THE OPEN COURT.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE.

No. 290. (Vol. VII.—11.) CHICAGO, MARCH 16, 1893. { Two Dollars per Year. Single Copies, 5 Cents.

INDIVIDUALISM AND POLITICAL ECONOMY.

BY VICTOR YARROS.

These are certainly critical and trying times for the political economists. The science of political economy is on trial, and the fate of its professors is being decided. Will the verdict mean life or death,—independent and fruitful existence, or complete disappearance from the leaves of the book of future intellectual activity? Will political economists find their occupation gone, or will their occupation acquire new importance, value, and dignity? Before attempting to predict the future we must glance at the remarkable career of English political economy.

Shortly after the publication of Ricardo's volume, De Quincey, certainly a keen and logical thinker, wrote: "Mr. Ricardo had deduced *à priori* from the understanding itself, laws which first gave a ray of light into the unwieldy mass of materials, and had constructed what had been but a collection of tentative discussion into a science of regular proportions, now first standing on an eternal basis." To Colonel Torrens it seemed perfectly certain that "twenty years hence there will scarcely be a doubt respecting any of the fundamental principles" of Ricardian political economy. To understand and sympathise with this optimistic view we need but to bear in mind that scientific men believed it to be true that (as Cairnes expressed the claim subsequently) "the economist, starting with a knowledge of ultimate causes," is "at the outset of his enterprise at the position which a physicist only attains after ages of laborious research." Senior undoubtedly voiced the belief of most of his predecessors and contemporaries when he proclaimed political economy's independence of facts and enunciated the proposition that the whole science, glorified by Cobden as the highest study of the human mind, is firmly built on four practically self-evident postulates. In a word, it was then believed that there existed a science of wealth whose laws, universal as well as immutable, men had only to learn and obey,—a science in whose names various theoretical and practical proposals were dismissed with hasty and scornful contempt as Utopian and unscientific. Nothing that emanated from sources other than those recognised by the economists, especially if it in anywise diverged from some accepted economic principle, was considered worthy of serious attention.

But does not all this appear like ancient history when we turn to survey the present condition of economic discussion? The word *discussion* is purposely employed in lieu of *science*, since it is generally agreed that there is really no such thing extant as a "science" of political economy. "Young men ask," said Bagehot, in a lecture, "whether this [economic] science, as it claims to be, will harmonise with what we now know to be sciences, or bear to be tried, as we now try sciences; and they are not sure of the answer. . . .We find the state of the science to be almost chaotic." Arnold Toynbee bluntly declared that Ricardian political economy "is at last rejected as an intellectual imposture," and Jevons reluctantly admitted that "the public would be happier in their minds for a little time, if political economy could be shown up as an imposture." Professor Cairnes complained that only from six to ten students attended his lectures, while in all London no more than a hundred persons visited the public economic schools. Professor Marshall confesses that "economics is yet so much in its infancy that it has but little to teach." And even that "little" is so little respected by scientific men that in 1876 an active attempt was made by the representatives of the preliminary sciences in the British Association to excommunicate the economists and abolish the Economic Section as no better (to quote Mr. P. Geddes) than a disgrace to a scientific association; and this humiliation was averted only by the economists choosing as champions such men as Dr. Ingram, who, though ostensibly eager to save the reputation and independence of their group, actually, (to quote the same writer,) "unconditionally surrendered the citadel" and even "took up arms on the side of the invaders."

The contrast between the past and the present of political economy, the disparity between the early promises and the actual achievements, will be conceded to be sufficiently striking to justify the inquiries that have been made into the causes of the radical change. But it cannot be said that successful explanations of the revolution have been furnished.

