

PHILOSOPHICAL PARTIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE AS FACTORS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THOUGHT.

BY THE EDITOR.

THERE IS a natural contrast in philosophy between rationalists and empiricists, between the theory-party and the fact-party, between deductionists and inductionists, between the advocates of pure reason and the advocates of experience, between the believers in the universal and the sticklers for particulars, and these parties are as natural in philosophy as the Whigs and Tories, the Republicans and Democrats in politics, the anarchists and socialists in social affairs, and the Pharisees and Sadducees in religion. Both parties work in harmony toward a common aim, which is the discovery of truth, representing two principles, the former looking out for the unity of all things, the latter for exactness in detail. Both parties are needed in philosophy as much as we need in politics the Republicans for union, order, centralisation, and the Democrats for independence, liberty, and non-interference in local and private affairs.¹ The Tories are the English Republicans and the Whigs the English Democrats. The socialists are social Tories, or the party of social organisation and union; the anarchists are the social Whigs, the party of liberty and independence. Thus the theorists in philosophy, the advocates of pure reason, are the Tories of thought and the particularists or advocates of pure experience are the Whigs of thought.

The same holds good in religion, where the Pharisees insist on definiteness in dogma and on authority in church government,

¹ This general characterisation of our parties refers merely to the traditional principles, leaving out of sight the fact that the silverites have of late taken possession of the Democratic party-machine and switched it off on the side-track of populism.

while the Sadducees demand culture, even though it may come from the Gentiles, and freedom from dogma.

In addition to these two parties there is another party which in American politics has received the name of Populist, and in Germany the collective name of the *die Wilden*, the wild ones, or savages. They are the irregulars who follow either no principle whatever or raise some side issue, thus giving a universal significance to some unimportant question. They are innovators on general principles; they propose a change on account of their dissatisfaction with the world. As a rule they rise from the ranks of those who not having the public ear try to gain it by creating a sensation of some kind. They are in this respect very much like those personages in politics who are hopelessly out of power and anxious to come into power by any means, just criticism of existing evils and otherwise—mostly otherwise. But whether or not their complaints are right or wrong, they are generally disregarded and poohpoohed.

The Populists in politics and the irregulars in philosophy play a very important part in history. They represent the spirit that denies, and when by a division of power both parties have become corrupt and anti-progressive, the irregulars grow in prominence and shake them from their stupor. Some of the greatest movements have been launched by this party of wild issues; but we must add that a wild issue raised on account of some sore need that was neglected by the Pharisees and Sadducees of the time, always sobers down when it grows to power. The Nazarene movement of Palestine is a religious populism which culminated in Christ's preaching the Gospel to the poor, leading finally to the establishment of the Christian Church, in which to-day we have the same division of parties, the dogmatists, or so-called orthodox, and the liberals, both being nothing but a reincarnation of the Pharisees and Sadducees of the times of Christ.

The Pharisees and Sadducees are as severely and indiscriminately arraigned in the New Testament as are the Republicans and Democrats by the Populists of to-day; and this lack of discrimination is natural. Both parties had remained heedless of the religious demands of the large classes of the poor and the uncultured. Both looked down with contempt upon the irregular preachers and self-appointed prophets of the Essenes and Nazarenes, who (like John the Baptist) lived, in food and dress, like Buddhist monks, introduced new rites, such as baptism, preached in the streets, and represented in this way the voice crying in the wilderness. We know from Josephus that both the Pharisees and the Saddu-

cees were by no means such contemptible persons as they are commonly supposed to have been. With all their faults, they were, taken as a class, earnest and upright men who tried to do what was right according to their best knowledge and obeying the dictates of their conscience. The Pharisees were stern in their faith in Jehovah and adhered with strictness to the covenant; and the Sadducees, seeing the narrowness of traditional Judaism, endeavored to broaden the religion of their fathers. We may assume that there were hypocrites among them, but the Pharisees' hopes and the Sadducees' aspirations were as honest as was any religious faith in the world. Their main fault was narrowness, not rascality and blindness, not knavery and ignorance, not ill-will. Considering the tragic fate of the people of Israel, we feel compassion for them, we pity them, but cannot look upon them as rogues. And what holds good of the old Pharisees and Sadducees is true of the modern Pharisees and Sadducees. There are hypocrites among them, but for that reason we need not call them a generation of vipers.

