

will bring him satisfaction? (2) Aristippus reduced knowledge to feeling, thus carrying out to its issue the doctrine of Protagoras that "man is the measure of all things." Some men cannot distinguish one colour from another; the varieties of taste are notorious; and the same water which to one finger is hot to another is cold. Colour, taste, sound, odour, hardness and softness, are merely our sensations of things. We cannot come in contact with things in themselves, but must be contented with our own sensations, which alone we directly know. Nor can we show that our own sensations are the same as another's. You and I may both call sugar sweet, but what guarantee have we that the word 'sweet' stands in each case for the same sensation? The use of a common name does not prove a common feeling; in fact, could we both be conscious of a feeling, shared by us in common, this consciousness would itself be an individual feeling, and the same difficulty would again arise, that your feeling cannot be identical with mine. This is a doctrine shocking to common sense, but it is far ahead of no doctrine at all. The modern followers of the Cyrenaics—our Locke, Hume, Mills and Spencers—endorse it, in a modified form, and it is a favorite view of our Lyndalls, Huxleys and Helmholtzes. (3) Aristippus was ahead of Protagoras in boldly affirming that the end of life is to obtain individual pleasure. No other answer would have been consistent with his theory of knowledge. If I can know only my own feelings, by my own feelings must my actions be determined. Why do I keep my hands out of my neighbour's pocket if not because it would *pain* me to take what is not mine? Why do I do a kindness to another if not because in so acting I feel a glow of *pleasure*? Feeling are either (a) pleasurable, (b) painful, or (c) neutral. Now as nobody desires pain, or wishes to have no perceptible feeling at all, every one must desire pleasure and nothing but pleasure. Aristippus asks any one to "look into his own breast," and say if in every act he does he is not seeking to get pleasure and to avoid pain. His proof that pleasure is the end is of the same nature as John Stuart Mill's. "No reason," says Mill, "can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness." Granting to Aristippus that we know only our own feelings, that those feelings are either pleasurable, painful or neutral, and that we always in point of fact desire pleasure, the next question is, What sort of pleasure is the best? What is the highest good, the *summum bonum*? The highest good, Aristippus answers, is neither (i) the mere feeling of tranquility nor (ii) is it the greatest amount of pleasure that we can extract from life as a whole. The pleasure to be sought is positive pleasure, and pleasure which is here and now. His view is not inaptly expressed by Horace, Odeo I, 9., in words thus paraphrased by Allan Ramsay:

"Let next day come as it thinks fit.  
The present minute's only ours;  
On pleasure let's employ our wit,  
And laugh at fortune's reckless powers."

All pleasure is a good, all pain an evil. People think that because some men take pleasure in preying on society the pleasure itself is evil; but the evil lies in the fact that they run counter to the interest of society, not in the pleasure which is felt in so doing. Here we have Hedonism in its unsophisticated form. Is it valuable? Is it true? (1) It is valuable as showing the self-developing power of a new thought. "Ideas," as Luther said, are "living things with hands and feet." Protagoras had said that morality is conventional. Aristippus took hold of this thought, turned it round and round, looking at it on all sides, and, lo! almost before he knows, it has changed under his very eyes into the doctrine that the only reason for obeying the laws of morality or religion is the pleasure that such obedience brings with it. As society is nothing but "anarchy *plus* the street-constable," and religion the "hangman's whip to hold the wretch in order," what a man does he does for his own pleasure and for that alone. Individualism is no longer "wrapt in a robe of rhetoric," but stands forth "naked and unashamed" before the eyes of all men. (2) In his theory of knowledge Aristippus has made an imperfect analysis of sensation. He does not see that color, taste, heat, sound and smell may be states of the organism, while yet extension, motion and weight are properties of things. It is on this distinction that modern sensationalists like Locke rely for the preservation of external reality. As it will come before us in its modern form I will refrain at present from saying more than that Aristippus' doctrine, that we know only our own feelings, leads when carried out to a more complete scepticism than he had any notion of, the scepticism which denies that there is any reality at all. (3) As a matter of fact we seek nothing but pleasure, Aristippus affirms. I deny that. If that were true there would be no distinction between honesty and dishonesty, justice and injustice, chastity and unchastity. As all men act from what appears to them as desirable, i.e., as pleasurable, the poor man who toils from morning to night to support his wife and family is, on that view, no better morally than the "loafer," with whom work is a "last infirmity," and who spends the stray coppers he begs, steals or borrows, in whiskey. What is the use of saying to him, "Go and dig—for pleasure?" His miserable soul is not affected by a "pleasure" so tame. I do not think that this theory of Aristippus can be true. (4) Why is it not true? Because it is self-contradictory, and because it is false to the nobility of human nature. It adopts the advice offered by Byron in his mocking way

"Carpe diem, Juan, carpe, carpe,"  
"To-morrow sees another race as gay  
And transient, and devoured by the same  
happy."

But (a) this is virtually to say, "Seek pleasure by not seeking it; look neither behind nor before, but straight before you." But to the man of a reflective turn of mind the advice is useless, because he cannot follow it, and to a light-hearted Autolycus, who skips along the highway of life, it is superfluous, because reflection is not his