



Obituary

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OBITUARY

FRANCIS YSIDRO EDGEWORTH
1845-1926

FELLOWS of the Society throughout the world will have read with deep regret of the death of Professor Edgeworth from pneumonia on February 13, 1926, with but a few days' illness, just after his eighty-first birthday. Professor Edgeworth was working on this issue of the JOURNAL up to the last day of his life, and his fellow-editor received a final letter from him about its business after the news of his death. Edgeworth was the first Editor of the ECONOMIC JOURNAL and designed and moulded it. He had been continuously responsible for it as Editor, Chairman of the Editorial Board, and Joint Editor from the first issue in March 1891 down to this present issue in March 1926. Only a few, perhaps, can appreciate as fully as his fellow-editor, who writes this notice,¹ the extent of Edgeworth's devotion and services to the JOURNAL, and the irreplaceable loss which we have suffered in his death.

Francis Ysidro Edgeworth was the last in the male line of a famous family—illustrating his own favourite Law of Averages; for his great-great-grandfather, Francis Edgeworth (Protestant Frank), “married successively several wives,”² and his grandfather, the eccentric and celebrated Richard Lovell Edgeworth, married four wives³ and had twenty-one children, of whom seven sons and eight daughters survived him. F. Y. Edgeworth himself was the fifth son of a sixth son. Yet, in 1911, after all the other male members of the family had died without leaving male issue, he succeeded to the family estate of Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford, where the Edgeworths, whose name was taken from Edgeware, formerly Edgeworth, in the County of Middlesex, had established themselves in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. After his succession he had taken interest in gathering up family records and in seeking to restore Edgeworthstown House to

¹ The few days at my disposal for its compilation before the JOURNAL goes to press, and the lack of time to submit proofs to those who might correct them, must be my excuses for its imperfections and possible inaccuracies and omissions.

² *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth*, vol. i, p. 15, where many entertaining stories may be found of Edgeworth's forbears. There are male descendants of Essex Edgeworth, a brother of “Protestant Frank,” to which branch the Abbé Edgeworth belonged; but these must be fourth or fifth cousins.

³ His last wife, F. Y. Edgeworth's grandmother, under whose roof at Edgeworthstown he lived for the first twenty years of his life, survived until 1865, 121 years after her husband's birth and her own 96th year.

something of its former tradition under the care of a married niece, Mrs. Montagu, and her husband. Whilst visiting Ireland every summer in recent years, he did not live at Edgeworthstown, but declared that he looked forward to a happy "old age"—though when, if ever, he would have deemed this period to have arrived, I do not know¹—in the home of his forefathers.

Edgeworth was a notable link with celebrities of almost a century ago—a nephew of the novelist Maria Edgeworth,² who was born in 1767 and was already famous in the eighteenth century, and a first cousin of the poet Thomas Lovell Beddoes, who died in 1847. Sir Walter Scott sent a copy of *Waverley* to Edgeworth's aunt on its first publication, and wrote in the last chapter of it (and afterwards in the preface to the novels) that it was her descriptions of Irish character which first encouraged him to make a similar experiment in Scotland; and Jane Austen sent her a copy of *Emma* on its first publication; and Macaulay sent her his *History*, which contains a reference to her. And in her later days she had visited Ricardo at Gatcombe Park.

F. Y. Edgeworth's father, Francis Beaufort Edgeworth, born in 1809, who had been educated at Charterhouse³ and Cambridge, where he was a prominent member of Sterling's set, has been immortalised in none too flattering terms by Thomas Carlyle, who devoted some three pages to him in his *Life of John Sterling* (Part II, chap. iv). "Frank was a short neat man," Carlyle wrote, "of sleek, square, colourless face (resembling the portraits of his Father), with small blue eyes in which twinkled curiously a joyless smile; his voice was croaky and shrill, with a tone of shrewish obstinacy in it, and perhaps of sarcasm withal. A composed, dogmatic, speculative, exact, and not melodious man. He was learned in Plato and likewise in Kant; well-read

¹ He was ashamed, and not proud, of his years, and enjoined on me most seriously to make no reference in the *ECONOMIC JOURNAL*, as I had desired to do, to his eightieth birthday, on the ground that he did not like to be connected with suggestions of senility and incapacity. His was:

"An age that melts in unperceiv'd decay
And glides in modest innocence away."

