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## THE RELATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE COMMUNITY\*

BY WILHELM WUNDT.

WHILE I request your most thoughtful attention to a brief consideration of the relation of the individual to the community, I desire above all to emphasise the fact that it is not the juridical nor even the legal philosophical aspect of this problem, that I purpose to discuss, however much they may crowd into the foreground at the mention of the theme. It is rather another point of view, heretofore little observed, that has led me to this question and for which I should like to claim your attention. This is the psychological point of view. In fact, the question, how the individual is related to the life-communities that surround him, to the nation, to the state to which he belongs, is certainly, perhaps I could say in the first degree, a psychological question. For if it is the spiritual nature of man, upon which his being and the character of his existence chiefly depend, then that science which has this spiritual nature as its object, must also give account, first of all, concerning the nature of the relations, which, in all forms of human association unite men with men. Does that nation, which, united by the same language, customs, and views of life, looks back to a common history and calls intellectual products of imperishable value its own, consist of nothing but the multitude of individuals who belong to it? Or is there something else added, which first makes possible the qualities of this community, a spiritual collective power which cannot be conceived of merely as a sum of particular effects? And is the state, in which such a national community is compacted into a firmly united organisation, nothing but a multiplication of the same combinations, as individuals arbitrarily enter into with each other, at pleasure, for passing purposes? Or is it also a unitary, collective being, no less independent and *sui generis* than the individual organism?

It is a spectacle which the history of science furnishes frequently enough, that problems which we count most difficult in view of the opposition of opinions which exist concerning them, appeared capable

\* This is the substance of a lecture delivered as an oration by Professor Wundt on the birthday festival of the King of Saxony. The oration was published in the *Deutsche Rundschau*.

of easy solution at a remote period which furnished them with more simple explanations but also under more simple conditions. More rarely it may happen that we again to-day, after long circuitous courses, prefer such early discovered solutions to the multitude of painfully conceived theories that have since asserted sovereignty, and we prefer them perhaps just because an investigation begun under more simple hypotheses might more easily succeed in comprehending the essence of the thing with hasty glance, since the eyes of those coming later are blurred by the plentitude of circumstances that have since come to light, or also by accepted opinions.

The problem that lies before us, belongs as I believe to those of such a character. That the nature of human association can be understood only upon the basis of a comprehensive insight into the spiritual nature of the individual man, and that the qualities of the individual presuppose, none the less, the community as its necessary condition, has scarcely ever since been expressed so excellently and clearly as by that thinker who presented the collected world and life-views of antiquity in a complete system that observes all just claims proportionately,—I mean Aristotle. It is not to his logic and metaphysics, which in spite of the long sovereignty which they have asserted, are for us long since antiquated, that I would like to give preference, but to two other writings of this philosopher, because the fundamental thoughts by which they are sustained, even to-day, possess for us, with certain limitations, a living significance. These are the little treatise concerning the soul, and the most mature work of his age, "Politics." The two belong together; for only the two united give a perfect idea of how the man, who was a teacher of Alexander the Great in philosophy as well as statecraft, conceived of the nature of the individual and of the community.

### I. THE STATE OF NATURAL GROWTH AND MAN A POLITICAL BEING.

To be sure, in almost every phase, the disclosures of the Aristotelian psychology can no longer be our standard. To desire its restoration would be no less an anachronism, than if one were to attempt to transplant

the physical doctrines of Aristotle into the physics of to-day. But when he points to the indivisible connection of all psychological activities, to the evolution of the higher from the lower, according to law, to the inner union of the psychical life with other life processes, and above all when he beholds the true spiritual essence of man in the spiritual activities themselves, not in some sort of transcendental substance, in which the psychical phenomena flit by simply as perishable shadows, foreign to the true essence of spirit,—these are views, to which, again, to-day psychology returns after long wandering about upon the uncertain sea of changing metaphysical opinions.

Most of the political doctrines of this philosopher, indeed, are likewise unfit for restoration. Not merely is what he says concerning the participation of the classes in government, concerning the relation of the citizen to the non citizen and stranger, and of the freeman to the slave, repugnant to our present feeling of right and humanity, but also the narrow compass of the ancient state, the total lack of those manifold interactions and voluntary combinations of individuals, which we in the notion of "society" contrast with the political community, make his discussions inapplicable for us. Nevertheless his fundamental view of the state might even to-day appear to very many superior to all the artificial hypotheses that have since obtained. Above all, the thought that it is not permissible, to derive political existence from any past condition in which the individual has lived apart from any association with his like; the thought also, that man from the beginning was a "political being," as well as the other thought that the state does not exist merely for the sake of the possession and security of its citizens, but that it is besides an end in itself, destined to produce good and beautiful results,—these fundamental thoughts of the Aristotelian politics, will have now more prospect of acquiescence than heretofore, since the knowledge gradually begins to prevail that egoistic utilitarian considerations, are a much too insecure basis upon which to found the noblest impulses of the human soul.

