

## PART II.—REVIEWS.

*The Physiology of Mind. Being the first part of a Third Edition, revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten of "The Physiology and Pathology of Mind."* By HENRY MAUDSLEY, M.D., F.R.C.P.

(Second Article.)

In the April number we criticised the psychological side of Dr. Maudsley's work in this volume from the point of view of a merely idealist, or, as he would call it, "metaphysical" theory of knowledge.

We endeavoured to show, first of all, that, though he did rightly in assailing the "Introspective" school of psychologists, and in maintaining that an adequate knowledge of Mind cannot be got by a mere inspection of Consciousness (after the manner, for example, of the Scotch school), yet he was in error when he confounded all other idealistic positions with this one. The truth is that Kantianism is not a whit less utterly opposed to Hamilton than it is to Hume. We tried to sketch out some of the chief points in which the "physiological" explanation of mental facts falls short, and fails to explain the phenomena, always confining the question, however, to the side of *knowledge*, and leaving *ethical* difficulties apart. The argument amounts, in brief, to the following simple and clear position. The scientific explanation of the world demands to be based on "facts," but it fails to explain to us what a "fact" is. If that be analysed, it will be found that it implies at least this: An entity within us beyond the brain or beyond mere sensations, which relates sensations together, compares and contrasts them, attends to them, and makes us "conscious" in the higher sense of what they have to tell, and builds them up, in fine, into that regulated whole which we call "Experience." All this, which is implied in any "fact" as a condition precedent thereof, is what we in England are apt to call "*a priori*" truth, and despise accordingly. But in so thinking we do foolishly. For all this is not inconsistent with physiology; and that for the simple reason that it makes no assertions whatever, either about the organism in itself, or about the mode whereby this further entity—the Mind, or Self—is related to its bodily organ. These are, indeed,

problems of the last difficulty, and are admittedly unsolved. We say merely that to seek, as Dr. Maudsley does, to solve them by eliminating the non-bodily factor is not to explain, but to explain away; and that his solution, therefore, so far forth, solves nothing.

But this entity, which we call non-bodily, and name Self, has another side besides that of Consciousness; it expresses itself also as Will. And it is on this side—the side of Ethics, Duty, Responsibility—that the Physiological School fails most patently. Since Hume—and resting on his errors—some men have believed that they found means, so far as *knowledge* is concerned, to resolve Experience into a series of sensations, and sensations again into “vibratiuncles” of nerve matter. But to resolve Duty and Remorse into mere physical facts is not easy; and to make Will fit into such a scheme it is necessary to deny it altogether. Let us see, then, what account Dr. Maudsley has to give of this Ethical side of human life.

To get at it, we have to pick our way through much vigorous and violent denunciation. “A self-determining will,” he says, “is an unmeaning contradiction in terms, and an inconceivability in fact.” But he proceeds to explain that he regards that term as implying that a man who acts by such a will is supposed not to be influenced by reason, a theory which every advocate of freewill would repudiate. He relies on the fact that men’s characters are fixed, and their actions thereby, to a certain extent, predictable, and that sane society, in fact, is based on the assumption of such fixity; and from this he proceeds at once to draw the somewhat violent conclusion that any sort of self-determination, anything, in fact, but the inevitable fatalism of natural causation, is a delusion and a snare. It was a true philosophic instinct that led Dr. Maudsley to look at the question from the point of view of Character. Character is the key to the problem of Free Will. But before we can use it safely for such a purpose, it is necessary to take a deeper view of “character” than the author does. Character to him is another name for organisation. We are saints or sinners according to the configuration of the nerve tracks concerned. Ethics is as much a matter of machinery as the basest mechanic process; only the machine is cunningly made, and improvements are transmitted by generations.

This method, once for all, is doomed to failure. It cannot explain the very facts which constitute the problem—duty,

responsibility, remorse, and the moral law. Why should there be any ethics or any moral factor in our lives, if we are a superior sort of steam-engine? That we *do* care about good and evil, that we *do* feel the call of duty and repent of sin, is the very fact to be explained. Dr. Maudsley has here no theory of life that does not end by speciously denying the patent facts it started to describe.