The Populists form a third party, but it would be wrong to imagine that the irregulars, the innovators, the representatives of prevalent dissatisfaction, are all that is left. There is not only the large mass of indifferent people who allow themselves to drift with the currents that originate in the conflict of both parties, following upon the whole either the will o' the wisp of private hopes or yielding thoughtlessly to their sentiments, which are allured by catching party-cries. There are also a number of independent men who would not swear by any one party-principle, and who sometimes do not care for consistency of party-principles, but would leave such questions alone and select what for some reason or other they feel there is a moral need of. They are called in politics the independents, in philosophy eclectics.

Independents and eclectics rise frequently into great prominence in times of need. They recruit themselves from the middle classes, who for practical ends and for the sake of peace, demand a *status vivendi* which would temporarily settle a problem by compromise. The independents appear on the scene of local government as "citizens' parties" and under similar names. Their work, however, is sporadic. They make a clean sweep, but as soon as the pressing cause of indignation that called the movement into existence has been removed, the enthusiasm abates on account of the general indifference, and the citizens' party changes into a regular political machine with spoils' system and all other faults. The eclectics in philosophy are similar; they are the seeds of thought

that grow on stony places ; forthwith they spring up because they have no depth of soil ; but when the sun rises they are scorched, and because they have not root, they wither away."

There is a great difference between the independents, the eclectics or citizens' party, and the Populists or irregulars. The former are practical and demand the settlement of practical questions. If they enter into matters of principle they are fain to appeal to two or more contradictory principles in one breath. They have no root, and are lacking in depth. The latter, however, are, upon the whole, wild theorists ; they sometimes fight principles as a matter of principle. They endeavor in their way to be thorough, but their schemes are wild and their theories crude.

The Populists can start new movements, but they are forever unable to run them. As soon as a new movement has become an established fact, the two parties of universalists or unionists and the particularists will under new names naturally and spontaneously reappear. The old names become sometimes odious and are for that reason dropped, but the new party divisions will in all essentials be on the lines of the old principles.

The reason of the constant reappearance of the same contrasts lies in the fact that they are both legitimate. They are contrasts but not contradictions. Both principles are right, and the history of the world is mankind's endeavor to adjust itself to both. Zealous partisans would abolish either principle and expect the realisation of a millennium on earth as soon as the principle which they have happened to embrace will have sole sway. Thus the ideals of both anarchism and socialism will be actualised in every social progress, not in the way that demagogues preach, but as society develops, according to the laws of social growth. Every new adjustment of the needs of society, every new institution in which it takes shape, will create better chances for individuals to make a fair living and through a choice of new possibilities widen their sphere of independence. Every definite comprehension of the true significance of a religious doctrine will show the old dogmas in a new light,—not, to be sure, in the light of narrow traditionalism, but after all as a fulfilment of the ideal which the dogmatists were groping after.

In the history of modern philosophy it is sometimes difficult to class philosophers, because they do not go to the polls to vote either way on party issues, and cannot therefore be divided as the goats and the sheep will be on the day of judgment. As there are no republicans who would not occasionally advocate democratic

measures, and *vice versa*, so there are no theorists who do not gladly avail themselves of the material of the empiricists; and there is no one who as a matter of principle rests his confidence on experience alone, who would not form a theory as soon as he believes he has found the general feature in a number of single facts. Nevertheless, we can say generally that among modern thinkers Kant, the philosopher of Pure Reason, represents the deductionist, the theorist, the believer in universality, the upholder of the *a priori*; John Stuart Mill, the advocate of pure experience, the inductionist, the believer in particulars, the upholder of the *a posteriori* as the sole source of knowledge; and Herbert Spencer, the eclectic. Without solving any one of the fundamental principles, Spencer accepts the main results of the science of his day and thus satisfies that large class of people who are in search of a solution that will serve their most urgent philosophical needs. As a typical populist in philosophy, one of the irregulars, who proposes to be original by principle, is Nietzsche, rampant and incoherent, but interesting; betraying even in his clearest works the incipient insanity to which he finally fell a prey, but suggestive; ridiculously grandiloquent, but ingenious, and brilliant.

The constant reappearance of the two main parties in philosophy, as indicated by Plato and Aristotle, the realists and the nominalists, the Kantians and the experience-philosophers, has led to the belief that the issue between these opposed principles is ultimately based upon the idiosyncrasy of the philosopher and can therefore never be decided but must forever remain a matter of personal preference. We beg to differ. As society is the product of two factors, the needs of the whole community and the wants of the individual, so the scientific instinct seeks a comprehension of the unity that pervades all the particulars and collects the particulars for the purpose of gathering them up into unities. If the realists imagine that the unities in nature, the types or ideas, the noumena, exist as independent entities or essences within, above, and beyond the things in which they have become incarnate, they are mistaken; and if the nominalists imagine that they are purely subjective notions to which there is no correspondent reality in the objective world, they, too, are mistaken. The types of being are not metaphysical essences but pure forms, and being pure forms they are, although not material, yet real or actual.

