

Report on the Recent Literature of Ethics and Related Topics in America

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the evils of our modern commercial life, and points out that in many respects the life of a worker for profit is often subject to conditions of slavery "almost as real and galling" as those of workers for wages. He urges, therefore, that the wage-earner ought "to welcome the 'bourgeois' as a comrade in arms." Evidently what the Labor Church aims at is the establishment of better conditions of social life generally; and the name "Labor Church" seems to be adopted merely because it is the condition of the laboring class that is specially in need of improvement. Mr. Trevor himself says explicitly that he sees no means of introducing the required improvement except by socialism. This appears, indeed, to be the view generally adopted by those who are taking an active part in the work of the Labor Church.

J. S. MACKENZIE.

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## BOOK REVIEWS.

### REPORT ON THE RECENT LITERATURE OF ETHICS AND RELATED TOPICS IN AMERICA.

(To be continued in the July number.)

1. WHAT IS REALITY? An Inquiry as to the Reasonableness of Natural Religion, and the Naturalness of Revealed Religion. By Francis Howe Johnson. Boston: Riverside Press, 1891. Pp. xxvii., 510.
2. STUDIES IN HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, with a chapter on Christian Unity in America. By J. Macbride Sterrett, D.D., Professor of Ethics and Apologetics in the Seabury Divinity School. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1890. Pp. xiii., 348.
3. THE CRISIS IN MORALS. An Examination of Rational Ethics in the Light of Modern Science. By James Thompson Bixby, Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Leipzig. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1891. Pp. viii., 315.
4. CONDUCT AS A FINE ART. The Laws of Daily Conduct. By Nicholas Paine Gilman. Character Building. By Edward Payson Jackson. Boston: Riverside Press, 1891 (two vols. in one). Pp. vi., 149; viii., 230.
5. ETHICS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. By C. C. Everett, Bussey Professor of Theology in Harvard University; author of "The Science of Thought," "Poetry, Comedy, and Duty," etc. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1892. Pp. iv., 185.
6. DUTY: A BOOK FOR SCHOOLS. By Julius H. Seelye, D.D., LL.D., late President of Amherst College. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1891. Pp. 71.

7. A PRIMER OF ETHICS. Edited by Benjamin B. Comegys, author of "Talks with Boys and Girls," "Beginning Life," "How to get On," "Old Stories with New Lessons," "Addresses to the Pupils of Girard College," etc. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1891. Pp. vii., 127.
8. "MAKERS OF AMERICA." COTTON MATHER, THE PURITAN PRIEST. By Barrett Wendell. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1891. Pp. vi., 321.

THE JOURNAL OF ETHICS is not responsible for any full report of the theological and metaphysical studies which appear of late in constantly-increasing numbers as factors in our American philosophical literature. But the trend of ethical thought is so largely determined by that of other forms of philosophical opinions that we cannot wholly ignore such works as those of Mr. Francis Howe Johnson, or of Dr. Macbride Sterrett.

1. Mr. Johnson's "What is Reality?" appeared in large part as a series of essays in the *Andover Review*. Without in the least lacking decided originality in statement, and especially in illustration, Mr. Johnson's general line of argument stands in obvious historical relationship to that of Lotze, to whom our author acknowledges indebtedness in his preface. Especially is his position towards Fichte, and the rest of the constructive German idealists, analogous to that which Lotze was accustomed to take in his academic lectures on metaphysics. The method of "subjective analysis," thinks Mr. Johnson, must be unfruitful in philosophy (p. 48). The "test of reality" lies after all in this, that "the necessity of living a proposition shows that this proposition expresses a reality" (p. 79). Neither in the inner life alone, nor in the bare observation of physical facts, can complete truth be grasped. A world of "real agencies that act and react upon us," and the human mind as a real originating cause, which to some extent modifies and directs itself and external agencies,"—these are, as it were, the data of philosophy, and Mr. Johnson, although quite willing both to analyze his data and to defend them against objection, never undertakes by any process of thorough-going self-criticism to face ultimate issues concerning their acceptability. Philosophical scepticism receives a certain treatment in Chapter V. on the "Thing in Itself," and, in particular, pp. 117-124, the question of the "relativity of knowledge" is well, but briefly, considered. Yet Mr. Johnson's *forte* lies rather in the synthesis of various suggestive lines of thought concerning concrete facts than in any facing of ultimate issues. Philosophy, as Lotze's own case shows, has owed much to thinkers of this type, and Mr. Johnson's syntheses form the really significant feature of this important book. These syntheses are upon the now so familiar lines of an organic Monism, with stress laid upon "conscious efficiency" and "personality," as characteristics of the Soul of the Universe. The methods used are largely those of analogy. The field run over in the course of the argument is of the widest, and the literature referred to is very varied. So many students in our day tread these paths of monistic philosophical synthesis, the same warm hopes of a coming clearer insight inspire so many minds, that the man who speaks in the terms of any form of this organic monism is useful to the cause of philosophy chiefly in so far as he has experienced widely in the realm of such inquiries, in so far as he can report freshly and with some originality of reflection his personal impressions, and in so far as he constantly feels his necessarily close relations to his many