The ways, indeed, are long and strangely entangled, that have to-day led us back to views akin to those which an impartial thinker, independently surveying human affairs, expressed more than two thousand years ago. When the civilisation of antiquity became antiquated and the gospel of the redemption of disconsolate humanity had placed before our eyes an ideal that presented the strongest contrast to the ideal of life-enjoying Greece, that antithesis had also to find expression in views regarding being and the value of the individual existence and the life-associations to which the individual belongs. The Christian view of the world, which esteemed the sensuous life merely as a prepara-

tion for the true life, the supersensuous, was here consoled incomparably more than by the Aristotelian doctrines or that Platonic conception, which considered the union of spirit with body as an evil, as an imprisonment of the soul, from which the latter looked back with longing to the unsullied purity of its previous incorporeal existence. Even, later, when Aristotle had become the unquestioned leader of mediæval science, people accommodated themselves to his doctrine of the nature of the soul only under reservations that limited the union of the lower psychical powers with the bodily organs to the earthly life. Among life communities, however, only one in the eyes of the mediæval church had permanent value; the community of believers, who without regard for political limits realise the Divine state, a representation of the heavenly kingdom upon earth. This one community alone, is of Divine, supernatural origin. All secular states arose in the natural way. They are founded for perishable purposes, by compacts, which like all secular compacts can be dissolved when those purposes are on the point of subversion. The ideal life, however, is life separate from state organisation. Therefore man in Paradise, before the fall, lived separate from state organisation, just as the future life, which will no longer need the laws and legal ordinances of this world, will be unconnected with state organisation. World revolutionising developments can only be perfected in violent oppositions. When Christianity overcame the one-sided idea of happiness of ancient ethics, when it overcame the limited political conceptions of the civic institutions of antiquity, finally, when it assured to the individual personality as such, without regard to race and class distinction, its claim to moral esteem, it succeeded only by rendering everything that seemed good and valuable to the Greeks, as worthless when compared to the higher goods, which it taught men to know. But it has, visibly to all eyes, come to light, that the negation of real life to which Christian philosophy was thus continually impelled, gradually had to destroy itself, that, thought out with consistency, it led necessarily to the opposite of that which it strove after. This appeared not merely in the secularisation of the mediæval church, to which it was doomed as if by fate, but is to be traced also in many other phenomena, which as they belong to the more obscure development of scientific views, are more wont to escape observation. To these phenomena, belongs also, as I believe, the remarkable fact that the weapons forged by ecclesiastical philosophy for the protection of its transcendental system, when turned against this system in the following age, transformed themselves into the most effective instruments for a perfectly secular, natural view of life.

When, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century,

the newly prevailing impulse for investigation abolished, in all domains, the remnants of mediæval scholasticism, when there no longer remained one stone upon another of the building of Aristotelian Physics and Metaphysics, then those two essentials of the ecclesiastical philosophical doctrinal edifice, which relate to the anthropological and the sociological problem, preserved themselves intact, according to their essential fundamental concepts, in the new era. While mediæval metaphysics had regarded the union of spirit with body, in the sense of the relation of all earthly things to the supersensuous world, as a transitory imprisonment, from which it was the hope of the suffering soul to be released, this same conception of Aristotle's became a welcome tool for the worldly minded philosophy of the following centuries, to implant anthropological concepts in that mechanical view of the world, which obtained sovereignty under the influence of the pioneer discoveries in the natural sciences. At this time, the body was esteemed little more than a prison, involuntarily endured by the soul. Nevertheless body and spirit confronted each other as equally real substances, and in the conceptions concerning their interactions, the preponderance lay so much upon the side of the corporeal event, that there fell to the soul, at the most, only the rôle of an atom of specific inner qualities, which, like the material elements in which it was bound up, was subjected to the universal, mechanical conformity—to law. Therefore, it is comprehensible, that people, from these conceptions came easily to accept the spiritual life as nothing but a sport of mechanical movements. As the rise of mechanical physics, soaring above everything as it did, after the beginning of the seventeenth century, furnished aid to materialistic views, so the very idea of the transcendentality of the spirit, which at one time, sprang from the negation of the sensuous world, offered also to this differently moulded era, the expedient for satisfying the claims of faith. The immaterial, immortal soul,—thus a Francis Bacon, a Pierre Gassendi and many others explained it,—the immortal soul lies outside the pale of cognition: Cognition has only to do with the sensuous soul, which is necessarily a sensuous being.

