CAN ECONOMICS FURNISH AN OBJECTIVE STANDARD FOR MORALITY?

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to all civilized Europe. From it German literature received an impulse most rich in results on a side on which it most needed to be aroused. For while it now took to itself that lightness and grace, that verve and animated precision, while it replenished itself with those ideas which enkindle the people and exert an immediate and practical influence, it still remained true to itself, it knew how to melt that gold in its veins, it cleansed it from those elements which were foreign to itself, and a light was enkindled in it which has ever since lighted the nation on all its paths with an ever-increasing brightness.

The figure of the green Snake, which Goethe chose to represent this stage of German literature, seems to me a very happy invention. Let one read the first part of the Märchen and see if, when the meaning which I have given is accepted, the most manifold relations do not everywhere spring into view, carrying along the characterization, now in an earnest and again in a satirical and ironical spirit.

I will return to this point again at the proper place. Let us now follow the action of the Märchen from the beginning.

(*To be concluded.*)

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BY SIMON N. PATTEN.

It is affirmed by Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his Data of Ethics, that all current methods of ethics have one general defect—they neglect ultimate causal connections. Now that he has added another method of ethics to those we previously possessed, certainly it is not out of place to examine whether he has neglected any of those ultimate causal connections which were overlooked by previous moralists. It must be conceded that he has brought out many causal connections by which a much clearer view of ethics can now be had than was formerly possible; but that he has clearly enumerated or even consciously recognized those ulti-

mate causal connections which lie at the basis of the true ethical system must be doubted even if we accept those general principles from which he proceeds. Mr. Spencer affirms that it is the business of Moral Science to deduce from the laws of life and the conditions of existence what kinds of actions tend to produce happiness and what kinds to produce unhappiness. An examination of his books, however, will reveal that he has deduced most of his conclusions from the laws of life alone. A reader is left in complete darkness as to what those ultimate conditions of existence are to which humanity must ultimately conform to obtain the highest type of existence. When I endeavor to determine these ultimate conditions and seek aid from Mr. Spencer's writings, I find that he, as well as his predecessors, has an inadequate idea of causation, and at some points he seems to have no idea of causation at all. To be specific, I would say that Mr. Spencer asserts that on our planet an evolution is taking place in which the fittest tend to survive and through which the surplus of our pleasures above our pains is constantly increased. Now, if such an evolution is taking place, it must be due to the peculiar natural conditions of our planet. Whoever asserts that a progressive evolution must take place on Mars, Jupiter, or any other planet regardless of their peculiar natural conditions, certainly lacks an adequate idea of causation. The same would be true of any one who asserted that a progressive evolution would take place on our planet if all the soils and climates were like that of Greenland, Sahara, or many other places. Evolution can be progressive only under peculiar natural conditions, and only when all these conditions are present can we expect a progressive evolution.

Mr. Spencer, however, asserts more than that we have a progressive evolution. He also asserts that this evolution has a given goal—an ideal social state where pleasure is unalloyed with pain anywhere. In asserting the possibility of an ideal state where all right conduct has no necessary painful consequences, he either has an inadequate idea of causation or he means to affirm merely that the natural conditions on our planet are such as to allow an ideal social state.

Supposing that in his two main propositions we have a progressive evolution and that an ideal social state is for us possible, he means only that these two propositions are true of the natural

conditions of our planet, there is still need to examine the natural conditions which each of these propositions presupposes to see if they harmonize enough so that both of them could be true of one planet. If the natural conditions needed for an ideal social state where pleasure is unalloyed with pain are anywhere different from those which a progressive evolution demands, then an ethical system which endeavors to ground itself on both of these propositions lacks consistency, and one or the other proposition must be given up so as to harmonize our ethical ideal with natural conditions.

If Mr. Spencer wished to show that his idea of causation was more developed than that of his predecessors, he should have shown that these two fundamental points of his system harmonize. He has, however, avoided all discussion of the necessary condi tions of existence and has sought only to elucidate the laws of life; yet these laws are not ultimate, but depend on the external conditions of existence.

