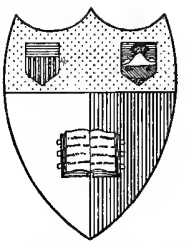

SOME SUGGESTIONS IN ETHICS

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SOME SUGGESTIONS IN ETHICS

BY

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PREFACE

THE aim of the following pages is to be of service to ordinarily thoughtful persons who are interested in reflecting upon morality. I do not believe in casuistry as a guide to conduct; but I hope that suggestions drawn from moral philosophy may here and there throw light upon perplexities due to unchallenged assumptions which are not true. Must a man be selfish, for instance, because he does not "live for others"? Can morality be hostile to beauty, or *vice versa*? Is it true that retributive punishment is a mere survival of vindictiveness? If evil is real, does that make it certain that the universe cannot be perfect? Have we any right to be stupid? On difficulties of this kind I thought that some suggestions might be helpful. And if I was wrong, there is no great harm done.

BERNARD BOSANQUET.

OXSHOTT, *November* 1917.

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CHAPTER I

LIVING FOR OTHERS

WHEN we say of any one that he or she—it is more often said of a woman—" lives wholly for others," we mean it to be unqualified praise. We mean to indicate the height of unselfishness, to suggest a character wholly devoted to service.

We find no practical difficulty in interpreting the phrase, although, taken quite literally, it seems indefinite. We insert into the words " for others " the assumption of an interest or purpose in life which is such as we hold desirable.

And yet the phrase " for others " raises questions which it does not answer. Of the golden rule itself it has been said, " what we would that men should do to

us" is not a safe guide to what we ought to do for them. Do we wish the judge to pronounce a just sentence when it would condemn us? Do we wish our neighbour sternly to refuse connivance at our indirectnesses and misdoings? And are we entitled ourselves to fail in justice and uprightness in so far as we do not actually wish our neighbours to exhibit these qualities towards us?

We see that even the golden rule gives us no trustworthy criterion of our behaviour to others, and that some more definite standard is necessary. And in fact, as we may learn from the English Church catechism, we do construe our duty towards our neighbour by help of a number of positive interests and obligations which interpret for us that traditional rule.

Common sense will carry our answer a little further. In two cases out of three, or, if we prefer to say so, nine out of ten, we have no mistrust of the character implied in the description "lives for others." But here and there we shall find ourselves

asking, " Lives for others ? But what on earth has he to offer to others ? Does he know what to do for them in the special troubles of their lives ? Does he study or understand their interests or welfare ? Does he even sincerely and unselfishly care for them ? Perhaps he takes no money from them ; but has he a hundredth part of the value for them that a hard-working doctor or a gifted inventor has ? " It is a formidable question, which all who aim, say, at social service should put to themselves, " What have I to offer to others ? "

This makes clear, what common sense and the facts of all good service confirm, that " living for others " is a great positive responsibility. For it means, and must mean, promoting for or in others, definite interests or purposes, in a word, values. And in this work as in any other it is possible to fail by misfortune or by fault. The would-be servant of others may have no real gift that way ; or his would-be service may be the mere trifling and self-

importance of a busybody, the polar opposite of strenuous devoted work at any positive duty or problem.

So far we are clear that living for others must involve some definite and positive value which we strive to maintain or to create.

But it is natural to return upon the problem, and to say, "But are not unselfishness and self-sacrifice good in themselves, and are not they the same thing as living for others?" We have seen enough already to throw doubt on this being always the case, and we must look closer.

The fact is, that in everything we do we give up something, and attain something. In every act, therefore, there is really a double character present. In very many cases one side of it or the other may not be noticeable, but both are always there. Whenever you do anything, you must abandon your *status quo ante*, and you must produce some positive result, or some positive change intended to lead up

to a result.[1] You may think that a certain act is wholly gain and no loss; but it is obvious on consideration that in acting you have moved out of a *status quo* which as such is gone for ever, and so have given up something, though you may hold your loss a gain. Moreover, if you seem in acting merely to have lost and to have gained nothing, that is your estimate of the result. But none the less it is plain that you have gone on to and acquired something new as well as moved away from something old. Always both sides must be there, positive and negative.

If a man makes the uttermost sacrifice—we may take as typical that of life, for it involves the entire surrender of our familiar existence—there is, nevertheless, a positive value for the sake of which he has made it, the promotion of something which at the

[1] It is no exception, if your "action" consists in carrying out a resolve to stand fast or endure, though here no external change takes place. In this case you count your action as a resistance to what would naturally or most easily have happened, and this latter, the line of least resistance, you reckon morally as the *status quo*, which your action departs from.

moment he held worth the sacrifice. This value is affirmed, at least in will, and so while giving up even his whole existence, the man asserts himself in something which does not die with him. Or take such a case as this, which happens from time to time. A scholar, growing old, surrenders the materials and the goodwill, so to speak, of his lifework to a younger man, thinking that the work will so be sure of getting done, and perhaps better done. Here it is even uncertain how the elements of self-assertion and self-sacrifice should be appraised. Was it the scholar's main purpose that the work should be well done, or that he in particular should do it ? In the first case the sacrifice seems lighter, just because from the beginning the aim was less self-centred. In the second case the sacrifice was harder, just because the purpose held more of the ordinary self. But in either case and in every case the man parts with something and achieves something else.

Now we, as a rule, approve of both these

sides in an action. We approve of values achieved or attempted, and we approve of self-sacrifice. And this is just because we assume that they go together; and we have seen that at bottom they cannot be altogether divorced. But from this general way of looking at the matter something further follows. The law of sacrifice has no special relation to actions in favour of other persons. It refers to something wider and deeper than living for others. The secret is that values are impersonal, and to live for them means self-sacrifice certainly, but primarily for impersonal ends, and only secondarily and incidentally for ends which involve the furtherance of others' existence and happiness. It is just as likely, and indeed certain at times, to involve antagonism to others' life in such respects as these. To live for beauty or truth means a very austere self-suppression, and a suppression not of self alone, but of others so far as we influence them. We all recognise in practice that in pursuit of a great value you may rightly be hard on

others; and so long as you are equally hard on yourself, people will not greatly disapprove. It does not matter to the value whether it is A or B who is sacrificed to it. This is the ruthlessness of the will for value; and though it may have been rhetorically overstated, it is an error to suppose it immoral. On the contrary, all sound moral philosophy accepts it as fundamental. When Palissy the potter burnt his wife's furniture to keep his kiln alight, he may have misjudged the value of a new enamel as against kindness to his family. This is a question of value against value. But that a great invention in the arts has a certain claim upon all who can subserve it, and not merely on some one person who is first interested in it, of that no competent moralist will entertain a moment's doubt. There is, and ought to be, sacrifice everywhere; but only as one side of the affirmation of a value.

We see, then, that it remains true that we approve self-sacrifice; but we saw that self-sacrifice is a much wider and deeper

thing than living for others, and depends on a principle which may involve the sacrifice of others no less than of self. It is a matter of degree, and very various and surprising in its applications. The simple case, as we have seen, is when our attempts to realise values threaten or abandon all or part of our familiar embodied existence—life, comfort, pleasure, or particular normal aims on which we have set our heart. And this is what we call self-sacrifice *par excellence*, as a special mode of conduct which we approve; distinct from self-affirmation, which we also approve, in my station and its duties or some analogous completion of the self. It is conceivable that a sacrifice of high values may be right, in deference to very homely duties; and even that something very near a sacrifice of morality itself might be demanded, if, for example, an imperative call for help compelled us to enter what we knew to be for us a danger-zone of temptation. The principle of sacrifice really rests on the same ultimate fact

as the conflict of duties, and the two are at some points undistinguishable. The fact in question is that we are an infinite spirit lodged in a finite environment, and nothing which we do can satisfy either our whole claim or the whole demand upon us. What we are actually called to is a matter of what we must practically set down as chance; "the readiness is all." There is always something to be affirmed and something to be let go. We necessarily approve of both, but only on the latent assumption that they go together; and if taken really quite apart, each becomes valueless, and each as an extreme passes into the same worthlessness as the other. The miser's life is as much a profitless waste and extravagant expenditure of opportunities as the profligate's is a narrow concentration upon a wretched fragmentary satisfaction.

What is meant by saying that values are impersonal? It is not hard to see what is meant in case of beauty and truth, but in matters like love and life there seems

a difficulty, and so again in speaking of justice. Do not these latter just consist in relations of persons or in what constitutes personal existence? And all values, it seems obvious, have a personal side, and wholly apart from persons would be nothing.

It is not really a difficulty. We shall see more fully below that values can only have full subsistence through the valuations of self-conscious beings, because only such beings can feel and judge, and valuation implies feeling and judgment. It implies, indeed, as we shall see, something more than these terms naturally express. It implies an immanent and implicit standard of perfection. Now when values are called impersonal, it means that though they are qualities revealed in and through persons, yet they are imperatives or notes of perfection to which the persons as facts are subordinate. Love, for example, arises in a relation of person to person; but it does not consist in such a relation. It is an imperious value, which

may descend upon any persons, and transcends all others in the severity with which it rules and refashions a personality. Persons are to love like facts to truth, a medium in which something is revealed greater and deeper than the particulars concerned.

So in the case of justice. You have to hold the balance fair between one and another, and especially between yourself and others. Well, then, it is said, you admit that the value depends on the distinction between one and another, between me and you. It consists in treating A and B alike when their circumstances are alike, and therefore it cannot be impersonal. But there is no contradiction. In securing justice the care you have to take is precisely to be impersonal—indifferent, as it used to be called. This is to be guided by the value and not by the person. The starting-point of consideration, A, B or C, is irrelevant. What matters is the connection between the quality and the treatment appropriate to it. If you con-

sider personal relations, you consider them to exclude them, unless, of course, they are relevant to a claim. A son has claims which a stranger has not. In justice, these have to be distinguished according to the respective obligations which a good system of life—one promotive of values—implies.

All the above, I believe, is true. But there seem still to be some obvious facts outstanding unaccounted for. In every-day good-fellowship and politeness, and in many crises and emergencies, it is unquestionably thought right to give way to others, or to sacrifice yourself for them, merely because they are others. So much so, that if it were not for general rules which apply positive marks, like *seniores priores*, or for the host's right to marshal his guests, it would be difficult to get a score of people out of one room into another, because no one would be willing to go first. Often an ordinary plain man will risk his life to save that of another ordinary plain man; still more constantly to save that of a woman or a child. The

latter choice is perhaps partly accounted for by a special presumption that the stronger exists to help the weaker. And, on the whole question of hazarding life for others, we must bear in mind that it can hardly ever be a certainty that one life must be sacrificed. There is the chance of saving the one without losing the other, which is a clear gain if we assume life to have any value. Still it remains that a man will often deny himself or sacrifice himself for any other as such, without calculating on coming off scot-free, and without thinking of any special value in the other. And we think it right and fine; we would not for the world impair the tradition or suggest that it is irrational. How can we account for this on the basis of always aiming at a positive value? We may assume, as we said, that life has always a potential value. But that cuts both ways. The life which is risked has also a value. Why should it be sacrificed to the other, as, in will and intention, it often is? Why should we approve the sacrifice?

It seems true and worth observing that our approval of such conduct applies exclusively to two classes of cases; first, to trivial matters, which fall within the province of polite behaviour, *i.e.* where no very grave interests are at stake; and, secondly, to extreme and sudden emergencies, where remoter interests, however grave, cannot be weighed, and one must act on *prima facie* presumption or not at all.

Experience is especially decisive about cases of the first type. In minor matters we give way to others without any thought of their merits or capacity. But when serious things are at stake, we say, "There is no room for politeness here; the work comes first; we must have A, the better man, and turn out B."

The second type of case is really difficult and very interesting. "This is what we have in exchange for Beauchamp! It was not uttered, but it was visible in the blank stare at one another of the two men who loved Beauchamp, after they had

examined the insignificant bit of mudbank life remaining in this world in the place of him "[1] (the little boy he had saved from drowning before, in his continued effort, he perished).

We must say, I think, to begin with, and as *prima facie* covering both sets of cases, that there is a presumption in favour of others, because devotion to them shares with the higher values the tendency to set at naught the agent's immediately private concerns and physical existence. This is not by itself a solution of the problem; for in sacrificing his own physical and private existence, the agent may be ruining hundreds of serious aims and interests possessing presumptions of value equal to or above anything attaching to the person, or it may be a favourite animal, for whom he gives his life. It is not enough to show that there is a presumption of an ideal value in the object; we have to explain why it overcomes, and we approve of its overcoming, any equal

[1] Conclusion of George Meredith's *Beauchamp's Career*.

or greater presumption of value in the agent.

To explain the facts, I think, we have to take this first presumption arising from the common feature that our own physical being is set at naught by all great values, though not by all in the same way, along with the presumption that there is some value attached to any person or perhaps to any sentient being — almost to any existent; and both of these along with the assumption that the emergency excludes all careful reflections and comparison of values. All you have time to see is, "Here is life in danger beyond my own skin; it—because it is beyond—comes first."

Especially the second presumption is important. An orthodox Christian not long ago would have said, "Oh, save him, he may not be fit to die." And *mutatis mutandis* some such ignorance plays in our mind the part of exalted knowledge. You cannot limit the possibilities of value in an act which recognises the ideal as imperative, either in its positive object,

or in its assertion of a principle. In other words, then, we approve the *prima facie* presumption that mere private existence should be very lightly held by its possessor in comparison with values beyond it, which are recognised by the common feature of exhibiting it as comparatively trivial.

But can this be right? All I can directly save by the risk of my life is the other's mere existence. If we contemplate a very possible case, in which, at the sacrifice of high values on one side, known high values are conserved on the other, we are in the region of action with determinate positive aims, and beyond the province of self-sacrifice "for others" simply. But keeping to our simple case, I cannot make sure of the other's existence involving high specific values, and I may know that very high values, say, very important issues, attach to mine which I contemplate hazarding. There need be no vanity in this perception; it might be merely that an income, which supports infirm dependants, dies with me.

Can it be right to hazard known great values for an uncertainty?

The answer must lie, I think, in the third feature we recognised, in the suddenness of the emergency. It seems irrational not to raise the question of the values for which we hazard all; but, according to the facts as we have accepted them, we do not in the emergency advert to this question. I can suddenly determine to risk my own being; I cannot suddenly succeed in using in the emergency the aid of any one else, nor putting in force a considered plan by which perhaps all the issues at stake might be satisfied. *Ex hypothesi*, it is for me to act, and I must act on a quick presumption, or do nothing. Suddenness operates here as triviality in the case of politeness; here there is no time to think about comparative values, as there it is not worth while.

Where these features or presumptions are absent serious comparison of values does influence us and we approve it, though there is a very difficult border-line.

Where a man is not dealing with his own risk, and the presumption against one's own physical existence is therefore absent, he certainly discriminates between more or less valuable men in sending them to extreme hazard. "Ali Gul at once volunteered to swim across the river in face of the enemy and bring back a boat. His commanding officer could not, however, spare so valuable an officer for so desperate a venture, and forbade him to make the attempt. Two other men volunteered and were permitted to go." [1]

Even in one's own risk, when the presumption of value in "the other" is more or less countered in a very obvious way, the comparison is allowed to operate. A man would hardly be approved who gave his life to save a favourite dog's, though he might be admired. If it were a child, every one would approve. A man, it is said, gave his ration of water to a coffee plant he was in charge of, in a boat after shipwreck. As towards a mere

[1] *A Soldier's Memories*, Younghusband, p. 52.

plant, this act would hardly be approved, but circumstances might make it admirable. The whole edible banana supply of the Pacific once depended on a single plant.[1] Of course the degree of risk tells heavily here. And as a rule, if the rescue is successful, the rescuer's life is not lost. This consideration is important throughout.

When suddenness is absent, as in planning a General's duties, I imagine the consideration of a man's value to the service is allowed to weigh. But if by chance he suddenly finds himself under fire, or with an opportunity of saving life at a great risk, what is his impulse and duty? Probably the consideration of the men's *moral* would by itself decide him in favour of the risk; and the indisposition to consider one's own value, along with the presumption against one's private existence, would be very strong. It would be interesting to know what an experienced soldier would say. Yet put a slightly

[1] *The New Pacific.*

different case. I take it he could not conceivably stop in directing an important movement to go and pick a child out of a ditch where it was drowning, though he would send a man if he could possibly spare one.

The conclusion seems pretty clear. There are distinct beings, each specially related to a body. These beings are singly or conjointly the basis of all interests and values. Our main approval is for the higher positive values and for conduct that promotes them. And these higher values reveal in various ways incompatibility with full unperturbed physical existence; if we want an example, we have only to think of love. Now to every distinct being the existence of others presents this same *prima facie* aloofness. It can be asserted against one's own being as love or duty can, and as one's own private existence *ex hypothesi* cannot. Therefore if the two private existences collide, the quick presumption is against my own, and for the other's; against that which cannot

be an ideal counter-claim, and for that which can.

The relation contains the self-contradiction of altruism, for the two opposite presumptions are on a level: mine in favour of you, yours in favour of me. But in the conditions we are considering this matters less, because we are assuming the power of helping to be on one side only. The presumption in favour of others is a wholesome one, and we should all be sorry to see it undermined by reflection. Reflection on our own value, unless practically necessary to serious interests, is a vicious thing. It cuts at the root of morality and religion; for the essence of these is in the conviction of our own nothingness, except when recognising our union with something greater. And to bring such reflection in aid of clinging to our own physical being with its incidents of pleasure and comfort is on the road to terrible self-deception.

Both here and in politeness, then, we are dealing with a *prima facie* presumption

which the existence of others shares with ideal values, as denying what all ideal values in some degree deny. It does not arise from any positive value in you simply as other to me, and does not conflict with the primary truth that all conduct is guided by positive impersonal values directly or indirectly. When I say "indirectly," I mean "by a presumption that positive values are involved, transcending that which is sacrificed." "Living for others" as an expression of unqualified praise is founded on an unduly amplified analogy, drawn from the two sets of cases we have considered.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL GOOD

To say that a man is devoted to the social good is not quite the same as to say that he lives for others. In this case we say something which indicates a recognised bond of union; and we escape the initial puzzle of treating a man's own welfare as something which it is right or fine for him to disregard. Because the welfare of his society certainly includes his own, although perhaps with reservations.

Will this idea of social welfare or a social good give us all that it is necessary to say about the good which we are bound to pursue? There seem to be two ways of treating it; perhaps both of them may

be right and serviceable. Let us take them in turn.

We may begin by noting the conception of Justice. I have spoken of it at length elsewhere[1] and will only make use of it here to start our discussion.

Justice, if it is to have a really special and definite meaning, might be treated as the first effort of individualism to improve itself away. It is, one might say, the law that everything must have a reason, applied to the distribution of advantages between individuals. It has no meaning unless you are dealing with the application of rules to cases. A rule is founded on some common feature of particular cases; and so here you have an elementary recognition of something social, something shared by a number of persons. Here is a set of people with *prima facie* similar claims. They belong to the same lot or group, and you must treat them all alike, unless there is a reason for treating some

[1] "Three Lectures on Social Ideals," in *Social and International Ideals.*

of them differently. If you treat any of them differently, they will ask "Why?" And this power to ask why is the mainspring of what is called the equality of man. Ultimately, you can only govern him by his own consent. He demands to be "satisfied"—to see the reason for the way he is treated. He knows that different people need different things; but he does not think he has justice unless he approves the reason for the difference. *Prima facie* to break a rule of treatment is unjust; that is, it is unjust unless it is done because of a better rule.

Pursuing this line of thought, we find ourselves building up an idea of what every one is bound to aim at, out of the separate claims to pleasure, welfare, or material resources, of all the persons belonging to the group he recognises. It is presupposed that all these persons' claims are equal, because of their primary nature as human units. If they are to be different, there must be a reason for the difference. And if we start from the claims of units,

the reason must reduce itself to this, that *real* equality cannot be attained except through a *prima facie* inequality. To satisfy equal individual claims is the end; the machinery of functions, duties, classes, and positions is nothing but a means to that end. This way of looking at things is particularly characteristic of views which have started from pleasure as the end, because pleasure is private to each particular person. But long after it has been seen that you cannot by any machinery guarantee equality of private pleasure, there persists this method of building up the social aim which the individual is bound to recognise. The aim is my own welfare, or opportunity for welfare, modified by the arrangements necessary to the welfare or opportunities of every one else—that is, of every one else within the group which I recognise as concerning me.

This principle, that one creature's welfare is as much to be regarded as another's, in other words, that so far as may be practicable, equality of well-being is to be sought

after as between members of a group which recognises membership, may be stated and explained in more ways than one. And there is a difficulty attaching to one mode of the statement which illustrates, perhaps, a weakness in the whole of this first method by which the notion of social good can be approached. Thus, if we start from the idea of a group of individuals having *prima facie* equal claims and apply it as a test of the desirable consequences of actions, it is natural to lay down such a rule as, "Every one to count for one, and no one for more than one." That is to say, an action is approved by the test, in so far as it is compatible with the equal claims of all members of the group, or conducive to them. Now, of course, if we take it that the claim rests on the equal desirability of equal amounts of happiness, and add that one person is capable, say, of twice the amount of happiness which is within the capacity of another, the plain meaning which the principle has for common sense is overthrown. The double quantity

needed to fill my capacity is as desirable as the unit quantity needed to fill yours, and I, therefore, have practically the right to twice the happiness which you have the right to. This interpretation destroys the merit of the principle in affirming the equality of persons, though it has the advantage of recognising in a roundabout way that a true respect for the good will level up but not level down. On the other hand, we may support the principle, "One to count for one," by the argument that successive increments of resources produce diminishing effects in the way of enjoyment. If we take it thus, we have a fair practical reason for the natural interpretation of the principle. On the whole, the more resources one person has in excess of a certain sufficiency, the less his enjoyment is increased by each successive augmentation of them.

But this way of building up the social good to which individuals are supposed bound to direct their conduct has other difficulties. What is the group to be considered,

and how can you limit its extension? Can it fall short of humanity? Does humanity include future members of the race, even those whom one course of conduct might bring into existence, and another might not? And if the object of the claims is pleasure, how leave out the sentient world, including for all we know not only the lower animals, but the higher plants? If we adopt the ground we took up at first, this latter paradox does not affect us. The claim for equality, the innate demand for a reason why, does not exist in the lower animals. They are objects of duties, but not subjects of rights. But the difficulty of taking as a standard the claims of human beings as a multitude, including an undefined posterity, remains so long as we start from individual welfare.

