

BOOKS

A FINE EXPOSITION OF ETHICS.

The Ethics of Progress; or The Theory and the Practice by which Civilization Proceeds. By Charles F. Dole, author of "The Spirit of Democracy," the Ingersoll Lecture of 1906 on "Immortality" at Harvard University, etc. Published by Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York. Price \$1.50 net.

In reviewing William Allen White's novel, "A Certain Rich Man" (p. 836), it was with great difficulty that we escaped the use of laudatory superlatives, if indeed we did escape; and now we are face to face with the same temptation, after reading every word of Mr. Dole's "Ethics of Progress." Of different classes, these books are complementary. Mr. White's gives you in fiction form a picture of American life, exemplifying in action the principles of ethics which Mr. Dole's eloquently expounds.

"What kind of ethics befits and corresponds to the needs and social relations of civilized men," is the object of Mr. Dole's inquiry, and these are the limitations he adopts: "Ethics is the science of human conduct. As a science it must meet the demands of our intelligence. It must harmonize with other sciences and help to make our thought of the universe congruous and complete." And not only must it "meet the reasonable conditions of thought," but it must "also work out into, and inspire rational and beautiful conduct." Nor is this science a mere human creation. It is no petty substitute for the moral law, which is from everlasting unto everlasting; but in Mr. Dole's ethical system "it consists, like other sciences, in tracing the underlying laws which govern moral movement and growth." In other words, if we interpret this book aright, ethical science is to natural moral law what physical science is to natural physical law, a progressively changing human apprehension of eternal natural principles which present constantly changing phenomena to human observation. "Ethical problems consist largely," as Mr. Dole explains, "in the application of universal principles, already admitted, to new and altered circumstances, or to new phases of human life as it grows more sensitive from age to age."

Looking beneath the surface of human conduct, the author distinguishes three attitudes of mind: antagonism, indifference and good will, the last being the ethical attitude.

In this view the two great rival theories of ethics, the utilitarian and the idealistic, are reconciled. The selfish or utilitarian, and the sympathetic or social forces in human nature, so far from being antagonistic, "play together, if not over the whole field of human conduct, at least

over the larger part of it, in far closer harmony than men thoughtlessly suppose." The point is that "selfishness ceases to be selfish and rises into a new term, as soon as it begins to take in family and kinship and the whole human race." Even "the most enlightened and refined theory of selfishness does not account for the highest acts of a man's life, which often in fact threaten self destruction." And these acts are very common; "they gleam out every day from the simple annals of the poor."

But good will, "the key to the theory of ethics," is no "mere sentiment dependent upon the character or the attractiveness of its object;" it is not good nature; it is not goodness. "To say that a man feels kindly or means well is to say little." But "to affirm that the man wills well is to say an altogether different thing." For will "determines the man's ruling purpose." It comprehends not only the will, but the sympathies and the intelligence, these three in conjunction being good will and producing ideal conduct. This is the reason that the principle of good will is "a safe key to open all the problems of ethics." It serves at the same time as "an inspiration to every form of noble personal conduct." He who determines his conduct by good will in this truly devotional sense will do right—what is right for him—in every emergency and as a "natural consequence."

Taking this principle as his clue and guide to the science of ethics, not forcing it but using it as a working hypothesis, Mr. Dole subjects it to the test of the facts of life and appeals to it for practical answers to practical problems. Everywhere he finds it to be "the essential driving power of the ethical life."

So rich in its suggestiveness is this book, so keen in its penetration, so comprehensive in its psychological grasp, so convincing in its concrete applications, and so simple yet lucid and eloquent in its diction, that a condensation of its scheme conveys a very inadequate idea of the force of its reasoning and the charm of the whole. A few isolated quotations may, however, dimly suggest its educational value and delightful literary quality.

Describing the irreligious man, Mr. Dole writes that it "is not he who denies some dogma or opinion, least of all who dispenses with certain conventions and ceremonies, or goes to no church, but rather the man who has no sense of belonging to a universe, no thought of a binding structure to which he owes allegiance; in other words, the good man fits into all manner of human relationships, to which he adjusts himself in order to render them more complete," whereas "a man is 'bad' or morally worthless so far as he fails to fit into and strengthen the social structure of mankind."

In relating democracy to good will and both to eternal moral law, he makes this impressive declaration: "We cannot conceive any world in any time where good will would cease to be valid, or where ill will or self will would become beautiful. Wherever any form of social life is, good will must be the universal spring out of which all rules, usages and customs proceed. The modern democracy builds upon this idea. It is slowly and surely coming into sight. The democracy is not a form of government in which one party by virtue of numbers and greater power, forces a minority to obey its laws. It is hardly safe, indeed, to use the word government, as if one party commanded and the other only obeyed. A democracy rests upon willingness. Less and less do its members need to see the show of force. Not bayonets but public opinion persuades men. So far as democracy ever has seemed to fail, as in ancient Athens, it has been because people had not yet developed humanity enough to live together as fellows. They trusted in force and not in persuasion. So far as democracy is coming into its own, it is because men are learning lessons of good will toward one another."