² Edgeworth's father Frank was, in fact, the hero of several of Maria's tales. But (according to T. Mozley, *Reminiscences*, vol. i, p. 41) "Maria Edgeworth cared for the actual Frank as much as he cared for her, which was so little that it was better not to mention her."

³ T. Mozley's account of him (*Reminiscences*, p. 41) is as follows: "He was a little fair-haired, blue-eyed, pale-faced fellow, ready and smooth of utterance, always with something in his head and on his tongue, and very much loved in a small circle at Charterhouse. With a fertile imagination and with infinite good-nature he would fall in with any idea for the time and help you on with it. . . . At school he was on Perpetual Motion, so often the first round in the ladder that leads nowhere."

in philosophies and literatures; entertained not creeds, but the Platonic or Kantian *ghosts* of creeds; coldly sneering away from him, in the joyless twinkle of those eyes, in the inexorable jingle of that shrill voice, all manner of Toryisms, superstitions: for the rest, a man of perfect veracity, of great diligence and other worth."

The Reverend Thomas Mozley, who devotes a chapter to Frank Edgeworth in his *Reminiscences*, does not confirm this account of "the good little Frank," as Carlyle calls him: "My ear still testifies that there was sweetness in Edgeworth's voice, and gentleness in his manner and tone. . . . Frank Edgeworth was torn by conflicting systems, and I may add conflicting sensibilities, from childhood. He was a most sympathetic, self-sacrificing being."¹ In Sterling's own description one can gain a further glimpse of the inherited temperament of the son. "Edgeworth seems to me not to have yet gone beyond a mere notional life. It is manifest that he has no knowledge of the necessity of a progress from *Wissen* to *Wesen* (say, *Knowing* to *Being*). . . . I regard it as a very happy thing for Edgeworth that he has come to England. In Italy he probably would never have gained any intuition into the reality of Being as different from a mere power of Speculating and Perceiving; and, of course, without this he can never reach to more than the merest Gnosis; which taken alone is a poor inheritance, a box of title-deeds to an estate which is covered with lava, or sunk under the sea."²

But Sterling's friend was only one of the ingredients which went to the making of Francis Ysidro Edgeworth. For Francis Beaufort Edgeworth "had married a young Spanish wife, whom by a romantic accident he came upon in London."³ Edgeworth's mother was a Spanish lady, Rosa Florentina Eroles. Frank Edgeworth, on his way to Germany to study philosophy in the company of his nephew, T. L. Beddoes, stopped in London to read in the British Museum, and accidentally made the acquaintance of Señorita Eroles, aged sixteen, daughter of a political refugee from Catalonia, married her within three weeks, and carried her off to Florence, where the couple lived for a few years. F. Y. Edgeworth was a good linguist, reading French, German, Spanish and Italian, and his mixed Irish-Spanish-French⁴ origin

¹ *Reminiscences*, vol. i, p. 52.

² Hare's *Sterling*, p. lxxiv.

³ Carlyle, *loc. cit.*

⁴ His great-grandfather was Daniel Augustus Beaufort, the son of a French Huguenot refugee. A genealogical record of the Beaufort family and of the Edgeworths connected with them will be found in *The Family of the Beaufort in France, Holland, Germany, and England*, by W. M. Beaufort, printed for private circulation in 1886.

may have contributed to the markedly international sympathies of his mind.