Modern times accepted the inheritance of the mediæval church, in the same manner, in the conceptions that prevailed concerning the significance of political institutions. The political powers striving after an independent unfolding of strength, even in the fourteenth century, made a vain attempt to resurrect the Platonic conception that the state was a living being, with organic members. The German Reformation, at a later period, in a similar sense, sought in vain to secure recognition for the precept that the magistracy was established by God. The notion that the state was the

result of a compact between men, did not again disappear from science and it soon, victoriously superseded all other views. However, there was no longer any question of opposing a divine state to this human state, established for perishable purposes. On the contrary, when Thomas Hobbes developed his idea of the state church, he boldly claimed the unconditional subordination of the latter with the cynical words: "Religion is the belief permitted by the state, superstition the belief forbidden." The main principle of these new theories of the state was to create a legal basis for the sovereignty of the state, which led back to no supersensuous origin, but taught men to conceive of the "corpus politicum," as a no less natural creation than is any natural body that issues from known natural powers. Thus, the secular theory, in this respect also, takes possession of the same conception as the ecclesiastical once did for opposite purposes. For the latter, the state had been a work of human agreement, in order to subordinate it all the more certainly to the divine state, which was of supernatural origin. The contract-theory now became an expedient for insuring the state against all attacks, just because that only is regarded as legitimate which is of natural origin.

The logical development of this conception, however, was obliged gradually to lead far beyond its aim, in order, finally, to attain a result again annulling it. In the endeavor to establish the primitive equality of the natural rights of individuals, Hobbes replaced the early idea of a "contract of subordination" which was applied to the state on the basis of the relation of the ruler to the ruled, by that of a "social contract," which each concludes with each, because in the natural condition precedent to the state, each is dependent upon his own will alone. Now, as indeed actually happened, this social contract could be adapted to all possible political views. However, the ideal of an absolute sovereignty of the people, corresponded to it most perfectly, according to which the best state's constitution was said to be that in which each foregoes, in his originally unlimited will only the minimum which is indispensable for the safety of all. Here, again, the social contract of a Jean Jacques Rousseau accorded most beautifully with the testimony of those Christian philosophers, who esteemed the state as a necessary evil and the anarchical or stateless primitive condition, as the true paradisiacal ideal.

Thus, in manifold relations, that mediæval doctrine prolonged its existence up to the threshold of our century. Wilhelm von Humboldt, in his "Attempt to Determine the Limits of State Interference," condemned even that activity of the state which seeks to further the positive well-being of its citizens, as

deleterious. For it would be the highest ideal of the collective life of human beings, "if each developed from himself alone and for his own sake." And Fichte, a few years later, in his "Lectures Concerning the Vocation of Scholars," thought that there must, surely, lie a point somewhere in the prescribed course of the human race "where all political institutions will be superfluous," because pure reason will be universally recognised as supreme arbiter. Only from that point however, and only when the state has gradually become unnecessary will we, in general be "true men." Truly, the antithesis to the Aristotelian principle, that the state was prior to the individual and that man is a political being, cannot be more vigorously expressed.

Yet, in the latter case as well as in the former, the conception of the community stands in the closest connection with that of the individual man. If good and truth are, everywhere, only a product of subjective reason, a commonwealth that binds the wills of individuals will be experienced only as a galling restraint that, finally, may be unable to withstand the struggle after a perfectly free activity of the rational will. Thus, the bold idealism of the Storm and Stress Period leads to the same result that the naturalism of the social theories of the seventeenth century attained. As for Fichte, the individual reason, so for Hobbes, the individual body only, possessed a title to independent reality. In both cases the commonwealth becomes a sum of individuals, which, by voluntary assent, subject themselves to certain rules of action, for harmonious, subjective purposes.

