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George Cruikshank del.

THE

"GREATEST HAPPINESS" PRINCIPLE

IN MORALS AND GOVERNMENT,

Explained and Defended. In Answer to the Edinburgh Review.

FOURTH EDITION.—*STEREOTYPE.*

Re-published from the Westminster Review, No. XXI; on the 1st Aug. 1829. Sold by ROBERT HEWARD, at the Office of the Westminster Review, 2, Wellington Street, Strand, London; and by COWIE and STRANGE, 55, Paternoster Row.

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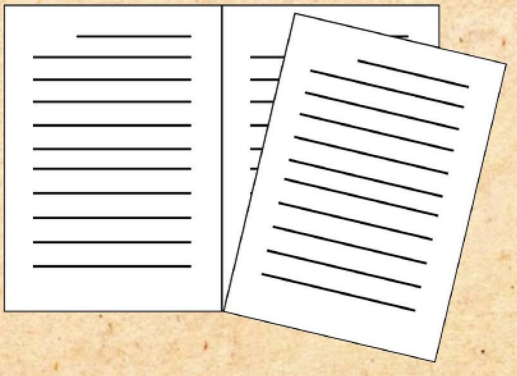

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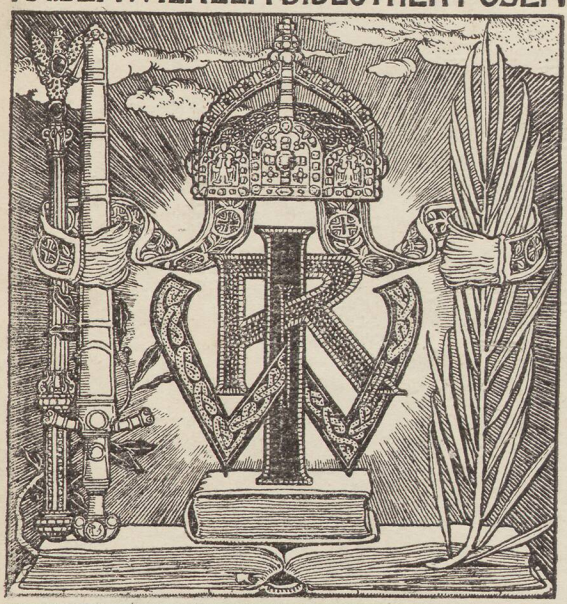

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Edinburgh Review, No. XCVII: Article on Mill's Essays on Government, Jurisprudence, &c.

A GOOD enemy is sometimes worth a host of friends. In such a position the Edinburgh Reviewer has placed himself, by the assault of arms made nominally against the 'Essays' in the title, but announced at the top of the alternate pages as directed against what are there denominated Utilitarian logic and politics. If the treatises in question have been attacked where they were right and let alone where they were wrong, and an opening made for advancing the opinions intended to be opposed,—it may be said in courtly language (which means the language of law courts), that the learned brother has taken little by his motion.

The pith of the charge against the author of the 'Essays' is, that he has written 'an elaborate treatise on government,' and 'deduced the whole science from the assumption of certain propensities of human nature.' Now in the name of Sir Richard Birnie and all saints, from what else *should* it be deduced? What did ever any body imagine to be the end, object, and design of government *as it ought to be*, but the same operation on an extended scale, which that meritorious chief magistrate conducts on a limited one at Bow-street; to wit, the preventing one man from injuring another? Imagine then, that the whiggery of Bow-street were to rise up against the proposition that their science was to be deduced from 'certain propensities of human nature,' and thereon were to ratiocinate as follows.

'How then are we to arrive at just conclusions on a subject so important to the happiness of mankind? Surely by that method, which, in every experimental science to which it has been applied, has signally increased the power and knowledge of our species,—by that method for which our new philosophers would substitute quibbles scarcely worthy of the barbarous respondents and opponents of the middle ages,—by the method of Induction;—by observing the present state of the world,—by assiduously studying the history of past ages,—by sifting the evidence of facts,—by carefully combining and contrasting those which are authentic,—by generalizing with judgment and diffidence,—by perpetually bringing the theory which we have constructed to the test of new facts,—by correcting, or altogether abandoning it, according as those new facts prove it to be partially or fundamentally unsound. Proceeding thus,—patiently,—diligently,—candidly,—we may hope to form a system as far inferior in pretension to that which we have been examining, and as far superior to it in real utility, as the prescriptions of a great physician, varying with every stage of every malady, and with the constitution of every patient, to the pill of the advertising quack, which is to cure all human beings, in all climates, of all diseases.'