allies. Epoch-marking originality is here impossible. We can only work together. Mr. Johnson has all the advantages of such a wide outlook and experience; he shows great sensitiveness to the suggestions of current discussion; he states his case with a pleasant simplicity of style, and he adds his own reflections with a highly effective strength. It is a great regret to the present reviewer to have to pass him by here so hastily. There are many matters that one would desire to discuss with him more at length. The strongest single discussion in the book seems to me the fine Chapter IX. on "Immanency and Transcendency," where the analogical method of dealing with the problems of monism and of the world-consciousness receives an embodiment of almost classic skill, with a result which is, after all, strikingly similar to that reached on wholly different grounds by the idealists whose method Mr. Johnson declines to follow. The present reviewer is free to confess that he favors more ultimately critical methods in philosophy than are those here adopted by Mr. Johnson. Yet it is one thing to favor such methods, quite another thing to carry them out; whilst Mr. Johnson's execution of what he has planned is, within his own limits, admirable. Meanwhile Mr. Johnson's definition of the "efficiency" of "creative intelligence" in the world-process, as the matter now stands in his book, does not in the least satisfy the present reviewer; yet if any treatment based upon his form of the notion could disarm criticism, Mr. Johnson's version of the Lotzean doctrine would do so. Appendix A, on "The Evolution of Conscience," will be especially interesting to our own readers. The present writer cherishes the hope of coming to closer quarters with Mr. Johnson in the future, in the form of some more adequate discussion of his Teleology. In sum, then, this is a work of a man who looks over a very large field with a summary yet penetrating glance, who has strong intuitions, and who on the whole trusts them. The resulting book has some of the defects, but surely many of the merits, of this fashion of thinking.

2. Dr. Sterrett is now not unknown to our readers. His book, "Studies in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion," is the outpouring of a very learned and philosophical enthusiasm, which is not in the least wanting in clearness of expression, but which, after all, seems to the present reviewer somewhat deficient in self-critical freedom from the overshadowing influence of Hegel himself. It will not do to feel, for instance, that Hegel's classification of religions was so perfect that one may venture to say, as Dr. Sterrett does (p. 253), "The study of religions since Hegel's day undoubtedly compels considerable change to be made in the characterization that Hegel gives of some of them. But it does not change or invalidate the method, which can readily adapt itself to any amount of new information as to religious phenomena. The *idea* passes through these phases, and is indifferent as to just what religion shall represent any one phase." This seems to be taking our Hegel far too seriously. But in general Dr. Sterrett, although an expositor rather than anywhere a critic of Hegel's fundamental positions, preserves an excellent freedom of form. Chapter IV., on "The Vital Idea of Religion," and Chapter V., on "Theology, Anthropology, and Pantheism," show our author at his best. He is profoundly impressed by Hegel's conception of God as the complete and organic Personality, *in* whom all individuals have their fulfilment and their true being. In expounding this notion, however, Dr. Ster-

rett is free from any slavish dependence upon the letter of the Hegelian text, and his work will surely serve to make the Hegelian point of view more comprehensible than any merely literal following of Hegel's language could do. The book is especially good in bringing together literary illustrations of the principal philosophical conceptions discussed. At one moment Green, or Principal Caird, at another Lotze; or, again, Carlyle, or St. Hildebert, or St. Gregory the Great, or Meister Eckhart, will be found contributing to the reader's interest and insight. Yet none of these other writers are expounded at any length. It is Hegelianism which they all alike in some fashion illustrate. Few studies from the hands of the relatively orthodox Hegelian school, meanwhile, show so much vitality, personal experience, and suggestiveness as are here found together. It is true that, from the present reviewer's point of view, the final significance of Hegel for the philosophy of religion, as for other regions of philosophical inquiry, will never be made out until we shall have at once understood Hegel himself with something of Dr. Sterrett's warmth of appreciation, and shall have learned also to view him more critically from without, and to regard him in his historical place as one only among many of the expositors of the idealistic doctrine. For the rest, Dr. Sterrett, in his eagerness to show us the significance of Hegel, seems in some places, as on p. 31, unjust to the genuine spirit of the Kantian doctrine; and in one passage, p. 139, he places Schopenhauer in what we take to be an incorrectly chosen context. If one may venture to express a hope as to the future of Dr. Sterrett's work as a student and expositor, I should look for fresh aid from him if he undertook, in a form somewhat similar to that of Pfeleiderer's well-known work, a comparative historical sketch of modern religious philosophy. It is the comparative method which best tends to correct the imperfect perspective in which we must view our world so long as we study it from the outlook of a single systematic thinker. As things are, we have to thank Dr. Sterrett for a very warm and readable volume, full of temperament, of devotion to truth, and of a spirit of genuinely catholic liberality.

