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BALANCING RESULTS

THE LAW OF CONSEQUENCES AND THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE.

Good or Evil in Things is Discovered by Observations of Consequences. Morals Are Determined by the Consequences of Human Actions.

A reaction is the consequence of an action; an effect is the consequence of a cause; a result is the consequence of an antecedent. It is evident that the words reaction, effect, result and consequence express different manifestations of one law, usually called the law of causation, though it would be, I believe, more correctly named the law of consequences.

We shall understand more clearly the interactions in human affairs when we recognize that the meaning of the words reaction, effect and result is included in the word consequence. We may doubt the importance of reaction in our affairs, but we shall not doubt the importance of consequences.

We are compelled to give consideration to consequences in the most trivial affairs. One has consequences in view when he strikes a match, sets a pot to boil, plants a seed, pulls a weed, sharpens a pencil, mends a fence. Shall I take an umbrella? I balance the danger of rain against the annoyance of the umbrella and decide accordingly. Shall I change my coat? Take another cup of coffee? Walk or ride? Each question will be decided in accordance with my estimate of the balance of results. In considering possible advantages or disadvantages, gains or losses, we are balancing consequences, endeavoring to anticipate and weigh the results of our actions.

Regret is usually a reminder of a neglect or misjudgment of consequences, while repentance and reformation indicate a waking up concerning consequences. Our interest, curiosity, anxieties, fears, hopes and ambitions are concentrated upon consequences. We seek advice when we are doubtful about consequences. Precepts and examples elucidate consequences. We work and rest, eat and drink, scheme and plan, spend and save, for consequences.

The lesson of consequences which the individual often learns slowly and imperfectly the sound business organizations acquire quickly and enforce by discipline. The salesmen in a successful store are characterized by tidiness, promptness and a desire to please; the employees of the important railroads are not even permitted to answer insult with insult. The industry that is intelligently managed will avoid misrepresentation and deception, knowing that a reputation for truth and fairness is vital to continuous success. The shrewdest maxims of trade are built upon the observation of consequences.

That mind is the strongest which has the clearest judgment of consequences. The fools are those who know little about consequences. The child must be guarded because it is ignorant of consequences. What we know of narcotics, stimulants, antidotes, hygiene, surgery, chemistry, agriculture, mechanics, commerce, culture, we know through the observation of consequences. The best razor, plow, sanitary system, plan of social betterment, is that which produces the best results. Knowledge, learning and experience deal wholly with cause and consequence. The science of astronomy seeks to comprehend the heavenly bodies and their influences upon each other. The science of chemistry explains the consequences of chemical action. The science of political economy aims to distinguish and mark the good and evil results of different systems of land tenure, taxation, trade and finance. The science of government would determine what political system is best for a people. The science of war seeks to know what arms, equipments, forces and maneuvers will inflict the greatest injury upon the enemy with a minimum of expenditure. The science of language deals with the utility of words, pronunciation and forms of expression. And so on through the whole of human experience knowledge seeks to distinguish that which has the best results from that which has inferior or evil results.

Our ideas of right and wrong are due to the nature of the responses to human actions. How do we know that truth is better than falsehood? Because we are better pleased with ourselves when we speak truthfully than when we lie; because truth is essential to understanding; because we despise lying in others; because lying leads to confusion, uncertainty, chaos, enmity and to other evil consequences. And so also we have formed a judgment of loyalty and treachery, cruelty and kindness, virtue and vice, by their consequences.

Our laws, customs and commandments would not prove to us that truth is better than lying if our own experience did not confirm it. The Decalogue is effective only so far as nature corroborates it.

Our common conceptions of morality are the results of the observation of human actions and their consequences—of cause and effect, of action and reaction. We know that certain actions are right and others wrong, as we know that bread is good and straw bad for food; that light clothing is more useful in summer than in winter; that cleanliness is better than filthiness; that the way to walk is forward, not backward; that mirth is pleasanter than grief.

As the value of a machine or implement is shown in its working and the value of a tree by its fruit, so the merit or demerit of food, drink, medicine, acts and thoughts is determined by

their results, reactions or effects—by their consequences.—From "Balance: The Fundamental Verity," by Orlando J. Smith.

THE BRIDE'S PORTION.

At One Time It Was Stated in the Wedding Announcement.

It was a common custom in the eighteenth century, especially during the reign of George II., to insert notices of marriage stating the bride's portion in contemporary periodicals and newspapers both in England and Scotland.

Almost every number of the Gentleman's Magazine at that time contained several of these records, of which the following, in 1731, is a specimen: "Married, the Revd. Mr. Roger Walna, of York, about twenty-six year of age, to a Lincolnshire lady, upwards of eighty, with whom he is to have £8,000 in money, £900 per annum, and a coach and four, during life only."

Sometimes the notice merely describes the bride as a lady with a "good portion" or a "genteel fortune." One of the latest notices was in Aris' Birmingham Gazette, July 14, 1800, which recorded the marriage of Mr. Canning, undersecretary of state, to Miss Scott, "with £100,000 fortune."—London Telegraph.

Patches and Politics.

In Lord Lytton's novel, "Devereux," the hero says to Lady Haselton, "Why, you have moved all your patches, one, two, three, six, eight, as I am a gentleman, from the left side of your cheek to the right. What is the reason of so sudden an emigration?" The reply is: "I have changed my politics, count, that is all, and have resolved to lose no time in proclaiming the change." A note reminds the reader that at that time Whig ladies patched on one side of the cheek, Tories on the other. Addison, too, has an amusing Spectator paper on the same subject, relating how he went to the theater and observed two parties of ladies in opposite boxes, the faces on one hand being spotted on the right side of the forehead and those upon the other on the left. He adds: "I am informed that some of them adhere so steadfastly to their party and are so far from sacrificing their zeal for the public to their passion for any particular person, that in a late draft of marriage articles a lady has stipulated with her husband that, whatever his opinions are, she shall be at liberty to patch on which side she pleases."

A Pretense of Knowledge.

"I hate to see a man pretend to know more than he actually does," said the habitually severe man.

"So do I," said the unassuming friend—"so do I. But when your wife insists on having you read the war news out aloud and the children are sitting around listening what are you going to do when you come to all these Japanese and Russian names?"—Washington Star.

Her Age.

Tom—Did Maud tell you the truth when you asked her age? Dick—Yes. Tom—What did she say? Dick—She said it was none of my business.

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