The acute philosophic sense that enabled the author to see that the question rested, after all, on the ground of Character, would have led him to a truer result had he made a distinction which is vital to the whole problem, and which, nevertheless, is almost always either ignored or blurred by writers of every school. Dr. Maudsley harps upon the damning fact that the "Free Will" of the Libertarians is "a power which, in so far as it gives a preponderance to one of two motives, is *entirely* arbitrary, *absolutely* exempt from all influence, *supernaturally* infused, *free!*" If this were so, well might he say, in his wrath, that it was "as wild a dream as ever entered into the imaginations of metaphysicians to conceive." But it is not so, after all. This strange power is not the Free Will that we claim to defend. It has another name, and that name is Caprice. Whether there is such a freedom of caprice in human nature or no, it is hard to say. Of course, as Dr. Maudsley naturally points out, there are all manner of subtle influences, organic and extraorganic, which *may* be determining me when I seem to myself to be determining in sheer and objectless caprice, to lift my pen or to lay it down. It is difficult to prove a negative. It is also peculiarly difficult to demonstrate that in every case there are such influences, and that they actually do determine. It is an ingenious hypothesis, like so many others that adventurous science hazards, and it is incapable of proof. In reality, what proof there is goes rather the other way. For after we have allowed all possible scope for such occult impulses, there remains still the old scholastic case of the ass and the bundles of hay. There are circumstances where, for the sake of experiment, a man may place himself in such a position that the motives balance with the finest possible accuracy. In such a case, if our volition were nothing but a mechanical resultant of balancing forces, we should either, ass-like, stand irresolute in the middle, or, at most, should feebly gravitate for some infinitesimal reason to the preferable side. But, on the contrary, we find in such a case that all men take a sportive pleasure in throwing the sword of their capricious

will into the scale, so that we may almost say that men decide with most volitional force when there is least reason for the decision.

This, however, is by the way. So far as it goes, it may serve to show that there is more to be said for the existence in the human mind of a power of arbitrary self-determination, properly called Caprice, than Dr. Maudsley cares to admit. But what we are chiefly concerned to say is, that the question whether there is or is not such an arbitrary power, is *not* the real question at all. *This arbitrary Will of Caprice is not the "Free Will" which we contend for in the interests of Ethics, and in explanation of the fact of Duty.* And in regard to the debate between Libertarian and Necessitarian schools, the confusion of the two is fatal.

What then do we mean by Free Will? Stated in plain terms and reduced to a minimum, it comes to this: My acts are determined by volitions, and these again by what we call vaguely "motives." But a motive may mean either of two wholly different, and indeed contrary things. It may mean an influence or desire which comes upon men with all the force of the confluent currents of outward circumstances and bodily organisation, my Self being therein passive merely. In that case, unless we can act by Caprice, we are the slaves of Necessity—"stones gravitating consciously." It may mean not at all a passive datum, but rather that idea of an object of desire which I, my rational Self, have formed and set before my practical Self, as that, which if attained is fitted to satisfy me, and to fulfil the conception I have framed of my happiness. If that be what motive means, then our acts obey a command not laid upon us by the blind powers without, but rising from the rational power within. Our Will is, in the Kantian phrase, "autonomous." We are a law unto ourselves, and thereby we are free.

The theory of Free Will then, is that *in every determination to act which constitutes a volition* (as distinct from those mechanical organic movements where motion immediately proceeds from stimulus, "without ideation," as Dr. Maudsley would say) the determinant *is not* a mere datum of nerves, or sense, or passion, but *is* an idea actively taken up, formulated as an adequate end, and stamped as an element of happiness, by that non-bodily entity, which we call Self. This is what the Germans mean when they talk of Reason as "entering into the constitution of the object of desire." This is the simple key to the whole problem of Responsibility. For this

