

GOOD AND EVIL—THEIR ORIGIN.

BY PROF. ANDRÉ POËY.

OPINIONS are profoundly divided with regard to the origin and nature of good and evil. For Theologians: God is the good, and the Devil is the evil. Tradition, Christ, the apostles, the doctors, the councils, the Christian dogmas, teach us that God has existed from eternity infinitely powerful, wise and holy. The world and man, formed out of nothing, are the work of his hands, and these same hands which imparted life to man, will also give him happiness in a heavenly home. As the world is naturally divided between good and evil, *evil is the result of a fall due to his free-will*, which precipitated man into sin, suffering, and eternal death. But the omnipotent goodness of God ransomed man from the error of his ways at the price of an infinite victim; hence the coming of the Messiah, the Word, and the Son * * * when divine grace was diffused anew over the earth. "Here," says M. Littré, "the dogma is engaged in obscure questions between this divine grace, predestination, the small number of the elect on the one side, and on the other the free-will of man, and the goodness of God." At last men rise from the dead, and are judged according to the deeds done in the flesh. The good are rewarded, the bad punished; the heavenly Jerusalem opens its gates, and hell opens its portal for an order become unchangeable, and a time become eternal. "Viewed in its ensemble," says M. Littré, "this dogmatism is a philosophy giving enough light to satisfy the faithful about the author of the world, the world itself, man, his duties and his destiny, while in its origin it is the rival of philosophy. It is important to note that each theology emanating from an antecedent theology, always carries with it a supernatural history. To be intimately connected with a supernatural history is the character of a primordial philosophy or theology."*

Consequently, in the theological philosophy evil is the result of a fall due to free-will, and *free-will*, according to Bossuet, † belongs to the soul, which, being an immaterial substance, has the faculty of willing for its own sake, without the intervention of any motive as a determining cause of its resolutions.

* "La Philosophie positive." *Revue*, 1867, vol. i, p. 9.

† "Traité sur le Libre arbitre."

This theological conception of free-will is still the most advanced, for some Christian sects and established churches have, on the contrary, professed a *bond-will*, holding that, in the presence of divine omnipotence and omniscience, man's freedom was an impiety, a chimera, an immorality. According to the Presbyterian Church's principle of predestination, the sin being foreseen, man has to submit to free-will personified in the immutability of God's omnipotence. Men are therefore fatally foreordained to be, while on earth, good or bad, according to their celestial missions.

If from this theological or divine conception we pass to the metaphysical or abstract, as found in the most advanced school of Locke, J. Stuart Mill, and Prof. Bain, we find that free-will, as the theologians understand it, is a psychological error, and that volition is not a faculty determined by its own momentum toward this or that motive. On the contrary, that the resolution urged by the will is determined by this and that motive. In a word, that it is not motives which obey volition, but volition which obeys motives.

Thus, according to theological and metaphysical philosophy, the knowledge and practice of good and evil depend upon the will, and this last is determined either by itself, independently of all extraneous causes, or else by volition which obeys motives of some kind. All this, in the first case, leaves us in the most absolute vagueness about their origin, and in the second, we are only furnished with a point of departure whence we plunge into the greatest obscurity with regard to the psychological explanation of good and evil, and their mental evolution in human morality.

Theology and metaphysics being wholly powerless to furnish us the origin of good and evil, let us seek it in positive psychology. When anatomy and physiology were advanced enough in the knowledge of the simpler functions of the human body, they were compelled to take up immediately the more complicated functions of the brain and intelligence. They were at once struck with the close alliance of these two facts: that everything which changed the organ, also altered the state of its function. Then it was observed that all the impressions furnished us by the external world as well as our own internal impressions, were immediately received and transmitted by our conducting nerves into the depths of the nerve-cells of which the cerebral mass is composed. These cells have then as their irreducible property the translation of these impressions into *ideas* and *sentiments*, their conservation, their association, and their elaboration into combinations, more or less complicated, according to the nature of the given impressions.

Although the analysis of the anatomical conditions and physiological functions of the organs of the brain may in part be unintelligible to some readers who are not on a level with the latest discoveries in biology, I cannot pass it over in the conception of the new positive doctrine which I shall shortly propound. This analysis has conducted

