

Function,  
Feeling, and Conduct



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# Function, Feeling, and Conduct

An Attempt to Find a Natural Basis for  
Ethical Law

By

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*Εοίκασιν οὖν οἱ ἀληθεῖς τῶν λόγων οὐ μένον πρὸς τὸ εἰδέναι χρησιμώτατοι εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὸν βίον.—Aristotle*

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## INTRODUCTION

Natur hat weder Kern  
Noch Schale,  
Alles ist sie mit einemmale.

*Goethe.*

Πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος.

PROTAGORAS.

OUR thought of nature is a defining and qualifying thought. We speak of nature, it is true, as infinite. And the mind, exploring nature, rests at no given term in its progress, but finds in each phase of the universal revelation, in element, atom, world, or system of worlds, the movement of exhaustless energy, the shifting barriers of interminable being changing through illimitable time. But though the mind's progress were endless it were a process nevertheless of endless delimitation. Thought is thought of a more or less particularised content. Whatever we see, whatever we think, is, in the very fact that we think or see, qualified and so far defined.

Nature is thus finite as object of thought, infinite as transcending any given process of thought. It is the function of thought to define; to seek for the source, essence, office, or end of its object. But the defining thought, impatient of the

limits of each several object, and searching for an ultimate term in the aim, origin, or heart of nature as object in general, finds no such term, and confesses in the concept of the Infinite the abandonment of its search.

But the mind finds no less interest in its task because its task is interminable. The thought that there is no bound to its activity is, rather, its most inspiring thought. The mind's interest, however, is everywhere specific. It looks into the maze of being and change through human eyes; human feeling prompts its attitude, human aims direct its activity. In contemplation as in action its interest is determined by its own constitution.

In this constitution is found much that is common to all sentient life. Man, with his intellectual being, shares with other animals certain animal impulses. He has appetites which crave satisfaction, he shrinks from pain and injury, and he is commonly ruled by the strong instinct of self-preservation. But if, abstracting from these common impulses, we consider only what is characteristic of man, his reflective and creative intelligence, we find him taking two main attitudes in the presence of nature or universal being as the means and medium of his peculiar activities.

Of these two main attitudes, one is exemplified in the sciences, or methods of knowing; the other, in art, morals, and religion, through which man gives expression to what he conceives to be

the more perfect forms of being. Science, the product of the cognitive interest, is content, as science, to explore facts, or to discover laws which embody systems of facts; that is, to take nature as it finds her. Art, morals, and religion, on the other hand, bring with them a measure or standard, and search the facts for illustration of their own exemplars; or, failing the search, re-form the facts in the sense of their several demands. In brief, science, as descriptive or explanatory, rests, with all its abstractions, in the actual; art, morals, and religion, as normative, seek an ideal, or that which, rarely exemplified in the real, shall, on demand of the imperious interests which they represent, give finer form or tendency to the real.

This distinction, however, may not be taken too strictly. The mind is not a mere cluster of separable faculties or powers, but tends as an organic whole to press all its functions into the service of any main end. The cognising subject is not content simply to know, indifferent to what it finds; the field which science selects for its scrutiny is taken on suggestion of some human aspiration or need, and the truth which it most affects is the truth which has the profoundest human interest. On the other hand, there can be no art or religion or morals without knowledge. Their standards are not grasped out of the air. Art which is not natural is grotesque; religion which in its deep

discontent with the world flies to worlds unknown fades into a vision; morality, flouting at experience, unenlightened by self-knowledge, becomes an erratic and mischievous habit, a vice. Even our ideals are in relation with experience, and may be proven just or sane only by the test of experience. In fine, the difference between the actual and the ideal marks but a difference in the attitude of the same subject or soul dealing with various material and looking to different ends. Here the matter of our thought is that which now is; there, that which we seek, which we will to be, which ought to be. The actual interests us as in relation to the ideal; the ideal is but the actual shaped, or to be shaped, into the real which we demand. And what we know of this formative process may possibly itself become a science.

Meantime, as between that which is and that which ought to be, philosophy, the anticipatory and generalising science, must mediate. Human life is a craving, a tendency, a system of activities moving continually, if inconstantly, to their several ends. Science discloses the actual trend of such movements; philosophy must define, if possible, their rational issue. In science we keep close to the sensuous fact, the experiential grounds of thought. But experience awakens aspiration, achievement suggests a finer achievement, and philosophy, surveying the field of the known and searching with speculative eye the

boundaries of knowledge, mediates between the truth clearly seen and the better truth obscurely divined. Pressing into its service biology, history, sociology, psychology, it searches for the true relation between the untoward fact and that burning human impulse which, spurning the fact and impatient of the world as we find it, too often prompts us, wanting the guidance of knowledge, to the creation of insubstantial worlds from the stuff of our dreams.

Warned by the errors into which this impulse has led us, philosophy has leaned of late towards natural science as offering assured methods, and assumes to have established by means of its new lore a solid footing in the real. The eternal flux of things in which our human destiny is caught appears at length as something more than mere eddying and wash. In the animate world at least, in the long sweep of biological change, and notably in the development of human manners and thought, there is evidence of melioration: history is written as a progress, and, as some would have it, a necessary progress. Our current evolutionary theories, in fact, are in a sense fatalistic. Whatever man may do or may leave undone, they seem to maintain, the race must advance. But human progress cannot be independent of human activity. Man is a factor in his own destiny, is himself a cosmic force, and if he is fated to advance he is fated also

to make adequate effort. His advance is conditioned by his effort.

What we will to have or to be, to know or to do, is thus matter of more than present or personal moment. Through the solidarity of human interests it bears on the problem of human destiny. And moral philosophy, born of our interest in this problem and strengthened now by discipline in the methods of natural science, returns with fresh interest to the study of human needs, and with fresh hope of discerning the true direction of human effort or the rational human end.

Our attempt here is in fact to throw a little light on the nature of this rational end. The need or the utility of any such attempt is sometimes disputed. The moral life, it is said, is independent of the philosophy of morals: mankind needs but the instinct to choose its immediate ends and the ultimate end will take care of itself; conscience, the moral instinct, suffices. But life, we may be reminded, grows continually more complex. The simplicity of manners for which "a few strong instincts and a few plain rules" were enough we are now fast forsaking, and situations arise in which instinctive morality or the common moral sense is at fault. In fact the part played by instinct in morals is much overrated. The moral habit is mainly an acquired habit. It may assume some of the characters of an instinct, but it is, strictly speaking,

a tradition rather than an instinct that runs with the blood. It is learned by each generation with infinite pains from the generation which went before; and that which is directly transmitted is at most a more sensitive moral tissue, so to speak, or a growing responsiveness to moral discipline and to the suggestion of moral ideas. The necessity for the serious and systematic treatment of moral ideas remains.

And in the discipline upon which society relies for the formation of the moral habit this necessity, it may be admitted, is in some sense recognised. Efforts are not wanting to justify the moral demand by some theory or some certain shreds of theory. But though there is in the common-sense of mankind a strong inkling of the rational grounds of this demand, which lie bedded in the structure of society and the form of human nature, it occurs to but few that there is need to work out a sustained moral theory. And men find the effort to construct or to understand such a theory fatiguing. We see them constantly falling back, in their speculative indolence and their dread of change, on the dogmas of tradition. But dogma is fast losing its force as mere dogma, and its instability weakens the force of the moral obligation which it was invoked to support. Even hoary tradition must submit to scrutiny. The modern spirit, stimulated by the success of free inquiry in the domain of natural science, searches boldly

in every domain, and not even the moral tradition is allowed to pass unchallenged. Error is as old as truth, and we demand some other voucher than age.

With reason, then, we return to the old problem of conduct, and search once more for the ground and unifying principle of our moral judgments. The course of humanity, we may admit, is in the more civilised communities fairly set forwards. But so far its advance is more evidently materialistic than moral, and there are races, we should remember, which are apparently stationary or declining.<sup>1</sup> Even the higher types of our species are never quite free from peril of reversion to the animalism of the lower. Instance the arbitrament of war. The moral habit indeed sits but insecurely on the mass of mankind. It is, we may say, the last great gain of human nature, and is not yet ingrained or organic; and its supremacy is perpetually menaced by those older habits which were generated in the long brute struggle for existence, and which are in fact instinctive, hereditary, and organic.

To check the violence of the brutish habits thus entailed on the race, society itself resorts to violence. Organised as the state and armed

<sup>1</sup> It is indisputable that much the greater part of mankind has never shown a particle of desire that its civil institutions should be improved since the moment when external completeness was first given to them by their embodiment in some permanent record.—H. Maine: *Ancient Law*, chap. ii.

with irresistible force, it applies this force steadily and systematically to the repression of crime—that is, of acts which threaten the peace and dignity of the state. And few will question the need or the right of such repression. But as we cannot, on the one hand, leave the formation of the moral habit and the development of moral feeling to tradition and dogma, so, on the other hand, we cannot be content simply to support the strong arm of the state. The effect of force on the control of conduct is mainly restrictive or negative, and it reaches no farther than the prescription or rule. Or if by continuous imposition of the rule force does at length induce a habit, the habit is mechanical rather than vital. A true moral principle, on the contrary, works as an affirmative impulsion of the will, appearing in the free expression of the nature of the volitional subject rather than in the curtailment of its freedom. It is, in a word, a principle of life.

Our attempt in the following pages is to trace out the constitution and general working of such a principle, or to undertake, in other words, a fresh statement of the philosophy or general basis of morals as grounded in human nature. If there be a science of morals it must of course rest on such a basis. It need hardly be said, however, that in an attempt of this kind little that is new can be offered. Our doctrine is at least as

old as Aristotle. All that is undertaken, in fact, is to set forth old truths in newer phrase, to piece out certain half-truths with rounder statement, and to pave the way for a comprehensive theory of morals, based on psychological and naturalistic grounds, by means of which some at least of the old feuds may be appeased and a firmer and more intelligent moral habit may be made possible. But to accomplish even so little were much.

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## Function, Feeling, and Conduct



## SECTION I

### ORGANISATION, CAUSATION, AND FINALITY IN NATURE

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE GENERAL UNITY OF NATURE

NATURE is apprehended by the knowing subject as a cosmos or system. Nowhere is unreason, caprice, or chance; everywhere we find order, character or persistent quality, law. We mean, in fact, by the nature of a thing the essential law or method of its being, assuming as of course that it has such a nature or law. The fruit tree we see yielding fruit after his kind. Gold has a specific gravity of 19.33 and fuses at a temperature of 1250 degrees, Centigrade. Such is the nature of these things. And in the general term Nature we express our conviction that being in general is a being in accordance with law.

But the order of nature is no mere mechanic order. The mechanic view of nature follows from the conception of matter, the stuff of which nature is assumed to be compounded, as inert,

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uninformed, moved only by alien influence. But chemistry and physics have banished this conception. There is no dead matter. Matter in its minutest divisions as in its most ponderous masses is vitalised by an immanent principle, reacts to all agency by inner determination, and asserts through all change its own elemental quality or nature. By abstraction we dissociate matter so-called from this animating principle and conceive of it then as the mere lifeless residue. Such dissociation, however, is but the act of the mind. In all matter, as real, this principle perdures, yielding up nothing of its own even to preponderant force, but expressing itself in every resultant with its measure of power and in its own peculiar mode. Matter *is* in fact only as its principle is, or finds characteristic expression. And this is true whether we contemplate an atom, a world, or the whole breadth of the apprehensible universe. Wide as we may range we find an inner principle always at work, and as the eye at length wearies or thought droops on flagging pinion, we are brought to the conclusion that all things are related to all, and that in all things the moving principle is one.

We are thus led to regard the activity of nature as the movement of life, and the union of her elements, masses, and systems as an organic union. Inasmuch, however, as nature is never viewed as a finished system, no end can be assigned,

no distinctive character can be imputed, to nature as a systematised whole. Ends are assigned, mechanisms and organisms are defined, by comparison from without. Nature is never seen from without. All being, all qualities, all ends, and the means to all ends fall within the being of nature, which thus eludes all real definition. That which we do indeed apprehend or define is some determinate tendency or aspect of nature: her elemental affinities, the gravitation of her masses, the evolution of suns and systems, the development of man. And the terms by which we are fain to characterise that which is in being and character exhaustless, terms such as Nature, God, the Absolute, the Infinite, the Universe, the All-Real, the One, are but symbols which define no more than the mode by which we arrive at the limit of definition.<sup>1</sup>

When therefore we say that universal nature subsists in vital or organic union we shall not be understood as imputing to nature the specific characters of man or of any of the organisms which we know. We mean no more than that natural processes show such interdependence and

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps we know only some of the elements of which existence, considered as a whole, is composed. At all events, it is here impossible to verify the use of analogy, because the whole is never given. . . . Neither matter nor spirit, neither multiplicity nor unity, neither being nor becoming, are fit to be ultimate expressions of existence.—Harald Höffding: *Mind*, April, 1905.

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interrelation and yield such clear proof of inner direction that they cannot be adequately conceived as lifeless or mechanical processes controlled wholly from without. Each thing is in itself a centre and origin of influence. But through this influence which by nature it exerts, and the influence to which by nature it responds, it is related to all. As it acts or reacts it is; and each thing is just what it is because all else, being what it is, evokes from each thing its characteristic activity. The needle of the compass varies with the variations in the constitution of the earth's crust. The light of suns incalculably remote flecks the plate on which the astronomer maps the heavens. Hence the universe of nature, uniting all elements in sensitive and constant interaction, each and all moved by an immanent principle, may be called a living universe.

And this universe, in virtue of its principle, is one. Not that we can shut in the illimitable by a term. Nature's universal being has no assignable bounds and is therefore no mere arithmetical unit. And as inclusive of all that is real it cannot be adequately expressed by such terms as Power, Wisdom, Goodness, or any mere abstraction. It is as including no insulated content, as nowhere disparted by any absolute line, as centred at each point of its being, that the universe is one.

Nature, we say then, though eluding definition, offers to our apprehension a certain unity in

difference: a unity of system with ineffaceable distinctions in quality and mode. And the familiar law in which this unity in difference is implied is the law of causation. Nothing, we say, stands unsupported, or in its own right alone; nothing happens without a cause.<sup>1</sup> And we refer each cause to an antecedent cause in infinite series.

But every effect demands, in strictness, a universe of causes. A spark may start a conflagration. We assume, however, in collaboration with the spark, an indefinite number of causal agents. We assume, for instance, the properties of oxygen and of certain elements with which at a certain temperature it combines. But inasmuch as the collaborating causes, which in so far as they are constants may be taken for granted, are not the causes in which for the time being any practical interest centres, they are commonly relegated to the uncertain rank of conditions. Yet the conditions are part of the cause. An event may be termed, in fact, either condition or cause as a shifting interest shifts the line of inquiry. And as we may trace back from the event an indefinite chain of causes, so we may diverge at any link in the chain and from the point of divergence trace

<sup>1</sup> Πᾶν δὲ αὐτὸ γιγνόμενον ὑπ' αἰτίου τινὸς ἐξ ἀνάγκης γίγνεσθαι· παντὶ γὰρ ἀδύνατον χωρὶς αἰτίου γένεσιν σchein.—Plato: *Timæus*, v. 28 A.

Now everything that becomes or is created must of necessity be created by some cause, for nothing can be created without a cause. (Jowett's tr.)

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a new causal series or an indefinite number of such series.

And the multiplication of effects is as well recognised as the plurality of causes. Any member of a causal series may be regarded, in fact, as either end or origin of an infinite number of converging lines of causation whose distal extremities are infinitely remote. That is, the universal activity is represented in every event. As between causes and effects any given event thus stands like the common vertex of a double cone. And as the modes of causal influence may be expressed, wherever we have adequate knowledge, under the form of unvarying laws, the causal event, conceived in its full significance, implies not only an infinite series but an infinite system. Latent in the conception of cause is the conception of the systematic unity of nature. Nothing is real but as the universal reality is. All fugitive and finite being is relative to that for which the Infinite or the Absolute is our symbol.<sup>1</sup>

But we note in certain groups of phenomena a stricter and more obvious unity than that which binds all things to all in causal or systematic union. What we call vital phenomena are vital in a more special sense. Where such phenomena appear we find a definite organism or body within

<sup>1</sup> The Absolute *is* its appearances, it really is all and every one of them.—F. H. Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, p. 486.

which the lines of causal influence all converge to a definite end, namely, the conservation of the body in the discharge of its functions. We define life in fact, provisionally at least, as the principle which effects this convergence or appears in the tendency to this end.

Every vital system is therefore, even when unconscious, in a sense teleological. It presents a synergy of functions tending in their discharge to the conservation of the system and, as incident to this office, to the production of other systems in type like itself. So far as we can see, however, no physical or chemical law is suspended in the accomplishment of the vital end. The living body is still incorporated in the body of nature. The force of gravitation, for instance, is exerted on every particle of organised matter; and it appears, if we allow for the influence of organic conditions, that the chemical elements in any organism show their characteristic chemical reactions. But while the specific forms of energy follow within the organism their own specific laws, they are all made subordinate to the vital end. Or perhaps it were more accurate to say, since subordination of a law might seem to imply infraction or suspension of the law, that the interaction of the elements under the conditions presented in the living body constitutes in itself the vital principle which dominates the body.<sup>1</sup> Without

<sup>1</sup> Compare Kant's suggestion: *Es als unausgemacht dahin-*

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proof, therefore, of such infraction or suspension, we may reasonably infer from the general validity of the elemental laws as disclosed by physiological research, that organic causation is but a special case of common causation, or of undiscovered activities which work within the sphere of such causation.

The doctrine of finality in nature then, a doctrine of which philosophy is coy as in some way subversive of natural law, need not alarm the most thorough-going naturalist. It is, as we regard it, but an exemplification of such law. The philosophical objection is valid, no doubt, as against the assumption of conscious prevision in all natural tendency to an end. But there is finality in nature before consciousness appears. It is characteristic of all vital systems. It is most obvious, however, in the activities of animal organisms, the structures of which are deemed to be intelligible only when their office or end is understood. Physiology, as a science of functions, has indeed little to tell us but of adaptations to an end. The heart, it appears, is formed with reference to the circulation of the blood; the stomach anticipates the food which it must

gestellt wird, ob nicht in dem uns unbekanntem inneren Grunde der Natur selbst die physisch-mechanische und die Zweckverbindung an denselben Dingen in einem Prinzip zusammenhangen mögen.—Kant: *Krit. der Urtheilskraft*, zweiter theil, sec. 70.

assimilate; and no instrument consciously devised for an end is comparable with the brain in the delicacy and completeness with which it is adapted to conserve and develop the organism in which it has its seat.

And one might apply the concept of an end to the action of nature wherever we see a system of causes steadily converging to a common result. But there is risk of making the concept useless by over-expansion. It suffices to note that nature is, in any aspect, a process; that the principles by which the process is guided are definite and stable; that the thing which is tends in a determinate manner to become the thing which shall be. And we may add that among all natural processes there is interaction and communion. Nature's common theme is the systematic or organic unity of nature.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SYSTEMATIC UNITY OF BODY AND MIND

WHEN we come to deal with consciousness, however, and especially with the rational self-consciousness of man, we discover what appears to be a break in the system of nature. The lines of causation here seem to be interrupted. We have "thought" on the one side and "matter" on the other, and, finding it hard to understand how the movement of matter may be transmuted into the activity of thought, we rest, though uneasily, in a sort of dualism. Here apparently are two separate realms, the realm of body and the realm of mind. And the gap which divides them, it is urged, is no mere gap in our knowledge, but is one which cannot be stopped by any conceivable extension of our knowledge; the chasm is and must remain impassable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pour ce que d'un côté j'ai une claire et distincte idée de moi-même en tant que je suis seulement une chose qui pense et non étendue, et que d'un autre j'ai une idée distincte du corps en tant qu'il est seulement une chose étendue et qui ne pense point, il est certain que moi, c'est-à-dire mon âme, par laquelle je suis ce que je suis, est entièrement et vérita-

To the naïve consciousness this problem in causation does not occur. For the plain man pain is without question the effect of a blow, and it is the will which as cause nerves the arm to strike in retaliation of the blow.

And even cultivated minds glide over the problem with easy assumption. Certain evolutionists, ignoring, it would seem, the question of the commensurability of physical and psychical terms, class consciousness as a specific kind of force. It is simply the equivalent of so much physical force from which, or into which, it is converted. Feeling or idea or will ranks thus, without more ado, in its place in the vast scheme of forces to which the universe is by our physical philosophies commonly reduced; and consciousness, as a refined kind of force, is brought under the general doctrine of the conservation of energy, or, as the phrase once ran, the persistence of force.<sup>1</sup>

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blement distincte de mon corps, et qu'elle peut être ou exister sans lui.—Descartes: *Med. Sixième*.

Nec corpus mentem ad cogitandum, nec mens corpus ad motum, neque ad quietem, nec ad aliquid (si quid est) aliud determinare potest.—Spinoza: *Ethics*, pars iii., prop. ii.

<sup>1</sup> Various classes of facts thus unite to prove that the law of metamorphosis, which holds among the physical forces, holds equally between them and the mental forces. Those modes of the Unknowable which we call motion, heat, light, chemical affinity, etc., are alike transformable into each other, and into those modes of the Unknowable which we distinguish as sensation, emotion, thought: these in their turns being

But to this the psychologist, tracing the relation of cerebration to thought, demurs. The doctrine of the conservation of energy, he insists, is a merely physical doctrine, resting on physical data and applicable to physical processes alone; and consciousness, as distinguished from its physiological concomitants, cannot be classed as a force in the sense in which this doctrine is properly held. The activity of the mind is not to be compared with the stroke of a piston or the movement of a muscle. The symbolism of speech, it is true, suggests the comparison. Nothing is commoner than to speak of the weakness or the energy of the will. But this, if we take our terms strictly, is mere metonymy. We impute to the will the energy of the inhibitions and movements which attend the formation and execution of the will. But there is in the execution of the will no transformation of a so-called psychical force into physical force. No energy is imparted to the muscles by the volitional idea as mere idea. The energy which is liberated in the movements of the body is energy which was stored in the body. The series of changes from the sensory organ inwards to the brain, and outwards from the brain to the muscles which respond to the sensory stimulus, is a series without a break; consciousness, taken in its ordi-

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directly or indirectly re-transformable into the original shapes  
—Herbert Spencer: *First Principles*, chap. viii., sec 71 (4th ed.).

nary abstract sense, never for an instant interrupts the series. That is to say, consciousness absorbs no cerebral energy, cerebration does not cease when consciousness begins, and the physical series and the psychical series must be conceived as in this respect distinct. The operations of the mind, if we share the psychologist's view, never occur in the strict line of neural or cerebral change.<sup>1</sup>

It follows further, if causation is restricted, as it commonly is, to changes in the form in which energy is exerted, that the relation between body and mind cannot be regarded as a causal relation. My volition, as a merely psychical fact, is not, in this view, the cause of the act by which I strike down a foe or lift up a friend. The cause must be sought in the liberation of cerebral and muscular tensions accompanying the formation and execution of the volitional idea. So the psychologist insists. There being here no interaction, no transformation of forces, parallelism or concomitance is all that we can assert. We must give up

<sup>1</sup> L'idée n'intervient jamais physiquement et de manière à faire brèche au mécanisme universel.—A. Fouillée: *Exist. et Devel. de la Volonté*; *Rev. Philos.*, Juin, 1892, p. 597.

It is never possible to arrive, by way of a molecular mechanics, at any sort of psychical quality or process. . . . Psychical processes refuse to submit to any one of our physical measures of energy; and the physical molecular processes, so far as we are able to follow them, are seen to be transformed, variously enough, into one another, but never directly into psychical qualities.—Wundt: *Prin. of Phys. Psychology*, vol. i., chap. iii., sec. 5 (Titchener's tr., p. 102).

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the causal relation, it would seem, in dealing with the relations of body and mind, and take up, with more or less protest,<sup>1</sup> the doctrine of pre-established harmony in new form.

It may appear, however, that there is a misunderstanding here, or at least that the "gap" which we are supposed to have found is by no means unique, or so effective in disrupting the scheme of things as speculative thought has assumed. The physicist, dealing with the objective world, is naturally most interested in that attribute of things which is the most decisive test of their objectivity—their capacity, namely, to resist or to overcome resistance. This attribute the psychologist reduces, with some variation of detail, to terms of the sense of pressure and strain and of muscular movement; and it is from this attribute that we form the idea of matter as the seat of energy or power. A step further, and energy or power is itself dissociated from matter, which is thus left dead and inert. But the energy thus dissociated in thought is never dissociated in fact. Nor can we in fact isolate either matter or power from such attributes as heat, light, colour, or sound. Some such attributes inhere in every material object, inseparably

<sup>1</sup> Constant parallelism plus absolute separation is logically so unstable a position that the theory either lapses into some form of crude monism, or one series is in the end subordinated to the other.—James Ward: *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i., lect. vi.

associated with that capacity for exerting or resisting pressure which is the most convincing proof that we are dealing with such an object. Such inseparable association, however, is taken for identity. All phenomena, it is assumed, are reducible to forms of force. It is believed, for instance, that we reach the real nature of colour and sound when we "reduce" them to vibrations, that is, to projected impressions of the sense of pressure or strain or muscular effort. But no such reduction is in fact possible. Visual and auditory sensations are not dermal or tendinous or muscular sensations. We may find, under certain conditions, that vibrations will be accompanied by, or as we say "produce," impressions of colour or sound. But as colour cannot be identified with sound, neither colour nor sound can be identified with vibrations. Colour, sound, and vibrations refer each to independent sensory data, and however closely they may be associated as states or qualities of objects, their differences cannot be effaced nor should their sources be confused.<sup>1</sup>

If therefore the philosophical demand for unity requires the resolution of all differences into identity, we have here, in the forms of our sensibility, other insuperable obstacles to unity.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Berkeley: "But if we take a close and accurate view of the matter, it must be acknowledged that we never see and feel one and the same object. That which is seen is one thing, and that which is felt is another."—*Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, sec. 49.

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Here again, an alarmist might say, in the so-called continuum of the material universe itself, occurs many times the impassable chasm, and no man can tell, until the psychologist shall have definitely counted our senses, how many such gaps must be filled to restore nature whole. But we make no awful pause here, nor tremble for the solidarity of the universe or the unity of knowledge. We ignore the break. The objective associations of sense are so close and constant that we assume identity in spite of difference. Light, we say, ignoring the difference, *is* the vibration of ether; heat *is* a mode of motion; and the abstraction Energy or Force, drawn from the deliverances of a particular sense but clothed with attributes furnished by every sense, is treated as the ultimate reality for all.

But between the thing and the thinker, between the characters which we impute to an object and the thought which we impute to the subject, no such inseparable association obtains. Here is a distinction which, once recognised, we cannot ignore. We find here a line which seems to isolate the ego in every man from the world, and even from the body which we regard as the immediate instrument of the ego. On the one side of this line lies the whole material realm, marked indeed by endless distinctions of quality, but represented by what is practically a single attribute, variously

hypostatized as substance, matter, energy, or force. On the other side of this line lies the realm of mind, and there this attribute fails. The activities of thought are inaccessible to any sense, actual or constructive, of pressure or touch. We apply to them forms of speech moulded to the needs of outer experience, and talk of a psychical substance, assuming a fund of energy in the mind; but we are convinced, on reflection, that the terms are figurative and that spiritual and material "forces" are really distinct. The subjective realm is thus conceived apart. The common attribute, energy or force, in virtue of which we waive all insoluble difference in the objective world, fails us here, or must be understood in a wholly different sense. And the unifying effort of philosophy so far fails. The cleavage seems absolute. The undisciplined mind leaps the chasm here as even reflective minds leap it elsewhere. But philosophy, having once looked into its depths, despairs. Between the inner thought and the outer thing, which includes the brain of the thinker, runs a seam which apparently disrupts the universe of being.

Hence the dualism in our philosophy. Body, with all its attributes, we assume to be in nature or in man mere energy or force. The synthetic habit is in external perception so strong that we waive all distinctions of quality, virtually reducing all attributes to one. But mind we

cannot reduce to mere force. Or if by analogy we resolve the characters of mind into a so-called psychical force, the two forms of force, the physical and the psychical, are left inconvertible. Body must stand for ever, it is averred, in irreconcilable opposition over against mind.

But such opposition is after all mere difference. It is indeed a difference which we cannot resolve away or ignore. But it avails no more to break up the systematic unity of body and mind than the irresolvable differences which we find among sensible qualities serve to break up the systematic unity of a physical object or of external nature. There can be little doubt, in fact, that if we knew and always had known the cerebral correlates of thought, perceiving the cortical process whenever we were conscious of an idea, the opposition set up between the mind and the brain would never have been recognised. The two processes, cerebral and ideational, would have been regarded as essentially the same. Thought, we then might have said, is a mode of cerebral change, just as we now say that heat is a mode of motion. But there is a fallacy in any such identification of things different. Association, even inseparable association, is not identity. We may allow that our sensations have unequal value as indicia of the objects which we project or construct or infer from them; and we may allow, further, that the sensations which we objectify as force surpass all

others in objective or cognitive significance. But no datum of knowledge can absorb or efface all other data. In the synthesis of cognitive elements which constitutes knowledge every element has its place and value, and must contribute of its quality, or the real and composite object of knowledge tends to fade into a dull and homogeneous blank, as unreal as any of the abstractions which philosophers substitute for the teeming wealth of actual being.

On the other hand, elemental differences of quality are consistent with systematic unity. Body and mind, neither of which can be resolved into the other and each of which includes insoluble differences in itself, are both included in the unity of the person. This unity we constantly recognise; in volitional movements, for instance, and in sensibility to the hurts or the health of the body. In practice indeed we never doubt it. The doubt is philosophical. That is to say, we have found some difficulty, following a false clue, in harmonising our conceptions of body and mind with the idea of such unity. We have confused unity with identity, and when this confusion is cleared up our difficulty is removed. The true object of our search is a unity in difference, not a unity which abolishes difference. Thought and cerebration, great as is the breadth of their difference, are in systematic relation. They are conjoined in the nature of the psycho-physical

system, which like all real being involves elements that differ. But here as elsewhere differing elements may subsist in systematic union. Indeed, to abolish difference were to abolish personality itself, which is a highly complex system of differing and constantly changing elements.<sup>1</sup>

And if in this complex system a certain psychical event systematically precedes a certain physical event the antecedent may, for the purpose of our inquiry at least, be called the cause. In practice no error results if I say, for instance, that the will to walk is the cause of my walking. I may allow that the merely physical act had its proper antecedents in the cerebral or neural changes which it systematically follows. But if the will to walk is not present we must assume that the correlative cerebral state is not present, and as we cannot directly verify the presence or absence of this state we are compelled to refer to the volitional idea as its sole index. The volitional idea thus represents the physical antecedent, and may in practice be treated as itself the cause of the muscular movements which constitute the volitional act.

Inasmuch, therefore, as ethics is a practical

<sup>1</sup> L'unité du moi n'est donc celle de l'entité une des spiritualistes qui s'éparpille en phénomènes multiples, mais la coordination d'un certain nombre d'états sans cesse renaissants, ayant pour seul point d'appui le sentiment vague de notre corps.—Th. Ribot: *Les Maladies de la Personnalité in fine*.

science we may, in the light of the foregoing discussion, follow the common usage and assume without error a causal influence in our willing. Whether a true conception of the causal relation would allow us to make this assumption we need not stop to inquire. The practical reason is our sufficient justification. The truth which we seek to enforce is that the gap which has been discovered between the physical and the psychical realms is not so deep as to split our human personality or the all-inclusive system of nature. It is simply a case of difference, and no more justifies the dualism of our philosophies than the insoluble differences in perception which we minimise or ignore would justify the pluralism of a rationalising polytheist. The universe, like its microcosm man, is complex. In each there is unity in difference. And if body must be distinguished from mind, thought from the brain, with no hope of cancelling the difference, we need not stumble at the distinction. The unity which philosophy may legitimately demand is not the unity of the merely identical or homogeneous, but organic or systematic unity. And to such unity difference is essential.

