

ARTICLE VII.

A FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF ENGLISH ETHICS.

BY THE REV. GEORGE F. MAGOUN, D.D., IOWA COLLEGE.

RICHARD CUMBERLAND, D.D., bishop of Peterborough in the county of Northampton, England, 1691-1718, was born in London, 1632, educated at St. Paul's School and at Magdalen College, Cambridge University, fellow of Magdalen about 1655, vicar of All-Hallows and rector of Brampton, before he was made a bishop. As a general datum in philosophical chronology, Cumberland came about a century after Bacon and about ninety years before Adam Smith. More particularly, he was forty-four years younger than Hobbes, thirty-six younger than Descartes, fifteen years younger than Cudworth and the Cambridge Platonists. He was born the same year with Spinoza and Locke. Shaftesbury, his disciple, came thirty-eight years later; Hutcheson, the disciple of Shaftesbury, sixty-two; Bishop Butler, seventy; President Edwards, seventy-one; Dr. Reid, seventy-eight; and Hume, seventy-nine. Cumberland's intellectual vigor was shown at the age of eighty-three by his becoming a proficient in the Coptic language. Our popular English speech is in debt to this well-nigh forgotten English prelate and philosopher for the phrase, "better to wear out than to rust out."

The moral philosophy of Cumberland is to be found in his treatise *De Legibus Naturae Disquisitio Philosophica*, 1672. The book is now a rare one: frequent searches in the London book market have failed to discover a copy, and that which lies before me turned up unexpectedly in New York. The latest life of Hobbes (Prof. Croom Robertson, Edin., 1886) says of this author that he is "properly the first of Hobbes's critics, in point of time, among those who have left their mark on the develop-

ment of ethical theory." Of his treatise President Porter says, in Ueberweg's *Hist. Philosophy* (vol. ii., American translation), that it is "memorable as being the first English treatise in philosophical ethics as distinguished from the treatises on casuistry,"—as "the first from that numerous school of ethical writers which was called into being by antagonism to Hobbes,"—and as "the first of modern treatises which dares to assert that certain ethical conceptions and beliefs obtainable by reason are required in order to be able to interpret and defend revelation." Few books are memorable for reasons of such a character, and we are manifestly drawing here from a fountain-head—if stronger words cannot be used—of English ethics. Many ideas will flow out at this source which have been long since made familiar to American religious thought by our own writers, who probably drew from the successors of Cumberland in the mother country, rather than from himself. The book was "Made English from the Latin by John Maxwell, M.A., Prebendary of Connor, and Chaplain to his Excellency the Lord Carteret, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland," London, 4to, pp. 774, 1726-7, with Introduction and Appendix,—the former filling 168 pages, the latter 167, and Cumberland's own work, 377. Our citations are from the original edition of 1726-7, which was not perhaps the only one. "I cannot but acknowledge," says the translator, in his preface, "that his periods are very perplexed and intricate, and that his language is too scholastic and philosophical. The reading of his valuable work is a laborious task."¹ We have found it so;

¹ Mr. Maxwell's notes, says Whewell, "often complain of the author's obscurity, and sometimes give an explanation which is at variance with the system." (*Hist. Mor. Phil.* p. 83.) Cumberland himself says: "being extremely solicitous about the *Matter*, I was but too negligent of its *Dress*. It was written by starts at intervals, such as an uncertain state of health, and the weighty cares of my holy function would permit." (*Introd.* p. 35.) He ascribes his venturing into print to the "importunity of some friends at Cambridge, principally Dr. Hezekiah Burton and Dr. John Hollings." Prof. Croom Robertson says, "Cumberland, by his discursiveness and confused handling, falls

but the task is lightened by some thirty-two pages of well-made analysis and index. And it is a pleasure in any investigation to go to sources as high up as one can.² "The treatise *De Legibus Naturae*," says President Porter, "is of the greatest significance in the History of Philosophy for its ability,"—"Cumberland's psychology and ethics are highly instructive, for the reason that he anticipated Locke in conducting his inquiries in respect to Human Nature in general, in the inductive spirit."³ "His work," says Dr. Whewell (*Hist. Mor. Phil.* p. 83.), "was the basis of much of our succeeding moral philosophy."