us to the great discovery: that the brain is at the same time the seat of the affections, as well as that of the intelligence. The heart has no other function but that relating to the circulation of the blood and the preservation of life. Gall reclaimed the intellectual functions from the vegetative viscera, where they were believed to be situated, to place them in the brain. Now we exclude the affective functions from the heart, in order to bring them back to their true place in the cells of the brain, where they are elaborated simultaneously with the intellectual. By considering the brain as the seat of the intelligence and affections, we do not say that it has the power of creating them. The brain creates nothing; it merely receives impressions external and internal, and elaborates them. The function of the brain is limited to the building up, so to speak, of ideas and sentiments out of the materials which come to it from without and within our organism: that is to say, out of external sensorial impressions, and internal instinctive impressions. In this respect the nerve-cells of the head have a triple basis: intellectual, affective, and esthetic. Intellectual, or that which is attached to the sensorial impressions; affective, or that which is dependent upon the needs of individual life and that of the species; esthetic, or that connected with what is emotional and pleasing in certain auditory and visual impressions. In this the subjective or internal impression is always blended with the objective or external impression, and can only mean the faculty of elaboration on the part of the nerve-cells of the brain's hemispherical lobes. All this in the esthetic faculty gives rise to music, architecture, sculpture, painting and poetry, idealized and constituting with ideology and morality the psychical phenomena of human reason.

Now that we have an idea (exact enough for our purpose) of the anatomy and physiology of the intellectual and affective faculties, let us proceed to consider from a more elevated point of view, the latter only, as they are less known and accepted.

We have already said that the impressions which affect our nervous system are of two kinds: the one, sensorial or of the senses; the other, instinctive. At present we shall add that sensorial impressions are the source of ideas, and instinctive impressions, the source of sentiments. The instinctive impressions are also of two kinds: those which appertain to the instincts for preserving the individual life, and those which belong to the instinct for preserving the species. The instinct of individual life depends upon self-love, which degenerates by reason of vicious direction into selfishness. The instinct-life corresponds to love of others, in its primordial forms of sexual attachment, maternal, filial, national love, and finally love for humanity, by the preponderance of altruism over selfishness. Thus, however complex may be our ideas, they can always be reduced to ideas, the simple products of our sensations; in the same manner, however complex may be our sentiments, they can always be reduced to one of two fundamental sentiments.

Hence the founder of the positive philosophy, Auguste Comte, has very judiciously divided all our sentiments into *selfish* and *altruist*. The selfish sentiments relate to the conservation and safety of the *individual*, and the altruist sentiment to the conservation and safety of the community or of the human species.

According as we ascend the zoölogical scale from the inferior animals to man, we always see altruism prevail over selfishness. Among fishes, which are cerebrally at the lowest point in the vertebrate scale and have no conception of either family or children, the instinct remains purely sexual. But the sentiment to which it gives birth commences to be manifested in many mammals and birds; only it is but temporary in the greatest number of instances. Among men, the family raises in the children love of parents, and in the parents love of children. Afterwards are formed between families bonds of the same kind as between the members of the family itself. In fine, from this union and this fraternity, sociability arises here and there, and is more and more developed.

Now mark the following: it is precisely upon this power of sociability, which increases from the inferior beings up to man, that Auguste Comte has founded his static law, which serves as the basis of the science of sociology (the present politics). This law is in its turn so dependent upon the constitution of the brain, that it is effaced according as the cerebral mass diminishes among animals. This constitutes among men the foundation of political economy.

Whence man is a moral being, capable of acting under selfish impulses or under altruist impulses, according as these or those prevail. Barbarous people and certain narrow natures* in the bosom of our society are found exactly in the former condition, on account of the small development of their intellectual and affective faculties. Praiseworthy actions spring by the side of detestable ones, and dispute with them the supremacy. It is only later, when man learns the profound abyss which exists between selfish and altruist sentiments, that he can only establish a rule of conduct.

"Such a rule," says M. Littré, "which appears a very light bridle to repress the passions, is nevertheless invincible. Its force is in nature, which has created it; and even by this it can never be annihilated, but is always maintained. Fixed in the mind and become a moral force, it takes where it is violated the form of *remorse* in the individual, the form of *reprobation* in opinion, and the form of *punishment* in society and among humanity." †

According as humanity grows and develops, it forms intermediate associations of sentiments and rules, which determine and characterize the different moralities arising in the advance of the ages. It is thus

* Unfortunately every-day business concerns place us in contact with too many of such selfish natures.

† "La philosophie positive." *Revue*, 1867, vol. i, p. 359.

that the moral sense, having a foundation wholly physiological and, as a result, constant, is none the less variable, according to times and peoples. We therefore see that, for morality as well as for human intelligence, there is a primitive state destitute of both. In the primitive epoch of humanity, the morality is as weak and faulty as the intelligence is infantile. It has been only in the lapse of time that the sentiments have been developed, associated, and regulated, without having yet attained in our day either form or definite stability.