The external landmarks of Edgeworth's life are soon told. He was born at Edgeworthstown House, where, after returning from Florence and an unsuccessful attempt at schoolmastering, Frank Edgeworth had settled down to manage the family property, on February 8, 1845. His father died when he was two years old. He was brought up at Edgeworthstown under tutors until he went to Trinity College, Dublin, at the age of seventeen. His memory and agility of mind were already at that time remarkable. He told his Oxford cousins ¹ only a few weeks ago how well he still remembered the poetry he had learnt in his youth, and complete books of Milton, Pope, Virgil and Homer would readily come to his memory. At the end of his life he was one of the very few survivors of the tradition of free quotation from the Classics on all occasions and in all contexts.²

He entered Oxford as a scholar of Magdalen Hall, proceeding from there to Balliol, where he obtained a First Class in *Lit. Hum.* There is a tradition in Oxford concerning his "Viva" in the Final Schools. It is said that, being asked some abstruse question, he inquired, "Shall I answer briefly, or at length?" and then spoke for half an hour in a manner which converted what was to have been a Second Class into a First. He was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1877, and spent some years in London with but straitened means, the youngest son of a younger son of an impoverished Irish estate, before he could find, amidst the multiplicity of his intellectual gifts and interests, his final direction. He became a Lecturer in Logic and afterwards Tooke Professor of Political Economy at King's College, London. In 1891 he succeeded Thorold Rogers as Drummond Professor of Political Economy at Oxford, and was elected a Fellow of All Souls, which became his home for the rest of his life. He retired from the Oxford Professorship with the title of Emeritus Professor in 1922. He was President of the Economic Section of the British Association in 1889 and again in 1922. He was an ex-President of the Royal Statistical Society, a Vice-President of the Royal Economic Society, and a Fellow of the British Academy.

At Balliol Edgeworth had been a favourite of Jowett's, and it may have been from Jowett, who was always much interested

¹ Mrs. A. G. Butler and her daughter, Miss C. V. Butler, to whom I am much indebted for some of the foregoing particulars.

² Like his grandfather before him, as Maria Edgeworth records.

in Political Economy and was occasionally teaching the subject at about that time, that he received his first impulse to the subject. The most important influence, however, on his early economic thought was, I think, Jevons, whom he got to know in London, where his Hampstead lodgings were but a short distance from Jevons' house. His contact with Marshall, for whom his respect was unmeasured, came a little later. In *The Academy* for 1881 Marshall reviewed Edgeworth's *Mathematical Psychics*—one of the two only reviews which Marshall ever wrote, the other being of Jevons' *Theory of Political Economy*. This review led to an acquaintanceship which ripened into a lifelong personal and intellectual friendship. Mrs. Marshall has many pleasant memories of Edgeworth's visits to Cambridge—though there can seldom have been a couple whose conversational methods were less suited to one another than Francis Edgeworth and Alfred Marshall.

To judge from his published works, Edgeworth reached Economics, as Marshall had before him, through Mathematics and Ethics. But here the resemblance ceases. Marshall's interest was intellectual and moral, Edgeworth's intellectual and æsthetic. Edgeworth wished to establish *theorems* of intellectual and æsthetic interest, Marshall to establish *maxims* of practical and moral importance. In respect of technical training and of lightness and security of touch, Marshall was much his superior in the mathematical field—Marshall had been second wrangler, Edgeworth had graduated in *Litteris Humanioribus*. Yet Edgeworth, clumsy and awkward though he often was in his handling of the mathematical instrument, was in originality, in accomplishment and in the bias of his natural interest considerably the greater mathematician. I do not think it can be disputed that for forty years past Edgeworth has been the most distinguished and the most prolific exponent in the world of what he himself dubbed *Mathematical Psychics*—the niceties and the broadnesses of the application of quasi-mathematical method to the Social Sciences.