3. Temperament is also not lacking in Dr. James Thompson Bixby's "Crisis in Morals," a book in which perhaps the thing most open to objection is the title, although that is by no means wholly bad. There is namely a sense in which the world is indeed perpetually in the midst of a "Crisis in Morals," just because it is of the nature of our greater spiritual interests to be always in question, always dependent on the clearness of head and the strenuousness of will of erring and hesitant mortals. But, on the other hand, Dr. Bixby's frequent recognition of his numerous allies in ethical teaching shows what is the fact, that his book is in line with the wisest thinking of our time concerning these matters. We have mentioned above the prevalence of organic monism in the thought of the age. Now monism has many forms, but all of its more organic forms tend to the recognition of the truth that the real world is informed by a genuinely spiritual principle, and that whether or no, the physical forces at work on our planet always favor the development of righteousness, still, at all events, whatever beings are rational enough to appreciate the truth of the universe in even a very dim way, are led by that very fact to prefer on the whole some approach to righteousness, just because they thereby get a genuine place in the organism of things, and conform to the deeper truth itself. This

general statement is here made in an intentionally vague way, in order to leave plenty of room for the actual variety of method which obtains among those who try to give it a more precise formulation. Suffice it to say, however, in the first place, that Dr. Bixby is one of the large company whose general purpose is thus definable. He is in nowise alone, therefore, nor does he in fact feel himself to be alone. The bare title, however, and a few words in the first chapter, would suggest that the need for a defence of the objective validity of the moral law is more pressing, and Dr. Bixby's own fashion of defence more isolated in current discussion, than our author himself, in the body of his book, appears to think, or than is the case. In Mr. Spencer's own treatment of ethics, as Dr. Bixby shows (pp. 215-217), the more organic principle contends for mastery with the more hedonistic. The remarks in Mr. Van Buren Denslow's book, cited by Dr. Bixby on page 17, and the other examples of extreme or anarchical individualistic opinions concerning ethics which he here and there refers to, are, as a fact, symptomatic of currents wholly aside from the main stream of our time,—a time very generally devoted to the elaboration of social ideals, and to the defence of a theory of the universe which recognizes the world-principle as essentially organic, or else as at the very least productive of the Ideal through processes of evolution, even if it be not itself the embodiment of a genuinely conscious and spiritual Ideal.

Yet a defence of the moral order as such is never out of place, and Dr. Bixby's little volume is full of a noble spirit, is written in a clear, scholarly, and effective fashion, and is sure to do good. The negative portion, devoted to Mr. Spencer's ethics, is on the whole less serviceable, to my thinking, than the positive half, but Dr. Bixby's criticisms of Mr. Spencer usually carry the present reviewer with him. One might, indeed, lay more stress upon the Spencerian distinction of "Absolute and Relative Ethics" than does Dr. Bixby (p. 47, *sqq.*), and I myself should find the distinction, properly understood, less dangerous than the latter tries to make it out. There is no reason why strenuous devotion to the absolute good, in so far as it is in sight should not be joined with a readiness to remember that in case by reason of our ignorance it is *not* in sight, then the principles which we actually follow may, and in fact must, be such as would need correction from a higher point of view. But this assertion cannot here receive further justification; for it in fact introduces the whole discussion which, since the controversy between Kant and Herder over the limits of the historical justification of imperfect stages of life, has occupied a prominent place in ethical theory (*cf.* Julian Schmidt's remarks in his "Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur," last edition, vol. iii., p. 105, on the Kant-Herder controversy itself). As to the matter of the hereditary element in the development of conscience, Dr. Bixby is very suggestive. There is probably no portion of the Spencerian theory which, in the light of well-known recent investigations into the nature of heredity, is more vulnerable than this portion, and Dr. Bixby's criticisms on pages 178-181 fall well in line with the discussions of the final chapter of Professor James's larger "Psychology," where the possibility of the heredity of acquired habits as a source for the formation of instincts is considered from a more general point of view. Mr. Lloyd Morgan, in his "Animal Life and Intelligence," after a lengthy study of the recent inquiries concerning