Let us resume our researches into the origin of good and evil in the three philosophies we have passed in review. In the Theological school, free-will is a faculty of the soul, without control, and independent of our volition; or else the free-will is in God, and man is irrevocably predestined to act well or ill. In the first case we have only prayer, invocation of the Supreme Being to preserve us from evil, at last punishment or reward in eternity. In the second the bond-will absolves us always in the evil as well as in the good. In the Metaphysical school, as its principles always repose upon intimate causes, and not upon laws, the volitional faculty is synonymous with the faculty of an immaterial soul in the psychological properties of the brain. It is its absolute origin which destroys the concrete cause of the determining faculty of the volition in free-will.

In the Positivist school, soul, free-will, volition, good, evil, and all the psychical faculties, are the simple result of the transformation of impressions from without and within, by a physiological elaboration in the nerve-cells of the brain into ideas and sentiments. Good and evil become thus unstable sentiments, while the two media (external and internal) undergo variations more or less considerable; and they cannot be morally determined so long as these media have not taken their normal course—that is to say, so long as the sociological laws are not definitely known and fully practised. Hitherto not a single example can be found where evil was not in certain circumstances the parent of good, or *vice versa*. The proverb that “there is no evil which may not become a good,” has here its most brilliant confirmation.

In the Positive Philosophy, instead of having recourse to personal or divine absolution always at hand to give us peace, in order to fall anew into the same sin, our rule of conduct and our moral force, in a word, are powerfully rooted in the noble *remorse* for a bad deed, while in the *reprobation* of public opinion we impose a punishment from the hands of society and entire humanity, much keener than the vain absolutions, punishments, and rewards, personal and selfish, beyond the grave.

Let it be particularly noted that what we have said above about psychical phenomena, and about the transformation within the nerve-cells of the brain of external and internal impressions into ideas and sentiments—that all this is by no means Materialism in the sense of the ancient school of Epikurus, of Condillac, of Locke, of D’Holbach,

and of Büchner in our own days. They are simply facts of observation, experiment, and comparison, obtained by modern anatomy and physiology.

Following the diverse vibrations suffered by inert matter, do we not see as remarkable effects produced in the thousand properties of heat, light, sound, electricity, and magnetism? Are not the physical properties of inorganic matter as marvelous as the psychical properties of organic matter? Here, as in the cerebral mass, it is always the inorganic or organic matter which is manifested under the impulse of a form of vibration determined in the diverse properties—physical, vital, and psychical.

Thus in fine we are in possession of three grand series of fundamental properties of matter. First—*Universal Gravitation*, which is an immanent principle of matter inorganic or inert. Second—*Life*, which is an immanent principle of matter organic or animated. Third—*Intelligence and Affection*, which form the immanent principle of nervous or thinking matter.

Having signalized the origin of good and evil according to theological, metaphysical and positive interpretations, let us now proceed to establish the static and dynamic laws which govern the theory of human reason.

Hippokrates and Aristotle have shown that there is nothing in the intelligence which has not come from sensation. This law was later badly interpreted by the materialists, who suppressed the intelligence and only admitted the impression of sensation. Leibnitz rectified the primitive law by saying that there are outside of us facts which we perceive by our senses. But if we do not wish, like idiots, to contemplate uselessly these facts, we must connect them together in order to construct theories and establish *laws*. This concurrence between the brain and the world for the formation of any notion whatever, has been established above in the distinction between subjective and objective.

Completing Hippokrates, Aristotle and Leibnitz by Kant, Auguste Comte has in fine established that the mind is not and cannot be passive in its relations to the world, and that the state of the subject causes always a modification in the appreciation of the object. All our conceptions being at the same time objective and subjective, Comte has thus established his first intellectual and static law: that "*our subjective constructions are always subordinated to our objective materials.*"

But as in our greater flights of imagination we never cease to draw from without the materials with which to construct our fancies, this first law applies as well to the state of madness as to that of sanity. In order that the internal may be subordinate to the external, it is not sufficient that the foundation of our thought comes from sensation, the sensation must preponderate. Hence Comte's second law is that "*the internal images are less vivid and exact than the external impressions whence they emanate.*"

"It is thus alone," adds Comte, "that a veritable *subordination* of the brain to its truly preponderant medium can be established. Without such a condition the mental intercourse of man with the world admits of no fixed rule. For our internal impulses come always to disturb our external impressions, being on the point, at times, of overwhelming our weaker appreciation."* Nevertheless this second static law does not altogether complete the normal state of the understanding, for any object whatever may create, according to the diversity of circumstances, many different images. If these images, for example, though all inferior to their corresponding impressions, were notwithstanding equal to each other, there would result in the mind an insurmountable confusion. This is what takes place in symptoms of insanity. Comte's third law following is still necessary: that "*the normal image is more vivid than those which the cerebral action brings simultaneously into existence.*"

The static theory of human reason is finally completed by these three laws. *The within* ceases to have power to disturb *the without*, but on the contrary yields to its necessary preponderance. The external order becomes thus, by its relation to the brain, an aliment, a stimulant and a regulator, as it does toward all other classes of biological phenomena.