Toynbee was certainly in error when he described it as entirely the result of the "chill breath of intellectual criticism," for we do not know of any such crushing criticism; and the latter-day economists of the "historical school" are no less mistaken when they attribute it to the discovery of the importance of supplementing and guiding deduction by induction, for this, as Marshall avers, was well known before. Marshall's own opinion is that the change is not chiefly attributable to any particular attacks on economic doctrine, but "is due to the discovery that man himself is in a great measure a creature of circumstances and changes with them." Ricardo and his followers, he thinks, "regarded man as, so to speak, a fixed quantity, and gave themselves little trouble to study his variations"; whereas "in different ways Goethe, Hegel, Comte, and other writers called attention to the development of the inner character and outward institutions of man, and worked their way towards the notion of tracing and comparing the modes of growth of the different sides of human nature." But the proper and satisfactory answer seems to be that many influences, direct as well as indirect, great as well as small, have contributed to the effect. It is conducive to clearness to recall in this connection the luminous observations of Lecky in reference to the process by which popular beliefs get driven out of circulation and are supplanted by new ones radically different. Any complete change in public opinion, according to his view, "may be the result of a controversy which has conclusively settled the question, establishing to the satisfaction of all parties a clear preponderance of argument or fact in favor of one opinion, and making that opinion a truism which is accepted by all enlightened men." But "it is possible also for it to be effected by what is called the spirit of the age. The general intellectual tendencies pervading the literature of a century profoundly modify the character of the public mind. They form a new tone and habit of thought. They create new attractions and new antipathies, and they eventually cause as absolute a rejection of certain old opinions as could be produced by the most cogent and definite arguments." In the case of political economy, while it is doubtless true that both of Lecky's "classes of influences" were brought to bear, the spirit of the age is nevertheless to be held responsible as the chief factor. Special and definite parts of the body of old economic doctrine were destroyed by direct controversial attack. To the polemics of Cliffe Leslie, Toynbee, Thorold Rogers, Thornton, Ruskin, Carlyle, and other writers we have to attribute the fact that the Ricardian theory of rent, the Malthusian population hypothesis, the wage-fund theory, Senior's "four unchallengeable postulates," and rent-the-reward-of-abstinence theory, are now by common consent relegated to the region of "unsettled problems"; while the profound and general distrust of political economy as a whole we must acknowledge to be the work of the spirit of the age. The theological and philosophical doctrines which Smith and Malthus explicitly adopted and laid at the foundation of their economic structure, and which Ricardo tacitly assumed, could not fail to be thrown overboard, as utterly unfounded, when the application of scientific methods to sociological problems began to yield conclusions respecting social life and growth as irreconcilable with the physiocratic assumptions borrowed by Adam Smith, as is the theory of development with the notion of special creations. The economist's plea for *laissez faire* necessarily came to be regarded as the result of an optimism no less innocent than Dr. Pangloss's conviction that everything is for the best in this best of possible worlds; and with the destruction of this corner-stone was involved the total collapse of the old economic system. The *laissez faire* doctrine, Cairnes felt, had brought disaster and disgrace to the science which came to be regarded as "a handsome apology" for the existing arrangements, and he naturally favored the relinquishment of the pernicious and fatal doctrine.

Bagehot, who had little faith in the socialistic schemes which elicited sympathetic consideration from Mill and Cairnes, sought to preserve at least the skeleton of the old system by limiting and qualifying it in every direction. We were told, in the first place, that political economists are not speaking of real men, but of imaginary ones; not of men as we see them, but of men as it is convenient to us to suppose they are." In the next place, the original claim to universality and immutability was withdrawn, and the modest statement made that English political economy "is the theory of commerce." Finally, Bagehot cautioned us against the suspicion that political economy aspires to regulate practical affairs and solve real problems arising in the world of material interests. It only says these and these forces produce these and these results, and there it stops.

Such a method could not succeed, however. To say nothing of the obviously fatal objection that an abstract political economy which guides no one and aids no one in practical difficulties is worse than useless, it is evident that such an interpretation could not check the advance of socialism, which professed to deal with things as they ought to be and to show a way out of the complications between capital and labor. In fact, the rise of socialism is coincident with the definitive rejection of *laissez faire* as the corner-stone of political economy. Unwilling to expose themselves to ridicule, the economists declined to defend free competition, which they knew the founders of the school rested on teleological assumptions, and enlisted

in the army of their old-time antagonists, the socialists. It is no secret that the strength which socialism has acquired lately, in and out of legislative councils, is mainly derived from the patent tendency of modern economists to assimilate and appropriate socialistic doctrines. The economists do indeed hope to preserve their independence; but the logic of events is against them. The real and consistent alternative is the communism of Mr. Bellamy, with equality of income and total suppression of individuality. Under Mr. Bellamy's system, exchange is superseded by common ownership of products, free contract by enforced solidarity. The triumph of the principle, "To each according to his needs, from each according to his capacities," implies the extinction of political economy.