No doubt it is possible to construe the facts of morality upon this basis. The main root of individual morals is in social function—my station and its duties—which has throughout a reference to the well-being of other members of the group which

we recognise as concerning us. Moreover, extensions and amendments of moral practice are suggested by our acquaintance with social custom beyond our immediate social group, and also by definite demands for remedies, springing from obvious pain and hardship in the lot of members of our own or other groups, and suggestions for their removal. These ideas furnish matter for social ideals, and extended social ideals may certainly appear applicable to the welfare of all conceivable members of humanity.

And further, the supreme goods, truth, beauty, goodness, religion, can in one aspect of them be construed as instrumental to the welfare of civilised society, and even, ultimately, to that of all human individuals. Here, indeed, we are confronted by a well-known paradox. All of these high values are in a sense "universal"; that is, they have in them something fitted to appeal to what is best, and, in a way, most characteristic, in man, and there are instances in which this

potentially universal appeal seems on the road to become a fact; when supreme beauty or goodness seems for a moment to exercise a conquering power over great masses of mankind. But, as a rule, we know it is not so. Man is, we may argue, most human when he appreciates Shakespeare, or brings home to himself the life of Christ in its full and simple significance. But the "universal" is not the "general." We might as well say that man is most human when he is physically and mentally perfect. But then the most human would be the rarest specimen of humanity. This difficulty, which we confront at the climax of our first way of contemplating the good, will serve to indicate a further and different procedure. But so far we have seen that there are reasons in favour of the conception that the good which I am morally bound to pursue is the welfare of all the individuals who compose my group, including my own welfare. This assumes equality of treatment as the *prima facie* rule, only to be departed from in any one

sense, in order to secure it in another and more effective form. Obviously, for instance, to assign every human being in a country identical rations of identical food would be the most horrible waste and injustice.

On this method all the great values of life would have to be represented, and can to some extent be represented, as means to the aggregate social welfare, that is, to the welfare of all the individuals who are members of the group to be considered.

The strong point of this first way of construing the moral good is its regard for the welfare of all individuals. The good which a man is bound to aim at is built up of the amounts of welfare or satisfactory consciousness attainable by all individuals of a group; and the values of life are all to be derived from the consideration of these, and esteemed as instruments to them.

When we consider the working of any coherent community, the plausibility of such an account is in some degree shaken. Not to speak of the category of "others,"

which we do not find admitted in it—for every one recognised by the community is recognised in virtue of some definite station or function—the claims of "all" under the heading of Justice are but poorly satisfied. "So much the worse," we may retort, "for the community." That criticism we may accept. But yet there is something further to be noted, which the claims of "others" and of "all" did not suggest, though, having it before us, we made shift to accommodate it to them. There is a distinctive and interesting communal life, which seems rather in fact to absorb individuals and to provide them with purposes or values, than to be itself deducible from an accumulation of private lots, as it were, or claimable portions, of welfare, each lot to each individual.

This social substance or single social life, in which individual members blend their minds and wills by directing action to common indivisible purposes, is hard to represent as merely derivative from the separate claims of individuals to welfare,

and as taking its value from being instrumental to these. It has rather the air of something new; of something which comes out of the co-operation of individuals, but reveals a fresh character in them, and exhibits them as something, which, *qua* mere units set side by side, they would not appear to be. In such a life the object of desire for all persons presents a peculiar character. It tends, as we said, to become one and indivisible. That is to say, it tends to become such that you cannot will one part of it, or as much of it as concerns one person, without willing a great deal more, and what concerns a great number of persons. And this latter statement can have two meanings. It may only apply the principle, "If you will the end, you will the means," and that is the point of view from which society was regarded in the former construction which we suggested. I may support the best scheme of national education, but only because I think that it is a good way of securing the happiness and efficiency of individuals

one by one. But again, this is a difficult point of view to keep to. The means are continually offering to take control and become the end. It is not merely that if you recognise the utility of education to individuals you must support a sound educative system as the means to individual welfare. It is that if your will is directed towards the sort of value which a good educational system offers to any individual, you find included in it indivisibly the good of a better way of thinking and feeling in the whole social group and concerning the affairs of the entire community. Such things are in their nature single objects, imperative values. You cannot wish a healthy life even for your own mind, without wishing it to include a certain attitude to the minds of others, which demands and depends on a healthy life in theirs. It is not that every man wishes for all persons' well-being, and accepts the training of the people's minds as a means to this. It is that men, on the whole, start with interests in life and knowledge, and these

dictate to them what they are to mean by welfare, and the methods by which it may be achieved.

There was a difficulty in our first way of considering the individual's desire for good which we did not insist on, because it was perhaps even there not fatal, but which vanishes entirely from our present point of view. *If* the good which I desire is built up out of the welfare of a number of persons, it is not obvious on what principle or for what reason I should recognise it to be a good. If it is a good, it is my good; that is clear from the meaning of the term good. Every good is every man's good; *i.e.* is a value which it is incumbent on him to realise. It is only practical considerations which can make one factor of good more imperative on him than another. The cross-over from me to you is already made when I recognise your welfare as a good; it is not necessary to say as my good. All the same, it may not be easy to say why, if your welfare is a thing that you claim, while

mine is a separate thing that I claim, either of our welfares should be admitted as a good. A great deal of attention has been given to this question, and it has been said to be obvious that one person's welfare is as much a good as another's; so that *if* I assume my own to be a good, I must logically assume every one else's to be so. This argument seems to have a sound basis in what we called the principle of Justice; but this, we saw, does not deal with individuals in their complete separateness, but involves the first recognition of a common nature in them, on the consciousness of which their common claim to reasonable treatment is founded. I do not wish to deny that the cross-over from my desire to your welfare and *vice versa* can be supported in this way. But it seems less complete and convincing than the nature of a social will for which the object is a system in which your welfare and mine appear as indivisible sides of the same thing, such that each interpenetrates the other and intensifies it. We experience

this unity when we will the preservation of our country, or—it is a very simple and familiar case, though negative—when we will the extinction of some social evil which is a shame and a sore to the consciences of all respectable citizens. Here we all feel, simply and directly, the same yearning and desire, so to speak, for a purer air, as a value without which life hardly seems worth living. Our desires meet in the one indivisible object, "This shame must cease."

On this our second way of considering the social good, how do we maintain the necessity of justice? The great types of social excellence and attainment here come first as obvious values—the achievements of beauty, knowledge, and goodness. Individuals recognise these as the good for which they exist, and no longer as means to their several shares of well-being. The "happiness" of the community comes first, as a famous paradox puts it. The "happiness" of individuals is secondary. This can only mean, of course, that a

community is to be judged by such achievements and attainments as are proper to individuals considered as participating in a communal life and activity, while the share of comfort or satisfaction which, if any, they might reserve for themselves in abstraction from social attainment is of less account. Still, a community without justice to all is very imperfect, and we must see, if we begin with high achievement and not with separate welfares, how the condition demanded by Justice is to be deduced as necessary.

The answer is not difficult. We all feel it in ourselves in such experiences as were mentioned above. The great values draw out the powers of mind, and harmonise them in a many-sided whole. But the presence of disvalues counters and opposes this process, and each member feels the imperfection, oppression, and incapacity of any members within his community as a load on his aspiration, and a contradiction in his otherwise harmonious attainment. It has been well said that if I but note a

bad arrangement of trains in Bradshaw I am tempted to try and have it put right, altogether disinterestedly. I do this, it seems clear, merely because it is a disorder in my world, which obstructs my inherent endeavour to introduce order. Still more, if there is a contradiction, a distress and oppression burdening a whole class of lives, so that they conflict with themselves and with the communal aim, this constitutes an immediate misery and obstruction in every mind that has the communal spirit. In principle, it would take a perfect community to elicit and harmonise the whole mind of its members. A community in which there is injustice must be full of pain and bad conscience in as far as its mind is active.

This second way of representing the nature of social good seems more in harmony with social fact than the first. From the first point of view the governing term was "social"; and the "good," the general idea of good being once presupposed, was in its actual nature com-

posite, derivative, instrumental. It was the way in which millions of welfares could be best subserved. From the second point of view, what comes first is the term "good," that is, the imperative relation of values to intelligent beings. The adjective "social" is then secondary, and simply marks the character of values as impersonal, and so not coincident in their demand or realisation with individual persons each to each. Society then would be regarded as existing because values demand a single co-operative life with diverse capacities. Values would not be regarded as being built up as means to separate welfares.

And if once more we ask why on this second principle there should not be whole populations subject to narrowness and oppression for the sake of supreme values enjoyed by a few, the answer has been indicated already. Values are the development of capacities. It takes the whole system of values to draw out the whole capacity of man; it takes the whole

capacity of man to be the basis of a perfect system of values. If in any community there are undeveloped capacities, so far the system of values is straitened and obstructed. This is the same as saying that a social sore is a sore in every mind, or else convicts it of an insensitive spot, which in itself is a contradiction and defect.

How do we know this account of values to be true ? We know it first by observation of the moral consciousness, which plainly declares that goodness, beauty, truth, and religion are more than instrumental, are imperative values, for the sake of which man and society recognise themselves to exist, although as the central characters of life that is worth living they may in a certain sense be set down as instrumental to it, being related to it as *sine quibus non.*

We know it secondly by a consideration of the nature of values and their kinship with mind and reality, which we are now about to discuss.

Both the points of view which have been dwelt upon are instructive, though the second is the more natural—for you will never persuade a sensible man that goodness or beauty are mere means to the happiness of groups—and the most complete. But if you are interested in starting from the individual's care for others and seeing how it develops, you can find your way up to the idea of good on that path, though your goal will be marvellously transformed *en route*.

CHAPTER III

VALUE AND GOODNESS

VALUE, worth, and goodness seem all to be names for the same character of objects. It involves the experience that some objects *prima facie* are welcomed and approved in a way in which others are not. A certain character, indicated by terms like these, is attributed to such objects; and we take it to be in principle the same in all cases. But its nature is not in everyday thinking expanded into an explanation. (For simplicity's sake we may suppose that we can distinguish "intrinsic" value from value as a means, and speak of the former only. Probably this is not quite true.[1])

a. This feature is insisted on by those who

[1] See p. 62 below.

say that value is indefinable, and compare it in this respect with unanalysable qualities given to sense-perception, *e.g.* yellowness or sourness. To define it, to say that it is one with some other term, is alleged to be substituting the other term for it, and so removing and abandoning the idea itself. But this seems merely to be saying that it is a thing you cannot explain, *i.e.* exhibit more clearly by tracing its essential properties, and this again seems to be in every case a question of fact and degree. Why should value have no essential properties and relations; and if it has them why should you not explain it by analysing them? To find anything indefinable is, it would seem, a mere mark of ignorance. You say you can recognise it, but you cannot tell me how. But this indicates as a rule a want of attention. Of course an object is definable only in proportion to the degree of structure which it presents. The most purely sensuous quality is least so; but ultimately everything must have structure. You cannot draw a line in the

attribution of properties to any object, and say "Here its definite connection with the system of reality must stop. It cannot be expressed any further." This, if not purely provisional, is sheer assumption.

This reason for pronouncing goodness or value indefinable, viz. that we have not at first sight analysed its structure, seems to be reinforced by another, viz. the idea that you must not use an attitude or perception of the human mind to express a quality of a real thing. Now it is true that this must be done with precaution. You must not say downright that the red of a rose is a sensation in my mind. Nevertheless, if you persist that no use can be made of what I experience to characterise real objects in any way, you are obviously back in the doctrine of the Thing-in-itself—in an attitude which forbids us to pronounce anything good or beautiful or real or sweet. All this is involved in the only grounds, besides *de facto* ignorance, which are or can be alleged

for pronouncing value and goodness indefinable. *Prima facie*, they can be explained or defined in terms of the character fixed upon them by the functions they exhibit in the context of experience. At most you might be able to show that attempts to demonstrate such a character have hitherto failed. But to assert that they must fail is clearly *a priori* scepticism and so irrational.

In fact, I take it, this whole demurrer against value being definable is an awkward version of the truth that it is undesignable—cannot be indicated with the finger—which is really opposed to that demurrer. Yellowness and sourness are designable by pointing to sensations, but are *prima facie* indefinable so far as they are mere sensuous qualities, though ultimately no doubt definable as knowledge progresses. But worth or goodness is not a sensuous quality; you cannot point it out with your finger. It is more comparable to number or causation, being a feature of structure and function char-

acterising experiences which have other features besides it.

In a word, good or value is a category, and not a datum of sense-perception. Things fulfil it more or less, but it is not any one thing.

Pleasure is a simple illustration. It seems to be the one thing whose very essence is to be what we want and all that we want, and it is natural at first sight to take it to coincide with good.

Yet the moment we look at it carefully, we see that pleasure is only one thing among others that are good. It has goodness or value in its own way, according to what its own peculiar nature can offer and provide; that is, it is not good in every way, but only in its own way, and there are many other things besides pleasure which, each in its own way, are also good. Such are the concrete things which, because we want them, give us pleasure; such again are beauty, knowledge, social life. No one of all these is mere or perfect good; none of them include the good-

nesses of all the rest. Each is good, we shall see, by being such as to fill its place or satisfy its correlative need; and to fill its peculiar place it must be determined in its scope and structure by its peculiar character.

Goodness, then, is not given in experience as one kind of thing you can point out. It is a feature attaching more or less to many such; we cannot exclude the possibility that in a sense it may attach to all. It is, as we said, a category, of which at least a great many objects present the character, but which is itself present as a whole in none. It is not given in perfection anywhere, at any rate in such experience as ours. This is what is expressed in an awkward way by calling it indefinable, and comparing it to qualities like yellowness and sourness. It is so hard to explain or define, that to recognise it as we recognise them would be convenient if we could do it; and the rough initiative of doing it we have in the judgment of immediate approval. But really,

definable, by properties and function, is just what it is, and indefinable—merely designable by pointing—is just what it is not.

β. The central problem and interest of philosophy is in recognising the attributes of what is real as characters within experience. To make affirmations of value without reinforcing them by such characters is to separate value from reality, and to abandon philosophical enquiry.

It will be worth while to point out shortly and simply how the affirmation that something is good—the judgment of value—can be confirmed and expanded by analysis. The method may be called Inductive, if we understand the meaning of the term. But it does not mean, of course, an enumeration of apparently similar instances without analysis. Its formula, in plain language, is, "Show me an instance of good or value, and I will show you that it has the general character which I claim for these attributes."

What is good or has value is naturally

observed as possessing the general character of what a human being[1] wants.

This may be expressed by saying that it is the object of desire, or which satisfies desire, or that it is anything in which we find ourselves affirmed. Of course not all that is good is the object of desire of every man at every moment. This is why we spoke of "the general character." As a rule we can only enjoy one thing at a time. In a mixed enjoyment we do not fully enjoy two or more things. We enjoy a combination, which is an enjoyment different from any one of them, and alternative to them all. Moreover, the desires for different objects are often incompatible states of mind, and the nature of our practical world very narrowly limits the multiplicity of experiences which any individual can attain. But these restricting and diversifying conditions cannot affect the general character of value. For this,

[1] The argument could be extended *mutatis mutandis* to angels or the lower animals. But it is enough to deal with the experience which is most familiar to us.

the quality of the object, obviously could not consist in the variable external fact of being actually desired by this or that individual at this time or that. To say so would be like treating the quality of yellowness or sourness as simply the same thing with being seen as yellow or tasted as sour.

This slight risk of misconception in the phrase "object of desire" is partly removed in the expression "that which I approve" or "in which I find myself affirmed." For this does not presuppose an antecedent want directed to the object in question, nor, indeed, a very special preoccupation with it at all, but merely a recognition of its character. Thus in the judgment of beauty, it is commonly held, all will or desire directed to the object [1] is absent, and even perhaps all enjoyment

[1] There is, I think, often a confusion about this. No one says that it spoils your beauty-loving attitude if you will ardently to see a beautiful picture of a house or a woman, or even to buy it. It is if you begin to think of buying the house or the woman that you have fallen out of the aesthetic attitude.

of the beautiful may be absent compatibly with recognition of its quality.

This general character may be further analysed thus: When we scrutinise any instance of value, we find its capacity to meet our need and sustain our self-affirmation to be one with what above we spoke of as its structure. That is to say, its mode and amount of positive being is such and so arranged as to present in determinate harmony a relatively great variety of features, or, in other words, to cover solidly — that is, without internal discrepancy—a relatively large area in our experience. This is what we mean when we say of great men or thoughts or books, or of beautiful works, that they have "so much in them"; that they "feed" us; that they "satisfy" us. They meet our nature's want or need, that is, amply and enduringly, at many points, without leading up to failure and self-contradiction. They show in some degree the quality of the "living water which he who drinks shall not thirst again," or of the object

which, as it is more real, and has more of being, so more really and essentially fills our nature's want. Such a stable and satisfactory object is *such as* to satisfy desire; it has the property of satisfactoriness.

This property has at bottom a logical aspect. It is one with the nature of any experience in which self-discrepancy is to a great extent banished, not by vacancy, but by comprehension and positive unity. This is what you feel, to take simple instances, in a sound political constitution, in a good life, whether communal or individual, in beauty, truth, physical health, and the material strength of things. The attribute is ultimately the same—a strong and complete self-maintenance—whether in a theory so far as it answers all questions, an institution so far as it deals with all emergencies, or an experience so far as it satisfies all wants. The human agent or recipient, uniting himself with such an object, is so far reinforced and given solid ground against discord, and against the narrower objects or paths of conduct which,

set against one another and against his wider wants and powers, must inevitably engender discord.

The recognition that in any such object we are affirmed or reinforced, and the inherent conation towards unity and self-completeness—the judgment and the aspiration—seem to be merely different forms of the same central feature of our life. To ask whether it is a matter of intellect or of feeling appears unintelligent. The quality both is obvious to apprehension and makes a difference to vitality. It is appreciable therefore both by reason and by feeling, and must always in some degree be evident in a reaction upon both, although either may predominate. There is nothing in which the grades of its nature are more manifest than in lower and higher appreciations of beauty. To be willed by the good will—the will and objects which are comprehensive and harmonious — is merely a special form of the same character.

The main point, then, is clear. The quality of goodness or value is one which

is recognised in various degrees throughout human experience and by its character. But this does not in any way interfere with the attribution of it as a quality to objects in the real world. We cannot find a difficulty in this qualification of the real, unless we are prepared to revive the doctrine that real objects are things in themselves which cannot exhibit their qualities in human experience.

γ. We can now take a further step. We have seen that value, worth, or goodness is a certain quality of objects, *bona fide* belonging to them, but especially revealed in their manifestations within the attitude of human minds (the minds of finite spirits). Why has it been thought that goodness in the strict and ultimate sense is reducible to goodness of the human will, that is, of will as manifested in finite spirits? What connection is there, if any, between the quality revealed in judgments of value and the quality present in the will that wills the good?

"Nothing can possibly be conceived,

in the world or out of it, which can be considered good without qualification except a good will."

Why does this sentence come home directly to the hearts of many men, and why have great philosophers accepted a view akin to it or founded upon it? We have seen that, *prima facie*, value need not be willed. It need not be good in the current sense of being a quality of human conduct. It is *prima facie* a large and general feature of objects of experience, and the good will, the will for good, may even be held good as a means to realising it, rather than value be held reducible to the simple case of the moral will.

But there is something more to be said. It is well, I think, to begin the investigation of values from the large and general experience of all that man does value or approve. But having begun it so, it is also well to push the enquiry to the end. The quality of value may have more conditions than we have noted. Can objects conceived in isolation, for example,

abstracted from the context of experience, possess the quality as we have defined it? It has been said that "all other values are relative to value for, of, or in a person." Does this suggest anything which we have so far failed to consider? Is value really intelligible apart from incorporation in a whole where its quality and structure can deploy itself and be appreciated? Supposing that we mean by the good will not an objectless aspiration, but a character complete in many-sidedness, while moulded and stimulated throughout by a comprehensive idea of perfection, is it not plain that at least in such a personality all values must receive a completeness which otherwise they could not attain? Can any value really, as has been argued, be itself by itself?

We seem here to have developed a double-edged suggestion. Moral goodness will after all be the essence and centre of value; but then moral goodness will be much more than the good will used to mean.

δ. Let us draw out this suggestion for a moment.

Truth, for instance, is a value. And we know that bizarre suggestions have been made for reducing all immorality to falsehood. If you steal, you are asserting something to be yours which is not so; and so again, if you corrupt another man's wife. This is an obvious encroachment of truth on morals; but we perceive, I think, a certain affinity between the two provinces. To possess truth is indeed not the same as to be truthful; and to be truthful cannot be expanded into being wholly good. Yet to possess truth is to be, in a certain province of our living, regulated by sound and comprehensive ideas, to be free from discord, narrowness, and superstition, to be, in short, so far organised as a spiritual creature should be. This can certainly be regarded as a region of morality, even if an outlying region conveniently designated as a rule by a different name. So it is with the valuation of beauty. In it we are quiet, sane, and harmonious. And

thus we are led on to the coherence of all the qualities which go to a complete personality, and we recognise that their separate names are provisional and popular distinctions, but that really and genuinely each is such as to presuppose all the rest. This is especially true in a social whole. All minds throughout the community give and take their colour from each other, or, more truly, partake in different degrees of the one social mind and character. None are purely instrumental. Every means, so far at least as it is a mind, partakes of the nature of the end. For the end is the whole of which the so-called means is a member, and each learns from others their special sides of goodness. Our popular moral doctrines are in nothing more defective than in their lack of this insight, which to the Greek moralist was so transparent. I quote[1] an illustration of this: "We must have observed in any such form of conduct as an act of beneficence or munificence, how infallibly the churl in spirit betrays

[1] From *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 397.

himself, to use Aristotle's phrase, in the quantity or degree or time or place or manner of his action. Only the true motive gives you the perfect act. The brave man again; how hard it is to be brave and gentle and modest and calm and wise. The brave and noble soul, and it alone, will ring true in every side and aspect of its act; time, place, manner, degree, behaviour to persons; all the characters which make up an act whose quality takes form in quantity, and is adapted to the situation with a beautiful adequateness, neither too little nor too much, like the petals of a rose. . . . If the motive or attitude of soul were in any way wrong or imperfect the act would betray it at once by passing over into some exaggeration or deficiency at some one of its innumerable aspects and peculiarities. What should be courage, for example, would be vulgar, or ostentatious, or rash, or false, or wanting to itself in resolution or tranquillity or gentleness."