## CHAPTER III

### ORGANISMS AND THEIR ENDS

WITHIN the general scheme of nature, which we have described as an organic or systematic unity, are found, as we have noted, systems which are organic in a stricter or more definite sense; and it is to one or another of these stricter systems that we usually refer when we speak of an organism. But a definite organism implies a more or less definite end. This end, as usually conceived, is the conservation of the organism in the discharge of its functions, and includes, as we have said, the propagation of the species.<sup>1</sup> How the play of instinct and the impulsions of appetite result, under the conditions of terrestrial life, in a better adaptation of the species to maintain itself in the struggle for life we have

<sup>1</sup> Chaque élément anatomique, chaque tissu, chaque organe n'a qu'un but, exercer son activité, et l'individu physiologique n'est pas autre chose que l'expression convergente de toutes ces tendances. . . . Tous ces besoins ont un point de convergence: la conservation de l'individu, et, pour employer l'expression courante, nous trouvons en eux l'instinct de la conservation en exercice.—Th. Ribot: *Psychologie des Sentiments*, p. 10-11 (Introduction).

not taken time to consider. Darwin has made this matter of common knowledge.<sup>1</sup> It is enough to say that the double aim, the conservation of the individual and the propagation of the species, is characteristic of vital systems generally whether in the plant or in the animal world.

But with the appearance of consciousness and of such nervous structures as the presence of consciousness implies the functions of the organism are directed towards an end of a different kind. This new end, which may be distinguished as the conscious end, is not directly and primarily the conservation of the organism at all: it is to do the thing by which the individual may avoid or mitigate pain, or the thing which shall tend to the satisfaction of some positive impulsion varying with the nature of the organism. And this conscious aim appears in the activities of an organism in which assimilative and other physiological functions are at the same time directed to the achievement of the organic or unconscious end, the preservation of the physical system.

<sup>1</sup> These elaborately constituted forms . . . have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in their largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance, which is almost implied by Reproduction; Variability, from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse: a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for Life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less improved forms.—Darwin: *Origin of Species*, chap. xv (conclusion).

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But though we have distinguished the conscious end from the organic or unconscious end, we need not assume that the two are unrelated. The relation between them indeed appears to be both intimate and profound. The gratification of appetite, for instance, tends on the whole to the nutrition and development of the body. Appetite in fact is so closely related to the physical demand that it is often spoken of as if it were a merely physical impulsion. And we may say that conscious effort tends generally, in its search for satisfaction, to promote the characteristic activity of the organs employed, and thus inures to the welfare of the system. The particular satisfaction, it is true, may sometimes be noxious in its general effect. A cow will eat clover until she sickens or dies, and even men will break down their health in the indulgence of appetite. But the same selective influences, under which the functions of each vegetal structure are turned to the advantage of the plant as a whole, have in the animal shaped desire so that its gratification tends to the good of the animal as a whole. Consciousness, at least in its earlier stages, is little more than an added means of promoting the unconscious end—that is, of preserving the organism in the full vigour of its corporeal life.

The fuller development, however, which consciousness implies may change the whole habit of the system. The conscious end, the satisfac-

tion of appetite and other conscious impulses, is not absolutely merged in the physical end, the discharge of the physical functions. Consciousness, even of the primitive kind, imports some addition to the functions and therefore to the end of the organism, which tends to discharge *all* its functions, including the psychic. In its degree consciousness, with the neural development which it implies, always modifies the organic end. Starting in an organism relatively complex, it becomes the occasion, under stress of some necessity which strains the resources of the system, of a development still more complex, a development to which, in the plastic constitution of man for instance, we can assign no definite bounds.<sup>1</sup> Consciousness, with its physical substratum, is in fact an indispensable condition of the evolution of life in all its advanced forms. Without it the development of organised nature would have been arrested in its initial stages: the vegetal structure would have been the acme of the organic series.

<sup>1</sup> We may admit, at all events provisionally, that the laws of variation and natural selection, acting through the struggle for existence and the continual need of more perfect adaptation to the physical and biological environments, may have brought about, first, that perfection of bodily structure in which he [man] is so far above all other animals, and in co-ordination with it the larger and more developed brain, by means of which he has been able to utilise that structure.— Alfred Russell Wallace: *Darwinism*, chap. xv.

But the complexity and intricacy of the conscious organism demand nice adjustment to external conditions, and therefore any given adjustment is in such an organism more or less unstable. Changes in these conditions may disturb adaptations which it has cost generations of experience to establish. Under altered surroundings the effect of which the individual has not intelligence enough to grasp, tastes, instincts, or habits which had once served to protect may lead to pain, injury, or death. The conscious aim may thus frustrate the unconscious aim and emerge as distinct through the fact of such opposition. Or the two aims may diverge through the sheer force of the conscious impulse itself seeking its own satisfaction. The brute mother will sacrifice her life at the prompting of maternal feeling, and safety is disregarded, at every stage of psychic development, in the ardour of conflict. But such cases may be regarded perhaps as merely occasional or exceptional. Maternal and combatant feeling no doubt represent in the main conscious aims made subordinate, in accordance with the laws of survival, to the general aim of each vital system to conserve the individual and perpetuate the species. But the exceptional cases emphasise the fact that the conscious aim, though for the most part coincident with this general organic aim, is not to be confounded with it. Consciousness has an end of its own. It pursues its own

satisfaction, even at the expense of the vital system.

And the importance of consciousness increases with the development of the system. Both internal impulse and external pressure, in the case of an organism capable of growth, favour the expansion of the conscious life; and by degrees the central aim of the system, which lies primarily well within the domain of physical function, shifts towards the psychic domain. That is to say, distinctively conscious ends are more and more completely emancipated from the service of the body and become ends in themselves. Acts are performed and habits are acquired, by ourselves for instance, purely for the interest they excite in us. We do things physically indifferent because we like to do them. The physical tendencies of course still survive, but the body, when consciousness is highly developed, is consciously nurtured and protected, not for the body's sake, but for the sake of the conscious functions of which the bodily life is the condition.

But the organisation of the psychical life, even in man, is incomplete. We know only a little more of the general trend of our conscious activities than the bird knows of the meaning of its nest or of its migrations. Keenly conscious of the immediate objects of desire, and eager to grasp them, we shape our desires with scant insight into their bearings on each other or on any com-

prehensive end. Our consciousness is thus, relatively speaking, only a little more intelligent than animal instinct. It is occupied in the pursuit of jarring and proximate ends, and such unity of aim as appears in the issue is due rather to the constitutional trend of the system and the pressure of the social environment than to the effect of self-conscious direction. Of the cause, however, we might scarcely complain were but a reasonable unity assured. But there is little appearance of such unity, either constitutional or acquired, in the general trend of our conscious acts. The physical functions are fairly organised in the interest of the corporeal life. But the psychic or conscious life is erratic, inconsequent, discordant. Its organisation is yet to be achieved.

The fundamental inquiry, then, in respect of the conscious conduct of life is for some governing principle which shall unify our aims. Discord implies impotence in the pursuit of any end, and, as the essence of the conscious life is to act for ends, a life at issue with itself must defeat itself. It is conceivable, however, that there may be different types of unity, governed by different principles of conduct, each effective in its way. Experience in fact offers us diversity of type. Is there a normal type? If so, what is the norm, and how is it determined? In other words, what is the standard by which we may estimate the worth of our acts, and by reference to which a choice may

be made as among various conceivable types? What, in fine, is the true principle of conscious choice ?

Assuming that a "true" principle of choice is one which must be based on the principles of human nature, we cannot answer this question until we shall have examined the grounds of choice, or the influences which in a conscious being like man determine the direction of the will.

## SECTION II

### BASIS AND FORM OF VOLITIONAL CHOICE

#### CHAPTER IV

##### THE CONSCIOUS CHOICE OF ENDS AND ITS RELATION TO PLEASURE AND PAIN

IT seems indisputable that the ultimate reference in conscious choice must be to some affection of the ego contemplating or pursuing or achieving its ends. In other words conscious choice, as such, must be determined on grounds which we consciously appreciate. There must be presented to the mind a percept or idea of that which we choose to have or to do, and of the qualities or circumstances which commend it to our preference.

The basis of such choice is not far to seek. The ego is not indifferent to the variations in its states, but notes each new phase of experience with characteristic comment. It is conscious, upon the discharge of any function, that is, upon presentation in consciousness of any object or idea, or upon the execution of any act, of a certain response, which is the specific reaction of the

psycho-physical organism as a whole to the occurrence of this experience. And this response, determined in the depths of the organism, is in consciousness attested by a peculiar affection or feeling.

Such feeling presents, in correspondence with the form of the action, a double aspect. It appears, on the one side, in that sense of satisfaction or pleasure which regularly accompanies the free discharge of a function in its characteristic mode.<sup>1</sup> It is felt, on the other side, as the sense of pain or dissatisfaction or displeasure which arises upon obstruction of this free functional action, and which commonly reaches its acutest form, when the obstruction imports injury to the structures concerned.

The terms "satisfaction" and "pleasure" are here used, it will be observed, as if they were interchangeable, and we may be reminded that in ethical speculation they have been distinguished. The distinction is not without warrant in common usage. When the function on which feeling attends is sensory, the feeling is commonly called

<sup>1</sup> The organ of sight, like every other, requires activity, and its natural normal functioning is accompanied by pleasure, as appears to be the case with all normal functioning.—H. Höffding: *Outlines of Psychology*, vi., A, 3, e (Lowndes's tr.).

Pleasure is seen to be nothing more than the feeling of the performance of function, or the free discharge of vital energy.—Henry Sturt: *Self-realisation; Intern. Journ. of Ethics*, April, 1898.

pleasure. The subject is in such case assumed to be passive, the activity of the organs of sensation being usually ignored. It is in this passive sense that we speak of the pleasure which we derive from the beauty of a flower, the sweetness of an orange, or the strains of a melody. When, however, the conscious subject is obviously active and effort is directed to the accomplishment of a purpose, the resultant pleasurable feeling is more commonly called satisfaction. And this pleasurable feeling so regularly follows achievement that the consciousness of achievement is, without analytical recognition of the pleasure it implies, itself called satisfaction. Even sensuous pleasure is called satisfaction when it follows the attainment of an object of craving or desire. A starving man craves food and with food he is satisfied.

As contrasted with the satisfaction which we take in a task well accomplished, pleasure is sometimes restricted, again, to the feeling with which we engage in the spontaneous activities which we call play. The pleasure-seeker is, in this view, a mere idler bent on relaxation or amusement; or he is a trifler, incapable of laborious effort, who in his pursuit of frivolous pleasure neglects his duty. Pleasure is thus discredited in advance as a principle fitted to control the more serious occupations of life. The writer, therefore, who for want of an unequivocal term

makes use of the word "pleasure" in its most general sense, is at a certain disadvantage. He seems to be reverting to a principle subversive of morality, and to represent the moral subject as shrinking from toil and danger and pain, or lapping himself only in sensuous sweets.

But some comprehensive term—"happiness" or "blessedness" or "satisfaction" or "pleasure"—is a necessity of ethical thought. If we follow the lead of the psychologist, "pleasure" seems to be the most available term.<sup>1</sup> It would appear that the systematic treatment of conduct requires that all phases of the feeling which arises upon the free and characteristic discharge of a function should be classed together. And we must find some designation for the class. The psychologist groups all phases of such feeling, irrespective of its functional origin, under the general name of pleasurable feeling. The sources of this feeling are various. Pleasure may be of the eye or the ear or the palate, or of any sense. There are the pleasures also of action, of imagination, of sentiment. And, save perhaps in hortatory discourse, there is no more reason for taking the satisfactions of sympathy or of a good conscience out of the

<sup>1</sup> A pleasure is any degree of agreeable consciousness which as such contents us, and is voluntarily held to; a pain, any degree of disagreeable consciousness which as such discontents us, and is voluntarily repelled.—James Sully: *The Human Mind*, part iv., chap. xiii., sec. 2. All feeling thus seems reducible to pleasure and pain.—*Ib.*, sec. 3.

general class of pleasures, because of the specific character of the generating function, than there is for isolating the several pleasures of eye or ear or palate because the respective sensory functions are distinct.

But feeling, it should be remembered, is never found "pure."<sup>1</sup> Pure feeling is an abstraction formed for the purposes of science; as a fact of experience feeling is continuous with the functional act upon which it arises. Hence the variance which we find in the psychological treatment of feeling, which is by some regarded as a mere quality or tone of sensation,<sup>2</sup> and is by others set off as a relatively independent state.<sup>3</sup> But for our purpose this variance is unimportant. Feeling is at least in intimate relation with the sensation or functional act to which it is referred, and is incorporated with it in one concrete, con-

<sup>1</sup> We cannot have a pure feeling, *i.e.*, pleasure and pain without qualities. Feeling in this sense is nothing which constitutes a separate object by itself.—B. Bosanquet: *Psychology of the Moral Self*, p. 31. (London, 1897.)

<sup>2</sup> We distinguish three properties in each sensation: quality, intensity, and accompanying tone of feeling.—Th. Ziehen: *Intr. to Phys. Psychology*, chap. vii., p. 130 (tr. of Van Liew and Beyer).

<sup>3</sup> There remains only the last of the three possible views of the relation of feeling to sensation, that which makes feeling an independent conscious process. . . . We will therefore interpret it as a correct interpretation of the facts, without intending for a moment to deny the normal connection of feeling with sensation in consciousness.—Oswald Külpe: *Outlines of Psychology*, sec. 34 (Titchener's tr.).

tinuous state from which it is separated only by abstraction.

This concrete state has other aspects also, that is to say, it embodies other elements which by abstraction are distinguished from both sensation and feeling. As registering the welcome or recoil of the psycho-physical organism, it includes in implicit form terms of approval or disapproval, a psychological datum which may be traced even in the highly complex judgments of morals.<sup>1</sup> Again, bound up with this welcome or recoil with which feeling is associated, we find movements, expressive, instinctive, or volitional, apart from which feeling can hardly be said to exist. Such movements, it is true, may be merely inchoate, like those of subdued speech in reading to one's self, or they may be so far restrained that an observer may be unaware of the quality or even of the presence of the underlying feeling. If, however, this emotional activity is allowed free play, it takes a direction in reference to its object

<sup>1</sup> The peculiar ethical emotions, the feelings which find expression in all our moral judgments of men and events, are the feelings of approval and disapproval; the characteristically ethical attitudes towards things are those of praise and blame.—Alfred Edward Taylor: *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 104. (Macmillan & Co., 1901.)

I hope it will be plain that I have insisted on the necessity of recognising the distinctively moral sanction of self-approbation and self-disapprobation, a recognition which, in my view, is essential to the very existence of Ethics.—Fowler and Wilson: *Prin. of Morals*, vol. ii., p. 272.

which differs according as the reaction is pleasurable on the one hand or painful on the other. The pleasure-producing object we seek, the pain-producing object we shun.

We thus arrive at what may be called the elementary act of choice. Embodied in the original affectional state engendered by sensation, perception, ideation, or other functional act, and continuous with this act, we find an incipient judgment of approval or disapproval, and incipient acts of pursuit or avoidance following the sense of the judgment. In this pursuit or avoidance choice is involved. Choice is implicate in the very existence and expression of feeling, and it becomes conscious choice when the subject, in the expression or on the suggestion of feeling, follows the lead of a volitional idea.<sup>1</sup>

And beyond this affectional state, thus generated by the play of function and determined in sense and effect as the function is obstructed or freely discharged, we find no element in consciousness on which to found a principle of conscious choice.

<sup>1</sup> Au point de vue psychologique, ce qui constitue la conscience, selon nous, c'est un processus à trois termes inséparables: 1° un *discernement* quelconque, qui fait que l'être sent ses changements d'état et qui est ainsi le germe de la sensation et de l'intelligence; 2° un *bien-être* ou *malaise* quelconque, aussi sourd qu'on voudra, mais qui fait que l'être n'est pas *indifférent* à son changement; 3° une *réaction* quelconque, qui est le germe de la préférence et du choix, c'est-à-dire, de l'appétition.—A. Fouillée: *Revue Philosophique*, Juin, 1892, p. 578.

For the ground of choice we are referred, ultimately, to the pleasurable or painful functional act.

True, the activities of the conscious being are by no means all determined with explicit and conscious reference to this principle. The scope of conscious action, relatively to all that the organism accomplishes, is in any case narrow. Our distinctively conscious life rests upon a basis of habit, instinct, and unconscious activity, and constitutes, even when it is most active and complete, but a transient accompaniment of the unconscious processes on which it attends. The body, with its complex apparatus of muscles and nerves, has a certain initiative of its own. It is not a machine moving simply as directed by the mind. It is alive; that is to say, it is a system of organised structures, each adapted to a specific end in relation to the general end, the conservation of the system. The human system includes, in short, a fund of organised energy which upon appropriate stimulus tends, even without volitional direction, to characteristic modes of action. Food and water prompt in the famished man the familiar attitudes of hunger and thirst. A timid nature shudders and an aggressive nature rises at the mere intimation of danger. And every man has his bias, his habits of feeling and action, which assert themselves, without mediation of the will, upon any suggestion with which the

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activities of the organism are in train. The organism reacts to its stimulus in a sense pre-determined by the form of the organism.<sup>1</sup>

And volitional control is itself nothing more than the determination through the volitional idea of the initial phase of this systemic activity. The organic apparatus itself does the rest. That is to say, volitional activity presupposes and depends upon a certain pre-formed character in the organisation of the muscles and nerves, and the volitional idea is in such relation, through its cerebral concomitants, with the motor centres which control the organism that it initiates the movements which result in the execution of the idea. Ideas thus become springs of action. But the transition from the idea to the act is an unconscious process, though a succession of acts may require a succession of ideas for their due control. And the so-called "force" of the idea is simply its power, through its neural and cerebral substrates, to start this unconscious process, which thus serves, as it were in the dark, to execute the idea which we call the mandate of the will.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It seems probable that instinctive movements may have their source . . . in the mesencephalon (the corpora striata and the optic thalami). Volition proper, on the other hand, is linked with the cerebrum. Volition proper is characterised psychologically by the ideas of the end of the action and the means to its realisation, and by a vivid feeling of the worth of that end.—H. Höfding: *Outlines of Psychology*, chap. vii., pp. 312-313 (Lowndes' tr.).

<sup>2</sup> The essential achievement of the will, in short, when

By conscious choice, then, we mean volitional choice, and in our study of the law of conscious choice our inquiry must be limited to the field of volitional or consciously determined action. The principle of choice must be charged or accredited with that alone which is consciously chosen. And it does not invalidate our principle to show that, under the dominance of instincts compelling their own gratification, the course which is on the whole the more painful or the less pleasurable is often the course which is actually pursued. A large part of human conduct is determined instinctively, that is, without reference to other feeling than that which is involved in the gratification of the instinctive impulse itself. In such case, there is no comparison and evaluation of ends, and therefore no explicit or conscious choice. But where the choice is consciously made, where ends are compared, and where rival claims are really measured and adjusted, the sole principle of choice appears, on inspection, to be that which determines us to take the more pleasurable or the less painful course.

This is the principle stated in its simplest terms. But man looks before and after, and the field

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it is most "voluntary," is to attend to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind. The so doing *is* the *fiat*; and it is a mere physiological incident that when the object is thus attended to, immediate motor consequences should ensue.

—W. James: *Psychology*, vol. ii., p. 561.

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of volition, instead of being limited to two simple alternatives, covers the whole breadth of his life. The principle has therefore to be rationalised or generalised. Any proposed end has to be compared with many possible ends, and remote as well as immediate effects have to be taken into consideration. But the complexity of the estimate does not change the psychological basis of value. The reasonable choice must fall on the end or object in the pursuit of which the man has reason to believe, all things considered, he will obtain most satisfaction. Errors of knowledge or of judgment may vitiate the estimate, and the actual choice may be by no means the reasonable choice. But the simple case discloses the principle of choice, and the principle has only to be consistently applied to any situation, however complex, to make the choice reasonable.

Our position, then, is that value in consciousness is determined, ultimately, by a certain affectional tone or element in the perception or idea or pursuit of some end or object with which the subject may be brought into conscious relation. And the affection or feeling may appear in either of two contrasted phases. The one phase of feeling is that in virtue of which we find the things which induce it gratifying, satisfactory, pleasant; and the things which, as pleasurable, we tend to pursue increase in value with the increase in their power to satisfy or please. The other phase of

feeling is that in virtue of which we find its inducing causes disagreeable, unsatisfactory, unpleasant, painful; and those causes or objects which, considered by themselves, we seek to avoid fall in value with increase of the pain or dissatisfaction or displeasure which they induce. Feeling thus affords us a standard of value, and in a normal human being the choice falls, at least in simple cases, on the end or object which appears to be of most value. And in complex cases the same principle of choice is that which consistency would require us to follow, or, in view of the constitution of our nature, the rationalised or reasonable principle.

In looking to feeling for a standard of values, however, we should not lose sight of the dependence of feeling on function. Instead of referring to feeling simply, that is, to pleasure and pain in the abstract, we might more properly speak of pleasurable and painful functions, bearing in mind that functions may be either sensory or motor, perceptive or ideational. In this view our position may be defined in slightly different terms. Pleasurable and painful functions, we may say, mark at their respective extremes the positive and the negative limits or poles of choice. And as between any given alternatives within these extremes, the choice falls on the pleasurable rather than on the painful function, on the more pleasing rather than on the less pleasing, and on the less

painful rather than on the more painful. In a word, the working of our principle carries the choice away from the negative limit as far as possible over towards the positive limit.

Of course it is qualities as they are felt or represented in the appreciating consciousness which determine the actual choice, and this choice is, for the reasons stated, subject to error. Whole tracts of certain or possible experience may be left out of consideration. The choice may lie, too, between alternatives in both of which pleasures are mingled with pains. Or a man may be required to determine whether present pleasures shall be purchased at the cost of future pains, or whether he will submit to present pain, such as the fatigues of discipline, for the sake of permanently enlarging the sources of pleasure. But however broad the field of choice, however complex the ends or activities to be valued, the principle of choice remains the same. Conscious or volitional choice, as distinguished from instinctive or impulsive determination, is governed by the subject's estimate of the functional or affectional worth of the end or object chosen. And the actual choice becomes a reasonable choice when the estimate may in reason be considered just, and the choice falls on the end or object of most functional or affectional value.

But the relations of the affective state to the general conscious activity of the subject are so

intricate that the workings of this principle are not always clear, and its validity is disputed. It seems necessary, therefore, to look more closely into the nature of these relations.

## CHAPTER V

### FUNCTIONAL CONDITIONS OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

ALL pleasure, we have found, is associated with the discharge of some function. Each organ has its characteristic structure and action, and pleasure is the indication in the affectional consciousness that the structures implicated in any given act or state are for the time being freely discharging their office. Pain, on the other hand, implies either injury to the structure or a certain obstruction or disturbance of function.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> La douleur est liée à la diminution ou à la désorganisation des fonctions vitales.—Th. Ribot: *La Psychologie des Sentiments*, p. 29. . . . Les manifestations de la joie peuvent se résumer en un seul mot: dynamogénie.—*Ib.*, p. 53.

Pains are the correlatives of actions injurious to the organism, while pleasures are the correlatives of actions conducive to its welfare.—H. Spencer: *Prin. of Psychology*, vol. i., p. 279. (Appleton, N. Y., 1876).

Notwithstanding apparent exceptions the great principle may be established that pleasure connects itself with vital energy, and pain with the opposite.—Bain: *Emotions and Will*, I., 9.

As a general rule it may be laid down that pleasure indicates increased activity of life, higher and freer employment of energy.—Höfding: *Outlines of Psychology*, chap. vi., p. 272. (Lowndes' tr.)

A painful sensation is a physiological discord incompatible

This, however, is but a general statement of the physiological conditions of feeling, and the relations of pleasure and pain to volitional choice would be clearer perhaps if we could state these conditions in more specific form. But it is only in the most general way that the physiology of feeling is understood. Feeling, at least in its non-sensuous forms, is too vague and elusive to be studied as we study a muscle or a nerve; it tends to vanish or change the instant it is brought under scrutiny.

But feeling as allied with sensation is more accessible, and has been made matter of much experimental inquiry, especially the feeling of pain. Indeed facts are cited in support of the theory that such pain is mediated by special nerve paths or apparatus, and constitutes, in fact, a special sense comparable with the sense of temperature or of contact.<sup>1</sup> But the term pain is in such experimentation taken in a restricted sense. It denotes, not the general counterpart

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with health or comfort, or, it may be, with life itself. A pleasurable sensation is a physiological harmony promoting health and comfort, and calculated to prolong existence.—Ferrier: *Functions of the Brain*, chap. xii., sec. 5 (2d ed.).

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand see *American Journal of Physiology*, p. 843: The evidence of physiological experiment . . . teaches that this sensation [pain] is the result of the excessive or unnatural stimulation of a group of nerves whose function is to give rise to what is indefinitely called "common sensation."

of pleasure, but simply that form of pain which indicates violence or injury to some physical structure. And inasmuch as integrity of structure is of more importance to the system than any mere disturbance of function, we need not be surprised that nature should in some way insure swift recoil in case this integrity is threatened. This, however, is a detail which it is beyond our purpose to discuss. It is mainly the non-sensuous forms of pain, pains of the mind as they are called, which concern us here.

Formulae have been proposed which refer the feeling of pleasure or of pain in any given conscious content to the nutritive state of the organs involved, that is, to the quantum of energy stored in the organs relative to the demands which they have to meet.<sup>1</sup> And there is, no doubt, good ground in experience for the recognition of some

<sup>1</sup> Pleasure is experienced whenever the physical activity coincident with the psychic state to which the pleasure is attached involves the use of surplus stored force—the resolution of surplus potential energy into actual energy—or, in other words, whenever the energy involved in the reaction to the stimulus is greater in amount than the energy which the stimulus habitually calls for. Pain, on the other hand, is experienced whenever the physical activity coincident with the psychic state to which the pain is attached is so related to the supply of nutriment to its organs that the energy involved in the reaction to the stimulus is less in amount than the energy which the stimulus habitually calls for.—Henry Rutgers Marshall: *Pain, Pleasure, and Æsthetics*, p. 221.

more or less constant relation between the repletion or the exhaustion of an organ and the feeling attendant on its exercise. The freshness of a pleasure, which may be regarded as the subjective index of abundant energy in the officiating structures, adds to the pleasure. Fatigue, the psychical index of physical exhaustion, is pain. But whatever truth may be embodied in the theory, it seems clear that no mere ratio between energy stored and energy expended can make up the full account of the physical substrates of pleasure and pain. Even if we allow that qualitative differences in the form of the function always involve questions of degree or of quantitative change, the qualitative difference remains; it cannot be resolved into non-qualitative elements.<sup>1</sup> And the qualitative difference, as may appear later, has often controlling significance.

Some investigation has been made of the changes in blood pressure, circulation, and respiration which occur in the presence of feeling. These

<sup>1</sup> Change or transition from one mental state to another and dissimilar state is a condition of all mental wakefulness and of the simplest mode of intellectual activity, viz., the consciousness of difference.—James Sully: *The Human Mind*, vol. ii., p. 31. (N. Y., 1892.)

Quantities are perceived first, I presume, not as being quantities at all, but as differing merely in quality. They are perceived next as also more or less of some quality or thing.—F. H. Bradley: *What do we mean by the Intensity of Psychological States?* in *Mind*, January, 1895.

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changes, generally speaking, are such as indicate, in the case of pleasure, acceleration or reinforcement of the vital processes, and correspond, no doubt, to that vivifying of our conscious states which is generally allowed to be the effect or accompaniment of pleasure. A corresponding depression or enfeeblement of the vital processes accompanies the consciousness of pain. The changes in circulation and respiration are in all probability merely secondary phenomena, referable perhaps to some central state,<sup>1</sup> though they may, as in themselves pleasurable or painful, reinforce the primary feeling.

It has been suggested, further, that pleasure

<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, probable that in the case of feelings and emotions, we have chiefly changes in inhibitory innervation, originating in the brain and conducted along the vagus. It may well be assumed that the affective tone of sensation corresponds on its physiological side to a spreading of the stimulation from the sensory centre to those central regions which are connected with the sources of the inhibitory nerves of the heart. What central regions these are we do not know.—W. Wundt: *Outlines of Psychology*, 2d ed., p. 98 (Judd's tr.).

Observations upon mania (in which there is excess of pleasure) and melancholia (in which there is constant unpleasantness) point to the fact that the ultimate physiological equivalent of a pleasurable state is the increase of excitability following from a dilatation of the blood-vessels which supply the brain, while the ultimate physiological equivalent of an unpleasurable state is the lasting diminution of excitability connected with the constriction of the central vessels.—Külpe: *Outlines of Psychology*, sec. 37, 4 (Titchener's tr.).

is connected with the extension and unpleasantness with the contraction of the muscles.<sup>1</sup> But there is no theory touching the physiological conditions or accompaniments of feeling which commands general acceptance.<sup>2</sup> We must content ourselves, accordingly, with such conditions as are accessible to common observation and appear to throw light on the practical aspect of the relation of feeling to volitional choice.

For convenience of treatment we may dis-

<sup>1</sup> "The reflexly excited extensions and flexions are the condition of those conscious processes which we call pleasure and unpleasantness."—Hugo Münsterberg: *Beiträge zur Exper. Psychologie*, Heft 4. Cited by E. B. Titchener in *Mind*, April, 1893, p. 240.

A later expression of Münsterberg's view appears in his *Grundzüge der Psychologie*, Band 1, S. 293 (Leipzig, 1900): "Es mag sein, dass wirklich alle Lust durch eine Tendenz zu Streckbewegungen, alle Unlust durch eine Tendenz zu Beugebewegungen charakterisiert werden kann, und dass gleichzeitig Assoziationen sich zugesellen, welche den Lust- und Unlustton verstärken, und dennoch ist der eigentliche Lust- und Unlustwert noch als besondere Nuance des Bewusstseinsinhaltes in dem gefallenden oder nicht gefallenden Objekt enthalten."

<sup>2</sup> Les conditions anatomiques et physiologiques de la genèse et de la transmission du plaisir sont une terre inconnue. Th. Ribot: *Psychologie des Sentiments*, chap. iii., p. 50.

For a résumé of the literature on this subject see Ladd's *Elements of Physiological Psychology*, part ii., chap. ix., sec. 12 et seq. Ladd summarises as follows:

"We are compelled then to confess that the localising of the nervous apparatus, and the nature of the physiological processes which form the physical basis of painful and pleasurable feeling, require further investigation" (p. 512.)

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tinguish the conditions of pleasurable feeling as they may be traced,

(1) to the state of the organism as a whole;

(2) to the state of the specific organs or structures which are in any given case called into activity;

(3) to the energy or intensity of this activity;

(4) to the form or mode or such activity; and

(5) to the relational character or stimulative effect of the original functional act which with its derivative activities forms a pleasurable whole.

(1) To the consideration of the general organic conditions we need not give much time. We know from common experience that no pleasure can be felt in full measure unless the physical system as a whole be at the top of its condition. Exhaustion, or lack of nutrition, or any morbid process which lowers the nervous tone, lowers the affectional tone, and in some degree vitiates the satisfaction which we feel in the discharge of any particular function.

(2) And the importance of physical conditions is equally clear when we consider the case of any particular organ which is in any given instance brought into play. Eye or ear, muscle or limb, cannot discharge its function freely and effectively in its characteristic mode unless it be well trained, in good exercise, and sound. In other words, the structure, considered as an instrument, must be an efficient instrument. The term "structure"

is not used here, of course, in any rigorous anatomical sense. It implies any organ or group of organs, however complex, employed in the discharge of a particular office; and it is a commonplace of observation that the organ must be in a condition to do its work well in order that we may take all the pleasure possible in doing the work.

(3) The intensity of the pleasurable feeling depends, in part at least and within certain limits, upon the intensity of the functional action. There is always in feeling a question of degree. Pain, we know, may be felt as a just perceptible annoyance, or it may be so severe as to destroy self-control; and it increases, within certain limits, with increase in the disturbance of the function. Pleasure too has a wide range, varying between the faintest affectional tone distinguishable from indifference and that ecstatic state which absorbs all consciousness in a tumult of joy. And such difference depends, in part, upon the difference in the intensity of the functional activity. It does not depend, of course, upon the energy of such movements alone as are apparent to the observer. We know that a train of nervous or emotional reactions of exhausting intensity may occur in a system which is to all appearance quiescent. It remains true, however, that a feeble functional action is likely to provoke, directly at least, but a feeble organic reaction as the basis

of feeling, and to incite therefore but a feeble consciousness, relatively speaking, of either pleasure or pain.

(4) It appears that the mode in which a function is discharged has an influence on the quality and value of the feeling no less significant than that which is exerted by the mere energy or intensity of the discharge. This is a phase of the question, however, which has been but little studied. Some light may be thrown upon it, perhaps, by reference to sensory stimuli, that is, to the objects or qualities which excite an organ of sense to pleasurable or painful activity.