I wish to discuss in detail the external conditions upon which these two propositions depend, and think it can be made clear that they require for their realization radically different natural conditions—so different that it is impossible for one planet to have all the natural conditions necessary to make both of these ends possible. I shall endeavor to determine what natural conditions a progressive evolution demands, and then these natural conditions can be compared with those which Mr. Spencer's ideal social state presupposes.

The evolution of life, we are told, is a continual adjustment of internal relations to external conditions. We thus have two distinct problems to investigate—the fixed external conditions and the internal relations which must adjust themselves to the external conditions. To the second of these problems evolutionists have devoted their entire attention, bringing in the external conditions in a casual way. They presuppose such a set of external conditions as would make a progressive evolution possible and then investigate the changes in the internal relations which take place as these relations gradually adjust themselves more and more to external conditions.

What, then, are the external conditions which favor a progressive evolution? To answer this question we must first determine

what are the external conditions upon which we are dependent and to which we must adjust ourselves. There is no great difficulty in determining these conditions, since they mainly lie in the conditions determining the food-supply. It is true that we need water and air and a few other things outside of the food-supply; but as these are found in abundance where any food can be obtained, we can overlook these factors and give our attention solely to the conditions of the food-supply. To adjust ourselves to natural conditions is, when stated specifically, to adjust ourselves to the food-supply, and to say that we are surrounded by natural conditions favorable to a progressive evolution is to say that the food-supply enlarges as the intelligence of those who consume it increases. To illustrate this proposition let us take an extreme case. Suppose a world so situated that the sun shone on every part alike, thus causing an equal temperature everywhere, and that there were no mountains or hills, no differences of soil or climate, nor any other difference by which one locality would have an advantage over any other locality. Upon such a world, if a suitable plant were introduced, it would spread until it covered the whole world. But would it tend to evolve into many varieties and cover the earth with as many kinds of plants as we now have? Suppose, further, some low class of animals to be introduced, would they tend to form varieties and create a progressive evolution?

On the other hand, let us suppose a world which has many different climates and soils, many hills and mountains, swamps and deserts, and all that variety in other particulars which would be sure to arise from such a diversity of fundamental conditions. If upon such a world first a plant and then a low class of animals were introduced, what would be their tendencies to form varieties and to evolve into higher forms of life?

If we examine the writings of our leading evolutionists to determine which of these worlds would have the conditions favorable to a progressive evolution, it will be found that all their proof presupposes a world where there is a great variety of soil and climate and would not apply to such a world as was supposed in our first illustration. A given animal or plant spreads over a limited territory where external conditions are favorable. When these limits are reached a new variety is evolved suitable to an adjacent region with somewhat different external conditions, and when this

region is filled another variety arises suitable to still other external conditions which other regions possess. When all the world is once filled with simple organisms, complex organisms are evolved with enough intelligence to utilize those portions of the food-supply which are not accessible to lower organisms.

Certainly such arguments take for granted that we live in a world of frost and heat, of mountains and valleys, and of all those other changes to which we as a race are subjected. Examine these arguments from the objective side and they show that low organisms can exist only under simple conditions, and all the food-supply cannot be utilized by such organisms wherever there is a great variety of soil and climate. Room and food are thus left for higher organisms to evolve under those complex conditions from which the simpler organisms are excluded, and a progressive evolution can continue so long as still higher organisms obtain support through a greater utilization of the food-supply. In other words, a progressive evolution is possible when but a portion of the whole food-supply is available to low organisms, and the more the intelligence of an organism is increased the greater is the portion of the food-supply which it can acquire. The food-supply, however, can be small to low organisms and enlarge to higher organisms only in a world of great variety of soil and climate, and only in such a world can we expect to find a progressive evolution. In a world without change or variety of any kind a complex organism would have no advantage over a more simple one. All the food-supply could be obtained by simple organisms and there would be no unoccupied regions over which higher organisms could spread.