But are there not among the economists wiser and more perspicacious men who know how to avoid the errors of the old school without embracing the blunders of socialism? Passing over the so-called empirical school of economists, which has done nothing of value, let us examine the proposals of the philosophical economists,—of men like Cliffe Leslie and Dr. J. K. Ingram, who appear to suggest profitable measures for the elevation of economics. They argue that political economy properly constitutes a branch of sociology; that its discoveries and principles, when arrived at in accordance with scientific canons of research, should be viewed as provisional and preparatory to the development of truly universal sociological principles; and that, since men's various interests are interrelated, political economy, which deals only with wealth, cannot pretend to be capable of furnishing instruction regarding conduct in general, but merely of indicating more or less probable tendencies. Political economy, they hold, is not a separate science, but a branch of social science. The "jargon" of natural harmony, natural liberty, etc., they unhesitatingly reject, although they are not prepared to advocate increased interference of government in industrial relations. In fact, while they discard theoretical *laissez faire*, they would have government *practise laissez faire*, because they realise with Bacon that luciferous research must come before fructiferous, and agree with Herbert Spencer that methods that answer are preceded by thoughts that are true. There being as yet an extreme want of true thought and scientific ideas upon sociological subjects, they deprecate haphazard legislation, and are content with the work of spreading clear conceptions and of urging upon all students the vast complexity of social problems.

That this advice is sound and healthful as far as it goes, cannot be denied. The theoretical position is impregnable, and the practical suggestion both opportune and sensible. But there are some considerations that Dr. Ingram overlooks. As Professor Marshall says: "It is vain to speak of the higher authority of a unified social science. No doubt if that existed, economics would gladly find shelter under its wing. But it does not exist. . . . There is no use in waiting idly for it; we must do what we can with our present resources." Were it possible to induce society and legislatures to respect and accept present conditions until the science of society should throw a flood of light upon all our difficulties and make wise action possible, then we should gratefully accept Dr. Ingram's advice and "learn to wait." But society will not and cannot wait. The masses clamor for state intervention and regulation, and well-meaning reformers are ready with all sorts of plans for eliminating social evil. Laws are manufactured by the legislative mills without number, and their operation naturally produces important changes in social relations. To remind us of ignorance, is useful, but utterly inadequate. Moreover, it is far from being true that, as Professor Marshall avers, sociology "shows no signs of coming into existence," and that "the only resources we have for dealing with social problems as a whole lie in the judgment of common sense." Nobody would claim that we have a complete and strict science of society; but it is emphatically true that some truths have been established, some generalisations formed, that not only afford the illuminating principle essential to the proper interpretation and classifications of facts, but permit the direction of practical affairs in approximately correct ways. In political economy, no less than in other branches of the sociological science, it is perfectly possible, not only to carry on theoretical investigations in a scientific manner, but to map out and guide more or less safely our practical course by the light (dim as it is compared with what we hope it may become) of those large truths and important generalisations which sociological authorities have placed at our disposal.

First, there is the law of justice, or the principle of equal freedom, justly termed the first principle of human happiness, which Mr. Spencer, the greatest of our sociologists, has established and placed upon a strictly scientific basis. It having been demonstrated that the principle of equal freedom has the highest warrant imaginable and an authority transcending every other, it becomes necessary to test existing economic arrangements and current notions, and pronounce upon them from the point of view of equal freedom. It will scarcely be contended that justice may be safely ignored or violated in the sphere of economic interests; hence the need for defining the nature of just economic relations. It has also been established by Mr. Spencer and other sociologists that the progress of society is from status to contract, from compulsory coöperation to voluntary coöperation, from a condition in which agreement results from authority