But the author of the "Addresses to the German People," (Fichte) had already abandoned much of the fundamental thoughts of his earlier lectures, as, after him, likewise the statesman Humboldt wished no longer to acknowledge the content of his youthful labors. There were two intellectual streams, independent of each other in external appearance, but, at bottom, sustained, half consciously and half unconsciously, by the force of national exaltation, in the beginning of our century, which caused those views to totter.

On the one side, a deeper historical conception of habits and laws of previous eras, awakened and roused to independent life by Romanticism, caused the rationalistic constructions of state and society to appear in an increasingly more doubtful light. On the other side, in German philosophy, there issued forth from the logical progressive development of Fichte's ideas, the notion of an objective world-rationality, of a spirit of universality, concerning which people assumed that, in history, political life and in all ideal creations depending upon the united intellectual labor of mankind, such as art, religion, and philosophy, it proves its reality, independent and infinitely superior to individual

existence. An age whose distinction from the former ages consisted, not the least in the fact that it had learned to think historically, could not escape the power of this idea, even although the abstruse, dialectic garment, in which Hegel's system, its most thoroughly developed presentation had clothed it proved obstructive to its propagation. But for just this reason, one cannot regret enough that the logical scheme of that system established everywhere in the place of real, historical developments an artificial system of concepts and that, led astray by this, it split into opposites such things as according to their essence and origin belonged together. Thus the domain of objective morality was here, like another higher world, placed in opposition to subjective morality. Law and state appeared like beings *sui generis*, almost as if they could exist independent of individuals. Thus arose the idea of an independent existence of communities, through which they were, on the whole, considered too much like individual beings.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### NATURE AND MORALITY.

##### AN EXAMINATION OF THE ETHICAL VIEWS OF JOHN STUART MILL.

###### I. THE MEANING OF BASING ETHICS UPON NATURE.

JOHN STUART MILL has written an essay on Nature in which he "inquires into the truth of the doctrines which make Nature a test of right and wrong." He sums up the results of his inquiry in the following conclusions:

"The word *Nature* has two principal meanings: it either denotes the entire system of things, with the aggregate of all their properties, or it denotes things as they would be, apart from human intervention.

"In the first of these senses, the doctrine that man ought to follow nature is unmeaning; since man has no power to do anything else than follow nature; all his actions are done through, and in obedience to, some one or many of nature's physical or mental laws.

"In the other sense of the term, the doctrine that man ought to follow nature, or in other words, ought to make the spontaneous course of things the model of his voluntary actions, is equally irrational and immoral.

"Irrational, because all human action whatever, consists in altering, and all useful action in improving, the spontaneous course of nature:

"Immoral, because the course of natural phenomena being replete with everything which when committed by human beings is most worthy of abhorrence, any one who endeavoured in his actions to imitate the natural course of things would be universally seen and acknowledged to be the wickedest of men."

If the word Nature is used in the second meaning, it is obvious that an imitation of nature would signify the suppression of the human in man, of that which is properly called ethical; it would deprive man of his most characteristic and noblest feature,—rationality

—and degrade him into an animal blindly obeying its instincts.

Yet what is instinct but inherited habit? How have habits been acquired but by repeated action? Instinct is by no means bare of the rational element. Instinct is not totally blind. Although it may not prove rational intelligence in the individual, yet it does prove rational intelligence in the race. Instinct can be explained only as having been acquired through race-experience. The human has grown out of the race-experience of man's ancestors, and the rationality of certain instincts are a prophecy of the human. If the blindness of instinct has to be called "natural," and that element of rationality, however small it may be, which represents judgment and may be considered as the germ of humanity is to be counted as "non-natural," the whole animal kingdom from man down to the moner must be classed as part of the non-natural domain of the world. Nature in that case would have to be limited to the province of unorganised things, to stones or minerals, and the world of plants might be a disputed ground.

This conception of nature is not admissible, and it contradicts its etymological meaning, which is not as yet forgotten. The word "Nature" is derived from *nascere*, to grow, and denotes especially the evolution of organised life.

If we take "nature" in its first meaning, denoting "the entire system of things with the aggregate of all the 'properties,'" Mr. Mill declares that the doctrine that "man ought to follow nature" has no meaning. He says:

"The scheme of Nature regarded in its whole extent, cannot have had, for its sole or even principal object, the good of human or other sentient beings. What good it brings to them, is mostly the result of their own exertions."