There are nine chapters in this "Philosophical Inquiry into the Laws of Nature, in which their Form, chief Heads, Order, Promulgation, and Obligation, are deduced from the *Nature of Things*: Also, the Elements of Mr. Hobbes's Philosophy, as well *Moral* as *Civil*, are considered and refuted." One reason why it was translated from the Latin was, that "the poison, which Mr. Hobbes and other writers of his stamp spread far and wide, subversive of the principles of all morality and religion, strongly infected many [in England] who do not understand that language." (*Tr. Pref.* p. 2.) Dr. Whewell describes it as, "the first extensive attempt to construct a system of morals, which, being founded on the consideration of the consequences of actions, should still satisfy those moral

as much below the level of endurable philosophical style as Hobbes rises above it."—(*Phil. Class. for Eng. Readers*, Hobbes, 1886, p. 219.) Chambers says: "This modest and erudite, but verbose production (of which two English translations have appeared) contains many sound, and at that time novel views on moral science, with others of very doubtful soundness." (*Cyclop. Eng. Lit.* II. 427.)

²Other works of Cumberland were an essay on Jewish Weights and Measures, 1686: a translation of Sanchoniathon's Phœnician History, 1720; and *Origines Gentium*, 1724.

³"Cudworth, and Clarendon, and Harrington, and even Cumberland, were disciples of the philosophy which prevailed in England before the civil wars: but Locke was deeply and decidedly formed by the opinions which came into vogue toward the end of that period."—(Whew. p. 91.)

judgments and feelings of man in his usual social condition, which had been revolted by many of Hobbes's doctrines and modes of reasoning." (Hist. Phil. p. 75.) "The whole work is constantly made tedious and confused by the insertion of criticisms of Hobbes in every part." (Ib. p. 83.) A sufficient running account of these nine chapters at the outset is: Chap. I. The laws of nature reduced to one. II. Explanations of terms—man, nature, etc., with psychological and physiological statements. III. Natural good. IV. Moral laws set forth in the consequences of actions. V. Law, obligation, reward and punishment. VI. Relation of laws to human happiness. VII. The right of dominion, or authority. VIII. Obligation to virtue flows from the law of nature. IX. Corollaries as to the Decalogue, civil government, the family, society, etc., with special reference to the errors of Hobbes. "The title of this treatise indicates its leading purpose," says Dr. Porter, "viz., to vindicate the proposition that there are laws of morality made known by nature, in opposition to the doctrine of Hobbes, that those laws originate in civil society alone, and derive from society their sole sanction." (Ueberweg, p. 362.) It is one object of this paper to disentangle Cumberland's own views, so far as possible, from his arguments against those of Hobbes; but along with this to show the debt to him of later philosophers. Very pertinent to this are the remarks of two English metaphysicians that come to hand while we write. "No student of English ethics," says Professor Andrew Seth of the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire, "could avoid acknowledging that both the Intuitionist and the Utilitarian lines of thought begin essentially as a reaction against Hobbism."⁴ "Cumberland, Cudworth, and Clarke," says Professor Croom Robertson of

⁴In *Contemp. Rev.*, March, 1886. Robertson's *Hobbes*, p. 214. "Hobbes," adds Prof. Seth, "deriving apparently nothing from Bacon, stands directly connected with the 'mechanical' philosophy" and Galileo. So Robertson, pp. 17 seq. 35 seq.

University College, London, "who, next to himself (Hobbes), are the first important figures in English moral philosophy, had each in view the establishment of principles directly antagonistic to principles of his."

We shall come to a readier and clearer understanding of our author, if we do not take first what is first in his own order, so far as he has one. He discusses laws of nature at once, indeed does so in his Introduction, but first defines them in the fifth chapter, the first four only "preparing the way." An exhaustive, or even extensive psychology is not here to be expected. Man, he says in the second chapter, "is an animal endowed with a mind." To animals at large belong the powers of increase by nourishment, of beginning motion, and of propagating their species, and a power of sensation, as we may bestow the name on the motions impressed upon the organs by their objects, and thence transmitted by the nerves to the brain,⁵ and sometimes thence communicated to the muscles, where they excite motion, or to the heart or lungs, and perhaps to other intestines by means whereof various affections are excited." "The most active parts of the blood assist the imagination and memory." "To the mind we ascribe understanding and will; to the understanding we reduce [ascribe] apprehending, comparing, judging, reasoning, a methodical disposition, and the memory of all these things, and of the objects about which they are conversant; to the will both the simple acts of choosing and refusing, and that vehemence of those actions which discovers itself in the passions, over and above that emotion or disturbance of the body which is visible in them." In another place the operations of the mind are said to be, "1. Invention, which consists in