As every judgment we form results from a certain medley of objective impressions and subjective elaboration, we must inquire what is the exact degree of each of the two elements constituting the normal state. This degree cannot be rigorously fixed, seeing that there is no precise boundary between reason and madness, health and sickness. The existence of a being allows of variations within certain limits, and it is only when their extent is overpassed that it becomes impossible. But we can fix an ideal mean around which the reality oscillates. This mean which the human reason always tends to approach, furnishes us the *logical law of the First Philosophy*, so well forecast by Bacon, which consists in this new law of Comte, prescribing us "*to construct always the simplest hypothesis permitted by the facts.*"

Seeing that all our theories must finally end in representing the world as *it is*, the brain will become, as far as possible, a faithful mirror of the external order. But *to see things as they are*, it must be deprived of all exaggerated sentiments of malevolence, and even of benevolence. We say with reason that hate is blind, but we also say it of love, which amounts to the recognition that all excessive passion hinders us from seeing justly, and forces us to make complex hypotheses, either to condemn or to absolve. But as the mind, in a state of unity, can think only under an affective impulse, selfish or altruist, positive logic prescribes us to guard especially the malevolent impulses, which are the most violent and imperious. The influence of benevolence is likely to become exaggerated only in case of madness, when

* "Système de Politique positive," t. iii, p. 19.

the mind ceases to be the minister of the heart, in order to become its slave. So, to be as simple as possible, Comte has established as an *affective complement* to the anterior logical law, that "*our hypotheses must be stripped as much of malevolence as of benevolence.*"

The ensemble of the three static laws with the logical law of the first philosophy and its affective complement just given, only furnish the character of human reason in opposition to madness,* but not the stability of opinions whence it emanates.

If the opinions were unstable (even the variations they suffer by more extended observation, or by the changes to which age makes our sentiments yield), or if they were not submitted to any law, they would then be arbitrarily free. This dynamic law which is connected with the intellectual development of the human mind, was also discovered by Comte and formulated in these terms: "*All human conceptions proceed from the theological or fictional state to the positive or scientific state by passing through the metaphysical or abstract state.*"

Considered by itself, this law at first appears inexact. In fact, we see illustrious geniuses recognizing the existence of a superior volition, and bowing before it, while almost all our contemporaries are at the same time theologians or metaphysicians in politics, and positivists in geometry or chemistry. Does the normal state of our intelligence consist in employing different methods, according to the nature of the subject of which we treat?

A second complementary law resolves this apparent contradiction: it is the law of the classification of our abstract conceptions into six philosophies of the irreducible sciences, according to *the complexity and speciality increasing, or the simplicity and generality decreasing* of the phenomena with which each of them deal. The intelligence is thus conducted from the simplest and most general speculations to those most complex and special, in the hierarchal order of the Sciences following, established by Comte: mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology, (this last comprehending psychology, esthetics, ideology, and morality.)

The first four sciences embrace the study of the cosmological Medium, or inorganic creation, and the two latter the vital and social Medium, or organic creation. Mathematics, astronomy, physics, and chemistry being the simplest, are the earliest emancipated from all supernatural and metaphysical intervention. Among those who the most resolutely invoke divine mediation in human affairs, no one pretends to deprive a railway train of all velocity by means of prayer. On the contrary, in biological or sociological phenomena, confined especially to psychology, or the intelligence and affections, by their greater complexity, theology and metaphysics are yet deeply rooted.

* Eugène Sémérie, "Des Symptomes intellectuels de la folie."—Thèse. Paris, 1867.

The different degrees of velocity with which each science, according to its complexity, is susceptible of attaining its final state of positivity, is a capital fact which confirms beyond a doubt the exactness of the dynamic law of the three phases of human intelligence in the interpretation of natural phenomena.

But from the moment that the positive method has furnished us the true psychological and sociological laws, these theological and metaphysical phantoms disappear from the sciences never to return. The creation of the sociological and moral sciences conducts us then to mental unity by a complete cerebral harmony, or, in other words, to the *stability of ideas* by the Positive Philosophy, replacing definitely the two primitive philosophies.

The study upon the origin of good and evil which we have terminated, is at the same time positive and negative. Positive, by the physiological and psychical laws we have established; negative, by the relative impotence in which we remain for want of a sufficient number of laws to fix the true limits which separate good and evil.