It would be a formidable task to draw up a complete list of Edgeworth's writings,¹ almost entirely in the shape of contri-

¹ A list of twenty-five books and papers, published between 1877 and 1887 is to be found in an Appendix to his *Metretike*. I have recorded twenty-nine items, which bear on the Theory of Probability, ranging between 1883 and 1921 and partly overlapping with the above, in the bibliographical appendix to my *Treatise on Probability*. Thirty-four papers on Economics and seventy-five reviews are reprinted in his recently published *Papers relating to Political Economy*. His papers on Economics, Probability and Statistical Theory, other than reviews, must approach one hundred in number.

butions to learned journals. The earliest with which I am acquainted is his *New and Old Methods of Ethics*, published by Parker and Co. of Oxford in 1877, when he was thirty-two years of age—a paper-covered volume of 92 pages. It mainly consists of a discussion of the quantitative problems which arise in an examination of Utilitarianism, in the form of a commentary on Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* and Barratt's criticisms of Sidgwick in *Mind* for 1877. Edgeworth's peculiarities of style, his brilliance of phrasing, his obscurity of connection, his inconclusiveness of aim, his restlessness of direction, his courtesy, his caution, his shrewdness, his wit, his subtlety, his learning, his reserve—all are there full-grown. Quotations from the Greek tread on the heels of the Differential Calculus, and the philistine reader can scarcely tell whether it is a line of Homer or a mathematical abstraction which is in course of integration. The concluding words of Edgeworth's first flight would have come as well at the end of his long travelling:—

“Where the great body of moral science is already gone before, from all sides ascending, under a master's guidance, towards one serene commanding height, thither aspires this argument, a straggler coming up, *non passibus æquis*, and by a devious route. A devious route, and verging to the untrodden method which was fancifully delineated in the previous section; so far at least as the mathematical handling of pleasures is divined to be conducive to a genuinely physical ethic, *προσίμια αὐτοῦ τοῦ νόμου*.”

Another slim volume (150 pages), *Mathematical Psychics: An Essay on the Application of Mathematics to the Moral Sciences*, appeared in 1881.¹ This was Edgeworth's first contribution to Economics and contains some of the best work he ever did.² During the last months of his life he nursed the intention of reprinting a portion of it and several times consulted me in the matter. Whether he had got so far as to approach the Clarendon Press, which was his desire, but about which he felt a characteristic delicacy and hesitation, or to mark the precise passages which he wished to preserve, I am not aware.

The volume on Ethics had attempted to apply mathematical method to Utilitarianism. In *Mathematical Psychics* Edgeworth carried his treatment of “the calculus of *Feeling*, of Pleasure

¹ A paper entitled “Hedonical Calculus,” which is reprinted in *Mathematical Psychics*, had appeared meanwhile in *Mind*, 1879.

² It is now a scarce volume, difficult to obtain. A few copies are available, which were in Edgeworth's own possession, and which I am in a position to hand over to such public libraries, not possessing a copy, as may apply to me for them.

and Pain" a stage further. The Essay consists of two parts "concerned respectively with principle and practice, root and fruit, the applicability and the application of Mathematics to Sociology." In the First Part, which is very short, "it is attempted to illustrate the possibility of Mathematical reasoning without *numerical* data"—a thesis which at the time it was written was of much originality and importance. "We cannot *count* the golden sands of life; we cannot *number* the 'innumerable' smiles of seas of love; but we seem to be capable of observing that there is here a *greater*, there a *less*, multitude of pleasure-units, mass of happiness; and that is enough."

The Second Part contains the roots of much of Edgeworth's work on mathematical economics, in particular the treatment of Contract in a free market and its possible indeterminateness; and it is here that his famous *Contract-Curves* first appear.