⁵ This confusing together of physical motion and intellectual action, revived by Spencer and the Materialists lately, was common in Bishop Cumberland's day. Hobbes used still grosser language: "Motion, *wherein our conceptions of things consist*, passes from the brain to the heart." Hum. Nat.

the observation of things present, and the pertinent recollection of things past; and, 2. Judgment, whether intuitive or discursive, which consists in the deduction and methodical ranging of truth: we may hence infer, that nature recommends to us the use of true logic."⁶ He held that "the mind of man, and every faculty thereof, especially the intellectual [ones,] is prone to such actions as are proper thereto, as often as occasion is offered, and matter suggested, either from without, or from the body." The use of the senses is instanced: "Simple apprehensions, the more obvious comparisons of ideas among themselves," etc. "Nor can the will at all put a stop to such actions, though it may indeed promote them." This has a bearing upon the question whether "all our actions proceed from the love of our own pleasure only, and therefore discover nothing but mere self-love," or whether many of them occur "disinterestedly," i. e., without any previous, or inducing action of the craving for enjoyment. Later he declines to discuss "the power which determines us to action," (as if there were but one in the opinion of philosophers then,) contenting himself with saying: "All however, I think, acknowledge that a practical dictate of reason is previously necessary to our *deliberate* acts, and does in some manner direct the determination of our future actions."

⁶ Bowen (*Logic*, p. 77.) and others give clearness, distinctness, and adequacy as the three excellencies of concepts, Cumberland wrote more than two centuries ago: "We ought to take care, that our simple ideas be both *clear*, from strong and frequent impressions of the same thing known in various circumstances; and *distinct*, by a separate observation of the parts singly; and *adequate* also, by the assistance of the memory and the understanding, added to the discoveries of sense." The mind's power of forming universal ideas, or general concepts, in modern language, is asserted—"omitting those accidents by which particular things are distinguished. For the mind can easily apply to innumerable individuals and their various circumstances, properties agreeing to one or a few natures considered in themselves, whether those properties respect their inward frame, or their causes and effects. Hence, all sciences take their rise as composed of universals" (confounded here, as in Plato, with generals).

The sensibilities have no distinct place above, co-ordinate with intellect and will, as they had none in the writings of contemporaries, or of President Edwards. When Cumberland treats, then, of benevolence, we shall understand that both wishing good and willing good are meant, a complex state of mind, composed of sensibility and will united, but without discrimination between them. Emotion, it will be noticed, is physical, not mental. Affection he also uses in the sense of an impression on the nerves passively received, as was then common. It is quite true to say that will, as generic, was distinguished from feeling, as *feeling*, deemed specific, was not distinguished from will, and the latter is often recognized as controlling the former.' "There is no power in men greater to effect anything," it is said, "than a will determined to exert its utmost force." "In human passions, what is produced in man by a necessity arising from the impulse of external objects, cannot be forbid by any law of nature, because laws direct only such actions as are in our power." "No cause can be assigned to human actions beside the consent of the will." That we cannot will to act otherwise (than for our own preservation) he pronounces "contrary to every man's manifest experience. For my own part, I profess that I can will to act otherwise, and believe that great numbers have willingly laid down their lives for the

¹Once affection is said to depend upon the imagination. Cf. Day's *Aesthetics*.