Take, for instance, the field of audition. The musical character of a tone, or that which renders it pleasurable as mere sound independently of all association or ulterior use, depends upon its "purity." Such purity we refer to the regularity of the aerial vibrations which are the kinetic concomitants of sound; and the regularity of the aerial movements, as we may fairly infer from a study of the internal ear, is reproduced in the mechanical processes incident to audition, that is, in the manner in which the organ of hearing discharges its function. And when tones are combined the resultant tone is pleasing or musical only when the vibrations are compounded in certain simple ratios.

A corresponding account may be given of the pleasure which we derive from colour. Such

colours or combinations of colour are pleasing or beautiful as affect the visual organs in a peculiar mode, depending, say, upon the "purity" or "harmony" of the colours. The form of the sensory function here also appears to control the character of the attendant feeling. Though we know little of the nature or visual import of the retinal reaction to colour and light, we are bound to assume that this reaction varies with the variation in the character of the stimulus, that is, of the ethereal vibrations; we must assume, therefore, that the pleasures of the eye depend upon the mode in which the eye does its work or responds to its stimulus.

And this dependence of pleasure upon the mode of functional activity, as distinguished from its energy or intensity, appears to be general. It is seen in the motor activities, in the rhythmic movements of the dance, of speech, of thought, no less than in sensation and perception. The conscious organism, it appears, is not indifferent as to *how* it acts and reacts, but it discriminates as among the possible modes of its activity. It is not enough that there be life, and a liberal quantum of life. The organism, having a certain character, demands a certain character or kind of life; and pleasure and pain are the indicia of the fulfilment or frustration of this demand.

(5) But feeling, as it invades the system, tends, as it were, to irradiate. It seems to react

upon its own generating percept or idea and to increase its suggestive or associational power. Hence the direct affectional result of such percept or idea may pass, through the media of related or similarly-toned ideas, into a multitude of indirect or secondary results; and it not seldom happens that the secondary results outrank in value the primary feeling. A drop of dew, the smell of new-mown hay, the note of a bird, or the voice of a friend, pleases the sense. In its direct and strictly sensational effect, however, it is of slight affectional moment; and yet it may awaken, in a mind of associative and imaginative power, a train of recollections and images capable of producing a profound emotional upheaval.

We must add, therefore, to the functional conditions of pleasure already referred to, the relational character of the functional act. This is an important condition, since the various forms of satisfaction or pleasure show great differences in respect of their suggestiveness or stimulative effect. Roué and moralist alike have remarked the fleeting nature of the gratifications of mere appetite. Such pleasures, whatever their value while they last, have little in them to suggest other pleasurable states or to procure their own revival. Dying with the satisfaction of the original desire, they leave hardly a trace behind. The pleasures of social converse, on the other hand, of literature, of art, and, generally speaking, what are called

the pleasures of the mind, fall almost wholly within the class of suggested pleasures, the ideas with which they are identified being readily recalled and in the highest degree fruitful or suggestive. They become in fact an exhaustless source of satisfaction, freshening the routine and sweetening the drudgery of life.<sup>1</sup>

But enough has been said, perhaps, to direct attention to the general functional conditions of feeling. An organ is, as its name implies, an instrument. The instrument is part of the system in which it is formed, and it is developed with reference to a particular kind of work in the interest of the system. Pleasure and pain are the subjective indications of the manner in which the instrument is doing its work. And the pleasure is at its maximum when the functional or instrumental activity by which feeling is generated is truest to its type, and is at the same time, within the limits of structural integrity and the requirements of the office, most voluminous in scope and intensest in degree. The psychophysical system is then most effectively discharging its function. In other words, life is sweetest when we are most completely and successfully engaged in doing the work of life.<sup>2</sup>

And what is this work? So far as the physical

<sup>1</sup> Compare Bentham's account of the fecundity of a pleasure. —*Prin. of Morals and Legislation*, chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Κατὰ πᾶσαν γὰρ αἰσθησίην ἔστιν ἡδονή, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ διάνοιαν καὶ

functions are concerned it is, as we have seen, the conservation of the physical organism in and through the completest discharge of these functions. But the human system includes psychical functions, the end of which we have distinguished from the physical end. In fact the attainment of the one may coincide with the frustration of the other. The work of life, in the sense which interests us here, is the volitional direction of life in the pursuit of conscious ends, for the achievement of which a sound body is no more than the instrument; and our inquiry may be said to begin where the field of medicine and hygiene ends. Our problem is to find a rule for the direction of conscious or volitional action.

*θεωρία ν· ἡδίστη δὲ ἢ τελειοτάτη· τελειοτάτη δὲ ἢ τοῦ εὖ ἔχοντος πρὸς τὸ σπουδαιότατον τῶν ὑφ' αὐτήν.* Aristotle: *Eth. Nic.*, x., iv., 5.

For pleasure is attendant upon every sense, as it is also upon every act of intellect and contemplation; but the most perfect is the most pleasant, and the most perfect is the energy of that which is well-disposed with reference to the best of all the objects which fall under it. (Browne's tr.)

## CHAPTER VI

### DETERMINATION OF CONSCIOUS FUNCTIONS BY VOLITIONAL ENDS

IT might seem that we should be able to determine from the mere form of the system we are studying the uses to which it is best fitted, and from which we could hope to derive most satisfaction. The character of life's work, one might say, should be deducible from the structure of the living and conscious organism. Let us see what may be learned in this way.

The human system is a system of structures, some with fixed functions, and some discharging a varying office. The vegetal functions show least variation. The heart, the lungs, the stomach, have each their determinate work, which they perform with monotonous repetition. Here the function is apparent in the structure. And the activity of the structure, having a fixed and uniform character, is withdrawn for the most part from volitional control.

In the sensory structures, too, we find a certain fixity and uniformity in respect of the functions which are ordinarily set off as sensory. If we

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regard these functions, however, as in organic relation with the motor reactions which they initiate, and with which they form, we may say, a psychophysical unit, this fixity of function tends to disappear. It is still present in the reflex arc, in which a given sensory stimulus evokes a determinate muscular reaction. But as the forms of the sensory impression and the modes of the reaction are multiplied and compounded, a given reaction follows a given stimulus with less uniformity. The relation between stimulation and movement is then obscured. And the relation becomes at length so complex that it baffles even the most intelligent scrutiny, and the reaction tends to assume the appearance of spontaneity. In such case the form of the structure manifestly throws little light on the precise character of the function. It gives us at most the range of possible activity. The hand can grasp a dagger and wield a pen with like facility, but which it shall do the structure of the hand will not help us to decide.

And the difficulty is still greater when we come to consider what we call the higher functions of the conscious organism, that is, those intellectual functions which are disengaged from the service of the unconscious end and are directed to ends of their own. Here the specific form of the function cannot be made out by the examination of any structure which we may assume to be implicated

in the discharge of the function. In the first place, the brain, with its cells and processes, or the structures to which intellectual activity is usually referred, cannot, save in the most general way, be mapped out or defined with reference to function at all.<sup>1</sup> These structures are subject, in the second place, to indefinite variation in their connection and arrangement, and each new arrangement constitutes virtually a new structure. Manifestly, with an instrument adapted to uses so various, we need a principle not disclosed by a mere inspection of the instrument definitely to determine its use. From even the completest anatomy of the brain one could hardly hope to infer a code for the guidance of volitional activity. We know, generally, that there are limits beyond which the cellular reactions cannot be pushed without lesion of the brain tissue. But to know the limits of one's strength is not to know how to apply one's strength. The rule of life is not written in the cerebral structures.

The law of volitional conduct,<sup>2</sup> therefore, must be sought for elsewhere. And we have the means of its determination at hand. Structure, function, and end, are but three aspects of the same organic

<sup>1</sup> Consciousness . . . being mainly of things seen if the stream [of innervation] is strongest occipitally, of things heard if it is strongest temporally, of things felt, etc., if the stream occupies most intensely the "motor zone."—William James: *Psychology*, vol. i., p. 65.

fact, and instead of looking backwards to the structure, we may, in the case of psychical functions, look forward, under the guidance of the law of conscious choice, to the end. Even physical functions are defined with reference to an end, which is, ultimately, the conservation of the physical system; but when the part taken by a physical structure with reference to this end is simple and constant, a mere inspection of the structure may reveal to the experienced eye its particular function and proximate end. In the mental and moral life, on the other hand, structure, as we have seen, suggests only in the vaguest and most general way the form of the function. Our only recourse, therefore, is to infer the function from the end.

The end, it may be said, is in the conscious life continually shifting, and requires in each case a fresh structural adjustment. But with the intricacies of structure we have here nothing to do, if only we may determine the function. We may even ignore the details of function save as they appear in our practical conduct. This is what interests us as ethical students. And the activities or functions which constitute the practical conduct of life are determined with reference to ends. The end of such conduct is of course present only in idea, but this idea is a present fact, and as idea it is to the subject at least always discernible. It is the volitional idea. In volitional choice,

which includes moral choice, the activities of the subject are always directed to the realisation of an idea; and the mental or psychical function is determined with reference to this idea, the conception and execution of which constitutes what we call an act of the will.<sup>1</sup>

If, therefore, the principle of conscious choice depends on the relation of feeling to function, and the conscious functions proper can be determined

<sup>1</sup> The terminus of the psychological process in volition . . . is always an idea.—W. James: *Psychology*, vol. ii., p. 567.

On pourrait donc . . . définir la volition: le désir déterminant d'une fin et de ses moyens, conçus comme dépendants d'un premier moyen qui est ce désir même et d'une dernière fin qui est la satisfaction de ce désir.—A. Fouillée: *Revue Philos.* August, 1892, p. 171.

When we will to do something, our own psychical content at that moment is only distinguished from other psychical contents by the fact that the idea of a desired action accompanied by a positive emotional tone is already contained among the sensations and ideas that are then actually present.—Ziehen: *Phys. Psychology*, chap. xv., p. 295. (Van Liew and Beyer.)

Unsere Definition [des Wollens] umfasste vier charakteristische Bestandteile. Erstens die Vorstellung eines Erfolges. . . . Der zweite Faktor lag in dem Gefühl der Zukünftigkeits dieses Vorstellungsinhaltes. . . . Wir forderten aber noch ein drittes. Die Vorbereitung, die als möglich empfunden wird, muss so gedacht werden, dass sie durch eigene Thätigkeit geschaffen oder wenigstens eingeleitet werden kann. . . . Zu allen diesen Empfindungskombinationen tritt nun als vierter Faktor die Wahrnehmung, dass jene den Erfolg herbeiführende Thätigkeit sich thatsächlich realisiert.—Münsterberg: *Grundzüge der Psychologie*, Bd. 1, S. 353-354-355.

only as in relation to ends, the doctrine of what we call the conduct of life resolves itself into a doctrine of ends. We have now to inquire, accordingly, how the choice of ends influences the affectional life.

We may distinguish, as bearing on the theory of conduct, two general types of end: the incidental, mediate, or proximate end; and the essential, direct, or ultimate end.

This is a distinction well recognised in ethical theory. But the fact that life is a stream of tendencies which are from time to time diverted or modified or variously merged, but which no achievement can consummate, creates in us the habit of demanding for every end justification in some ulterior end. We assume that nothing can be good save as instrumental to some other good. In this respect we are all utilitarians. The good we conceive as the useful, that is, as serviceable to some end beyond itself. But if anything is good there must be something, it would seem, which we find in its own right good. In the complex and continuous activity which constitutes life no act or state, of course, can be viewed as in entire isolation. No good is wholly detachable. The good may lead to other good, or it may lead to harm. But unless we share the pessimist's conviction that all good is illusive, we must allow that there are some ends which are in their direct and intrinsic relations to the pursuing subject

good, that is, which are conceived to be good, not as means, but as ends.<sup>1</sup>

Such ends are what we have called direct or ultimate ends. Their finality is not finality in the order of time. An ultimate aim is simply one which is not consciously chosen as means to any ulterior aim. The pleasure which attends its pursuit may be slight. The generating function may be sensuous or intellectual, or of any order of conscious activity. But if the end is pursued, not for the sake of other good, but as an ultimate object of desire,<sup>2</sup> that is, as good or satisfactory in itself, it is for the purpose of choice an ultimate end.

Take, for instance, the case of sensuous perception. Where the mind seeks satisfaction in the sensory impression, in the tones of a singer, in the

<sup>1</sup> Εἰ δὴ τι τέλος ἐστὶ τῶν πρακτῶν, ὃ δι' αὐτὸ βουλόμεθα, τὰ ἄλλα δὲ διὰ τοῦτο, καὶ μὴ πάντα δι' ἕτερον αἰρούμεθα (πρῶτοι γὰρ οὕτω γ' εἰς ἀπειρον, ὥστ' εἶναι κενὴν καὶ ματαίαν τὴν ὁρεξίν)· δῆλον ὡς τοῦτ' ἀν εἶη τὰγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀριστον.—Aristotle: *Nic. Eth.*, I., ii., 1.

If, therefore, there is some end of all that we do, which we wish for on its own account, and if we wish for all other things on account of this, and do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for thus we should go on to infinity, so that desire would be empty and vain), it is evident that this must be "the good," and the greatest good.—(Browne's tr.)

<sup>2</sup> Constat itaque ex his omnibus, nihil nos conari, velle, appetere neque cupere, quia id bonum esse iudicamus; sed contra nos propterea aliquid bonum esse iudicare, quia id conamur, volumus, appetimus atque cupimus.—Spinoza: *Ethices*, pars iii., prop. ix., schol.

lines of a statute, in the blending and contrast of colours, the satisfactory impression is, so far, an ultimate end. And the impression which yields the most complete satisfaction is that ideal or perfect impression which, on the level of sensation, the principle of conscious choice leads the subject to demand. This principle thus becomes the inspiration of art. Art is, indeed, by no means merely sensuous. But it requires that the sensory impression which is its vehicle shall be perfect in its place and kind. The perfection of this impression is in art either an ultimate aim or a part of the ultimate aim.

The distinction as between proximate and ultimate ends obtains also in respect of the activities recognised as motor. Most of what we call "work" is directed to proximate ends. The ulterior end or interest is a home, or social position, or some interest which is usually distinct from our interest in the work itself. In "play," on the other hand, we are prompted by an immediate interest: we play from sheer delight in the activities which play incites. Occasionally, as in the case of the artist, artisan, writer, or thinker who enjoys his work, this difference disappears. Play is then mere relaxation or alternation of function. But it is still a response to the demand for exercise by functions unemployed, and the enjoyment which it yields springs from the effective discharge of such functions.

In the light of the general distinction of ends as ultimate and proximate, it need not be said that ultimate ends demand our chief consideration. These are the ends which determine the general form of the life, or the character of its functional activities, and so determine the quality of the feeling which is for the subject the ultimate standard of values. Proximate ends, being but means to the ultimate end, we should not choose for their own sakes alone if we were alive to their true character as means. But we confound means with ends and thus miss the things of real value. The habit of toiling for the means of living, for instance, becomes so strong that life itself in its broad functional capacity eludes us, and its affectional value shrinks to the compass of some monotonous task or some dull round of utilitarian employment.

But pleasure, it should be observed, does not attend the pursuit of the ultimate aim alone. Feeling, we have seen, depends on function, and functions may be pleasurably discharged apart from their bearing on the ultimate end, especially if that end is relatively remote. Hence our daily tasks, which for their own sakes might never be assumed, are not altogether irksome. They tend in fact, through the multitude of small satisfactions which they seldom fail to procure, to imbue our lives with that spirit of content which is a substantial element of happiness. The good workman, indeed, makes his work for the time

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being an end in itself, and there is direct satisfaction in its accomplishment.

But while every function has its part in producing the whole affectional result, the chief value of an end lies in the fact that it usually groups the activities of a considerable number of functions, each of which may procure its own satisfaction, and thus secures volume and variety of feeling. But this is not all. The body of feeling thus generated is of much more value than the sum of the particular satisfactions of which it is compounded. Feelings are diffusive, and the effect of their interplay is such that each enhances the value of all. We know how worthless for feeling is the aimless activity which depends for its incitement and direction on the inclination of the moment, that is, on the pursuit of detached and constantly shifting aims. By failing to call forth our whole functional capacity it fails to sound our capacity for feeling. A comprehensive end, on the other hand, by engaging all our activities keeps the mind active and alert, enriches the elemental feelings by the effects of contrast and change, and thus yields in its pursuit a deep and comprehensive feeling of satisfaction.

But the adoption of an end, while it compounds our energies, limits and defines them. It involves the fixation of the attention on a more or less definite range of ideas, conceived as relevant to the end, and the inhibition of all activities in-

compatible with the realisation of such ideas. Only in this way can our energies be made practically effective. And the attention must be protected from sudden and violent arrest. Thought must be free to run to its object. Distraction, indeed, or that state of consciousness in which the thoughts are checked at every stage and rudely deflected from the end to which the will is adjusted, is the very type of mental anguish.<sup>1</sup> The attention should not, however, be too rigidly fixed. The processes of life are subject to a certain rhythmical variation, which is related, possibly, to that alternation of waste and nutrition, expenditure and restoration, which is the basis of vital action.<sup>2</sup> Change is in fact so essential in conscious activity that consciousness disappears when the attention is too rigidly fixed: sleep, normal or hypnotic, supervenes. And the main end should not be so persistently regarded as to interfere with the due consideration of subsidiary ends. In fact, if the main end is remote it is more likely to be attained if it is allowed for a time to lapse entirely from the field of vision.

<sup>1</sup> There is pleasure in proportion as a maximum of attention is effectively exercised, and pain in proportion as such effective attention is frustrated by distractions, shocks, or incomplete and faulty adaptations, or fails of exercise, owing to the narrowness of the field of consciousness and the slowness and smallness of its changes.—J. Ward: Article *Psychology*; *Enc. Brit.*

<sup>2</sup> Flint: *Human Physiology*, p. 171. H. Newell Martin, *The Human Body*, p. 19.

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The mountain-climber, scaling a cliff, keeps his eye on the path at his feet rather than on the heights above him. It is enough that a view of the summit should give him his bearings.

Taking, then, each end by itself, the pleasure attainable in the pursuit of an end depends on the effectiveness of the pursuit as we advance to achievement. And achievement crowns the satisfaction. The structures temporally co-ordinated for the accomplishment of the end have done their office, and the function being duly discharged the subject is so far satisfied. The function has generated its modicum of feeling.

But, as we have said, no aim can be completely isolated. Each particular aim is to be considered in its bearing on the general aims of life. And ends, even when successfully achieved, are of unequal affectional worth. Just as we find grounds for choice as among sensory functions the form of which has been fixed by the structure of the physical system, so we may choose among those more variable and complex functions the form of which is for the time being fixed by means of a volitional idea or preconceived end. We are constitutionally predisposed to find certain ends more pleasurable than others. And ends in general may be made more effective, and therefore more pleasurable, by organisation. It remains for us to consider, then, how the principle of conscious choice bears on the choice and organisation of ends.

## SECTION III

### ORGANISATION OF VOLITIONAL ENDS

#### CHAPTER VII

##### EXAMINATION OF METHODS AND PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION: HARMONY, REASON, THE MORAL SENSE, SELF-DEVELOPMENT

IN any analysis of the conscious life the tendency is all but inevitable to isolate the results of our analysis. The painstaking psychologist is misled by his pains. He atomises. The various aspects of our psychic activity tend under his scrutiny to become distinct and concrete. Sensation, judgment, will, and other abstractions are hypostatized and treated as independent powers in a psychic federation. It is well to be reminded, therefore, from time to time, that the individual with all his qualities must himself be present to exhibit any given quality or to discharge any particular function. The general system is presupposed in each of its parts.

We must conceive of the conscious life, moreover, as in effect a continuous life. True, the threads which bind its successive states are

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often unseen, and sleep gives daily pause to its waking phases. But in the psycho-physical system of which the conscious state is an aspect the causal relation, broadly conceived, is, we may fairly assume, never disrupted; that is to say, each conscious state is through this system related to and conditioned by the preceding states, and stands itself in like systematic connection with the states which follow.<sup>1</sup>

To look at life, therefore, as a mere succession of independent moments, or to estimate the value of any phase of experience by its immediate affectional result, is to ignore an essential law of life. No sound theory of conduct can be derived from a view of the merely dislocated elements of conduct. The biologist might as well attempt to spell out the laws of the physical life by breaking up the corporeal system and studying the fragments.<sup>2</sup> The delights of the voluptuary, the pains of discipline, are to be reckoned with their sequel. Each succeeding moment marks the transition from phase to phase of a continuous vital act; and its value can be estimated only as

<sup>1</sup> L'individualité psychique et l'individualité physiologique sont parallèles . . . la conscience s'unifie ou se disperse avec l'organisme.—Ribot: *Maladies de la Personnalité*, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Wer will was Lebendigs erkennen und beschreiben  
Sucht erst den Geist herauszutreiben;  
Dann hat er die Theile in seiner Hand,  
Fehlt, leider! nur das geistige Band.

Goethe: *Faust*.

it is considered in relation to this continuous act.

But this unitary system which, viewed as a natural product, is so completely organised, exhibits great inconsistency and inconstancy in the pursuit of its conscious aims. The conscious life, considered by itself, is short-sighted, vacillating, irrational. It is guided by no fixed principle and requires reorganisation under the guidance of a principle.

But we are not even agreed as to our principle. The theoretical difficulty is perhaps not the greatest of our difficulties. It is harder, apparently, to train our feet to keep the path than to discover the path; but it must be admitted that a sound theory, if held with conviction, would be a valuable aid to the establishment of a sound practice. We may say, in fact, that our practice is bad because, to a greater extent possibly than most of us are willing to allow, we are really unconvinced of the soundness of the principles in which we have been reared and to which we loosely adhere. At any rate all schools of ethical thought agree in the demand for a principle of unity in the conscious conduct of life, and each school offers such a principle. A brief review of the leading types of ethical theory may be of use, therefore, in familiarising our minds with the matter of ethical inquiry and in strengthening and developing the theory we have outlined and defended.

It has been held that we have in the idea of Harmony an adequate principle of conduct.<sup>1</sup> If we should control the intent of our acts, it is urged, so as to suppress all internal conflict, the life could not fail to be guided aright. This principle is recognised, among others, in the penetrating but somewhat imaginative treatment which the problems of conduct receive at the hands of Plato.<sup>2</sup> And interpreted and supplemented, as it usually is, with reference to a standard which requires more than the mere suppression of conflict, the principle is of undoubted practical value and approaches very closely to the principle here maintained. But it needs interpretation and supplement.

The term "harmony" is, in the first place,

<sup>1</sup> An interest in something is of an immediate character: signifies therefore: its harmony or disharmony with the impulse is felt in advance of all reasoning. But I feel only myself, and hence the harmony or disharmony must be in myself, or must be simply a harmony or disharmony with myself.—Johann Gottlieb Fichte: *The Science of Ethics*, pp. 150-151 (Kroeger's tr.).

Volitions, therefore, when judged practically, are judged by the anticipated harmony or discord which they tend to produce in the character of the agent.—Shadworth H. Hodgson: *Metaphysic of Experience*, book iii., chap. vi., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> The just man does not permit the several elements within him to meddle with one another, or any of them to do the work of others, but he sets in order his own inner life, and is his own master, and at peace with himself, etc.—Plato: *Republic*, 443, D. E. (Jowett's tr.).

figurative.<sup>1</sup> And even in its primary sense, that is, as applied to the relations or effects of sound, it refers us to a standard in human sensibility. The harmony must be felt. Harmonious sounds are sounds which when heard together satisfy "the ear." Investigation may disclose mathematical or other relations among the aerial vibrations to which we refer the sounds, but this does not justify us in identifying the harmonious quality of the sounds with any such relations. It is only within a limited range that the vibrations are perceived at all as sound, and the sounds would certainly not be harmonious, whatever the character of the waves to which we refer them, if they had no power to please. To determine whether they are harmonious or not they must be tried by a certain standard, and this standard must be sought, ultimately, in the form of the human sense.

If now, by a figure, we apply the term "harmonious" to a certain concurrence of tendencies in the acts of the individual, the term will be of little use in suggesting a norm of conduct unless

<sup>1</sup> Another Source of mutual Misapprehension on this Subject hath been "the introduction of metaphorical Expressions instead of proper ones." Nothing is so common among the Writers on Morality, as "the Harmony of Virtue"—"the Proportion of Virtue." . . . This figurative manner tends to mislead us. . . . It induceth a Persuasion that Virtue is excellent without Regard to any of its Consequences.—John Brown: *On the Motives to Virtue*, Essay II., sec. vi.

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reference is made to some subjective test, some form of feeling. It is not enough to show that our acts reinforce one another, or, if such a thing were possible, never conflict. A conflict may be ended by the subjugation of a contestant. Any imperious principle, a selfish ambition, say, or the propensity to mere animal satisfaction, may become paramount, subduing all the more generous instincts and establishing in the soul a peace which might be called harmony, but which were ethically the peace of desolation. Harmony in this barren sense would be consistent with extremely poor values in feeling, and would afford us no principle by which to determine, as among conflicting types, the true form of the human type. Consistency would be the only virtue, and we might be as the cat or the tiger, consistently selfish or ferocious. Self-preservation might be the first and the last law of nature. And like criticism applies to those who seek their ethical principle in some law which harmonises different wills,<sup>1</sup> without explicit reference to the nature or test of the harmony desired.

This criticism would be obviated if, dropping the figure, we should interpret the term "harmony"

<sup>1</sup> The ultimate aim of life cannot be merely the extension of the power to realise the wills that are active about us, but must at last be found by defining the course of action that best harmonises these wills.—Josiah Royce: *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. 174.—Harmonize thy will with the world's Will.—*The World and the Individual*, vol. ii., p. 348.

by reference to a subjective test analogous to the test to which sounds are submitted, and where harmony is adopted as an ethical principle some such test is actually implied. But the test is affectional. The soul must be "satisfied," and the harmony is perfect only when the soul is completely satisfied, or, in other words, when the feeling has that maximum worth which in ethical discourse is called "blessedness." And so interpreted or supplemented, the principle of harmony becomes identical with the principle here maintained.

Turning now to another school of thinkers, we find them looking to Reason for the principle of ethical distinctions, that is, to the reason regarded as a several and independent faculty of the mind. Reason, so conceived, and the moral nature are correlatives: man is moral because he has reason, reason furnishing both the ground and the motive for moral discrimination. Consciousness in the brute, it is held, serves only the brutish end, the conservation of the animal self, and it is determined to this end through the brute's sensibility to pleasure and pain. Your animal is thus your only consistent hedonist. But reason, in this view, marks the advent in man of a new principle, overriding the merely animal impulsion, and disclosing for the first time in the animate series the distinction between right and wrong. And moral distinctions when thus

recognised are, according to this contention, recognised as ultimate. The authority of the reason which discloses them is accepted as an indisputable fact of our nature and as supreme.<sup>1</sup>

The reason, upon this theory, has nothing in common with the animal nature: it simply over-

<sup>1</sup> Handle so, dass die Maxime deines Willens jederzeit zugleich als Prinzip einer allgemeinen Gesetzgebung gelten könne. . . . Man kann das Bewusstsein dieses Grundgesetzes ein Faktum der Vernunft nennen.—Immanuel Kant: *Kr. der Prakt. Vernunft*, book i., sec. 7.

Hugo Grotius: *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, liber. i., cap. ii., i., 1, 2, 3.

Ralph Cudworth: *A Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutability of Morality*, book i., chap. ii.

Richard Price: *A Review of the Principal Questions, etc., in Morals*, chap. i.

Samuel Clarke: *Discourse upon Natural Religion*.

The Reason is not only the faculty by which we reason from fundamental principles when we have anyhow attained and assumed these; it is also the faculty by which we apprehend fundamental principles.—William Whewell: *Elements of Morality*, book i., chap. i., art. 10.

Reason is the self-objectifying consciousness. It constitutes, as we have seen, the capability in man of seeking an absolute good and of conceiving this good as common to others with himself: and it is this capability which alone renders him a possible author and a self-submitting subject of law.—T. H. Green: *Prolegomena to Ethics*, book iii., chap. iii., p. 214.

Reason itself supplies the principles of rectitude, which cannot be reached by induction from experience, as all rules of expediency are.—H. Calderwood: *Philos. Rev.*, July, 1896, p. 338.

The ethical function of Reason is sovereign and legislative.—James Seth: *Intern. Jour. of Ethics*, July, 1896, p. 423.

rules it. And there is, in this view, nothing in the moral nature which can be analysed into simpler elements, or which can be regarded as a development from some principle of natural action less specific and complex. The appearance of reason and the moral nature marks a *saltus* in the natural series.

This view of the matter was not unnatural in the earlier stages of psychological inquiry. An ethical principle for which no solvent had been found was thus in a sort accounted for. It was an ultimate fact, marking the assumption rather than the development of a new nature, and involving by consequence subjection to a new code of laws. But gaps in our knowledge of the developmental series are not gaps in the series itself, and as these gaps are filled in by a comparative study of the forms of conscious life man's reason appears rather as a growth than as a sudden and special creation. We cannot regard it now as a unique and underived faculty imposing upon the natural propensities an alien and absolute law. It includes under one general term all the abstracting, discriminating, comparing, and reflective processes of the mind. Reason, indeed, is scarcely separable from any grade or phase of intelligence. Merely to perceive is to interpret.<sup>1</sup> There is therefore an inferential or rational ele-

<sup>1</sup> Perception is an attempt at interpretation.—H. Höffding: *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 207 (Lowndes).

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ment implicit in perception, and we must concede this element in germinal form to the intelligence even of the brute.

But to concede so much is not to assume that there is nothing distinctive and characteristic in human reason. For the higher or more complex instances of the inferential process we must look to the treatment of abstract conceptions, which are derived primarily from the materials of perception. For the formation of such conceptions language is essential.<sup>1</sup> And since the thought of man alone is articulate, the main exemplification of the rational consciousness, including the formation of moral concepts, is to be sought for in the operations of the human mind. Thought which is inarticulate wants more than the means of expression. It wants the power of analysis and also that capacity for constructive activity which depends for its materials on the results of analysis. Hence the extreme simplicity of brute intelligence as compared with that of man. The gap between the two is wide. But it were rash to assert that no developmental process can span it. Reason, the capacity for inferential thought, being implicit

<sup>1</sup> When we remember that thought is in a large measure internal speech, and that the abstract relations and qualities of objects are inseparably bound up with words, we can readily see that we may call up the images symbolised in words, however abstract they may be, by making the articulatory movements in which we have symbolised them.—Ferrier: *Functions of the Brain*, chap. xii., sec. 17 (2d ed.).

in perception, must exist in elemental form far below the level of human intelligence, and must be assumed to develop with the development of the conscious life and with the increasing supply of matter to which it can be applied. It is a capacity which grows.

And if the capacity to reason is itself a growth we have little ground to doubt that the moral principles assumed to have been disclosed by the reason have been developed or revealed by a like gradual process. Proof of this development would appear in a resolution of such principles into simpler constituents. Such a resolution or analysis we have undertaken in this thesis.

There is, however, another form of the general theory of morals which presents moral distinctions as ultimate. Reason, it is urged, is not the bearer of ends at all. It can only distinguish, compare, and define among ends already determined in the mind or in the constitution in which it is operative. Nor can it, without a criterion which reason may find but does not bring, assign a superior or an inferior place to any given end.<sup>1</sup> Reason has in itself no preferences. Given an end, reason discloses, upon a review of the whole situation, the

<sup>1</sup> It appears evident, that the ultimate ends of human actions can never, in any case, be accounted for by *reason*, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependence on the intellectual faculties.—David Hume: *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, App. 1.

fittest means for the attainment of the end; and reason, upon due consideration of our actions, may point out their probable results. But why one end should be preferred to another depends, it is said, upon no merely reflective or rational process, but upon a form of human sensibility. And this sense, as applied to moral relations, is specific and unique. Right and wrong are not, in this view, as they are in some forms of rationalistic ethics, distinctions inherent in our acts themselves, or deducible from the objective relations of any act; nor is the principle of moral distinctions one which we may resolve into non-moral or pre-moral elements. To make such distinctions is the office of a special sense, and we are sensible in making them of an inward preference for that which we feel to be right even when as a matter of fact we choose the wrong. And this special sense has been called the Moral Sense.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moral Distinctions deriv'd from a Moral Sense.—To have the sense of virtue, is nothing but to *feel* a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character. The very *feeling* constitutes our praise or admiration. . . . The case is the same as in our judgments concerning all kinds of beauty, and tastes and sensations.—David Hume: *A Treatise of Human Nature*, book iii., part i., sec. ii.