I have dwelt on these two early works at disproportionate length, because in them, and particularly in *Mathematical Psychics*, the full flavour and peculiarity of Edgeworth's mind and art are exhibited without reserve. The latter is a very eccentric book and open to mockery. In later works, it seems to me, Edgeworth did not ever give quite a full rein to his natural self. He feared a little the philistine comment on the strange but charming amalgam of poetry and pedantry, science and art, wit and learning, of which he had the secret; and he would endeavour, however unsuccessfully, to draw a veil of partial concealment over his native style, which only served, however, to enhance the obscurity and allusiveness and half-apologetic air with which he served up his intellectual dishes. The problem of the inequality of men's and women's wages interested him all his life and was the subject of his Presidential address to Section F of the British Association in 1922; but who in space and time but Edgeworth in the 'eighties, whose sly chuckles one can almost hear as one reads, would treat it thus:—

"The aristocracy of sex is similarly grounded upon the supposed superior capacity of the man for happiness, for the *ἐνεργεῖαι* of action and contemplation; upon the sentiment:—

'Woman is the lesser man, and her passions unto mine
Are as moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine.'

Her supposed generally inferior capacity is supposed to be compensated by a special capacity for particular emotions, certain kinds of beauty and refinement. Agreeably to such finer sense of beauty, the modern lady has received a larger share of certain *means*, certain luxuries and attentions (Def. 2; *α sub finem*).

But gallantry, that 'mixed sentiment which took its rise in the ancient chivalry,' has many other elements. It is explained by the polite Hume as attention to the weak, and by the passionate Rousseau *φυσικωτέρως* Altogether, account being taken of existing, whether true or false, opinions about the nature of woman, there appears a nice consilience between the deductions from the utilitarian principle and the disabilities and privileges which hedge round modern womanhood."¹

Edgeworth next proceeded to the second great application of mathematics to the Moral Sciences, namely, its application "to *Belief*, the Calculus of Probabilities," which became perhaps his favourite study of all. In 1883 and 1884 he contributed seven papers on Probability and the Law of Error to the *Philosophical Magazine*, to *Mind* and to *Hermathena*. These were the first of a very long series of which the last, one more elaborate discussion of the Generalised Law of Error, still remains to appear in the *Statistical Journal*.

As regards Probability proper, Edgeworth's most important writings are his articles on "The Philosophy of Chance" in *Mind*, 1884, and on "Probability" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (revised up to 1911). Edgeworth began as an adherent of the Frequency Theory of Probability, with a strong bias in favour of a physical rather than a logical basis for the conception, just as he was an adherent of the Utilitarian Ethics with a bias in favour of a physical rather than a metaphysical basis. But in both cases his mind was alive to the objections, and in both cases the weight of the objections increased in his mind, as time went on, rather than diminished. Nevertheless, he did not in either case replace these initial presumptions by any others, with the result that he took up increasingly a sceptical attitude towards philosophical foundations combined with a pragmatic attitude towards practical applications which had been successfully erected upon them, however insecure these foundations might really be. The consequence was that the centre of his interest gradually passed from Probability to the Theory of Statistics, and from Utilitarianism to the Marginal Theory of Economics. I have often pressed him to give an opinion as to how far the modern theory of Statistics and Correlation can stand, if the Frequency Theory falls as a logical doctrine. He would always reply to the effect that the collapse of the Frequency Theory would affect the *universality* of application of Statistical Theory, but that large masses of statistical data did, nevertheless, in his opinion,

¹ *Mathematical Psychics*, p. 78.

satisfy the conditions required for the validity of Statistical Theory, whatever these might be. I expect that this is true. It is a reasonable attitude for one who is mainly interested in statistics to take up. But it implied in Edgeworth an unwillingness to revise or take up again the more speculative studies of his youth. The same thing was true of his work in Economics. He was disinclined, in company with most other economists of the Classical School, to reconsider how far the initial assumptions of the Marginal Theory stand or fall with the Utilitarian Ethics and the Utilitarian Psychology, out of which they sprang and which were sincerely accepted, in a way no one accepts them now, by the founders of the subject. Mill, Jevons, the Marshall of the 'seventies and the Edgeworth¹ of the late 'seventies and the early 'eighties *believed* the Utilitarian Psychology and laid the foundations of the subject in this belief. The later Marshall and the later Edgeworth and many of the younger generation have not fully believed; but we still trust the superstructure without exploring too thoroughly the soundness of the original foundations.