It is only a character thus complete that

could possess the good will in perfection; it is only in a good will so perfected that each separate value could really come to its own. A lesion anywhere in the soul must affect its receptivity throughout, and a sore in the society is a lesion in every soul that is a member of it, as a communal greatness exalts every particular mind.

Thus it would seem that it is only in a full experience that value or goodness can be real with a complete development; and that a full experience can only be present in a complete personality. Under other conditions the value of objects may be recognised, but in proportion to the defectiveness of the conditions they must be truncated and curtailed of their attributes. "Minor moralities" the values less necessary to social existence might be called by some, and life can no doubt dispense with them. Others would retort that the cardinal virtues themselves are but instrumental, and that the enjoyment of beauty and of human kindliness form the primary worth of life. It is not difficult to

estimate these counter-conceptions. All the goods or values are instrumental to each other; all are cognate expressions of the same category. It is an error to give preference to any as the exclusive end, for it is only in the whole of being that each can find full expansion. "The world of reality is the world of values."

It seems to follow that there can hardly be existence without some value. Such an existence would in principle be one which *could* earn no recognition and claim no attention. Whatever fills a place and occupies thought and feeling must *ipso facto*, however slightly, present a value. That individuals may, in fact, not recognise it is merely a case of the narrowness of the particular finite mind.

CHAPTER IV

UNVISITED TOMBS

"The number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs."

1. We thought it not enough to say that a man should "live for others." It seemed necessary to indicate more positively what sort of thing, if he would live well, he was to do for them and indeed for himself, who could not be omitted from his own duty and welfare. Thus we were led to consider the social unity, and ultimately the great values which seemed to be its quintessence, though not directly social, not appeals or services from some of us to others as to social units. Though personal in quality these great values appeared to be impersonal in function and service, and

in reaching the core of social good we found ourselves beyond directly social transactions. Beauty, knowledge, and universal love, though the birthright of all, are not so constituted as to appeal directly to the multitude.

Thus, in that high region of the unquestionable values, we found ourselves using in the main illustrations from the most exalted gifts of the individual, and from his most perfected life. Even his morality, though a central and universal character of human living, took an idealised form, as we attempted to see its connection and interdependence with the system of those qualities which we value most.

But this result ought to leave the student discontented. He has been driven back, in a sense, to the individualism which he had rejected. He has been forced to find the centre of life in achievements and utterances which come only in special conditions and through exalted saintliness or genius. His own scientific convenience, so to speak, has promoted this result. In

considering what value is, he naturally turns to achievements which stand out from ordinary life, and whose nature is the constant object of contemplation and analysis. Poetry, music, the plastic arts, all perceptions of beauty, the work of science and philosophy, or, if he reflects on society, the ideas of statesmen, publicists, and moralists, lie near at hand for him to utilise. Religion, too, if he is wise enough to appeal to it, comes to him in a crystallised form, from great saints and prophets and preachers, from the scriptures of many faiths, and from the highest poets.

In all this material, which has been said, and rightly said, to form the characteristic province of philosophy, the philosophical student feels himself somewhat withdrawn and remote from the common life—common in a double sense—in which actual humanity is concerned. And yet surely he is right, is indeed uttering a tautology, when he says that existence which presents no value is worthless. His view tends to be aristocratic and exclusive; not in the least, I

think, through his intention, in which the impersonality of values—the widow's cruse of goods—bulks much larger than the special personality which is their condition; but mainly for the reasons of convenience and facility in exposition which lie in the conspicuousness of the supreme excellences, and the logical purity which attention focussed upon them has given to their theoretical analysis.

But the result *is* in some sense individualistic and aristocratic. The theory of values is directed to high achievement; and in speaking of man's function, his "work," his *raison d'être* and hope or right of continuance, the student is apt to fix his eye on the leaders of mankind in great vocations, and on their nearest followers. Though well aware that their work is *for* mankind he finds a difficulty in exhibiting the value or values that come by and through mankind. Perhaps the present writer may tell a story against himself which illustrates this weakness of the scholar. In a youthful college essay on

some such topic as the extension of the franchise he had given vent to extreme hopes and theories respecting general education and the "ladder from the elementary school to the university." But from his college tutor, the sturdy democrat, T. H. Green, his speculations only elicited the remark: "If you imply that no one is fit to have a vote who has not had a university education I don't agree with you."[1]

This conception of function and value—or rather this natural bias in elucidating it, for it amounts to no more than that—has more important echoes, perhaps, than one might suppose. Particularly, I suggest, it is powerful in the current conception of a future life. "Man is immortal till his work is done." One may ask a distinguished student, free from theological bias, to tell one as frankly as possible what

[1] This criticism ought not to be recorded without reference to his well-known aspiration that "the time will come when the phrase, 'education of a gentleman' will have lost its meaning, because the sort of education which alone makes the gentleman in every true sense will be within the reach of all."—Nettleship's *Biography of T. H. Green*, p. 80.

is his fundamental desire and expectation about a future life. And one is not unlikely to get the answer: "Well, I *should* like to complete my work." A feeling of this kind is also noticeable with reference to the promise of youth cut short in war. "How necessary to think of such splendid forces as continuing their work elsewhere." I will return to this idea. There is also the very real difficulty of discerning a quality of humanity which may command our loyalty and devotion, coextensive with the actual multitude of mankind, especially if past and future lives are to be included. This is a difficulty which hardly can be disposed of altogether, though its arduousness may in some degree be mitigated by what we are about to say.

2. No doubt the recognised forms of social relations and intercourse, involving loyalty and affection, are without difficulty admitted as a value. They meet one whole side of our being, and obviously have in themselves a quality of satisfactoriness. They actually arise in man's

endeavours to confront with increasing completeness his growing wants and needs. But even this recognition, it appears to me, is inadequate to the value implied in humanity as such, if indeed there is a value which is thus rightly designated, instead of being merged in the worth of Nature in the largest sense, which certainly must in some way be taken into our account.

For want of some conception of this latter kind, we get two antithetical errors in dealing with the social whole. Some apply the idea of means and ends sharply on one side, some on the other. The justification and worth of life, we are told, is in the high achievements of the foremost men or castes, and the bulk and multitude have only a derivative value, from their position as a *sine qua non* of these great things. An opposite error—for, though a well-meaning error, it is one in principle—is that of which the writer was self-convicted above. Man, it urges, must not be a mere means ; and as value lies only in

high achievement, such achievement and its condition must be made the lot of every mortal. We are very willing that this should become a truth, and it may be one already, far more profoundly than we can know. But it does not adequately cover the ground, and there is something more fundamental to be said.

We want to find an expression for the value of mere humanity; for that which is present wherever there is man. We have certainly made a step towards what we want in reflecting on the contagiousness of values, and the truth that in any community the units and strata, however apparently divided into means and ends, borrow colour and character from each other—the "highest" from the "lowest" no less than otherwise.

A first suggestion comes from applying this idea to the great community of the universe. Our most comprehensive conception of human values, it may be, is not to be sharply limited to the species of *homo sapiens*. Traditional and crystallised re-

ligion has perhaps never played us a more injurious trick than when, by dwelling on our ultimate destinies, it drew an absolute demarcation between ourselves and the lower animals. Even if we adopt the view, which has certainly a measure of truth, that it is in intelligent finite spirits, and in the filling of their minds, that nature becomes most fully what it is capable of being, still the mode and type of such a filling is not confined to the most highly individual among human attainments. Here we might be thought to have in mind the fashionable topic of the subliminal self; but without entering into controversy I will only say that what I am speaking of is something simpler and more evident. At any rate, then, as between social classes, so in the community of the universe, the higher and the lower both nourish and colour one another, and the total resulting experience is far richer and more solid than it could be if *per impossibile* any part of the whole could be removed.

But there is again more than this, or at least a further special emphasis on one aspect of it. It is not merely that our minds are filled from nature and from our sympathy with the lower organic world. This might be said in a sense of every finite mind in its most lofty creations. What we are trying to call attention to is a unity which underlies this filling and forms its unreflective foundation; something which it is difficult to name except by some such colourless and uninteresting phrase as "The sense of the unity of things." Creation, a great mystic said after his conversion, "had a new *smell*." Something between these two extreme expressions is the rendering we desire. First there are the minimum basal facts of human life itself; love and labour and the family or its simplest equivalent. And then follows the recognition of all this or rather the direct touch with it, as rooted in external nature and in continuity with the animal mind; what is reflected in a very exalted form by Words-

worth, and with more affinity to the earthy quality we are now considering, in Meredith's nature poems. The spirit in nature I take to be a reality, though not separately self-existent. It is hardly necessary to cite in illustration the texts which, I suppose, as later utterances often push home points of a creed, elicited the possibilities of Christianity in a slightly new direction.[1]

Here we are led to reflect upon the values which man inherits without being able to name any benefactor to whom he owes them.[2] And these, in a word, comprise nearly the whole of his life. For the name itself, even when it can be named, indicates in a great measure a focus of

[1] From the *Logia*: "Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I"; or, less known, I think, "Who are those that draw us to the kingdom, if the kingdom is in heaven? The fowls of the air, and all beasts that are under the earth and upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea; these are they which draw you, and the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, and whosoever shall know himself shall find it."

[2] *Value and Destiny*, 263. The reference of a trade to a god as originator is a suggestive meeting-point of the nameless and the divine.

origins and surroundings, whose real growth is beyond analysis. Inventions are in part no doubt creations, but in a great part they are growths. The trades[1] the habits, the solid virtues which are the main quality of humanity all come to us from the nameless ones. And more than this; they come not from the nameless ones as a crowd of individuals, but from unities, families, communities of all sorts and sizes, in which the spirit of things has taken form and grown. In all this medium of unity, which, though unreflective, is not subliminal, we have an undeniable human value of a direct and universal type, in which there cannot be a human creature who is not a partaker in some mode or degree.

Another side of the same character is the touch of the trades and crafts with

[1] I repeat from the reference in the last note part of Goethe's lines on the mason:

The mason's ways are
A type of existence,
And his persistence
Is as the days are
Of men in the world.

external nature. It is easy here to go astray into sentimentalism; but any one who has noted the facts will not easily surrender the conviction that here the unity of things finds a peculiar and valuable utterance. It might be fanciful to say that the quality of the sea, the forest, the mountain, or the arable field, passes directly into minds and bodies occupied with them. But that corresponding qualities, tinged with some of the nobility of these external features, are elicited by preoccupation with them seems to be a fact which admits of no doubt, and is, of course, perfectly natural. All dealings with externals must promote relevant qualities. It seems sentimentalism to speak of "the veracities of nature," for nature makes no assertions. But there is something which everybody feels who has touched constructively the material world, something to which and in which his heart goes out to meet it, and through which he feels it his fellow-worker and almost his comrade. This is a value—this spirit of

insight, sympathy, reliance, and resignation, in face of the course of nature—which is in all humanity, and which all humanity realises, I believe, as a unity transcending its mere self, and blending it with a wider world.

And a word should be said of our relations to the lower animals. That it reduces mankind, in their hope and destiny, to the level of the beasts that perish, has always been a cutting reproach against paganism or infidelity. But even if levelling up were here altogether inconceivable, it could not be right to deny a continuity which obviously exists. Everyone who has had a friend among dogs or horses or birds must have felt himself enlarged in sympathy and in faith and courage by having a representative, so to speak, at the court of Pan. Just because it lacks the intelligence directed to a whole beyond the individual, which forms the glory and the imperfection of man, the lower animal carries in itself a peculiar anticipation of the Absolute. The dog which runs beside

one seems a middle term and an interpreter between one's worrying mind and the tranquil life of things. This quietness and simple trustfulness of an animal which is once your friend is surely the secret of its attractiveness. It is, I have fancied, as if the Absolute came to eat out of your hand. It is a little world or kingdom, foreign and unbiassed by interests,[1] which recognises you of its sovereign indulgence. See two or three people in a garden, and how gratified that one is to whom a robin makes advances, just as if it were a child or a king that did so.

> And with joy the stars perform their shining,
> And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
> For themselves they live, nor pine with noting
> All the fever of some differing soul.

This, perhaps, we can neither assert nor deny; but it verges on the pathetic fallacy. Of the lower animal, on the other hand, something of the kind is a simple truth. And if the brutes that perish do not make

[1] I do not think it spoils the relation that they are attracted by food. This is not always so, and when it is, the friendship becomes in the end a separate thing.

each for himself the enormous claims of our spiritual individualism, it may be that, without lowering our standard, we have something to learn from them in humility and resignation. That is, in what, translated into our mentality, must bear these characters, though in them it is a sheer consequence of a simpler mode of mind.

An analogous set of considerations can be applied, and must in some sense be applied, as Matthew Arnold's verses showed us, to the whole of external nature. It forms the world we live in; it imparts qualities—I do not say *its* qualities—to us; we may shun as a fallacy individualistic animism, but that through nature in a great degree we imbibe the faith which makes us one with the universe it seems impossible to doubt.

> The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
> In love and worship blends itself with God.

In seeking, then, the most universal value of mere humanity as such, we have found something more, something with

which it is continuous, and from which it is inseparable. And this something seems to be a sense of reliance, of belonging, and of absorption, which has kinship with the essence of religion. Humanism *per se*, and cut off from this pervading sense, is artificial perhaps, and unstable. "The high Renaissance pride and glow are apt to leave this bitter taste in the end. Absorption in man as the centre of the world and the hero of existence leads certainly to loss of that sanity and sweetness which an openness to the abiding presence of the non-human living world around us infuses into life. It is not by that absorption that we shall find the full meaning or animating power of our Western faith that in man the divinity is revealed." [1]

The neglect of these most general values is the key to much pessimism, the outgrowth of unintentional but ignorant arrogance. The average reader must surely stand amazed at times, when he realises a common literary or publicistic attitude

[1] Laurence Binyon, *Painting in the Far East*, p. 24.

to all forms of life in succession, to the slum, the suburb, the country village, the great country house, the industrial or plutocratic city. If we add to these "the middle-class paradise" of the summer assembly at Chautauqua Lake, as treated with a kindly contempt by William James,[1] we shall observe that every typical form of human life, whether with squalor and misery or without it, lies open to destructive criticism from the standpoint of those lofty values which we described as universal in potency but not general in appreciation. Now one does not suggest that this criticism is to be repudiated as baseless. One does suggest that it is under grave misapprehension as to its own importance.

"He cares for the big things—ambition, popularity, a prominent position, luxury. He will enjoy being a personage, and having wealth at his command. For my part, I care infinitely more for the small things of life—love, friendship, sympathy.

"'The small things! Good Lord!' said

[1] *Talks to Teachers, etc.*, p. 268 ff.

the bishop, and his jaw dropped. He also dropped the subject." [1]

Miss Octavia Hill, with a life-long experience in the poorest homes, although an impassioned advocate of beauty and knowledge, spoke in the same sense: that our urgency to promote these special values is because they need promotion. The greatest things of all no one can take away. This is the mood for which humanity as such is a value, and the line, as we saw, cannot be drawn even there.

3. These considerations have an echo in our attitude to death and survival. The student or statesman who longs for a continuance in which he may "complete his work"—some task in the universe analogous to his function on earth, is thinking mainly of those high values of which great individuals are the vehicle. One dares not say that he is wrong; but the consideration of the vast masses of humanity suggests supplementary ideas. If not the pre-eminent, yet the widest

[1] *Prisoners*, by Miss Cholmondeley, p. 113.

work of the world is nameless, general, indivisible. To the student who uttered his desire to complete his work elsewhere some of us would hold it natural to answer, "But no man completes his work himself." The honour and responsibility of an achievement can never truly and justly be laid upon any individual, not even in the crystallised achievements of poetry, knowledge, beauty. Still less can it be so considered when we reflect upon the general indivisible spirit of things.

To any one strongly influenced by reflections like these, the ending of life on earth presents itself not quite as it did to the student whom we imagined above. Such a one is undogmatic as to what may come, but he needs no primary reliance on individual survival as instrumental to continuing or completing in his own person his earthly functions or their analogue. He does not even feel that he is losing hold on his work, and preparing to bequeath it to a successor, either another on earth or himself in a new life. Rather it

seems to him to be resuming its absorption in the general thought and effort of the world, from which, as ascribed to some one worker, it was discriminated for a time only, and that most arbitrarily and superficially. It is passing away on every side, he feels, not by death and destruction, but by transformation into kindred forms of the spirit through which the unity of things affirms itself in humanity. If the sea in which Davidson's runnable stag found rest and refuge were not to be felt as an enemy, but as a friendly medium into which the brave deer's spirit passed freely and gladly away—and something of this kind, I fancy, was in the poet's thought—it might be taken as a figure of what is meant. The work, which was never separate from the general effort, grows at every point into the general vitality which surrounds it; and in merging itself in the common task and becoming nameless, like the mason's or the ploughman's labour and habit or the citizen's traditional loyalty, it resumes its indefeasible right

as a factor, however trivial, in the general human value. In a word, he does not feel himself to be dying, but to be re-living at countless points in a new life, infinitely greater than his own. Nearly all mankind rest in unvisited tombs, and leave behind them a common undistinguished work, and it is the value of this general life that we have been trying to appreciate and aspiring to share.

CHAPTER V

ON "DOUBTING THE REALITY OF EVIL"

IT is one of the everyday jeers or impeachments against students of philosophy that they doubt the reality of evil. It is urged that to do this is to invite moral apathy, to admit that evil is something of the nature of good, and so to weaken the moral will, whereas the only way to think of evil truly, and without danger to morality—"to think of it as good," the paradox is accepted—is to consider it as absolutely and finally evil, without any kind of affinity to good.

Let us trace this line of thought and see where it would lead us.

1. You are paltering with evil — this is the starting-point—if you do not regard

it as absolutely real. Grant that it may be "overruled" with good results, *e.g.* in history, still you are in moral danger if you confuse the instrument with the result. You must not only not do evil that good may come. You must not in any way acknowledge kinship between the evil instrument and the good consequence.

As evil has no good in it, the war between the two is to be a war of extermination. Its aim is to extinguish evil by the triumph of good. As there is a great deal of evil, the extinction is drawn out into a process which we hope to be a progress. How do we regard this progress? Is progress going on for ever the end, *i.e.* the best we are to hope for? Or do we believe in the total extinction of evil one day by the triumph of good? And if we believe in this, is it to take place in time, in our world as we know it, or beyond time, in another world, whose conditions are presumably different? Then what about the past evil, if at a certain point evil ceases; or about the evil continuing in

this world, if it goes on here, and only ceases elsewhere? The answer has usually been "compensation." There must be compensation, or the universe is fundamentally unjust, and the evil in it is not only real but so far triumphant, a positive quantity not in any way cancelled; pain and badness which we must simply grin and bear, putting up perhaps the best fight we can in detail. Though, indeed, if there is no "recompense," it is very doubtful if we can be expected to put up a fight. Thus to believe in a recompense has often been held necessary if you would have credit given to your testimony on oath, or be admitted to serve as a magistrate. The moral government of the world, of which we elders were taught in our youth, was by rewards and punishments.

2. Here we see a strange medley of fact and improbability. We will begin by pointing out some distinctions.

"Evil is real." Take as types of it pain and the bad will. These are facts. All of us experience both of them pretty

nearly every day. And the lower animals are continually experiencing pain.

"Evil is absolutely real, and has no kinship with good." "Absolutely" ought to mean something. It should mean *at least*, "according to a character wholly its own, unaffected by relations or connections, what can never be seen or thought of otherwise." Of course such a thing would be a world of itself; it is a contradiction to treat it as a part within a larger world. And so it looks very improbable that anything absolutely real can be extinguished at all.

But we shall perhaps find out what is meant if we proceed. "Evil can be overruled into good, but you must not therefore think it akin to good." If you do, you are in danger of taking evil for good and weakening your moral will. War is an example. It may give rise to excellent by-products, but you are not to say it is good, or to be weakened in your will to prevent it. Absolutely real, then, is what has its own nature and must not be

explained away into anything else. Evil is evil, and you must not explain it away. It is positively effective, has its own quality; it is not true to say, "It is null, is nought." This seems to be what "absolutely" means; otherwise it would mean too much for the doctrine which uses it, that is, it would mean that evil was *ipso facto* unconquerable and the moral hope would be gone. So far we assent. We are not to palter with evil and call it something else.

Now for the consequences. One possible result was, "The End is Progress," a motto one has seen written up in a chapel of advanced thought. You are bound to fight evil, but you have no ground to think it can be totally extinguished. If it is absolutely real, as we saw, it cannot. If it is just a fact, we can only tell by trying. You observe it diminished here and there, and there is probably, as we shall see,[1]

[1] This is anticipating; but the common belief could not be made plausible for a moment without something of this kind. See below, p. 115 ff.

something beyond your observation, which makes you believe that it is in some degree being got the better of. So you acquiesce in progress as the end, that is, as all you can hope that the world can attain. Obviously, if taken literally, the words are a contradiction. Unending progress cannot be the end. The spirit of this meliorism is in some ways fine, but fundamentally unhappy. It is summed up in the slang phrase, " Do your d—d duty."

But again, if we take a distinction we can see a profound truth in this consequence. In the finite creature, as he stands, it *is* impossible that evil should be extinguished. He is so limited in body and mind. How can he become invulnerable to pain, and sure of seeking satisfaction in what satisfies ? It is a true conviction that evil must be overcome. It is a true conviction that in us as we stand it cannot be overcome. It is when we weld these truths together and say, " It shall then be overcome in our likes one day—*after* an *unending* progress," that we

have flatly contradicted both of them. We have said, "It will be overcome at the Greek Kalends in our world without any radical change of its nature."