Certainly, that good which nature brings to sentient beings, is mostly the result of their own exertions. But if nature comprises the entire system of things, it also includes the exertions of sentient beings. That sentient beings can make efforts, is one of the most important, nay, for us it is the all-important part of nature. In other words, ethics is not something artificial in contrast to that which is natural, it is not something non-natural or unnatural; ethics is the most characteristic feature of human nature.

Mr. Mill has much to say about art and the artificial. He treats art as something radically different from nature. He ought to have remembered Shakespeare's lines:

"Yet nature is made better by no mean,  
But nature makes that mean; so, over that art,  
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art  
That nature makes. . . . .  
. . . . . This is an art  
Which does mend nature—change, rather; but  
The art itself is nature!"—*Winter's Tale*.

Mr. Mill tries to dispel some ambiguities that lurk in the old proposition *naturam sequi*, yet he confines his investigation to one interpretation of this rule only, and indeed to that which is the crudest and the most obviously absurd conception we can form of it, so crude that nobody has ever maintained it and, so far as I know, even thought of it before Mr. Mill refuted its proposition.

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In the introductory remarks to his essay on Nature, Mr. Mill complains about the "many meanings, different from the primary one, yet sufficiently allied to it to admit of confusion." The article was apparently suggested by the reading of certain propositions of theological authors, who maintain that nature must be considered as a divine revelation; nature's doings are acts of God; the scheme of nature indicates a plan wisely premeditated and designed to serve the good of human or of other sentient beings; and that "all things are for wise and good ends. Such a view has been presented to "exalt instinct at the expense of reason."

Mr. Mill deals with these notions with great adroitness. He refutes the idea that natural processes are an indication of the Creator's designs. Natural laws act blindly; the storm rages without taking into consideration that it may do harm to sentient beings.

Now, if we consider nature as a personal being who acts not in uniformities of law, but with conscious knowledge of the consequences of his doings, and adjusting them to special ends, it would truly be ridiculous to say that we must act as indeliberately, ruthlessly, and blindly, as nature acts. Mr. Mill has succeeded completely in the refutation of this view, although it almost appears to me that a serious refutation is scarcely necessary.

The following passage might be suspected of humor, but Mr. Mill is in deep earnest.

He says:

"In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are banged or imprisoned for doing to one another, are nature's every day performances. Killing, the most criminal act recognised by human laws, Nature does once to every being that lives; and in a large proportion of cases, after protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their living fellow-creatures.

"Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first christian martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed. All this, Nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and of justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst; upon those who are engaged in the highest and worthiest enterprises, and often as the direct consequence of the noblest acts; and it might almost be imagined as a punishment for

them. She mows down those on whose existence hangs the well-being of a whole people, perhaps the prospects of the human race for generations to come, with as little compunction as those whose death is a relief to themselves, or a blessing to those under their noxious influence. Such are Nature's dealings with life. Next to taking life (equal to it according to a high authority) is taking the means by which we live; and Nature does this too on the largest scale and with the most callous indifference. A single hurricane destroys the hopes of a season; a flight of locusts, or an inundation, desolates a district; a trifling chemical change in an edible root, starves a million of people. The waves of the sea, like banditti seize and appropriate the wealth of the rich and the little all of the poor with the same accompaniments of stripping, wounding, and killing as their human antitypes. Everything in short, which the worst men commit either against life or property is perpetrated on a larger scale by natural agents.

"Nature has Noyades more fatal than those of Carrier; her explosions of fire damp are as destructive as human artillery; her plague and cholera far surpass the poison cups of the Borgias. Even the love of 'order' which is thought to be a following of the ways of Nature, is in fact a contradiction of them. All which people are accustomed to deprecate as 'disorder' and its consequences, is precisely a counterpart of Nature's ways. Anarchy and the Reign of Terror are overmatched in injustice, ruin, and death, by a hurricane and a pestilence."

The passage quoted appears to me of special interest because the anthropomorphic view of nature is pushed to its utmost extreme. Mr. Mill combats here the conception of a personification of nature which is unequalled in mythology. Mr. Mill concludes from his considerations:

"Nature cannot be a proper model for us to imitate. Either it is right that we should kill because nature kills; torture because nature tortures; ruin and devastate because nature does the like; or we ought not to consider at all what nature does, but what it is good to do. If there is such a thing as a *reductio ad absurdum*, this surely amounts to one. If it is a sufficient reason for doing one thing, that nature does it, why not another thing? If not all things, why anything? The physical government of the world being full of the things which when done by men are deemed the greatest enormities, it cannot be religious or moral in us to guide our actions by the analogy of the course of nature."