"There is no evil till the sight of the ideal has come," is one of the author's sententious statements; followed by the explanation that "the sense of evil is a tribute to the ideal of good." But he conceives of evil nowhere as a separate power, but always as a form of weakness or immaturity. "Consider the vices of cowardice, cruelty, ugliness and hate. Under each of these names we find weakness or poverty of mind and resource." "Pride, arrogance, egotism, moral pests as they are, all express a certain weakness, not power." "Whichever way you look at sin or moral evil, it represents some sort of social incapacity." "The moral life follows all the great common analogies. Thus, moral evil is like weakness, childishness or disease. It involves the sense of failure, of frustration, of disfavor, of consequent pain and unrest. The judgment or sense of guilt fixes the fact of this weakness or disease. It calls attention to it and publishes it. This is salutary. The sense of guilt points toward the way of strength or cure."

And repentance—where will you find a definition at once so true, so terse, and so forceful as this? "The one use of responsibility is to get one upon the track of right as soon as possible. The aim of responsibility is forward-looking, not backward. Repentance is the negative side of responsibility. It bids a man look back on what he has done. But repentance is not to stand sorrowful over the past. The use of repentance is not to prolong pain; it is to urge the man to do better; it is the beginning of fresh life and moral power."

"In every case the ethical condition is that the act shall proceed in the name of good will, and

not of wilfulness." "Absolute justice can hardly be expected in a growing world; what is more important is the spirit of justice." "Moral movement is by the laws of vital growth." "The law of growth for the individual and for society is identical with the law of good will." "God does not march men in platoons; each man's cause is his own." "There is a species of pressure upon us or within us which urges us to do the right, whatever the right may be; we readily admit that this is rather vague, as vague as the force of gravitation, but also as real." "Certain clear test questions guide the conduct at every step and guide it safely: Am I doing the best which I know?" "Every system of government which has tried to build upon the superiority of a class has proved to be in unstable equilibrium, and growingly so."

This book's theory of ethical compromise is of present practical importance, and in our judgment eminently sound. We present it in our closing quotation from a book which should rank among the best, both as to substance and as to form: "What shall a man do, when caught in the toils of a system of society which he inherited but did not make? What shall the early Christian do with his polygamous household? What shall Washington do with his slaves? . . . Problems of compromise touch us on every side. Society exists in strata, all in motion, perhaps, but at various rates of movement. Shall the individual move at his own rate, ahead of the rest, and regardless of what others are willing to say and do with him? Or shall he wait for the rest, and cease to utter himself till others are ready to march with him? Luther answered this question in one way, and Erasmus in another. . . . There are two senses in which we use compromise. One is a bad sense. A man stoops from what he knows is best, to do what is worse. He sees an ideal, and he denies it or refuses to give it expression. He conforms to a standard in vogue lower than his own, against which his conscience protests. . . . This sort of compromise stunts a man's soul. . . . On the other hand, we are bound up together in society in such ways that we often are obliged to act together, or else we cannot act at all. A man is a citizen with millions of others. . . . A man cannot cut himself off from the human race because he sees ideals invisible as yet to others. . . . The only question is whether they [the social acts he is as yet unable to prevent] are the acts of his own volition. The question follows, if the practices are wrong, whether he is doing what he can to forbid or correct them? . . . The problem of righteous compromise may be likened to the working of the resultant of forces. There is a certain direction in which you wish to move a load. Other men associated with you, however, pulling also at the same load, point in various directions for your pole star. Are you not glad if by your united efforts the load moves, whether northeast or north-

west, provided on the whole it makes a distinct nothing? Will you stand aloof and do nothing, and see the load only move to one side or the other? 'I do not wait,' said a Chicago politician, 'to hitch my wagon to a star; I hitch it to anything that goes my way.' This conduct was not necessarily immoral. It is fair compromise, that is, co-operation, if we insist upon pressing, through the activity of all, as far and as fast as we can toward our goal. That is fair compromise in which a man does not retract, nor retreat, nor falsify his manhood."

And the sum and substance of it all is simply this, "that the man at each issue or hour of temptation must act in good will."

BOOKS RECEIVED

—The Substance of Socialism. By John Spargo. Published by B. W. Huebsch, New York. Price, \$1 net.

—Annual Report of the Department of Government of the City of Cleveland for the Year Ending December 31, 1908.

—The Budget, the Land and the People. The New Land Value Taxes Explained and Illustrated. A complete Guide to the Great Question of the Day. With a preface by the Right Hon. D. Lloyd George,

M. P., Chancellor of the Exchequer. Issued by the Budget League. Published by Methuen & Co., 36 Essex street, W. C., London. Price sixpence net.

—Evolutionary Socialism: A Criticism and Affirmation. By Edward Bernstein. Translated by Edith C. Harvey. Published by B. W. Huebsch, New York. 1909. Price \$1 net.

—The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets. By Jane Addams, Hull House. Author of "Democracy and Social Ethics," "Newer Ideals of Peace," etc. Published by Macmillan Company, New York.

PERIODICALS

Judge Lindsey's autobiography, "The Beast and the Jungle," continues in Everybody's, the December installment furnishing an interesting instance of graft in Denver which might be duplicated by the true story of any other city, together with an affecting account of the origin of the juvenile court. The same number of Everybody's opens with an account by Elizabeth Robins of the "Why?" of the suffragette movement in England.

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The appreciation in the New Church League Journal for November by the Rev. Clyde W. Broomell, of Quincy Ewing's Atlantic Monthly article on the heart of the race problem, concentrates the race question even on its practical side into a single

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