to a condition in which authority results from agreement. It is further insisted that in the transition state it is absolutely impossible to decide upon the utilitarian merits of any measure or proposal save by constant and intelligent reference to the ideal formed of the future through the study of evolution and the factors and agencies which prevail in the present. Now what are the logical conclusions from these premises with regard to political economy, which, we have seen, is urged by the most competent thinkers to adopt the philosophical method and conduct its investigations in the light of modern sociological knowledge? Political economy has to deal with the problem of national wealth and prosperity,—has to teach the true and proper principles of production and distribution. But facts need to be correctly understood; they require classification and systematic grouping,—which cannot be accomplished except by the aid of a guiding principle, a theory. Modern economists complain of the lack of such a guiding principle. The physiocrats, and their English disciples, had the principle of "natural liberty," the theory of *laissez faire*, which they borrowed from the theology and philosophy of their time. The fact that their principle was arbitrary and unscientific, their doctrine vague and nebulous, and that consequently their superstructure had to fall when the philosophy was supplanted by one more positive and true,—this fact does not at all militate against their wisdom in basing their economic beliefs on those principles. There is nothing surprising in the fact that their economic beliefs were as untenable as their theological, metaphysical, and philosophical notions. The economists of *our* day, therefore, must go to *our* sociologists and philosophers for their criterion of economic right, for guiding principles. And what have the latter to impart? This, briefly: that ideal economic relations are perfectly free relations, that the fundamental law of equal freedom negatives government meddling and regulation of production, exchange, and distribution, and that all economic teaching which contemplates less than justice is necessarily *un*-economic as well as immoral, that is, conducive to social misery and distress. And this is tantamount to declaring that once again *laissez faire* must become the corner-stone of economics. Back to the old formula, whose meaning, however, is entirely new. Instead of the "natural state" of the physiocrats, there is the *ideal state*, which society is bound to reach if its natural progress is not violently obstructed, and which evolution marks as the goal of our endeavor. The state of nature was a fiction, natural harmony an arbitrary assumption, but the ideal state is a strictly philosophical conception. We must, as Mr. Spencer says, keep an eye on the compass which tells us whereabout the ideal lies, so that the changes we may make may be towards it, and not away from it. Absolutism is needed in economics as well as in ethics, and the lesson to be impressed upon the minds of those who deal with temporary needs is that in industrial relations, no less than in political and social relations, nothing can be right and advantageous that checks or retards the movement towards justice or equal freedom, and that nothing can be wrong that wisely promotes that movement.

Dr. Ingram, Professor Huxley, Thorold Rogers, in criticising the modern *laissez faire*-ists, do not betray the faintest perception of the fact that Mr. Spencer's reasons for advocating non-interference are totally different from those of the believers in a code of nature. To speak, as does Professor Huxley of "a new Rousseauism," *à propos* of this revival of *laissez faire* doctrines, is to be guilty of a grave oversight. Modern *laissez faire*-ists have the support of science, not of metaphysical assumptions; in adopting the formula of the metaphysical school, they only accept the conclusion, reserving the right to find the logic for it. Hence the arguments that put to flight the old believers in *laissez faire* leave the moderns unmoved. Unaccountably short-sighted is Dr. Ingram in thinking that Mr. Spencer is simply the (as yet) unconverted champion of an exploded doctrine, the last representative of an extinct school of theorists; and that his pleas and protests will be like a voice crying in the wilderness. The truth is that Mr. Spencer was the first thinker to proclaim the necessity for a new departure in practical politics and legislation, to correspond with the new truths and generalisations of sociology. He was the first to hold up the new ideal and to indicate the way leading to its realisation. His comparative isolation (which led some English politician to insinuate that Mr. Spencer is against "all England") is due to the fact of his being the founder of a philosophical school, the leader in a new movement, *not* to his being engaged in perverse and futile attempts to maintain a lost cause. It is safe to predict that Mr. Spencer will not go to sue for peace at the hands of Dr. Ingram and his friends, who doubt everything but doubt, and who have nothing definite and positive to offer; but that they will at no remote day find themselves constrained to go to him.

A reconstruction of economics is declared to be urgently needed by economists, and they are searching for philosophical foundations. Mr. Spencer's "Justice" is respectfully recommended as supplying their want.

THE ABSOLUTE.

THE mischief which the term "absolute" has caused in almost all the antiquated philosophies is hardly imaginable. The absolute actually plays the part of a fetish among a certain class of sages who re-

quest their readers and adherents to bow down into the dust and worship the absolute as soon as their thinking capacity, either from innate inability or from natural laziness, ceases to accomplish its purpose.

The absolute is an idol which is still worshipped and which must be broken to make room for a purer, clearer, and truer conception of philosophy.

We present the following definitions of the term absolute*: (1) That which is not related. (2) That which is not conditioned. (3) That which is entire, complete, or perfect. (4) That which is viewed without regard to its relations or conditions as a complete whole.

The term "absolute" is used in contradistinction to "relative." That which is not relative is absolute. The most important relations being those which condition the existence of a thing, the term came to be identical with the unconditioned or that which has the conditions of being in itself. This raised the dignity of the word above all its comrades and it became a substitute for God, for God alone can be described as "unconditioned." Those philosophers, accordingly, who have ceased to believe in God, but have not outgrown the paganism of antediluvian religions, find it very convenient to enthrone a divinity of their own make and to treat it with the same awe and reverence which marks the behavior of all fetish worshippers.