It is not necessary that I should say much here with regard to Edgeworth's statistical work, since this will doubtless be treated in the *Statistical Journal*. From 1885 onwards his more general articles, especially his "Methods of Statistics" in the Jubilee Volume of the *Statistical Journal*, 1885, and his "Application of the Calculus of Probabilities to Statistics" in the *Bulletin of the International Statistical Institute*, 1910, were of great value in keeping English students in touch with the work of the German School founded by Lexis and in sponsoring, criticising and applauding from their first beginnings the work of the English statisticians on Correlation. His constructive work, particularly of late years, has centred in highly elaborate and difficult discussions of his own "Generalised Law of Error." Edgeworth's particular affection for the mode of treatment which he here adopted was partly due, I think, to its requiring the minimum of assumption, so that he was able to obtain his results on more generalised hypotheses than will yield results in the case of other statistical formulæ. In this way he could compensate, as it were, his bad conscience about the logical, as distinct from the pragmatic, grounds of current statistical theory.

At about the same time as his first papers on Probability

¹ In his early adherence to Utilitarianism Edgeworth reacted back again from his father's reaction against Maria Edgeworth's philosophy in these matters. Mozley (*op. cit.*) records of Frank Edgeworth that "he showed an early and strong revolt against the hollowness, callousness, and deadness of utilitarianism."

and the Law of Error, namely in 1883, in his thirty-eighth year, Edgeworth embarked on the fifth topic, which was to complete the range of the main work of his life, that is to say, Index Numbers, or the application of mathematical method to the measurement of economic value.¹ These five applications of Mathematical Psychics—to the measurement of Utility or ethical value, to the algebraic or diagrammatic determination of economic equilibriums, to the measurement of Belief or Probability, to the measurement of Evidence or Statistics, and to the measurement of economic value or Index Numbers—constitute, with their extensions and ramifications and illustrations, Edgeworth's life work. If he had been of the kind that produce Treatises, he would doubtless have published, some time between 1900 and 1914, a large volume in five books entitled *Mathematical Psychics*. But this was not to be. He followed up his two monographs of 1877 and 1881 with a third entitled *Metretike, or the Method of Measuring Probability and Utility*, in 1887. It is a disappointing volume and not much worth reading (a judgment with which I know that Edgeworth himself concurred). After this, so far from rising from the Monograph to the Treatise, moving to the opposite extreme from Marshall's, he sank from the Monograph to the paper, essay, article or transaction. For the last forty years a long stream of splinters has split off from his bright mind to illumine (and to obscure) the pages of the *Statistical* and *Economic Journals*.

Once when I asked him why he had never ventured on a Treatise, he answered, with his characteristic smile and chuckle, that large-scale enterprise, such as Treatises and marriage, had never appealed to him. It may be that he deemed them industries subject to diminishing return, or that they lay outside his powers or the limits he set to his local universe. Such explanations are more than enough and Occam's razor should forbid me to mention another. But there may have been a contributory motive.

Mathematical Psychics has not, as a science or study, fulfilled its early promise. In the 'seventies and 'eighties of the last century it was reasonable, I think, to suppose that it held great prospects. When the young Edgeworth chose it, he may have looked to find secrets as wonderful as those which the physicists have found since those days. But, as I remarked in writing

¹ I refer to Edgeworth's first contribution to the *Statistical Journal* (1883), "The Method of ascertaining a Change in the Value of Gold." This was followed by the well-known memoranda presented to the British Association in 1887, 1888 and 1889, and a long series of articles thereafter, several of which are reprinted in his *Collected Papers*, Vol. I.

