The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas by Edward Westermarck
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BOOK REVIEWS.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MORAL IDEAS. By Edward Westermarck, Ph. D. Volume II. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1908. Pp. xv, 852.

It is difficult to give in a review any idea of the great merits of Dr. Westermarck's work. For it consists not so much in any theory which could be quoted and examined as in the vast mass of well-arranged facts which he has collected with reference to every branch of morality. It is only possible to indicate what are the divisions in which this treasure of detail is arranged.

In the first volume (reviewed in the JOURNAL, in October, 1906) Dr. Westermarck explained his theory of the development of moral ideas, and then commenced his survey of the ideas which have been actually held by mankind. He began with those ideas which concern the agent's duties to other men, and resumes this subject at the beginning of the second volume, the first two chapters of which (XXVIII and XXIX) deal with the right of property. He concludes his survey of the past and present with an anticipation that "the law of property will sooner or later undergo a radical change." The ground for this statement is that "though ideas of right and wrong may for some time outlive the conditions from which they sprang, they cannot do so forever."

The next two chapters concern regard for truth and good faith. This includes not only the duty of stating what is believed to be the truth, but also the idea of seeking the truth. Dr. Westermarck rejects the theory of M. Réville that Christianity has been specially favorable to the disposition to seek truth at any price. Dr. Westermarck's appeal to history against this doctrine seems, to me at least, quite convincing.

Politeness, gratitude, and patriotism are then discussed, and this part of the subject closes with a discussion of the origin and development of the altruistic sentiment. Among many interesting things in this chapter we may quote the author's opinion that "man was not originally a gregarious animal, in the proper sense of the word; . . . he originally lived in families rather than in tribes." This conclusion is based partly on the habits of the manlike apes. The family is thus earlier

than the tribe, and lost some of its relative importance when the tribe arose. But afterwards, again, "the family was strengthened because the clan was weakened . . . the father became a patriarch only as the inheritor of the authority which formerly belonged to the clan. But . . . at a higher stage the family again lost in importance." We may notice in passing that Dr. Westermarck considers it probable that in primitive man, as in other mammals, the generative power was restricted to a certain season.

From duties to others we pass to duties to self. In the chapter on Suicide, perhaps the most remarkable fact mentioned is the opinion which was held by certain early Christians that the suicide of Judas was a greater sin than his betrayal of Jesus. We also learn that certain American Indians compel a man who has cut himself to pay his mother's family compensation for shedding the family blood, while his father's family receive "tear-money," and any friends who are present must be compensated for their grief at the accident. The remaining self-regarding duties are considered under the heads of industry, restriction in diet, and asceticism.

Duties arising out of the relation of the sexes form the next division. We come first to marriage, which Dr. Westermarck defines as "a more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of the offspring." In this sense Dr. Westermarck believes that marriage has existed through the whole history of our species, being "an inheritance from some apelike progenitor." (For the proof of this and various other propositions on this subject the author refers to his earlier work, "History of Human Marriage.") From a social point of view, however, such a connection cannot be called a marriage until it is regulated by some custom or law.

The theory by which Dr. Westermarck accounts for the almost universal condemnation of incest is somewhat elaborate. The sexual instinct being very variable, he considers it probable that from time to time some men would feel an aversion to sexual intercourse with those women with whom they had been brought up from childhood. Such an aversion would be perpetuated and strengthened by natural selection. For most of the people with whom any person lived would be his near relations, and intercourse with near relations is more or less detri-

mental to the offspring. Those families in which such an aversion was hereditary would tend to supplant those who did not possess it.

In this way a strong sentiment might arise against the marriage of persons who had been brought up together. But, says Dr. Westermarck, "the objection has been raised that, if my explanation of the prohibition of incest were correct, connections between unrelated persons who have been brought up together should be as repulsive as connections between near kin." His answer is: "I do not deny that unions between the nearest blood relatives inspire a horror of their own; and it seems natural that they should do so considering that from earliest times the aversion to sexual intercourse between persons living closely together has been expressed in prohibition against unions between kindred." But what the theory, as it seems to me, fails to explain is why the aversion to intercourse between persons brought up together *should* have been expressed in prohibitions against unions between kindred. Why was it not expressed directly by prohibition against unions between people brought up together? It is true that intercourse between people brought up together is only injurious to the species when they are also close kindred. But then this fact is not known to all the primitive peoples who condemn incest as such, and cannot account for this expression of the original aversion being chosen.

Dr. Westermarck does not regard polyandry as primitive. "On the contrary, this form of marriage seems to require a certain degree of civilization." "Monogamy is all the more likely to have been the general rule among our earliest human ancestors as it seems to be so among the manlike apes."

Chapters follow on celibacy, adultery, and homosexual love. "During the Middle Ages," we are told, "heretics were accused of unnatural vice as a matter of course. Indeed, so close was the connection between the two delinquencies that the same name was applied to both."

We now pass to the duty of men toward the lower animals, in which connection is also treated the doctrine, generally prevalent in the Church of Rome, that no such duties exist. This somewhat remarkable view, however, was also held, as Dr. Westermarck reminds us, by so good a Protestant as Kant.