This moral Sense, either of our own Actions, or of those of others, has this in common with our other Senses, that however our Desire of Virtue may be counterballanc'd by Interest, our Sentiment or Perception of its Beauty cannot; as it certainly might be, if the only Ground of our Approbation were Views of Advantage.—Francis Hutcheson: *An Inquiry*

The theory of a Moral Sense, it will be seen, may be made the basis of Intuitionism, which holds to an immediate apprehension of the paramount law of conduct, as readily as Rationalism. And it is open to the same fundamental objection as that which we urged against Rationalism: it halts in its analysis, and makes that ultimate which later inquiry shows to be derived. So far as it refers us to a subjective standard it is doubtless right. We have ourselves found it necessary to refer to such a standard; but we have placed it in the affective or general evaluative aspect of consciousness, which is broader and more elementary than moral feeling, and which only

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*concerning the original of our ideas of Virtue or Moral Good,*  
sec. I. (British Moralists, vol. i.)

Human actions . . . are further distinguished in our perception of them, as fit, right, and meet to be done, or as unfit, unmeet, and wrong to be done. . . . The power or faculty by which we perceive this difference among actions, passeth under the name of the moral sense.—Henry Home, Lord Kames: *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, Essay II., chap. ii. (Brit. Mor., vol. ii.)

To this ultimate fact . . . we must always come in estimating virtue, whatever analysis we may make or think that we have made. It is in this respect, as in many others, like the kindred emotion of beauty.—Thomas Brown: *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 20. (Edin., 1846.)

Our knowledge of the Supreme Excellence . . . springs from that instinctive or moral nature, which is as truly a part of our being as is our reason, and which teaches us what reason could never teach, the supreme and transcendent excellence of moral good.—William Edward Hartpole Lecky: *Hist. of Eur. Morals*, chap. i., p. 56.

in specific relations, as we shall see, becomes moral feeling. The theory we are considering, on the other hand, makes moral distinctions elementary, and endows the mind with an irresolvable faculty for marking these distinctions. Like Rationalism, the theory of a Moral Sense assumes to be at the end of the road because it can itself go no farther. Both theories, therefore, while they have many practical merits, betray the same defective analysis, the same psychological weakness. And both might be harmonised with the theory of this essay if their ultimate terms were broken up into their psychological elements.

Starting from a different point of view there appears another main tendency of ethical thought

The feeling which determines conduct is not a judgment at all, though it is inseparably bound up with serious judgments. It is a simple unanalysable fact.—Leslie Stephen: *The Science of Ethics*, chap. ii., p. 57.

By Morals or Ethic I mean the doctrine of a special kind of pleasure or displeasure, which is felt by the human mind in contemplating certain courses of conduct, whereby they are felt to be *right* or *wrong*, and of a special desire to do the right things and avoid the wrong ones.—William Kingdon Clifford: *Lectures and Essays*, vol. i., p. 106.

To the implicit beliefs secreted within our moral consciousness let precisely so much be conceded as we readily grant to the testimony of perception, and it will appear that, in learning ourselves, we discover also what is beyond and above ourselves. If then we can but state accurately the essence of the moral sentiments, and find the propositions they assume, we reach the last resorts of theoretic truth.—James Martineau: *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii., p. 9.

which, under the name of Self-realisation or Self-development, finds its organising principle in the form of the conscious organism itself.<sup>1</sup> With this point of view we are already familiar. The human organism, it is averred, is a complex instrument, and we have only to consider the nature of this instrument, or the form of the self, to determine its use. Self-development would follow then from a sustained and consistent application of the self as instrument to its use so determined.

But the possibilities of the psycho-physical system are, as we have seen, so vast that no mere inspection of the instrument will disclose its use with such definiteness as to reveal the law of conduct. In the field of

<sup>1</sup> It [the doctrine of goods] will . . . regard as the highest good, stating it in a general formula, a perfect life, that is, a life leading to the complete development of the bodily and mental powers, and to their full exercise in all the spheres of human existence, etc.—Friedrich Paulsen: *A System of Ethics*, p. 4 (Thilly's tr).

If we have any rational end at all it must consist in some kind of realisation of our nature as a whole.—John S. McKenzie: *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, p. 255.

Moral good may be defined in general as conduct conducive to the natural good or perfection of the agent and those persons affected by his action.—Edith Simcox: *Natural Law*, p. 105.

The final end with which morality is identified, or under which it is included, can be expressed not otherwise than by self-realisation.—F. H. Bradley: *Ethical Studies*, Essay II., p. 59 (Anas. reprint).

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volitional conduct this use must be learned from a consideration of ends. True, the self which is to be realised is itself an end, a representation or an ideal of the manner of man one fain would become. But the theory requires a definite and fairly consistent idea of this end, without which the idea of self-realisation remains vague and as a directive and shaping influence ineffective.

Such an idea of the self may be virtually present, however, without being explicitly recognised or grasped as a whole. It may operate piecemeal, as it were. Certain acts and attitudes seem admirable, certain others seem despicable and unworthy of the self. And the fact that we have in the affective life, or the feelings, a constantly available test of the value of our experience and acts compels us to put a practical gloss on all our theories and tacitly adjust them to the facts of life. We unwittingly assume in our theories that which is never wanting in our lives. And with the aid of such gloss and silent comment the theory of self-development acquires a form and completeness which cannot, without supplement, be found in the theory itself. The necessary supplement of this theory is a true conception of the self as end to be realised. But this ideal self is not simply given. It is a construction, and varies in form; and it stands itself in need of a principle to determine the true law of its con-

struction.<sup>1</sup> And such a principle it might find in what we have suggested as the law of conscious choice.

<sup>1</sup> The Self in Psychology seems always to be identified with some positive content, and not always with the same.—B. Bosanquet: *Psychology of the Moral Self*, p. 8 (London, 1897).

The end may therefore in all conscious action be said to be self-realisation, though the nature of this end differs according to each man's conception of self.—W. R. Sorley: *On the Ethics of Naturalism*, p. 287.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PLEASURE AS AN ORGANISING PRINCIPLE

IT remains now to consider the theory that the organising principle which alone can give full value to life and furnish a basis for morals is happiness or pleasure. This theory, which has assumed different forms and gone under different names, is as old as ethical discussion, and the ethical student needs only to be reminded of its main contention, namely, that pleasure is itself the supreme and ultimate end. A word of explanation may be necessary, however, to show its relation to our own contention. And to save time we may refer to this theory generally as hedonism, using the term in as broad a sense as we have used the word pleasure.

Much of the criticism which has been directed against hedonism is properly directed against the assumption, common to hedonists and to their opponents alike, that feeling is a detachable concrete psychical state. But feeling, as we have seen, is an abstraction. It is never wholly free from certain elements of intellection and conation, and cannot as a motive be effectively presented

to the mind except as associated with a sensation, percept, or idea, or whatever constitutes its generating function.<sup>1</sup> But it is assumed that we are capable of detaching from the idea of a pleasurable function, as of the eye or the ear, the idea of pleasure, and of erecting this idea into a separable end, from which the discharge of the function may be distinguished as means.

<sup>1</sup> Pleasure, we must remember, is an abstraction, and only to be found in the concrete complexity of mental life.—B. Bosanquet: *Psychology of the Moral Self*, p. 81.

On passing from compound reflex actions to those actions so highly compounded as to be imperfectly reflex . . . we pass to a kind of mental action which is one of Memory, Reason, Feeling, or Will, according to the side of it we look at.—Herbert Spencer: *Prin. of Psychology*, I., chap. ix., sec. 217 (1876).

The impulse is essentially determined by an idea, is a striving after the content of this idea. In hunger, e.g., the impulse has reference primarily to the food, not to the feeling of pleasure in its consumption.—H. Höffding: *Outlines of Psych.*, vii., B, 1, a, p. 323 (Lowndes.)

It [pleasure] is not something by itself, which we can choose rather than something else as we may select a peach instead of an apple. We must aim not at pleasure *per se*, but at objects which we have reason to believe will be accompanied by pleasurable feeling.—W. R. Sorley: *Ethics of Naturalism*, pp. 187, 188.

All human pleasure is pleasure in something. It is true that if that something gave no pleasure, we should not be able to value *it*; but still, seeing that it does please us, we do value it, and not simply the pleasure that it yields.—J. S. McKenzie: *Outlines of Metaphysics*, p. 126.

The springs of conscious activity, or the incentives to volition, are present or ideally revived sensations and their accompaniments.—Ferrier: *Functions of the Brain*, chap. xii., sec. 5 (2d ed).

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In different ways one enjoys, for example, a glass of wine, or low music, or the invention of a story or of some mechanical device; and one can estimate the degree of enjoyment, it is supposed, as a distinct quantum, disengaged from any thought of the wine, or the music, or the plot or plan of our work. The actual conscious state, indissoluble in fact, is in conception broken up into its several aspects, and it is assumed that one of these aspects, to wit, pleasure, may be conceived as in factual independence, subjected to quantitative estimate and comparison, and set up as a separable object of volition or desire. The abstract is thus dealt with as concrete. Pleasure is taken simply as a lot or quantum of feeling, to be listed with other like lots and measured by such standards as are conceived to be applicable to pure feeling. And practical wisdom lies, according to this contention, in choosing the most effective means of making over to one's self that several lot of pleasure which, upon a fair computation, shows in biggest bulk.

It cannot be denied, of course, that "pleasures," in the sense of pleasurable sensations, diversions, or occupations, may be dealt with as wholes more or less distinct and subjected to comparative treatment. But "pleasure" as mere feeling is to be distinguished from "pleasures" so understood as the abstract is distinguished from the concrete; and the error lies in assuming that the bare idea

of pleasure constitutes in deliberative choice the true volitional idea. The bare idea of this feeling, as we may be convinced by inspection, does not exist, and neither feeling nor the idea of feeling can be called up independently of any idea of the object or experience which gives rise to the feeling; much less can it furnish an incentive to volitional action. And this is equally true whether we are speaking of revived or anticipated feeling. To awaken one's pleasure in a flower one must recall in idea the characters of the flower, its colour, its fragrance, its form. One does not revive the feeling first, or independently of the impressions by which the feeling was originally evoked; the idea of these impressions must first be revived, and the feeling returns as a fresh product of such ideation. So we may explain the force of mere words. Language as the common vehicle of ideas becomes the common vehicle of feeling, and the medium through which orator, dramatist, and poet touch the sentiments and play upon the passions of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to attend to pleasantness-unpleasantness as such. . . . It is impossible to voluntarily recall a past affective state as such. . . . Spontaneous revival of a past affective state as such is also impossible. Where this purports to have taken place, external (associational) suggestion has reproduced the ideational substrate of the state in question.—E. B. Titchener: *Philosophical Rev.*, Jan., 1895.

In the same article Titchener cites Lehmann in *Hauptgesetze des Menschlichen Gefühlslebens*, p. 262, as follows:

But though the will must be directed by the idea of an end, ends may be more or less definite. They may indeed be extremely vague, but if the idea is indefinite the activities initiated by the idea will be ill-organised or indefinite. And ends may be grouped, that is, may be more or less general. Under the idea of "wealth," for instance, we may symbolise the ends which we desire and conceive to be attainable through wealth. So we may group loosely under the general term "pleasure" the particular class of pleasures to which we are prone. But the volitional idea in such case, however we may generalise, is not the mere abstract idea of pleasure, but an idea more or less definable of the pursuits or functions in which pleasure inheres. A volition is never simply the will to be pleased. As a practical function it is the will to have or to do or to experience some certain thing which shall satisfy or please.<sup>1</sup>

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"Gefühlstöne können dadurch reproduziert werden, dass die Vorstellungen, mit welchen sie verbunden gewesen sind, wiedererzeugt werden."

The necessity of an objective principle, or norm, is further suggested by the fact that one is totally unable to produce directly any desired sensibility mode. By an act of will, one cannot inaugurate immediately a feeling of satisfaction of any kind whatever.—Walter G. Everett: *The Concept of the Good*; *Philos. Rev.*, Sept., 1898.

<sup>1</sup> Movements are really *willed* only when they are made with a definite intention and directed to a definite end.—H. Höfding: *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 320 (Lowndes).

It would seem, then, that the primary source of feeling lies in the sensation or the idea, or in some function to which the psycho-physical system must react in order that feeling may be generated. And yet it often happens, apparently, that the idea follows the feeling. As we feel, grave or gay, so we think; and the character of our thoughts seems to depend generally upon the exaltation or the depression of our spirits. The dyspeptic habit, for instance, which is marked by painful organic sensations, is no less distinctly marked by the painful tone of the dyspeptic's ideas. In fact, we have all felt the effect of a dominant mood in restricting the range of ideas to such as accord with the mood. With the system tempered to a certain emotional tone we seem to be more or less impervious to ideas of a different tone. The feeling appears to react on the ideational sources of feeling.

This reaction depends doubtless on the inhibitory force of the expressive and motor accompaniments of feeling. Expression in any emotional key naturally inhibits the expression of any incongruous feeling, and through this inhibition suppresses, for the time being, the ideas which must express themselves, if at all, through such incongruous feeling. The sensation, or the idea (which is sometimes called an internal sensation), apparently forms with its affectional and motor reactions a psycho-physical unit. Obstruct the

reaction and you obstruct the whole function.<sup>1</sup> Dam the outlet and you stop the current. And you may obstruct a function by action incompatible with its discharge even more effectively than by a direct effort to repress it.<sup>2</sup> Freedom in one direction is inhibition in another. The emotional expression of the dyspeptic's painful sensations inhibits the antagonistic expression, and therewith the conception, of pleasurable ideas. While, therefore, we may regard feeling as in direct relation with the idea upon which it attends, we have reason to believe that it is only indirectly related to the idea which it seems to suggest. The direct course of suggestion is from idea to idea.<sup>3</sup> And to inspire or to revive a particular

<sup>1</sup> Empfindungen . . . sind lebhaft und eindringlich, wenn die Entladungsbahn der sensorischen Erregung in dem subkortikalen motorischen Centrum, zu dem sie führt, keinen Widerstand findet. Die Empfindung anderseits ist gehemmt, wenn die Entladungsbahn der sensorischen Erregung zu einem subkortikalen motorischen Centrum führt, welches wegen der gleichzeitig ablaufenden Erregung des antagonistischen Centrums selber gehemmt ist und so der Entladung Widerstand entgegensetzt.—Hugo Münsterberg: *Grundzüge der Psychologie*, Band 1, S. 536-537.

<sup>2</sup> Il semble donc, si on fait l'hypothèse que la durée de prononciation donne une mesure de la facilité de prononciation, qu'il est plus facile de remplacer un état moteur d'articulation par un autre état que de supprimer complètement cet état moteur.—Binet et Henri: *Rev. Philos.*, 1894, xxxvii., p. 614.

<sup>3</sup> The combination of ideas seems therefore to be the channel through which the feelings mingle with one another. . . . Every idea has, indeed, its special feeling, but this always

feeling we must first reach the source of the feeling in the idea or functional act upon which the feeling depends.

Pleasure, we conclude then, or happiness, cannot as mere feeling be made the end of volitional action, and cannot, therefore, serve as the basis of a system which undertakes the control of volitional conduct. The structure of the conscious organism is such that the bare idea of feeling, if such a thing exists, cannot in itself constitute an end. In fact, were a desired feeling present, and were the attempt made to direct attention to the feeling alone with a view to prolonging its presence, the effort would initiate a new functional process, the original feeling would be dissipated, and a different affectional state would be induced. Hence the apparent paradox that pleasure the sooner arrives the less it is thought of, that happiness the more surely eludes us the more intently, as happiness, it is pursued. Pleasure, in a word, attests the normal discharge of a function, and, evading direct pursuit, demands that our thoughts and energies be directed to the function which generates it. Activities, not feelings, are the direct objects of the will.

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breaks its force on the feeling previously prevailing, and its effect is determined through the latter. . . . Feelings are remembered by means of the ideas with which they were originally linked, and in conjunction with which they composed a certain conscious state.—H. Höffding: *Outlines of Psychology*, pp. 240, 241 (Lowndes' tr.).

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If, therefore, happiness is made an object of desire, it must be conceived in such a sense that it does not impose on me the lifelong task of watching my subjective symptoms, with my finger for ever on the pulse of feeling. It must be conceived only as a product of the various activities of the subject. And this is doubtless the interpretation which in practice the hedonist puts upon his theory. But the effect of ordinary hedonistic teaching is to give a false tendency to the thought by directing it too exclusively to the merely affectional aspect of conduct. Hence the strength of the critic's position who insists that hedonism is philosophically unsound, and that the idea of happiness is an idea which it were best to banish from our minds. The constant effort to gauge the emotional value of life reduces the effectiveness of the very activities upon which this emotional value depends.

But we cannot assume, as the critic of hedonism is wont to assume, that principles of conduct may be framed apart from any consideration of feeling. Ends we must have. A man must have some intelligible notion of what he means to do, or of the ends to which his energies shall be directed. But how shall he choose an end to which he is indifferent? We aim at an end because it interests us, and interest is but feeling centred in a definite object. It is feeling, that is, the emotional tone or accompaniment of our activities, which gives life

its value, and any organising principle which shall ensure for life its maximum value must be framed, of necessity, with ultimate reference to feeling. Such, at least, is our contention. Though it is impracticable to constitute an end of the abstract idea of feeling, life for the conscious subject has in it nothing that he should desire it except as attested by feeling. That it interests him means that it offers him ends or objects in seeking which he takes satisfaction or pleasure; and it interests him most, or is most desirable, when the pleasure or satisfaction is most complete.

## CHAPTER IX

### COMPARISON AND ESTIMATE OF PLEASURABLE FUNCTIONS

INASMUCH, then, as our interest in an object or end is the ultimate ground of preference, the mere idea of an object, without affectional tone, were as powerless to influence choice as were the abstract idea of feeling. An end must in some sense interest us, or promise some sort of satisfaction, or it can submit no claim for volitional preference: wanting the elements of value, it leaves us indifferent, that is, without incentive to choice.

Not that choice proper, involving a comparison of values, must precede every conscious act. The tendency of thought is always to act itself out.<sup>1</sup> The idea is the initial stage of the act. And the mere observation or intimation of an act, suggesting the thought of it, suggests the act also, that is, initiates the movements which, if not inhibited by acts or ideas incompatible with their continuance, will advance to their consummation

<sup>1</sup> The tendency of an idea to become the reality is a distinct source of active impulses in the mind.—A. Bain: *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 341. (London, 1868, 3d ed.)

in the act suggested.<sup>1</sup> Hence perhaps the tendency to imitate which we find in the young. They have as yet no controlling interest, their powers have not as yet been disciplined to the service of special ends or ideas, and out of the abundance of their energy they are ready to act upon the presentation of any idea which they are able to grasp and execute. And even acts originally requiring volitional direction and choice tend by repetition to approach the instinctive type. The feet of the practised dancer start involuntarily with the opening strains of a waltz.

But there is in such suggested or impulsive action no deliberation, no appraisalment of interests, no conscious appeal to any standard of values. Here therefore the principle of conscious choice is not involved. Or if it is urged that we still must choose, if only as between action and inaction, we may trace the affectional element even here as influencing the choice. There remains the interest of an active nature seeking satisfaction in the mere exercise of power.

But the contention that choice is influenced by feeling is met by the objection that feeling, as a psychological fact, follows both the choice

<sup>1</sup> We may then lay it down for certain that every representation of a movement awakens in some degree the actual movement which is its object; and awakens it in a maximum degree whenever it is not kept from so doing by an antagonistic representation present simultaneously to the mind.—W. James: *Psychology*, vol. ii., p. 526.

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and the act. And how, it is asked, can the feeling to be generated in the attainment of an end not yet accomplished affect in advance of its own appearance my choice of such an end? How can future pleasure, in other words, operate as a present motive?<sup>1</sup>

Plainly feeling (or its physical concomitant) not yet existent cannot be the cause of acts which are now to be performed. Such a cause would be "final" in the most objectional sense. But no such retroactive causation need be assumed. Though the end and its attendant feeling lie yet in the future, the idea of the end with its emotional tone is a present fact. And the idea is a process, not an inert image lodged, as it were, in the mind; it is a process too which, as common observation attests, may initiate present feeling. The prospect of a pleasing experience is itself and at the moment pleasing. But careful introspection seems to disclose that it is not feeling as a present fact, but the idea of a situation with future possibilities of feeling, which governs the choice and initiates action subservient to the end selected. In other words, it is not the pleasure of the idea, but the idea of the pleasure, that is,

<sup>1</sup> Even when we are acting with a direct view to our own future pleasure, it is, of course, the present pleasure attached to the idea of our future pleasure, not the future pleasure itself, which determines our action.—Dr. Ernest Albee: *Philos. Review*, July, 1897, p. 344.

of the pleasurable function, which operates as a motive in volitional choice.

But the whole subject-matter is obscured by our habit of interpreting psychical terms in a physical sense. We treat the feeling to which we ascribe the force of a motive as in effect a physical motor, an actual and present force, which is assumed to be necessary to impel the inert mass of the idea, itself conceived in a physical sense, to its consummation in act.<sup>1</sup> But this application of mechanical concepts to psychophysical experience is misleading. The human organism is not a mechanical system. It is indeed a storehouse of energy, and as such is subject to the laws which govern the transformations of energy. Force exerted is force transmuted in a definite ratio of equivalence. But the human system is a highly organised system, and it is organised, as we have seen, in accordance with a scheme which places the key to its volitional activities in the idea. Volitional choice is a choice of ideas. But as the worth of experience is measured in terms of feeling, the choice falls, so far as it is deliberately rather than reflexly or instinctively determined, on the idea of the object or end which is deemed likely to prove

<sup>1</sup> Pleasure is the mechanism or dynamic of choice. The energy or moving power of an idea lies in the feeling which it arouses. James Seth: *Is Pleasure the Summum Bonum?* *Intern. Jour. of Ethics*, July, 1896.

most satisfactory or pleasing.<sup>1</sup> And if, tracing the process on its physical side, the cause as a cerebral discharge seems inadequate, without the reinforcement which is implied in emotional excitement, to produce the effects which we see in muscular action, we have only to be reminded that the organism is itself a seat of energy. The question is one, not of the mere transmission of force, but of the liberation of forces latent in the system. And if the psychophysical system has been organised to seek satisfaction through functional action, we cannot be surprised that the idea of that which will satisfy should be the index of cerebral changes adequate without further excitation to engage the activity of the whole motor system.<sup>2</sup>

But if, in order to determine the choice, ends must be compared in idea with respect to their affectional values, what method shall we follow in

<sup>1</sup> Volition proper is characterised psychologically by the ideas of the end of the action and the means to its realisation, and by a vivid feeling of the worth of that end.—H. Höffding: *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 313 (Lowndes).

<sup>2</sup> It is a property of our intellectual nature, that for all purposes of action the remembrance, notion, or anticipation of a feeling, can operate in essentially the same way as the real presence.—Alexander Bain: *The Emotions and the Will*, 3d ed., p. 354. (Appleton, 1876.)

Consciousness is *in its very nature impulsive*. We do not have a sensation or a thought and then have to *add* something dynamic to it to get a movement.—W. James: *Psychology*, vol. ii., p. 526.

the comparison and determination of these values? What do we mean when we say that one thing is more pleasing, or gives us more pleasure, than another? Is the estimate quantitative? Can pleasures be computed in units of pleasure, or are they only qualitatively appreciated and preferred?

If we refer to the language of common life, it would seem that pleasures are compared in respect of both quantity and quality. There is no doubt, in the first place, that we distinguish them in respect of quality. We compare, for instance, the pleasures of golf, of study, of society, of philanthropic activity and self-sacrifice, in terms which imply that the pleasures so distinguished are different in kind. So also with pains. There are the pains of hunger, of weariness, of disappointed ambition, of thwarted love.

In the form in which it first invades consciousness the feeling of pleasure or of pain, so far as we can consider it by itself, seems to be a mode of sensibility which reports the inner or organic significance, as the special senses report the external or objective significance, of any given impression or experience. And in its initial stage the feeling seems to share something of the distinctions in quality or mode which mark the various functions with which it is associated. That is, it is qualitatively defined by the generating function. The pleasures of sense differ

in quality from one another, and from the pleasures of action; and all these differ, again, from the pleasures of the creative imagination or of speculative thought. The differences in the mode of the functional act are carried over to the immediate affective state, the feeling by first intention, so to speak, which is continuous with the functional act, and are thus felt to be inherent in the feeling.<sup>1</sup> To resolve away these differences we must address ourselves to feeling in the abstract, and psychologists who assume to deal with pure feeling find in it no differences of quality other than the difference between pleasure and pain.<sup>2</sup> And for the purpose of psychological analysis such a conception of feeling may have its uses. But in ethics, which bears directly upon conduct or

<sup>1</sup> The quality or character of what is generally called a feeling or emotion comes from the sensations or cognitions that go with it.—B. Bosanquet: *Psychology of the Moral Self*, p. 63. (London, 1897.)

<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, there is no qualitative difference discoverable between the pleasantness of a colour and that of a successfully concluded argument, when careful abstraction is made from the very wide differences in all their attendant circumstances.—Külpe: *Outlines of Psychology*, sec. 35, 1. . . . We are left with the simple qualities of pleasantness and unpleasantness, which refuse to admit of further subdivision.—*Ib.*, sec. 35, 3.

It seems to be true of pleasure as of pain, that in itself it exhibits no differences of kind, but that the differences in the pleasurable feelings spring out of the sensations or ideas accompanying them.—H. Höffding: *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 224 (Lowndes).

practice, our conscious states must be dealt with more concretely. The pleasurable or painful state must, for the purpose of choice, be taken as a whole, including function, feeling, and, we may add, the expression or consummation of the affective state, which, is in fact, but a single state however we may distinguish its phases or aspects. For us, in other words, "pleasures" differ in quality or kind. And even psychologists are to be found who take the same view.<sup>1</sup>

But the affectional state, even in its initial phase, may vary in intensity. One colour, or one shade of colour, may yield a stronger sense of satisfaction than another; or a musician may feel that the pleasure which he derives from the harmonies of sound is more intense than that which he takes in the harmonies of colour. Such variations, involving a question of degree, are so far quantitative. And they are, in fact, such as we might expect from the nature of feeling as the exponent of a more or less diffusive reaction of the organism to the changing phases of its experience. The intimate nature of the reaction, as we have said,

<sup>1</sup> The variety of simple affective qualities seems to be indefinitely great.—W. Wundt: *Outlines of Psychology*, 2d Eng. ed., p. 90 (Judd's tr.).

The countless feelings that thrill the human heart, envy, anger, ambition, love, etc., are obviously different in quality. It would be doing violence to the facts to force all these emotions into the two classes, feelings of pleasure and feelings of pain.—Th. Ziehen: *Intr. to Phys. Psychology*, p. 178 (Van Liew and Beyer).

has not been explored. But it appears, under inspection, to be a continuation of the initial impression, invading the organism in varying degrees of energy and completeness. The affective reaction shows, accordingly, with reference to the nervous system at large, a certain volume and strength, which are reported in consciousness as the volume and strength of the feeling, and may be made the subject of comparative estimate. A sharp pinch of the ear, for example, has little more than local significance, while an incision made by a surgeon's knife may check respiration, or produce nervous shock, or so affect cerebral action as to suspend consciousness. In such reactions, considered in their merely physical aspect, there is a marked difference of intensity and scope; and if feeling may be defined as the sense of such physical reactions,<sup>1</sup> the energy and extent of the reaction may well be represented by what we call the intensity and breadth of the feeling. That is, feeling, even in its initial phase, may show quantitative as well as qualitative differences.

And the quantitative differences are still more apparent in the later phases of feeling. The feeling of first contact or intention tends in its development to merge in the consciousness of

<sup>1</sup> My theory . . . is that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur *is* the emotion.—W. James: *Prin. of Psych.*, vol. ii., p. 449.

the motor resultant. We impute then to the feeling something of the scope and energy of the act. The vigour with which one springs from a rattlesnake's coil seems to increase one's terror of its fangs. The strain of the struggle for a coveted prize intensifies the feeling with which one advances or falls behind in the struggle. There may be something of illusion here. We may impute to one process the energy of another which should be distinguished from it. But the relation between feeling and the action to which it prompts is in any case extremely close.<sup>1</sup> It has even been maintained that the sensory impression itself depends for its worth and vividness upon the scope and energy of the discharge or motor response.<sup>2</sup> And feeling, it should seem, as connect-

<sup>1</sup> Wollen wir näher beschreiben, was wir denn bei Lust und Unlust in uns empfinden, so wissen wir dies nicht anschaulicher zu thun, als indem wir die Lust als ein Streben nach dem Gegenstande hin, die Unlust als ein Widerstreben gegen denselben bezeichnen. Nur darum aber fließen in unserer Schilderung die Namen der Gefühle, der Triebe und Willensbestimmungen fortwährend in einander, weil diese Zustände in der Wirklichkeit immer verbunden sind und durch die psychologische Abstraction nur insofern getrennt werden können, als die Apperception gegenüber den äusseren Eindrücken bald ein passives bald ein actives Verhalten darbietet: im ersten Fall reden wir dann vorzugsweise von Gefühl, im zweiten von Trieb, Begehren oder Wollen.—W. Wundt: *Grundz. der Phys. Psychologie*, vol. i, p. 535 (1887).

<sup>2</sup> Jedes Element des Bewusstseinsinhaltes dem Übergang von Erregung zu Entladung im Rindengebiet zugeordnet ist und zwar derart, dass die Qualität der Empfindung von der räumlichen Lage der Erregungsbahn, die Intensität der

ing the limiting aspects, sensation and conation, of a given conscious event, must be intimately related to both, sharing the quality of the sensation, peripheral or central, on the one hand, and something which represents the energy of the reaction on the other. And if this view is permissible, if sensation, feeling, and impulsion are but various aspects of one indivisible event, no aspect of which is what it is without implication of the others, we cannot but conclude that differences in feeling are susceptible of both qualitative and quantitative expression. Pleasures may differ, at least for the purposes of practical choice, both in degree and in kind.<sup>1</sup>

But while pleasures differ in degree, as all will allow, it does not follow that they may be subjected to precise mathematical treatment. For a given individual the strength of a feeling may be roughly gauged perhaps by the strength of its motor expression, but there is no affectional unit which can be generally applied even to the feelings of the same individual. And in practice there need not be. At least we make shift to do without it. We are content if differences in quantity or quality, or in both, enable us to establish some-

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Empfindung von der Stärke der Erregung, die Wertnuance der Empfindung von der räumlichen Lage der Entladungsbahn und die Lebhaftigkeit der Empfindung von der Stärke der Entladung abhängt.—H. Münsterberg: *Grundz. der Psychologie*, vol. i., p. 548-9.

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Mill: *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii.

thing like an order of preference. This is perhaps all we ever attempt to do, and even this is not always possible. And much has been made of this difficulty. It perplexes us indeed at every turn of life. But the differences on which our common ethical distinctions are founded are for the most part too palpable to be missed. Man's moral struggle is a struggle to escape ruinous and imminent disaster rather than an effort to follow subtle distinctions where only refined observation can detect a difference. The difficulty of applying to our conduct an order of preference based on affectional differences is therefore by no means fatal. A greater difficulty, if we give due regard to the functional origin of feeling, is to find any other basis.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GENERAL OR RATIONALISED VOLITIONAL END

WHAT we regard as the general volitional end is now perhaps clear. It may be summarised as the reduction of the several conscious activities to a rational and organised unity based on the principle of conscious choice.

This principle, as we have seen, prompts us in any given case to seek the fullest satisfaction for the volitional impulse. But our impulses conflict and cannot all be gratified. And even were there no internal conflict the conditions of life would compel us to forego much that we might be impelled to seek. Hence in order to become a rational principle, the principle of choice must be construed with reference to the conscious life and its environment as a whole. In other words, it must be applied in the direction of our energies to such particular ends as offer on the whole, in the character and completeness of our functional activity, the completest satisfaction of our volitional demands which the conditions of life allow.