But a great truth has been irrevocably acquired: 1st, that the intellectual and affective faculties have their single and sole seat in the brain, where they are united by bonds of strict and intimate solidarity; 2d, that the affections arise from internal instinctive impressions, while the ideas or intelligence are derived from external sensorial impressions; and 3d, that the instinctive or affective impressions are of two orders: those appertaining to the instincts for preserving the life of the individual, and those relating to the instincts for preserving the life of the species. The first are beyond a certain limit selfish, and the second are always altruist.

After the affective and spontaneous faculties of the brain which constitute human morality, follow the *intellectual* faculties and rules which determine human reason. Between these two is placed a third order of faculty, called *esthetic* or emotional.

The reason being merely outlined, morality in our day is in only an embryonic state. Good and evil depend upon false and true, that is to say, upon intellectual reasoning. We do evil because we have a *false idea* of the *true*, in the same way that we do good because we have a *true idea* of the *false*. In the state of mental anarchy in which society is sunk, we frequently confound the noblest sentiments with the basest passions. For example, impersonal pride is mistaken for personal selfishness. We should only be proud of a noble and just action in the unique interest of goodness, as it relates to our fellow-beings; but if this pride has no other aim than our own satisfaction, what in the first case was a legitimate virtue, in the other degenerates into unworthy self-love. Should one be badly appreciated in his noble impersonal pride, he must never blame the author without taking into account the extenuating and powerful circumstances which often, alas! are but very fallacious. After a disappointment, one can only pity the

object of his attachment, not by high disdain, but by compelling him to return to better sentiments. In a word, pride can become a noble and pure passion only on condition of forgetting itself. We have taken as an example pride, because it is at once the noblest and the vilest of passions, according to the use, good or bad, legitimate or illegitimate, which is made of it, and according as personal selfishness or impersonal altruism predominates. Thus evil limits good, and they are transmitted, the one into the other, in the form of perturbation, without which we cannot seize the true law which governs these two extreme terms.

The cause is very plain: in the affective faculties *biology* is not advanced enough to furnish us the law of the instincts for the preservation of individual life, and *sociology* is too much in its infancy to give us the law of the instincts for the preservation of the species-life. Do we not perceive in this ensemble of incontestable facts that Morality is yet in process of creation by the sole means of human reason?

In a second part we will regard good and evil from the dynamical stand-point, its evolution and periodical recurrences. In the first case we have applied Broussais's law upon the assimilation of the pathological state to the physiological (or health), the former differing only in a greater amplitude from the normal state which then degenerates into perturbation. In the same way the psychological faculties of the nerve-cells of the brain may be exalted from the normal state or *the good* to the perturbed state or *the evil*. So the origin of evil is an exaggeration of the good. In the second place I will show how the periodical recurrences of astronomical and physical phenomena, also occurs in morality, as well in the individual as in society. As in the physical, so the more complex moral phenomena are, the more difficult it is to foresee the period of revolution, and the cycle is more extended. The same relation exists between eclipses and comets of very long periods. The last part of this work is entirely personal, although its principles are more or less based upon those of the Positive Philosophy.

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THE THREE MENTAL CRISES OF AUGUSTE COMTE.

BY PROF. ANDRÉ POËY.

M. LITTRÉ has charged Auguste Comte, since his death, with having changed the method in the elaboration of his two great works. In his *Philosophie positive* the *objective* method presides, while in his *Politique positive*, on the contrary, the *subjective* method principally reigns.*

M. Littré finds the cause which drove Comte into the subjective method in a purely psychological effect—in a word, in a *mental crisis*—experienced by him in 1845, preceded and followed by the following circumstances :

“Since he finished in 1842,” says he, “the *Système de philosophie positive*, he never ceased to revolve in his mind his promised book upon positive politics. Yet, not until 1845 were its character and plan settled. This *initial elaboration of his second great work* (Comte’s own expression) coincided with a *grave nervous illness.*” †

M. Littré cites afterwards two of Comte’s letters to Mr. J. S. Mill, of June 27, 1845, and May 6, 1846. In the first, Comte speaks of interesting details (necessarily deferred) upon a grave nervous illness, produced, doubtless, by the resumption of his philosophical composition, which occurred some days after his last letter (May 15).

M. Littré remarks that this letter is mysterious ; that one does not promise *interesting details* upon a fever or fluxion ; but that this was really a crisis in which Comte’s mind suffered profound impressions and durable modifications. He finds this plainly set forth in the following extract from his second letter to Mill : “. . . . The decisive invasion of this virtuous passion (for Mme. Clotilde de Vaux) coincided last year with the initial elaboration of my second great work. You can thus imagine the true gravity of a nervous crisis, up to the present imperfectly known, in which I have run a true cerebral risk, and from the forcible personal recollections of which I have been happily saved, without any vain medical interference”

In this second letter Comte speaks, not of an illness, but of a nervous disease. Before 1845, this disease was indeterminate, adds M.