Let us review the philosophical meanings of the term. Absolute is used in the sense of "that which is not related." Very well! Such a thing as "that which is not related" does not exist. The world is a system of relations and there is nothing that is or can be unrelated. Even the God of Genesis (i. e. according to the traditional notion) is not an absolute being. He stands in a definite relation to the world as its creator, ruler, and master. The God of the New Testament being He in whom we live and move and have our being can still less be called absolute; and the Universe as such, the All, the totality of being (whether we include God as a part of it or regard the Universe with materialists or atheists simply as a big lump of material atoms) is as little absolute as either a supernatural or an immanent God, for the All has certain relations to its parts.

In one word, the absolute in the first sense is simply a humbug.

The "absolute" in the second sense, as that which is not conditioned, is, perhaps, admissible, although it would be an improper expression for that which ought to be called the unconditioned. For the "unconditioned" or "that which has the conditions of its being in itself" is not a concrete thing, a special being, or a big person inside or outside of the world, but a certain feature existing in all the realities to be met with in experience. All things, all creatures, all concrete realities or beings, as such, are forms; they originate by being shaped, they disappear by being dissolved, but there is a certain something in them which abides in all the changes, and this certain something is part and parcel of their existence.

Here is not the place to discuss what this feature of an abiding something in all the various forms of being is. It is most certainly not only matter and energy as the materialists say, it is also the elementary something of that which in its highest evolution appears as consciousness and mainly that peculiarity of the formal laws which establishes harmony and makes them so axiom-like self-evident (as they have been called) that through them the whole universe becomes transparent like glass to the eyes of the initiated. In all these abiding features of fleeting existences there abides an inalienable consistency of being with itself which gives to the world the character of *Gesetzmässigkeit*, so that uniformities prevail which can be formulated in so-called "natural laws," so that the totality of the world is not a chaos but a cosmos, a whole in which order prevails.

Something "unconditioned" in this sense exists in the abiding features of the various existences. But it is obvious that this something that abides is not absolute; it is not without relations to the other more or less fleeting forms of realities. Moreover, we cannot so much say that it is unconditioned as that it is conditioning the very existence of every thing that is.

The absolute in the third sense is identical with the All, including everything and anything, past, present, and future, also all the chances of its possible formations. The All alone is a perfect entirety, a complete whole in itself, which has no relations to things outside, because there are none, the All including everything.

This conception of "absolute" is quite legitimate, but the expression "All" being free from the mystical tinge that still adheres to the term "absolute" is preferable. We can only use the term absolute in this sense as an *epitheton ornans* for the All in All, not as its name; yet as an *epitheton ornans* it has little significance.

The "absolute" in the fourth sense expresses, not a quality of or in things, but a certain attitude of the thinking subject. In this sense, it has a loose and rather popular application. Thus we speak of the "absolute certainty" of mathematics, meaning thereby simply its universal reliability*; there may be special cases, but there are no exceptions to mathematical

* The word is derived from the Latin *absolutum*, meaning that which has been loosened from.

* Mathematical axioms possess absolute certainty in the sense mentioned above; they are reliable statements. But they are not absolute truths, i. e., truths which need not be proved.

theorems. We speak of "absolute monarchy," looking at monarchy abstractly and meaning thereby that according to the law of the country the monarch is not bound to give account to any one for the acts of his rule or misrule. We speak of "absolute (i. e., the highest imaginable) perfection," of "absolute (i. e., perfect) beauty," "absolute (i. e., pure) alcohol," "absolute zero" of temperature, which is —459.4°. All these terms and many more similar phrases are sanctioned by usage, but nowhere is there any really absolute as a quality of things; there is only a relative absoluteness, a lack of relations in some special directions or a perfection or finish of some kind.

Thus the usage of the term "absolute" in these and similar connections is not to be understood in any strict or philosophical sense of the word, but is a license quite allowable for special purposes.

It would lead us too far here to refer to all the nonsense that has been written by those philosophers who seriously declare that "philosophy is ultimately, by its very nature, a search for the Absolute" (with a capital A).

No greater absurdity has been excogitated by a great man than the idea of things in themselves, which really means "things absolute." (See *The Monist*, Vol. II, No. 2, "Are There Things in Themselves?") Hegel's system has been characterised as the philosophy of the absolute. He maintains, as Flemming sums it up, that "all existence is strictly a manifestation of the Absolute in the evolution of Being, according to dialectic." The truth is that all existence is existence, and the idea of absolute existence is nothing but a pale thought, an abstract symbol created by dialectic to represent those qualities which all existences possess in common. To represent the absolute, this shadow of being, as real, and existence as a mere manifestation of it, is turning the universe topsyturvy. P. C.

TRUTH.

