

The So-Called Idealism of Kant

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is less likely to be approved than plural votes conferred not only (as Mill thought) upon sagacity, but also upon capacity for happiness.

The play of the struggle for life is to be encouraged, in the present state of society, within limits, without prejudice to the supremacy of the supreme principle. Mr. Barratt indeed from the same premisses, the utility of competition, infers a different conclusion: that Utilitarianism should resign in favour of Egoism. But surely the inference is, not that the Utilitarian should change his destination from Universal to Egoistic Hedonism (points *toto cœlo* apart, as the chart of Sidgwick shows); but that, while constant to his life's star, he should *tack* (in the present state of storm at least) more considerably than the inexperienced voyager might advise. No one can misunderstand this "self-limitation" of Utilitarianism—for it has been explained by Mr. Sidgwick; least of all the Egoist—for a similar delegation, without abdication, of the supreme command is much more necessary in the case of the supremacy of self-love (Butler, &c.).

Lastly, while we calculate the utility of pre-utilitarian institutions, we are impressed with a view of Nature, not, as in the picture left by Mill, all bad, but a first approximation to the best. We are biased to a more conservative caution in reform. And we may have here not only a direction, but a motive, to our end. For, as Nature is judged more good, so more potent than the great utilitarian has allowed are the motives to morality which religion finds in the attributes of God.

F. Y. EDGEWORTH.

VII.—NOTES.

THE SO-CALLED IDEALISM OF KANT.

In a note by Professor Caird, in MIND XIII., there are some remarks on Kant's view of the external world which appear to me inaccurate and misleading: and since Mr. Caird has acquired a right to speak with some authority on this subject, it seems desirable that his misrepresentations—if I am right in so regarding them—should be carefully noted and pointed out. The passage to which I refer is the following:—

"The truth is that Mr. Balfour has never realised the difference between the so-called Idealism of Berkeley and the Idealism of Kant. This is manifest from the whole course of his paper, and particularly from some of his criticisms on Kant's 'Refutation of Idealism'. Thus (p. 498) Mr. Balfour says: 'The real question is this—Does being in space and outside the body imply that the extended and external object is outside of mind, and other than one of the series of conscious states?' And then he proceeds to accuse Kant of a confusion between the idea of externality to consciousness, and the idea of externality in the sense of existence *in* space (which, it may be remarked in passing, Kant has expressly and clearly distinguished, *Kritik*, ed. Rosenk, p. 299), because he only attempts to show that the explicit consciousness of the external object in the latter sense is prior to the explicit consciousness of the self as an object, and does *not*

attempt to show that there is an existence of things in themselves independent of consciousness. But if Mr. Balfour had understood what Transcendentalism implies, he would have seen that its effect is to make the latter problem meaningless, and to substitute the former for it. (*Cf.* Mr. Green's article in *Contemporary Review*, Dec., 1877, p. 30.) No doubt there is an occasional uncertainty in Kant's language, especially in the first edition of the *Kritik*."

Before I criticise this passage, I must disclaim any intention of carrying on Mr. Balfour's controversy with Prof. Caird. The article to which Prof. Caird is replying was addressed to a doctrine called Transcendentalism, conceived as common to Kant and a certain number of contemporary English writers, including Prof. Caird. Now that there is such a common doctrine I do not doubt; but I have not been able to gather from Mr. Caird's work on Kant any such knowledge of its principles or method as would justify me in attempting to criticise it closely.

At present, therefore, I am only concerned with Mr. Caird as an expositor of Kant. In this capacity I understand him to affirm (1) That Kant held a doctrine which may properly be called Idealism, because he regarded the question whether or not there is an existence of things in themselves independent of our perception of them as "meaningless"; and (2) that in his "Refutation of Idealism" he substituted for this the question whether or not we have an explicit consciousness of objects in space outside our bodies prior to the explicit consciousness of self as an object. Neither of these positions appears to me tenable.

As regards the first point, I quite admit that great latitude ought to be allowed to a philosopher in choosing the precise signification that he will attach to such a term as Idealism. Still I think that the word will inevitably be understood by English readers to denote a doctrine "concerning the existence of things"; and in this sense Kant emphatically and reiteratedly repudiated the appellation. The following passages from the *Prolegomena*, § 13, Remarks 2 and 3, are surely sufficiently explicit (I quote from Mr. Mahaffy's translation):—

"Idealism consists in the assertion, that there are none but thinking beings, all other things, which we think are perceived in intuition, being nothing but representations in the thinking beings, to which no object external to them really corresponds. Whereas I say, that things as objects of our senses existing outside us are given, but we know nothing of what they may be in themselves, knowing only their phenomena, that is, the representations which they cause in us by affecting our senses. Consequently I grant by all means that there are bodies without us, that is things which though quite unknown to us as to what they are in themselves, we yet know by the representations which their influence on our sensibility procures us, and which we call bodies, a term signifying merely the appearance of the thing which is unknown to us, but not therefore less real. Can this be termed idealism? It is the very contrary."

He adds "I should be glad to know what my assertions must be in order to avoid *all* idealism. . . . my protestation against *all* charges of idealism is so valid and clear as even to seem superfluous, &c". And to meet the objection that he has himself called his theory

"Transcendental Idealism," he explains that "my idealism concerns not the existence of things (the doubting of which however constitutes idealism in the ordinary sense) *since it never came into my head to doubt them*, but it concerns the sensuous representation of things." I do not see how Mr. Caird can hold that Kant when he wrote these passages regarded as "meaningless" the question whether "there is an existence of things in themselves independent of consciousness"; nor how he can say that there is here any "uncertainty in Kant's language"; and I do not understand him to hold with some German writers that Kant changed his opinion on this fundamental point between 1781 and 1783, or misrepresented his real conviction out of a base regard for his reputation.

But secondly, if any one, with the passages above quoted from the *Prolegomena* before him, will consider carefully the 'Refutation of Idealism' in the second edition of the *Kritik*, I hardly see how he can avoid the conclusion that Kant in the latter passage does confound "the idea of externality to consciousness" and the "idea of externality in the sense of existence in space". He states as the 'Theorem' to be proved—"The simple but empirically determined consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of external objects in space"; and then proceeds with the proof, as follows:—

"I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time. All determination in regard to time presupposes the existence of something permanent in perception. But this permanent something cannot be something in me, because my very existence in time can only be determined through this permanent something. Therefore the perception of this permanent is only possible through a *thing without me*, and not through the mere *representation* of a thing without me. It follows that the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the existence of real things which I perceive without me."

It is evident that the "Ding ausser mir" in the third sentence of this 'proof,' contrasted as it is with the "blosse Vorstellung eines Dinges ausser mir" is identical with the "unbekanntes aber nichts desto weniger wirklicher Gegenstand" of the passage from the *Prolegomena*—i.e., it is a thing external to consciousness: while again it must be identical with the "Gegenstand in Raum ausser mir" of the 'Theorem'. The two notions of 'externality in space' and 'externality to consciousness' have here run into one in Kant's mind—however true it may be that he has elsewhere "expressly and clearly distinguished them".

HENRY SIDGWICK.

ALLEGED SUICIDE OF A DOG.

AN account of the great grief shown by a chimpanzee at the death of its female companion, which has recently gone the round of the newspapers, has been the occasion of speculations concerning the very human passions of some animals, and of stories of actual suicide by them in certain instances. One Journal believes there is a well-authenticated story of a cat which, having had its kittens drowned,