Special instances of psychological confusion are these: "Our acts of will—whether choosing or refusing—according to the degree of good or evil and other circumstances, are called by the names of several passions; on the one hand, of love, desire, hope, joy; on the other, of hatred, fear, aversion, grief." "I judge it requisite to the natural perfection of the human will, that it follow the most perfect reason, both in its calmer resolutions—which are simply called desires and aversions—and in those more vehement ones which usually go under the name of passions." On such a mental philosophy it would be more difficult than Edwards found it, even, to argue the freedom of the will. The difficulty goes further: it embarrasses the exhibition of the personality of moral action. But the author of this *Disquisitio Philosophica*, like some others, had quite another criterion of moral action than its voluntary and free nature.

common good." "We are conscious that we can divert our minds from such thoughts and affections as respect only our own private good, and fix them upon the care of the public good, in which liberty principally consists." He goes on, however, to resolve liberty pretty much into the use of judgment, memory, and other intellectual powers. The words "voluntary," "voluntarily," "volition," are used apparently in the senses which they now bear. But when words for acts of sensibility are employed, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary acts disappears. It is not surprising, therefore, that voluntary states are sometimes called affections (which are also sometimes called "motions of the blood"), and at others are said to govern them. Cumberland distinctly disavows materialism, notwithstanding his confusion of thought, or at least of language, and his once calling the powers of mind "properties of the brain." After a good deal of physiology, then new, but not now pertinent to moral philosophy, if true, he "thinks proper to add, That though in the human head there are so many helps to the imagination and the memory, which are of great service to the mind, these are no way sufficient to resolve [its] operations into the mechanical powers of matter and motion. On the contrary, I think Malpigi's observation very just: 'That the better we understand the nature and functions of the brain, the more we shall despair of explaining the operations of the mind by its motions.' See *Malpigh. de Cerebri cortice* cap. 4."

Cumberland's position as to the intuitions is confused, not to say inconsistent.* "The Platonists," he observes, "clear up this difficulty [about moral laws] by the supposition of innate ideas as well of the laws of nature themselves as of those matters about which they are con-

* Pres. Porter says that he "does not accept the doctrine of innate ideas and principles as held by Descartes, Lord Herbert or the Cambridge Platonists." and on the same page quotes this from him: "Human nature is endowed with certain innate principles," etc. Ueberweg, vol. ii. p. 362.

versant ; but truly I have not been so happy as to learn the laws of nature in so short a way." This in his Introduction. But in the first sentence of his first chapter, he recognizes "certain propositions of unchangeable truth." "Such truths are necessarily suggested to the minds of men;" he adds that certain "ideas necessarily enter into the minds of men, and when they are they are necessarily connected"—which looks like the well-founded distinction between intuitive ideas and intuitive propositions,—he instances "those universal ideas of cause and effect and their connection,"—"the evident connection between causes and effects leads men to form propositions affirming that connection;" "right reason," he affirms, "comprehends as well first principles, or self-evident truths, as conclusions thence formed;" "it is of advantage to observe these universal ideas and propositions, both speculative and practical, which are naturally formed by the mind of man, because from such universal notions are formed unchangeable, and consequently in some sense eternal, rules of human action." He even calls these "innate principles of action." This last principle he makes use of largely. We cannot, however, be quite sure of that on which he rests it, though he recognized nearly all the ordinary tests of intuitive truth. For he cautions us "not only to avoid false deductions, but especially the rash admission of any thing as self-evident *without proof*." This is capable of a clear and sound meaning, but hardly carries it on its face. What is proof of the self-evident? Further, he nullifies his own rejection of even "innate" ideas (in a sense of the phrase which no one seems now to accept), when he declares in the introduction, that "such ideas might be both [!] born with us, and afterward impressed upon us from without."⁹ Such a thinker, with

⁹ In another place he asserts that "both things external, exciting thoughts in us, and our mind composing these thoughts, are the causes of necessary truths." The word cause, however, was used with such vagueness that his thought may have been the now-received one—among intuitionists at

all his acuteness, might well add: "It seems necessary, especially at this time, to trace more distinctly after what manner the powers of things . . . within us conspire to imprint these conclusions [of reason in moral matters] upon our minds, and to give a sanction to them. Our countryman, the Lord Verulam, has reckoned such an inquiry among the things which are wanting." And this want Cumberland did nothing to supply.