“non-bodily entity called Self” has, as we said, its two sides, or aspects, the side of thought and the side of act, of theory and practice, of reason and will. From the Greek philosophers to the Churchmen of the Middle Ages, everyone recognised this great fundamental dualism that runs through life, and it is only a delusive thirst for simplicity, such as would fain resolve black into white, and white into no colour at all, that threatens to obscure it to the modern mind. It is, to use a dangerous metaphor, the polarity of the Ego, and in every true volition that polarity is found; there are not two Selves, but one Self that is two-faced, that is equally called the Rational Will and the Practical Reason. It is not that there are two “faculties” in separate brain pigeon-holes, the one called Reason, or Thought, or Consciousness, or Ideation, and the other called Will. Reason is Will in its inception, and Will is Reason in act. It is the one same spiritual force, which gathers from all the delicate nerve impulses that flow in from the material world their momentary, blurred, and as yet unknowable data of sense and desire—which takes them up into consciousness by that unifying act of perception wherein first they have relation to one another and to the whole cosmos of experience before and after—which selects again, by its arresting and intensifying power of Attention, the relevant memories out of the linked myriads of suggestion that every moment rouses to insistent life—which builds out of all these elements the conception of an act to be done, an end to be gained, “an object of desire,” and sees that that conception harmonises and fits in with what theory it has of “happiness—” and which, therefore, having so constructed, actively and for itself, as best it could, this, its own “motive” for the coming act, accepts the full responsibility thereof before Heaven and before man, utters its creative “fiat,” and becomes Will.

This is not the place, nor would it be possible within the limits of a review, to follow all the problems which such a theory raises, or the proofs on which it is held to rest. But it is necessary to state it, definitely and in full, because the author of the *Physiology of Mind* has fallen deep into an “*Ignoratio Elenchi*.” Has he not been stoutly belabouring a windmill long disused? Against the theory, as here stated, which is in substance the theory now held by those whom he calls “the metaphysical school,” he has said nothing, except that he assails on general grounds the idea of Free Will in any form, and commits himself to what to us

seems even a humorous paradox. "Brethren could not dwell together in unity; human society, in fact, would be impossible," unless men could rely in each other's conduct as a physical necessity, as perfect as, and in fact the same as the absolute bondage of physical causation! We feel inclined to invert the sentence, and say that human society would be hopelessly impossible if life were in truth any such mental clockwork. It would be a world, we submit, like that which "Theophrastus Such" imagines in the age when machines can repair and reproduce themselves. In either kind of Iron Age, Consciousness would be a feeble and otiose superfluity, and would, doubtless, in a little time, according to the happy dispensation of the Survival of the Fittest, follow the already effete ghosts of Duty and Religion across the river of Lethe. This supposed chief human faculty of Consciousness, in fact, is altogether of so little visible use in Dr. Maudsley's theory of Mind, frankly automatic as it really is,\* that we are tempted to compare it, as he does the doctrine of Free Will, "with certain bodily organs, like the thyroid gland, which have their functions in early development, and then, not being wanted afterwards, undergo atrophy." Let not the Pessimists be afraid. If all these things are true, the reign of the Unconscious must be at hand.

Dr. Maudsley does not concern himself much with Consciousness or its uses; but he seriously advances the theory that the belief in Freedom of Will, which amounts to a seeming testimony of self-consciousness in its favour (*vide* pp. 414-416), is a kind of embryonic faculty which served in earlier days "to promote the evolution of the social organism." Indeed its uses are not yet over. The delusion of "Freedom and its Responsibilities was necessary, and perhaps still is, to make for man a higher necessity than that of his passions." This salutary check was not necessarily always believed in by the superior altruistic man, but he kept up the deception, and invented "the most vivid pictures of the unspeakable joys of heaven and the endless torments of hell," in order to supply his not yet altruistic brother with a powerful body of motives, and manufacture him into a moral man.