Fancy now,—only fancy,—the delivery of these wise words at

Bow-street; and think how speedily the practical catch-poles would reply, that all this might be very fine, but as far as they had studied history, the naked story was after all, that numbers of men had a propensity to thieving, and *their* business was to catch them; that they too had been sifters of facts, and, to say the truth, their simple opinion was, that their brethren of the red waistcoat (though they should be sorry to think ill of any man), had some how contracted a leaning to the other side, and were more bent on puzzling the case for the benefit of the defendants, than on doing the duty of good officers and true. Such would beyond all doubt be the sentence passed on such trimmers in the microcosm of Bow-street. It might not absolutely follow that they were in a plot to rob the goldsmiths shops, or to set fire to the House of Commons; but it would be quite clear that they had got *a feeling*,—that they were in process of siding with the thieves,—and that it was not to them that any man must look, who was anxious that pantries should be safe.

If indeed it could be proved, that Bow-street at large had been mistaken in its men;—that the flash gentlemen to whom it had been in the habit of much directing its surveillance, were in reality meritorious persons filled with zeal for the public good, and in short the best and only representatives and guardians of the public interests;—then, in truth, the opinion of the ancient and venerable thief-takers would fall down before the new discovery. And this it is, the Whigs essay to prove.

And first, 'that it is not true that all despots govern ill;'—whereon the world is in a mistake, and the Whigs have the true light. And for proof, principally,—that the king of Denmark is not Caligula. To which the answer is, that the king of Denmark is not a despot. He was put in his present situation, by the people turning the scale in his favour in a balanced contest between himself and the nobility. And it is quite clear that the same power would turn the scale the other way, the moment a king of Denmark should take into his head to be Caligula. It is of little consequence by what assemblage of letters the majesty of Denmark is typified in the royal press of Copenhagen, while the fact is that the sword of the people is suspended over his head in case of ill behaviour, as effectually as in other countries where more noise is made upon the subject Every body believes the sovereign of Denmark to be a good and virtuous gentleman; but there is no more superhuman merit in his being so, than in the case of a rural squire who does not shoot his land-steward, or quarter his wife with his yeomanry sabre.

It is true that there are partial exceptions to the rule, that all

men use power as badly as they dare. There may have been such things as amiable negro-drivers and sentimental masters of press-gangs; and here and there, among the odd freaks of human nature, there may have been specimens of men who were 'No tyrants, though bred up to tyranny.' But it would be as wise to recommend wolves for nurses at the Foundling, on the credit of Romulus and Remus, as to substitute the exception for the general fact, and advise mankind to take to trusting to arbitrary power on the credit of these specimens.

Secondly, that a government not under the control of the community (for there is no question upon any other) '*may soon be saturated.*' Tell it not in Bow-street, whisper it not in Hatton-garden,—that there is a plan for preventing injustice by 'saturation.' With what peals of unearthly merriment, would Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus be aroused upon their benches, if the 'light wings of saffron and of blue' should bear this theory into their grim domains. Why do not the owners of pocket-handkerchiefs try to 'saturate?' Why does not the cheated publican beg leave to check the gulosity of his defrauder with a *repetatur haustus,* and the pummelled plaintiff neutralize the malice of his adversary by requesting to have the rest of the beating in presence of the court,—if it is not that such conduct would run counter to all the conclusions of experience, and be the procreation of the mischief it affected to destroy. Woeful is the man, whose wealth depends on his having more than somebody else can be persuaded to take from him; and woeful also is the people that is in such a case.

Thirdly, that 'though there may be some tastes and propensities that have no point of saturation, there exists a sufficient check in the desire of the good opinion of others.' The misfortune of this argument is, that no man cares for the good opinion of those he has been accustomed to wrong. If oysters have opinions, it is probable they think very ill of those who eat them in August; but small is the effect upon the autumnal glutton that engulphs their gentle substances within his own. The planter and the slave-driver care just as much about negro opinion, as the epicure about the sentiments of oysters. M. Ude throwing live eels into the fire as a kindly method of divesting them of the unsavoury oil that lodges beneath their skins, is not more convinced of the immense aggregate of good which arises to the lordlier parts of the creation, than is the gentle peer who strips his fellow man of country and of family for a wild-fowl slain. The goodly land-owner, who lives by morsels squeezed indiscriminately from the waxy hands of the cobbler and the polluted ones of the nightman, is in no small degree the object of both hatred and contempt; but it is to be

feared that he is a long way from feeling them to be intolerable. The principle of '*At mihi plaudo, Ipse domi, simul ac nummos contemplor in arcâ,*' * is sufficient to make a wide interval between the opinions of the plaintiff and defendant in such cases. In short, to banish law and leave all plaintiffs to trust to the desire of reputation on the opposite side, would only be transporting the theory of the Whigs, from the House of Commons to Westminster Hall.