No one will expect, then, any recognition in our author of a fundamental, intuitive moral idea of right as simple, necessary, original. He uses the word, of course. He could not avoid doing so. "The knowledge of right and laws," he acknowledged "to be proper to man alone." But "neither right reason nor right are [is] pliable to every man's pleasure." "Practical reason is called right when it determines truly what is every man's best and most necessary end, and what are the most proper means of attaining it;" intellectually correct being manifestly the sense given here to the adjective right. He quotes Cicero's language, "the incorrupt voice of those who form a true judgment of eminent virtue," but he nowhere defines virtue, though he pronounces it "in its own nature amiable," and to some extent classifies specific concrete virtues. The nearest approach to a definition are the following: "Virtue consists in obedience to law;" "things morally good are only voluntary actions conformable to some law;" "it is sufficient to make actions virtuous, if the mind of the agent has a general inclination to do those things which are acceptable to God and to all men." The moral idea of right he constantly confounds with that of a prerogative right or rights, as did Hobbes.¹⁰ least—that experience and reflection are the occasions of the rise of intuitions in our minds. It will be noticed that he does not apply all the criteria of intuitions to his "necessary" propositions: he does not call them original, as opposed to derivative, nor term necessary ideas simple as opposed to complex. He means by simple ideas elementary ones, at first hand from experience, which many deem always complex.

¹⁰ Calderwood's *Handbook Mor. Phil.* p. 33, does not avoid this.

“Right is the liberty of acting anything granted by law. . . . right reason grants to every man the use of things and services,” etc. “Hobbes openly acknowledges that by the name of right he understands a liberty left by the laws;” “he defined right to be a liberty of using the natural faculties according to right reason;” he “does not extend right [where he purposely defines it] beyond” this liberty. All which leaves rightfulness, rectitude, moral right, untouched. When he mentions willingly surrendering the right to life for the common good, he implies that this is ethically right, though he does not say so. In this meaning of right as prerogative, which passes into constitutional, common, and statute law, right is frequently mentioned.

Conscience is thus described: “Our mind is conscious to itself of its own actions; it naturally sits a judge upon its own actions and thence procures to itself tranquillity and joy or anxiety and sorrow. In this consists the whole force of conscience by which it [the mind] proposes laws to itself, examines its past, and regulates its future conduct. Nor appear any traces in other animals of so noble a faculty. Great are the powers both to the formation and increase of virtue, [and] to the erecting and preserving civil societies, both among those who are not subject to the same civil power and among fellow-subjects.” But he furnishes this noble faculty with mere non-ethical ideas, such as prerogative right, and others to be noticed hereafter. Philosophy, he declares, will make it to appear, “both how our mind is by the light of nature let into the knowledge of the will or laws of God, so as that it cannot be free from the warning of conscience; and what that rule is whereby the justice and rectitude of the laws of particular states is to be measured, and their injustice and imperfection to be corrected and amended by the supreme authority. Hence also (that it may appear that morality is not the artifice of ecclesiastics or politicians), is further shown that there is something in

the nature of God, of other men, and of ourselves, which in good actions affords present comfort and joy, and a well-grounded expectation of future rewards. On the other hand, that there are causes that must naturally produce the most violent grief and fear after evil actions; so that the sentence of conscience may be justly looked upon as armed with scourges against impiety." The rule of duty," or, as his phrase always is, the law of nature, "is sometimes expressed in the form of a command: 'Let that action which is in thy power, and which will most effectually of all those which thou canst exert, promote the common good in the present circumstances, be exerted;' often also in the form of a gerund, 'Such an action ought to be done.' In my opinion, these several forms of speech relating to the law of nature, mean the same thing, whether the understanding judges this best to be done, or commands it, or tells me in the form of a gerund that I am bound to do it. For the understanding (which in this affair is called conscience), sufficiently hints the natural obligation, when it says, 'This is best to be done both for yourself and others.' For in omitting what is declared best for me, it is evident that I bring mischief (which may be called punishment) upon myself." This will hardly be deemed strongly ethical language: to many it will sound like the language of expediency rather than of ethics. It is difficult to decide whether our author regarded conscience as anything more than the discernment of our acts as means to ends, or of the results of acts, pleasant or painful." One other passage in which the

¹¹ I cannot find the word duty used more than once, or righteousness at all in this treatise, and infer that their Latin equivalents were not used. The word rectitude is used, I think, but once, as quoted above. This is one respect in which Cumberland's work is very unlike a modern ethical work.