Such a statement of the supreme volitional end is of course merely formal in its terms. The

content must be filled in from experience, general and individual, of the forms of activity which satisfy. And we cannot, from the nature of the case, conceive of this end as involving any attainment or possession which may be regarded as the final consummation of our ends. The volitional life is an organising process to which we can assign no fixed closure until death arrests the process. The end is progressive. In fact, in defining the end of the conscious life we have done no more than define the direction of its activities or the true law of its development.

And this law may properly be called a natural law. It is not indeed, like the laws of which we speak in the sciences of observation, a generalised statement of what actually happens. It is a norm or a merely directive law. But it is founded upon a basic fact of our nature, upon the fact, namely, that each impulsion, so far as it is free from interference by a rival, seeks full satisfaction. It is therefore implicate in the nature of the conscious life. And it would be the actual law if the conscious organism as a whole were completely organised in accordance with the principle which governs each impulsion as it severally takes control of the field of choice. In other words, it looks to the completest satisfaction of our nature conceived as a composite tendency in which each constituent has its recognised place. It is natural therefore in the pregnant sense that

it applies to the whole rather than to any mere part of our nature. Through it our whole nature tends to arrive at completest expression.

And while the law is natural in this broad sense we are justified in calling it the rational law. It is a generalised and rationalised statement of the principle which we all inconsequently and irrationally recognise in practice. We have no hesitation in calling the effort to seek the fullest satisfaction a rational effort where there is but a single impulse to gratify. A thirsty man, for instance, having nothing but his thirst to consider, would hardly escape question of his sanity if, with abundance of sweet water at hand, he should refuse to slake his thirst. He might, of course, have other things to consider. He might fear the effect of a too copious draught on an overheated system; or he might through his generous instincts be moved, like Sir Philip Sidney, by a fellow-man's greater necessity. What had been a simple situation would then become complex. But what new principle could we apply to the more complex situation? Taking human nature as a whole, and having regard no less to its beneficent or social element than to its so-called self-regarding aspect, we find no other principle which commends itself to a reasonable man than that which enjoins such direction of his activities as shall procure for him the completest satisfaction on the whole.

And this rational law, as controlling all the impulsions of our nature in the same general sense, is a harmonising law. Harmony, we have seen, is referable ultimately to some subjective test. Sounds, for instance, are most harmonious whose concord, as measured by this test, is sweetest or most pleasurable. Such a test for conscious experience generally we find in the general sensibility to pleasure and pain, taking these terms in their broadest intention. And by means of the law rationalised from the results of this test, we are enabled not only to modulate discordant tendencies, but to impart the greatest value, or, in other words, the richest harmony, to the general conscious content of life.

And, finally, this natural, rationalised, and harmonising law may be regarded as the true law of self-realisation or self-development. The self is, as a matter of fact, developed in many types, and as there are many existing types so there are many ideals of the self. It would seem, however, that these ideals cannot have all the same value. The self as conceived by the barbarian or the voluptuary or the practical materialist is a gross and shrunken ideal as compared with the self conceived in the full breadth of its capacity for life. And this broader self, if what we have urged is true, must be recognised as incomparably the more satisfactory self. It is the self, therefore, which, as rational beings

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seeking the fullest satisfaction, we should endeavour to realise; and the form of that more generous self must be determined ultimately, as we contend, through a consistent and intelligent application of the principle of conscious choice here enunciated. In this principle, accordingly, we find the principle which the theory of self-development requires to determine that form of the self which shall insure the completest self-expression.

To recapitulate, then, we find that the true law of self-development is identical with the law which guides us, through functional activity, to the completest satisfaction attainable in life as a whole. And this law is implicate in each conscious impulsion: each appetite demands full satisfaction. Here lies the natural basis of the law. But the conscious life is as yet ill organised. Our aims are conflicting, our acts inconsequent, and the discord which thus marks our functional life is reflected in the distractions and general low value of our feeling or our affectional life. Hence the problem of conduct is the problem of rationalising, harmonising, and completing our lives by so controlling our choice of ends that the principle recognised in the case of the particular appetite shall be applied to the conduct as a whole.

The consistent application of this principle, however, which in the mere statement seems so simple, is a task which our actual human nature

finds extremely difficult. This difficulty springs, we may say, from two main causes: the strength of the instinctive and subconscious bias, which overrides the broader and saner intention; and the restriction of the view in volition to a part only of the field of conscious choice. The former of these causes is often reducible to a case of the latter. Anger, lust, and fear, for instance, are in their intensity blind to everything but the objects of their own suggestion, and the broader human interest, the interest of the humanised self in beneficent and fruitful association with sympathetic minds, is thus shut out from recognition.

The field of view is limited also by our incapacity, even when we are unbiassed, to see far forward into the effect of our acts. None of us are, of course, exempt from this sort of restriction. Human affairs are highly complex. The consequences of what seems to be a trivial act may be so wide and far-reaching as to baffle our intelligence in the attempt to compute them. While therefore we may have no doubt as to the sort of actions enjoined on us by the principles we cherish, we have the most perplexing doubts as to the bearing and objective character of a particular act. For this reason, as well as for the reason that it is impossible to follow out in detail the whole of man's conduct, educational effort and the force of opinion are directed to the intent rather

than to the form of the act, to the general disposition of the will rather than to the particular determinations of the will. In the midst of the confusing problems of conduct we feel that the best guarantee of a just solution is the persistent desire to be just.

And here as elsewhere experience brings its lessons. A certain practical knowledge is acquired from day to day as we live and choose and act, and this knowledge, though unsystematised or unscientific in form, is of great value in the conduct of life. And much may be learned in a lifetime. But the individual does not begin with a blank sheet or depend on his own experience alone: he has the tradition of the race behind him. And as every disciplined mind starts with this tradition, and tends through its influence to correct or modify or enlarge the tradition, man's stock of wisdom is cumulative. We may hope that the world as it grows older will grow a little wiser.

And with the increase of wisdom we may hope, too, for increase of happiness. Happiness as a product of activities not exhausted in the amassing of "means," but effectively directed to the accomplishment of valid and ultimate ends, is as yet rare. We are for the most part engaged in the pursuit of provisional aims: our energy is expended in merely averting calamity, or in the animal occupation of saving ourselves alive.

Pain is our familiar prompter, and the dread of disaster casts a shadow on our sunniest hours. Hence the pity or contempt with which sage experience smiles at youth's dream of happiness, and a theory which in any sense relates the conduct of life to the pursuit of happiness seems, like the hope on which it is founded, to be an illusion. So our mentors are wont to insist. But the relative prevalence of pain, if proven, does not affect our theory. The principle of conscious choice remains the same whatever our position as between the poles of choice, whether we are engaged in the search for pleasure or mainly employed in the effort to avoid or mollify pain. And the law of life generalised from this principle remains the same. It determines only the direction of our efforts and requires no more of us than to make the best of such conditions as we find. Whether we lie under the frown of a sullen fate or bask in fortune's smile, melioration is its watchword: to mitigate evil, for evil to substitute good, for good to find a better good. But the good is relative always to some functional demand, and is good because it satisfies this demand.

## SECTION IV

### THE ASSOCIATIVE LIFE AND THE MORAL END

#### CHAPTER XI

##### SOCIAL UNION NECESSARY TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

IN the discussion so far we have treated our subject generally, taking human nature as we find it, and giving little attention to the conditions of its development. There is one main condition, however, which should be explicitly recognised as a condition which the ethical student cannot possibly ignore: the medium in which the individual lives and moves. Human personality is not an isolated growth, and neither human development nor the norm of human conduct were intelligible without recognition of the effect on the individual of communion with beings like himself. This social influence we have assumed. The man we have all along had in mind is man as an element of human society, but we have made no special study of the nature of the relation which the social individual holds to the social union. This relation we have now to consider.

We pause, however, before carrying our inquiry forward, to review certain conclusions that we have reached.

An organism, we found, is the seat of many activities converging to a common end. This end is, primarily, the conservation of the individual in the discharge of its functions. Among the latter is included the function of propagating the kind; and the discharge of this function operates to give the primary tendency, self-conservation, a remoter and broader aim, namely, the conservation of the species. But the conditions of life press so hard on the individuals of the species that not all are able to resist the pressure. Only the fittest survive; that is, such individuals alone as are most completely equipped for the struggle for existence maintain their existence.

The appearance of consciousness in this competitive struggle marks a new era in the development of the vital series. It is regarded, in fact, as introducing a new series, that of animal life. At any rate, dating from the appearance of consciousness, the activities of the individual begin to be directed to new ends, giving a new impulse to the development of the organism and the series. How these ends are gradually distinguished and emphasised we need not restate. Suffice it to say that a great part of man's conscious activity is directed to ends which have no immediate reference to his physical well-being at all. And the number

and scope of such ends increase as the conscious life develops, until at length the body is regarded as the mere instrument of the conscious functions rather than as the reason for their being.

There is, however, an element of the conscious life—and from this point we proceed with our inquiry—which marks by its appearance the beginning of still another series in the line of organic succession. This is the element of social feeling, or, objectively, the principle of association, through which this feeling finds expression. As the vital series would have been arrested, but for consciousness, at the vegetal stage, so the psychic division of the series would have been arrested, but for the principle of association, at the brutish stage. Man owes to this principle, if not his very existence as man, all that is characteristic of civilised man.<sup>1</sup> From the moment of its appearance it gave a new impulse to his development, broadened the sphere of his action, and began to work a change in his character. It was virtually a new principle for the organisation of his powers, and no man can set limits to the efficacy of this principle.

In the associative life the conscious individual, the knowing and feeling subject pursuing his ends, is still the ultimate conscious unit.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Pour l'homme lui-même, le premier terme de la série de ses succès n'est autre que sa sociabilité.—Frédéric Houssay: *Revue Philosophique*, May, 1893, p. 475.

<sup>2</sup> There is no social brain other than and separate from the

principle of conscious choice remains therefore valid. But the sphere of the individual's interests is expanded. The conscious subject tends, in proportion to the strength of his social feeling, his intelligence, and his experience of the associative life, to increase in capacity to grasp with vividness and detail the ends of his fellow-men, and thus to make other men's ends his own. An end does not engage the interest of the social subject merely as it inures to his personal advantage. It may become in a sense impersonal. An idea cannot, of course, become wholly detached, floating as it were *in vacuo*, but it may be conceived universally, that is, as independent of the fortunes of the thinking subject or of any particular man. A certain personal interest, however, in the universalised idea still remains: the subject takes personal satisfaction in its realisation. Truth, Liberty, Humanity, for example, are universal ideas the progressive realisation of which the individual may make his personal concern. And his interest may be so profound, his nature may find in their pursuit satisfaction so complete,

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brain of individuals.—B. Bosanquet: *Intern. Journal of Ethics*, April, 1894.

Society is not an organism with a single centre of consciousness. . . . But the name marks the essential fact, that although at any time the properties of the constituted whole are the product of the constituting units, those units have gained their properties in virtue of belonging to this whole.—Leslie Stephen: *Science of Ethics*, pp. 111, 112.

that for their sake he is willing to sacrifice his private ends and even his life.

Opportunity for the expansion of individual aims, however, and for the inner development which such expansion implies, would be wanting were there not in the associative life some mitigation of the severity of the struggle for existence. And some mitigation of this severity is implied in the very being of society. So far as men unite for any purpose they cease to contend. And such moderation or suspension of the struggle as the fact of society implies limits the application of the law of the survival of the fittest,<sup>1</sup> if by the fittest we mean those who are best equipped for the struggle. Survival of the fittest, as usually interpreted, presupposes continuous conflict. It is the effect of

<sup>1</sup> There is another fallacy which appears to me to pervade the so-called "ethics of evolution." It is the notion that because, on the whole, animals and plants have advanced in perfection of organisation by means of the struggle for existence and the consequent "survival of the fittest," therefore men in society, men as ethical beings, must look to the same process to help them towards perfection.—T. H. Huxley: *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 80. (Appleton, N. Y., 1894.)

À la lutte pour l'existence on a opposé avec raison l'association pour la vie . . . la grande loi à laquelle tout nous ramène.—F. Paulhan: *Rev. Philos.*, April, 1894, p. 403.

As to the value of the qualities by which the type is preserved, natural selection exhibits a fine indifference. . . . The lower type underbids the higher. . . . The low, miserable, degraded bacillus wages war with him [man] on equal terms, and in some places may be almost said to conquer and expel him.—L. T. Hobhouse: *Intern. Jour. of Ethics*, January, 1898.

fierce and uninterrupted competition for means of subsistence of which there is but a limited supply. But social feeling tends to harmonise or to identify ends which in its absence would conflict, and in the associative life competition is replaced, so far as the principle of association prevails, by co-operation. Room is thus provided for freer play of the conscious activities. Energy which was expended in securing a footing upon which to maintain the struggle for physical life is now liberated for the pursuit and achievement of the broader ends of the conscious life. The circle of life's aims and interests thus expands. And with this expansion goes increase of capacity to use and devise new instruments for the accomplishment of these aims. Human nature develops.<sup>1</sup>

The law of the survival of the fittest, on the other hand, is the law of man merely in his capacity of brute. As a biological law, moreover, it is a mere generalisation of fact. It simply describes a situation prevalent in the animal world. We seek a law of a different kind, a law, or norm, which shall enable us to satisfy most completely the demands of our nature. And the fact that brute nature, red in tooth and claw, has fought

<sup>1</sup> La civilisation met en valeur nos aptitudes; elle leur permet de naître en même temps qu'elle crée les besoins auxquels elles répondront. Les causes comme les fins de nos facultés sont essentiellement sociales.—Gustave Belot: *Rev. Philos.*, February, 1892, p. 218.

its way up through the vital scale by no means justifies the presumption that human nature, which is essentially social, can find its completest fulfilment through the adoption of the anti-social habit of the brute. So far as this habit survives, in fact, it tends to defeat any hope of such fulfilment. For man the promise of the future lies in what may be accomplished only through the co-operative activity of the social life.

It may be urged that any hope of suppressing the competitive habit is baseless, and by directing human effort to an illusory end can only do harm; that the struggle for existence is as continuous, as relentless, among men as among the fiercest of brutes; that it has merely changed its form from a physical struggle to a contest of wits. The struggle indeed continues. As to that there cannot be the slightest doubt. And yet if there exists among men any genuine social feeling, if there is any community of interests recognised at all, we must admit that the struggle is so far abated. And the fact of social feeling is indisputable. The sphere of its influence may be narrow, much profession of such feeling may be hollow, and we may deceive even ourselves in the disavowal of private motives when we are engaged in the pursuit of ends ostensibly common. But the feeling exists, and exists in undeniable strength. And the effect of its presence is to suspend, so

far as it goes, the anti-social conflict, and to introduce a new order of relations in which the formula "the survival of the fittest" must be abandoned or interpreted in a more human sense.

The substitution of this new order for the old is the ethical aim. Our thesis is, in fact, that ethical law is fundamental social law, or a summary of certain elemental conditions with which the social unit must comply that he may be fitted to play his part in the associative life.<sup>1</sup> And it will help us to understand these conditions if we consider, briefly, the nature of social feeling and the process by which social union is established.

<sup>1</sup> Toutes les vertus sont des conditions déterminées de la pleine vie sociale, comme de la pleine vie personnelle, par cela même d'une vie universelle et idéale.—A. Fouillée: *La France au Point de Vue Morale*, p. 233.

La moralité, en un mot, est la résultante de notre activité, de notre vie sociale, collective, comme la mentalité est la résultante de notre activité sensible, sensorielle, psychique.—Julien Pioger; *Revue Philos.*, June, 1894, p. 637.

By saying that a law is moral, we mean that it belongs to human beings as such, and not as belonging to any special class. This, in my view, amounts to saying that the moral law defines a property of the social tissue.—Leslie Stephen: *Science of Ethics*, pp. 167-8.

That which constitutes the measure of morality seems to be the actual . . . surrender of the will to the greater will of the system to which we belong. We cannot judge by the feeling of being good or bad; that is absolutely deceptive.—B. Bosanquet: *Psych. of the Moral Self*, p. 113. (London, 1897.)

## CHAPTER XII

### INDEPENDENT ORIGIN OF THE SOCIAL INSTINCTS

WE have referred to the associative life as the product of social feeling, and have assumed that this feeling is an essential element of our nature. Look backward as far as we may we find man associating with man. He appears at the dawn of history, and even in the barbarism which makes no written record, as living in social groups and seeking for the rude motions of his life a sympathetic response in the lives of his fellow-men.

But the social life yields more to the individual than this sympathetic response. It renders him service. He finds even in the horde, or whatever may be deemed the elementary social group, companions in the chase and comrades in attack and defence, that is to say, protection for his life and ampler means of sustaining life. So obvious indeed are the benefits of the social state that social feeling has been defined as little more than the sense of these benefits. Man loves his fellow-man, it is said, as he loves his axe or his spear, for the use he can make of him; and his

interest in his fellow-men exceeds his interest in these things solely for the reason that he finds no other instrument comparable with man in the accomplishment of his private ends. But the reduction of all interests to an egoistic interest has never been completely worked out. And there is a better explanation, as we shall endeavour to show, of the chemistry or ultimate constitution of social feeling than that which traces it to a sense of personal advantage.

Nor can the social instinct be treated as a mere amplification, through the association of ideas, of either the sexual or the parental instinct. The sexual instinct, as such, is perhaps as purely egoistic as any animal propensity whatever. So far as the parental instinct, on the other hand, has a social value, it appears, at least in its paternal aspect, to need as much support from mental association as the social instinct itself; and if in its maternal aspect it must be regarded as an original instinct, its social efficacy, or the conscious identification of interests which it implies, seems to be limited to the scope of the physical relation. The mother, as such, loves only her own child. Granted an active sympathy, independent of that which is bound up with the instinct itself, a woman's heart may respond to the appeal which she reads in the face of any child. But there appears to be nothing in maternal feeling, where the broader sympathy is

wanting, to convert it into a general social feeling.

And on the whole no explanation of the sympathetic or social impulse which reduces it to a mere by-product, in accordance with the laws of association, of impulses more elementary than itself appears to be satisfactory. Social feeling is of course affected by the association of ideas, the principle of association being general in its operation. But even though social feeling should be shown to be of later origin than certain other forms of feeling, there seem to be good grounds for regarding it as of independent origin, appearing as inevitably as egoistic feeling when in the development of the psycho-physical system the necessary cognitive or ideational basis is supplied.

Feeling, as we have seen, is the inner or subjective aspect of a psychic process which in its outward and cognitive reference is classed as a percept or an idea. My perceptions are of course my own. I may perceive the same object as another, but I cannot perceive it through the impressions of another: the sensory data must be mine. But it is otherwise with an idea. I may by suggestion adopt the idea of another. That is to say, I may infer from a certain facial expression, or from certain gestures, sounds, or symbols, what is in the mind of another, and the idea thus suggested becomes my idea. And this idea, being now my own, will, if not inhibited,

tend through my own motor system to act itself out. It is its very nature to seek expression. To a certain extent, also, it will have the same emotional tone as in the mind of the original owner. In fact, we may say generally, in view of the common basis of our nature, that like ideational processes tend to produce in different minds like affectional results: allowing for individual differences, men who are possessed of the same idea feel in the same way and give like expression to their feelings. It is true that these differences may be great. But they are due, at least in part, to a difference in power to interpret the symbols of an idea. Susceptibility to suggestion presupposes a certain refinement of sensibility and a certain grade of intelligence, and in these respects men are by no means alike. But when the cognitive and imaginative powers of a man are so far developed that he can form a just idea of the mental experience of another, or respond to suggestion, the suggested idea, taken by itself, will tend to express itself in the same way, approximately, as if the experience were his own. And the accompanying feeling will be the same in kind, with personal modification of course, as if he had gone through the same experience. So we feel another's pain, share his sorrows and his joys, and keep pace with his thoughts.

Ordinarily, however, the feeling which arises upon mere suggestion will not have the same

strength as that which is evoked by personal experience. The suggested idea loses something of its vividness in passing by suggestion from mind to mind, and therewith something of its affective power. The suggested idea is further modified by the fact that the dominant aims and inhibitory tendencies which in any given case may check the course of an idea in its emotional expression, or in its advance to its object, are in no two individuals the same. Thus the identification of the suggested with the original idea is never perfect. The suggested idea may even be cast out as repugnant to or incompatible with the ideas of the receiving mind. But so far as the idea is effectively grasped, and resists the personal influences which tend to change its character or diminish its strength, its effect on the feeling is the same in kind when its source is in the experience of another as when the experience is one's own. The sympathetic interest is, so far, as inevitable as the personal interest.

Ideas thus acquire their prevalence over many minds. Means of communication are of course presupposed wherever there is such sympathetic ideation with its attendant feeling. Ideas are not objects presented to sensuous or to a so-called noetic perception, or passing bodily from brain to brain. They are processes made intelligible by symbol. We read another's mind in his expression, his attitude, his gestures, his acts; and

we employ the artificial symbolism of speech for the expression of ideas that cannot be conveyed by the natural symbol. But our skill in the use and interpretation of our symbols, natural and conventional, varies. It increases, however, with increase in the refinement, resources, and general activity of the mind, and also, we may add, with increase in emotional power, the capacity for feeling being closely related to the capacity to entertain such ideas as evoke the feeling. The communication made possible by symbols becomes at length, between natures finest in texture and richest in resource, so swift and intimate that thought answers thought and feeling responds to feeling as if by direct contact. The sympathy may then be said to be complete.

Social or sympathetic feeling has thus an original basis in the form of our consciousness, and stands in no need of derivation from special instincts. We share the feelings of others so far as we share in idea their experience or their desires, and find in ourselves no countervailing impulsion to thwart the suggested idea in its natural course to fruition in feeling and action. And so we may explain the really social elements of conjugal, parental, tribal, or national feeling. The more closely we are associated the more readily we understand one another, and the special character of the association gives a special character to the consentient feeling. In maternal feeling the sym-

pathy is perhaps most complete, and there the identification of experience through the suggested idea is most complete. The mother knows every movement of the child, forestalls every need, and absorbs, as it were, the very consciousness of the child. And the feeling born of this intimate knowledge grows by what it feeds on. Her love creates opportunities for love.

And we may say, speaking generally, that the human consciousness is now so far developed that the capacity and the craving for sympathy are among its essential elements. In this capacity and craving we have the subjective grounds of the social life. Sympathy can be complete only as between kindred minds, and human nature, which is fundamentally everywhere the same, is completely reflected only in human nature. Hence the pressure of the demand for human companionship. We are constitutionally social.<sup>1</sup> The social impulse, it is true, is traversed and obscured by egoistic demands, and is rarely seen in purity and completeness; but so far as we are social we seek human companionship for companionship's sake, irrespective of its "utility" or egoistic advantage. A man craves com-

<sup>1</sup> Nor will any one deny that this affection of a creature towards the good of the species or common nature is as proper and natural to him as it is to any organ, part, or member of an animal body, or mere vegetable, to work in its known course and regular way of growth.—Shaftesbury: *Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit*, book ii., part 1, sec. 1.

panionship even when he eats, and the loftiest creations of the intellect bespeak the appreciative response of kindred minds. The social instinct, in short, pervades all our instincts. The self cut off from sympathy is an atrophied self, and in the midst of egoistic gratification wearies of life.

Seeing then that the self in the human type is the seat of a pervading social impulse, self-development is necessarily incomplete so long as the opportunity for social life is incomplete. A social nature can thrive only in a social medium. Hence the social impulse alone, impure as it is, were ground enough for the institution of society. We must live with mankind about us. We must breathe an atmosphere charged with human ideas and human feeling for the reason alone that our feeling and ideas are human.

But not only is the associative life a necessity of our social nature; it is no less indispensable as a means of broadening man's intelligence and developing his general conscious life. Without society, as we have said, there had been nothing of what we call progress. Art, science, literature, civilisation depend upon conditions which can be realised only in the social state, and especially upon that continuity of effort and cumulation of benefit which the social tradition makes possible.<sup>1</sup> Through this tradition the race holds

<sup>1</sup> The content of the intellectual and social environment is

what it has won, and as it is constantly adding to its knowledge and the instruments of its power the gap between man and the lower animate world is constantly widened. And what humanity yet may be and do we cannot know. But vast as are the possibilities of human capacity and effort, they are all contingent upon the interchange of ideas and the association of effort which are characteristic of the social life. Man in isolation were merely the most cunning of brutes, and his life "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."<sup>1</sup>

Thus every human interest demands for its due recognition a life of common helpfulness and associated action. Social union is the condition at once of collective achievement and of individual growth, and marks, as we have said, the beginning of a new period in human development. But what constitutes a union social? The social impulse is undeniably present, and men do in fact band together; and yet their association is far from being one of common service and harmonious effort. How is it that among beings constitutionally social we find constant irritation and opposition, and too often murderous conflict? Apparently men have not yet mastered,

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kept constant by the handing down of tradition through social heredity.—J. Mark Baldwin: *On Selective Thinking*; *Psychological Review*, January, 1898.

<sup>1</sup> Hobbes: *Leviathan*, part 1, chap. xiii.

or they fail to apply, the principles which control the organisation of a true social union. We may properly attempt, then, some sort of statement of these principles.

## CHAPTER XIII

### PRINCIPLES OF THE SOCIAL UNION

A TRUE social union will of course oppose no arbitrary impediment to the suggestions of social feeling. In it the identity of human nature, which is the ground of human fellow-feeling, will receive the fullest practical recognition compatible with the aims of associative action. The union is in principle a sympathetic union.<sup>1</sup>

Of course no man's attitude can be in all respects equally sympathetic towards all mankind. The fullest sympathy is impossible, as we have seen,

<sup>1</sup> And is not that the best ordered State . . . which most nearly approaches to the condition of the individual—as in the body, when but a finger is hurt, the whole frame, drawn towards the soul and forming one realm under the ruling power therein, feels the hurt, and sympathises all together with the part affected, and then we say that the man has a pain in his finger?—Plato: *Republic*, 462, C. D. (Jowett's tr.).

But it should be borne in mind that, however great weight we may attribute to public opinion, our regard for the approbation and disapprobation of our fellows depends on sympathy, which, as we shall see, forms an essential part of the social instinct, and is indeed its foundation stone.—Darwin: *Descent of Man*, chap. iv.

without intimate companionship and knowledge. The influence of the social spirit is most effective therefore among those who are most closely related, not necessarily by local bonds or the ties of kindred, but through community of ideas; and it diminishes as such community of ideas is obstructed by distance, by difference in language, by incompatibilities of temper and training, or by any cause which keeps the spheres of conscious activity apart. While all men, accordingly, may have a certain claim upon our sympathy in virtue of their humanity, the laws of feeling make it impossible that the same measure of sympathy should be accorded to all. No man can be to all men what he is to the few whom he knows well.

But while we must recognise perforce certain natural limitations to the expression of social feeling, a true society cannot, as the medium of the sympathetic life, restrict the range of our sympathies by barriers artificially interposed. Basing its union on the essential identity of our nature in spite of all difference it is bound in its own interest to emphasise the identity rather than the difference. The vital impulse can express itself only where it has way, and the broader the circle of our sympathies the broader the aims and active interests of our lives. Exclusion on the one hand is restriction on the other. The field of social activity and feeling should therefore

be made as wide as the conditions of life will allow. Society, having its reason for being in the opportunities it offers for enriching and expanding human life, contravenes its own principle when by arbitrary obstructions it dams up the stream of life.

Not every community, therefore, which calls itself a society has full title to the name. The constitutional demand for sympathy is of course to some extent satisfied wherever men are found living in communion. But society parts itself off into classes by lines impervious to social feeling. In some communities there is a class which is practically shut out of the social league, and everywhere we find that arrogant self-assertion, that arbitrary affirmation of will against will, which is the negation of social feeling. It were impossible, in fact, to point to any community where there is no wanton exercise of power, ranging from the assumption of petty social privilege to the assertion, in fact or in effect, of ownership in the person. And all arbitrary exercise of power, all effort to exploit a fellow-being and degrade him as a tool, is anti-social.

But the conditions of social union are by no means fully complied with in the mere removal of barriers to the expression of social feeling. There is no sharpening of faculty, no increase of resources, no expansion of interests in the mere massing of individuals, like the huddling of sheep

or the herding of cattle. To reap the full benefit of the social state there must be association of effort with apportionment of tasks and diversity of function, or, to borrow the economist's phrase, division of labour. The social union must be an organised union.

Such an organised union, confining the individual, apparently, to a single monotonous task, might seem to involve loss of faculty and of that sense of amplitude of movement and freedom of choice which is the charm of a varied life. But social organisation, while it demands of the individual a certain special skill, extends at the same time the general field of opportunity and interest. So many things are possible to organised effort, and through the interlacing of social aims the individual takes part in enterprises so numerous and varied, that the life of the citizen in a developed society is incomparably richer than the life of any tribesman, hermit, or hunter who seems to be sufficient to himself. Compare the activities of the "highly groomed" Goethe with those of the most versatile and self-reliant trapper. Beyond question organisation implies diversification no less than specialisation of function.

And while multiplying the ends and interests of life, organisation furnishes ampler means for their pursuit. It brings within easy reach things which, without it, had never been dreamed of.

And it not merely adds to the "goods" of life, and to the appliances by which man strengthens his feeble hands and sharpens eye and ear and every sense, but it apparently adds to man's native capacity for the general pursuits of life. Thus, while multiplying his ends, it in many ways increases his effectiveness in winning his ends.<sup>1</sup>

And this extension and diversification of employment, reacting on the feeling, enriches the distinctively social or sympathetic life. Social feeling does not exhibit itself apart or come unbidden into being. It presupposes common ideas, common aims, a common experience. It springs up among neighbours who lend a hand when a neighbour needs it, among workmen who supplement each other's labours, among citizens associated in the pursuit of the same civic ideals or in defence of the same national life. Like all feeling it depends on function. It craves companion-

<sup>1</sup> John Stuart Mill: *Prin. of Political Economy*, book i., chap. viii. See also book iv., chap. i., sec. 2.

Taking the human race as a whole, and not any one people, it appears that human development brings after it, in two ways, an ever-growing amelioration, first, in the radical condition of Man, which no one disputes; and next, in his corresponding faculties, which is a view much less attended to.—Auguste Comte: *Positive Philosophy*, book vi., chap. iii., p. 467 (H. Martineau's tr.).

*Per contra* Buckle: In the present state of our knowledge we cannot safely assume that there has been any permanent improvement in the moral and intellectual faculties of man.—*History of Civilisation in England*, vol. i., p. 127. (Appleton, N. Y., 1883.)

ship, but the companionship which satisfies the social nature is not the mere presence of a fellow-being, but a comrade's fellowship in the action, suffering, pursuits, aspirations, and directive ideas of life. And the more varied and absorbing the common experience and aims, the more complete is the development of social feeling and the deeper the sense of social satisfaction.

And as there are few activities of the ego that cannot be shared, the social or so-called altruistic life is not to be conceived as in necessary opposition to the life of the ego. It appears from what we have learned of the genesis of social feeling that the ego socialised is simply the ego expanded. All experience has its characteristic affective tone. Bruises hurt us, warmth and sunlight please us; misfortune depresses and good fortune elates us. And when the feeling becomes social it is not by the substitution of a different feeling, but by the modulating effect of the reflection of our consciousness in another mind. The appearance of this reflection is felt as an enlargement of the ego, and is a source of pleasure, mingling with and modifying the original feeling, and disposing us to welcome the presence of the reflecting mind. And this pleasure is reciprocal. The reflection is itself reflected, and there is on both sides an expansion of the ego, and of the affectional life. Social feeling, in a word, is pain assuaged and pleasure increased through sympathetic enlarge-

ment of the ideational and emotional field.<sup>1</sup> No hard and fast line may be drawn, therefore, between the functions which we distinguish as egoistic on the one hand and as social on the other. The self is condemned as egoistic or "selfish" only in so far as the individual contracts his activities and interests to the sphere of a personality so narrow that he becomes uncompanionable. The self of absolute selfishness would, in fact, include little more than animal functions. But none of us are restricted to these poor limits. The self must be in some degree social, and the distinction between the egoistic and the altruistic, between the selfish and the social, is for human nature generally a question of refinement and breadth rather than a question of function.

But enough has been said, perhaps, to enable us to determine the essential character of the social union. We conclude, gathering up the ends of our discussion:

(I) That the social union must be, first of all, a sympathetic union. In so far as the union is unsympathetic, it negates its own principle.