heredity, decides, indeed (*op. cit.*, p. 176), that while there is no certain proof of the fact, there is still no reason why, in view of the present state of our knowledge, the heredity of acquired variations "should not be assumed as a provisional hypothesis," and, accordingly, Mr. Morgan himself is also ready to accept, with some doubt, the view that certain instinctive tendencies have, as at least a part of their basis, the acquirement and consequent heredity of a habit. But the arguments of Dr. Bixby, and others of the same sort, seem to the present writer to show pretty conclusively that, however the matter may stand with other instincts, in case of the conscientious impulses at all events, this their supposed origin in the experiences and slowly-acquired habits of our ancestors is a peculiarly poor "working hypothesis." Were they derived in this way, they ought to have a very different content and psychological context from their present one. Yet strange to say, it is this weakest portion of the Spencerian doctrine which has won apparently the largest popular approval and the most general support.

The second and more positive portion of Dr. Bixby's study is full of brilliant brief statements of important insights. The total effect is, to be sure, a little unsystematic. To fundamental questions as to the nature of the moral consciousness, the author returns in several different places, and in a way to confuse somewhat our notion of the precise nature of his theory in its wholeness. On p. 191 moral obligation has as its source "the nature of things," in that "we are all parts of an infinite organism," and in particular have a share (p. 193) in "the common life of the social organism." This thought is further defined, though still somewhat vaguely, on p. 195, to the effect that "as soon as we see certain relations in existence, we see, as involved by them, certain corresponding feelings and acts, as the only ones befitting under the circumstances." On p. 210 we learn that the "ultimate standard of worth is personal worth," and that the end is the "realization of our true and higher self." On p. 221, *sqq.*, there is an insistence upon Dr. Martineau's notion of morality as "essentially a preferential choice between higher and lower alternatives." Further on an union of altruism and of the sense of "sacred obligation" figures as the instinctive element in morality. In Chapter VII. of Part II., p. 245, *sqq.*, we learn that the "reason" is the "faculty of human nature most directly concerned in moral development;" and man is a moral agent "because he is a thinking being." On p. 260 the "moral germ," with which conscience began in the course of evolution, "starts with only a dim fierce sense of personal rights;" and on p. 268 the transition from the conception of "rights" to that of "duties" occurs in this fashion: "When one sees a thing to be right and good, it is the most natural of impulses to do it. . . . Duty is thus logical consistency in conduct; the equation between our social demands and our personal deeds." Thereupon Dr. Bixby returns to "reason" as the power which developed out of the "germ" our own moral law. All these notions, as Dr. Bixby defines them to his own mind, are unquestionably meant to form one organic doctrine; but we could wish for a more technical definition of the entire process of synthesis by which they are united in his thought. So far as one can gather his drift, the present reviewer feels in decidedly close sympathy with his philosophical interpretation of the moral consciousness.

4 to 7. The publication, almost contemporaneously, of a number of text-books for the ethical instruction of the young, is a most interesting sign of the times.

The two books by Mr. N. P. Gilman and by Mr. E. P. Jackson, were written in response to the call of the American Secular Union for a prize "essay, treatise, or manual adapted to aid and assist teachers in our free public schools," etc., "to thoroughly instruct children and youth in the purest principles of morality without inculcating religious doctrine." The prize offered was divided between these two works. The other works mentioned in our list appear independently.