Now all this is very odd as it stands—and yet a very little

\*He even says in terms (p. 419) that "the aim of education is to produce a nature in which spontaneity shall disappear in automatism." Cf. also the Definition of Will, on p. 430.

difference would bring these pages of our ablest English medical psychologist into accord with the profoundest of his foes, the metaphysicians. The difference is this. Dr. Maudsley insists on seeking the solution of every mental problem in the body, and there only. He puts aside, and keeps out of sight, by every point of statement or nomenclature possible, the idea of any non-bodily entity, such as we call the Self. Yet he never even pretends to disprove the existence of such a presence, beyond and in and through the organism which he sees and can dissect. Nothing therein refutes the existence of a soul. The very theory of Free Will, which we have stated, is perfectly consistent with the whole known physiology of the brain. It does not, it is true, pretend to say how Mind may act on Matter—in what mechanical sense the “fiat” of Will becomes a cause of physical motions in the brain, through which it may in due time move the world. The acts of self-determination, which are what we here in strictness mean by acts of Will, are not events in the phenomenal world at all; their laws are other than the physical laws of Matter, and the order to which they belong is a moral order, to which we have as yet only a slender clue. It is perfectly true that there *is* a moral order, and hence it is nowise wonderful that we should be able to rely *in the main* upon an even tenour of social life and even of historic evolution; for in all these things, as we most strenuously maintain, there is an underlying Reason which is working itself out, whether you choose to call it Providence, or the Philosophy of History, or the Science of Sociology. There is no Unreason in this universe, not even in a madman, as Dr. Maudsley himself has so often and so clearly shown. Yet it by no means follows that a man cannot do wrong. He does his best to put back the wheels of the world, but they only come round again and crush him. Being free, we can sin—but the sin recoils upon our own head; and the moral order remains.

All, therefore, which Dr. Maudsley says concerning Character is true. It is the same doctrine which Aristotle taught his students in the Lyceum. Character is formed by repeated acts, and it becomes to us more or less of a binding necessity—never fatal, for we can always break with it, as witness the constant phenomena of religious “conversion”—but still exercising on us a continual strain which in the main, determines our ways of life. Yet all this is still perfectly consistent with the theory of Free Will stated

above. Again, as a proof of the closeness with which Dr. Maudsley sometimes approaches, by a just instinct, the very theories he holds himself bound to assail, compare the following sentence from page 427:—

“Speaking psychologically, the definite will is the final issue of the process of reflection or deliberation which a man’s life-culture has rendered him capable of; it represents a *conception* or *idea* of the result with *desire*, such as have been determined by the character of the reflection.”

Is he, then, a convert to the theory of the Autonomous Will? By no means; for he proceeds to ignore the possibility of the non-bodily\* factor altogether, and so reduces the definition rapidly to this (p. 430):—

“The final reaction after deliberation, which we call Will, is . . . a *resultant* of a certain molecular change in a definitely constituted nervous centre”—or in other words, “I am a reproductive steam-engine.”

This, therefore, is the sole key to his intense detestation of that “effete superstition and offshoot of ignorance, mischievously drawing men’s minds away from the beneficial recognition of the universal reign of law and of their solemn responsibilities under the stern necessity of universal causation.”† Brave words, truly, but surely difficult to explain. Dr. Maudsley has already confessed, and rightly, that our responsibility is bound up with our freedom. If we are the children of stern Necessity, then Duty, and Responsibility, and Moral Right or Wrong, are words full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. The stones that fall have no duty—because they have no choice. To the flowers of the field, Yearning and Remorse are alike meaningless, for all they want they have, and all they do is right—or, if not right, at least inevitable. We alone hear the voice which says “Thou shalt,” and “Thou shalt not”—the hard imperatives of the Moral Law—because we alone have a causal power that is above the reach of circumstance, and always, in the last resort, determines its own act. Because it stands with me, and not with fate, to say whether this crime shall or shall not be done upon the earth, I am justly and inevitably held responsible for it, not merely to the State, but to a higher morality also, call it what you will. We do not blame the

\* We use the term “non-bodily” rather than “mental,” in this paper, because Dr. Maudsley especially insists on making no distinction between “mental” and “organic,” in this differing from Dr. Hughlings Jackson.