¹² Cumberland's translator in some "general remarks" favors us with this morsel of precious wisdom: "A man of an enlarged understanding may, in most moral actions, have an *intuitive knowledge that it is highly probable* [!] the action will be for his advantage; although he has not a pre-

word is used is the following, the last in the volume, perhaps the most ethical one: "He who esteems nothing a great good but what contributes *much* to the common happiness, will never *inordinately* desire anything; and consequently will never so offend against the public good as to be disturbed with the conscience of any crime: nor, if human affairs suffer by the wickedness of others, or by causes superior to the power of man, will this rob him of his tranquillity; partly, because he knows these things to be out of his power, partly because—being well aware of that inconstancy to which all human affairs are subject—he expects many such events daily: but especially because it is certain, from the experience of so many ages, that the innumerable revolutions of human affairs have left us the world in a better rather than in a worse state, whence we have reason to hope that it can hardly happen otherwise with our posterity."

One will look in vain through this leading treatise in English ethics for any discussion of the relations of right or conscience to obligation, either as idea or as feeling. The longest of its chapters, a hundred and fourteen pages, is on the law of nature and its obligation. His definitions of the latter are these: "Obligation is this: That the legislator has annexed to the observance of his laws, good, to the transgression, evil; and those natural, in prospect whereof men are moved to perform actions rather agreeing than disagreeing with the laws." "Moral obligation may be thus universally and properly defined: Obligation is that act of a legislator by which he declares that actions conformable to his law are necessary to those for whom the law is made. An action is then understood to be

cise knowledge of the degree of probability or value of the chance." Butler's view of conscience is a very different one from this. Cumberland intimates that obligation arises from simple fear of punishment, and attaches to external actions, "either from the punishments which conscience foresees will be inflicted by God, or even from the punishments which any man in a state of nature has a right to exact from the transgressor of nature's laws."

necessary to a rational agent, when it is certainly one of the causes necessarily required to that happiness which he naturally and consequently necessarily desires." "There is nothing which can superinduce a necessity of doing or forbearing anything upon a human mind deliberating upon a thing future, except thoughts or propositions promising good or evil to ourselves or others consequent upon what we are about to do. But because we are determined by some sort of natural necessity, to pursue good foreseen especially the greatest, and to avoid evils; hence those dictates of reason, which discover to us that these things [good and evil] will follow from certain of our actions, are said to lay upon us some kind of necessity of performing or omitting those actions, and to oblige us." There is here a manifest lack of distinction between oblige and obligate. The rational and fixed connection between means and ends constitutes moral obligation. This grows out of Cumberland's theory of good presently to be noticed. If we are to secure good by action then we must act thus and so. "Obligation is the proper effect of laws and becomes known to our senses by the rewards and punishments consequent upon the observance and violation of those laws, and is therefore a proper evidence that they are laws." "Moral obligation and the nature of a debt thence arising is unintelligible without a respect to a law, at least of nature." And whether a law of nature is anything more than a discovered or disclosed natural and rational connection between means and ends to this Christian moralist, we shall see ere long. I can find no higher view of obligation stated than has been already cited. He proposes in his Introduction to reverse the method of Grotius and prove the obligation of the laws of nature by arguing from the cause to the effect; the cause is human nature; but human nature *simply as capable of producing certain effects*, good and evil, and requiring, along with the rest of nature, the production of

good effects." In this sense "the laws of nature are the foundation of all moral and civil knowledge," and teach what is here meant by obligation,—the rational and necessary connection between causes [and means] and effects [and ends] on the side of good. As Whewell says, "his system of morals [is] founded on the consideration of the consequences of actions." "Virtue is in a peculiar and eminent manner the condition of [man's] well-being," and is considered in this light throughout, and in this only.

For Cumberland substitutes throughout for the idea of right as formative in ethics that of natural good. In some sense he was a Socratic moralist with modern improvements. "The whole ethical philosophy of ancient times," says Dr. Calderwood, "was encumbered by discussing the question of morals under the general conception of *the Good*, as a character of things, rather than under the conception of *the Right*, as a quality of actions. It commonly led to an estimation of moral good by its utility, as in the part taken by Socrates in the Protagoras; or to the use of good and evil in a double sense, as when Socrates makes the *doing* of injustice a greater evil, and the *enduring* of it [i. e. of its effects in things or natural results in experience] a less. Plato's Gorgias, 509." That knowledge is virtue, and that obligation is the rationally known necessary connection between acts and good effects, are kindred ideas. "Knowledge which makes virtue," says Zeller, "is knowledge about the good, but what is the good? The good is the conception of a thing viewed as an end. When