The issue between both parties can be decided only by a clear and definite conception of the nature of form. The form of a statue and the form of musical sounds consist neither of matter nor

of motion; and yet the forms of things are their most essential qualities. Things are such as they are because they possess certain forms. Form is the essential problem everywhere. We have reasons to believe that even the chemical elements are different groupings of the same world-substance, and that thus their difference will eventually be explicable as a difference of form.

All science is ultimately a tracing of form; hence the paramount importance of counting and measuring in all exact investigations. But we must remember that counting and measuring are only quantitative determinations of form, and that qualitative differences must be defined by subtler methods of purely formal thought.

The philosophy of form is the philosophy of science; it starts from experience, systematises the facts of experience, and then studies the method of systematisation which contains the key to the order that prevails throughout the cosmos. The system that characterises the functions of all the purely formal sciences (which as a totality characteristic of the human mind is called Reason) is analogous to the formal aspect of the objective world; or, in other words, the intrinsic harmony of mathematical constructions and the immanent order of the laws of nature (which at first sight appear to us as the studied design of a creator) are the results of the same conditions in different fields: they are products of the same determinedness of formal laws, implying intrinsic necessity as well as universality.

Now, we claim that while forms are not gods, nor metaphysical essences, nor entities of any kind, that they are nevertheless (as the realists claim) not only present in the things, but exist also independently of them as "pure forms." There are no things in themselves, but there are "forms in themselves." This is the solution of the old quarrel between the mediæval schools of realism and nominalism, and this is also the answer which we present to the fundamental questions of Kant's transcendentalism. It is wrong to seek for an x behind the things; that which constitutes the thing is its form; and if a concrete thing is destroyed it can be reconstructed by an exact restitution of its form.

There is one important peculiarity of form, viz., the intrinsic necessity of its laws. This, reduced to its simplest expression, is formulated as the law of identity, which declares that that same is the same. The same purely formal operation will give the same results wherever, whenever, and howsoever it may be done. One plus one equals two, whether counted in apples or planets, or any

imaginary objects, and $(a + b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2$, whatever a and b may stand for.

The sciences of pure form are not (as the nominalists claim) purely subjective inventions; they are not mere conceits of the mind; they possess objective validity. The fundamental notions of form are abstractions from experience, and in this sense they are *a posteriori*, but given the fundamental notions of pure form every thinking being can, *a priori*, construct forms which, if they are consistently built up, will generally be applicable to objective reality, for the same process will lead to the same results whether performed with purely mental figures or with concrete objects of any kind. The applicability of mathematics to the most distant stars on which we can never set foot demolishes the principle of nominalism that we know particulars only and have no right to formulate any universal law until we have collected all its single instances in actual experience.

Both the nominalists and the realists were right in their main aspirations. There is (as the realists claim) a unity in the world, and this unity is a real presence in the universe. On the other hand, the nominalists are right in saying that the world consists of particulars and there is no other way to a comprehension of the world than by a study of these particulars. Universals are first mere names, the verification of which as actualities in the objective world can only be determined by a verification of their applicableness to the concrete world of particulars.

The world of form, being throughout definite and determined, is a world of order. It is the condition of science and the condition of ethics. Science is everywhere the tracing of some change of form; and its principle is negatively expressed in the physicist's law of the conservation of matter and energy, and positively in the law of causation. Both laws declare that in all changes there is a certain something which remains the same. Qualitative changes involve no quantitative changes; which means that all causation is ultimately a transformation, a new arrangement, a new distribution of parts.

The philosophy of form is not a temporary compromise between realism and nominalism, between Kantian apriorism and John Stuart Mill's empiricism, but a definite settlement of its issues.¹ It neither overlooks nor abolishes the contrasts that nat-

¹For further details as to the nature of cognition, reason, the *a priori* in its relation to the *a posteriori* and further inferences in the domains of religion and ethics, see the writer's *Primer of Philosophy*.

urally obtain between them, but on the contrary justifies the principles on which they are based and limits them to their proper spheres. Thus the faults of onesidedness can be avoided and science has come in close touch with philosophy.

The philosophy of form is a new positivism in so far as it derives the fundamental notions of forms from the positive facts of experience; it is a new monism in so far as the formal aspect of the world constitutes its unity and verifies the assumption of the oneness of all existence as well as the unison of all truth. It is the philosophy of science in so far as it analyses and explains the methods of science; it can serve as a propædeutic to scientific methodology and justifies the scientist's ideal, which assumes that truth is attainable.