TRUTH is correct knowledge, i. e., a statement of facts that is perfectly reliable. In other words: Truth is the agreement of a representation with the object represented.

No objection can be made to Thomas Aquinas when he defines truth as "*adæquatio intellectus et rei*," which, in more modern form, means "conformity of thought to thing." *Intellectus* or thought is the mental symbol, the idea, the conception of something, and *res* is the reality represented in the mental symbol of an idea, it is the object thought of.

Truth, accordingly, is the adequateness of a relation, to-wit, of a mental relation. Without mind no truth. Truth does not dwell in non-mental facts. It is a misnomer to speak of objects or objective facts as being true. Facts are real, while the facts represented, i. e., statements of fact, if correct, are true.

A single sense impression is a fact, but the perception of a sense-impression as a certain object is either true or untrue. Facts are real, or, if they do not exist, unreal; ideas are true or untrue.

There is a great difference between truth and reality. The facts of reality are always single, concrete, and individual. Every fact is a *hic* and *nunc*. It is in a special place, and it is as it is, at a certain time. All facts are definite and of a particular kind. Yet truth, although representing facts, i. e., objects, or relations among objects, is never a concrete object, nor is it a *hic* or a *nunc*. It rises above facts, and views facts from a higher standpoint.

The simplest truths are statements as to the reality of facts; they are declarations that a certain thing, or event, or relation, does or did or will, does not or did not or will not, obtain. Higher truths are the statements of natural laws, describing certain regularities of facts in general formulas. Truth accompanies mind in its growth; and the higher a mind rises, of the more consequence will be the truth or untruth of its ideas.

The kinship of truth with mind endows truth with a generality that is lacking in the particularity of the single facts.

We cannot speak of the truth of mere sensations. The sense-organs furnish us with facts; they present certain data; and if our sense-organs perform their work with sufficient regularity, they furnish under the same conditions the same sensations. Properly speaking, we cannot say that there is truth in these sensations; these sensations are as yet non-mental realities. Yet when sensations are recognised as representing certain objects, i. e., when they become perceptions, they acquire the power of being either true or untrue. Perceptions are elementary judgments; they are the first mental functions, and from them the mind rises into existence. Should it happen that a sensation is registered in a wrong place, it will be mistaken; it will cause errors. Thus truth originates together with mind. Truth and error are the privilege of mind.

The development of mind means the development of truth. Sentient beings observe in a certain group of facts, in spite of all variety, some features of sameness. Such features are noted by brutes, then named by man, and finally, in the scientific phase, they are expressed in exact formulas. These formulas are called natural laws. If a natural law describes all the cases precisely and exhaustively, we call it a truth.

Truth in one sense is objective; it represents objects or their relations conceived in their objectivity, in their independence of the subject. This means that the representation of certain objective states will, un-

der like conditions, agree with the experience of all subjects—i. e., of all feeling beings having the same channels of information.

Truth in another sense is subjective. Truth exists in thinking subjects only. Truth affirms that certain subjective representations of the objective world can be relied upon, that they are deduced from facts and agree with facts. Based upon past experience, they can be used as guides for future experience. If there were no subjective beings, no feeling and comprehending minds, there would be no truth. Facts in themselves, whether they are or are not represented in the mind of a feeling and thinking subject, are real, yet representations alone, supposing they agree with facts, are true.

We distinguish between true and real. We have further to distinguish between true and correct. Purely formal statements, such as $5 \times 5 = 25$, have no direct, but only indirect reference to objects. They are empty forms which have to be filled with contents from the realm of our experience. General usage agrees in denoting such statements of purely formal construction, if made with strict consistency, according to the rules of our mental operations, not as "true," but as correct.

The very name of truth has something holy about it, and rightly so! For if the All-existence in which we live and move and have our being is God, truth, viz., the representation of this All-existence, is God's revelation. Christian mythology calls God our father, and the word of truth, or the Logos, his only begotten son. It is the mission of Christianity to found an empire of truth, the kingdom of heaven upon earth, and this empire of truth which is within us (i. e., in the souls of men) must be acquired by our own efforts, or as Christ says: The kingdom of heaven suffers violence whenever men are eagerly searching for the truth.*

Considering the relation between mind and truth, it is natural that *mind yearns for truth*. The yearning for truth constitutes the deepest impulses of the mind. It cannot be otherwise, for *truth is the fulfilment of mind*. Truth, however, is not only a correct representation of facts as they are now and here, but also as, according to conditions which constitute a given state of things, they must be here and everywhere. Mind expands in the measure that it contains and reflects the eternity and universality of truth.