¹² "Common to both [Grotius and Hobbes] is the modern determination to connect the inquiry into public law with a theory of morality as grounded in the facts of human nature." "Cumberland stands much nearer to Hobbes in method of inquiry than any other of his opponents. . . . He, more than Cudworth or Clarke, is the true successor of Hobbes upon the modern path of ethical inquiry by regard to the constitution of human nature and the facts of human life." Robertson, 143, 219. So Shaftesbury and Butler after Cumberland, 214. "find at the same spring the motive of their search."

¹⁴ Hist. Mor. Phil. 75, 60, 58.

¹⁵ Handb. Mor. Phil. 17, 18.

asked whether there could be a good which did not refer to a definite end, he [Socrates] distinctly stated that he neither knew nor desired to know of such an one; every thing is good and beautiful in relation to the special needs which it supplies. He declared in the most emphatic way that the good is nothing else but what is advantageous, the beautiful nothing else but what is useful, and that every thing is accordingly good and beautiful in relation to the objects for which it is best fitted."¹⁶ In the same spirit Cumberland says: "It is of the last consequence to establish a well-grounded and irrefragable notion of good: because if this totters and wavers, we must necessarily be fluctuating and uncertain in our opinion of happiness, (which is the greatest good of every particular person), and of the laws of nature, and of particular virtues, justice, etc., which are *nothing else but the means of obtaining that good*, and in some respects the causes in part thereof."

"The object of the will is good, for evil is rated from the privation of good." "Seeing the promulgation and execution of laws are good, that is conducing to the happiness of all rational beings, it may hence be proved, that there are things which are good necessarily and naturally." "Things are first judged to be good, and they are afterwards desired, only so far as they seem good." "I concur with all philosophers that I know of as affirming that the first apprehensions of things, and the desire of good and aversion from evil in general, are necessary; for the innate activity of the divine nature of the mind permits it not to be perfectly idle."¹⁷ "By the word good I

¹⁶ Socrates and the Socratic Schools. Translated by Reichel, pp. 123, 125. "In the dialogues of Xenophon he almost always grounded his moral precepts on the motive of utility." "It is certainly a contradiction to call virtue the highest end of life, and at the same time to recommend it because of the advantages it brings. From such a theory it is impossible to deduce definite moral actions, (only) to discover them by a reference to well-known consequences." 127, 128.

¹⁷ The intuitive faculty seems to be here recognized as innate, while its products are sometimes admitted to be, but sometimes denied to be so.

understand that which by the philosophers is usually called natural good, and, with respect to created beings, that which preserves or renders them more perfect or happy." "The causes generating or preserving man, by efficacy of which he continues for some time and flourishes with faculties, as well of body as mind, enlarged and determined to their proper functions, are called good to him." But he does not confine natural good to happiness or the means of happiness. "Good is that which preserves or enlarges and perfects the faculties of any one thing, or of several." "For in these effects is discovered that particular agreement of one thing with another which is requisite to denominate anything good." "So that is good to man which preserves or enlarges the powers of the mind and body, or of either, without prejudice to the other. 'That is good to anything which preserves it,' says Aristotle (Pol. 2 : 1) speaking of cities." "Anything is truly judged good, because its effect or force truly helps nature." "The constituting, preserving, and perfecting causes of things or men are those things which we call good, and the contrary to these evil, whether their efficacy reaches one only, many, or all." Moral good is often distinguished from natural as consisting in voluntary acts, and not in effects. But these acts are regarded as morally right, not in themselves, but only in relation to the production of some kind of good, whether it be happiness, improvement, or some other good, as consequence." "The good which is called *moral* is ascribed only to such actions and habits of rational agents as are agreeable to laws, whether natural or civil, and is ultimately resolved into the *natural* common good." The

¹⁸So our latest American ethics : "Moral good is the voluntary choice of the highest natural good possible to man, as known to himself and by himself, and interpreted as the end of his existence and activities." "A morally good choice is a choice that selects or prefers the best natural good." "The standard by which our volitions are judged to be morally right or wrong is the natural capacities of the agent." Porter, *Elem. Mor. Sci.*, 144, 169.

particular virtues "are indeed in their own nature good, though there were no law, because they conduce to the good state of the Universe." The clause, "Though there were no law," seems quite superfluous here, since law in the author's meaning simply means relation to the good state of the universe, discovered by effects of virtues. So large a place is occupied in this treatise with this relation, and with the showing how happiness and other forms of good are the effects of virtue, that it hardly can be classified in moral philosophy proper, but rather falls into the methodology of morals. Its true successor, among notable English works of late, is Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*.