The present reviewer feels distinctly disqualified, by his lack of experience in the actual teaching of children at the ages which the authors of these books have in mind, from giving any accurate estimate of their probable effectiveness for their particular purpose. It is to be hoped that an expert discussion of the practical problem here involved will ere long find a place in the pages of this JOURNAL. If a non-expert in the teaching of children and youth at this particular age may hazard an opinion, the present reviewer's would run thus: Of the various books on our list, Professor Everett's has the advantage of joining a great deal of picturesqueness and grace with suggestiveness and depth. The illustrations employed are often very attractive. The style is crystal clear. The volume ought surely to set a number of young people thinking; and in doing so it will also surely increase their sense of the dignity, not to say the true solemnity, of the general business of life. On the other hand, Mr. Jackson's book will reach perhaps a still wider range of minds than would be susceptible to Professor Everett's gentle and gracious thoughtfulness. It will stir them more immediately and vigorously. But, on the other hand, it *may*, for all that one can tell, raise more ghosts than it will lay. Mr. Jackson, to change the figure, descends before his class into a sort of ethical arena, and there, in each new discussion, grapples with some practical problem or some human failing in a fashion sure to excite a certain interest, such as any hand-to-hand fight arouses. The scene can, of course, have but one ending on any occasion. The moral law easily wins, the human failing is duly chastised, the practical problem is bravely throttled; only one fears lest the class should come to get, after all, a certain sympathy, as it were, with poor Satan, who fights so persistently, but every time gets worsted. Are they sure to hate him merely for having seen him, under such one-sided conditions, bite the dust so often? Still, a teacher of ethics to the young must take his risks, and Mr. Jackson seems sure, as has been said, to arouse a genuine and, as it were, a somewhat elemental stirring of inquiry in a class that has been well introduced to his book. Mr. Gilman, on the contrary, is less directly stirring in his appeal to youthful curiosity, and is rather more theoretical in his attitude. He aims at getting principles before his pupils, especially the principle that society is an organism, and that individuals are members of the social body. He thinks, apparently, a little too often of the teacher rather than of the pupil, and his book may herein find the limit of its serviceableness. Nevertheless, his study is only relatively theoretical in its character. He aims to avoid technicality as such, is more successful than Mr. Jackson in escaping the paths that may lead to an inconvenient sort of casuistry in the discussions of the school-room, and brings his pupils face to face with a wide range of moral fact.

Mr. Benjamin Comegys has printed an adaptation and abbreviation of the once noted "Rollo Code of Morals," with some new chapters added. Jacob Abbott and his "Rollo" formed a great part of the moral training of our American

youth in a generation not yet wholly departed from the earth, and his work in its new dress will, at all events, be no wholly unwelcome visitor.

President Seelye's "Duty" is founded on the thought that "there can be no abiding basis of morality altogether separate from religion," but seeks to avoid altogether any sectarianism.

8. Professor Wendell's book on Cotton Mather cannot properly be estimated as an historical study, except by an expert in its own field. It is very highly interesting to the student of ethical facts as an exceptionally painstaking and, so far as a non-expert can judge it by internal evidence, a faithful portrait of the inner life of the "Puritan Priest," written with a full sense of the paradox involved in this very title, and in the assurance that, in the long run, "Protestantism can have no priesthood." Professor Wendell gives himself over with the utmost devotion to picturing his hero's moods and struggles. Their story is told, as largely as possible, in Cotton Mather's own words; and the whole book adds most valuable documents to the now so extensive history of mysticism, as well as to the tale of the inevitable struggle in a proud and self-willed soul, between this mysticism and the temperament which made other men call Mather a vain pretender. The tender sympathy, the delicate psychological skill, and the clear literary style of the biographer give the reader every aid in making Mather's acquaintance. The treatment of the witchcraft delusion, in Chapter IV., is introduced and much affected by a curious hypothesis of Professor Wendell's own, concerning the explanation of these phenomena,—an hypothesis as ingenious as it is, in the present state of our knowledge, unpersuasive. But it is at least worthy of consideration.

The foregoing brief notices form the beginning of a report on such current American literature as is of interest to students of ethics. It is the reviewer's intention to continue and extend the undertaking in the July number. The necessarily narrow limits of space and time at my disposal must excuse the curt-ness of speech which may here and there be manifest.

JOSIAH ROYCE.

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LA PHILOSOPHIE PÉNALE. Par G. Tarde, Paris. G. Masson, 1890. Bibliothèque de Criminologie.

This book is the work of a philosophical magistrate who applies the resources of a very keen intellect to the study of social and criminal questions. It contains both a criticism of the ideas which have been circulated and received with favor during the last few years by the school known as that of criminal anthropology, and a statement of his personal ideas. Full of insight of all sorts, it is nevertheless somewhat involved and diffuse, and the reader has some difficulty in grasping the principal outlines of the book. In a word, it does not seem very systematic; but it is eminently suggestive. The author warns us, however, that his theories are concerned with three different questions. First of all, an attempt to reconcile moral responsibility and determinism, conscience and science, which the notion of free-will had appeared to separate by an impassable gulf. Next, and especially, an explanation of the criminal side of society, in conformity with a general point of view which the author has endeavored to