

The favorite argument against Berkeley's theory of the non-existence of matter, and the most popularly effective, next to a "grin"(267)--an argument, moreover, which is not confined to "coxcombs," nor to men like Samuel Johnson, whose greatly overrated ability certainly did not lie in the direction of metaphysical speculation, but is the stock argument of the Scotch school of metaphysicians--is a palpable Ignoratio Elenchi. The argument is perhaps as frequently expressed by gesture as by words, and one of its commonest forms consists in knocking a stick against the ground. This short and easy confutation overlooks the fact, that in denying matter, Berkeley did not deny any thing to which our senses bear witness, and therefore can not be answered by any appeal to them. His skepticism related to the supposed substratum, or hidden cause of the appearances perceived by our senses; the evidence of which, whatever may be thought of its conclusiveness, is certainly not the evidence of sense. And it will always remain a signal proof of the want of metaphysical profundity of Reid, Stewart, and, I am sorry to add, of Brown, that they should have persisted in asserting that Berkeley, if he believed his own doctrine, was bound to walk into the kennel, or run his head against a post. As if persons who do not recognize an occult cause of their sensations could not possibly believe that a fixed order subsists among the sensations themselves. Such a want of comprehension of the distinction between a thing and its sensible manifestation, or, in metaphysical language, between the noumenon and the phenomenon, would be impossible to even the dullest disciple of Kant or Coleridge.

It would be easy to add a greater number of examples of this fallacy, as well as of the others which I have attempted to characterize. But a more copious exemplification does not seem to be necessary; and the intelligent reader will have little difficulty in adding to the catalogue from his own reading and experience. We shall, therefore, here close our exposition of the general principles of logic, and proceed to the supplementary inquiry which is necessary to complete our design.

Book VI.

ON THE LOGIC OF THE MORAL SCIENCES.

"Si l'homme peut prédire, avec une assurance presque entière, les phénomènes dont il connaît les lois; si lors même qu'elles lui sont inconnues, il peut, d'après l'expérience, prévoir avec une grande probabilité les événements de l'avenir; pourquoi regarderait-on comme une entreprise chimérique, celle de tracer avec quelque vraisemblance le tableau des destinées futures de l'espèce humaine, d'après les résultats de son histoire? Le seul fondement de croyance dans les sciences naturelles, est cette idée, que les lois générales, connues ou ignorées, qui règlent les phénomènes de l'univers, sont nécessaires et constantes; et par quelle raison ce principe serait-il moins vrai pour le développement des facultés intellectuelles et morales de l'homme, que pour les autres opérations de la nature? Enfin, puisque des opinions formées d'après l'expérience ... sont la seule règle de la conduite des hommes les plus sages, pourquoi interdirait-on au philosophe d'appuyer ses conjectures sur cette même base, pourvu qu'il ne leur attribue pas une certitude supérieure à celle qui peut naître du nombre, de la constance, de l'exactitude des observations?"--CONDORCET, *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*.

Chapter I.

Introductory Remarks.

§ 1. Principles of Evidence and Theories of Method are not to be constructed *a priori*. The laws of our rational faculty, like those of every other natural agency, are only learned by seeing the agent at work. The earlier achievements of science were made without the conscious observance of any Scientific Method; and we should never have known by what process truth is to be ascertained, if we had not previously ascertained many truths. But it was only the easier problems which could be thus resolved: natural sagacity, when it tried its strength against the more difficult ones, either failed altogether, or, if it succeeded here and there in obtaining a solution, had no sure means of convincing others that its solution was correct. In scientific investigation, as in all other works of human skill, the way of obtaining the end is seen as it were instinctively by superior minds in some comparatively simple case, and is then, by judicious generalization, adapted to the variety of complex cases. We learn to do a thing in difficult circumstances, by attending to the manner in which we have spontaneously done the same thing in easier ones.

This truth is exemplified by the history of the various branches of knowledge which have successively, in the ascending order of their complication, assumed the character of sciences; and will doubtless receive fresh confirmation from those of which the final scientific constitution is yet to come, and which are still abandoned to the uncertainties of vague and popular discussion. Although several other sciences have emerged from this state at a comparatively recent date, none now remain in it except those which relate to man himself, the most complex and most difficult subject of study on which the human mind can be engaged.

Concerning the physical nature of man, as an organized being--though there is still much uncertainty and much controversy, which can only be terminated by the general acknowledgment and employment of stricter rules of induction than are commonly recognized--there is, however, a considerable body of truths which all who have attended to the subject consider to be fully established; nor is there now any radical imperfection in the method observed in the department of science by its most distinguished modern teachers. But the laws of Mind, and, in even a greater degree, those of Society, are so far from having attained a similar state of even partial recognition, that it is still a controversy whether they are capable of becoming subjects of science in the strict sense of the term: and among those who are agreed on this point, there reigns the most irreconcilable diversity on almost every other. Here, therefore, if anywhere, the principles laid down in the preceding Books may be expected to be useful.

If on matters so much the most important with which human intellect can occupy itself a more general agreement is ever to exist among thinkers; if what has been pronounced "the proper study of mankind" is not destined to remain the only subject which Philosophy can not succeed in rescuing from Empiricism; the same process through which the laws of many simpler phenomena have by general acknowledgment been placed beyond dispute, must be consciously and deliberately applied to those more difficult inquiries. If there are some subjects on which the results obtained have finally received the unanimous assent of all who have attended to the proof, and others on which mankind have not yet been equally successful; on which the most sagacious minds have occupied themselves from the earliest date, and have never succeeded in establishing any considerable body of truths, so as to be beyond denial or doubt; it is by generalizing the methods successfully followed in the former inquiries, and adapting them to the latter, that we may hope to remove this blot on the face of science. The remaining chapters are an endeavor to facilitate this most desirable object.

§ 2. In attempting this, I am not unmindful how little can be done toward it in a mere treatise on Logic, or how vague and unsatisfactory all precepts of Method must necessarily appear when not practically exemplified in the establishment of a body of doctrine. Doubtless, the most effectual mode of showing how the sciences of Ethics and Politics may be constructed would be to construct them: a task which, it needs scarcely be said, I am not about to undertake. But even if there were no other examples, the memorable one of Bacon would be sufficient to demonstrate, that it is sometimes both possible and useful to point out the way, though without

being one's self prepared to adventure far into it. And if more were to be attempted, this at least is not a proper place for the attempt.

In substance, whatever can be done in a work like this for the Logic of the Moral Sciences, has been or ought to have been accomplished in the five preceding Books; to which the present can be only a kind of supplement or appendix, since the methods of investigation applicable to moral and social science must have been already described, if I have succeeded in enumerating and characterizing those of science in general. It remains, however, to examine which of those methods are more especially suited to the various branches of moral inquiry; under what peculiar facilities or difficulties they are there employed; how far the unsatisfactory state of those inquiries is owing to a wrong choice of methods, how far to want of skill in the application of right ones; and what degree of ultimate success may be attained or hoped for by a better choice or more careful employment of logical processes appropriate to the case. In other words, whether moral sciences exist, or can exist; to what degree of perfection they are susceptible of being carried; and by what selection or adaptation of the methods brought to view in the previous part of this work that degree of perfection is attainable.

At the threshold of this inquiry we are met by an objection, which, if not removed, would be fatal to the attempt to treat human conduct as a subject of science. Are the actions of human beings, like all other natural events, subject to invariable laws? Does that constancy of causation, which is the foundation of every scientific theory of successive phenomena, really obtain among them? This is often denied; and for the sake of systematic completeness, if not from any very urgent practical necessity, the question should receive a deliberate answer in this place. We shall devote to the subject a chapter apart.