It may be said that in such a world, organisms would still tend to adjust themselves to Nature. Certainly; but under these conditions low organisms would be completely adjusted to Nature. What, for instance, can be better adjusted to Nature than a grasshopper on a warm summer day when the whole surrounding world is covered with grain and grass upon which he may feed? If we contrast him with the ant, who works to lay by a store for winter, he is much better adjusted to present external conditions. It is not the lack of adjustment to present conditions that proves the superiority of the ant over the grasshopper. The grasshopper can adjust himself to the summer heat and plenty, but the damp-

ness and frost of the coming autumn find him unprepared. It is only because we live in a world of change where one extreme follows the other in rapid succession that the adjustment of the ant to Nature is better than that of the grasshopper. In a world of deadening uniformity the grasshopper would have the advantage over more complex organisms and could displace them.

A world of change would be a world of intelligence, but it would not be a world of pleasure unalloyed with pain anywhere. To be free from pain it would be necessary to migrate to another world where there is a complete uniformity, and where wind and hail and frost and other disagreeable results of changing climate cannot interrupt a life of pure pleasure. Must we not therefore conclude that the external conditions needed for an ideal state of pure pleasure are radically different from those which a progressive evolution presupposes? When Mr. Spencer assumes that all our pains arise from an incongruity between the natures which men inherit from the present social state and the requirements of social life he overlooks the fact that many of our pains arise from those changing external conditions over which we have no control. Certainly, if there were a complete adjustment of internal relations to external conditions, there would be no pain, but it should be kept in mind that there can be no complete adjustment when the external conditions are variable. If the axis of the earth did not incline to the sun so as to cause changes of seasons, and if our mountains were levelled and our soils made of equal fertility, then we might adjust ourselves so completely to Nature that we should have no pain. So long, however, as our external conditions remain as they are, our adjustment to it must always be incomplete, and there must be many pains and diseases which arise purely from necessary external conditions. Our moral ideas, therefore, must be very different from what they would be if we were surrounded by a different external condition.

Even Mr. Spencer has affirmed that moral principles must conform to physical necessities; but when he lays down the condition of absolute ethics he overlooks all the physical necessities of our planet and adopts a moral standard which may be a very good one on Mars or Jupiter, but certainly is not fitted for our world. If the law of absolute right can take no cognizance of pain, it certainly can take no cognizance of our planet; and when

Mr. Spencer considers an ideal man as existing in an ideal social state, he clearly shows that his ideal presupposes a world without change and not such a one as that in which we live. While believing in a progressive evolution, he takes away the very conditions which make a progressive evolution possible in order that he may predicate an ideal state without pain as a possibility for us.

Mr. Spencer tells us that the best examples of absolutely right actions are those arising where the nature and its requirements have been moulded to one another before social evolution began. Now, for two things to become moulded to one another their external conditions must be constant and not variable, and, as our external conditions are variable, we cannot ever become completely moulded to them. Were all our relations between man and man, this moulding might become complete; but our most important relations are not those between man and man, but between man and Nature. In giving its natural food to the child the mother receives pleasure; but can the mother get her food from Nature without pain? To my mind, the chief source of the mother's pleasure would arise from the fact that she can exempt her child from all those pains to which every one must submit who acquires his food direct from the hand of Nature. The external conditions surrounding the food-supply must determine what are the highest types of moral action, and so long as one man, by bearing more than his share of the pains necessary to procure food, can exempt his family or his friends from their pains, or can reduce their pains more than his pains are increased, so long will such actions be regarded as of a higher type than are those which bring less pleasure but no pain to all concerned. We admire the warrior who sacrifices his life for his country, because such actions are typical of those which every one must perform in every-day life. If we did not have to fight with Nature for food, we should not think of fighting with one another, and then Mr. Spencer's absolutely right actions might become models. So long, however, as most of us must live in unhealthy climates, plough the land in April rains, harvest wheat in August heat, husk corn in November frosts, and feed our stock in December snows, we shall admire acts of self-sacrifice by which the few suffer more that the many may suffer less.

