevolence. When he is in daily close intercourse with his fellows it shows him the necessity for honesty and integrity, and this exercises his conscientiousness or sense of justice. Men are thus obliged to live for others as well as for themselves; they everywhere find it their interest to help one another, and as combination and co-operation thus increase, so do civilization and the growth of those mental habits which enable men to live most happily together.

We thus progress surely, but slowly, not in consequence of, but in spite of, our conflicting creeds, and when at last we arrive at the conviction that nothing could have happened otherwise than it did; that the present and the future only are in our power—when we have determined to “let the dead past bury its dead”—we shall have made a great advance towards the more easy practice of justice and benevolence. Of course, the usual cry about gross matter and materialism and iron fate may be expected, but all that is highest which man has ever reasonably looked forward to may be more immediately expected when science and certainty are welcomed in the place of chance and spon-

taneity. We are approaching daily in practice, if not in theory, in this direction. At present our religious creeds stand directly across our path. But utility, if not philosophy, is teaching our law-makers that they cannot mend the past, and this gradual application of the Science of Mind to legislation will ultimately extend to the people for whose benefit the laws are made, until all will feel that nothing must be left to accident in the moral world any more than in the physical.

The effect upon the individual of the reconstruction of his ethical code upon a scientific basis is most favourable to the growth of all the higher feelings upon which conduct and happiness depend. The supposition that things ought to have been otherwise, and *might have been otherwise*, is the source of half the worry in the world, and revenge, remorse, and retributive punishment cause half its misery. Revenge is not only wicked, but absurd; as applied to the past, it is like a child beating a table. When we have done wrong, the experienced consequences are generally sufficient for our future guidance, and "repentance whereby we *forsake sin*" is admirable, but remorse for that which could not have been otherwise is both absurd and useless. An Irish priest told his congregation that it was a most providential thing that death had been placed at the end of life, instead of at the beginning, as it gave more time for repentance. With this we can scarcely agree. Our verdict, as it *must* be now, would be rather that of the Irish jury, "Not guilty, but would advise the accused not to do it again." But is this verdict of not guilty just? Certainly it is, as regards *the past*; it could not have been otherwise. But surely it will be said this is dangerous doctrine. Is no one to be blamed for anything he has done? Blame is both unjust and useless as applied to the past; it is only so far as it may influence the future that it can be of any use. This praise and blame is a rough-and-ready way of influencing future action, which

has a very uncertain effect upon conduct. We assume that people might have done differently, and, after scolding or punishing, we leave them to do so, but there is no certainty that they will. Would it not be better to inquire into the causes that induced them to act as they did, and alter them, otherwise they are certain to do the same again. Society's conduct with respect to offences at present is very much like Bartle Massey's ideal of woman as cook,—“the porridge *would* be awkward now and then; if it's wrong, it's summat in the meal, or it's summat in the milk, or it's summat in the water.” Is it not time that we, as well as our cooks, began to measure the proportion between the meal and the milk? As to dangerous doctrine, we must not forget that “philosophical certainty” implies that everything that will influence conduct in the present or the future is still open to us, only in one case we trust to science and law, in the other to chance and free will. In proportion as we extend our dominion over the darkness of ignorance, and are able to conquer fresh fields of knowledge, as the domain of law becomes every year wider and wider, and we gain enlarged views of the eternal sequence and universal order, all contingency and spontaneity must vanish. What we call chance or free-will is nothing more than the action of hitherto undiscovered causes. As to the past, that we feel is inevitable, and more, it could not have been otherwise—the causes then in operation *must* have produced the effects they did—and when we know a thing is inevitable we can “grin” and bear it; it is the mental worry, not the mere physical pain that is hard to bear. As the proverb says, “It is of no use crying over spilt milk.” Few know the peace of mind and internal quiet which the habitual practice of this mental attitude secures, but all may know it as science advances, and it is this state of mind which it is the true function of philosophy to enable us to attain.

There is infinite peace also in the conviction that we

are in higher hands than our own ; that the interests of morality and virtue are ultimately assured, being based upon law ; that we may forget ourselves in the glory of the whole of which we are so infinitely small a part ; and that we may thus rest satisfied that something much better is being secured than the freedom of the will, and with which that Will will not be allowed to interfere.