Or, once more, the progress is to have an end in time. In this world, indeed, hardly. The reasons for the unending progress have disposed of that possibility. But in another world under different conditions. This again bears witness to a truth. If evil is extinguished, it must be in some way which gets over the difficulty of our feeble body and mind, in some way different in principle from our daily progress. But then, what about the evil of this world, which is to go on, or at least has gone on for ages? We were told it was absolute; we admitted it was real. Would a future perfection cancel it? How could this be?

The answer was, through compensation. There will be a supernatural recompense which will cancel previous pain, and fulfil all unfulfilled moral striving. The lower animals, indeed, hardly enter into the

insurance scheme; but, on the whole, the recompense, as we saw, is necessary to make the universe seem just, and justice is the ultimate law. Here again we have some truth. Evil, as a fact and act, cannot be undone. It is rooted in the finite creation. This is admitted when you appeal to compensation. Compensation is not annulment. It is a *pis aller*, employed when annulment is impossible. Still, by admitting compensation you show that you desire annulment and half believe in it. Something more, something which the first experience of pain and badness does not offer, is to be brought in, and the " absolutely real " evil is in some way to have its sting drawn.

Finally, we may note the consequence to heroism and self-sacrifice. In principle, if you admit compensation as a working necessity, morality is done away. You are afraid to admit that self-sacrifice is a reality and heroism a genuine fact. You have entertained a " why ? " which is fatal to the moral attitude, which at least

demands that good shall be aimed at for its own sake.

And all this comes from confusing "is a fact" with "is absolutely real." Evil must be overcome, although it is a fact. But if it is "absolutely real" it cannot be overcome; if it is a fact rooted in our nature it cannot be overcome apart from some realised change in us; and in trying to get round these results all these make-shifts and contradictions are incurred. In the whole point of view the one thing that survives and is solid is that evil is evil, and cries out to be overcome.

3. The line of thought we have been tracing is that of mere morality. And it is well to note that this is partly a theory. Ordinary life is not despairing; but if its experience bore out that line of thought, it would be pure despair, and indeed could not be lived. Our imperfections, all of which are evil, would be too heavy for us to bear. We are full of error and selfishness. Unless we knew, in some way, that there is a way out, an escape from our

badness, here and now, without our becoming perfect beings which we see to be impossible, we could not live on.[1]

And it is noteworthy, and should be helpful to plain persons, that this narrowly "moral" line of reflection has always been held to be that of the fanatic, and has been condemned by the heart of peoples and by great religions—perhaps much the same thing. Plain men and women, though well aware of their imperfections, are yet, as a rule, not at odds with reality, and do not believe that in being as they are they are exhibiting moral apathy. It is not an accident that "morality" in a certain sense has been the *bête noire* of religion; not, for example, that Scott has put in the mouth of a woman of almost perfect saintliness such words as these: "Mony a hungry, starving creature, when he sits down on a Sunday forenoon to get some-

[1] If I understand the attitude of Friends aright, this perfectibility of the individual in time is a weak spot in it—a sheer contradiction. It is motived, I suppose, by the dread of moral apathy which also sustains the view we are considering.

thing that might warm him to the great work, has a dry clatter o' morality driven about his lugs." [1] The characteristic term for the preaching so stigmatised, which he repeats by her mouth more than once, is "fizzenless," that is fushionless, foisonless, without sap or life, without the principle of nutrition.[2] It is not ill-meant towards men and women whom I highly esteem, and of whose movement I was a member for a considerable time, if I venture to see inevitably and by no personal fault some such character in the "ethical culture" propaganda, as also in the Positivist doctrine.[3]

What is it that is, I think by experience, as also according to theory, "fizzenless" in all these reflective theories of the duty of extinguishing evil by actual progress?

I remember hearing the late Sir Alfred Lyall say, in insisting on the underlying unity of Indian religion which free sym-

[1] *Old Mortality*, p. 398, ed. of 1871.

[2] Andrew Fairservice applies it to rubbishy manure.

[3] Cf. note above on the Friends. There seems to be a common reason why none of these sects can get to the heart of a nation.

bolic interpretation made possible, that if you asked any member of that religion, from the most learned teacher to the most ignorant peasant, what he expected from it, he would answer with the same word, "Liberation." What did Scott's old woman expect to be emphasised in the Calvinistic preaching her heart yearned for? What did John Bunyan's Christian expect when he carried his burden to the foot of the Cross? Again "Liberation," was it not? or what in more doctrinal language has been called salvation. The precise nature of this hope and expectation will occupy us below. The present point is merely that it exists; that the common and instinctive conviction pronounces evil, though ineradicable for us, yet not to be absolute, and to be conquerable, but otherwise than by progress; that this is the fundamental faith both of the social mind and of all great religions, and that the sentence is true which tells us, "Make the moral point of view absolute, and you have become not merely irrational, but have

broken with every considerable religion." [1] To do so is, I repeat, an outcome of theory and reflection. It is against the conviction of tribal or social man, or of the deepest of all human reactions to the world, the universal reaction of religion. When a man is in his will and heart at one with something above him, with a social group in which he has "his station and its duties," or with a spirit which he divines in the universe, he is not driven to despair by his own or others' evil. There need be in no sense or degree a failure to recognise it for what it is—a social sore, we have seen above,[2] is a sore in every member's mind *qua* member—but yet he has strength to disown it. By will, and in the social whole by sight, in the religious whole by faith, he throws himself beyond himself, and in spite of his badness and suffering, and fully confronting it, he claims as his own the good into which he has thrown his heart.[3]

[1] Bradley, *Appearance*, 500-501. [2] P. 64 above.

[3] "Throw your heart over the fence," I have read that the hunting man says, and you and your horse will follow. The Roman soldier, the story goes, threw his eagle into the thick of the enemy. Where it was, he knew that he must be.

4. In religious theory the name that has been given to this principle is Justification by Faith; and the dangers of moral apathy, which are admittedly real, have long ago been elaborated and refuted, even within the New Testament itself, in the controversy of Faith and Works; which anticipates in essentials the modern antithesis of goodness in the good will and in the consequences of action. Recent criticisms of the Absolute, as offering a moral holiday and repose to indolent characters, or an escape from conscience to wresters of the truth, are akin to the charge we are considering; and as we have quoted Scott on the dryness of mere morality, we may show by a reference to him how fully we appreciate the perils of Antinomianism.[1] Beyond all question, religion has its dangers. You do not handle a force that can remove mountains without grave hazards from neglecting the conditions of safety. None the less, though religion is

[1] Trusty Tomkins in *Woodstock*, and Thomas Trumbull in *Redgauntlet*.

not itself without morality, yet morality [1] is an impossible attitude without what is essentially religion. The point of the whole matter is that the finite being cannot attain perfection in itself, for finiteness excludes perfection. Of this, surely, fact and observation allow no doubt whatever. The only way is, to abandon the pretension to perfection as a finite individual, and to claim it in virtue of absorption of heart and will in a greater being. The antagonism to evil and the progressive conquest will remain as in morality; but they will only be one consequence of a change in principle which takes the universe in a new light and character, opposed to *prima facie* sight.[2] We have admitted the perils of this attitude. But it is man's fundamental attitude, and the theory which opposes it we have seen to be mere one-sidedness. It is the characteristic of such common-sense

[1] I repeat that "morality" in this sense, that which we have been criticising, is a thing of theory. It is not the moral world or total of observance and institutions in which man finds himself realised, and in some degree justified.

[2] See p. 75 above on the mystic's conversion.

reflection, which takes itself to be decisive and resolute, not to have room for more than one idea.

There is a famous passage in which Hegel [1] has said in effect that evil is an illusion which prevails in all finite spirits. Perfection is in reality achieved and does not wait upon you and me to be so, but finite beings cannot see it thus. This is just their task, and the interest which moves the world, to learn to see through the illusion. This saying has proved too hard for many who are not disinclined to reflect profoundly on the problem of evil. The essential objections to justification by faith reappear. "If the whole arrangement, as we see it, is a deception, and our only task is to believe so, the reality of the moral life, of 'works,' is unmotived and abolished, and the alleged interest in getting rid of the illusion falls dead." On the contrary, it is urged, perfection *does* wait

[1] The passage from Hegel is translated and commented on by Professor Pringle Pattison in his Gifford Lectures, *The Idea of God in Philosophy*, p. 412. The reference to Hegel is *Encycl.* sect. 212, Zusatz.

upon you and me to be realised; it is always being realised, as alone it can be, *through our works*. Yet the meaning of the passage has always seemed to me simple and convincing, in the light of such facts as we have been reciting. Undoubtedly you are here confronted with what is a plain contradiction to reflective common sense.[1] In it you are given a supreme test of courage and devotion, a supreme adventure. This is what the critics say they desire. They reject and despise a moral holiday; an easy belief, an arm-chair religion. Well, it seems to me, that here they have their wish. It is a hard test; but it is the supreme test of a man, and yet one, as we have seen, to which all sound and whole-hearted men respond, each after his manner.[2] Evil is evil; once more, you have not to palter with this

[1] Common sense is practical, and deserves all respect. Reflective common sense, or common-sense theory, is neither fish nor flesh. "That wildest of all theorists, the practical man," Bonamy Price used to say.

[2] The bad and desperate man responds after his way. His despair is that he cannot hold to the faith which yet he cannot escape.

truth; but, all the same, it can be overcome; not at a distance, but now and here; and the secret of overcoming it is to feel that it is overcome, and to treat it practically as a conquered thing. Such is the faith of science in its battle with appearances; it does not suppose some to be intelligible, and some not. If it did, it could not work. And such must be in effect the faith of the good man, if he is in any place or time to overcome the world. He must not suppose that here and there he may light upon an absolute evil which is in principle a separate thing, unresolvable and insuperable. His faith is essentially universal and practical. If it were not universal, it could not be practical. He could not tell at what points he must let evil triumph. The critic rejects this faith on the plea that it is too easy; but we must be forgiven for suspecting that he really finds it too hard. And in a degree, in the progress of the world, you can see your faith justified, and gain sidelights on the nature of evil which reveal to you

precisely how, under what conditions, it must be evil, but how also in principle it must continually lend itself to be overcome by good; continually, but, in the finite world, never completely.

5. One of these sidelights we will consider briefly; for it explains to us something of the nature of evil, and something of the helpfulness of trying to understand it.

What is the nature of the bad self, or the evil will? I have never seen noted the extraordinary boldness with which Dante indicates the fundamental point.

> Chè se potuto aveste veder tutto [1]
> Mestier non era partorir Maria.

We are not here to pause upon distinctions of intellect and will; the saying is above all that; just as Christ was when he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The meaning is simple and is familiar; but is not enough considered. It is the narrowness of man's mind which makes him do wrong. He desires more

[1] "If you (human beings) had been able to see the whole, there would have been no need for Mary to bear a son."—*Purg.* 3. 38.

than he can deal with; indeed, he aspires to be self-complete. But what he can make his own, as a set of values which do not conflict, is but little. And of what is extruded something refuses to be suppressed and forms a nucleus of rebellion. Thus the good we are able to aim at is narrow and distorted, and more than that, the elements of good which our narrowness forces us to reject lie in ambush to conflict with the good we recognise, itself poor and narrow and so weakened for the struggle. Life and literature are full of examples, and every one knows this in himself. A secondary self is formed out of the conflicting stuff, rebellious, in constant readiness to embarrass and overthrow the will which represents our best. The constituents of this bad self may not be bad; so far as they are positive interests, and in the main there is nothing else they can be, they are not bad in themselves. If a girl goes to work in a hospital when—assume it—she ought to have stayed at home to help her mother, you cannot say

that her interest in the hospital is a bad purpose, though she may have been selfish or self-willed in asserting it against a more imperative duty. But, you may say, this is at worst a mistake of judgment, biassed, perhaps, by a desire for freedom. You could not treat it as an example of the bad self. Well, that is the point. The question is harder than it seems at first. You may have, it seems, two conflicting selves, say family duty and a "career," and it may be impossible to say which you are right in preferring. Then whichever you choose, you may say, you are not bad, but at worst mistaken.

I should agree that this may be so. But the mistake itself, we must remember, comes of narrowness. If we could see completely, or be complete, we should make no mistakes. And thus there is a continuity between such alternatives, and developments in which the bad self is unmistakable. Consider a biassed choice.[1]

[1] It is coming to be held once more that all error is moral. I do not think so; but undoubtedly a great deal of it is due to non-intellectual bias, which passes into moral fault.

Let one course be or involve an attachment conflicting with your position as husband or wife, and the other be the normal discharge of your duties in and to the family; and you feel at once the recurrent conflict and discord of the incompatible selves, tearing the mind in two, and tinging the lawless attachment, which may in other respects be the better and the nobler, with the colour of vice and rebellion. Need the lawless course always represent the bad self, and the other the good? Not necessarily; no rules are absolute. I shall recur in a following chapter to the problem of what is right in conduct.

But the difficulty of judging just illustrates the continuity of the two selves. What is certain is, that there is some self in which we feel that we are doing and willing our best—affirming the greatest values which on the whole we can—and that there is some self, some habit, desire, rebellious temper, course of conduct, in which we know that we are conflicting with our best, and depressing the highest

accessible values. Both might be right for us, if we could have both; but we find them to conflict, and thus one of them becomes bad. Why is it bad? Because it is in contradiction with the good. We have amply seen that it may not be bad in itself. It is not true that possible acts and feelings are painted white and black, so to speak, as good and bad in themselves, and that it is our task to choose the white and refuse the black. How easy life would be if this were so!

But from the moment that a habit, a course of conduct, a habitual desire, interferes with our best, lowers our standard, silences or weakens our will to good, then it takes on, so far and for us, the colour of evil, and certainly its own essence seems to become infected, perhaps gradually, by the evil taint, and its own character to change. It is still a positive, but it carries with it a negative, and in willing it we know that we are willing against what is good; we are negativing our highest values, affirming their destruction,

Is not all this, it may be asked, needlessly hesitating and artificial? Are there not a huge number of moral vices, religious sins, which are condemned by their mere names, and the willing of which, or any of them, is what distinguishes the bad self? We see at once that "*is what* distinguishes the bad self" carries us too far. You can have a very bad self without any distinct and nameable vice. But if you have vice, must you not have *ipso facto* the bad self? Practically, no doubt, it would be so as a rule. The case seems to be that vices are habits whose names are taken to imply a collision with every possible good will. Sloth, cruelty, jealousy, cowardice, lust, these are judged when their names are applied. But, of course, not all actions which look like them merit these names.

We apply them roughly and provisionally by an average external standard. But we ought not to affirm the condemnation they convey without grave reflection; and perhaps, ultimately, not about others

at all. For it is the opposition to the good will that makes the passion or habit a vice. And it cannot be pure opposition; there can no more be an opposition without a positive value behind it, than there can be a denial without a positive reason behind it. There is at the root of the opposition some positive need or desire which, if we could have united it with our main set of values, would have added value to them. But because owing to our narrowness we cannot, we are bound to suppress it, and it fights against suppression, and so far as unsuppressed it is vicious. And to many a bad self, in its main outline, you cannot apply the habitual appellation of vice. It has not taken a form which is antagonistic to every possible good will, but only one which is antagonistic to my special good will here and now. You cannot name an hour of rising in the morning to be later than which constitutes sloth; that is, is indolence incompatible with any good will. The man may be a night worker. But not to rise at six, if I am able, and

bound by my vocation, to do so, is certainly of evil; and the habit of failing to do it would, in that case, prove a nucleus of bad ways and contribute to debilitate the will.

It is not necessary to dwell on the subject and its complications at greater length. The principle is clear. And returning to the proposition from which we started, we now understand, not that evil *is* good, but that it is made out of the same stuff as good; the stuff of life, its passions and values. It is evil when it is evil, that is, when it is antagonistic to good, and impairs our values or the will to them. But the same stuff is not evil in its positive nature, and the gain from understanding this is that we see how, in the actual moral progress, it can be overcome and overruled by good. Remove the exclusiveness which limits the good, give a man or a people freedom and opportunity, and much which was wrong will come right. A wider stuff will be reconcilable with the good will, a stuff which would otherwise have turned

to poison and hatred. The student's tendency is not really to call evil good because of its apparent results, but where you find good in the result to look for the good in the cause. The pessimist's view of causation is generally undiscriminating. Only, the finite is finite, and can never cease to err. The step it gains, the stuff with which it widens its will to value, becomes a basis for new contradictions and new vices. Women—it is not the only aspect of the question, but that it is a real one I fear there is no doubt—women become comfortable and economically independent—a manifest gain—and then a new terror assails society. They rebel against bearing children. Some of their reasons, we may admit, are very likely sound, but sheer selfishness is surely one of them.

Thus, as in the old controversy, "good works" are a necessary token of "saving faith," and indicate how good is present in the stuff of life. But it is not the works of finite beings which constitute the divine perfection; nor is it the fact of moral

progress,[1] though a clue to the weakness of evil, which constitutes the perfection of the universe. Rational and necessary though it is, there is no steeper and braver adventure than the faith of religion that in the perfection of the universe we have our own.

6. The proposition we have been discussing, that evil is "absolutely real," is closely akin to a proposition expressed or implied in much popular argument. It is this, that pessimism alone is faithful to "the facts." You gather together some of the horrors which any newspaper will furnish, and you conclude upon them that what these people experience *is* Reality—they are the persons best qualified to have experience, and so forth. The attitude is quite common, and is usually attended by

[1] We see here why we cannot help believing in it; it is not because our observation could warrant this belief. It is because it is a symbol of the perfection which our faith guarantees. See above, p. 115.

We see also that, good being narrow, and opposed by omitted elements in the character of evil, the affirmation made by evil is a necessary factor of perfection. We have seen, in principle, how the antagonism which makes it evil depends on finiteness, and must vanish if finiteness is transcended.

a good deal of arrogance and self-laudation. "We have no prejudice; we are not to be blinded; we see things not *couleur de rose*, but as they are."

Those who see differently, who look steadily at the great values of life, while denying none of its hazards and hardships, are treated as if what they saw in some way did not exist, as if, when you come to look at a great vista of things in their connection and significance, you in some way depart from reality and enter a province of shadow and illusion.

Pretty plainly there is here prejudice and superstition. What is its nature and motive? Shakespeare gives us the first clue. The temper is unintelligent, because malicious. "Love speaks with better knowledge, and knowledge with dearer love." Your care and interest must be wide if your intelligence is to be so. Take even the facts as balanced each to each, and say, what is ridiculously false, that they are equal on either side, the disvalues and the values. Even so, it would

be sheer malice to say of the disvalues, these *are the* facts, *are the* reality. And of course the supposition is ridiculous. The world is full of greatness, beauty, and love. Its tragedy—its hazard and hardship—is the price it pays for its freedom. You cannot have finite beings at a cheaper rate, so far as we can possibly understand.

But why these particular sufferers? Here is another prejudice—that justice, the equal dealing with individuals, is an ultimate law of things. Plainly it is not so. It is not so in any community, and only prejudice suggests that it should be so in the world. You cannot assert it, while admitting any individual difference at all, without being back in the old absurdity of compensation. It is of course impossible to dogmatise about the probability of a future life as a fact; but to make religion rest upon it as an instrument of compensation and as a reason for assuming a God to guarantee it, is to degrade religion to an egoistic level and deny the unity of spirits. We shall never

get a popular conception of religion that is clear and sane until this perpetual hankering after a future life as a means of recompense is laid to rest. A man who is radically unhappy and out of tune with his world must probably in any case be made again and made different before he could be happy in another life.[1] Why not simply say, "He has served his turn; he has at least explored a *cul-de-sac* of life, and tempered the world-experience by a significant negation;[2] let him rest, and a different being take his place"?

A very popular case of this pessimism is expressed in some such saying as, "Why not try Christianity?" or "Try the religion of Christ" (implying an opposition to *de facto* Christendom[3]). This throws a

[1] The Pope in the *Ring and the Book*—

"Else I avert my face, nor follow him
Into that sad, obscure, sequestered state,
Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
He else first made in vain, which must not be."

In any case it would seem the soul remade must be a new being.

[2] See p. 115 note.

[3] I venture to refer to my essay, "The Civilisation of Christendom," in the volume with that title, published 1893.

strong light on the prejudice in question. A well-known publicist headed a pamphlet with the supposition, "If Christ came to Chicago——." Another, I believe, offered as a completion of the sentence, "If Christ came to Chicago, he would see something he had never seen before, and that is a great city."

The idea that a better life for modern peoples than that existing to-day could be evolved directly from a few unharmonised texts of Scripture, belonging to an age when no such life was possible, is of a piece with the blind pessimism we were considering. Heaven knows, the problems of modern life are difficult enough, however freely and sanely you may approach them. But if you make dealing with them a meeting-point of extremes between the fanaticism of one-sided morality and the superstition of text-worshipping religiosity, their solution, which was arduous before, has simply become inconceivable. Every one must be struck, I think, by the incredibly low level of all public discussions in which

appeals to Scripture figure on either side. The reason is plain. In order to make full use of human experience you must start freely and frankly from your present position as a whole, and give to all special or historical suggestions just the value to which their rank in presence of that whole is found on discussion to entitle them. It is not only that the attention is wrongly focussed and the mind is wearied and irritated when you treat as important, for example, the texts in the Bible about marriage, and so initiate a controversy which is wholly irrelevant to the present problem of marriage law and divorce. The greater evil is that in repelling the false pretence of authority you are apt to be misled into supposing that you have refuted the substantive reasons which it was foolishly employed to corroborate. And a plain and open discussion on the merits, on the arrangements which are best for modern society in view of the freedom and happiness of men and women, is a thing hardly to be attained.

So with the whole of the Sermon on the Mount. It belongs, surely, to those early aphorisms which occur to gifted hearts and minds from the beginning of recorded culture and before the stress of life had created the setting in which their main difficulty will consist. It is easy and pleasant to rest in the contemplation of such sayings. But the work of spiritual progress lies in perfecting the possibilities they suggest through the innumerable strains and stresses of a complex life. And through this process their value is not diminished, but reaches higher levels as the life to which it is a clue becomes profounder.

I take a simple example. The incredibly low level at which all popular discussion of the rightness and wrongness of war is carried on seems to me ultimately to be determined by a single false assumption.[1]

[1] I could argue, if it were necessary, from actual conduct and from inconsistencies of speech, that Christ, probably, did not wholly surrender his habit of mind to this falsity. But such argument is against my plan. It is confusing a question of right and wrong with a matter of historical curiosity.