† P. 421.



bullet that followed its fated curve—that is Necessity: we blame the hand, or rather the Will that fired it, for that was free. If Dr. Maudsley answers that the Will might will and yet could not fire, if one nerve current was stopped, our answer is all the stronger; for even though the “fiat” did not effectuate itself in fact, we blame the murderous intuition nevertheless, because it was a free act of Will.

In bringing this long and perhaps over-critical review of Dr. Maudsley’s powerful book to a close, we cannot refrain from quoting, in justice to the author, a marvellously true and powerful passage from the end of this same chapter on Volition. It may serve to show how far after all we Idealists can really go with Dr. Maudsley, although he rails at us, and we say hard things of him. After stating many pregnant points concerning the power of a well-directed Will, always on the same Necessitarian hypothesis, he acknowledges that in such an ideal Will there is always something of “an upward nisus”—

“If we ask whence comes this impulse, we can only answer tamely that it comes from the same unfathomable source as the impulse which inspires or moves organic evolution throughout nature. He who reflects upon himself and upon the universe is forced in the end to the recognition, in the workings of the world, of a power from which all life and energy proceed, which has been from the beginning, is now, and so far as we can see, ever shall be; and which cannot be comprehended or controlled by human thought or will, but comprehends and controls human thought and will. We recognise an impulsion outside ourselves, working also in our wills, which is the moving energy of the evolution which went on through countless ages before man appeared, which is going on now in his progress, and which will doubtless go on through countless ages after he has ceased to replenish the earth and subdue it. We come back indeed to something which, however we may name it, or forbear to name it, is very like the theological Trinity—God the Unrevealed and Unrevealable, God the Revealed, and God the Revealer. In human thought and will, nature has arrived at self-consciousness, but the power which impels the highest evolution of life, as manifested in the highest reach of human thought and will, is fundamentally the same power which impels the evolution of the lowest forms of life.”

Well might a “metaphysician” cry out on reading these solemn lines, “Is Saul then also among the prophets?” But

there is one thing wanting still—Dr. Maudsley sees the same vast all-pervading Spiritual power; but he sees it upside down. Therefore he rushes on to assail the overweening man, who dares to say that this power as it works in him is a freedom, and by that right to claim a destiny and a rank above the natural creation, and he rates him roundly for “an insufferable conceit.” Yet these lines, after all, admit of only one final explanation. As Prof. Tyndall said at Belfast, the recognition of that oneness of underlying power means a *new definition of matter*. “Matter” is no longer the blank opposite of “Mind,” definable only as that which does not think. It is rather that which has or is the potentiality of all life and progress. If so, we have got down to Matter at the bottom of the scale, only to fall through that also, and find Mind, Spirit, God—the thinking, living, willing Power—below and through and above the whole. Let Dr. Maudsley grant us this, and we will not despair of convincing him also that Mind is not a function of Matter, but Matter rather a phase of Mind—that Will may be free, and society and the universe endure nevertheless—and that Physiology and Psychology may yet lie down as the lion and the lamb together, and try to solve in friendly rivalry that final problem which may indeed prove some day to be the keystone of the whole—the question how this “non-bodily entity which we call Self” can act and react with a material organism.

Oxon.

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*Traité de la Paralyse Générale des Aliénés.* Par M. VOISIN.

The last class includes the so-called “general paralysis without mental symptoms.”

Voisin thinks that it would be absurd to say that a patient had locomotor ataxy without ataxic symptoms, and that it is equally impossible to have general paralysis without mental change. We cannot see the parallel, for general paralysis does not connote insanity. The spinal trouble may be primary or secondary, and our author thinks he can arrest its ascent to the brain by antiphlogistic measures. This variety may slowly proceed to weak-mindedness; the process takes longer in women than in men, but is slower if taken in hand soon, and more prolonged in private than in public asylums in France. Many authors give three years as its average duration, but M. Voisin objects to limit it to any sacred period, the terminations of these cases being in cure,