In such a system the term law must bear the meaning of a rule of personal action, requiring such action as conduces to some form of good. Nature means chiefly human nature, but not exclusively. Things material and non-material, the lower animated creation and God are included. But it is from the experiences of human nature that we learn whatever we know of these. Laws of nature, then, are substantially laws of human nature in respect to the production of forms of natural good, or generalized truths as to acts which are necessary to produce good, regarded as of authority over conduct. But this authority is not at all ascribed to conscience, as by Butler. Their truth and fitness to secure, if observed, well-being, are deemed to be evidence of the authority and will of God, and to carry these with them. E. g., "Propositions of unchangeable truth which direct our voluntary actions about choosing good and refusing evil,"—"conclusions of right reason concerning actions necessary to the common good, promulgated by God,"—"dictates of reason, naturally laying down clear and general precepts concerning the common good are justly esteemed divine laws."—"Propositions naturally carry along with them the force and obligation of laws to direct men's actions [which] point out what is necessary to be done to obtain that end which na-

ture has determined men to pursue."—"To direct such actions in such manner as that they may best promote the best end is the business of all the laws of nature." For "laws are nothing but practical propositions, with rewards and punishments annexed, promulgated by competent authority."—"Certain universal practical propositions which give us a more distinct idea of the utmost possible happiness of mankind, and pronounce by what actions of ours, in all variety of circumstances, that happiness may most effectually be obtained, these are the rules of action, these are the laws of nature."—"In dictates concerning the supreme end, and the means of conducting thereto, does the whole law of nature consist."—"The laws of nature have an intrinsic and essential proof of their obligation taken from rewards and punishment."—They are affirmed to be proper to man alone, "because they are propositions concerning consequences depending upon the influence of actions." The most comprehensive definition is the following: "The law of nature is a proposition proposed to the observation of, or impressed upon, the mind, with sufficient clearness by the nature of things from the will of the First Cause, which points out that possible action of a rational agent which will chiefly promote the common good, and by which only the entire happiness of particular persons can be obtained." It is a rationale for well-being.

It is apparent at once what ethics must be in the view of such a thinker and teacher. "Ethics is the art of living, or of directing the whole of all human actions, to the best end." "The truth of moral philosophy is founded in the necessary connexion between the greatest happiness human powers can reach and acts of universal benevolence or of love towards God and men." "The best abridgment of ethics is the idea of that true happiness which is attainable by every one and of all its causes methodically disposed." Moral science is here the science of felicity. Well-being absorbs well-doing. The art of be-

ing good is the art of enjoyment. It is not necessary that the laws of right should be made imperative — “pronounced in the form of a gerund, This or that ought to be done,—as some Schoolmen teach: because that fitness which is expressed by a gerund wants explanation, which is to be fetched, either from the necessary connection of the means with the end, or from the obligations of a law.” The bishop of Peterborough could hardly have denied more clearly and expressly the binding force of moral principles as inherent in themselves, than he has in these words. Method of ethics becomes method of happiness.

We are now prepared to see what he held virtue or moral rectitude in concrete action to be. And here begins his special relation to later ethics, to his successors, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, and to their divergent successors in England and this country, Butler and Edwards.

ARTICLE VIII.

THE REVISED VERSION OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT.¹

BY THE REV. SAMUEL IVES CURTISS, D.D., PROFESSOR IN CHICAGO
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

THERE can be no question that a revision was needed, not because the style could be improved, for hardly any period could be more favorable for producing a faultless English than the early part of the seventeenth century. Indeed, there was the same danger of marring the classic beauty of the version as there would be of injuring the masterpiece of some great painter by retouching the canvas. But this view of the question would be to exalt the

¹ This paper was read before the State Congregational Association of Michigan at Flint, May 20th, and is published at the request of that body.