Fourthly, the Edinburgh Reviewers are of opinion, that

'it might, with no small plausibility, be maintained, that, in many countries, there are two classes which, in some degree, answer to this description;' [viz.] 'that the poor compose the class which government is established to restrain; and the people of some property the class to which the powers of government may without danger be confided.'

They take great pains, it is true, to say this and not to say it. They shuffle and creep about, to secure a hole to escape at, if 'what they do not assert' should be found in any degree inconvenient. A man might waste his life in trying to find out whether the Misses of the Edinburgh mean to say Yes or No in their political coquetry. But whichever way the lovely spinsters may decide, it is diametrically opposed to history and the evidence of facts, that the poor *are* the class whom there is any difficulty in restraining. It is not the poor but the rich, that have a propensity to take the property of other people. There is no instance upon earth, of the poor having combined to take away the property of the rich; and all the cases habitually brought forward as examples of it, are gross misrepresentations, founded upon the most necessary acts of self-defence on the part of the most numerous classes. Such a misrepresentation is the common one of the Agrarian law; which was nothing but an attempt on the part of the Roman people to get back some part of what had been taken from them by undisguised robbery. Such another is the stock example of the French Revolution, appealed to by the Edinburgh Review in the actual case. It is utterly untrue that the French Revolution took place because 'the poor began to compare their cottages and sallads with the hotels and banquets of the rich;' it took place because they were robbed of their cottages and sallads to support the hotels and banquets of their oppressors. It is utterly untrue that there was either a scramble for property or a general confiscation; the classes who took part with the foreign invader lost their property, as they would have done here, and ought to do every where. All these are the vulgar errors

* 'Let them hiss on (he cries)
While, in my own opinion fully bless'd,
I count my money, and enjoy my chest.'—*Francis's Translation of Horace.*

of the man on the lion's back,—which the lion will set to rights when he can tell his own story. History is nothing but the relation of the sufferings of the poor from the rich; except precisely so far as the numerous classes of the community have contrived to keep the virtual power in their hands, or in other words, to establish free governments. If a poor man injures the rich, the law is instantly at his heels; the injuries of the rich towards the poor are always inflicted *by* the law. And to enable the rich to do this to any extent that may be practicable or prudent, there is clearly only one postulate required, which is, that the rich shall make the law.

This appears to be sufficient, for the Edinburgh Review, in this place. A more useful and agreeable office remains, in endeavouring to give the history of the common-sense principle of morals and politics, and to promote its diffusion.

The first time the phrase of 'the principle of utility' was brought decidedly into notice, was in the 'Essays, by David Hume,' published about the year 1742. In that work it is mentioned as the name of a principle which might be made the foundation of a system of morals, in opposition to a system then in vogue, which was founded on what was called the 'moral sense.' The ideas, however, there attached to it, are vague, and defective in practical application.

Nearly at the same time appeared in French the celebrated work of Helvetius '*Sur l'Esprit.*' In this a commencement was made, of the application of the principle to practical use. A connection was established between the ideas attached to the word 'happiness,' and those attached to the words 'pleasure' and 'pain;' by which a great advance was made in the developement of the meaning of the terms 'utility' and 'principle of utility.'

In 1749 appeared the work of David Hartley known by the title of 'Hartley on Man.' It at first consisted of two volumes octavo; which by the abridgements of Dr. Priestley were afterwards reduced to one. In this a greater number of species were ranked under the two heads of pleasure and pain, than in the work of Helvetius; but the collection was still exceedingly defective.

In the year 1768 appeared a pamphlet of Dr. Priestley's, (Essay on the First Principles of Government and Liberty), written, as was his custom, in a hasty manner; but containing in one of its pages the express phrase 'the greatest sum of happiness.' And this was represented as a principle containing the only rational foundation of rules for human conduct. *

* In 1766 Beccaria had published at Haarlem, '*la massima felicità divisa nel maggior numero*' (the greatest happiness divided among the greater number).