It is the assumption that love has only a single form, and excludes all use of force and all strife between those whom it unites; in other terms, that it manifests itself externally in gentleness and non-resistance only, and has no other word to say. The doctrine seems to me to be false, mean, and shallow. Love does not aim at the pleasure or ease of its object; it aims at his salvation. For its manifestation the whole gamut of passion and action is there, and it burns with the flame which the contact demands and speaks in the language which will be understood. It has become a cheap old jest to say, "To punish you hurts me more than it hurts you"; but it is one of the mischiefs of our vulgar literature that the caricatures of deep but dangerous truths are found so piquant that the truths themselves are discredited. All deep truths are dangerous; but to live therefore with none but shallow truths is degrading and rots the soul away.

Love which avails itself of this truth

to the full—and no day passes in any social bond without its doing so in part, and war is such a bond—assumes of course a terrible burden of *bona fides* as against temptations to hatred. Still, we may see it on the whole triumphant over the difficulty. The courage of hate and anger, as already the pagan knew, is a hideous and bestial courage. The true warrior is the knight of the holy spirit, and in the modern soldier at his best we find more than traces of his temper.

Now of course it may be said, " You are jesuitically defending war, separating the intention from the act." I should reply that this is just a case of the prejudice I am attacking. I have not defended war. I have, on the contrary, explained the general type of its prevention. I have only advocated the first principles of any rational discussion on the subject. If you wish to be rational, you must discuss how to avoid it, not condemn it when you have made it unavoidable. The love of man, and of God if you come to that, is a passion

for achieving the highest values and the best life for all—in a word, salvation. The idea of attempting this without being ready to face pain and sacrifice is almost blasphemous. Do we really think we are to enter into life just as we happen to grow, without experience of conflict and discipline? It would be a way out, in some degree, if the conflict and discipline in which we take a part could always end with our own particular suffering and not involve that of others. But men have known since reflection began, that this is an absurdity. The unity of man forbids it. You cannot attack an evil nor achieve a good without inconveniencing some one, and the natural man resents being inconvenienced, and never more than if, rightly or wrongly, the interference aims at his salvation. Of course you want to hurt any one as little as possible. But you cannot make it a principle that no one is to be hurt at all.

No recurrence to ancient creeds will help us, except in as far as all suggestions

have continually to be considered. The point at which we stand is the outcome of our best efforts, and in any case it is from this point, and it can be from no other, that our advance has to be made. It is not " doubting the reality of evil " to say that both in actual progress, by sight, and in the whole by faith, we are assured of its subordination to good, and of the absorption, if we could see the whole, of both, together with our finiteness which is the cause of their antagonistic existences, in perfection.

CHAPTER VI

"HOW IS ONE TO KNOW WHAT TO DO?"

CAN moral philosophy help us here? This is itself a subject of dispute; and I follow the view that directly and positively, by advice on particular issues of conduct, it cannot help.

On the other hand, just by explaining why this is so, and what is the nature of the moral choice which practical life involves, it is possible that some current errors may be avoided, and a general attitude suggested, fruitful of good results, even in the way of preference.

I will lead up to the problem by approaching the general attitude to begin with. The reason why philosophy cannot give particular instructions will follow

simply, if we master the principle which operates in moral choices.

1. To begin with, we have to recall two steps which were made above, and which are all-important for the problem.

(i.) In the first place, we saw reason to think that there is a common structure or quality in all values, and, depending on this, an interconnection between them. They form, we held, a system of positive self-affirmation and reciprocal reinforcement, such that the enhancement of any one tends to the enhancement of all the rest, and by the depression of any one all the rest are dulled and lowered. It is nothing against this that in a mind or body of limited energy, as of course every mind and body must be, it is possible for the assertion of one value to depress another—for moral activity, for example, to lower and obscure the sense of beauty. This is not the case necessarily nor always. It is just a hazard of the finite, as going a walk beyond our powers may cause us to be sleepy, when after it we intended to enjoy

poetry, while if well within our powers it will strongly reinforce our enjoyment. There is a common basis of values, and to fortify it helps all alike, though in calling upon it there is a point where the reserves of energy show exhaustion.

To appreciate the common nature of all values, as experiences which have the property requisite to filling and satisfying a mind, is the first step to understanding the meaning of a sane and fruitful attitude in moral preferences.

(ii.) The second step carries the same principle further. It is that the medium and atmosphere of all values, and itself a comprehensive value, is the good will.

In saying this, I take the good will to mean what I have above described it to mean.[1] And I think that this follows from a reasonable and necessary interpretation of the famous principle which is known by that name. It means, as I understand, a will whose object is a connected system of values, knit together in a harmonious whole

[1] P. 60 above.

through their common quality, and ruling the character of the individual whose will it is in a steady pursuit of its object so far as power and situation admit. The acts of such a will, though individual and concrete, are affirmations of universal law, because they are so adjusted as to contribute to an orderly life in which, so far as the man's limitations allow, all values and all individuals have assignable places. The social will is the familiar example. In it, I will the general object of the community, but not merely, perhaps not at all, *in* general. A peasant, for instance, has probably never reflected on it. My daily will is adjusted to a certain set of values, embodied in, and governing, the relations of a certain set of persons. All of these, to an extent varying with my knowledge and interest, I reinforce and sustain by my particular and detailed action. It need not be said, that the whole system grows, by the assimilating [1]

[1] Assimilating in the sense in which digestion is assimilating, the permeation and appropriation of new material.

impulse of reason, and there is constant friction and disagreement of volition in particulars. Nevertheless, the whole, so far as it works, is an example of law universal, and my volition, so far as willing it, is a will which is fit for participation in a system of law universal, and is a value, a personal harmony, directed to a set of values and embodying them ; for example, to the happiness of the society, and its economic, aesthetic, or scientific contribution to the world. A current objection to the notion of the good will may be disposed of in a few words. It is held to exclude the affections. Now we are not discussing the history of philosophy ; and what the doctrine plainly may mean, and is right in meaning, is enough for us. And that is, simply, that the good will indicates a character trained by subordination to a systematic object in life, of the quality above described. The affections, of course, are embodied in it, but educated and disciplined affections. Any one who objects to this, and claims to prefer the

affections as natural impulses, without training and discipline, does not know what he is saying. At best he would get the love of the slave or the dog, who fights for his master—or against him—right or wrong, and is incapable of hearing reason, or caring for justice or any social obligation.

Passing over this, we see from what has been said above [1] that in the object of the good will as fully interpreted the values of life are elements. It is convenient to give them different names, because each of them has its own individual quality—beauty, moral goodness, truth, love—and lends a particular character to the will in which it predominates. But these qualities are individual only *par excellence*; their root is one, and there can be no life, above that of the brutes, in which all are not present in some degree. Taken at its fullest, the good will is their common atmosphere. It is because of the common

[1] Pp. 54 *note*, 60. We spoke adequately of the apparent difficulty that aesthetic experience is not an activity of the will.

relation to them as their basis and medium that virtue, duty, and the good will are apt to be pronounced instrumental merely. The real values of life, it is held, are its marked and pre-eminent triumphs, as one might call them—the pleasant ways of humanity, the appreciation of beauty. That this is a narrow and supercilious view I think we have adequately seen already.[1] The will or character which is the atmosphere of values and shares their quality is itself a value, and its aspects are the virtues and duties. If a mind that is brave and humble, honest and religious, has not a value of its own, it would be hard to know where value could be found. What is true is that, as we have amply seen, in a spiritual whole the distinction of ends and instruments has little place, and every instrument is an end, as every end an instrument. Take the most splendid value you can conceive, the worship of beauty or of divinity, and you will find that it cannot help being instrumental to orderli-

[1] Above, p. 67 ff.

ness and self-sacrifice in the character as a whole, just as orderliness and self-sacrifice are instrumental to it.

These two steps together bring us to the general principle of the right attitude in conduct. The right attitude depends on forming in the self a good will, which is a will trained and determined by the connected system of values, that is to say, by as much of it as we can appreciate. The difference between a good, that is, any value, and the right for me, that is the action which I ought to will in a particular situation, is already in principle overcome, and partly so for practice, by the observation that the object of the good will is a connected system of goods, attached to the individual by a will which links it with his powers and opportunities. The system already tells you something of relative values and of the conditions under which each may be approached. His educated social will tells the private citizen that it is not his business to govern the country, though good government is among the

greatest goods. It puts him in connection with the good which it is for him to realise, and *through it*, with other goods beyond.

2. Assuming that we know in general the character of the good will, as directed to the highest and completest system of values possible, a very formidable problem still arises out of the word "possible." How can we know that *any* good results we may contemplate can really be achieved by the actions which appear to us as calculated to bring them about? Here emphasis has been laid upon the place of causal judgments in the guidance of our action, and the difficulty that arises from our ignorance of remote and it may be overwhelmingly fatal consequences of acts that promise well *prima facie*. We are to do what secures the most and highest value for the world as a whole. But how can we possibly know enough to be effectively guided by any consideration of the kind? Our most promising efforts may excite after long periods wholly disastrous reactions in man or in nature, or, at the

very least, the indifference of nature may overwhelm them after a longer or shorter lapse of time, and make them as if they had never been. About this latter possibility we need not trouble our heads. If it is the way of the universe to utter itself in successive worlds, discontinuous so far as we can understand, they are none the less its utterance, and better is better, and worse is worse. But about the former possibility, which directly affects the guidance of our actions in the course of our relatively familiar world, there seems to be something worth saying.

The question is one of success. Can we count on affecting the course of things, in the direction we desire, by our best motived and considered efforts? Or may they not be producing just the result which we deprecate and consider evil? And is, therefore, any degree of success—assured victory—a thing that the individual has a right to expect and demand as a pledge or seal of the value of his endeavours? Or is he to maintain his morality and his

religion wholly without visible encouragement, being destitute of rational ground for supposing that his acts produce any lasting effect of the kind he purposes and desires? Can he know in the least what he is really doing?

To begin with, we have seen that the good will carries in itself what we may call the general form of success; that is to say, it responds to the quality by which all values show strength and positive power in maintaining themselves. It covers, so to speak, a considerable area with an unbroken line of defence and operation. This is the positive aspect of its self-consistent and stable quality. The general probability is in favour of the effectiveness of the good will.

But there is something more to be said, which bears on a common defect in our consideration of the moral will. We have already gone some way to rectify it by our view of the interconnection of morality in the narrower sense with the whole scheme of values. In a word, success is

not merely a probability, not merely based on chance responses from the world, but it is a duty. The severance, in moral estimation, of moral motive from the consequences of action is well intended, but easily becomes a dangerous sophism. It is well intended, because it counters the excuse, in case of a bad thing that has occurred, "I could not help it; it happened so," with the question, "But did you try to help it? Was *any* element of your conduct in the matter good, admitting that your power and knowledge were sadly at fault?" If you can say, "I would have given my life to hinder it, and I did all I could possibly do to prevent it," then you are so far clear. Your "motive," that is, the point in the sequence of effects which you had at heart, and which indicates your character and desires, was such as we approve. The consequences were such as you "could not help"—your knowledge and resources were not enough to prevent them, and perhaps no one's could in practice have been so.

That is all very well, and it is a distinction necessary to making fair moral allowance for our feebleness. But none the less, considering the interconnection of values, your morality in the full sense was defective. That is to say, the ideas and impulses under which you acted were defective in width and orderliness, and therefore inadequate to produce a desired effect on the real world. It was not that your motive was too good for this world; it was not good enough. It was not completed and filled out by the qualities of head and heart which would have given it adequate connection with the value you meant it to elicit. You did not understand other people, or the facts of nature; you were vain, hasty, impatient, ignorant, in some part of your disposition untrained and undisciplined. You "did not go to work in the right way." I know well that the course of events may, at a given moment, be too strong for any man or every man. But these comments are constantly made upon practical failures,

and with truth; and where they are true, they are substantially moral censures; and in ultimate principle they are true of every failure.

The continuity of the good will with the nature of the world, and its hopeless discontinuity with a certain element of things which is apparently irrational and accidental, form a remarkable antithesis, whose sides the poets, the deepest seers, have expressed with striking force. One assures us that

> Winds blow and waters roll
> Strength to the brave, and power and Deity.

But in another we read:

> Streams will not curb their pride
> The good man not to entomb,
> Nor lightnings go aside
> To give his virtues room.
> Nor is that wind less rough that blows the good man's barge.

It is not difficult to see in general how the matter must stand. The rationality of the world corresponds to our rationality, and its irrationality and chance

medley to our irrationality and blindness. Of the latter, as we have seen, our finiteness involves a certain measure, which is in principle irremovable. But the continuity of the good will and its effectiveness in promoting values is no less certain, and the persistent victory over the seeming indifference of things, which our finiteness does not forbid, proves that it is so, and is a pledge and earnest of our faith in a perfection whose character can even be asserted in some degree through our action in the world.

This question of the continuity between the good will and the capacity for success, that is, of success as a moral duty, when all reservation is made for necessary indulgence to our feebleness, is a matter of immense practical import. I will take two examples by way of illustration, one from dealing with the irrationality of history, the other from dealing with that of nature.

The great type of irrationality in history is war. Now we are continually urged,

both on a scriptural and on a one-sided ethical basis, to deal summarily with the danger of war by moral means. We are to be kind and gentle, to refuse to fight, to respond to aggression by non-resistance. But this is condemned as a moral policy by its incompleteness. It is substituting the bare motive, "I mean well to every one," which is in its nature a plea for indulgent judgment of our own action, in place of a reasoned course of conduct fit for a place in a system of law universal. But the moral duty, if we are right, includes making the good will effective; effective, that is, by means which are its natural and inherent development. It is of no use to mean well by people unless you take measures to acquaint yourself with their difficulties, sympathise with their position, and act so as to undo the entanglements which bring them into conflict with each other. This is why a policy of mere gentleness or non-resistance, not merely in the middle of a world of aggressive policies, but in any world of complex

relations, is morally inadequate and condemnable. It is only half a moral policy.

If, for example, persons in sympathy with the Society of Friends had been in a position to conduct the entire foreign policy of this country, and, *a fortiori*, that of more countries than one, since the foundation of that Society, it is quite possible that war might have been put an end to, and the several countries been much more prosperous and successful than they have been in fact. But if this had been the case, it would not have come from a mysterious blessing of Providence on our moral and non-resistant attitude. It would have come from extreme skill and sagacity, together with patience, impartiality, and good temper in handling our foreign relations.[1] In principle, all conflicts of pride and interest are capable of solution in harmony with the claims of

[1] The policy of Penn towards the Indians appears to have been brilliantly successful so long as it was observed. Of course you cannot mix up a policy of this kind with quite opposite policies. Common sense tells you that your policy must be all of a piece.

both parties, if patience, sagacity, and good temper are brought to bear. Now all these are continuous with the good will; they are not alien to it, but essential outgrowths of it, sharing its quality. If we have not them we have no right to claim that we possess the good will. We are then not too good for this wicked world, but not good enough. But, of course, if you are to use these qualities, they must govern your policy from beginning to end. It is no use to send out an army to fight, and then be seized with a fit of non-resistance in the middle of a war. You may say *you* did not send out the army. No, but with divided counsels your policy is impossible. The incompetence and half-heartedness of our moralists, so far as they preach non-resistance apart from making an imperative moral duty of shrewd and sympathetic dealing with international entanglements, is largely responsible for the continuance of war. They never, I think, put the two requirements, love and wisdom, on the same level, as continuous

elements of the good will. You do not want mere "moral" motives, *i.e.* desires for peace and happiness; you want their adequate development into ideas which "have hands and feet." And this the moralist is partly too prejudiced in favour of the undeveloped or "well-meaning" good will, which alone seems to him to be "moral," and partly too incompetent in the region of affairs, to give you. The more careful study which is now being devoted to the needs of other countries, and the deep-lying conditions of a peaceful atmosphere, is changing the situation, and bringing with it some promise of a good will adequately furnished for the promotion of peace. An attempt at a good which succeeds and one which fails are not, as a rule and in principle, equally good in will. The former is good all through; the latter is good at core, but the core has not grown an outside to match it. I do not say but that even so, holding in part the general quality of successfulness in common with all good will, it may be

self-propagative, and have indirectly results which it misses directly. But so may the successful good will, and the unsuccessful one has no claim to special merit on this score, though its apparent simplicity, due to its inadequateness, actually creates a bias in its favour.

Take, again, an actual victory over the irrationality of nature—the triumph over malaria at the Panama Canal. When the common moralist says, "Nature has no respect for goodness or for your moral purpose," what he means, owing to his narrow idea of the good will, is that if the promoters and agents of a scheme are virtuous persons, *i.e.* free from intemperance and vice, and have aims desirable for mankind, *i.e.* general prosperity, that will not stop the anopheles mosquito from conveying malaria to their labourers. Perfectly true. But expand your idea of morality a little. Let the good will include intelligent attention to the conditions under which your labourers live; no very far-fetched notion, surely, for even the

most elementary morality. Then with care and seeking your good will becomes possessed of the knowledge—I do not know whether it sprang from the managers' own research or was borrowed from elsewhere—that a certain method will put down the malaria. And so your moral will expands continuously, by an extension natural and obviously kindred to it, into an effective process which is successful. Sometimes, I confess, I think it nothing less than a crying shame and scandal that our morality has been taught to take out the motive from an act—a purely artificial abstraction, which is the very root of immoral sophistry—and judge it alone, as if moral obligation stopped at laudable desires, and did not at all extend to making one's will adequate to the situation. "To respond adequately to the situation" is not a bad formula if you want to put the rules of moral guidance in six words.

I hope that the difficulty of knowing how to act which arises from ignorance of the consequences of our actions has in a

great measure been shown by our argument to be imaginary. We know what are values, we know their general character, we know what a will is which makes them its object. We also know, I have ventured to suggest, that a will which makes them its object, and which is not limited by the prejudice that the capacity to unite itself with values is outside moral duty and obligation, is according to the nature of the world on the general road to success. Of course the irrational side of things, which corresponds to our side of incapacity, will frequently upset our plans, and because we are finite, can never visibly and entirely be overcome. Still of the two quotations which we contrasted, the first has the fundamental principle in its favour. And as to the second, the will which puts a steam-engine in the barge, in whomsoever it is found is a part of the general good will. And the good man who cannot expand his will to meet the situation may be as good as the world can produce at the moment, but in principle he is not good enough.

There are cases, of course, in which the good will has been able to find realisation only through the personal destruction of its bearer. This is only an exaggeration of the universal rule that in all actions something is gained and something forfeited. In the case of the Founder of Christianity the premature loss of immediate existence seems to have been the condition of the greatest effect ever produced upon the world by an individual. It was self-realisation—the realisation of values accepted as supreme for the self—by self-sacrifice, and presents no difficulty in principle. The idea that self-realisation implies some form of continued self-enjoyment is a mere consequence of thoughtless individualism.

3. We have seen that a good will is of a general nature such as to command success, and we need not fear that the guidance of conduct is to be obstructed by complete uncertainty as to the results of our actions.

But a question remains. Granting that

the good will has a fair chance of success, and is in any case contagious, how is the *right*—the conduct incumbent on *me*—related to the *good*—the whole world of values?

The answer must be in the main, that your problem is to make a livable life for yourself with the greatest regard for values possible under the conditions. And this brings us the answer to the question why moral philosophy cannot directly proffer guidance in the particulars of conduct.

For the problem is individual. Values can only be realised in and through a life, and a life itself is an indispensable value. You are not a mathematical point, fitted to enter equally into any conceivable construction. You have *ab initio* the material of a self, and if you could cut yourself loose from it you would be nothing. Your task, then, is original, unique, creative. You have to mould yourself into a living person, whose being shall incorporate what it can of value. The work is therefore, in logical jargon, not deductive. There is

no deduction unless the matter admits of clear and unambiguous insight into necessary relations, as when you see that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. But the moral and religious life is a business, if we speak logically, corresponding to the creative step in induction, that for which, admittedly, no rules exist; that in which a set of facts, hitherto merely grouped in time or space, is bound together by a newly contrived conception or hypothesis. Or you may say it is an artistic creation; the principle is the same. Given an initial self and surroundings, the problem is to find or contrive the life which will do justice to them, which will reveal all the values that can be found in them, which will "meet," or "do justice to, the situation." Nine-tenths of the human race, I should suppose, accept the life that descends upon them, or choose as a whole, at most between two or three familiar alternative paths. And it is doubtful whether those who believe themselves more free are so much happier or better as they

think. For in the main, the source of the life which you accept—whether inheritance or choice—makes little difference. Within every life every step is a creation. At every step an alternative must be accepted and a new shape given to the contour of the self and the situation. There is plenty of suggestion and tradition to work upon; the social spirit in all its forms due to all its groupings is the main substance which is given you. But operating within and upon all this is the reason of the self; the impulse to live and to make something of life; to bring its elements into some kind of shape and connection.

This being the problem, to know the general outlines of value and goodness is important, but is not enough. It is, indeed, a grave drawback for the formation of the self if its attention has never been called to the varied forms of good purpose which are normally within a man's reach. Defective acquaintance with the extension of the good is a serious hindrance to the preference for the right; and it is the

task of education to guard against this disadvantage. Nevertheless, the right is different from the good. The right for me is that form or case of the good which, all things considered, I am able to embody in my scheme of life and in my daily conduct. My duty is not necessarily the duty which would be the highest if it were mine. There is a rational necessity here to which insufficient attention is paid in certain types of theory. Why can you not as a rule go out freely into the world and do service to any one you meet or to any cause which attracts you? Is it not a mere superstitious convention which tells you that mostly your duty lies at home? I answer No. In general there is a sound practical reason for the presumption, and we can see that where the reason fails the presumption fails also. It is an example of the truth we urged before, that when your "high" ideal is unsuccessful, it is very apt to be so because it is not high enough. The general reason why primarily one's duty lies at home is that the very

exacting conditions which are essential to the full realisation of good purposes are as a rule, and for normal individuals, only present in very familiar conditions and among affairs and persons which they thoroughly know. Why, when you hear of a gifted child needing some special education, of a family suffering from some removable misfortune, can you not, supposing resources to be available, step in at once and play providence? Not from any superstition that your duty is only at home. Your duty is everywhere where you can find it. But simply because, if you have a right conception of the high conditions necessary to successful interference in unfamiliar lives, you will find as a rule that you cannot fulfil them. Where you can establish the relations of knowledge and continued responsibility necessary to effective interference, and where your home duties, for which no one but yourself is likely to be so well qualified as yourself, are not interrupted by the distraction of your attention, the presump-

tion against sporadic activity may fall away. But experience, and nothing else, shows us how very frequently the conditions of success are really absent, when we had encouraged ourselves to believe them present.