* “Auguste Comte et la Philosophie positive.” Paris, 1863, p. 126.

† Id., pp. 580-591.

Littré. "But the fatiguing effort of thought, as it neared completion, encountered the impassioned love inspired by Mme. de Vaux. From this time the disease took a determinate form, impressing the seal of sentiment upon the conception elaborated. So, between profound meditation ruling his intellect, and passionate tenderness captivating his heart, the obstacles which had hitherto stopped him disappeared, the scales fell from his eyes, and the subjective method appeared to him a luminous guide which introduced him at the most distant future to a humanity altogether devoted to love. From this time his work was traced throughout; it was only a question of deduction and combination; and what greater mind for concatenating and following out combinations ever existed than his?"

Such are the only proofs brought forward by M. Littré on Comte's mental crisis of 1845. His physician and one of his three testamentary executors, Dr. Robinet, does not mention it in his life of Comte. Mr. Lewes' objection to Littré is very inconclusive. It is that, if the great crisis of 1826 had no deleterious effect upon the Positive Philosophy, how could the trivial one of 1845, even granted that it took place (for Lewes doubts it) vitiate his subsequent constructions? * He appears to think that all cerebral crises are of like character and have similar effects. This is improbable, and Comte himself, in the present instance, asserts the contrary, as will be seen below.

To solve this delicate question, it will suffice to refer to Comte himself, which Littré and Lewes have not done. If they had, they would have seen, in an affectionate *profession de foi*, addressed to Clotilde de Vaux, August 5, 1845 (two months after his last nervous illness), that Comte himself acknowledges three cerebral crises, determining their characteristics and their influences upon his philosophical elaboration. He traces with a steady hand his life, past and future, public and private, and invokes his love to finish his task.

These three crises took place in 1826, 1838, and 1845. This extract from Comte establishes their existence. "To conceive more clearly the true general relations of the two crises which circumscribe the only part of my past career, public or private, directly interesting to you, it will be useful to indicate a kind of intermediate crisis of less pronounced character but of similar nature, determined in 1838, by passing from the purely scientific preamble of my great philosophical construction to the biological element which definitively constitutes it."

In fact, the third volume of the Positive Philosophy, closing with Biology, bears date of February 24, 1838, and its fourth volume, with the dogmatic part of social Philosophy, is dated December 23, 1838. From these two dates, his second crisis occurred in this interval of nine months.

Comte, in continuation, determines its happy influence upon his

* "The Fortnightly Review." 1866, vol. iii, p. 403.

philosophical conception, in the following words: "Although in this second and principal half of that prolonged task, the social standpoint had to remain almost wholly speculative, and hence could not tend to develop in me so powerfully as at present the affective needs, still that epoch forms a remarkable phase in so intimate a history of my double existence. Its principal marked result consisted in a vivid and permanent stimulation of my taste for the different Fine Arts, especially poetry and music, which then received a considerable increase. You feel immediately the spontaneous affinity with my ulterior tendency towards a life principally affective; and further, it very happily improved my work in all relating to the esthetic evolution of humanity. In domestic affairs, this period has some interest as also intermediate between two essential crises; for I ceased then, for the first time, soliciting, while still permitting a postponement of a temporary separation, and signified my firm resolution of making in the future any similar occurrence irrevocable."

Comte finishes the estimation of these three crises by a singular property which has much assisted him in the clear remembrance of them. One of his small philosophical secrets is to consolidate and aid every intellectual or affective improvement by joining it with some physical improvement, directed especially towards the continual improvement of the diet. "From this principle," says he, "is derived all the essentials of the positive theory of sacraments, of which priestly empiricism feels confusedly the bearing, as physical signs of different degrees of spiritual progress. In the same way I can say that the three essential crises of my double personal evolution, in the years 1826, 1838, and 1845, are rendered familiarly sacred to me by the durable dietetic symptom that I have definitely abstained, at first from coffee, next from tobacco, and now from wine. Such are, my dear friend, the different *secret* indications which complete the ostensible part of my difficult explanation of the new character, public and private, belonging to the second half of my career."*

Thus, beyond any question, Comte's three mental crises are fully acknowledged by himself. The psychological study which he made upon these affections is curious. Indeed, he states in his public courses and in his second work the valuable observation made upon his own cerebral illness of 1826. An empiric treatment, he says, which prolonged the disturbance for eight months, permitted him the better to estimate its different states. He was able to doubly verify his "law of three states," which characterizes human evolution, by going through all its essential phases, at first inversely, then directly, without their order ever changing.

