

# **THE MORAL ECONOMY**

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The moral economy by Ralph Barton Perry

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**RALPH BARTON PERRY**

**THE MORAL  
ECONOMY**



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MORAL ECONOMY

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" Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be ; why then should we desire to be deceived? "

BISHOP BUTLER.

## PREFACE

THIS little book is the preliminary sketch of a system of ethics. Its form differs from that of most contemporary books on the subject because of the omission of the traditional controversies. I have attempted to study morality directly, to derive its conceptions and laws from an analysis of life. I have made this attempt because, in the first place, I believe that theoretical ethics is seriously embarrassed by its present emphasis on the history and criticism of doctrines; by its failure to resort to experience, where without more ado it may solve its problems on their merits. But, in the second place, I hope that by appealing to experience and neglecting scholastic technicalities, I may connect ethical theory with every-day reflection on practical matters. Morality is, without doubt, the most human and urgent of all topics of study; and I should like, if possible, to make it appear so.

The references which I have embodied in the notes are intended to serve the English reader as an introduction to accessible and untechnical literature on the subjects treated in the several chap-