In the same year this pamphlet fell into the hands of Mr. Bentham at Oxford; he being at that time not quite twenty-one years of age. Like Archimedes on the discovery of the principle of hydrostatics, he exclaimed Εὕρηκα, and from that page of that pamphlet, was drawn the phrase, the import of which it has been the object of his subsequent writings to diffuse.

In 1776 came out Mr. Bentham's first publication, entitled 'A Fragment on Government.' In this he employed the phrase of Priestley's which had made so strong an impression on his mind; and endeavoured to enforce its reception as the radical principle of government, in preference to the fiction of Locke denominated 'the original contract.' In 1781 was begun the printing of his 'Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation;' but it was not till 1789 that it was brought into the state in which it now appears. In this was seen the first inventory that had been attempted, of the different forms of stimulus to human action called 'motives;' each motive being accompanied by a reference to the corresponding pleasure or pain, in the prospect of which it has its origin.

In 1817 appeared his tract entitled 'Springs of Action;' which is composed of a pretty extensive Table, elucidated by notes. In this was added for the first time a list of 'interests;' each interest being referred to its corresponding motive, as the motives were to pleasures or to pains.

In the course of the construction of this Table, occasion was given for observing the expression of approbation or the contrary, which in the case of almost every species of motive, is introduced into its designation, according to the colouring desired to be given to it by the speaker. Hence in most cases there were found to be three sorts of designations; one in which the expression of approbation was superadded; another, in which there was the expression of disapprobation; and a third, which presented the original idea without either. The extent to which these kinds of adjuncts were employed as instruments of deception, induced the author of the Table to mark the difference between the classes by appropriate denominations. The terms chosen by him for the two classes which depart in opposite directions from the unadulterated idea, were *eulogistic*, or if preferred, approbative,—and its Greek opposite *dyslogistic*, or if preferred, disapprobative. All new terms have a portion of stiffness; but the proof of their goodness, is the degree in which they finally wind themselves into the practice of mankind. On this ground, there are appearances, that the Greek terms here mentioned, possess a force and spirit, at least to Grecian ears, that will confer on them the durability the Roman emperor complained of being unable to bestow.

On his entrance upon the *moral* (including the *political*) branch of science as it then existed, it appeared to him to be in nearly the same condition as that in which Lord Bacon found the *physical*. The matter of what was called the science, was composed of a more or less copious assemblage of words; and the instruction attempted, consisted principally in conveying information of the relation borne by the import of one of these words to the import of another,—but with an almost total absence of any endeavour to trace the relations of the things typified to each other in the way of cause and effect. Hence, as '*Fiat experimentum*' was the aphorism of Bacon, so '*Fiat observatio*' seemed to be the aphorism demanded in the present case. An Imperial dilettante, or a Colonial Secretary, may be able to pursue his studies by making original experiments upon mankind. But unofficial philosophers must be content to classify appearances as they arise; without attempting to direct the course of their succession.

In proceeding to make trial of the application of the new principle, it was in the first instance very open to observation, that by far the greatest part of what is done in the way of legislation, is done by making a choice of evils. No government can be without coercion; and the degree in which its ends can be obtained by reward, is so comparatively small, that it may almost be left out of consideration altogether. But if the object of government is to effect an end by means of pains, there appeared strong *primâ facie* reason for believing, that the object of a *good* government must be to prevent a greater evil at the expense of a less; and this led rapidly to a vague surmise,—a wandering suspicion mixed with hope, like 'love's youngest dream,'—that the object of good government might possibly be the carrying the diminution of evil, or the increase of happiness, to its *maximum*. This was the vision of which the prophet caught a glance from his Pisgah, and straightway girded himself to enter on the promised land.