The next topic dealt with is the duties we owe, or are held to owe, toward the dead. Dr. Westermarck is inclined to think

that the belief in the continued existence of the dead is universal among savages, and to doubt the accuracy of the statements which affirm that certain tribes have no such belief. But the belief in the form which it generally takes among savages is not very cheerful. "Generally speaking, my collection of facts has led me to the conclusion that the dead are more commonly regarded as enemies than as friends." The author thinks that the mourning fast, and other ceremonies connected with death, are essentially "a precaution taken by the survivors, and not a tribute to the dead." An instance is given of an African tribe who "bestow as much care on the tombs of foes who have fallen near their villages as on those of their own warriors"—a practice which must evidently arise from fear.

The question of the proper treatment of the dead includes, of course, the question whether it is desirable to eat their bodies, and a special chapter is devoted to cannibalism. Wherever this prevails, it has always, Dr. Westermarck thinks, had to conquer an original and instinctive aversion, common to man and the other animals. "Although our knowledge of their habits in this respect is defective, there can be little doubt that carnivorous animals as a rule refuse to eat members of their own species; and this reluctance is easy to understand considering its race-preserving tendency."

The last division of the subject is the duty of men toward the gods. Here Mr. Westermarck distinguishes between magic and religion in a manner substantially similar to that adopted by Hegel and Dr. Frazer. "Religion may be defined as a belief in and a regardful attitude toward a supernatural being on whom man feels himself dependent and to whose will he makes an appeal in his worship. Supernatural mechanical power, on the other hand, is applied in magic. He who performs a purely magical act utilizes such power without making any appeal at all to the will of a supernatural being."

He continues: "This, I think, is what we generally understand by religion and magic. But in the Latin word *religio* there seems to be no indication of such a distinction. *Religio* is probably related to *religare,* which means "to tie." It is commonly assumed that the relationship between these words implies that in religion man was supposed to be tied by his god. But I venture to believe that the connection between them allows of another and more natural interpretation—that

it was not the man who was tied by the god, but the god who was tied by the man." In support of this view Dr. Westermarck gives some very interesting observations made in Morocco.

Two chapters follow on the duties to gods. These duties have, in various countries, included the slaughter at solemn festivals of deified men. Dr. Westermarck, on this subject, remarks: "As Dr. Frazer himself observes, in the chain of his evidence a link is wanting: he can produce no direct proof of the idea that the soul of the slain man-god is transmitted to his royal successor. In the absence of such evidence, I venture to suggest a somewhat different explanation, which seems to me more in accordance with known facts—to wit, that the new king is supposed to inherit, not the predecessor's soul, but his divinity or holiness, which is looked upon in the light of a mysterious entity, temporarily seated in the ruling sovereign, but separable from him and transferable to another individual."

It is interesting to hear that in Scotland, as late as 1767, a young heifer was offered in the holy fire during a cattle plague.

"The idea of sacrifice being a conductor of imprecations," says Dr. Westermarck, "has hitherto almost entirely escaped the notice of students of early religion." He is himself disposed to attribute considerable importance to this practice of sacrifice, and quotes several instances in support of it.

The last subject treated of is gods as guardians of morality. On the atrocity of the sin of atheism, as compared with unworthy conceptions of the divine idea, the author quotes Plutarch's well-known remark: "I for my part would much rather have men to say of me that there never was a Plutarch at all, nor is now, than to say that Plutarch is a man inconstant, fickle, easily moved to anger, revengeful for trifling provocations, vexed at small things." Dr. Westermarck's criticism is that "Plutarch seems to have forgotten that a person is always most sensitive on his weak points, and that the weakest point in a god is his existence."

Dr. Westermarck is of opinion that Pfleiderer and Caird have considerably exaggerated the extent to which primitive morality was affected by religion. "I have been led to the conclusion that among uncivilized races the moral ideas relating to men's conduct toward one another have been much more influenced

by the belief in magic forces which may be utilized by man than by the belief in the free activity of gods."

I trust that even this very inadequate abstract of the contents of Dr. Westermarck's work may be sufficient to make evident the value of this great contribution to learning.

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Justice and Liberty. A Political Dialogue. By G. Lowes Dickinson. London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1908. Pp. 229.

The three speakers in this political dialogue may be described, with a certain freedom but not altogether inaccurately, as an aristocratic and a democratic socialist and a defender of the existing order. In relation to their ideas, my position is paradoxical. While I have a strong disposition to agree with everything that the two idealists say in condemnation of the present industrial anarchy, which they describe as a mixture of oligarchy and ochlocracy, I think that, as against them, the practical-minded banker has on the whole the best case. In none of the systems outlined do I find justice a conspicuous feature; but Stuart seems to me right in what he says about liberty. "No free society would ever tolerate Collectivism at all" (p. 136). "I insist that even an unskilled laborer benefits by and consciously enjoys his freedom under the present *régime*" (p. 141). "There would, I am sure, be less freedom, in a very real sense, under Collectivism, than there is now, not only for the few but for the many" (p. 143).

Again, the Utopian aristocrat Harington seems to me to have a better case than the academical democrat Martin when he declines to sacrifice the best that the highest faculties can produce under the condition of leisure for the sake of a more evenly diffused material comfort. His aristocracy, he says, would see that an appropriate share of labor and talent was devoted to noble and beautiful things. Martin replies that he does not know whether the love of beautiful and noble things is a permanent factor or a transitory phase in human nature, but he hopes that it is permanent; and if the instinct for art persists, then it will have a healthier and nobler development under his social democracy because it will be the spontaneous