These are his own words: "The three months in which medical influence developed the illness made me gradually descend from posi-

* "Notice sur l'Œuvre et sur la Vie d'Auguste Comte," par le Dr. Robinet. Paris, 1864, pp. 211-213.

vism to fetishism, stopping at monotheism, and longer at polytheism. In the five following months, according as my spontaneity, despite the remedies, restored normal life, I slowly reascended from fetishism to polytheism, and from it to monotheism, whence I promptly recovered my previous positivity. By procuring me a direct and decisive confirmation of my 'law of the three states,' and making me more plainly feel the necessary relativity of all our knowledge, this terrible episode aided me in identifying myself more easily with any of the human phases. The assistance furnished by it to the whole of my historical meditations, makes me hope that suitably instructed readers can also utilize this summary indication of a memorable anomaly."*

These psychological studies upon the three mental crises of Comte deserve to be taken into serious consideration in our researches upon the faculties and psychical products of the nerve-cells of the brain. We deeply regret not having been able to consult the recent work of Dr. G. Audiffrent, which would probably have thrown great light upon this question.† It should always be remembered that these three crises had a very diverse influence upon Comte's philosophical elaboration. In the first his ideas passed and repassed through the three great periods of theology, from monotheism to fetishism, stopping at the intermediary station of polytheism and *vice versa*, until the return to his primitive positivity. It is, moreover, a curious fact that he has skipped, so to speak, the transitional phase of metaphysic, which he does not mention. In his second crisis, Comte suffered a first though small effusion of affection which he interprets as "a vivid and permanent stimulation of his taste for different Fine Arts, especially poetry and music." At last, in his third crisis, this affection took colossal dimensions under the influence of his impassioned love for Clotilde de Vaux. "Its influence was mystic," says M. Littré, very truly, "especially when death, which soon came, had consecrated the recollection; and the mysticism was an aggravation of the subjective method."‡ From this influence arose the fine inspiration of the Religion of Humanity, the principle of which I adopt as a moral power, but reject the form.

Unfortunately, Comte returned in his last days to a *positive* theology, personified in the Grand-Fetiché or the earth, the Grand-Milieu or space, and the Grand-Etre or humanity;§ nevertheless this positive trinity overpasses the limits of our poor human intelligence. "Comte's thought," says M. Littré, "wavered between fictions and chimeras; but the idea of the cultus in the end excluded the first and imposed the second."

Comte's reasoning is as follows: Subjectivity must prevail in the universal synthesis, and fetishism, having introduced it spontaneously,

* "Système de Politique positive." Paris, 1853, vol. iii. p. 75.

† "Du cerveau et de l'innervation d'après Auguste Comte," Paris, 1869, 1 vol., 8vo.

‡ Work cited, p. 583.

§ "Synthèse subjective" Paris, 1856. 8vo, pp. 840.

it must reappear in the latest period of human evolution which reproduces the initial type. The only difference is that the new fetishism will be subordinated to natural laws which the old did not know. In this case we can apply to Comte his own judgment upon "Vico's aberrations in the strange theory of social circularity, by specially proclaiming the general superiority of the modern régime over the ancient."* M. Littré remarks that this is a "gratuitous assertion, the falsity of which is at once apparent, on applying it to biology, in which neither manhood nor old age reproduces infancy." Still, it must be avowed there are many points of contact, yet unknown, between childhood and old age, and hence the saying to *fall into infancy*, specially applied to mental affections.

Comte's life presents three great periods, distinctly characterized: that of his philosophical construction, that of his political construction, and that of his religious construction. He was, despite himself, led insensibly from the first to the second, and from it to the third. In the first he established an objective philosophy for the first time, in the third he restored the primitive subjective philosophy, basing it upon laws more or less empirical or fictional, while in the second period his mind and heart wavered between the two methods, impelled by a supreme effort at harmonizing them. He sought a point of union between the subjective and the objective, between mind active and mind passive, according to Kant's fine conception. His idea was grand but premature, and his task being placed beyond his power by fatal natural laws, he had to succumb before the force of circumstances—that is to say, through the failure of scientific data upon such complex problems. Still, the sociological and moral bases established by him remain imperishable, and will serve posterity as a foundation. The objective Philosophy remains intact, and in the third edition (1869) M. Littré asserts that the discoveries of forty years (since its first issue) have not altered the organizing principle of the Positive Philosophy.† Another century, and the great encyclopædic series will receive its final coronation. A fine law of nature also places an impassable limit to the human mind, according to the stage of intellectual progress attained by it. Kepler, after founding celestial geometry, failed in celestial dynamics, holding the *theological* conception that "angels" guided the movements of the stars. His successor, Descartes, also failed, holding the *metaphysical* conception in his renowned *vortices*. The *positivity* of celestial mechanics was only reached by Newton's discovery of the *law of universal Gravitation*.