And here was to be encountered in the outset the perplexing question, of *why* the production of the maximum of happiness ought to be the object of government. One possible response was, that it is the production of good. But why ought a government to promote the production of good?—for to say that it cannot be a good government without it, is at best only an identical proposition. Cicero would have answered that it was because it was virtuous, becoming, or perhaps god-like; and philosopher Square would have said, it was because it was according to the fitness of things. But these are all reasons *à l'antique;* and would not in this day content a Mechanics Institute. Something might perhaps be done towards an answer, by Euclid's mode

improperly included under the title of *reductio ad absurdum*, or defying any body to prove that the object of government should be any thing else. For if it is any thing else, the object must be the production of a smaller quantity of good instead of a greater; or in other words, the production of relative evil—which is an unmaintainable proposition *s'il y en avait jamais*. But the real answer appeared to be, that men at large *ought* not to allow a government to afflict them with more evil or less good, than they can help. What a *government* ought to do, is a mysterious and searching question, which those may answer who know what it means; but what other men ought to do, is a question of no mystery at all. The word *ought*, if it means any thing, must have reference to some kind of interest or motives; and what interest a government has in doing right, when it happens to be interested in doing wrong, is a question for the school-men. The fact appears to be, that *ought* is not predicable of governments. The question is not why governments are bound not to do this or that, but why other men should let them if they can help it. The point is not to determine why the lion should not eat sheep, but why men should eat their own mutton if they can.

It might, perhaps, be objected in this place, that the obligation may be solved into the fact, that men would not consent to obey a government that acted on the principle of diminishing the possible quantity of happiness, and therefore the members of the government are interested in preventing their own overthrow. But the misfortune is, that this solution does not extend to the most needful case; which is that of the successful establishment of an open and avowed diminution of human happiness by the exercise of government. The system of Colonial Slavery, is an overt instance of this kind; but still it is not overthrown. The danger of overthrow, therefore, is not a competent answer to the question 'Why the aggregate of human happiness should not be diminished by law in the West Indies.'

The only rivals of any note to the new principle which were brought forward, were those known by the names of the 'moral sense,' and the 'original contract.' The new principle superseded the first of these, by presenting it with a guide for its decisions; and the other, by making it unnecessary to resort to a remote and imaginary contract, for what was clearly the business of every man and every hour. Throughout the whole horizon of morals and of politics, the consequences were glorious and vast. It might be said without danger of exaggeration, that they who sat in darkness had seen a great light. The mists in which mankind had jousted against each other were swept away, as when the sun of astronomical science arose in the full

— "A propos d'un édit publié en 1667 au nom et par les ordres de Louis XIV: 'Qu'on ne dise donc point que le souverain ne soit point sujet aux lois de son Etat, puisque la proposition contraire est une vérité du droit des gens que la flatterie a quelquefois attaquée, mais que les bons princes ont toujours défendue comme une divinité tutélaire de leurs Etats. Combien est-il plus légitime de dire, avec le sage Caton, que la parfaite félicité d'un royaume est qu'un prince soit obéi de ses sujets, que le prince obéit à la loi, et que la loi soit droite et toujours dirigée au bien public." J. Rousseau, sur l'origine de l'inégalité &c

developement of the principle of Gravitation. If the object of legislation was the greatest happiness, *Morality* was the promotion of the same end by the conduct of the individual; and by analogy, the happiness of the world was the Morality of Nations. The awful names of Justice and Liberty,—which men had long felt after, if haply they might comprehend them,—ceased to designate unknown powers; and *Justice* stood forth as the rule of appropriation which produced the greatest happiness, while *Liberty* was the being subject to no restraints except what were necessary for the promotion of the same end. *Rights*, were what by the same rule men *ought* to have; not the miserable technicality, of what laws and lawyers might have left them. Or if preferred, they were the securities which individuals could not be unprovided with, without a diminution of the aggregate of happiness. Rights, therefore, in this sense, were no more abrogated by the absence of enjoyment, than Moral rules are abrogated by the absence of obedience; and in this sense it was, that men had murmured of their *Natural* and their *Imprescriptible* rights. What men *ought* to have—that is, what it is for the advancement of the aggregate happiness that they should have—depends neither on lawyers nor on kings, but on the constitution of things imprinted by the Maker; and is consequently immutable like that. *Equality*, meant equality in the enjoyment of such rights as the rule of the greatest happiness assigned; and it was an easy inference from practical observation, that in the case of all the most important rights, the assignment was uniform to all mankind. The *Sovereignty of the people*, meant the acknowledgment of the essential right of the community to obtain its own happiness in its own way; and a *Constitution*, meant a reserved rule or rules, which in the exercise of this sovereignty it was not committed to the delegated rulers to infringe. A *Legitimate* government, was such a government as was established or assented to by the community, in the uncontrolled exercise of its last-mentioned right; and the *Illegitimate*, were all besides. A *Free* government, was one which not only was legitimate, but in which the members of the community actually exercised an effective portion of the direction of their own concerns, either by the means of representatives or otherwise; and in proportion to the degree in which this exercise was extended and secured, was the degree in which freedom could be predicated of the result. A *Constitutional* government, was one in which there was an acknowledgment of the reserved rule or rules denominated a Constitution; a necessary ingredient of a free government, but not identical in terms. Lastly, a glimpse had been received from beyond the Atlantic, of the possibility of such an institution as a *Constitutional Ma-*