Mr. Mill apparently takes the words *naturam sequi* in the sense of *naturam imitari*. To follow nature is in his conception not a conforming to the entire system of things and its laws, but the regarding the facts of nature as the actions of a person, and acting accordingly.

If "nature" is taken in the sense of the whole system of things, the precept to follow nature, Mr. Mill says, is, with reference to the irrefragable necessity of natural laws, meaningless. For every atom—so to say—obeys the law of gravitation, and every motive sufficiently strong to incite a man to action, if not counteracted by other and equally strong motives, will pass into an act; it will—so to say—obey the laws of psychical dynamics. Any advice to obey the laws of nature in this sense is not quite as ridiculous as the injunction to imitate nature, but it is meaningless. It makes no sense.

But there is another sense still—and Mr. Mill has not overlooked it—in which the doctrine of basing ethics upon nature can be conceived. Mr. Mill, it appears, has devoted little space to an explanation of it, because to his mind it seemed so very obvious and unquestionably correct. Indeed it is as unquestionably correct as the other views which he combats are unquestionably erroneous and meaningless.

The original definition of nature is formulated by Mill as follows:

"As the nature of any given thing is the aggregate of its powers and properties, so Nature in the abstract is the aggregate of the powers and properties of all things.

"Nature means the sum of all phenomena, together with the causes which produce them; including not only all that happens, but all that is capable of happening; the unused capabilities of causes being as much a part of the idea of Nature, as those which take effect."

Mr. Mill concludes:

"Since all phenomena which have been sufficiently examined are found to take place with regularity, each having certain fixed conditions . . . on the occurrence of which it invariably happens; mankind have been able to ascertain, either by direct observation or by reasoning processes grounded on it, the conditions of the occurrence of many phenomena; and the progress of science mainly consists in ascertaining those conditions."

Mr. Mill proposes to express the doctrine not by *naturam sequi* but by *naturam observare*. He says:

"To acquire knowledge of the properties of things, and make use of the knowledge for guidance, is a rule of prudence, for the adaptation of means to ends; for giving effect to our wishes and intentions whatever they may be.

"If, therefore, the useless precept to follow nature were changed into a precept to study nature; to know and take heed of the properties of the things we have to deal with, so far as these properties are capable of forwarding or obstructing any given purpose; we should have arrived at the first principle of all intelligent action, or rather at the definition of intelligent action itself."

The ancients, Mr. Mill says, were very unequivocal in basing their ethics upon nature. "The Roman jurists, when attempting to systematise jurisprudence place in the front of their exposition a certain *Jus naturale*, 'quod natura' as Justinian declares in the Institutes, 'omnia animalia docuit.'" Mr. Mill after alluding to Christianity, continues:

"The people of this generation do not commonly apply principles with any such studious exactness [as the ancients], nor own such binding allegiance to any standard, but live in a kind of confusion of many standards; a condition not propitious to the formation of steady moral convictions, but convenient enough to those whose moral opinions sit lightly on them, since it gives them a much wider range of arguments for defending the doctrine of the moment."

This is very true. But how can we improve the present state of ethics, otherwise than by being exact and trying to find out the leading principle of ethics. A leading principle of ethics, which may serve us as a standard for the rules of action and a test for right or wrong, cannot be artificially constructed. The facts

upon which moral aspirations have to be based, are just as much facts of nature as the formation of crystals or the growth of plants. The conditions under which those facts are formed can be ascertained; and we can by observation and forethought predefine their consequences. They can be described in laws that are just as immutable as the laws which concern the growth of plants or the health of the body. Morality in all its phases and possibilities is deeply founded in the nature of things, and unless morality be an unexplainable fact in contradiction to all other facts of nature—there is but one way of comprehending morality and discovering its principle. This way is to study the facts of social life, the consequences of what is called immorality and the consequences of moral aspiration, to analyse them, to observe them in their origin and further development, to understand their importance, and to formulate their operation as exact natural laws.

The principle of morality cannot be contrived; it must be discovered. It cannot be devised like a work of art, but has to be found out not otherwise than any other natural law. Principles of art might be fashioned so as to suit our imagination—not so principles of morality. Artistic taste, yet even that in a certain sense only, is arbitrary, but the principles of morality are not arbitrary; they are not a product of our fancy, to suit special inherited or acquired inclinations, be they ever so lofty, charitable, altruistic, generous, or self-sacrificing. The principles of morality are to be based upon rigid truths which must be ascertained by experience and demonstrated by the usual scientific methods.