We can see from this illustration the nature of the constructive task involved in choosing the right conduct, or rather—for this expression veils almost the whole nature of the problem, and is responsible, I believe, for much unnecessary error—in contriving and creating the acts which, in the light of the best we know, confront and do justice to our successive situations. Life is not a choosing between white and black counters. It is making, contriving, inventing.

Now, I think, we can see why, when we leave the general nature of the good and come to the question of what is right for me, moral philosophy can no longer help us. It is, as we saw above, a question of method. Your life is a construction, and though general elements enter into it, a

unique and creative construction. No one but yourself really knows your materials and your situations, and he could not know all of them that there is to be known unless he was absolutely one with yourself. We find it in the giving of advice. The recipient can produce from his inner experience consideration upon consideration such as to turn his adviser's conclusions in any direction to which his desires and the drift of his personality are urging him. Rabelais' portrayal of a man thus receiving advice whether or no to marry, and reversing his adviser's conclusion at every sentence through several close-printed pages, goes deep into the heart of the subject. In a word, your moral conclusion must issue from your whole self, and be inspired by the convictions which dominate your life and determine your special outlook on your special situation. Casuistry, the application of general principles of good to moral conduct, is necessarily a source of fallacy and sophistry. The reason is, as we have seen, that it is impossible, apart

from a complete creative construction in terms of a unique complication of demands and materials, to determine which of the innumerable general truths applicable to a concrete course of conduct is to be insisted on in a given case. Is it cowardice, or care for your family, to avoid a personal danger? Is it indolence, avarice, or a just fear of doing mischief that hinders you from a sporadic benevolence? It is for you to judge, and though general advice may help to put the elements of the situation before you, no mind but your own can strike the decisive balance of values and resources and appropriateness to your scheme of life.

This may be put in other words by pointing out that general deductions applied to moral complications or conflicts of duty can only be stated in the form of hypothetical cases. But there is no sound inference from hypothetical cases to entire individual situations. No hypothesis can exhaust the whole circumstances, and the circumstance omitted may prove to be just

the decisive factor. In all dealings with concrete life, hypothetical cases are a dangerous source of fallacy. Of course your own case, when you state it in words to your adviser, becomes a hypothetical case. It is cut off from the full reality, and might be printed as an example in a text-book.

Thus it is most difficult to understand in many cases what is the meaning of the term Reason or practical Reason as appealed to in ethical treatises. It seems to be something which gives necessary judgments on self-evident principles affecting practice. But self-evidence is of one kind only, and depends on the relation of propositions to experience as a whole. There is no special kind of intuition which refers to propositions affecting conduct. The only true and comprehensive meaning of reason is the tendency of mind to construction, wholeness, completeness as we find it in the working out of a theory, or in the creative logic which brings order and positive unity into practice or fine art.

Of this the determination of moral conduct, as we have described it, is a central example, and the mere apprehension of abstract generalities only enters into it as what it always is—a sub-form of knowledge, which is inferior to concrete understanding, and which may be auxiliary to any form of insight.

4. We see, then, I hope, the nature of the problem with which the aspiration to right moral action confronts us. There is no general principle but that of promoting the best life we can. The best, as we saw of all values, is impersonal, though embodied in persons. It is the best for the world. The practical difficulty lies in bringing effectively together in our limited existence the characters of "the best" and of "what we can." We saw above that the complexity of causal relations in the world does not interpose so fatal an obstacle to this connection as might appear at first sight. And the moral of that discussion may be pushed further. The irrationality of the world, which we ad-

mitted, is in some degree everywhere. But the character of responsiveness to the good object is everywhere also. In multitudes of situations there is not even for ourselves any decisive insight as to what is the best or even the better course. But if the uncertainty of the better is common, so also is the certainty of the good. In practice it is more important to see that we get full value from the course we choose than to weary and bewilder ourselves by attempting to secure an infallibility of right preference which is in truth unattainable. To make a livable life, and see that it shall promote something of value, is within the power of all, if we remember that even to sacrifice personal existence for a supreme good which demands the sacrifice is also self-realisation, and is one way of affirming or perfecting our being. For our being is not restricted to our physical self, but enters into the unity of spirits. And, in the end, if we have missed a higher life by a defective choice, this is a hazard of our finiteness.

But very often the belief that we have done so is an illusion. And every sound assertion of values subserves, as we saw, all others. We may be contributors to a supreme good without having capacity for it in our immediate selves. All lives colour all.

CHAPTER VII

SOMETHING WORTH KNOWING?

Und so lang du das nicht hast,
Dieses, Stirb' und werde,
Bist du nur ein trüber Gast
Auf der dunklen Erde.

Die to live; for thou who hast not
Made this law thine own,
Art but an embarrassed novice
In a world unknown.

WE saw what Moral Philosophy could not do for the guidance of conduct. It could not lay down general laws, from which, by deductive process, the rightness of particular pieces of conduct in particular situations could be derived. It was the function of ethics, we held, to understand the nature of good and evil conduct, but not to take command of individual lives.

It seemed, perhaps, a hard saying, and while we must, as I believe, strictly maintain the principle that philosophy has to understand and not to dictate, it is natural for the reflective man of good-will to ask:

Can a student—who may be, though he is by no means certain to be, a sensible and experienced person—can a student not proffer anything at all of an intellectual nature that may be helpful to right preferences in practical conduct? Does he, after all his labour and reflection, not know anything about life, to put it brutally, which is unfamiliar to the sensible man in the street, whom business has prevented from giving the same attention to the subject in general? Of course, the man in the street has his advantage of close acquaintance with practical questions, and a habit of rapid and, at his best, of just decision. The student, if he is wise, certainly observes the practical man and learns from him. The overthrow of Hedonism, for example, depended very much on the observation of the attitude of plain men to their interests and purposes. Can the student on his side furnish nothing that will act, for example, as a clue to insight in prosperity and adversity, so that some continuity of mood and temper may be maintained; so that

a man's mind may not be driven about with every wind of fortune; some pillar of cloud by day in blatant prosperity, and pillar of fire by night in desperate adversity?

I venture to think that there are such ideas. They would, of course, not be true if experience did not bear them out, and not be useful if it did not bear them out very continually, and just where life is not all plain sailing. But yet, being perhaps a little difficult, because they require two or three sides of the facts to be held together at once in thought, they are not always noted, and are *de facto* a little esoteric. I call attention to Goethe's language in the verse at the head of this chapter, the emphasis of which I believe my doggerel version rightly reproduces. The truth he is urging, he seems to say, is an open secret; *i.e.* it is obvious in the facts, but yet often ignored, needing some attention and some experience to apprehend. But any one who remains quite innocent of it is really—I am sure Goethe meant to drive this home with all his force—like a man who has lost

his way in a strange city. He is perturbed and "put about." The turnings do not seem to take him anywhere. He can recognise nothing that helps him or tells him how to judge his situation. In the first stanza of the same lyric Goethe seems to be accenting the same point. It is less distinguished in expression. Goethe's way is to work up from matter that may seem trivial to his most splendid utterances.[1] I quote it mainly for the sake of the opening couplet, which confirms the suggestion that the poet genuinely thought himself to be on the track of an important indication:

Sag' es niemand, nur den Weisen,
Weil die Menge gleich verhöhnet;
Das Lebendige will ich preisen,
Das nach Flammentod sich sehnet.[2]

Tell it not save to the wise,
Shun the many's mocking breath,
What has life then most I prize
When it woos the fiery death.

[1] The well-known lines about forswearing all halfness follow upon very trivial examples.

[2] "Selige Sehnsucht," *Works* (ed. 1857), iv. 23. His symbol is the moth and the candle; of course he suggests an interpretation.

Before attempting to develop this particular thought, it may be worth while to observe some simpler instances in which pregnant truths do good service to morality. I suppose the old theory is substantially sound, according to which moral training consists of two parts—habituation to certain modes of living, and communication of explicit ideas which crystallise for distinct thought what has been implicitly apprehended in conduct. The Decalogue, proverbs, and the sayings of wise and good men, the Athenian citizen's oath, "My duty to my neighbour"[1] in the Anglican catechism, the whole end of man in the Scotch catechism,[2] with many more such utterances, share, I presume, the double nature implied in this serviceableness. They stamp into the mind and ratify a fragmentary perception of fitness and value which has attended certain aspects and

[1] There is a prejudice against this fine statement, based on a popular misquotation by which the words "that state of life to the which *it shall please* God to call me" are replaced by the words "to which *it has pleased* God to call me."

[2] "To glorify God and enjoy him for ever."

types of conduct; and they bring satisfaction as a sort of elementary theory, under which certain facts of life are gathered together and seen in a way which seems to explain them; to present them, that is, in a manner suitable and appropriate to an orderly conception of living. It is an old remark that there is a quasi-intellectual satisfaction of this kind about the "moral" of any child's moral tale. It is a very simple theory, which serves as the clue—the explanation—to the riddle or parable given in the incidents narrated. There is "Drop the nuts," said to the boy who could not pull his hand out of the bottle because he had grasped too many. There are the moralised stories of the Bible. We hardly know how much we owe to these. I have met a clever lad of the rising generation who did not know the story of how Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man." Without this story and that of Naboth's vineyard the morality of the world would surely be much poorer than it is. I could hardly feel that my clever

young friend was properly educated; and my feeling was the same about a distinguished savant who had never read the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

It would be a fascinating study to trace the influence of family mottoes and watchwords, which would not be confined to those fortunate houses which bear stirring phrases under their heraldic crests.[1] Countless families, "gentle and simple," and other corporate bodies also, colleges, regiments, crafts and classes, would be found to have valued traditions crystallised in simple sentences. Then there are the words of the poets and teachers which come home differently to different individuals according to their private experience. Many of us to-day are grateful for the lines:

> Life is mostly froth and bubble,
> Two things stand like stone;
> Kindness in another's trouble,
> Courage in one's own.[2]

[1] I must confess to having sometimes envied a house which bears the motto "Essayez," with crest a hand grasping at a star.

[2] I do not know the author. I got the quotation from a novel by Mr. Galsworthy.

Each of such expressions throws a strong though partial light upon life's experience; and because, as we saw, all excellences are connected, and promote each other, the general effect upon minds which they catch hold of is probably good. That they do catch hold of minds is, I think, quite unquestionable, and we saw above the reason for it. Of course, what comes home to one mind is a platitude to another who has a different experience; which is a reason why books of aphorisms are as a whole less valuable than the authors or compilers thought them likely to be. What they found they needed, and so was a revelation to them personally, will not meet every man's need, and where it does not it will attract no attention. Some of us have found it a special lesson of moral experience that a supreme danger and temptation is to allow hesitancy between two or more duties to obstruct the performance of all, and therefore the rule of thumb "Mind you get at least something done" to be very necessary to remember. But

for others, who are not assailed by that particular temptation, the "crystal" in question may carry no special value nor fascination.

And, in general, this is the case with all these "secrets of life" which sages and poets have embodied in utterances more or less fascinating or commanding. Each of them is just a rule of thumb, referring to something in experience of greater depth and value or of less, which merits observation and attention, and attracts as revealing a connection and partial completeness in some response which men's actions have made to their situations. None of them can tell you its own proportion of truth compared with others', nor when it is right to attend to it, and when it would be better to think of things otherwise. This is that defect of general principles as a guide to moral conduct, on which we insisted in the previous chapter. Still, for the reasons given, the spell they cast on us has its value. Our need will often suggest them at the right moment,

and they bring the general conscience to sustain the individual.

The principle to which I referred at starting, and to which I now return, is familiar among such sayings as we have been speaking of. But it covers the whole of life, whereas "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt do no murder," and even, though capable of very wide application, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," apply rather to special provinces of conduct. And being so wide, it is liable to be misapplied and materialised, so that "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" may be taken to mean that if you give your life in a good cause you are sure of living happily for ever in another world.

But, as I urged above, the principle in its full meaning is, as Goethe evidently felt, something of a revelation. It is one on which students have bestowed a great deal of thought and care; and I believe, perhaps naïvely, that the world would be a happier and better place if it were more generally appreciated in its full meaning.

It gives you, I should suggest, a positive yet critical account of what you have to look for in life, and what you may be glad to achieve. Current faith and expectation, if positive, are apt to be uncritical; if negative, to make a pretence of being critical, but in truth to be uncritical still.

I should venture to suggest that there are three uncritical attitudes among more or less reflective people who aspire to be critical—to pass judgment on life. Life itself, if firmly taken hold of, does much to bring the judgment straight; and the greater part of the world is, I suppose, fairly sane in its thought, which confines itself to practical needs. But when thought passes beyond practice and common-sense, and into the reflective ways of common-sense theory, it does not follow that it determines the thinker's conduct. Such thought is often little more than a safety-valve; and much of literature might come under this category.

Still there are the attitudes I speak of. They affect literature, and they un-

doubtedly exist as influences in life. I will call them complacency, expectancy, despair.

Complacency is the attitude for which all is well even in the world or worlds of time. I say the worlds, for in some forms it overlaps the attitude of expectancy, and ekes out its belief in the satisfactoriness of the world we inhabit by some reliance on an arrangement by which any defect will be made good in another sphere of being. It may be of very different qualities, and in its grossest form of total unawakenedness to surrounding evil and injustice, is hardly to be found, at all events in open utterance to-day. An innocent or deep-rooted faith, on the other hand, which refuses to see the evil, because it has a conviction that somehow all is well, though it may share certain characters with complacency, is rather a very imperfect form of the conviction which is our theme. Nevertheless, complacency exists, if hardly even pretending to be critically supported, as yet a sinister influence in life.

By expectancy I mean a mood of uncritical criticism which sees evil and imperfection in the series of events as they have occurred and are occurring, but which puts its confidence in an earthly or heavenly paradise, by which, in future time or *after* an *unending* progress (note the contradiction), all evil shall be ended, and all past evil wiped out by compensation.

Despair is the least uncritical of these would-be critical reflections. It has a standard of good or perfection, as indeed the two former also have, and as every attitude must have that so much as makes a proposition about the satisfactoriness of the world. But it obstinately denies that its standard is or can be attained in the world or worlds of time, and sees no reason to be convinced of anything deeper than this, or sees reason to be convinced that there is nothing such.

People who are habitually in any one of these three attitudes—and they are very common, and most of us are more or less infected with them—are, as we said, like

people who have lost their way. They have no insight which enables them to grasp the character of their surroundings, and the current of events is continually disconcerting their expectations. In the case of despair, indeed, there should be no expectations to overthrow. But it is an attitude which cannot be consistently maintained, and though, if thorough and discriminating, the most reasonable and critical attitude of the three, it also is groping after a law which it cannot find, and is constantly hopeless where it should be confident, and, inconsistently, confident where it would be right to be hopeless. Faith in arresting war by mere non-resistance is an example.

What position does our principle "die to live" suggest with reference to each of these attitudes? The reasons have been given in the previous chapter, and now a summary statement will be more helpful than a repetition of the argument at length.

Complacency, we shall hold, is a justi-

fied attitude in so far as it believes that there is a perfection in things. It is uncritical and false so far as it accepts any *status quo*, and especially the ease and comfort of any limited section of living beings, as the perfection which it divines.

Expectancy is well warranted in its conviction, which it shares with complacency, that there is somewhere a perfection, and in its own further belief that there is a process in things and that this process on the whole embodies a relative realisation of good against evil. It is false and uncritical when it is positive that the perfection which it divines to be real is to be found in a result of progress within historical time, whether in this world or another, and that any such result could be looked upon as in principle neutralising and abolishing the evil recognised in the past and present of the progressive world.

Despair is a sound and just attitude of soul in so far as it is a recognition that perfection and satisfaction cannot be attained in actual time or by the path of

unending progress ; and also that progress in the material conditions of life is by itself as great a danger to happiness and satisfaction as extreme rudeness and meagreness in man's surroundings, or probably much greater. It becomes false and uncritical when it fails to discriminate the historical and material progress, to which it rightly denies the achievement of satisfaction, from that perfection of the whole which is realised by faith, and which does give tokens of itself in the relatively successful character of the good-will, and in the increasing direction of man's energies upon supreme values. For this direction towards supreme values, the goods which are not diminished by sharing, is actually promoted by the recognition which despair itself implies, of the relative nullity and instability of material or competitive objects ; and further, by means of that direction, the competitive objects themselves, wealth, that is, and all material resources, being dropped into their rightful position of instruments for good life and

the higher values, must add to, instead of diminishing, the security of such human happiness as is permanently just and valuable.

All evil springs—it is a good old saying—from enjoying what we ought to use (wealth and material comforts) and using what we ought to enjoy (intelligence, love, beauty, religion); in other words, from reversing the true relation of means and ends. Despair, in critical and enlightened minds, is a recognition of the final absurdity of this reversed reading of things, and it, the unhappy consciousness, is therefore, or ought to be, a penultimate step on the path to the true interpretation of life, by which things fall into their natural places, and the lower values become instruments of those that are supreme, and therefore, as we have seen throughout, take on something of their colour and character. Pure industrialism and commercialism are soul-destroying things. But industrial and commercial enterprise and co-operation at their best may be

among the great bonds of humanity, and the highest stimuli of intelligence.

Our principle, then, to put it together in a few words, positively, means this. Man must recognise that he is always dying; that is, always losing parts of himself and his belongings. Also, he is always growing, that is, attaining and achieving something which he had not and was not. This comes from his nature, and is inevitable. But if he understands it, and sets his heart not on the things which are unstable and perishing, but on the something perfect and solid which he divines as persisting through the loss, and even as pointed out to him by the loss, through a sort of spiritual induction by negative instances,—if he adopts this attitude by instinct and religious impulse, with the wise but unreflective majority, or by reflection and insight, with, as we fear, a not very large minority, then he feels or sees a meaning in life, and is not disconcerted or uneasy in its vicissitudes, but holds a faith which is reinforced on all

sides by life and experience, and rises triumphant over even world-wide calamity.

The three attitudes we spoke of are thus what may justly be called stupid, like the mind of a rustic in a great city; full of bewilderment, destitute of insight and appreciation. The first two are stupid, because particulars may always fail you, and, if you cannot see beyond them, leave you not knowing which way to turn; the last is so, because the true perfection, with its partial corroboration by the generally successful character of the good will, can never fail you, and to distrust it means unawakenedness to facts. If we see these relations clearly, the nature of self-realisation and self-sacrifice become simple and obvious. It is self-realisation when you strive to put in act the perfection with which you experience yourself to be continuous through faith and aspiration. Always in the act there is loss, simply because for us one thing excludes another. Whether the loss amounts to self-sacrifice is, as we saw above, a matter of name and

of degree. But the secret of our principle is to hold together the fourfold thought; you must not expect good without relative loss; you must not expect to see perfection in the finite world; but nevertheless you have a hold on real perfection; and also its character manifests itself, in spite of and even by means of your loss and hazard, through the successful response in general of the good will to circumstance in the world. All this I believe to be clearly and simply true; and to be a reading of the strongest and wholesomest types of life. It avoids the three stupid attitudes; and I hope and am pretty confident that it is something worth knowing, and an indirect assistance which the student is able to contribute to the guidance of conduct.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE GROWING REPUGNANCE TO PUNISHMENT

THERE are to-day many symptoms of a revolt against the idea and practice of punishment. I think that the discussion exhibits a want of clearness on essential points; and I will try to indicate some distinctions which affect the question.

It appears to me that there are at least five influences which are active in the revolt against punishment. I enumerate them:

1. A change in educational and disciplinary ideas, covering the whole problem of the obedience of the young.

2. Experience of evils accessory to penal proceedings, as in attendance at police

courts, and in the treatment of prisoners, especially in the effect on unhardened offenders.

3. An attractive theory that moral badness is disease, implying the bad person's moral innocence, and suggesting curative treatment without penal associations.

4. The doctrine that punishment is mere adding evil to evil so long as it looks to the past, and that it is only explicable and justifiable as a mere means to preventive deterrence, and to reformation of the "guilty" person, as future results. As punishment, therefore, or as retribution, it is held to be meaningless, and to be a survival from primitive retaliation.

5. The relatively recent idea that social improvement can come only by selection, which, like (3), encourages the belief in irresponsibility, and further tends to merge punishment in extinctive measures.

On the first and second heads a few words will suffice, in which I shall concede nearly all that is contended for under those

heads, but shall not admit that it affects the main problem of punishment.

1. The correction of children and discipline exercised over persons *in statu pupillari* do not belong to the subject of punishment proper. They presuppose imperfect wills, which have not entered upon complete responsibility; and the object, especially in the case of children, is to secure the obedience of the imperfect will to that of a superior, in order that right habits of living may be formed from the first. The mode and degree in which correction is applied for this purpose is a matter of educational expediency; and it seems quite probable that with improved educational methods—the development of interests, and an appeal to the sense of honour through self-government,—the need for it may be reduced almost to a vanishing point. The objection to stupid and irritating methods in education may be thoroughly admitted without touching the question of punishment in dealing with fully responsible adults. I maintain, however,

the old objection against arguing with children on points of conduct.[1] Reasonable explanation of commands is a different thing.

2. The same applies to all that has been brought to light as to the evils resulting from the attendance of children or first offenders in the precincts of police courts, and as to all the stupid and cruel accessories of the treatment of prisoners, by which it is alleged that their health and reason are frequently undermined. The present argument defends no abuses of this type. It is perhaps not easy to avoid making prison desirable, while eschewing everything that approaches to cruelty and dangerous rigour. The difficulty is increased by what must certainly be admitted as a fact, the increasing sensitiveness of the age, and the occasional introduction into the prison population of persons to whom there is

[1] I have heard a lecturer quote with approval the saying of a mother that she had been arguing with her child for a couple of hours to get her to do some particular act; and they were both quite worn out. This seems to me wholly wrong in principle.

cruelty in details of treatment which the average inmates would not feel in the same way. All this I concede. It should be a definite aim to banish callousness and stupidity both from laws and from their administrators. But this again does not touch in principle the question of punishment. It may be added that, as we see from the account of Penn's imprisonment, disgusting laxity[1] may accompany horrible brutality. It must be possible *per contra* for stringent discipline to accompany proper attentiveness to the needs of mind and body.