L'amour de la démocratie est celle de l'égalité et de la frugalité. Montesq. L. 5. c. 2.

jority; or committing the charge of alterations in the Constitution itself, to, for instance, a threefold majority of the ordinary delegates, as a provision in the last resort, for what of change may be demanded by the imperfection of human foresight and the flow of time. All the sublime obscurities, which had haunted the mind of man from the first formation of society,—the phantoms whose steps had been on earth, and their heads among the clouds,—marshalled themselves at the sound of this new principle of connection and of union, and stood a regulated band, where all was order, symmetry, and force. What men had struggled for and bled, while they saw it but as through a glass darkly,—was made the object of substantial knowledge and lively apprehension. The bones of sages and of patriots stirred within their tombs, that what they dimly saw and followed, had become the world's common heritage. And the great result was wrought by no supernatural means, nor produced by any unparallelable concatenation of events. It was foretold by no oracles, and ushered by no portents; but was brought about by the quiet and reiterated exercise of God's first gift of common sense. Even religions bowed before the discovered rule; and the reason why the divine origin of the Koran and the Vedas was to be disallowed, was because they could not endure the test, which heaven in the exercise of its simpler Providence had revealed to human apprehension. Fanatics and bigots might frown; but good men of all creeds hailed the appearance of peace on earth and good-will towards men, in the establishment of the principle which made human happiness the end of all studies, and the land-mark of all toils.

Subordinate to the greater results of the discovery, were many other inferences both in morals and in politics. The innumerable questions which had been agitated concerning the merit or demerit of certain actions, were now found to be decided by a rule perfectly within the reach of human application, and which exhibited itself as a rigid touchstone of other systems. The paradox of the Stoics was dissolved by simple transposition; and instead of virtue making happiness, what makes the general happiness was virtue. But it was in the relations which pass under the name of the political, that its agency was most decisive. If the happiness of men was the object of government, it was plain that this object was to be obtained by their being governed with a view to their own interest, and not to the interest of somebody else. And the way to effect this, was that they should govern *themselves*, or which amounts to the same thing in the view proposed, should hold an effectual check over those to whom the reins of government are committed.† That a community of any great extent should govern by the constant act and deed of all its

† "It be said that those governments in which the democratical part governs most do more greatly err in the choice of men, or in the means for preserving that purity of manners which is required for the well being of a people than those wherein aristocracy prevails, I confess it." Algernon Sidney Discourses on Gov. comm. II. 19.

members, was as palpably inconvenient, amounting to the impracticable, as that the owner of a large fortune should be his own steward, butler, groom, huntsman, coachman, all in one. But it no more followed in one case than in the other, that the impracticability of exercising these offices except by delegate, derogates from the complete and perfect right to superintend their exercise by others. The sovereignty of the community, like that of the rich proprietor over his corks and his curry-combs, is an essential, not an active sovereignty. It is a sovereignty which can only be well exercised by delegating its execution to others under rules; but it is not on that account less real or less solid.

But if the community is to hold an effectual check over those who are to govern for it, the government, or at all events some integral and indispensable branch of it, must be committed to individuals chosen by the community at large or by its subdivisions. The Whigs say not,—and that it should be committed to somebody else, meaning themselves; and on this they and the community are at issue. And here rises to view the greatest political invention of the moderns; which is the system of Representation. And the plain and simple *rationale* of the right of Representation, unembarrassed with the consideration of what it may be one dishonest man's interest to defend or another's to acquire, is that all should be admitted equally, and that when all are so admitted and not before, each man possesses the full enjoyment of all the influence his wealth, talents, or reputation, can confer on him without infringing on the happiness of others. The principle of this is as clear, as that of the right of equal admission to the market. The equality of admission, does not make men possess an equality of influence when they are there. On the contrary it is precisely then, that the rich man has the just advantage of the influence, which there is no intention to deny him. The fallacy is in stating, that the rich cannot have their proper influence in the market, unless the poor are kept out besides. Property should be represented; but then it should be every body's property; the fallacy is, that it should be only the property of those who happen to have a great deal. And as in the common market, so in the greater market of election. In such a contest of interests, every man's influence would fetch exactly what it was worth; and the theory which claims for the rich not only the influence of their riches, but the exclusion of the poor besides, is as visibly and demonstrably unjust, as in the market case produced as parallel. This furnishes the foundation of the right of *Universal Suffrage;* a right which no reasonable man that understands it will ever consent to disavow, however remote the