I will conclude by saying that cerebral attacks, similar to Comte's often occur. "Many celebrated men," adds M. Littré, "have had mental shocks which greatly modified their characters." Saint Paul, on the way to Damascus, affords one of the most memorable examples.

* Letter to J. S. Mill in "Auguste Comte et la Philosophie positive," by Littré, p. 460.

† "Preface d'un disciple," p. vii.

Mr. Lewes also says: "There is nothing remarkable in the fact that Lucretius and Cowper wrote their immortal poems during the lucid intervals of frequent cerebral attacks. The philosophy of Lucretius has indeed been often affiliated on his insanity; but the sweet piety, the delicate humor, and the sustained excellence of Cowper have not been thus branded, and they show that the mind *is* lucid in its lucid intervals. The list of illustrious madmen is a long one. Lucretius, Mahomet, Loyola, Peter the Great, Haller, Newton, Tasso, Swift, Cowper, Donizetti, spontaneously occur as the names of men whose occasional eclipse by no means darkens the splendor of their achievements. To these we must add the name of Auguste Comte, assured that, if Newton once suffered a cerebral attack without thereby forfeiting our veneration for the 'Principia' and the 'Optics,' Comte may have likewise suffered without forfeiting his claims on our veneration for the 'Philosophie positive.' But the best answer to this ignoble insinuation is the works themselves. If they are the products of madness, one could wish that madness were occasionally epidemic."*

These temporary cerebral perturbations of great men should in no wise astonish us, as we can trace their existence in Humanity according to the similar laws of physical and moral phenomena, individual and collective. In fact, in 1841, Auguste Comte pointed out that our opinions, while "having ceased to be purely theological without being able to become wholly scientific, constitute the metaphysical state, regarded as a sort of transitional *chronic malady*, belonging to this impassable phase of our mental evolution, individual and collective."† Comte, in 1852, declared that, "since the original dissolution of the ancient theocracies, modern anarchy constitutes only the last term of an immense perturbation." Consequently, "analyzed cerebrally, the occidental malady constitutes a chronic madness, essentially intellectual but habitually complicated with moral reactions, and often accompanied with physical outbreaks."‡ In fine, in 1855, he was still more explicit in his letter to Dr. Audiffrent, in which he resumes the synthetic theory of diseases by the sociological definition of the brain as an instrument for the action of the dead upon the living. Occidental anarchy constitutes a true disease consisting in a continuous insurrection of the living against the dead, which tends to produce a chronic disturbance of cerebral economy. Comte connects medicine with morality, by formulating the subjective definition of the brain thus: *The double and permanent placenta between man and Humanity*. By "double" he means the two simultaneous orders of subjective relations to the past on one side, and to the future on the other. The gravity of the disease tends to break the placenta in two ways. §

In accordance with these ideas of Comte, I propose the following definitions:

"Mental diseases result from a failure of moral unity between two cerebra, that is, between the individual cerebrum and the collective, between man and Humanity."

"The mental diseases of nations result from a want of moral unity between the worn-out past and the developing future."

Individual moral perturbations, being more complex, depend simultaneously upon the collective moral perturbations of nations, and these upon those of Humanity at large.

Though thirty years have elapsed, it would be impossible to trace with more fidelity the state of Europe in 1870. We are perhaps on the verge of a profound revolutionary crisis, occasioned by political chicanery, and this evening the ultimatum of the Emperor Napoleon to Prussia will decide the fate of Europe. Yes, anarchy of the heart and head is deeply rooted in the bosom of our families, in our political circles, on the rostrum, in our scientific institutions, at the church. We are everywhere rushing against the revolutionary *debris*, bequeathed to us by that portion of the eighteenth century which followed the great French crisis of 1789. Nothing can satisfy our desires, our doubts, and our restlessness, incessantly renewed. Always the same question without reply:—*What can we do?* This crisis will only be terminated by the installation of the new spiritual power demonstrated by science, in place of the old revealed and imposed power. On a future occasion, I will examine the reasons which may have caused Comte to change his method in Politics and in Religion, as well as the objections raised by M. Littré.

* "The Fortnightly Review." 1866, vol. iii, p. 394.

† "Cours de Philosophie positive." Vol. V, p. 277.

‡ "Système de Politique positive." Vol. II, pp. 458, 459.

§ Robinet, "Notice sur l'œuvre et sur la vie d'Auguste Comte." Paris, 1864, p. 533.