There is no choice left; but we have to base ethics upon nature.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

#### CURRENT TOPICS.

THE practice of giving a dead congressman a roaring wake is again exciting comment. Dead statesmen have become so expensive that the people desire not the death of a congressman, but rather that he be converted and live. It costs so much to bury him. The funeral bill of a congressman depends apparently upon what state he hails from, as the figures vary from a few hundreds up to several thousands of dollars per head. The undertaker's bill for burying the late Mr. Houk, a member from Tennessee, amounts to \$1,994.90, but this does not include the expenses proper of the wake itself. These are in addition to the undertaker's bill. The price of the coffin alone was \$1,200, not including the "trimmings" which cost \$200 more. True, it appears in the bill as a "burial casket," but it was nothing but a coffin after all. When a man is buried at the expense of his own family it is of course a private matter with which the outside world has nothing whatever to do; but when he is buried by public generosity, a \$1,200 "casket" is an illegal perquisite, and a *post mortem* vanity setting a bad example. There also appears to be some invidious distinctions made between the members, for it is remarked that the undertaker's bill for burying the late Mr. Ford, a member from another state, amounted to only about \$500, and the report ironically says, "In-

stead of a \$1,200 casket, Mr. Ford rests in a \$150 coffin." Mr. Ford may rest fairly well in a \$150 coffin, but not so luxuriously as Mr. Houk reposes in a \$1,200 casket, decorated and adorned with \$200 worth of trimmings. Petty payments made out of the public money by legislators for the benefit of each other weaken the moral sense, and end in the squandering of millions. Tailors' bills and undertakers' bills are alike private affairs, and congress has no legal right to pay either of them out of the national treasury.

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It is not surprising that undertakers charge exorbitant rates for burying congressmen, when the committees in charge of the funeral set them the example. When a member of congress dies the custom is to appoint six members of the House and three senators to escort the body home; and this pious duty often takes the form of extravagant self-indulgence. A few years ago, a member from Kansas died in Washington, and the usual funeral committee was appointed. Their bill for taking him to his home and burying him amounted to \$3,561. This great expense could not have been made except by indulgence in the most costly wines, liquors, and cigars; and by their help the funeral was converted into a "wake" coarse, lavish, loud. It appears by the vouchers that the committee fortified themselves for their journey, and tempered their grief by a "lunch," at the moderate cost of \$200. As we have a right to assume that they had something to eat at their own homes in Washington, why did they need a \$200 lunch before starting on their journey? And what sort of a lunch fiend is it that can devour twenty dollars worth of lunch at one effort? Nine or ten men cannot eat \$200 worth of lunch at one trial. They may drink it, but even then each man of them must consume two or three quarts of the most expensive champagne; and this is enough to make any one drunk except a congressman. By the time they reached Harrisburg, the disconsolate mourners were in such a state of sorrow and starvation that it became necessary to strengthen and stimulate them with a \$200 breakfast. By careful nursing and proper nourishment of this kind, they managed to reach Kansas and get back to Washington at the cost of \$3,561. All the funeral expenses that were dignified and respectable probably cost about \$561,—the other \$3,000 represented luxury, jollity, and drink.

\* \* \*

In a highly colored sketch of Mr. Spurgeon, somewhat partial by reason of private friendship, the *Review of Reviews* for March, confirms what I said a few weeks ago about the colossal faith of that celebrated preacher. According to his religion, belief was the key of heaven; not belief in reasonable things, for there is no religious merit in that, but belief in the impossible, and in the Sacred History of that which never happened. In his theology the soul's danger lay just behind the forehead, and therefore the smaller the facial angle the larger the chance for heaven. He believed, says the *Review of Reviews*, "that the whole revelation of the Divine Will was contained in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, in the verbal inspiration of which, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelations, he never ceased to believe." The leaves of Nature's Book of Revelation, the geologic strata were all heretics to him, for they contained the testimony of the rocks, physical revelations uncorrupted by interpolation or forgery. He warned his church against the pagan story of the stars, for Astronomy was the science of Lucifer. He was impatient of mental development especially among the Baptists, although they greatly needed it; and, says the *Review of Reviews*, "he protested with such vehemence as he possessed—and that was not small—he denounced, he thundered, he almost excommunicated those of his brethren who could not share his conviction that no one could really believe in God the Father and Christ the son who was not certain that the majority of the human race were created to pass a whole eternity in endless torment." As the vision of hell faded from human eyes, the despair of Spurgeon

grew. As light fell upon other men, darkness fell upon him. With fear and trembling he saw Faith diminish, and Hope and Charity increase. His friend and biographer says, "He roundly assailed the tendency of the present time to take a broader view of the fate of man and the love of God; and his last years were saddened and darkened by what he regarded as the apostasy of English Christianity."