We may further clear out of the way the influence which I mentioned in the fifth place. The limits of eugenic selection under present conditions of knowledge are tolerably plain; and with this insight the idea that they overlap the normal province of punishment falls to the ground. The congenitally feeble-minded and those predisposed to consumption are the principal types of stocks against which selection

[1] The daily admission of prostitutes to the prison by connivance of the turnkeys.

might safely operate; and if alcoholism is really such a type, at this one point disease and criminality may in some degree overlap; but till we know more of the way in which inherited qualities may vary under varying stimuli, it is hardly safe to treat any mental character outside congenital feeble-mindedness as a ground for extinction of a stock. The ordinary criminal class appears to fall quite outside the province of such unfitness; and the suggestion that heredity brings irresponsibility in normal adults is therefore unsupported by the facts on which eugenic theory relies. And if it were supported by them, it is important to note, the only result would be to substitute liability to extinction or segregation for liability to punishment. If you are not capable of moral guilt because you come of a predestinedly vicious stock and are irresponsible, you cannot plead the claims of moral innocence. You are then open to be dealt with as the public welfare may require, without respect to guilt or inno-

cence, which in your case, by the hypothesis, cannot exist. For you are not a moral being.

There remains to be considered the influence of the ideas which I placed third and fourth respectively in the enumeration.

Of these the former (3), that moral badness is a disease, and demands curative treatment on the analogy of a disease, denies the necessity of punishment altogether, or only admits it in a non-natural sense, viz. as a mere means to the reformation of the patient or offender—a means in which the ordinary accessories of punishment such as pain and moral censure may or may not be advisable. If the medical analogy is pressed home the characteristics of punishment entirely disappear, and the patient is considered innocent by the fallacy just exposed. The latter (4) is kindred to the other in treating punishment as a means, but differs by regarding it as a normal and inevitable means both to deterrence from conduct hostile to the welfare of society, and also to the moral

reformation of the offender. Both of these doctrines consider punishment to be, if necessary at all, a means to purposes outside and beyond itself. And the only alternative to looking at it in that light they take to be the derivation of it from a primitive sentiment of vengeance, which in civilised society is obsolete.

I will now try to approach what I conceive to be the strict and real meaning of punishment. The distinction between this and the two doctrines I have just mentioned will appear, I hope, in the course of the description.

Punishment is *prima facie* retrospective; it deals with the past. This is its essence, and the main source of the objections to it. There is a somewhat heartless argument, which brought one hard-earned wisdom in one's school days, "What's the good of apologising after you've done it?" But if a big boy had been a mere philosopher one might have met his argument by asking, "What's the good of hitting one after one's done it?" That

is the foundation of the theoretical objections to punishment. Unless you can show counterbalancing advantages outside and beyond itself, so the argument runs, it is simply adding a new evil to an old one—pain to pain.

What is meant by suggesting that something which *can* be thus described—I do not accept the description—is inevitable or desirable ?

Let us consider the nature of a " precedent." Everything you do is a precedent. It tends to establish a rule. And there is a common expression, " It must not be made a precedent." A person in authority sometimes says this, and generally he is a weak person. " It may pass this once, but it must not be made a precedent." But every one knows that it is and will be a precedent, and that the protest admits it. It " makes " itself.

What must you do to prevent its becoming a precedent ? There is only one way. You must annul the fact or act. How can you annul a fact or an act ?

There are many methods. You can pull down a building, break open a locked gate, cancel a deed, make a liar tell the truth and apologise. A resolution of the House of Commons can be expunged. The best and surest annulment of an offence is to pardon. But to pardon rightly demands a response, and where there is no security of the response, to pardon may fail to annul. It is therefore rightly held a matter of discretion for a supreme authority.

This principle of annulment, applied to offences against the body or soul of a commonwealth, is the ground and nature of punishment. A bad act has come into being. It has so far established a vicious rule, a precedent hostile to the body or soul of the community. If the rule is not to stand, is not, that is, to become, with greater or less degrees of consciousness, a persistent factor and make-weight in the communal mind; that is, in every individual mind so far as it is influenced by social contagion, or, more properly, so far as it shares the general mind; if the evil rule

is not in this sense to stand and persist, then the act or fact must be cancelled, annulled, undone. This, I take it, and not the infliction of pain, is the essence of punishment. It is the formal verdict or censure of the social authority, marked by some overt act such as the dullest capacity cannot misread.

Now you cannot formally and publicly undo or set a brand on the voluntary action of a moral agent without checking, cutting back, and repressing his self and his personality. If you merely, for instance, were to require a man to be present at the formal removal of his fence which illegally obstructed a right of way, it would to a proud and sensitive person be a very serious pain. And so the true essence of punishment becomes more prominent as its barbarous accessories fall away with the increase of moral sensitiveness. The punishment of grave or horrid offences for an educated man or woman lies in the public trial, the verdict of his peers, and the weighty censure of

the experienced judge, although no doubt something more tangible and persistent is needed to make the brand effective. The attempt to prejudice the doctrine of retributive punishment—of punishment which is to undo the past—by treating it as a superstitious derivative from the primitive impulse of revenge, is an ill-timed introduction of anthropology to prevent us from looking straight at the modern ethical facts. So far from springing out of an irrational vindictive impulse, the nature of retributive punishment is but just traceable, if at all, so long as that impulse co-operates in it. This is an all-important point; for it shows that punishment for punishment's sake does not become less natural and necessary with the increase of rationality and decrease of cruelty and revenge, but then first, on the contrary, comes to its own, and reveals its fundamental significance. Civilisation grows up to it, not away from it. You do not really know what punishment means till you have realised the case of the fraudulent

company-promoter, the cruel parent, the unfaithful wife (it makes no practical difference that she is not before the criminal law), who have listened to what they did in secret, rehearsed in a public court before all Israel and the sun, and commented on by the weighty voice of the appointed social authority. Some overt act is also necessary, some visible and sensible diminution of personality—imprisonment perhaps, or deprivation of the children (which is practically a penalty, though primarily in the children's interest)—to make sure that the dullest capacity, including that of the guilty person if dimmed and hardened by sin, shall not fail to apprehend the intensity of the annulling act.

This is the demand of justice pure and simple. The violation of right within the moral community has called forth a shudder of repudiation which is at the same time a reflex stroke and shock directed against the guilty person. What good does it do, we are asked, if it does not produce better states of consciousness in the mind

of the past offender or of future possible offenders? The question betrays a deep-seated individualism, a reduction of personalities to atomic states of consciousness, worse even than the reduction of social wholes to personalities. I answer, it maintains the moral standard of the general mind and will, which otherwise would be lowered and infected by taking into itself and preserving an action which implies a rule adverse to the moral will. Such an action, if not cancelled, must and always does weaken and deteriorate that will in the general mind. We know this fact in its everyday expression, "If that sort of thing is not stamped upon, it will seriously lower the social standard." We saw it, for instance, in the matter of secret commissions. A bad practice was becoming a precedent and setting a rule. It became necessary, not to threaten for the future—the essence of punishment is not a threat—but to set a stamp of annulment on every case as it occurred. It was "made punishable." The counter-reaction in the social

will which such action evoked was to receive the seal of social authority and become definite, regular, and sanctioned.

Now perhaps we are ready to appreciate the simple philosophical term which concentrates in itself all that we have been saying. Punishment is the "negation" of a bad will by the reaction of the social will for good. This is its nature and character, and this sums up its value. The method of putting it in force is variable, according to the means of annulment which are at command or which are desirable in different surroundings and different phases of civilisation. Deterrence and reformation are expansions, outgrowths of its central character the negation of the evil will, and so long as the central character is secured, modifications of method are allowable in the interests of deterrence and reformation. But if these are allowed to become ends in their own right, and not mere outgrowths and expansions of the procedure which is provoked by the realised bad will, then there is no limit to the

sentimentalism which they may pass into on the one side, nor to their cruelty and oppressiveness on the other. I will return to this point below.

The concentrated expression which has been used by philosophy best represents, I repeat, the full import and effect of punishment. Sociology here conveys a true impression when it tells us that a crime is an act which offends the strong and definite collective sentiments of society. The impression is frittered away, and the true significance is lost, when we refuse to contemplate this general character as present and implied in the primitive reaction. We are then driven to search for justification in detached results; which are indeed included in the full and direct meaning, but taken each by each, can be represented as ends or consequences for the sake of which the procedure, not otherwise justifiable, is undertaken. It seems to me obvious, as I have said elsewhere, that it is almost an accident, and makes little difference, whether you describe the punitive reaction

as intended to show a man that he was bad in doing what he did, or to cure him of his badness, or to make him feel that he had better not do it again. Surely these are different sides or aspects, by any of which the intention to negate or strike down his bad will may so far be rightly described. And it is an imperfect conception which does not in principle include them all in the general nature of punishment, although, as I have said, the procedure may be modified, so long as its characteristic aim is not superseded, with the view of more completely carrying out *all* the aspects that belong to it, and so making the negation more absolute.

The connection with the *lex talionis*, then, lies not in the *lex talionis* expressing in full a sentiment of which the doctrine of punishment for punishment's sake, or of retribution, is an enfeebled and irrational relic. It is that the customs which resulted in the *lex talionis* embodied a rude fore-feeling of the truth that wrong demands negation, which has become, and

is becoming, more and more obvious as the disguise of anger and revenge is being stripped off the necessary social reaction by the advance of civilisation. The only connection between penal retribution in the modern world and the law of retaliation is that in both cases the initial act is a shock to some form of social consciousness (for the blood feud is a family business) which reacts by way of annulment. That the early form of negation, by an act of revenge, was not an end of the matter, but started, *e.g.* in the blood feud, an unending series of counter-negations, is a fact which flowed inevitably from the just form of the negation not having been found—the form in which the social good will could assert itself as a supreme and final decision, without the challenge involved in private retaliation.

We see, then, that the question of the future of punishment turns on the nature of retribution, that is, a reaction of the general moral will, stimulated by an action of a personal bad will.

The revolt against punishment which has been produced by the various influences I indicated at starting has been strongly promoted by confusions in popular theory connected with the supposed derivation of retributive punishment from irrational revenge.

I give two instances. A story is told of an Oriental servant who, having committed some criminal offence—larceny, I think—and suffered imprisonment, returns after his discharge to his European employer in perfect confidence that his place is open to him; and feels ill-used when the employer refuses to engage him. This behaviour on the employer's part is set down to a vindictive theory of punishment, whereas, it is argued, if the employer had thought of punishment in its true light, as a means of prevention and reform, he would have received the man back again as a matter of course.

Could anything be more hopelessly topsy-turvy? If punishment were pure revenge, and the revenge had been sated

and was full, obviously, so far, the man would have been clear, and the fact he had been punished for would no longer have been a stain upon his character. It is if and because punishment recognises an evil will, and has a reformatory aspect, that any one who is asked to trust an ex-delinquent is likely to require evidence that the work of reform has been completed. If you say the requirement tends to be a cruel one, I agree. The reformatory theory, in its purity, *is* arbitrary and cruel. Revenge may be exhausted by a term in prison; it is the work of reformation to the duration of which no sane man can profess to set a limit. We shall see the sinister significance of this when we speak of reformation as a substantive procedure. Obviously a stone was here flung against the idea of punishment without the smallest reflection on the question to what characteristic of it the objectionable feature was due.

So in a popular Utopia. Crime is to be disease, and its treatment curative and

medical. But the moment we look at the details, we see by obvious innuendo that the curative treatment of crime is a prolonged and secret application of pain. It is not in the least analogous to medical treatment, which is in every way open, kindly, and preventive of pain and depression. It is the more brutal accessory side of punishment, abstracted from the social verdict which constitutes its essence, and continues, in this respect only resembling medical superintendence, as long as a professional official considers that the cure is incomplete. Could anything be conceived more brutalising, arbitrary, and oppressive ? This is what you get by separating a single aspect of a complete social reaction, and setting it to work as an independent purpose without the reservations which the whole reaction imposes. You want to annul the bad will, and in doing so, to help the offender against it so far as within reasonable limits you can. But to bind a man under the jurisdiction of some official expert in morals—say a gaol

chaplain—till the latter should be satisfied of his reformation, would be a tyranny to which I find it hard to conceive a parallel.

And so with the feature of deterrence. If you once let this loose, so to speak, from the character of the moral reaction in which punishment consists, and treat it as an independent purpose which the penalty has to subserve, you are heading straight for the savage cruelties of obsolete penal codes which were due simply to this —to relying on severity of punishment for deterrent effect. You are not using the social force merely to give an unmistakable character to the social censure; you are using it recklessly to produce a further result, which if you fail at first to secure, you will be tempted into deeper and deeper cruelty. In this case two complementary blunders are at work: the idea of punishment as primarily the infliction of pain; and the idea of deterrence as a primary and principal end to which punishment is a mere means. If, on the contrary, you

start from the reinstatement of the weakened social will, then there comes into view the comprehensive adjustment of social regulations which is instrumental to the expression of that will. The exaggeration of deterrent and reformatory treatment is thus prevented by the introduction of a reasonable spirit into the rights and rules which are to be protected from violation, and by simple protective measures,[1] which remove temptation. The true place of deterrence and reformation in punishment is simply to determine the method and degree of details which no estimate of moral guilt can supply. There *is* no estimate which can determine degrees of moral guilt in actual individual cases. Such a thing is wholly inconceivable. It would demand an insight into motive and temptation which it is impossible to possess for others, and all but impossible for oneself. All that the law can

[1] It has been said that one street lamp is worth two policemen, or words to that effect. Adequate policing itself is a substitute for deterrent severity.

demand in the way of moral estimation is a general presumption that the agent it is dealing with is responsible, and a sort of average imputation of the intensity of evil will which certain types of action would imply in normal persons. When this is assumed, the adjustment of the detail of punishment may be allowed to depend on effectiveness in deterrence, and in reformatory influence upon the offender. I take it that no wise and sympathetic observer would pronounce that a murderer is necessarily "worse" from a moral standpoint than, say, a keeper of a disorderly house. But he would judge, I imagine, that a murderer must be, or must have been at the moment of his act, "pretty bad," *i.e.* either deeply malicious or frightfully deficient in self-control, and that, being a responsible creature, he must suffer with the very dangerous class in which he has put himself, though we do not venture to say that on the whole he is more profoundly worthless than such another offender as we spoke of. Thus

you cannot apply deterrent penalties simply according to an estimate of badness of will, for no such estimate can, strictly speaking, be made. Nor can you apply it according to your view of danger to the body and soul of the community. Many subtle misdoings and misbeings are worse for the community than any punishable offence. Deterrence can only be applied, consonantly with justice and security against oppression, as a subordinate aspect of punishment, where there is a definite violation of the law which is the expressed social will by a will which may fairly be judged as in contradiction with it.

As a limiting case, we may take that of an engine-driver or signalman, who by an inadvertence which we should naturally call trifling causes a serious disaster. Here a heavy penalty might be inflicted, because of the danger to the public involved; and it may be argued further that the inadvertence in such a case constitutes a serious moral offence. But it is difficult

to maintain this view. There is no grave shock to the social will. The act of inattention is often a single incident in the whole career of a conscientious man, and the public attitude on the whole is one of sympathy for him. I think that in such a case we feel that the deterrent prevention is on the point of breaking loose from the control of the true character of punishment, and that to rely on its intensity is to enter on the path of irrational severity.

On the other hand, all of us know of public characters whom we think degrading influences in the national life, but who are not law-breakers in any definite sense. A publicist or novelist whose tone is thoroughly Chauvinistic to-day probably does hundreds of times the mischief to society and the world that a petty thief or drunken rowdy can do. But a man cannot be suppressed because he is corrupting the national will at its source. You cannot apply punishment to make people think and feel rightly. Deterrence

suggests that line, but it ends in the Inquisition. This shows the limits within which the reaction by punishment has to do with moral judgment. The offence must not merely have moral culpability, but it must be a definite violation of explicit and social law. This is the double character which keeps all the aspects of punishment together. It is a negation of an evil will which has been realised in action; and is emphasised by a formal social deliberation and sentence, and some overt act which stamps the annulment on the person or belongings of the offender. Deterrence and reformation are subordinate aspects implied within it; not consequences beyond it to which it is a mere instrument, and by which, therefore, it could be determined without limit.

I do not think that the revolt against punishment proper would have set in but for the connection of it with the accessory evils of callousness and stupidity in educational discipline and in the accessory circumstances of penal administration.

The public are rightly sensitive to the demoralisation of children and offenders young in crime by bad association and stupid treatment, and to the injury of prisoners by other evil incidents of prison life. And they do not bring into the question their own just inclination to strike down triumphant wrong-doing or set a brand upon cruelty, although these instincts are normal and strong. There is a value, it has been well remarked, in moral assertion by analogy as well as in what is direct; when you can point out that some forms of company-promoting are akin to what men go to prison for as stealing; or that bribery must be a real offence, since "respectable" men are sent to prison for it. With all these characters of punishment, I believe that the public sympathises and will not cease to sympathise.

I note a difficulty in the case of the incidents of imprisonment. The gaol officials whom we pronounce callous and stupid (like some Poor Law officials in

whose case a kindred question arises [1]) might with some plausibility retort upon us, the public, "Well now, do you know your own mind? What *is* the punishment of imprisonment or penal servitude? You do not send prisoners here for mere restriction of their movements, and to be otherwise entertained at their ease, and occupied in interesting labour, which any one in ordinary life would enjoy? Or is this what you mean? Only tell us what the punishment consists in, and we will carry out your ideas. But do not sentence people to confinement without saying how it is to be penal, and then leave us to contrive the treatment which is to make it penal without being cruel or dangerous. It is not an easy problem, and we do not believe you have thought it out." Of course, I know that different types of imprisonment are in some degree determined by the sentence; but the attitude

[1] *E.g.* the official who was proud of a cold shower-bath to which they subjected the tramps, and which caused them to avoid the casual ward in question. I take it, it might easily kill a man.

and behaviour to prisoners throughout is a matter on which, from the facts which occasionally come to light, I should suppose there can be no definite and reasoned policy. It seems to me that as a general principle the regime should be at once strict in matters of comfort and constructive in matters of occupation.

It is to be noted that this discussion like others has been confused by the assumption that love cannot speak the language of retribution. The very point which should have proved the contrary, that is, the Christian principle that love can express itself in punishment, is utilised against the idea that punishment can be retributive. "Retributive," by the fallacy exposed above, is here confused with "vindictive." But the very work of love in punishment is to stamp and brand the evil, by exhibiting it in its true light. The penalties in Dante's hell and purgatory, it has well been said, consist in exhibiting what the acts so punished have tended to make of the world. Love may even take the

form of indignation; it burns, as we said, with the kind of flame which the special contact requires. But this is not to say that anger or resentment are factors in punishment. It is to say that punishment springs from the evil will which evokes it, and is the response of love or goodness to such a will. It is easy, of course, to make a joke by asking if all this high doctrine is to be applied in the multitude of cases in which petty penalties are inflicted for petty breaches of order and of rights. But what is seen in all these cases, however dimly, is that there is a social order which is able to assert itself, and, in any decent community, that on the whole it equally maintains certain general rights. That in doing so it may defend a state of things which contains much injustice and needless inequality is very true, and may be a further condition which tends totally to discredit the idea of punishment. The remedy for this is to improve the social system; not to fetter the reactions of the social will for good. But on the whole it is the clearer

consciousness to which we must look for the true import of an institution; and tested by this consciousness we see that civilisation, as we said, is growing up to the import of punishment for punishment's sake, and not away from it.

CHAPTER IX

"WE ARE NOT HARD ENOUGH ON STUPIDITY"

C'est vrai, et je le répète,
On n'est pas bon quand on est bête.

I CANNOT recall where I found the remark that we are not hard enough on stupidity; but it appears to me to express a feeling which is universal to-day.

It would be out of place in a work of this kind to criticise one particular nation or another. But it is within the mark to say that the greater part of the world is resenting the stupidity of war, and many other special forms and cases of stupidity which lead up to it or are embodied in it. Our social administration is full of things that are stupid, as we saw partly in

speaking of punishment. And the mildest of critics must say the same of our social stratification and the uninformed public opinion which results from it. Every one, I believe, feels this to be so.

This is a remarkable recognition, because the recent fashion in reflective thought has been hostile to what is stigmatised as intellectualism. "The retirement of the intellect" is a phrase which has been used to express the line which the modern mind is taking. And yet intelligence seems to be at least one opposite of stupidity. Perhaps intelligence is not the same as intellect. I will return to this point immediately.

1. What is the meaning of stupidity in the sense in which more particularly we have been roused to resent and condemn it? What, for example, *is* its true opposite?

Intelligence certainly seems to be opposite to it. When we condemn behaviour or routine as unintelligent, that is much the same censure as to call it stupid. But in this affinity the term intelligence does

not seem to mean the intellect—the general intellectual capacity; it indicates rather the quality of being "intelligent," which is taken as a special quality of some persons, and not as the mere power of reason, which is supposed to distinguish man from brutes. This quality of being "intelligent" is much what we shall find to be in general the opposite of censurable stupidity. It means being alive, responsive, awake to interests and wants which may be new to you.

"Clever" is *prima facie* an opposite of stupid. But it does not seem to point quite to the meaning we want. A boy is stupid, in the sense of not being clever, if he is slow at languages or at arithmetic. But one ought not to blame him for this; it is a matter for regret and sympathy, not for censure. And you may have cause to say of such a boy, "I shouldn't call him a stupid lad on the whole," *i.e.* in the common affairs of life. So with a peasant; he may be slow to talk or calculate, but may express himself with

wonderful adaptiveness if you give him a plough or a ribbon saw to handle, or the treatment of a crop to decide.