The criterion of truth is the perfect agreement of all facts, of all interpretations and explanations of facts among themselves. If two facts (such as we conceive them) do not agree with each other, we must revise them; and it may be stated, as a matter of experience, that our mind will find no peace until a monistic conception is reached. A monistic conception is the perfect agreement of all facts in a methodical system, so that the same law is recognised to prevail in all instances, and the most different events are conceived as acting under different conditions yet in accord with the same law.

P. C.

* We read in Matthew ii, 12: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," which means that efforts are made to realise it.

CURRENT TOPICS.

Picking up my morning paper of March 8th, I was greatly shocked and overcome to find that the returns for only one day showed bribery hard at work helping and hindering legislation in Indiana, Nebraska, and Kansas. Revelations of the same character from other states are promised in the reports for to-morrow, and we mourn the decay of public morals; but sad as the prospect is we are not altogether without hope. In an age of legislative corruption it is cheering to see the General Assembly of Illinois, superior to the venal temper of the time, wrapped in its Roman toga, going into quarantine against temptation as against cholera, and defying the tempter to bring on his gold,—and plenty of it. A few days ago a bill appeared in the Legislature granting another ten thousand dollars to the World's Fair, and by a queer coincidence every member received in a letter that morning a ticket or "pass" giving him the freedom of the Exposition until the 30th day of April 1893, a somewhat ironical privilege, considering that the Fair will not be opened until the first of May. The temptation was bravely spurned in a "ringing" preamble and resolution which, reciting the facts declared them to be "an attempt to improperly influence the honorable members of this General Assembly." This, while rather paradoxical was virtuously proud, but the next paragraph is more high-spirited still, and it condemns with senatorial dignity the cheapness of the "pass" offered in return for a grant of ten thousand dollars. Thus manfully rings the preamble, "Whereas, if any honorable gentleman were inclined to be thus influenced it is worthy of note that those passes all expire April 30th, the day previous to the opening of the Exposition." This appeal to civic honor, suggesting also the danger of low prices, was followed by a resolution declaring "that all members should virtuously and promptly return the passes to-day received." Since the celebrated attempt to bribe the Iowa Legislature with apples, the cheapest offer made for an "honorable member" is a pass to the World's Columbian Circus, good until the day before the opening of the show. It ought to be "virtuously" returned. Had the tickets been good until the close of the Exposition, they might, like the railroad passes and some others, have been "virtuously" retained.

* * *

The attempt to make the Joliet Penitentiary sectarian is meeting with much indignant opposition, and the Governor of the State is called upon to interfere in behalf of all denominations. The complaint is that religion in the penitentiary is under the control of a trust composed exclusively of Lutherans and Roman Catholics; that the convicts must get spiritual food from those denominations or go hungry altogether; and that as the state at large must pay for the food the discrimination is unfair. A settlement of the trouble is not easy because we have no moral standard by which to measure a practice alien to the constitution of the state, the appointment of chaplains for public institutions. Where a state religion is unlawful a state chaplain ought to be unlawful too; but if we must have the luxury of a chaplain for the penitentiary, or the legislature, or the insane asylum, the constitution being broken in his appointment, what matters it in which religious direction the lines of the fracture go? What matters it whether the chaplain of the penitentiary be Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, or Jew, except as the convicts themselves may have an interest in

the question; and in that case, they ought to be allowed to decide what faith should or should not be preached in the penitentiary. It may be that the religious views of the convicts have been consulted in the selection of chaplains, and if so, that ought to be satisfactory all round. If the convicts are mostly Lutherans and Catholics, what right have the Methodists or the Baptists, or the Presbyterians to complain that a Catholic or a Lutheran is chaplain? If those complaining sects can prove that they are more largely represented in the penitentiary than the Catholics or the Lutherans, that is another matter. The church that contributes the largest number of convicts ought to have the chaplain.