\* \* \*

It is only fair and generous to pay a tribute of admiration to a brave man fighting against the stars in their courses, as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera; and therefore I give sympathy to Spurgeon wrestling against the sunshine, and challenging the very learning and temper of his time. He made a stubborn fight for his doctrine, but he found that not only were the mental powers of the world arrayed against him, but the spiritual and moral forces too. He did not know that these were all one in essence and in substance, and that they rose and fell in sympathy together. The soul is not weakened by strengthening the mind, for as the world grows wiser it grows better, and as men become better they cherish a better opinion of God. Even the Baptists have grown wise enough and good enough to believe and hope that the "fallen angels" will rise again; and it appears even by the Calvinistic census that the population of the bottomless pit is growing smaller day by day, and the sulphurous cavern will soon be empty. With a touch of pathos, the *Review of Reviews* thus explains the defeat of Spurgeon. "He who had proved himself a very Hercules, who had successfully accomplished all those labors imposed upon him by a kindly providence, nevertheless found himself baffled and confounded by the subtle Zeitgeist or spirit of his time, with which he waged an uncompromising warfare." Yes, but unfortunately for Mr. Spurgeon "the subtle Zeitgeist" wages an uncompromising warfare too; and in a contest with him the mythological Hercules and the theological Samson both go down.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

#### BOOK REVIEWS.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION AND ORGANISATION IN THE GERMAN SCHOOLS. By *John T. Prince*. Boston: Lee & Shepard.

Dr. John T. Prince has made a very careful study of the German school system and presents in a most convenient form within the small compass of 237 pages all its most characteristic and most important features. The reviewer of the book has been trained in German schools and was for several years in active service as a teacher in Germany; he feels confident that he is as well informed on the subject as anyone can be; so he believes that his opinion has some weight when saying that Dr. Prince's report is in every respect accurate. But it is more; it is judicious. The author notices the drawbacks as well as the virtues of the German schools and exaggerates neither the one nor the other. He wants the American teacher to learn from the German educational methods, but he is far from demanding their direct imitation. The concluding chapter states the author's opinion in the following words:

"I have said that our schools are poor in comparison with the 'schools of Germany. And yet, I believe I am not inconsistent 'in saying that the best we have are better for us than the best 'that exist in Germany would be."

#### NOTES.

The Truthseeker Co. (28 Lafayette Place, New York City) have again collected their illustrations of the last year in a handsomely bound volume, entitled "Old Testament Stories Comically Illustrated by Watson Heston." Their plan is to propagate free-thought by ridiculing the superstitions and errors of religion, but they are not careful as to whom or what they strike. They are as vigorous in their work as are the most fanatic believers on the

other side. We do not approve of this method of the Truthseeker Co.; they spread in this way a wrong kind of freethought and we believe that they will make but few converts by their grotesque pictures. It will make the iconoclast laugh, but the believer will turn from them with disgust. In the general household of human thought, iconoclasts of this kind seem to equilibrate the balance with those eccentric forms of piety which find an expression in the Salvation Army and similar institutions. So long as the one extreme exists, the other extreme has also right to existence, and there seem to be deeper causes that demand that it should exist too.

The *New England Magazine* for March contains an article which will be interesting to all Americans. It is entitled "Recollections of Louisa May Alcott," the author of "Little Women," and is written by Maria S. Porter. The article is preceded by a beautiful frontispiece engraving of Miss Alcott, taken from a portrait made at the age of twenty, and contains besides a number of reproductions of later photographs handsome cuts of the Alcott homes. Every one will find in these "recollections" pleasant and welcome glimpses of the life of a woman whose fame rests as much on her private virtues as on any of her literary achievements.

MR. C. S. PEIRCE has resumed his lessons by correspondence in the Art of Reasoning, taught in progressive exercises. A special course in logic has been prepared for correspondents interested in philosophy. Terms, \$30 for twenty-four lessons. Address: Mr. C. S. Peirce, "Avisbe," Milford, Pa.

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