actual condition of society may be from its practical enjoyment. To think common sense at home, is a luxury that might have been indulged in in Egypt; even though all the surrounding world worshipped a crocodile or a monkey. Closely connected with the *universality* of suffrage, is the opportunity of its frequent exercise. For the only practical way of preserving a check over those appointed to the directorship of the great Company, is to send them back to their constituents frequently; and the more frequent the reference, the more perfect the check. And the period which would occur to every man who had no sinister interests to promote, would be that it should be *annual*. The organ of the Whigs once undertook to ask, why the period should be precisely a year, and what virtue there was in a planet's periodic time, that should connect it with a seat in parliament. To which the answer is by asking, why men do other things yearly, and not, for instance, every eighteen months. Why do men make up their accounts once a year, hold Long Vacations once a year, keep their birth-days once a year, visit their friends once a year, physic and purge, eat mince-pies, issue Army-lists and the Red Book, and take the sacrament by Act of Parliament;—if it is not that the necessary connection of the seasons with many of the acts of man, makes it highly convenient for him to bind up his other actions in the same routine, and hence in all things that require regularity of performance, his option is in reality to do them once a year, or once in two. But between these, there is a gulph, which passed, leads easily to once in seven, or once in ten. The tradesman who should defer making up his accounts to a second year, would soon bring them to a conclusion in the Fleet; and if all the members of the community had as lively a sense of their interests as the tenant of a chandler's shop, they would be equally jealous of the laxity of delay. Sensible men make their stand upon the right side of the gulph; and fools upon the other.

On these two important points of Universal Suffrage and its Annual exercise, the objections oftenest urged relate to some impracticability or difficulty to arise in the execution. On which it may be answered, that if an intelligent committee was appointed, with instructions to devise the mode in which the greatest obstacles should be thrown in the way of the quiet exercise of the operation of appointing representatives, it would clearly devise the actual one. In the first place, it is plain, that it would advise the compression of the power of choice into the hands of a few; that there might be a physical possibility of the few being bribed. Secondly, it would recommend the extension of the period of service; in order that it might be better worth while for the candidates to bribe, and

that the electors might be enabled to indulge in riot on an occasion that occurs but seldom, in a way they could not do if it occurred more frequently. Thirdly and lastly, it would suggest that each man's way of voting should be published; in order that the greatest possible scope might be given to the operation of party feelings, and no man be able to escape by holding his peace. This is what a sensible committee would recommend; and, by consequence, it is what sensible men on the other side would recommend to be undone. It is evident at sight, that the difficulties suggested are not only factitious and artificial, but require great pains to secure and keep them in existence. It would be as much easier to take men's votes annually than septennially, as for a boy to comb his hair daily than once a week,—if the management was in the hands of those who had an interest in its success. And the votes of an entire population might be taken with as much facility as a census, if the way that leads to such a result was followed, instead of the way that does not. When the lion builds its own cage, interests hostile to the good of the community will pare their own claws. But whether their claws are pared or not, it is satisfactory to know what arrangements are directed to the good of the community, and what are curiously and scientifically adjusted to its opposite.

These are the principles against which the Whigs have directed the small battery of their wit; which was more than it was politic to do, upon the strength of 'past renown and antiquated power.' Among other specimens of their ingenuity, they think they embarrass the subject, by asking why, on the principles in question, women should not have votes as well as men. *And why not?*—

'Gentle shepherd, tell me why.'—

If the mode of election was what it ought to be, there would be no more difficulty in women voting for a representative in parliament, than for a director at the India House. The world will find out at some time, that the readiest way to secure justice on some points, is to be just on all;—that the whole is easier to accomplish than the part;—and that whenever the camel is driven through the eye of the needle, it would be simple folly and debility that would leave a hoof behind.

Another of their perverted ingenuities is, that 'they are rather inclined to think,' that it would, on the whole, be for the interest of the majority to plunder the rich; and if so, the Utilitarians will say, that the rich *ought* to be plundered. On which it is sufficient to reply, that for the majority to plunder the rich, would amount to a declaration that nobody should be rich; which, as all men wish to be rich, would involve a suicide of hope.