(II) That it must be, in the next place, a voluntary union. This is perhaps implied in the first condition. Sympathy attends only the spontaneous or independent movement of will

<sup>1</sup> Amor est laetitia concomitante idea causae externae.  
—Spinoza: *Ethices*, pars. iii., definitio vi., *in fine*.

accordant with will, and vanishes with the appearance of coercion. The union must be voluntary, moreover, to render associated effort most effective. An intractable, loath, or dissentient will is an element of weakness in any association, and is especially baneful where the ends aimed at require, as in social union, the continuous application of intelligent and reasoning minds.

(III) That the social union must be an organised union, each man having his due place and function in the common life, which demands service of all. Organisation is necessary to economise effort and multiply results. But in achieving the ends to which it is directly addressed, organisation indirectly develops man's capacity and enriches his feeling, and thus increases the general worth of life for the organising units.

(IV) That, finally, the ends which the union is organised to pursue must be rational ends, and the method of organisation that which is most effective in achieving these ends. Rational ends, as we have seen, are such as are determined by a rational or consistent application of the principle of conscious choice, or such as tend in their achievement to give greatest affective value to the conscious life as a whole. Society exists, so far as it is in fact social, to aid in the pursuit of such ends: it has no other reason for being. Founded for any other purpose the union would be a merely arbitrary union. And the

amelioration of society depends upon the elimination of its arbitrary elements and the progressive reduction of the union to conformity with its rational principle.

Summarising these conditions or characteristics of the social union, we may define such a union as a voluntary co-operative organisation of independent but sympathetic minds, united in a common effort to promote the rational ends of life, or ends generalised from the elementary principle which governs the particular choice.

Such a union is of course a mere ideal. No actual society can be defined in these terms. But the will, like feeling, waits on the idea. Humanity is engaged in the institution of a true society and should have some idea of the main features of the society it would found. We have endeavoured to outline these features in accordance with some ultimate principle of our nature, and we have found that the same principle which makes social life a necessity, namely, the demand for such functional activity as will most satisfy, determines also the constitution of the ideal social union. The ideal may never become in all respects real. But it is an end towards which we may continually advance: it serves to set the direction of our effort.

## CHAPTER XIV

### MORALITY THE BASIS OF THE SOCIAL UNION

TO socialise the will, or to prepare the minds of men for membership in the social union, is the essential problem of morals. There are, of course, other elemental problems which the social union has to consider. Questions arise touching the external form of the union and the administration of its affairs as a commonwealth or polity, and every advanced community concerns itself with the general education of its members. But such matters lie outside of what is regarded as the strict province of morals. The function of morals, as a discipline, is to strengthen and refine social feeling and dispose the will to social conduct; and ethics, or morals as a science, should furnish an adequate theory of the ground, object, and general method of such discipline.

And the questions of morals are still burning questions because men have as yet so little social aptitude. We are too near the earlier stages of morality. The social impulse takes its primitive form among family and tribal relations, and is at first closely confined to the sphere of such

relations.<sup>1</sup> Whatever is outside of this sphere is beyond the pale of sympathy, and the individual, unable to grasp the idea of a general fraternal union, is insensible to the broader requirements of such union. His will, too, as yet but rudely socialised by the rough requirements of his barbarous entourage, is egoistic, impulsive, inconstant, and violent. The will's need of discipline is as urgent as the mind's need of light. Such discipline practically involves, as we have said, the reorganisation of the will, and a task of such magnitude is but slowly accomplished. The habits of the will cannot suddenly be refined. Men live together. So far as we can learn, men always have lived together. But while men find it impossible to live in isolation, they find it also impossible to grasp the full intent of the social impulse and to freely co-operate in the pursuit of those beneficent ends which include humanity in their scope.

To make a beginning in the reformation of the will some restraint must be imposed on the arrogance of that blind self-assertion which is the antithesis of the social habit. This necessary discipline is in childhood enforced, with more or less judgment and firmness, by the parent.

<sup>1</sup> We have now seen that actions are regarded by savages, and were probably so regarded by primeval man, as good or bad, solely as they obviously affect the welfare of the tribe—not that of the species, nor that of an individual member of the tribe.—Darwin: *Descent of Man*, chap. iv.

In the childhood of the race it may be enforced by some ruler or conquering chief who, while pursuing a selfish end, curbs the violence of the unsubjected will. The effect of such repression is of course not directly or necessarily social. So far as it induces the servile habit it is distinctly anti-social, and taints the will with a vice more pernicious and more difficult of cure than any mere wildness. But somewhere a line must be drawn beyond which the extravagance of self-assertion cannot go. Without disabling the will for that independent volition which characterises the co-operative activity of a genuine social life, the ego must be taught some respect for the volition of others. Social freedom and contractual rights presuppose this respect.<sup>1</sup>

And civilisation begins where this regard for others begins, and where some systematic attempt is made to enforce it upon the refractory will. In all civilised states a steady effort is made to protect persons and property from violence and rapacity, to control the relations of the sexes, and, in general, to enforce respect for

<sup>1</sup> Diese Beziehung von Willen auf Willen ist der eigenthümliche und wahrhafte Boden, in welchem die Freiheit Dasein hat. Diese Vermittelung, Eigenthum nicht mehr nur vermittelt einer Sache und meines subjektiven Willens zu haben, sondern ebenso vermittelt eines anderen Willens, und hiermit in einem gemeinsamen Willen zu haben, macht die Sphäre des Vertrags aus.—Hegel: *Philos. des Rechts*, sec. 71.

each in his place and function as a member of the social union; in other words, to define and protect individual rights. Such effort may be at first neither consistent nor intelligent. Men are then too unfamiliar with social needs to distinguish the essential from the non-essential in social conduct, or to hold to any steady conception of the associative life. But at any rate a beginning is made in the systematic training of the will in social habit.

As civilisation advances rules of conduct which are found to be necessary for the common protection, or useful in promoting common ends, tend naturally to receive general approval and support. Such rules of conduct are approved and supported, as enforced upon others, even by men who want the inclination or the firmness to adhere to them with consistency themselves. Against the will of each is pitted the will of all. The individual feels all his life a persistent social pressure, a pressure which, however obstinate or violent the egoistic impulsion, he can never wholly shake off. It is effectively present indeed, as the psychologist assures us, in the very form of his thought.<sup>1</sup> And at length this

<sup>1</sup> Man is a social outcome rather than a social unit.—James Mark Baldwin: *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, part i., chap. ii., sec. 6.

The Self of any man comes to consciousness only in contrast with other selves.—Josiah Royce: *Outlines of Psychology*, chap. xii., sec. 115.

public approval, with its obverse of censure, becomes explicit and crystallises as social law, which is finally, in part at least, adopted by the community as positive or tabulated law. And society becomes a state when it is incorporated for the enforcement of such law.

We thus reach a definite statement of social law, enunciated with the authority of the public voice and enforced by penalties publicly inflicted. The process by which this consummation is reached is not always the same, and there remains always a large and varying body of unwritten law which from time to time modifies, as it is itself modified by, the written prescriptions of positive or enacted law. But in every state rights are in some sense defined, and provision is made for the enforcement of rights.

Meantime, while juristic and legislative effort is engaged in defining the outward relations of the social units, the inward development, of which social usage and the laws are the objective expression, still continues, and becomes itself more definite by reaction to definite laws. Rights outwardly enforced are by those in whom the sense of the common life is strongest and most intelligent spontaneously recognised; the social need tends to become more and more distinctly a personal need; and, finally, to respect all rights, or, abstractly, the Right, is conceived as a private obligation.

In time, when the speculative habit has been formed, the contemplative mind reflects on the source and extent of this obligation. It philosophises. It elaborates a theory of conduct based on what it conceives to be the ground of this obligation, and, impressed with the importance of making men feel the obligation, it undertakes to give practical expression to its theory. It seeks to clarify the conception of right and at the same time to strengthen the conviction that men should do the right. Thus there arises a new social discipline of deeper intent than the discipline of the state, embodying a theory of right or obligation, on the one hand, and a code of practical rules more searching and comprehensive than those of the state, on the other.

So arise the doctrine and discipline of Ethics or Morals. Ethics is at first hardly distinguishable from Jurisprudence and Politics,<sup>1</sup> and must always in virtue of its idealistic aims be closely related to Religion. It would seem, indeed, that all public functions were originally more or less merged in the ministration of Religion.<sup>2</sup> But as the associa-

<sup>1</sup> Ἡ μὲν οὖν μέθοδος τούτων ἐφίεται, πολιτικὴ τις οὔσα.—Aristotle: *Eth. Nic.*, I., ii., 9.

This, then, is the object of my treatise, which is of a political kind. (Browne's tr.)

<sup>2</sup> Quite enough, too, remains of these collections or earliest codes both in the east and in the west to show that they mingle up religious, civil, and merely moral ordinances without any regard to differences in their essential character;

tive life has developed the social functions have been specialised. Religion, it is true, while undergoing a development and purification of its own, still retains, as general curator of the idealising tendencies in our nature, its relation not only to morals but to all human effort and feeling. But certain functions, legislative, educational, artistic, which it once united in itself, have become at length disengaged, though they cannot be regarded as wholly independent of Religion or, in all cases, of one another. Politics and Morals for instance, have many points of relation. The state, which is deeply interested in the conduct of its citizens, cannot of course be indifferent to their morals. But its point of view is different from that of the moralist. In Statecraft or Politics it is the outward or formal act which is mainly considered, while Morality, as we have seen, deals more especially with the springs of action, that is, with the inner or psychic attitude of the social agent. Morality addresses itself distinctively, therefore, to the psychic unit, the individual man. Its essential function, in other words, is so to reform the individual will that the will to do right shall be spontaneous and constant.

It follows from what we have said that the right,

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and this is sustained by all we know of early thought from other sources, the severance of law from morality and of religion from law belonging very distinctly to the later ages of mental progress.—H. J. S. Maine: *Ancient Law*, chap. i.

if restricted to the field of such rights as are defined and enforced by the state, falls short of the Right as embracing all that is demanded in fulfilment of the moral purpose. The doctrine of rights, juridically defined, applies simply to the sphere within which each will be protected in his efforts to supply his own needs or satisfy his own desires, and this sphere is limited by the prescription of the law. The Right, as identified with the moral prescription, has a much broader scope. Applying to the intent rather than to the act, it requires that all acts whatsoever shall accord with the moral intent, and in its most developed form merges with that which Benevolence or Love itself might suggest.

The practical delimitation and adjustment of rights is undertaken in the public administration of justice. Justice is the determination of indeterminate rights in accordance with the principle upon which rights are founded, and the concept of Justice may vary as the concept of the Right has been seen to vary. Obviously there are limits to what can be accomplished by the machinery of public justice. The state, which installs the machinery, must content itself with rude appliances and address itself only to society's most imperious needs. It can demand little more than is necessary for the conservation of the social body. The citizen or social unit is therefore bound in the social interest, which presumptively is his

own interest, to supplement the minimum of righteousness demanded of him by the state with the more liberal measure suggested by the conception of Justice which is correlative with the moral concept of the Right. And to this generous service he is prompted by a quick and controlling sense of Duty.

Duty, as we are often told, is the obverse of Right. It is obvious that neither right nor justice can be done unless the citizen is willing to serve and support the social union in giving effect to its demands; and, granting the necessity of maintaining the social state, such service is society's due. The recognition by the individual of society's right to this service is the sense of Duty.<sup>1</sup> And as this sense of Duty, in its moral acceptation, arises from the recognition of any social requirement which the individual may reasonably satisfy, it is not limited to the sphere of rights which it is practicable for society to enforce. It is the obverse of Right in the broadest sense in which the individual apprehends the Right.

But the sense of duty, it should be noted, is not always guided by an intelligent conception of

<sup>1</sup> The good of communion, which regards society, usually goes by the name of duty, a word that seems more properly used of a mind well disposed towards others: whilst the term virtue is used of a mind well formed and composed within itself.—Bacon: *Adv. of Learning*, book vii., chap. ii.

what is society's due. In fact, the grounds of the obligation which it imposes are seldom looked for, the mandate of duty being by many regarded as a divine decree, either directly transmitted from without or, under the name of conscience, suggested from within. The sense of duty is thus conceived as carrying its own warrant, and disposes the subject to resent any question of its authority, or even any effort to seek a rational ground for its authority. To dispute it or to explain it is felt as an impertinence.

And in this intuitive or instinctive form the sense of duty, when it happens to be just, is practically most effective. It is by no means secure from misdirection, however, and it enters into the service of error with the same uncalculating devotion and delight in self-sacrifice with which it serves the truth. We follow it therefore at a certain risk. A mistaken sense of duty, taking good for evil and evil for good, may defeat the very ends which duty should bind us to pursue. Urgent as is our need of quick instincts and ready-made concepts which in a practical emergency can be instantly applied, it cannot be more urgent than the need that our conduct be directed aright. And it is plain that conscience, or the intuitive sense of duty, cannot always be right, since its mandates are found to conflict. The instinctive moral judgment is liable to error, and to detect its errors we must revert to the general principles

which are founded in the fundamental requirements of the associative life. Justice and Benevolence, Right and Duty, rest in the same ultimate need, man's need of the social medium for his development and the satisfaction of his profoundest wants. They are, in fact, but various aspects of the same organic law, the law of social union. And the aberrations of conscience, that is, of the instinctive moral sense, must be corrected by comparison of its demands with the principles of social organisation as disclosed in experience to considerate thought.

## CHAPTER XV

### PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER OF THE MORAL LAW

SOCIAL organisation is, as we have seen, a necessity. It is an indispensable means of developing the individual life and enhancing its affectional value. And the moral law, resting for its authority upon this necessity, defines the elementary social relations and the temper or general direction of the will essential to the consolidation of the social union. It lays down what we may call the volitional basis of social union.

And here, it would seem, we might properly undertake to systematise the precepts of morals, or to review with some particularity, in the light of the theory we are defending, the current moral concepts. But such a task does not fall strictly within the scope of our purpose. It is not with the superstructure but with the foundation of morals that we are concerned.

And we may the more readily be spared such a task in view of the presumption which goes with the ordinary moral requirements. Their origin is not of yesterday. They have been tested by the independent experience of many communities

through countless generations, and they have been tested implicitly or unconsciously by the standard which we have attempted to make explicit. We may assume, accordingly, that the moral consciousness of mankind, in all communities where it has had opportunity for free development, is in its main demands sound, that is, tends to strengthen the social bond.<sup>1</sup> Common morality is empirical, it is true, and shows something of the weakness of empiricism, something of its false perspective and inconsequence. Its maxims stand in need of a clearly defined principle by which they may be explained and harmonised, or more intelligibly stated. We have attempted to enunciate such a principle, and we shall carry our examination of the social or moral demand no further than is necessary to show its conformity to this principle.

We may observe, in the first place, as showing the relation of the moral demand to social need, that the value imputed to the social virtues is by no means constant. The emphasis varies with the varying pressure of the social need. History shows us communities of men in widely different stages

<sup>1</sup> I have . . . endeavoured to show that the social instincts—the prime principle of man's moral constitution—with the aid of active intellectual powers and the effects of habit, naturally lead to the golden rule, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye to them likewise"; and this lies at the foundation of morality.—Darwin: *Descent of Man*, chap. iv.

of social development, and as the moral demand in any given age and nation roughly represents the social need as then felt by the community, it should bear on its face some relation to the existing phase of social development. We should expect this of the true moral demand, that is, of a demand which should be based on a true estimate of social conditions and requirements. And this index of vitality we find in the actual demand.<sup>1</sup>

Physical courage, for instance, is in primitive times, when the community lies under a permanent threat of extinction by foreign foes, pre-eminent among the virtues. It is then, in fact, *the* virtue, the sign of virility or essential manhood. But as the community feels itself more secure and war ceases to be its main occupation, qualities despised by the warrior, or contemptuously approved as the virtues of an inferior order, come in time to outrank the more soldierly attributes. Industry, for example, or the capacity for continuous toil, has in our day lost the servile implication which it long carried over from more militant times, and commands the respect which its importance to the social fabric justifies. Mere indolence, on the other hand, though generally despised, is not branded as distinctly immoral. The reason is not

<sup>1</sup> Each of the leading modes of social existence determines for itself a certain system of morals and manners.—Auguste Comte: *Positive Philosophy*, book vi., chap. iii., p. 470 (Martineau's tr.).

far to seek. The eye of the community is most anxiously directed to the point where danger is most feared, and though idleness in a community which has ceased to be predatory were, if general, as fatal to the aims of society as stealing, lying, intemperance, or any recognised vice, and would at once arrest its growth, there appears to be no imminent peril of such arrest. Indolence, moreover, in an industrial community carries its own penalty. Men feel that the idle and thriftless may in general be left to the spur of necessity or abandoned with indifference to their fate.

No such obvious penalty attaches, however, to treachery and deceit, vices from which society is constantly in peril of disintegration. That men should be able to trust at least their associates is, even in rude times, a condition of associative action. Sincerity and good faith, qualities which inspire confidence, are therefore rated high, and the condemnation of falsehood and perfidy, especially as between "neighbours," is correspondingly severe. And with the increasing complexity of social relations which comes with social development the interdependence of the social units grows more complete, and the demand for qualities which inspire confidence becomes more general. In modern society, in fact, this demand is paramount. A man must trust his fellow-men at every turn; he must trust even where treachery is feared. It is inevitable therefore that in the scale of moral

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values a progressively higher rank should be given to the qualities which secure us against betrayal and justify our trust. When a man inwardly is that which outwardly he seems to be, when his actions are as his speech, and he meets us with the directness of a fearless simplicity, we feel that his character, whatever its faults of excess or defect, is in all essentials moral. Integrity is now, in place of valour, the type and summation of virtue. In this quality our complex society coheres.

Further illustration of the practical character and constant modulation of the moral demand may be found in the varying interpretation of the general virtue of temperance or self-control. Self-control implies a type from which by self-abandonment we may diverge. Guided by this principle, abstractly conceived, we should censure with equal voice all incontinence or aberration from the type. Society, however, looking to practical issues and economising effort, marks for special condemnation only such forms of incontinence as appear to involve grave consequence and threaten the social well-being. Instance anger, once the moralist's pet theme,<sup>1</sup> when impulses were violent and manners were rude, but less adverted to since manners were softened; and drunkenness, an intermittent mania which unfits

<sup>1</sup> L. Annaeus Seneca: *Minor Dialogues*; Plutarch: *Morals*; Epictetus: *Discourses*, book i., chap. xxviii.

a man for all social duty, and which is condemned for that reason, while gluttony, equally incontinent but less obviously harmful, is condoned. On the other hand, among violations of the principle of self-control which are condemned with increasing severity are certain forms of sexual excess. These, as the source of patent and immediate evil as well as of insidious and far-reaching social taint, are singled out for censure as in an eminent sense incontinent; and the censure is the more severe the more sensible man becomes of the injury wrought by vices which corrupt the social bond.

This shifting of the emphasis which society places upon the demands which we class as moral strengthens our contention that morality is founded in social need. Assuming that the moral law is organic social law, we should expect to find in a developing society subject to this law some variation in the rigour with which society enforces any particular rule. Relatively to all such rules, the great end alone, the complete social union of mankind, may be taken as constant. A uniform inflexible rule, or a mere indurated custom, divorced from the moral judgment and treated as itself the end, were therefore a sign of moral decadence instead of moral life. The social demand, to maintain its character as vital moral law, must show that it can shape itself with the plasticity of a vital principle as a means to the

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moral end. And something of this plasticity we have found in actual social law. In this respect at least social law coincides with what we have characterised as the true moral demand. And, so far, it confirms our account of the nature of this demand.

It is important to note, however, that the actual social demand, though pressed as moral, does not necessarily coincide at all points with the true moral demand, that is, with the necessities of the social situation as in truth it confronts us. Society, even in its moral development, does not cease to be an association of fallible human beings. Errors of fact and errors of judgment are reflected in all human law, and the social demand, which owes its validity to its identity with the true moral demand, may be, and sometimes is, but the expression of a social prejudice. Every community has the defects of its qualities, and every community looks with lenient eye on offences which spring from a prevailing moral weakness. A society, like an individual, may even mistake its vices for virtues. More than one nation has gone down, for instance, in the lust and exaltation of mere power.

While therefore we are bound to respect the garnered wisdom of mankind as expressed in the moral traditions of the race, it is of the last importance that such traditions be not received with the dread reverence which holds them too

sacred for analysis, question, or suggestion. Like the deliverances of conscience, they are, after all, human in their utterance. They constitute, undoubtedly, the richest gift which humanity can bequeath to its heirs, and no sound judgment will underestimate the force of a behest laid upon us with the whole authority of the past. But the moral life is in the end a personal life. It is the product of individual feeling and judgment reacting upon the general moral opinion and the traditions which it embodies. It cannot therefore be mechanically imposed from without. It demands the intelligent and sympathetic assent of the person, that is, of an independent and rational will. And the person, reacting to common opinion and the social tradition, contributes from his individual character and experience just that element which is necessary to vitalise the tradition, and convert it from a mere heirloom, the relics and exuviae of the past, into a valid and continuously developing law.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A time always comes at which the moral principles originally adopted have been carried out to all their legitimate consequences, and then the system founded on them becomes as rigid, as unexpansive, and as liable to fall behind moral progress as the sternest code of rules avowedly legal.—Henry J. Sumner Maine: *Ancient Law*, chap. iii.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PRESCRIPTIVE MORALITY AND THE MORAL SPIRIT

**B**UT were the actual demand, as embodied in any possible statement, cleared of inconsistency and error, it could not embrace in its prescriptions the complete moral demand. We may agree upon an abstract definition of the general moral end, and we may supplement the injunction to pursue this end with subsidiary rules, such as, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not steal, Honour thy father and mother, and the like. But we cannot completely or adequately define each immoral act, or, on the other hand, every act which we may allow to be moral. The juridical code we found to be restricted by the limits of its power to enforce its provisions. We may add that neither the moral code nor any possible code can definitely prescribe the whole course of human conduct.

Even such particular injunctions as we have instanced are abstract, and require interpretation as applied to any actual case. The term "murder" does not always define itself. For the same act, if the act has a political bearing, a man may be hanged as a murderer and lauded as a hero.

But wherever the relations of the parties to the act are of a familiar or well established type the necessary interpretation is furnished by tradition or precedent or common opinion. In private relations we are fairly well agreed as to what constitutes murder, and ordinarily we have little trouble in understanding what is meant by perjury or theft. Changes of relation, however, embarrass an old rule with new difficulties. Family life, for instance, has been disturbed by the intellectual emancipation of woman. But while the modern woman stands in open revolt against the rule, once general, that the husband may exact strict obedience from his wife, opinion is by no means agreed as to the accommodation by which a divided supremacy shall not lead to anarchy.

In public affairs opinion may be still more at fault. We find it floundering among principles none of which it will venture to gainsay, and none of which it knows how to apply. When the government, for example, imposes a discriminating tax in favour of a certain industry, opinion is divided as to whether the discrimination is or is not robbery. The laws, and the execution of the laws, against gambling and sexual irregularities offer further illustration of this divergence of opinion. In like manner the question whether murder lies at the door of a government which engages in the horrible carnage of war is a question about which, in any given case, the parties and

their adherents will wrangle without hope of agreement. That international action is amenable to social law probably no moralist would dispute. To the general human interest all interests must be made subordinate. But opinion is guided by no clear and well-recognised description of the particular public acts which run counter to this interest and which must be treated as national crimes.

It thus appears that the prohibitions of the moral code, simple and direct as we conceive them to be, are by no means exhaustive descriptions of the acts which they prohibit. They are adequate in common cases, where the common consciousness supplements with point and circumstance the abstract mandate of the code. But in extraordinary cases, where experience is wanting, or where the matter is too complex to be grasped by the common understanding, common rules are applied with hesitation and distrust. In fact, the moral disputation so frequent in ordinary discourse, touching, for instance, the obligations of a citizen, our duty to the poor, the limits of private resentment, show that undetermined cases arise even in the course of common experience. Life, in short, cannot be reduced to rule.<sup>1</sup> We may summarise in a rule the results of experience, and

<sup>1</sup> There are few laws the breach of which (in obedience to a higher law) morality does not allow.—F. H. Bradley: *Ethical Studies*, p. 142 (Anast. reprint).

where the case is simple and the experience common, the rule will commonly suffice. But where the rule fails, or where we are in doubt what rule to apply, we must fall back on the reason of all rules. We must recur to the general social law that whatever we do shall be done in the fraternal spirit which looks to the union of our kind in a common effort to enhance the value of life.

The moral life, in other words, requires the guidance of a judgment which is in sympathy with the moral end. The mind must be imbued with the moral spirit. The practical value of rules is indisputably great. They furnish us with a ready solution of problems which cannot wait for the laboured analysis of an unforeseen situation in the light of the general principle. And for the most part, as we have seen, they carry in the common thought their own interpretation. But the rule, without interpretation, is abstract, indefinite, and incomplete, and the same spirit which led to the acceptance of the rule must guide the conscience in interpreting and supplementing the rule. One need not be a philosopher, of course, to be informed by this spirit. The moral obligation may be divined, so to speak, with practical effect on the will, by a mind which has little skill to analyse or define the process by which its conclusions are reached. But in some way the tendency of the will must be harmonised with the moral aim. The moral life is the expres-

sion of a purpose, and one must be in some effective sense governed by this purpose in order to interpret and, when need arises, to supplement the prescriptions of the moral law.

Whether therefore we regard the precepts of morals from the point of view of justice defining rights, or of duty prompting service, or of goodwill scattering benefits, we cannot hope to grasp their true meaning unless we feel and share their intent. Justice applying the rule in indifference to the reason of the rule becomes irrational and oppressive, that is to say, unjust. Duty absorbed in the routine of service becomes mechanic and renders lifeless and inadequate service. The good-will which is merely personal becomes arbitrary, and even in private affairs pernicious; while in matters of public moment, putting the person before the state, it may corrupt the administration and debase the character of the state. The processes of self-development, even, lose their main impetus and interest, and tend to restriction and shrinkage of the self, if the personal good is conceived as dissociated from the common good. In fine, the moral spirit alone, intelligently pursuing the moral end, can vitalise the moral law, and build the acts of the will into a genuine moral life.

And the moral spirit is under every guise the same. Whether it wear the sad feature of Duty, or the stern visage of Justice, or the gracious mien

of Love, it is the same synthetic vivifying principle, reducing the strife of will against will, and blending the jarring elements of social life into a union of free, intelligent, and consentient minds. Duty must be done, duty which disciplines the will. And justice must be done, justice which strikes that it may heal. But when duty and justice are done, the moral spirit appears in its proper guise as Love, which alone can be in all things dutiful and just, Love, the formative spirit, whose office is to mould the contentious purposes of men into the strong and constant will of Man—

“ Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,  
Whose nature is its own divine control.”

## SECTION V

### MORAL DISCIPLINE

#### CHAPTER XVII

##### THE STATE'S RIGHT TO PUNISH

**W**ITHIN the boundaries of every social group is included an element which is so reckless in its disregard of social law, or the conditions of the associative life, that it threatens the integrity of the group. This unruly element society as the state undertakes by force to repress. The state prohibits by law offences against the peace and order of the state, and punishes, according to a graduated scale of penalties, infractions of the law. And in face of the ever imminent peril of social dissolution it shrinks from no necessary severity. As occasion requires it deprives men of property, of liberty, of life.

This punitive function the state everywhere assumes. Taking human nature as we find it, the distinction between right and wrong were futile if no effort were made to enforce the right, and to prevent or punish or redress a wrong.

And the general right of the state to inflict punishment will scarcely be disputed. There is some contention, however, as to the nature and ground of the right.

A common theory touching this right is that it is a form of the so-called right of self-defence, which is conceived as "inherent" or "natural," that is, as a right which neither requires nor is capable of explanation. Like other principles which resist our analysis it is regarded as ultimate. And the function of punishment, whatever else it is, is undoubtedly protective. As inflicted by the state, punishment is directed against attacks upon the social order, that is, against acts which threaten the very existence of society and the state. It may be regarded therefore as a measure of self-defence or self-conservation on the part of the state. But the principle of self-conservation cannot in itself be made the basis of a right. It is in accordance with the principle of self-conservation that a cat springs at a mouse, and the mouse acts upon the same principle when it struggles to escape. But, apart from ideas borrowed from human social relations, there is no question of right in the case. A right implies some principle recognised as common, and there is in the nature of the animals no common principle upon which a right could be based. The two natures are simply incompatible. The cat with its instincts persists at the expense of the mouse.

And we may say, generally, that there is in the instinct of self-conservation, which includes the instinct of self-defence, nothing which will lead us forth of the self, or tend to establish any ground of rights. It is indeed part of the endowment of human nature to which, as to other instincts and impulses, the doctrine of rights may be applied. But the gratification of the instinct is of itself not properly a right. It becomes a right only as permitted and defined by some principle which co-ordinates the self with other beings having a common nature, and by which place and limits are assigned to the operation of the instinct. I may defend myself, but with a proviso. It is not the instinct, therefore, but the instinct as subordinated to the principle, which falls within the field of rights.

This limiting principle we may trace, ultimately, to the social impulse and our social needs, which are tacitly assumed to be paramount to all other impulses and needs. The self conserving itself in the narrow or physical sense is in its relations to others mainly destructive. But the self conceived as a human being in the complete sense of the word needs, as we have seen, association with other human beings for the conservation and adequate discharge of its social, intellectual, and characteristic functions. Apart from society human life, we feel, would be relatively worthless. Hence the institution of society is our most im-

perious need. The social demand is supreme. And rights arise upon such limitation of the sphere of individual impulse and activity as is implied in the existence of the social order. Rights define, in fact, the boundaries of such activity, and the gratification of the instinct of self-defence, or of any propensity of our nature, becomes a right only as limited and allowed in conformity with the conditions of social life. If men lived isolated lives, if they recognised no common interests and engaged in no common pursuits, there would be no occasion for the definition or the conception of rights. An unqualified egoism would prevail. But men, being by nature social, are found everywhere associated in groups having a community of interests. Such community of interests can of course be maintained only on terms of individual restraint. The definition of these terms is the definition of rights. And what we call inherent or natural rights are simply the elementary terms of association which are so universally assumed that they seem to need no justification in any other principle. Natural rights and all rights are grounded in social need.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Das Recht ist also der Inbegriff der Bedingungen, unter denen die Willkür des Einen mit der Willkür des Anderen nach einem allgemeinen Gesetze der Freiheit zusammen vereinigt werden kann.—Kant: *Metaphysik der Sitten, Einleitung in die Rechtslehre*, sec. B.

Das strikte Recht kann auch als die Möglichkeit eines mit

The justification of the state, then, in punishing infraction of its laws lies ultimately in the necessity, universally felt, of the associative life. And as the essential conditions of this life, so far as they concern the general form of volitional action, are expressed in the moral law, punishment may rightly be inflicted only for violation of such laws as are either founded upon or in harmony with the moral law. The action of the state stands always in need of social or moral justification. Laws may in fact be arbitrary, that is, demanded by no social need. But no right vests in the state to punish infraction of such laws save the ill-defined right by which the state may claim, as universal protector, the obedience of its citizens even to laws which are not wholly just. The human mind could not devise a system of laws which should do no injustice, and it were better, in the social interest, to suffer a little wrong than to weaken the hands of the great conservator of right.<sup>1</sup> But the state is not clothed, in virtue of this concession to human fallibility, with the right to enforce obedience in respect of

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Jedermanns Freiheit nach allgemeinen Gesetzen zusammenstimmenden durchgängigen wechselseitigen Zwanges vorge stellt werden.—*Ib.*, sec. E.

<sup>1</sup> And thus among civilised people, after the distinction between law and morality is fully established, it comes to be understood that it is a specific moral duty to obey existing positive law, not only when we cannot see the reason for it, but when we think the reason a bad one.—Frederick Pollock: *Essays in Jurisprudence and Ethics*, p. 25.

all that it may choose to command, whether it be monarch, senate, or demos that stands for the state. History is not without examples, indeed, of government which, viewed in its general relation to its subjects, is organised wrong. But if the laws are fairly just, they are simply the assertion of principles which an offender, when he participates in the privileges of social life, himself asserts. In other words, as against society insisting on compliance with the true conditions of social order no man can have any right whatever, since rights arise only on the assumption that the requirements of social order are paramount. The moment a man asserts a right as a right he recognises social law and social obligations, and appeals to principles which justify punishment for infraction of the law. An anti-social right is a contradiction in terms.