It is at this point where Mr. Spencer has made a great mis-

take. He discarded the utilitarian doctrine because in its current form this morality is merely empirical, and utilitarians do not deduce from the laws of life and the conditions of existence what kinds of actions tend to produce unhappiness. But does this deficient method of procedure justify Mr. Spencer in overlooking the external conditions of existence so that he can set up a life without pain as a model for imitation?

A moral doctrine can be deduced from the external conditions of existence, and thus Mr. Spencer's objection can be avoided. To conform to Nature is, as I have said, to conform to the conditions of the food-supply, and as the amount of the food-supply depends largely on the actions of men, those actions which permit an increase of the food-supply or economize its use are moral actions. The number of persons who can exist in our world by hunting and fishing are small, and as each person must have many hundred acres to support himself, he excludes many beings from the possibilities of a happy existence. When men resort to agriculture they decrease the number of acres which each one must have to procure his food, and thus allow many possible beings to become actual participants of a happy existence. The food-supply is further augmented when men use wheat, beef, and other articles of which Nature is least productive in relatively less quantities and consume relatively more of rye, potatoes, rice, and similar articles of which Nature is most productive. A proper rotation of crops and a right use of commerce allow the food-supply again to be greatly increased, and greatly decrease the number of acres which each man must have to provide himself with food. The economy of the food-supply is of no less importance than are the methods by which we produce our food. At the present time almost every one consumes two or three times the amount of food needed for his health simply for the pleasure which its consumption affords. So long as each one eats enough to maintain health, and then in liquor and tobacco consumes the produce of enough more land to support another man, half of the possible beings to whom this world might afford a happy existence are excluded, and the gross sum of human happiness is greatly reduced.

There is yet another condition to happiness which must be considered before we can determine what is the gross sum of happiness which this world can afford to human beings. The mental

qualities inherent in man which have been developed in increasing the food supply determine how many sources of pleasure the members of a society can enjoy. The man whose vocation calls into activity but one quality has few sources of pleasure other than eating and drinking. If the production of rice or potatoes or of cloth or shoes requires of the laborer but little skill, those who produce these articles will have their faculties but partially developed, and will thus be cut off from most of those pleasures which are most enjoyable to fully developed beings. The greater the number of qualities which are developed in any man, the more sources of pleasure will he have which are not derived from a mere consumption of food. The inexclusive pleasures of fully developed beings do not draw largely on the food-supply,[1] and hence these enjoyments do not exclude others from the possibilities of a happy existence.

Each individual through his actions and demand for food creates a demand for land. Some one individual needs but five average acres to supply his wants, a second ten, a third twenty, a fourth one hundred, a fifth five hundred, and still others need one thousand acres or even more. We must, of course, count in each one's share the number of acres which his conduct, considered as a whole, causes to be unoccupied or partially used. If a people have such habits that they cannot live near together, or if they are so warlike that they prevent a large portion of the earth from being occupied, the unoccupied or partially used land must be credited to them.

All our conduct influences our demand for land, and that conduct is, in an objective sense, the most moral which enables us to exercise all our faculties on the least land. We can, therefore, judge of the conduct of individuals or of nations by their demand for land. It is not necessary to know the subjective feelings of all individuals or how they increase their own happiness. We can judge of their conduct from what they desire for consumption and from how much of a demand for land this consumption creates. Those pleasures or habits which create a large demand for land are less moral than are those which require the exclusive use of fewer acres of land. The greatest happiness for

[1] Patten, *Premises of Political Economy*, Chap. II.