Still, want of intellectual cleverness has a point in common with the stupidity we condemn.[1] It is lack of quickness, of being "gleg at the uptak'." This may be due to mere mental tardiness, to slow reaction-time; but it is much more commonly due to self-absorption, inattention, inappreciativeness of what is important to others. Here we are fairly on the track of censurable stupidity. It is irresponsive, as we said above of the unintelligent; insensitive, unappreciative, unadaptive. It is inability to *see*. "There are thousands who can talk, for one who can think; and there are hundreds who can think, for one who can *see*." [2] We say it of a machine, especially of what is metaphorically called mechanical in social

[1] I think I am right in saying that "clever" in the far west of the U.S.A. means, or once did mean, "kind," "thoughtful"; "Will you be clever with these tenderfeet?" an old man in Colorado said to his child, referring to me.

[2] Ruskin. Quoted from memory.

management. We say it of any routine, even of nature in its indifference to human ends.

A comparison with ignorance may help us. They are clearly not the same thing. Ignorance may be the cause of stupidity, or its effect; but ignorance refers, surely, to any kind of facts and truths indiscriminately. If there is any truth or fact I do not know, then so far I am ignorant. Ignorance is a general term and means lack of knowledge; not of any knowledge *par excellence.* Stupidity is a more pointed term; it means rather a mental quality than a state or fact; and more particularly, it means blindness not to *facts* or *truths* but to *values,* or to facts or truths or consequences in as far as they carry values.

Thus, as we saw, we may attribute stupidity to a routine or system in respect of interests to which it is indifferent, and yet such a system may be highly rational or intellectual in its own internal coherence. But it fails in responsiveness or adaptiveness.

2. We might sum up all this account of censurable stupidity by saying that it has a " moral " element.

If we say this, we ought to use the word moral in the very wide sense in which it implies respect for all worth or value.[1] Then censurable stupidity would mean unresponsiveness to values.

And so it would be perhaps a truer rendering of what was once meant by saying that Knowledge is virtue and Ignorance is vice. The knowledge and ignorance in question were, I suspect, *meant* to include awakenedness to all values and its reverse, but were apt to be construed as meaning acquaintance, or unacquaintance, with any facts or truths, including those relatively indifferent or unimportant. Probably the thesis which favoured knowledge suffered in this case for a merit. It meant, no doubt, to insist just exactly on the point that " moral " goodness as commonly construed limited values too narrowly ; and that there was a great deal more in the

[1] See Chap. III.

world, besides common moral rules, which it was bad for our lives if we were ignorant of. Though it also meant that to lose our grasp of these latter, as certainly under obsession we do lose it, was to lose our insight into life as well as our character.[1] It is a foolish tradition that Greek moral theory despised the workman's life. In fact, the idea of apprenticeship to the art of living, and the mastery of it, which was the essence of Greek moral reflection, was modelled by Socrates on the great crafts and professions. The knowledge which was excellence was like the craftsman's or doctor's skill, an overmastering habit, and implied his singleness of heart in aiming at the values he had learned to prize. However, knowledge was an ambiguous term, and lent itself to misconstruction. Instead of meaning responsiveness to the values of life, it could mean, as we saw, an intellectual accumulation indifferent to them. Such knowledge is indeed little better than ignorance; but the possibility

[1] See p. 222 below, and Chap. III.

of the misconception is enough to demand a more precise expression for that which, in knowledge, has moral value. And this, perhaps, is being unconsciously worked out to-day in "the retirement of the intellect," together with the condemnation of stupidity.

Thus there may be doubt about the meaning of ignorance, and so of knowledge, when you say that ignorance is vice and knowledge is virtue. But when you say, "We are not hard enough on stupidity," it is pretty clear what you mean. Stupidity is used for blindness to values; and its opposite is sensitiveness, appreciativeness, sympathy—in the wide sense, understanding.

There is a closely cognate word "clumsiness." It was in *Ecce Homo*, if I remember right, that in trying to bring home the full humanity of Christ, the author said we must be prepared to think of him as a carpenter, and perhaps a clumsy carpenter. In discussing this passage, a friend, himself well skilled in woodwork, protested against the word "clumsy." He said that it im-

plied a moral defect, and could not be applicable to a man who was perfectly good. He meant, I suppose, that clumsiness involved an inattentiveness or unresponsiveness to minute obligations of one's work. Things would be done wrong, which were perhaps not the main things, but which yet a normal man, fully attentive and appreciative, would be careful to do right and would succeed. I should suppose that there is the same plurality of causes in clumsiness that are found in stupidity. Either might come from a defect in the mental machinery, or from a want of interest or scrupulousness. My friend's suggestion illustrates at all events the censurable aspect of stupidity.

Before leaving the issue raised by the old thesis "Knowledge is virtue," I should like to insist on a further substantive truth which was implied in that thesis, and which shows an affinity between stupidity in the "moral" sense, and genuine intellectual "ignorance" in the strictest sense. Take "moral" stupidity

in the very narrowest import, not widened into blindness to all values, but as blindness, say, to such values as are involved in the second half of the Decalogue. Even so, if we follow the Greek teachers, it is an enormous intellectual disability, in the plain and natural meaning of intellect. The man who lacks control of his passions "does not study the most important things." So Xenophon bluntly reproduces what he thinks he heard from Socrates. And Plato, towards the end of his life, though far from abandoning the old doctrine that "Knowledge is virtue," nevertheless restated it once at least in a way which betrayed, as I think, an emphatic secret and certainty which for him it contained. At all events he seems to tell us,[1] at once with the fire of youth and the faith of age, that whether knowledge is virtue or not, virtue at any rate is knowledge, and to desert the path of life according to principle is the ultimate stupidity. It does not matter, he says,

[1] *Laws*, 689a-e.

how "scientific" you may be, or how expert and rapid in reasoning; if you live well, by the simple laws of honour and justice,[1] you are wise, though you may know neither "how to spell nor to swim"; and if you live otherwise, all the science and reasoning in the world will not save you from having admitted into your mind a supreme discord, which is the ultimate and superlative stupidity. Your intellect proper,[2] he seems to be telling us, may in such a case be a fine-looking growth, but is rotten at the root.

The point seems worth pursuing. There is a widespread conviction, due, I think, in a great measure to an exaggerated doctrine of free will, conscience, and responsibility, in connection with orthodox Christianity, that the knowledge of life embodied in everyday morality is a negligible quantity, that every one has thus

[1] Of course a question stares the modern in the face, what these simple laws are. I will try to explain below what is meant by "morality" as distinct from convention.

[2] This sentence is entirely my own gloss upon his argument.

much by instinct, and that no strictly intellectual defect but only one of the will is implied in preoccupation with vicious or trivial interests, whether in art and literature, or in actual living. We know the lines :

> Whom do you count the worst man upon earth?
> Be sure, he knows, in his conscience, more
> Of what right is, than arrives at birth
> In the best man's acts that we bow before.

I do not believe a word of it. I believe that the intelligence of "the worst man upon earth" is confused throughout and shattered by pervading discrepancies and conflicts with itself, and is wholly incapable of conceiving or of portraying an orderly life in wholesome relations with man and nature.

The same point may be illustrated from the province of literary art. In re-reading a novel by a well-known writer,[1] I was reminded that he has had the courage to discuss in public a comparison not unlike one which has often been in my own

[1] *A Human Document*, by Mr. Mallock.

thoughts. In considering the relative justice of certain portrayals of life, he actually mentions in conjunction the names of Zola's *Nana* and Miss Yonge's *Daisy Chain*. And his judgment is that neither is true to life, for each excludes one half of it. While admitting this verdict in a quantitative sense, I should be inclined to urge that the quantitative sense is here, as always in such matters, exceedingly superficial. It is true that on either side an immense region of fact passes unmentioned; but it is not true, in my opinion, that the unmentioned bulk on both sides is equally fundamental and equally significant. It appears to me that the English authoress has in the main expressed the motives and experiences through which great things are done in the world and great communities are strong and valuable, while in the other case we find an analysis of morbid growths which are not typical and which if removed from the world by a miracle would not be missed.

Zola, however, appears to me to have

been the victim rather of a pseudo-scientific theory than of a totally biassed view of life. And it would not be just, I think, to deny him the power of appreciating and portraying a healthy life at its best.[1] But it does seem to me that Balzac, for example, had studied himself into obsessions of such a nature that when he attempts to represent a good or saintly life his genius becomes feverish and fantastic. He had, I must think, analysed himself out of a straightforward and fundamental grasp of human motive and endeavour.

And if, leaving these high references, we were to compare writers of lesser magnitude each to each, I should certainly hold that the authoress who has been mentioned knew more of life and of the world than Ouida, say, or than any of the commonplace cynical writers who more especially pique themselves on knowledge of that kind.

I am not speaking of the whole question

[1] His *Paris* seems to me a sufficient proof of this.

of artistic excellence. I am not denying the artist's right to choose his subject. I am only considering in what type of mind you find in fact the greatest mastery of the main motives of life, and insight into its real aims and ambitions. This, I say, is greater and deeper in those who start from the central facts of duty, serious purpose, and unselfishness—take Meredith's Italian novels as a type—than in those who spend themselves in the unravelling of selfish or sensuous aims, or in the representation of normal human motive as vulgar or malicious. This is not a literary essay. I do not wish to comment upon living authors. But I think that the experienced reader of prose fiction will have plenty of material by which to test my thesis, that no one understands much of the world who does not recognise and attend to its solid moral basis with faith in its serious work and purpose. Plato points out [1] how the cunning and suspicious pessimist, who thinks he knows the world and judges

[1] Rep. 409 C.

it by his own low standard, makes a poor appearance when he comes to deal with men of real worth and great experience, because he never understands when he ought to trust people; so that such men simply think him a stupid fool, though his own sort think him a clever man of the world. I am sure there is a great deal of this stupidity both in life and in literature to-day, and it contributes much to the crowning stupidity of war. Stupidity — even moral insensibility in the narrowest sense of the word "moral" —has a really grave intellectual disvalue, which I take to have been implied in the old thesis about knowledge and virtue.

Can we show why this must be so? I do not think it is difficult. It depends on two points—the connection of facts with values and the connection of central with outlying sets of both. I will try to put it shortly and simply.

First, though values are not mere facts, yet they are characters, qualities, of systems

of facts. A system of facts or truths or objects has value, we saw, in as far as it has unfailingness—as it meets and helps a typical mind and body amply and without lacuna. Knowledge of facts,[1] therefore, does not amount to knowledge of values; but knowledge or appreciation of values involves knowledge of facts in a certain way and bearing. When it was said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," it was not meant that they did not know they were killing a man. It meant, as we should say in our prosaic phrase, that they were not alive to some much greater issue, implied in the whole situation, on which they were fatally wrong; some quality of the connected facts which constituted a breach of an obligation, a blasphemy against a good, which belonged to them as men, but to which they were blind.[2]

[1] For this purpose knowledge of truth goes with knowledge of facts.

[2] I have spoken above of the relation of value to feeling, and it is not necessary to interrupt ourselves to insist on it at this stage. Feeling *is* just the vital difference which the recognition of value makes in our whole state of being.

Well, then, this is why "moral" stupidity involves far-reaching intellectual blindness. It is because the "moral" system is the centre and foundation of the mind's whole structure and habits, and if we are blind to the order and harmony of the former, it means that we are ignorant in a great measure of the facts and truths which belong to the latter. We are ignoring what a mind and life must be, at the minimum, in order to have value at all as a life and mind.

And this brings us to the second point. "Moral" values in the narrower sense are the condition of having any mind or life worth speaking of at all; and this, again, is obviously the condition of having moral values in the wider sense, that is, the whole world of goods or experiences that possess worth. Therefore "moral" blindness in the narrower sense is always tending to spread to the larger world of values or moralities, which comprehends all that is precious, and to destroy it at the root. And of course it is a truism to say that

blindness to this larger world itself is a stupidity which directly consists in intellectual ignorance along with æsthetic dulness and insensitiveness to ideal morality. This I take to be the full meaning of censurable stupidity.

Three questions occur to me at this point which might seem to complicate our conclusion. Can we give a tenable meaning to morality in the narrow or restricted sense, in which we said it was the root of life? Is it not possible for morality so understood to be the cause of very deplorable stupidity, rather than the mainspring of its opposite? And, lastly, may not any one of the values belonging to the wider world inspire the central moral will itself, and expand, as it were, downwards into it, like a strong young shoot rejuvenating a root that is on the road to decay?

I will try to answer these questions in a few words sufficiently to remove the misconceptions which they suggest.

First, I do not mean by morality a

rigid conventional code. I mean the personal and social attitude of the will which civilised communities recognise on the whole as essential to true membership of them. The pagan virtues, temperance, courage, and justice, together with the Christian virtues, faith, hope, and charity, give a fair outline of the requirements to this effect which life has so far specified. I omit wisdom, as its connection with the other qualities is the very subject of our argument. By moral stupidity in the narrowest sense, then, I mean an insensibility to those claims, a response to which constitutes the above-mentioned qualities. I do not mean simply breaches of conventional rules.

Secondly, I admit it to be possible that a restriction of mind and will to the moral province, even when conceived as I have just described it, might favour what would have to be called stupidity. All narrowness involves stupidity, and every one is narrow at some point. The peculiarly moral attitude may become a

fanaticism, and turn, as we know, against the higher intellectual and æsthetic interests, and even against ideal shapes of itself. But one may safely say that in as far as it does so it is false to its own nature. It is essentially a principle of unity, and so far as instrumental, is instrumental to a fuller unity. If it is hostile to the larger world of values, in short, it is so through the artificial and transient negation that springs from impotence and unenlightenment. It is not the active poison of a discordant principle which infects every growth of the self with a vicious bias. In fact, I believe that it is a popular illusion to consider that Puritanism was hostile to the higher interests of life. There are fanatics everywhere; but a creed which was Milton's can hardly have been anti-intellectual in itself, and in the Society of Friends, for example, a relatively high level of intelligence and wisdom has always prevailed. A recent enquiry has noted a similar fact with reference to Huguenot families in the United States of America.

But Huguenot families have as a rule a strict moral tradition. Morality may be narrowed, like any other attitude, but in principle and on the whole it is a radical antagonist of stupidity.[1]

And, lastly, as to the power of each of the higher interests separately to maintain itself, and even to redevelop by its own inspiration the entire moral organism; to make itself the root and common morality the fruit, in place of the reverse relation as it has been outlined above. The answer is in principle, I think, that if this is to be so in any given case, it must be made so by a private effort and special interpretation. We read of and meet with persons whose devotion to knowledge or to beauty is so widely understood by themselves, and has therefore such far-reaching ramifications, that it expands into the characteristics — which undoubtedly are akin to it — of courage, kindness, self-control, and, in short, of morality.

[1] Compare the remarks above on the general form of successfulness in the will to good.

It is certain that all the great values are cognate with each other, and any of them can be reinforced and vitalised from any other as a point of departure. They all of them make selfish aims and selfish preoccupations look petty and trivial, and they all of them may unite human minds and hearts in a common feeling for a universal good. But as it has been said that if philosophy is to be your religion, you must make it into something which it is not of itself, so if you are to make scientific or æsthetic enthusiasm into the whole of morality, you must find in yourself something more than the single interest in question, quite strictly construed, would offer. The thing is sometimes done, and testifies, as I said, to the essential connectedness of all values; but it is not the natural and simple course of affairs; and all specialism, apart from a sound fundamental morality, carries with it dangers of narrowness, dangers which in the long run affect itself as well as the other sides of life.

> Such were his words. It is indeed
> For ever well our singers should
> Utter good words and know them good
> Not through song only; with close heed
> Lest, having spent for the work's sake
> Six days, the man be left to make.[1]

Thus I hope we see what is meant by saying that there is a moral element in censurable stupidity. It is a blindness to moral values either in the narrower sense of morality or in that wider sense for which all values are "moral." But its intellectual side is also prominent and inevitable. You cannot be blind to values without a prevailing ignorance and distortion in your ideas concerning facts, objects, and truths.

3. We have seen, I hope, what is meant by the stupidity which it is desirable to be hard upon. But we may say a brief word in conclusion on the sense in which it is desirable to be hard upon it.

It is settled by our rendering of stupidity that we do not wish to be unkind to people whose minds are naturally slow.

[1] Rossetti, "Dante at Verona."

That would be cruel, and would do no good. Moreover, such people are not by any means necessarily stupid in our sense of the word. Affection may make them wonderfully alert. And, as we saw, a difficulty in certain modes of expression is a very different thing from total unadaptiveness.

We should look, it would seem, to education for our remedy. If there is a panacea for stupidity, surely it should be here. It is the special and principal engine for awaking interests and proportioning them to values, so that the area of life may have some tolerable chance of being duly represented in our value-field. That this is the task of education, or the principal part of it, is or ought to be a commonplace. But perhaps it remains worth observing. Of course it bears on the problem so much in our minds to-day, of finding the most effective method of bringing home humanity to the human being. But the present work is too humble to include a treatise on education, and I will pass to more

general considerations with two remarks. Education is often blamed as the actual creator of stupidity, and if it is in spirit obscurantist, or utilitarian, or narrowly specialist, that may very well be the case. On the other hand, it seems to me a mistake, in the hope of keeping dulness at bay and maintaining alertness, to exclude all labours and practices *de longue haleine*. It is a poor alertness which is blunted by arduous exertion. And you must learn to obey before you can command, and to follow before you can lead.

Passing from the special educational function which is confined to the education of the young, we approach the influences which affect public opinion, the educator and organ for good and evil of the general mind. And it was with reference to this, I should imagine, that the remark which is our thesis was made. Public opinion is too tolerant of stupidity, first in opinion itself, and then in public affairs. The same factors are at work in both.

And I should suggest that generally and in the main the source of censurable stupidity in public thought and in practices important enough to be of public concern lies in two forms of isolation; in the caste system of social stratification at home, and in the want of sympathy with other nations abroad.

Mrs. Transome in *Felix Holt* was simply unable to consider Rufus Lyon, the dissenting minister. Her mind had no place into which an understanding of him could be fitted. We think we are beyond all this to-day; but a careful student of our literature and journalism knows better, and his verdict is confirmed in daily life. We are not sensitive and awake to each other's needs, wants, and feelings. The minds of the classes are not in thorough reciprocal contact; and while this is so, the fully developed class consciousness can hardly mean anything but the war of classes. The fact is undeniable; and its consequence is obvious. If you do not know how a man feels things, where the

shoe pinches, what are his dearest ambitions, you cannot but be censurably stupid in dealing with him. It works both ways alike; from wage-earner to well-to-do, and from well-to-do to wage-earner. Each is stupid about the other; and of the two, the wage-earner has at least the advantage of being alive and sensitive to the experience of the larger multitude. The well-to-do ought to have the greater world of interests; but there are many things against him, and his unawakenedness is often extraordinary.

There is an old story which remains with me from childhood's days; it must come from Miss Edgeworth or some such writer. A well-to-do father has a party on his boy's tenth birthday; the tradesmen and artisans whom he employs are there. The carpenter goes to touch his hat on being introduced to the young gentleman, but the father interrupts. "This is a man who makes carts and gates for the farmers, and helps in building houses; can you do anything as useful?" The boy is silent.

"Very well, then; you take off your hat to him; when you can do anything as useful, he may if he likes touch his hat to you." That an active country lad would have been an adoring satellite of the nearest carpenter long before his tenth year is a characteristic of English life which does not altogether spoil the intention of the Rousseauish story.

I am not here attempting to say how in detail things can be done; but to get this spirit into education and into life by real contact and not in picturesque make-believe would do a great deal to remove stupidity. I do not lay much stress on externals. I believe that different people will both from taste and from equipment for function always live rather differently. But beyond a certain point externals do separate classes and prevent mutual understanding, and so cause censurable stupidity. An acquaintance of mine who held the doctrine that true help in distress involved genuine friendship used to carry out his thesis by not only visiting his poorer

friends, but, a much greater difficulty, by encouraging them to visit him. But I knew of other cases where the conditions were a little different, and the doctrine was harder to carry out; and certain failures made me feel how an uninterrupted and natural intercourse between richer and poorer people would demand as a condition much simpler living, and, for example, a different type of servants, among the well-to-do. All isolation makes for censurable stupidity. "You will find if you try that it is a practical impossibility to drink your tea if there is some one in the next room who has none to drink. Next door makes all the difference." [1] Public opinion needs a great deal of practice in this direction if it is to learn how rightly to be hard on stupidity in itself and the affairs of which it is the judge.

As to war, the crowning stupidity, I will repeat as shortly and pointedly as I can what I have urged elsewhere. We

[1] H. Bosanquet, *Aspects of the Social Problem*, p. 98.

disable ourselves against the peril of it just by our full-mouthed denunciations of it as a devilish wickedness and a sin against God and man. That is all very true; but it is, so to speak, consequential. And it misleads us. We are not all terrible sinners; but we *are* all causes of war; for blindness comes first, and sin follows at its heels. In pointing to the terrible sinners we are actually excusing ourselves, who mean so well, and do so ill. Started on conflicting courses, and seeing no way out, all nations get hotter and hotter, more and more perverse. What we want, as I hold, is to see *not* how devilish the thing is in the end, *but* how simple and natural it is in the beginning, and how just as simply and naturally its avoidance might come. It is the typical "misunderstanding," and we know that a "misunderstanding" is the euphemism for a quarrel, and, it may be, for a very nasty one. A hundred million people are resolved to march south at a given hour on given narrow roads; and another hundred

million to march north on the same roads at the same time. Nobody need be devilish on either side. They do not want a collision; they *merely* want to do *exactly* what they have set their hearts on doing. But a frightful collision must ensue. Then, of course, when they are on the roads, and can see no way round, they will become devilish.

Of course there is always a way round, if we look out for it in time. But stupidity prevents us. Nations are not alert, not sensitive, to the minds and needs of other nations; they do not realise where others want to go and why; nor how their own direction can be modified in harmony with the others', and yet none of their really essential aims be sacrificed. They are not at all clear, perhaps, what *are* their own essential aims. Their social arrangements do not permit a distinct vision of them. Their leaders are blinded and biassed by false interests. Still less are they responsive to the needs of others.

It is all this stupidity which most

emphatically public opinion ought to be hard upon. But, in being so, it might find that first of all it had to be hard upon itself. The only hope for it and for us is that it is a self-criticising organ; and to be hard upon itself is a function which it is seldom unwilling to adopt.

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THE END

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