about Alfred Marshall's gradual change of attitude towards mathematico-economics (JOURNAL, vol. xxxiv, p. 332), this has not happened, but quite the opposite. The atomic hypothesis, which has worked so splendidly in Physics, breaks down in Psychics. We are faced at every turn with the problems of Organic Unity, of Discrete-ness, of Discontinuity—the whole is not equal to the sum of the parts, comparisons of quantity fail us, small changes produce large effects, the assumptions of a uniform and homogeneous continuum are not satisfied. Thus the results of Mathematical Psychics turn out to be derivative, not fundamental, indexes, not measurements, first approximations at the best; and fallible indexes, dubious approximations at that, with much doubt added as to what, if anything, they are indexes or approximations of. No one was more conscious of all this than Edgeworth. All his intellectual life through he felt his foundations slipping away from under him. What wonder that with these hesitations added to his cautious, critical, sceptical, diffident nature the erection of a large and heavy superstructure did not appeal to him. Edgeworth knew that he was skating on thin ice; and as life went on his love of skating and his distrust of the ice increased, by a malicious fate, *pari passu*. He is like one who seeks to avert the evil eye by looking sideways, to escape the censure of fate by euphemism, calling the treacherous sea Euxine and the unfriendly guardians of Truth the kindly ones. Edgeworth seldom looked the reader or interlocutor straight in the face; he is allusive, obscure and devious as one who would slip by unnoticed, hurrying on if stopped by another traveller.

After the appearance of *Metretike* in 1887, Edgeworth ventured on no separate publication, apart from four lectures delivered during the war, which were printed in pamphlet form,¹ until last year the Royal Economic Society published under his own editorship his *Collected Economic Papers* in three substantial volumes. These volumes preserve in accessible form the whole of Edgeworth's contributions to the subject of Economics, which he himself wished to see preserved, apart from some portions of *Mathematical Psychics* alluded to above. It is much to be wished that his more important contributions to the Theories of Probability and of Statistics could be issued in similar form.

The publication of his Economic Papers was a great satisfaction to Edgeworth. His modest and self-effacing ways

¹ *On the Relations of Political Economy to War, The Cost of War, Currency and Finance in Time of War, and A Levy on Capital*. None of these is amongst his best work.

would always have prevented him from undertaking such an enterprise on his own initiative. But as soon as others were prepared to take the responsibility, the business of selection and preparation for the press was a congenial task. Moreover, the publication proved a great success in every way. The sales were substantial for a work of this class and have been sufficient to relieve the Royal Economic Society of any financial liability. The work itself has been reviewed in learned journals throughout the world with expressions of esteem such as the author's previous modes of publication had cut him off from hearing. I think that Edgeworth was genuinely surprised at the extent of his international reputation, and it gave him as much pleasure as surprise.

In spite of his constant flow of learned papers, a great part of Edgeworth's time for the last thirty-five years has been occupied with the work of this JOURNAL. His practical gifts as an Editor were quite other than might have been expected from his reputation as an unpractical, unbusinesslike person, remote from affairs, living on abstractions in the clouds, illuminating the obscure by the more obscure. As one who has been associated with him in the conduct of the JOURNAL for fifteen years, I can report that this picture was the opposite of the truth. He was punctual, businesslike and dependable in the conduct of all routine matters. He was quite incapable of detecting misprints in what he wrote himself,¹ but had an exceptionally sharp eye for other people's. He had an unfailing instinct for good "copy" (except, again, in what he wrote himself), exercised his editorial powers with great strictness to secure brevity from the contributors,² and invariably cast his influence in favour of matter having topical interest and against tedious expositions of methodology and the like (which often, in his opinion, rendered German Journals unuseful). I have often found myself in the position of defending the heavier articles against his strictures. He established and was always anxious to maintain the international sympathies and affiliations of the JOURNAL. I am sure that there was no economist in England better read than he in foreign literature. He added to this what must have been the widest personal acquaintance in the world with economists of all nations. Edgeworth was the most hospitable of men, and there can have been very few foreign economists, whether of

¹ The difficulty of his articles was often enhanced by the fact that they were packed with misprints, especially in the symbolic parts.