In point of fact it were hard to conceive how any man may live within the body of society without being a party to the social convention. From birth man breathes a social atmosphere, and throughout life, in his acts, in his speech, in his very thoughts, as we have seen, he reflects the character of the social medium,<sup>1</sup> and assumes,

<sup>1</sup> Thus the normal inner life of reflection, of conscience, of meditation, and of the so-called "spiritual ego" in general, is simply, in us human beings, an imitation, a brief abstract and epitome, of our literal social life. We have no habits of self-consciousness which are not derived from social habits, counterparts thereof.—Josiah Royce: *Anomalies of Self-consciousness*; *Psych. Rev.*, September, 1895.

however wild his life, social obligations. By constantly asserting and enjoying rights, which are the terms upon which the social life is maintained, he accepts those terms. He may protest against certain of the terms actually imposed and denounce them as unjust. But the charge of injustice has no meaning except as implying recognition of the just, or of that which can be required as of right and which he is willing to accept. To justify himself, therefore, in refusing submission to tribunals where justice is administered, if such refusal be possible, he must withdraw from the general sphere of rights. He must abandon his fellow-men and fly to the woods or sail to some desert isle.

We repeat, then, that the right to inflict punishment is based, as is every other right, on the constitutional demand of human nature for human association. Man's need of society is imperative. But society, without the power to inflict punishment for violation of the terms of social life, were impossible. Man's need of society is therefore no more imperative than is the need for punishing infractions of social law. The necessity is in both cases the same, and it is for humanity supreme.

And the same considerations which make good the state's right to punish serve also to define the function and scope of punitive laws. The office of punishment is to preserve social order. The

state, or society in its executive aspect, finds punishment necessary to prevent certain acts which threaten the freedom of social life and the integrity of the state; and beyond what is necessary to prevent such acts the state has no right, save in educational discipline, to impose any penalties or pains whatever. It is the social necessity which confers the right to punish, and the limit of the necessity is the limit of the right. When, therefore, punishment is carried beyond this limit the right fails to go with it; that is, the punishment ceases to be just, loses in fact its character as punishment, and becomes a mere act of retaliation or a wanton infliction of pain.

It is sometimes urged that the proper aim of punishment is the reformation of the criminal. And it is true that punishment would be vain if it did not succeed, to some extent at least, in repressing crime, and in so far reforming the actual or possible criminal. In this sense all punishment by the state is reformatory: it checks the criminal intent. But to regard the house of correction as a mere school for the reform of the actual offender under duress were to miss the main efficacy of punishment. The main efficacy of punishment is in its force as a threat. If the effect of punishment went no further than the convict we could hardly consider it seriously as a social remedy at all. But the punishment inflicted for crime committed acts as a deterrent in the

minds of a number of possible criminals, who would cease to be deterred if punishment were robbed of its terrors and converted into a mere educational discipline for offenders who have been caught. And the threat is the more effective because it appeals to a social being and looks to the social good.

But while the prevention of crime must be considered as the primary aim of punishment, the reformation of the convicted criminal is an important secondary aim. It is clearly in the interest of society no less than of the criminal that punishment should be educational, so far as it can be educational without ceasing to be deterrent. Punishment, as a remedy, is an appeal to men's fears, and while fear may prevent us from doing harm it cannot of itself operate as a motive for good. It may be employed, as in the training of children, to induce the form of the moral habit pending the development of a true moral spirit. But fear alone cannot inspire the positive good-will which is the essence of the moral spirit. The effect of punishment for good is therefore negative and indirect, and if it were possible, generally, to replace the fear of punishment by a positive motive inspiring good-will, the appeal to fear would be but a blundering makeshift. It is but a makeshift at best. Its justification is, as we have said, its necessity. It operates quickly where delay would imperil the social order,

and it operates in cases where gentler means, the direct appeal to good-will, would be ineffectual. There can be no doubt, however, that the appeal to fear might be made less urgent if more attention were given to the instillation of just ideas and to the discipline of the will before the criminal intent has matured and the criminal habit is set, and more effort were made to correct the conditions which foster criminal desires. Though the function of punishment is not primarily educational, the necessity of punishment might by educational discipline and social reforms be greatly reduced.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PUNISHMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

PUNISHMENT, it appears, is a conservative device applied by the state to certain morbid conditions in the body of society which imperil social institutions. And its operation is intended to be general. Its direct purpose is neither to remedy the mischief actually done nor to improve the character of the man who has done it. Its intent is broader than this. It is meant to give effect to a permanent threat directed against whatever criminal tendencies may be lurking in the corporate life of the state, and to prevent such tendencies from maturing in the criminal act. By correcting the will it seeks to forestall the act.

The question of punishment is thus a question of the artificial readjustment of motives. The moralist insists, it is true, that the natural effects of conduct are adequate, without art or coercion of the state, to resolve the purpose of the rational mind in favour of virtue. A man's action, we are told, evokes in the agent himself and in his social environment a reaction which is certain and sufficient. But the main impulsion of our minds is instinctive rather than reflective, and the animal

and self-regarding instincts are in most men still overweighted or the scope of the social instincts is too narrow. As against the train of evil tendency or the tumult of passion, therefore, the sane and social motive needs reinforcement. And such reinforcement is intended to be supplied through fear of the punishment or pain which is artificially subjoined by the state to violation of the social or rational law.<sup>1</sup>

It follows, now, since punishment is addressed to the will, that none but voluntary acts, or acts which, themselves not intended, are directly traceable to voluntary acts, are properly obnoxious to punishment. Acts which do not proceed from the will cannot be influenced, of course, by motives addressed to the will. A hunter who kills his companion by the accidental discharge of his gun does not will the death of his friend, and is not amenable therefore to the penalties which attach to wilful homicide. If he was negligent, however, in the handling of his piece, his negligence was wilful, and, inasmuch as the result was such as might have been foreseen, deserves punishment more or less severe. So the sentinel who lies down at his post, and then involuntarily falls asleep,

<sup>1</sup> L'esprit de l'homme a devancé l'organisation du groupe, et l'on a tâché de remédier aux défauts naturels de l'homme et de la société par l'organisation d'une sanction artificielle destinée à suppléer aux insuffisances et aux injustices de l'autre [the natural sanction].—F. Paulhan: *La Sanction Morale*; *Rev. Philos.*, April, 1894, p. 404.

may be punished, because he knows when he voluntarily throws himself on the ground the difficulty of keeping awake. The point of application is in all cases the will. The act of the will may be remote from the act reprehended, but it is not too remote so long as the volitional act is known by the agent to be in determinative relations with the act for which he is punished. And it is not too remote because punishment may in such cases be effective. Reaching the will, punishment reaches the known consequences of the wilful act. Hence a man is held in law to will the known or probable consequences of any act which he wills. Where, however, the point of application in the will is wanting, where, for instance, the consequences of an act could not have been foreseen or suspected, the threat of punishment could not have influenced the will to act, and punishment would necessarily be futile and therefore unjust.

The fear of punishment, again, can serve as a deterrent to such minds alone as can appreciate the relation between the act and its penalty, that is, can understand what the punishment is for. Hence punishments enforced against ordinary offenders are not inflicted upon children or the insane. Where the mind cannot perceive the intent of the penalty, or the nature of the act from which the will is to be deterred, the threat of the penalty is from the nature of the case inopera-

tive, and punishment is a useless infliction of pain.

It does not follow, however, that the discipline of pain is wholly inapplicable to a defective or undeveloped mind. Such discipline we apply to young children, and a relatively low order of intelligence can learn to appreciate a constant relation between acts and pains. So the horse learns to mind the rein and the retriever to bring back his bird. But pains so inflicted are educational rather than punitive. Their effect runs no further than to the creature that suffers them. Yet even here, the object being to induce certain habits of action through the education of the will, the relation of punishment to the act forbidden must be made plain. In other words the intelligence of the disciplined mind must be such that when desire impels to the act some representation of pain may be associated with the idea of the act.

Having briefly but perhaps sufficiently discussed the purpose and scope of punishment, we turn to the question of responsibility, which is indeed but another phase of the question of punishment.

When an act has been done which on its face is punishable it is not always apparent on whom the punishment should fall. We ask then, who is responsible? A bridge breaks down, for instance, when crossed by a train of cars, and the result is an appalling loss of life. We look for the

cause. We know, of course, that the accident as a physical event is the effect of many co-operating causes. These however are of interest to us, when we undertake to fix the question of responsibility, only as pointing to some volitional agent but for whose act of omission or commission the accident would not have happened. If it can be shown that the bridge was sound, that the abutments were firm, that the train was proceeding at no greater speed than ordinary prudence would suggest; if, in short, it appears that no reprehensible or punishable act formed an essential element in the composition of causes which produced the disaster, the question of responsibility is eliminated. No man is responsible. The act is, in common-law language, the act of God. If it appears, however, that the engineer, anxious perhaps to make up for lost time, was driving, in disregard of his instructions or of the dictates of prudence, at an excessive rate of speed, we say he is the man on whom punishment should fall. Or if he is incompetent we may say that the man who appointed him should be punished. Responsibility for the accident is then fixed.

The question of responsibility is thus bound up with the question of punishment. Punishment, it is true, may in cases not classed as criminal take the form of mere reparation, which, in the public administration of justice, is distinguished from punishment. But the distinction, though

important in determining whether the injurious agent shall be made to suffer in purse or in person for the injury done, may be disregarded here. Any man is responsible who may properly be punished, or in some way made to suffer, for an injurious act. The terms are convertible. The general conditions under which punishment may justly be inflicted are therefore the general conditions which determine the fact of responsibility. The offence must be voluntary, either directly, as being the deed actually intended, or indirectly, through its known or knowable relations to the intentional act; and the aim of the prohibition, or the threatened penalty, must be understood. If a man by false information which for good reason he believes to be true misleads a traveller to his hurt, he is not responsible. Nor should we hold an idiot or a little child responsible for setting fire to a house. The harm may be in either case as great as if it had been done with full knowledge and with deliberate intent to injure. But the conditions of responsibility are wanting. The injury done by the false information cannot be traced to any fault of the will, and so could not have been prevented by the introduction of motives designed to correct the action of the will. In cases like that of the idiot or the child, the relation of the act to any penalty subjoined to the act is beyond the grasp of the mind, and fear of the penalty could not operate therefore as a deterrent

of the will. The cases are not of the kind to which the threat of punishment applies; or, in other words, the agent is not responsible.

It may happen, however, where there is no doubt of the fact of a man's responsibility, that there is still some question as to the degree in which he may be held accountable. And the limits between which his accountability may range are wide. An injury inflicted as intended involves, for a mind of normal clearness and strength, complete responsibility. An injury, on the other hand, which is but the remote effect of an act not injurious in itself involves less responsibility than an injury directly intended; and the responsibility will be proportionate, other things equal, to the degree of certainty with which the injurious effect could have been foreseen. A guardian is not required to make good every loss incurred through investment of the funds of his ward. But he is bound to exercise care. A man cannot foresee all the consequences of any act, and he must in any case take the risks of his act; but the responsibility of a trustee is the greater as the risk which he takes as trustee is known, or should be known, to be greater.

But the capacity to foresee the consequences of an act, or to appreciate its risks, varies in any given situation with the intelligence of the agent. Standards of conduct also vary, as we have seen, on different levels of civilisation. Strictly speak-

ing, therefore, the degree of responsibility too should show parallel differences. And a lately reclaimed savage would not, in fact, be held in a court of morals to the same rigorous accountability as a graduate of the schools or a man versed in affairs. Public law, however, cannot, in ordinary cases, recognise such a distinction. Any general attempt to make such a distinction would lead only to confusion, since the law has no practicable means by which it could classify men generally in accordance with a graduated scale of responsibility. Much is left nevertheless to the discretion of the courts. And in the exercise of this discretion the courts do as a matter of fact take into consideration, when fixing the penalty for an offence, the youth, inexperience, and other circumstances bearing on the measure of accountability of an offender. The law makes its penalties more or less elastic for the very purpose of allowing this discretion.

But the limits of responsibility are not passed when we have passed the jurisdiction of the courts. There are many acts prejudicial to society with which the law cannot deal without working greater mischief than that which it seeks to cure. Ill temper, avarice, ill-will, for instance, and even good-will ill directed, may work irreparable harm without transgression of any law which it is practicable to enforce; and there are social irregularities which cannot be suppressed without such tyran-

nous supervision of private affairs as would put an end to personal freedom. For such extrajudicial offences men are responsible to society in general, and the only punitive remedy applicable in such cases is that of private censure or of an adverse public opinion. But punishment in this form loses something of its artificial character. So far as it springs from an instinctive and spontaneous source rather than from a cool intent to pronounce the social verdict, it may be classed among the natural consequences of evil conduct.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, conduct may be censured with much natural feeling and yet with the distinct intent to punish in society's name. Even judges pronounce sentence with a fervour of indignation. It is not easy, therefore, to draw any absolute line between the superposed and the self-wrought effects of wrong-doing. We might indeed apply the term punishment to the total reaction of pain upon the evil or anti-social act, and so persistent is our demand for the punishment of wrong that we do in fact so apply the term. Whatever a man suffers for his acts is regarded as in punishment of his acts. The criminal has to fear the retributive justice of both gods and men. But there are practical reasons for emphasising the artificial character of punish-

<sup>1</sup> Compare Bentham's account of what he calls the physical and the moral sanctions.—*Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. iii., secs. ii., iii., v.

ment, as such, since we may fail, regarding the artificial and obvious penalty as complete and sufficient, to be impressed by the wide and ever extending scope of the natural outcome of evil. On the other hand we may cherish the illusion, when the artificial and obvious penalty is wanting, that evil is immune. This is a costly error. And to avoid this error the truth should be grasped and firmly held that suffering follows by inherent law both ignorance and wrong; that suffering, of pain or privation, is their natural fruit.

And the bitter fruit of wrong should suffice to deter us from wrong. But the bitterness of the fruit cannot be anticipated by all or appreciated in the foretaste. For the ruder or more sensuous intelligence the pains of requital must hit the sense with strong and obvious impact; the natural sequence must be accentuated by the heavy intonation of human law. But by spirits more finely touched the necessary issue of evil, in the nature of the agent no less than in the acts and attitude of his fellows, is seen to be so far-reaching and profound that the threat of the law is by comparison idle. And it is a main part of the office of the moralist to expose this natural fruitage of evil.

## CHAPTER XIX

### RESPONSIBILITY AS RELATED TO FREEDOM AND CAUSATION IN WILLING

IT is implied in the theory of punishment here advanced that the volitional agent may be controlled from without. Through pain or the threat of pain, the theory asserts, we undertake to check or correct certain known vices of volitional action, a procedure which involves the causal determination of the willing subject.

But causal determination is held to be incompatible with freedom. The causal sequence, we are told, is a necessary sequence, and necessity is the antithesis of freedom. And with freedom destroyed what becomes of human responsibility? So far as our doctrine involves the causal modification of the will it would seem, in the light of this objection, to cut away the ground of freedom and responsibility alike. The point, though much laboured, demands consideration.

If we examine the relation of cause and effect in the inorganic realm we find there, taking the ordinary view, no room for freedom. Given the cause, the effect, we say, *must* follow: the effect is determined in form and made necessary as an

event by the cause. Like causes, we observe, acting under like conditions yield invariably like results; and, impressed by the certainty of this sequence, we conceive of the effect as controlled through some external necessity imposed by the cause. Heat, we commonly say, makes metals expand; the wind sweeps the sea, driving the waves in its fury and dashing them helpless on the shore; and our whole planetary system is controlled by the irresistible might of the sun. That is to say, we impute to the cause a certain coercive force which, acting upon some weaker body, constrains it, as it were in the sheer arrogance of power, to the production of the effect.

But the record of the causal event is scarcely so simple. Abstracting from the fact that the universal system is the permanent condition of all causation, the cause as agent is powerless to produce its effect without the co-operation of the reagent or of the material upon which it acts. Even in merely mechanical action the body which seems to be overborne is represented to the full extent of its nature and power. Action and reaction are equal. The effect is in all physical events the resultant of the action of agent and reagent both, and the stress of our assumption that the effect must perforce follow its cause is simply the strength of our conviction that things will act invariably according to their nature. The necessity is in our thought. What we see

is uniformity of action under uniformity of conditions: the methods of nature are constant. Without this constancy, in fact, there were neither nature nor the thought of nature; and we think an effect of a certain kind must follow a cause of a certain kind, when the conditions are the same, because that is what invariably happens. The necessity imposed upon our thought by the nature of things we in turn impute to nature. The effect appears as the triumph of a tyrannous and irresistible cause.<sup>1</sup>

The consequence of this habit of our thought is to divest every natural object of its particular nature and force. Overlooking the power immanent in each several thing, and referring it always to some external or antecedent thing,

<sup>1</sup> Metaphysical or philosophical necessity is nothing different from . . . certainty.—Jonathan Edwards: *The Will*, part 1, sec. 3.

What is our idea of necessity, when we say that two objects are necessarily connected together? . . . After a frequent repetition, I find, that upon the appearance of one of the objects, the mind is *determin'd* by custom to consider its usual attendant, and to consider it in a stronger light upon account of its relation to the first object. 'Tis this impression, then, or *determination*, which affords me the idea of necessity.—Hume: *A Treatise of Human Nature*, book i., part iii., sec. xiv.

All that, strictly speaking, we know of the material universe is this succession of events. . . . The principle or virtue by which one event is conjoined to another we never see.—William Godwin: *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, vol. i., p. 367. (London, 1796.)

we virtually deny that power anywhere is, while affirming that it is always produced. Coming from everywhere, we seem to say, it is yet resident nowhere.

There must be some misunderstanding here. Every element or object is what it is in virtue of its constitution as an origin of force reacting to all impinging force, and whatever the relations into which it enters, through constructive or destructive change, it acts in accordance with this constitution. It were as legitimate therefore to maintain that its action, being the spontaneous expression of its nature, is always free, as to insist that the power in presence of which it thus expresses its nature necessitates or controls its action. Take a case in illustration. We find enumerated among the properties of water that it solidifies, under ordinary pressure, at zero, Centigrade, and boils at one hundred degrees; that it is neither acid nor alkaline in its action on vegetable colours; that it is a poor conductor of heat. These and other properties constitute its nature. But how shall it arrive at the expression of this nature? How may it exhibit its properties, or even as water exist? Clearly only in the presence of conditions. Hence the presence of conditions, including what we call the cause, may as fitly be conceived to offer the opportunity for action as to impose the necessity for action. We may say, indifferently, that at

zero, Centigrade, water *will* freeze, or that at zero, Centigrade, water *must* freeze; we may regard the transformation as a spontaneous expression of the nature of water, or we may regard it as necessitated by a fall in the temperature of the air. The fact is in either case the same. The difference is merely a difference in our attitude towards the fact.

In the inorganic world then, we may say, the concept of necessity and the concept of freedom coalesce. But we learn from this discussion that the concept of freedom is relative to our idea of the nature of the thing whose freedom is in question. And we have so little to say, in general, of the freedom of things inorganic for the reason that the thing and its nature are in our minds so completely identified that the question whether the thing will act according to its nature does not arise. Iron, gold, feldspar, and quartz exhibit everywhere their well-known properties. They are always what we conceive it is their nature to be, and nothing occurs to them to disengage the idea of freedom. The whole inorganic world is conceived as fast bound to the chain of Necessity, without so much as a struggle to be free.

In the organic world, on the other hand, the nature or type under which the individual is conceived is such that the individual only in rare cases fully exemplifies the type. The individual and the type are thus disengaged in idea, and the

actual organism is compared and contrasted with the type. It is the nature of the germ to expand into the tree; of the tree, to bear fruit. But the germ may never unfold, the tree may be blasted before it matures. We look at the organism as it were from within, and if it unfolds according to the conceptual form which we regard as its nature we look upon its growth and expansion as free. On the other hand, if from any external cause, that is, from any cause by us distinguished from this inner and natural tendency, the organism is checked in the expression of its nature, or fails to become what under favouring influences it tends to become, we regard it as restrained of its freedom.

It is in the organic world, therefore, that the concept of freedom first acquires practical significance. We assume in the organism a principle tending to express itself in characteristic form and to accomplish a definite cycle of change, and it is to this principle, identified with the nature of the organism, that the concept refers. Freedom is the unobstructed working of this principle; any impairment of the activity of this principle is an impairment of freedom. The plant, for example, which has earth, air, sunlight, and moisture in abundance expands, as we say, naturally or freely, and exhibits in completeness the characters of its type. If it is parched by drought, or eaten by pests, or crowded by too thrifty neigh-

bours, or otherwise fails of the opportunity which its full development demands, its freedom is abridged, or, in other words, it lives a cramped and "unnatural" life.

And so in respect of all organised being. The individual is regarded as the seat of a distinctive principle which constitutes its proper nature, and which it tends as it develops to exemplify in full character and detail. And the freedom of the individual is freedom or opportunity to follow this tendency unthwarted.

Meantime, whatever complexity we find in the nature of the organism, we discover, as we have already had occasion to say, no break in the network of causes which binds the individual system to the system of nature in general. Action and reaction are as constant and uniform here, so far as we can see, as in the inorganic world. And yet there is nothing in this causal activity which annuls the possibility of freedom as we have defined it. Causation is, in fact, implied in such freedom. Without the action and reaction which bind the organism in causal relations with the general system of nature the organism would have no opportunity to exhibit or unfold its individual nature, or, in other words, to assert its freedom.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> En dehors de toute considération morale, la liberté dont la pratique a besoin est compatible avec le déterminisme: elle n'est qu'une forme supérieure de déterminisme conscient.  
—A. Fouillée: *Revue Philosophique*, May, 1895, p. 462.

The opposition between causation and freedom thus disappears. It is only when freedom is conceived in a different and, as we must insist, an illicit sense, namely, as affirmed of the action of a causeless cause, that any incompatibility is seen. Yet this illicit use of the term is not without some show of support in the facts. In conscious systems, that is, on the higher levels of organic activity, the action of the environment may undergo in the organism a metamorphosis so complete that its causal efficacy is in great part veiled from our observation. And the metamorphosis is the more complete the nearer we approach the human type. About the doings of man, in fact, our ignorance leaves a breadth of obscure or unseen activity so great that it seems to exempt his will from causal influence, and lends to his volitional acts the appearance of complete spontaneity.<sup>1</sup> Man comes and goes, lies down and rises up, as seems good to him. He moves at the suggestion of his own ideas, which occur without apparent excitation from without; and yet, while the acts which they prompt cannot be traced to the system of nature as effect, they enter into the system of nature so effectively as cause

<sup>1</sup> Ex his enim sequitur . . . quod homines se liberos esse opinentur, quandoquidem suarum volitionum sui que appetitus sunt consci, et de causis, a quibus disponuntur ad appetendum et volendum, quia earum sunt ignari, ne per somnium cogitant.—Spinoza: *Ethics*, pars i., prop. xxxvi., ap.

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that the will is sometimes assumed to be the original type of a cause. There is in human volition what thus appears to be an absolute initiative: the will seems to be a causeless cause. And this apparent initiative is identified with our freedom.<sup>1</sup>

We have in this interpretation of human action the antithesis of what we found in the interpretation of the activities of the inorganic world. There we saw the external view prevailing to the exclusion of freedom. Here we find the internal view, out of which the concept of freedom arises, occupying the thought so completely that it excludes the concept of causation, with the necessity which it is supposed to involve, as inapplicable to the genesis of the will. But the break in the continuity of the causal sequence is merely the presumption of our ignorance. No actual break has ever been shown, and our practice implies that there is no break. We assume in our penal and educational institutions, for example, that volitional action may be modified by discipline and punishment, and the whole procedure of civilised communities rests on the assumption that volition, as a psy-

<sup>1</sup> The metaphysical theory of free-will, as held by philosophers (for the practical feeling of it, common in a greater or less degree to all mankind, is in no way inconsistent with the contrary theory), was invented because the supposed alternative of admitting human actions to be *necessary*, was deemed inconsistent with every one's instinctive consciousness — J. S. Mill: *Logic*, book vi., chap. ii.

cho-physical fact, is subject to causal influence. Where there appears to be a break we simply follow our clue as far as it leads us, and lose it. There are gaps indeed in our knowledge of the connection of merely physical events, but as each accession to our knowledge of physical nature reduces the number of such gaps we have come to infer the causal sequence even where we cannot trace it. And as we have reason to believe that psychical changes are related, through the corporeal system, with the general system of nature, the conclusion seems inevitable that nature, organic or inorganic, brutish or human, is everywhere what we find her to be wherever we can follow her, a body of unbroken tissue, all of one piece.

We hold then that human volitional action relates backwards as well as forwards in the causal system. It is consequent as well as antecedent. And yet there is a germ of truth in this doctrine of the human initiative which we ought not to miss. The activity of nature implies interacting elements, and in that universal interaction which constitutes the life of nature each element, as we have said, must be regarded as a seat or origin of power. Such original power we must recognise in the psycho-physical activity of man. We cannot assume, of course, that human power is original in the sense that it is an absolute addition to the universal sources of power. We must conceive it as coming with the elements of

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which human nature is compounded. But while it may be regarded as co-ordinate with all the manifestations of power in nature, it has in its human investment a distinctively human initiative and character, and gives new direction, depending on its human quality, to the forces on which it reacts. It is in this sense an original factor in the processes of nature's continuous creation.

And it is as such a causal factor that human nature manifests its freedom. Indeed it could neither act nor assert its freedom, which is freedom to act, unless it were in causal relations with the system of nature. All that we need, then, to resolve the antithesis between freedom and causation is a just conception of freedom. Freedom, as we have said, presupposes causation, and appears wherever the distinctive nature of the individual appears. There is no organism in fact which does not transmute impinging force in its own sense and so assert its nature and its freedom. Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles, and the wolf does not surprise us with the characters of the lamb. Each acts as it is its nature to act. And the more complex or highly developed this nature, the more potent it is in giving direction to the reactions of which it is the seat, and the more significant is the question of freedom. Its potency is greatest therefore in the conscious activity of man. And there too freedom is most apparent.

## CHAPTER XX

### HUMAN FREEDOM RELATED TO THE EXECUTION OF THE VOLITIONAL IDEA

WE have seen that the external or exciting causes to which human nature reacts undergo in the human system a process of elaboration so complex and recondite that their part in volitional action cannot always be traced. But we cannot because of this obscurity deny the existence of such causes. We must allow, unless we are prepared to isolate the system, that they are essential to the maintenance of the conscious organism in its functional life. They are the threads by which its tissue, so to speak, is interlaced with the system of nature in general.

But the human system is conscious only in part. Its conscious activity is bound up with the activity of a physical system which performs certain functions without conscious direction, and may be treated as having a nature of its own, tending only to its own conservation and thus constituting an object of study by itself. The physiologist and the physician may properly consider whether this system, the body, is freely developing its nature; whether, in other words,

it is in a state of health. That is a question of pathology or of hygiene.

But the ethical student is directly concerned only with the conscious activity of man, and, specifically, with the field of volitional action. We must admit, of course, that the relation between the two systems, the physical and the psychical, is extremely close. In fact they are set apart only for the purpose of special study, and constitute together but a single system, the state of the body being sometimes quite obviously represented in the direction of the will. The composition of the blood, the flow of the secretions, the relation of waste to nutrition, are all, as they are normal or abnormal, reflected in the tone of our conscious states, and through the relation of the accompanying sensations to the current of our thoughts may influence volitional action. But physical conditions arrest our attention only when they are morbid, and then we seek medical advice. The ethical student has enough to engage his attention when the physical conditions may be assumed to be normal.

The field of ethical inquiry, then, is the will rather than the physical basis of the will. Human nature, for us, is conscious human nature seeking satisfaction in the realisation of ends which it has consciously chosen and demanding freedom to pursue its ends. But in referring to the will we do not intend that it shall be regarded as a separ-

able entity or power, having a distinguishable nature within the nature of the individual conscious subject. Apart from this subject it has neither nature nor freedom of its own. The will is, in other words, the individual conscious subject, the man, addressing himself to action, and the freedom of the will is the freedom of the man to advance to his ends or to execute his volitional idea.<sup>1</sup> What we call the mandate of the will is in fact nothing but this idea, inhibiting within the subject all influences or ideas incompatible with itself, and advancing by a constitutional law to its own accomplishment. And for our purpose, the volitional idea embodies, for the time being, the "nature" of the man.

For us, then, the will is the man. And, bearing in mind that it is the freedom of the man as willing and not of any hypostatized entity called Will that is in question, let us look at some of the cases as they confront us in practice. Under what

<sup>1</sup> To talk of liberty or the contrary as belonging to the very will itself is not to speak good sense. For the will itself is not an agent that has a will. . . . That which has the power of volition or choice is the man or the soul.—Jonathan Edwards: *The Will*, part 1, sec. v.

Liberty belongs not to the will . . . but to the agent or man.—Locke: *Human Understanding*, book 2, chap. xxi., sec. 20-21.

But in all instances, the proper *subject*, that which acts or is acted on, is not the faculty or the organ, but the *Unitary Ego*. This Ego *knows*; the Ego *wills*; the Ego *feels*.—James Martineau: *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii., p. 13.

conditions may we say that the will is free, and under what conditions is its freedom impaired?

Where the restraint is simply physical the case presents no difficulty. A man bound hand and foot or shut up within four walls has lost his freedom. And he regains his freedom, that is, the will to move, or to execute any act which such restraint makes impossible, is free when his fetters are struck off or the prison door is opened. Here there is nothing to suggest any distinction of the will from the man. When the body, which is the immediate instrument of volition, is restrained the will too, however we view it, is restrained: it cannot advance to its ends; and in ordinary parlance it would be said, as we also should say, the man cannot have his will.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By "liberty" is understood, according to the proper signification of the word, the absence of external impediments: which impediments may oft take away part of a man's power to do what he would.—Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan*, chap. xiv.

In this, then, consists freedom, viz., in our being able to act or not to act, according as we shall choose or will.—Locke: *Human Understanding*, book ii., chap. xxi., sec. 27.

The plain and obvious meaning of the words Freedom and Liberty, in common speech, is power, opportunity, or advantage, that any one has, to do as he pleases. Or in other words, his being free from hindrance or impediment in the way of doing or conducting in any respect as he wills.—Edwards: *The Will*, sec. v.

By liberty, then, we can only mean a power of acting or not acting according to the determinations of the will; that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may. Now this hypothetical liberty is universally

So far with respect to physical restraint. But even where there is no physical restraint, but merely the dread of it, the coercion is scarcely distinguished in practice from that which is in fact physical. So also when through fear of pain or the dread of death a man is driven, at the point of the pistol for instance, to give up his purse or open a safe. The fear of death is of course psychical, as is also the fear of pain and even the sense of pain. But the mental recoil from the idea of pain or restraint or death is in such close relations with the instinctive or reflex movements of the body that the coercion where such dread is inspired is conceived as physical. At any rate it leaves the actions of the man only in a limited sense under volitional control.<sup>1</sup> There is a certain range of conscious action, varying in breadth from man to man, which is so completely organised in accord with the physical principle of self-conservation that it is practically outside of the field of volitional choice. At the muzzle of a gun the average man has no will. That is to say,

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allowed to belong to every one who is not a prisoner and in chains.—David Hume: *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sec. viii.

In speaking of agents as free, it is intended to declare them free from compulsion or constraint by extraneous force, and free for actions resulting from their own nature and constitution.—Shadworth H. Hodgson: *Metaphysics of Experience*, vol. iv., book iii., chap. vi., p. 125.

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle: *Eth. Nic.*, iii., i., 3.

he abandons his own volitional ends to satisfy those of another. He is not free.

In case of moral restraint, however, the situation is not so clear. Here the restraining influence is the idea not of physical restrictions or pains but of the attitude of another mind. The boy who shrinks from the censure of his teacher or the jeers of his companions, the duellist who fights lest he should be called a coward, the writer or speaker who shifts his position under the criticism of his public, yields to this sort of restraint. In some cases, however, such influence ceases to be regarded as coercive. It may convince or persuade, that is, the will may be changed, or adopt a new end, as the result of criticism or comment. And if the will itself is changed, if the man adopts a new volitional idea, his freedom in willing must be judged as in relation to the end which he now seeks and which now represents his nature.

But what do we mean by "adopting" an end? And why, when pain or the dread of pain, physical or moral, deflects the will, should we not assume that the will here also adopts a new end, namely, to avoid the pain, and freely follows this end?