And as nobody has shown a fragment of reason why such a proceeding should be for the general happiness, it does not follow that the 'Utilitarians' would recommend it. The Edinburgh Reviewers have a waiting gentlewoman's ideas of 'Utilitarianism.' It is unsupported by any thing but their pitiable 'We are rather inclined to think'—and is utterly contradicted by the whole course of history and human experience besides,—that there is either danger or possibility of such a consummation as the majority agreeing on the plunder of the rich. There have been instances in human memory, of their agreeing to plunder rich oppressors, rich traitors, rich enemies,—but the rich *simpliciter*, never. It is as true now as in the days of Harrington, that 'a people never will, nor ever can, never did, nor ever shall, take up arms for levelling.' All the commotions in the world have been for something else; and 'levelling' is brought forward as the blind, to conceal what the other was.

The real errors of the author of the 'Essays,' may be concluded under the lawyer-like mistake, of pouncing on the technical and secondary meaning of terms, to the exclusion of the primary. As lawyers and law-makers became anxious to secure the adherence of mankind to their decisions, they found a strong interest in representing that *their law* was right, and right was *their law*. They were not only to be the servants of Astrea, but they were to be Astrea herself. Hence they applied themselves to suppress all reference to the awful though obscure ideas which men possessed, of a power to which both law and lawyers were meant to be subservient; the object being to transfer to themselves the reverence intended for the other. The only wonder is, that when they went to the secondary sense, they did not go to the ternary, and declare that the word justice meant nothing but a justice of the peace. With deference, however, to their authority, the original sense of words exists as ever; and 'seeking justice and doing right,' *does not* mean seeking Coke and doing Blackstone.

But as all knowledge is only the accumulation of improvements, the very title of the principle in question was found susceptible of progressive melioration. Its first name, 'the Principle of Utility,' was defective in as much as it did not express the nature and extent of the utility intended; and the same objection extended to the terms 'Utilitarian' and 'Utilitarianism.' It may be useful to a thief to steal; but it is useful to the community at large, that men should not steal; and it was this last utility, and not the first, which was intended, but not expressed. Its next denomination was, the principle of 'the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number.' This was erroneous by superfluity; and was in fact attempting to say

the same thing twice instead of once. Though nothing in the writings of any of the proposers supported such a construction, it was liable to be represented as maintaining, that if, for example, a nation was composed of a million of black men and a million and one of white, the white were justified in sacrificing as much as they pleased of the happiness of the million, for the sake of any increase that might be made to the happiness of the million and one. The latest improvement, therefore, of the philosopher whose long life has been dedicated to the diffusion of the principle,—and of which the present Article has to boast of being the announcement and the organ,—is to dismiss the superfluous 'greatest number,' and declare that the just object of politics and morals, is simply '*THE GREATEST HAPPINESS.*'

In this manner the magnificent proposition emerges clearly, and disentangled from its accessary. And the accessary proposition is, that the greatest aggregate of happiness must always include the happiness of the greatest number. For the greatest number must always be composed of those who individually possess a comparatively small portion of the good things of life; and if any thing is taken from one of these to give to the others, it is plain that what he loses in happiness, is greater than what the others gain. It is the mathematical assertion, that a quantity x is greater in comparison of a small quantity it is taken from, than of a large one it is added to. It is the avowal that half-a-crown is of more consequence to the porter that loses it, than to the Duke of Bedford who should chance to find it;—that a chief portion of the baseness of the rich man who seized the poor's ewe lamb, consisted in taking what caused so much greater pain to the sufferer, than happiness to the receiver.

It would clearly be very desirable to compress the expression of 'The Principle of the Greatest Aggregate of Happiness,' or its conjugates, into a single term. Those who object indiscriminately to inventions in nomenclature, are either ignorant of their power, or jealous of their effect. It is, however, very difficult to combine the three ideas of 'greatest, aggregate, and happiness,' in a single word. What friendly efforts have failed to effect, the scorner has perhaps supplied. That name is best, which most strongly excites in the minds of friends and enemies, the impressions designed to be conveyed. It has always been permitted, to learn from an opponent. The Utilitarians shall abandon foreign titles, and 'the sacred language of the *Benthamites*' be all that shall be heard of by posterity.

THE END.

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