² He invented and attached much importance to what he termed a law of diminishing returns in the remuneration of articles, by which the rate falls after ten pages have been exceeded and sinks to zero after twenty pages.

established reputation or not, who have visited London during the past thirty years and have not been entertained by Edgeworth. He had a strong feeling for the solidarity of economic science throughout the world and sought to encourage talent wherever he found it, and to extend courtesies in the most exquisite traditions of Ireland and Spain. His tolerance was all-embracing, and he combined a respect for established reputation which might have been thought excessive if there had not been a flavour of mockery in it, with a natural inclination to encourage the youthful and the unknown. All his eccentricity and artistic strangeness found its outlet in his own writings. All his practical good sense and daily shrewdness was devoted to the ECONOMIC JOURNAL.

On anyone who knew Edgeworth he must have made a strong individual impression as a person. But it is scarcely possible to portray him to those who did not. He was kind, affectionate, modest, self-depreciatory, humorous, with a sharp and candid eye for human nature; he was also reserved, angular, complicated, proud and touchy, elaborately polite, courteous to the point of artificiality, absolutely unbending and unyielding in himself to the pressure of the outside world. Marshall, remembering his mixed parentage, used to say: "Francis is a charming fellow, but you must be careful with Ysidro."

His health and vigour of body were exceptional. He was still a climber in the mountains, bather in the cold waters of the morning at Parson's Pleasure, unwearying pedestrian in the meadows of Oxfordshire, after he had passed his seventieth year. He was always at work, reading, correcting proofs, "verifying references" (a vain pursuit upon which his ostensible reverence for authority and disinclination to say anything definite on his own responsibility led him to waste an abundance of time), working out on odd bits of paper long arithmetical examples of abstruse theorems which he loved to do (just as Maria Edgeworth has recorded of his grandfather), writing letters, building up his lofty constructions with beautiful bricks but too little mortar and no clear architectural design. Towards the end of his life it was not easy to carry through with him a consecutive argument *vivâ voce*—he had a certain dissatisfied restlessness of body and attention which increased with age and was not good to see. But on paper his intellectual powers even after his eightieth year were entirely unabated; and he died, as he would have wished, in harness.

Edgeworth was never married; but it was not for want of

susceptibility. His difficult nature, not his conception of life, cut him off from a full intimacy in any direction. He did not have as much happiness as he might have had. But in many ways a bachelor life suited his character. He liked to have the fewest possible material cares; he did not want to be loaded with any sort of domestic responsibility; and he was content without private comfort. No one lived more continuously than he in Common Rooms, Libraries and Clubs, or depended more completely upon such adjuncts for every amenity. He had but few possessions—scarcely any furniture or crockery, not even books (he preferred a public library near at hand), no proper notepaper of his own or stationery or stamps. Red tape and gum are the only material objects with the private ownership of which I associate him. But he was particular about his appearance, and was well dressed in his own style. There was more of Spain than of Edgeworth in his looks. With broad forehead, long nose, olive colouring, trimly pointed beard and strong hands, his aspect was distinguished, but a little belied by his air of dwelling *uncomfortably* in his clothes or in his body. He lived at Oxford in spartanic rooms at All Souls; in London lodgings at 5 Mount Vernon, two small bare rooms, pitched high on the cliff of Hampstead with a wide view over the metropolitan plain, which he had taken on a weekly tenancy more than fifty years ago and had occupied ever since; in Ireland, where he would spend some weeks of the summer, at the St. George Club, Kingstown. For meals the Buttery and Hall of All Souls, the Athenæum, the Savile or the Albemarle; for books the libraries of these places, of the British Museum, of Trinity College, Dublin, of the Royal Statistical Society.

It is narrated that in his boyhood at Edgeworthstown he would read Homer seated aloft in a heron's nest. So, as it were, he dwelt always, not too much concerned with the earth.

J. M. KEYNES