the greatest number cannot be attained without the greatest economy of the food-supply and the use of all the land in the most productive manner. Only that conduct can be absolutely right which allows both of these ends to be fulfilled. Upon our planet at least all the food-supply cannot be utilized unless some persons are willing to endure pain. By harmonious actions we can greatly increase the surplus sum of our happiness above our pains, and also the number of those who can participate in our pleasures. Yet some pains must be endured, and that conduct, however painful it may be, which reduces the gross sum of the pains which humanity must endure, must serve as a type of perfect action. Suppose two planets with external conditions like our earth. On one of these the people admired those acts which involve no pain, while on the other a life of self-sacrifice furnished a model for imitation. On the first of these worlds only a mere fraction of the food-supply could be utilized and the population would be small. A few islands or small valleys in favored localities might be found where frosts, storms, and disease were so rare that a life without pain could be enjoyed. These localities would be isolated, since commerce cannot be carried on without pain, and as a result the inhabitants would be deprived of many sources of enjoyment.

On the second of these worlds, where the thought of pain would not deter any one from action, the outcome would be very different. Every climate could be utilized, even though many of them might be unhealthy, and all kinds of food could be produced. Every productive act could be carried on at the point where the least labor would be required, while commerce could distribute all the produce of industry even though a few sailors froze their fingers furling the sails or perished in a shipwreck. The second world would have many times the population of the first world and many more sources of enjoyment.

Suppose, now, a third world of complete uniformity, where storms and frosts never come and where disease never arises except through filth and ignorance. Here Mr. Spencer's ideal man might exist, since he would be in complete harmony with surrounding nature. In such a world as ours, however, he could not exist. He needs not only an ideal social state, but an ideal world. For each world there is an ideal man and a corresponding social state, and the ideal man in a world of change must

be different from that of a world of complete uniformity. A world of change cannot offer a life without pain, but it can offer a life with many intense pleasures and but few pains. Such a life forms an economic ideal, and it certainly corresponds to the possibilities of the world in which we live. The greatest happiness for the greatest number can be attained by us without any modification of external Nature, and if evolution tears down ideals formed by partially evolved subjective feelings and replaces them with other ideals which can be realized, we must expect that the economic ideal of morality will gradually displace those ideals which can be realized only on worlds with other external conditions.

BOOK NOTICES.

"MIND."

THE English Philosophical Journal, "Mind," has received notice or a record of the contents of certain numbers in "The Journal of Speculative Philosophy," as follows: Vol. X, No. 1, January, 1876, contents of the first number, January, 1876, with the Prospectus; Vol. X, No. 4, October, 1879, notice of Vols. I–III, by W. M. Bryant, and contents of the numbers for January and April, 1879, with brief remark by the Editor; Vol. XV, No. 4, October, 1881, contents of January and April, 1881. "Mind" is the most ably edited of all journals devoted to philosophy, and as we shall from time to time publish in this Journal a record of its contents, it has been thought advisable to present the entire contents from the beginning in connection with the following notice of Vols. XII and XIII:

EDITOR.

CONTENTS OF "MIND," VOLS. I–XI, NOS. 1–44.

1876–1886.

January, 1876, Vol. I, No. 1.—Editor,[1] Prefatory Words; H. Spencer, The Comparative Psychology of Man; J. Sully, Physiological Psychology in Germany; J. Venn, Consistency and Real Inference; H. Sidgwick, The Theory of Evolution in its Application to Practice; S. H. Hodgson, Philosophy and Science (I); Rector[2] of Lincoln College, Philosophy at Oxford; Prof. Bain, Early Life of James Mill (I); Critical Notices, Reports, Notes, New Books, News.

April, 1876, No. 2.—G. H. Lewes, What is Sensation? Prof. W. Wundt, Central Innervation and Consciousness; A. Bain, Mr. Sidgwick's Methods of Ethics; H. Calder-

[1] Prof. George Croom Robertson. [2] Mark Pattison.