* * *

A storm of sleet and wind and snow blighted the coronation pageantry at Washington on the 4th of March, and threw a chill over the festival. This was ominous, and dismally pathetic of a political "cold wave," more bitter than wind or snow, a chilling frost blighting the promised harvest of a patriotic multitude, camped around the capitol and clamoring for the offices earned by political toil. I can hardly believe it, and yet the papers tell it, that Mr. Cleveland "has definitely decided and has authorised his cabinet to announce to applicants for appointments, that all officials now in office, against whom no charges are made, will be permitted to hold until their commissions expire." It is also estimated that the enthusiastic legions who cheered the President on his triumphal march have paid $2,500,000 to the hotel-keepers of Washington, and where is the compensation for this ruinous "drain of gold"? How are the cohorts to get their money back, unless they get the offices won by their valor in the late campaign? "Put not your trust in princes," is a Scripture warning, to which might well be added, "nor in presidents." They remember not their friends. The Democratic transparencies, banners, and badges flaunted in the late campaign are now mute symbols of a barren victory. The bugles that inspired the hosts are silent, and the returning braves chant mournfully the "Hymn to Ingratitude," from Shakespeare:

"Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot.

Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not."

* * *

That is the dirge of the disappointed, and I am not surprised to read in the dispatches from Washington, dated March 8th, that "if they had suspected such a situation last summer they would not have attended the Chicago convention in such numbers and whooped it up so violently in the campaign." Certainly not; and the pathetic story reminds me of something equally sad that occurred in my own experience. In the summer of 1861, the regiment in which I served was on the march in Missouri, and one evening we went into bivouac in the woods near a little town called Shelbyville, where we were tantalised and exasperated by a building that bore on its arrogant front the opulent word "bank." About midnight a party of the soldiers stole quietly out of camp, entered the bank, loaded the safe on to a wagon, and carried it into the woods, where they might open it without making too much noise. They worked all night at the safe without success, but about daylight, by the aid of axes and gunpowder, they broke it open, and all the reward they got for their honest toil was a few papers "of no use to anybody but the owner." The outrage being discovered, our Colonel ordered an investigation, but the marauders were not found, and after breakfast we resumed our journey. We had hardly gone ten miles before I noticed three or four of my men dozing on the march, and at last, one of them towards the front of the column, addressing a sleepy comrade a few files back of him, said: "Tom! What good is a bank that has no money in it?" With similar disgust the Democratic soldiers who "whooped it up so violently in the late campaign," are now saying to one another: "Tom! What good is a victory that has no offices in it?" And the pathos in the question moves the very stones to "rise and mutiny."

* * *

For the past two or three weeks my conscience has been disturbed because of a charge brought against me by a respectable body of citizens called "The Tailors' National Exchange." This confederation, at a session held in Milwaukee last month, "presented a report," in which it was charged that 100,000 American tourists go abroad every year, each bringing back on an average two suits of clothes, "thus entailing a loss upon American tailors of between $3,000,000 and $6,000,000." As every guilty man, whenever a crime is mentioned, thinks himself accused, so the statistics given by those tailors read like a special indictment against me. I feel as the smitten David felt when accused in a parable by the prophet, because a few years ago I actually was an "American tourist." I wandered away to Europe, and I wickedly did bring back with me two suits of clothes that I bought in London. Avarice tempted me, for I got the two suits for the precise amount of money that I should have been compelled to pay for one suit in my own country. There is a moral puzzle in the case, and the ethical problem arising from the facts is this: in buying two suits for the price of one, did I cheat the tailors; or do they cheat me when they compel me to pay two prices for one suit? I think the answer will be against them, because they demand and receive the assistance of a law, that enables them to do so. The only remedy for the tailors is the passage of another law preventing Americans from going abroad at all. This is easy and simple, like the plan of the Nebraska statesman who has introduced a bill into the legislature of that state, forbidding the use of gas for illuminating purposes, because, as he logically says, when gas is abolished fools will not be able to blow it out, and thus endanger their lives. If Americans are not allowed to go to Europe, of course they will not buy any clothes there; they will be effectually restrained from "thus entailing a loss upon American tailors."

M. M. TRUMBULL.

THE OPEN COURT.

NIXON BUILDING, 175 LA SALLE ST.,

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, Post Office Drawer F.

E. C. HEGELER, PUBLISHER. DR. PAUL CARUS, EDITOR.

TERMS THROUGHOUT THE POSTAL UNION:

$2.00 PER YEAR. $1.00 FOR SIX MONTHS.

N. B. Binding Cases for single yearly volumes of THE OPEN COURT will be supplied on order. Price, 75 cents each.

CONTENTS OF NO. 290.

INDIVIDUALISM AND POLITICAL ECONOMY. VICTOR YARROS 3591

THE ABSOLUTE. EDITOR 3594

TRUTH. EDITOR 3596

CURRENT TOPICS: Legislative Integrity. A Sectarian Penitentiary. The Ingratitude of Presidents. A Victory Without Spoils. Buying Clothes Abroad. GEN. M. M. TRUMBULL 3597