The concept of freedom seems to be properly applicable to the willing subject or the ego only as the ego advances unimpeded to ends in which it seeks positive satisfaction. Pain prompts to nothing but measures for relief from pain, and the satisfaction afforded by such relief is pleasant

only by comparison with the pain. For distinction's sake we may call this negative satisfaction. When, however, the field of choice is open the subject pursues such ends alone as in themselves or in their pursuit yield pleasure or positive satisfaction. Pain is thus conceived as alien to the will, and when pain is the incentive to action it is regarded as obstructing or coercing the will; it distracts it from ends which the man would pursue in the unhampered discharge of his functions, which alone yields positive satisfaction. Pain implies, in fact, an obstruction of function. A volitional end changed by the dread of pain, which dread is in itself painful, is thus a thwarted end, and indicates, so far as it goes, that violence is done to the nature of the man. And he is, so far, restrained of his freedom. Where the man on the other hand, is convinced or persuaded, he pursues a new end, that is, seeks a new form of positive satisfaction, and thus makes the new end his own. Hence we say that he "adopts" the new end. In fact we do not consider that he is convinced or persuaded until he is satisfied to take the new attitude, or sees in the pursuit of the new end an opportunity for activities in which he takes pleasure. And so long as the new volitional impulse is unimpeded in its course to the new object he is free.

For the purposes of this discussion, then, we conceive that the nature of the ego is expressed

in the free activity of the will, or in the unimpeded advance from the volitional idea to some end or object which the ego finds satisfaction or pleasure in pursuing. It is not to be confounded, therefore, with the supposed general character or average tendency of the will. Nor can we, in this inquiry, identify it with what we call the man's better nature.<sup>1</sup> Freedom of the will is freedom to act. We might say that it is freedom to choose, but restriction of choice means only that in certain cases the man is not free to act as he will.<sup>2</sup> And for the purpose of determining whether the willing subject is or is not free the will must be defined by its actual end or aim as expressed in the volitional idea. The will, in relation to freedom, is the will to advance to a certain end.<sup>3</sup> The end may be near or remote, simple or complex; its attainment may involve the discharge of great

<sup>1</sup> It is clear that if we say that a man is a "free" agent in so far as he acts rationally, we cannot also say—in the same sense—that it is by his own "free" choice that he acts irrationally, when he does so act.—H. Sidgwick: *Methods of Ethics*, book i., chap. v., sec. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Freiheit ist die Fähigkeit eines Wesens durch selbstbewusste Motive unmittelbar in seinen Handlungen bestimmt zu werden. . . . Nicht dass eine Wahl stattfindet, sondern dass die Wahl selbst eine freie sei, erscheint uns als das wahre Kennzeichen einer freien Handlung.—W. Wundt: *Ethik*: dritter abschn., erstes cap., 3, a, S. 397-398.

<sup>3</sup> Sans doute, quand nous essayons de nous représenter le vouloir, nous n'y parvenons qu'en l'incorporant dans un objet,—désir de telle chose, vouloir de telle mouvement.—A. Fouillée: *Rev. Philos.*, June, 1892, p. 584.

muscular energy, with violent incursion into the world of things, or it may involve no more than the play of the features or the utterance of a word. But the will, whatever its end, is the will to do; and the end, however vague, must be so far distinguished that it may determine the conscious activity in one direction rather than in another. To the will in general, or to the will as the mere abstract possibility of willing, which, hypostatised as the Will, has imported so much confusion into ethical inquiry, the question of freedom is irrelevant.<sup>1</sup> Freedom, we repeat, applies to the will only as the man willing addresses himself to the attainment of some end so far defined as to influence his conduct. And if the man, seeking satisfaction in an end which he wills, or making the end his own, may without let or hindrance accomplish his will, he is in his willing free; so far as he is obstructed in the attainment of his end, he is restrained of his freedom.

It is perhaps important to note, further, that volition is not to be conceived as a process *in vacuo*. As we have said, the social environment is always presupposed. And the pressure of social opinion is felt in advance of any particular determination of the will. A body of traditions, tendencies, and judgments presses upon the individual before he addresses himself to the achievement of any

<sup>1</sup> To will in general is impossible.—F. H. Bradley: *Ethical Studies*, p. 139. (Anast. reprint.)

given end. And this pressure is constant. How, then, can the will of the social unit, formed under this constant pressure, be in any sense free? We can only answer that as a certain atmospheric pressure is essential to the proper aëration and circulation of the blood, so a certain weight of social opinion is necessary to the complete expression of the nature of the individual, that is, to the freest volitional action. The life of the ego is, in fact, a continuous reaction to this pressure, which, as we have seen, affects the form of the whole conscious life.

It should be added also that the acts and ends of life are so closely interwoven, and so much of the conduct of life is determined by the idea of remote and comprehensive ends, that neither the intent nor the act of the moment can be regarded as complete in itself. And there lies within ourselves an undiscovered realm from which emerge things as strange to us as are the contents of another mind. It is only in part, therefore, that we understand our volitions or our freedom. But the inquiry into the freedom of the will is, as we have said, a practical inquiry; and if we cannot always determine precisely what we will, or the freedom we may enjoy in the execution of our will, this does not affect the general position here taken. We are free only in so far as, with the will set to an object, we have way and means to do what we will.

## CHAPTER XXI

### MORAL FREEDOM AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

THE question of freedom arises, as we have seen, only upon the appearance of a volition or the will to act. It implies nothing as to the anterior development of this will: it takes for granted a will now existent and seeking satisfaction in its object. And there must be an object. A man does not assume the volitional attitude, or, in other words, he has no will, until he has settled upon some end or idea which by some act or course of action he undertakes to realise.

This idea is the intellectual element in volition. But the idea, we have seen, need not be defined with particularity or precision in order to become an object in volition. One's conception of the right in general, for instance, may constitute such an object; for though the right in general is an abstract or symbol of an indefinite number of acts, for each of which there must be a distinct intendment of the will, it is also something more than a mere abstract. It means, to the penitent, for example, the forsaking of certain namable companions, the surrender of certain darling

vices. It is thus an object at which the willing subject can aim. Otherwise nothing were willed: there were no determination to reform. And not until this object is so far defined as to give new direction to the will can the question arise whether the will to do right is or is not free. Freedom relates, in other words, to the execution, not to the formation, of the will. Up to the point where the man addresses himself to act upon his idea the idea which may become volitional is not yet will. The will is still in the making. The idea becomes will when, through its cerebral concomitants, it initiates the motor processes which issue in movements appropriate for the realisation of the idea.<sup>1</sup> And, as we have said, the will is free when, being identified with the self, or directed to an end in which the self seeks satisfaction, it discharges itself unimpeded in the act or acts to which the motor system is adjusted by the volitional idea. An end relatively remote may require a number of such adjustments, at each of which the question of freedom may arise afresh. The question must then be settled at each such adjustment. And it may appear that the willing subject is free with reference only to certain of its intentions, and not free with reference to its end as a

<sup>1</sup> In "deliberation" the last appetite or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that we call the "will"; the act, not the faculty, of "willing." Hobbes: *Leviathan*, chap. vi.

whole. It remains true, however, that as a practical question freedom relates to the execution, not to the formation, of the volitional idea.

What shall we say, then, of the doctrine of man's moral freedom? Simply that it is true. Inasmuch as in all questions of moral obligation the course of the will to its object, the right action, is assumed to be open, the fact of man's moral freedom, in the sense that he may do right if he will, cannot be disputed. That we must assume this course to be open is clear, for otherwise the obligation would not lie. The right act is always an act which, assuming that the will to do right is present, is within the scope, or may be brought within the scope, of the man's capacity to perform. The act thus depends upon the man's will alone. If he has the will to do the act, the act may be done, otherwise he would be under no obligation to do it.

And this freedom from impediments external to the will is all that is properly implied in the assertion of moral freedom as a ground of moral responsibility. If the way is open, if means and opportunity for the execution of the will are offered and nothing but the will is wanting, the fault lies of course in the derelict himself. The responsibility for failing to do right is then fixed. That is to say, the will or volitional disposition of the man becomes the point to which the usual correctives of the will may now be applied.

But it is sometimes urged that the question of

moral freedom and of the responsibility which it involves may be pushed back of the motor idea essential to volition. We have insisted that the will, that is the man, is free if when willing he may do as he wills. And he is morally responsible because, when he is willing to do right, there can be nothing foreign to his will to prevent him from doing any act to which he is morally obliged. But it is asserted, as bearing on the question of responsibility, that a prior question may be raised. We are asked, not whether the man is free to do as he wills, but whether he is free in the sense that he can will to will, whether, in other words, a volition can be the object of a volition.<sup>1</sup>

The question is psychological rather than practical or moral. Moral responsibility is responsibility for conduct, that is, for one's outward bearing or actions, rather than for the mental states which do not issue in action. Of course the trend of the thoughts, since thought tends to act itself out, cannot be ignored by the individual himself or his monitor. But it is only the overt act that society can deal with when it is awarding punishment or distributing censure; and

<sup>1</sup> Dem empirischen Begriff der Freiheit heisst es: "frei bin Ich wenn Ich thun was Ich will": und durch das "was Ich will" ist da schon die Freiheit entschieden. Jetzt aber, da wir nach der Freiheit des Wollens selbst fragen, würde demgemass diese Frage sich so stellen: "kannst du auch wollen was du willst?"—Arthur Schopenhauer: *Preisschrift über die Freiheit des Willens*, i., 1, c.

it censures or punishes the individual as it finds him, that is, as a man undissected and whole. But inasmuch as freedom and responsibility seem to go with the will, whatever its object, it is pertinent to ask whether the will to will is indeed a true willing. We should say that it is not. Psychologically, perhaps, the will to will might with some straining be brought under the category of volition. We should then have a volitional idea the content of which is not the performance of any external act, but the formation of another volitional idea; and the realisation of the first idea would be the formation of the second. Is a man free to execute this sort of volition? We can only answer that sometimes he is and sometimes he is not. Instincts which were quiescent in the first stage of the process, the so-called will to will, may appear later in unsuspected strength and prevent the formation of the will to act. But the process is not unfamiliar. It is known in common experience as making a resolution. And whether a man can or cannot carry out a given resolution, or convert it, when the time for action comes, into the will to act, is a question which perhaps few, and very likely not even the man himself, would undertake to answer.<sup>1</sup> If he cannot,

<sup>1</sup> We must therefore accept the conclusion that each such resolve has only a limited effect: and that we cannot know when making it how far this effect will exhibit itself in the performance of the act resolved upon.—H. Sidgwick: *Methods of Ethics*, book i., chap. v., sec. 5.

should we then say that his freedom in willing is restricted? That would be to use the words out of their ordinary sense, and to confound the meaning of two terms, resolution and volition, which we have good practical reasons for keeping distinct. Ordinarily we do not speak of a man either as willing or as free except in relation to his acts. Nor do we hold him responsible in merely resolving or willing to will. Freedom and responsibility are practical concepts. They do not apply to an anatomised subject, or to some merely psychological phase in the formation of the will to act. It is in what the man does as a man that we deem him free or restrained of his freedom, and it is the man as affecting other men that we hold responsible. In other words, it is conduct that we judge, punish, and reward.

But the confusion of thought which appears in the attempt to apply the concept of freedom to the genesis rather than to the expression of the will appears in other forms. The study of the natural sciences, now so generally pursued, disposes the student to apply the concepts of his science to every domain, even to the conscious life of man. Hence, if he is caught by the fallacy which lurks in the word "necessity," he may be heard to argue that moral freedom, and indeed all freedom, is an illusion. Even the student of sociology, weighing the influence of heredity, education, association, and other abstractions to which we assign

the rôle of psychical "forces," may conclude that certain deviations from the right are inevitable. How then, he may ask, shall a man be held responsible if he does wrong? And what is punishment but an added wrong?

Questions like these, which have found their way into literature and have given rise to much sentimental moralising, present no serious difficulty under the theory of causation and freedom which we have defended. In effect they have been answered already. Responsibility follows freedom, and neither is incompatible with causation viewed as a linear series of changes in that universal action and reaction of original forces which constitutes the system of nature. And responsibility, like freedom, assumes the will to act, by whatever means generated, as already given. The ordinary plea in evasion of responsibility is an averment that the act complained of was not the act of the will. Such a plea, when its averment is established, must be recognised as valid. But if the offender should allege, not that he did not will the offensive act, but that he in fact did will it, pleading however that he could not help but will it, we should have a quite different plea. The plea in the one case is that the man is not responsible for his *act*, on grounds which are in practice recognised as sufficient, and which leave the common doctrine of responsibility unimpaired. The plea in the other case is that the man is not respon-

sible for his *will*, or volitional idea, and would, if by such a plea punishment could be evaded, empty the term responsibility of all content. And these two pleas are confounded as one. It is assumed as self-evident that if a man is not responsible for the constitution which is practically effective through his will, he is not responsible for the acts of his will.

The assumption is unfounded, and rests upon a mistaken conception of the meaning of responsibility. In his efforts to ameliorate his social condition man must make a beginning somewhere: something must be taken as established. Where responsibility is imputed and punishment is inflicted it is the will to work social harm which is taken as the point of departure. We are bound, of course, in the economy of effort, to trace evil to its source, and, if possible, to dam up the source. But we cannot go back indefinitely. The chain of causation is infinite,<sup>1</sup> and if the attempt to fix responsibility should require us to refer each cause to an ulterior cause, in search of an ultimate cause, the result would be to paralyse effort in advance and strip the word responsibility of meaning. In practice the ultimate cause must be one which is to some extent under our control, or reacts to our

<sup>1</sup> Jede, auch die einfachste Willenshandlung ist . . . Endglied einer unendlichen Reihe, von der uns stets nur einige der letzten Glieder gegeben sind.—W. Wundt: *Ethik*, dritter abschn., erstes cap., 1, c., S. 377.

activity; and the ultimate cause sought for in any investigation intended to fix responsibility is the will. With the will something may be done. That we have learned from experience. Where there is question of responsibility, therefore, the inquiry begins with the evil or anti-social act, and harks back to the will to act. There we touch a point at which remedies may be applied. And there, save so far as is necessary to determine the severity of the punishment or the nature of the remedy, the inquiry ends.

The fact, therefore, that the volitional act is involved in causal or systematic relations with society and the world is so far from absolving the agent from responsibility for his act that such relations are presupposed when punishment is inflicted. The disorder in the will, however caused, is a present fact, and the remedy proposed is one that has been found, in its general results, more or less effective. And were it not absurd to insist that a remedy, or a new causal influence, may not be applied for the reason, indeed, that the disorder itself is not uncaused! The physician does not relax his efforts in the abatement, say, of malarial fever, because the conditions of its presence may be traced to the incidents of remote geologic time. His art requires no more than that he shall be sure of his diagnosis and of the fitness of his remedies. And this is all that is required in punitive treatment or social therapeutics.

We conclude, then, that there is nothing in the recognition of the volitional act as effect which resolves away the freedom of the agent or cuts away the ground of responsibility. The agent is free if he can consummate the volitional act, that is, if he can have his will; and if he knowingly wills a harmful act he is responsible for the harm. Punishment is a general remedy for the correction of the injurious will. That volition as a psycho-physical fact is caused, or has systematic antecedents, is doubtless true, but is here immaterial. The purpose of punishment is in a general sense to heal, and the will, like the wilding fruit, may be in systematic relations with the universal activity and yet be amenable to treatment. In fact, it must be causally related or we could not deal with it at all.

## SECTION VI

### RELATION OF MORALITY TO HAPPINESS

#### CHAPTER XXII

##### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

WE have seen that among the fundamental principles of our nature is a demand for the maximum satisfaction attainable through functional activity in its various forms, and particularly through such activity as is directed to volitional ends. This demand, as applied to any particular function, we regard as the elemental principle of conscious choice. And the principle becomes rational when it is consistently applied, that is, when all demands are harmonised and organised as a general demand for such functional life as will yield on the whole the completest satisfaction attainable under the conditions of life.

We have seen, further, that social organisation is indispensable as a means of complying with this rationalised demand. In other words, society is necessary, not only for the satisfaction of the social impulse, but as alone offering stimulus and

opportunity for human development from the state of the brute to that ideal state which is the progressive goal of human hopes.

And we have seen, finally, that the moral laws stand as elementary conditions of social organisation, conditions with which the individual must comply in order to fit himself for the associative life, upon which human progress, general and individual, depends.

Morality is thus a fundamental condition of human development, and of such increase in the pleasure or satisfaction attainable in life as comes with such development, in the sweetening of social intercourse, the strengthening of social ties, and a general increase in functional power.

In assigning to morality this pre-eminent position as a condition of human happiness we do not mean to be understood, however, as maintaining that morality is the sufficient condition of pleasure in general. This would be to fly in the face of experience. Nor could we with consistency hold to such a view. Recognising that feeling depends on function, we must allow that pleasure of any particular kind is attainable only through the specific functional activity by which it is produced. No matter how scrupulously we comply with the moral prescription in all that we do, we must miss the pleasure dependent on the exercise of such capacities as are left to rust unused. Each end,

with its satisfactions, must be won by appropriate means. One does not by one's morality, for instance, earn the pleasures attendant on the cultivation of science, philosophy, or the arts. What we insist upon here is the fact that the force which holds society together is moral, and that morality is therefore an indispensable condition of that general development of capacity or function which is possible only in the associative life. Morality is thus an ulterior condition even of such pleasure as depends on activities generally regarded as lying without the sphere of morals. But we may go farther. No human interest does in fact lie wholly without the sphere of morals, and no great work can be accomplished without social stimulus and appreciation, that is, without the inspiration of those strong social instincts which are the essence of moral feeling. On the other hand, whatever is essentially immoral, having no hold on the instincts which lead us forth of the self, is essentially personal and trivial. Morality is therefore something more than a remote condition of great and lasting achievement. It has a bearing on the very conception of really important work, and though not the sole condition of success in its prosecution, which demands of course capacity, skill, experience, and opportunity, it is an essential condition of success. It has thus a direct relation to the worker's sense of satisfaction in his work.

But we are met at this point by the general objection that human happiness is not in fact conditioned by human development.<sup>1</sup> Civilisation, we are told, is marked by evils of its own, and brings on the whole as much wretchedness as happiness. And there are social critics who deplore our civilisation as an artifice which marks but the decline of the race in vital capacity and the essential requisites of happiness.<sup>2</sup> But even a slight acquaintance with the actual savage should dispel these illusions of the closet. And the evils which are indisputably rife in society, its greed, its ingenuity in crime, the brutality and squalor of its masses, may be traced rather to man's lingering wildness than to any civilising pro-

<sup>1</sup> Die zufriedensten Völker sind die rohen Naturvölker und von den Culturvölkern die ungebildeten Classen; mit steigender Bildung des Volkes wächst erfahrungsmässig seine Unzufriedenheit.—Eduard von Hartmann: *Phil. des Unbewussten*, bd. 2, abschn. C, cap. xiii., 376.

<sup>2</sup> Semblable à la statue de Glaucus, que le temps, la mer et les orages avoient tellement défigurée qu'elle ressembloit moins à un dieu qu'à une bête féroce, l'âme humaine, altérée au sein de la société par mille causes sans cesse renaissantes, par l'acquisition d'une multitude de connoissances et d'erreurs, par les changements arrivés à la constitution des corps, et par le choc continuel des passions, a pour ainsi dire changé d'apparence au point d'être presque méconnoissable; et l'on n'y retrouve plus, au lieu d'un être agissant toujours par des principes certains et invariables, au lieu de cette céleste et majestueuse simplicité dont son auteur l'avoit empreinte, que le difforme contraste de la passion qui croit raisonner, et de l'entendement en délire.—J. J. Rousseau: *Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité* (preface).

cess to which he has been subjected. In other words, our civilisation is one-sided and incomplete. It has not yet eradicated the barbarous spirit. Hence it is against the surviving barbarism, against the savagery which has merely improved its weapons or sharpened its cunning, rather than against the civilisation which has not yet extinguished the barbarous spirit, that the critic of "progress" should level his denunciation. Some maladjustment is incident, perhaps, to any attempt at readjustment. But the great defect of our civilisation, as must appear if we examine the question with candour and care, is that it has not gone far enough. It has not yet thoroughly socialised the will.

Or the demurrer may take a theoretic and general form. The critic may contend that the cup of happiness never deepens; that art nor wit nor wisdom can ever enlarge it; that it may be brimmed for the savage as for saint or *savant*, and with a pleasure as real. But this were hard to maintain. The savage has little pleasure that is not physical, and keen as are the delights of animal sense they quickly pall. Pleasures less gross and more complex, on the other hand, pleasures due to the refinement of our sensibilities and the growth of the arts, not only have a finer edge, but are at the same time more pervasive and more lasting. And with the fuller development made possible by improved social conditions, and by increase in

the means and instruments at our command, the forms of functional activity are multiplied. This multiplies, again, the modes of pleasurable feeling. And the value of the feeling thus made richer by a richer functional life is further enhanced by the effect of contrast and change, which quicken the current and deepen the channels of feeling.

It may be urged, of course, that increased capacity for pleasure, due to the heightened sensibility of the developed organism, imports increased susceptibility to pain. And this is true.

Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure  
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

But the frequency of pain does not necessarily increase with the susceptibility to pain. Feeling is not perforce lacerated because it is fine. In fact, the conditions under which suffering arises are in large part conditions which as society progresses may be corrected or improved. Instance bad physical conditions, due to our ignorance or disregard of natural law, and bad social conditions, due to defective or ill-advised legislation. And the advance which civilisation implies is an advance for the very reason, among others, that it reduces the number of these injurious conditions, and thereby reduces the extent and mitigates the severity of human suffering. We cannot conceive of a developing society, in fact, without such meliorative change. Perceiv-

ing no such change, we should say that society were going backwards or standing still. Seeing, then, that the amount of suffering is diminished, while our functional activities increase in scope, effectiveness, variety of mode, and consistency of aim, we cannot doubt that the depth, intensity, and sweetness of the affectional life are increased. That is, taking the pain with the pleasure, we must believe that in the course of human development the value of life is enhanced. We may see, indeed, in the human face itself as it softens the index of such growth. The features of the savage, torpid with sloth, or furrowed with the passions of anger, hate, and fear, bespeak an affectional life incomparably poorer than that which we read in the face of the humanised man, lighted with intelligence, kindness, and hope.

But this assumed increase in the volume, intensity, and value of our affectional life, it may be urged, is illusory. All conscious activity, we may be told, tends by repetition to sink below the threshold of consciousness, the borders of which are never widened, but shrink on the one hand as fast as they expand on the other. And there is an appearance of truth in this contention. In mastering, for instance, the technique of an art, the movements of which the student is at first vividly or even painfully conscious become at length automatic or reflex. But the fact that these acquired activities become reflex does not

nullify the gain. They are added to the sub-conscious system which is at the basis of our conscious activity, and by extending this basis enrich the conscious life and deepen its affectional tone. All the pleasures of sensibility and motion depend on the reflex activity of the organs of sense and the unconscious co-ordinations of the muscular system, and the manual dexterity of the artist, when it has become mechanical, gives him, by new co-ordinations, a new medium for self-expression. The gain thus outruns the loss. Compare, again, the affectional capacity of the child with that of the adult. The child's cup of feeling may be full, but it is a shallower cup. The borders of consciousness *are* widened. Human development, whether it dates from the childhood of the individual or the childhood of the race, is the organisation of power, and by increasing the functional capacity on which feeling depends enriches the feeling. The conditions of feeling require, it would seem, that a developing life should become for the subject a more valuable life. Or if there remains a lingering doubt, it must vanish as the eye runs down the vital scale and we compare such a piece of work as man with the oyster, for instance, or with the lowly organisms which the biologist places nearer the beginnings of animal life.

But the rule of life would be no other than we have defined it even if what we call progress

carried with it no increase in our enjoyment of life. The fullest satisfaction is possible only where the self, as it is, finds fullest expression. And as full self-expression, in virtue of the law that exercise strengthens the function, leads to self-development or growth, the full measure of satisfaction is reached only by the expanding self. In other words, though there were no relative gain in growth, life would attain its deepest meaning and value for the subject only in the process of growth. We cannot, in living up to our capacity, stand still. Life is movement, and the life which on any plane wins the completest satisfaction is, in a creature capable of advancement, necessarily a movement forwards.

Rational life as we have defined it is thus by its very nature an ascent. And the common faith of civilised man is that life on the higher levels of capacity is of incomparably greater worth to the conscious subject than life at the level of the barbarian or the brute. This faith we share, as grounded in experience. But were the faith unfounded we must still go forward or miss the good that is within our reach. The splendour of the summit may be illusory, but the good to be gathered as we climb the slope is real. And it can be gathered in full measure only as we climb.

## CHAPTER XXIII

QUERY: DOES MORALITY DEMAND OF THE INDIVIDUAL UNCOMPENSATED SACRIFICE?

IT appears that the functional development on which the social unit must rely to get from life its full value leads to and is promoted by the progressive movement of society as a voluntary organised union of independent minds. And the fundamental law of social union is the moral law.

But while we may take for granted the principle that the social union, as social, coheres only by moral ties, and that the social welfare, which depends on the morality of the members of the union makes in general for the welfare of the individual member, there is some doubt whether this principle is in strictness universal. In other words, not all men are convinced that the moral law, though essential to the general welfare or happiness, is at all times a principle of happiness for all without exception who observe it. No exceptions to the supremacy of the law are allowed, as a rule, by those who in the name of God or of man make the moral demand. The claims of morality are usually preferred as absolute. It would seem, therefore, that the individual must be convinced, if

these claims are based on the relation of morality to happiness, that any infraction of the moral law on his part must impair his happiness, or why should he obey it? It is true that the state, in its effort to correct social disorder, does not stop to convince. It furnishes a motive of its own. Looking to the general good, it ignores the possible hardship which its demands may work in the individual case, and enforces its demands by an appeal to fear. But the moral appeal, as such, is made to the individual's good feeling and good sense. And if the individual is urged to make the social aim his invariable, unreserved, and personal aim, it must be on the ground that the social or moral demand is one at which no rational creature can cavil. The general validity of the moral demand, whatever our point of view, cannot well be disputed; but it is not allowed by all to be universally valid if morality is to be justified by its effect on the happiness of the moral agent alone.<sup>1</sup> The advocate of the doctrine that morality must be so

<sup>1</sup> No proposition can be more palpably and egregiously false than the assertion that as far as this world is concerned it is invariably conducive to the happiness of a man to pursue the most virtuous career.—Wm. E. Hartpole Lecky: *History of European Morals*, p. 61. (Appleton, N. Y., 1884.)

The attempt to establish an absolute coincidence between virtue and happiness is in ethics what the attempting to square the circle or to discover perpetual motion is in geometry and mechanics. I think it better frankly to abandon the hopeless endeavour.—Leslie Stephen: *Science of Ethics*, p. 430.

justified, if at all, is therefore bound to consider the exact scope of his doctrine.

What then is the relation of individual happiness to the general welfare as conditioned by the moral life? Apparently the fruits of moral action may lag too far behind the act to be always enjoyed by the agent, or to compensate him for all moral sacrifice. One generation sows and another reaps. Thousands have died in defence of political freedom and liberty of conscience, and the freedom in which they could not live is ours. There may be a Nemesis which pursues races, nations, or communities; on the broad and continuous stage of history virtue may be essential to happiness, and vice may be the initial phase of disintegration and death; but this sequence of reward and requital, it is urged, cannot be established with certainty in the individual life. There the field is too narrow. The mills of the gods grind too slowly, and the play of the moral forces is on too vast a scale to balance each private account as it runs, and to render to every man in the brief span of his life according to his deeds.

Can we, then, on the grounds that we have urged, press the moral demand as absolute? Happiness, to be felt at all, must be felt by individuals. There is no such thing as a general consciousness in which the pains of one man are compensated by the joy of another. The individual is the conscious unit. If therefore the force of the

moral obligation lies in the value of moral conduct as a means to human happiness, it would appear that the ultimate justification of the moral life must be sought in its relation to the individual consciousness of happiness, that the moral life must be for a given individual happier, at least in those aspects of life to which morality applies, than the immoral life. But if cases arise in which this justification is wanting, for life as a whole or in part, how can we urge the moral demand as binding at all times, without distinction and without reservation, upon all?

It is the exceptional case, it will be observed, that calls for consideration now. In the main the individual interest, intelligently understood, coincides with the general interest, and is therefore conserved by obedience to the moral behest, which is uttered in the general interest. But there are apparent exceptions to this rule. And if such exceptions are allowed to be real how are they to be dealt with in accordance with the theory we are defending? And how far are they real?

## CHAPTER XXIV

QUESTION DISCUSSED: UNCONSCIOUS EFFECTS OF  
MORALITY AND IMMORALITY

MUCH of our unhappiness, perhaps most of it, lies in the torment and unrest of conflicting desires. Nothing frets the feeling like a divided purpose. The harsh outer condition one may with good wit evade or with a good grace accept; but inner disorder, the vexed, erratic, ill-organised will, frustrates achievement and roils all the sources of feeling. And the effect on the feeling is proportioned to the extent of the disorder. Even where failure is neither obvious nor complete, the corrupting action of cravings suppressed but unsubdued hampers that free movement of the mind which is the condition of its joyous activity. The tide of feeling breaks with the breaking strength and disrupted unity of the will.

But to focus the aims of life and allay the fever of unrest some broad and harmonising principle must be in effective control of our practice. To a certain extent the demands of an absorbing occupation may exert this control. An active intelligence which might fritter away its energy in gossiping inquiries gets direction and power from

its devotion, say, to business or to politics or to a particular science. But a man's vocation rarely covers the whole breadth of his manhood. It warps him to its own confines, and he shrinks to the measure of the trader or talker or money-maker, or something less than a man. And there is no vocation which can compare for an instant in the breadth of its interests with the vocation of man as a social being, and no harmonising principle so effective as a constant moral purpose in giving strength and consistency to the activities of life. A moral purpose, which is not merely conventionally moral, strikes as deep as the social feeling to which the moral purpose gives direction and form; that is to say, it penetrates the whole life, even the intellectual life, which without the truth-seeker's sincerity and the humanist's sympathy achieves nothing which can endure.

To whatever ends, then, the self is consecrate, if it is immoral, that is, if it habitually ignores the profounder social laws, it is so far self-destructive: it ignores its own uses. The self unsocial must remain a dwarfed and mutilated self. We have need of our fellow-men to furnish us in their need and by their aid the opportunity for self-expression; and we have no less need of their sympathy and recognition that we may feel the full force of the self which they help us to express. In so far, therefore, as a man by violation of social law weakens the sympathetic interest which make

his life intelligible and necessary to others he shuts out opportunity, narrows his sphere, and thus violates the law of his own well-being. We cannot, of course, assume that there is no pleasure in any anti-social act. A man may derive a certain satisfaction from the reflection of his force or cunning in the fears and hatred of his kind. The gratification of any sense, the realisation of any end, is in itself a pleasurable function. But the pleasure of the anti-social act is mingled with bitterness and, having no organic relation with the body of wholesome and permanent satisfactions which are based in sympathy and social good, is shallow and evanescent. So imperative indeed is the demand of our nature for sympathetic recognition that the selfish or anti-social act is soon stripped of such poor satisfaction as it may procure. The profligate finds his cup soon drained. The egoist, in the very heart of society, wraps himself in solitude as with a shroud.

The effect of immorality as a repression or perversion of the proper activity of the self is thus essentially morbid. And the infection cannot fail to reach the feeling. It must reach it, too, independently of our recognition of its source and character. There can be no continuous underlying happiness where so strong and pervasive an interest as the social interest is contravened or ignored. The baffled social impulse reasserts itself in the tone of the feeling. The sources of

satisfaction are all embittered by a latent feeling of want, and the vivifying sense of expansion produced by the reflection of the self in the affection or appreciation of others is replaced by a mocking sense of the hollowness of all satisfactions. And whether the cause of this waste and want is misinterpreted or seen for what it is, the social life degenerates in function and feeling, and there is deterioration in the values of life.

Mark the effect of lying, for example, in the consciousness of the liar. Self-expression, to which the self normally tends, requires that the self shall appear in its proper form, that feeling shall assume no disguise, that intelligence, seeing that which is, shall frankly affirm that it is. Veracity is, in fact, the attitude of the self in the act of self-expression. Hence the truth distorted or denied is the self in feeling and apprehension distorted or repressed. The liar, in act or in speech, cannot be himself, as the liar himself is fretfully aware. How swift the sychophant to show his true feature when thrift no longer follows fawning! How candid the hypocrite with his own dependents! Simplicity in speech, sincerity in act, are of the essence of the conscious life, which effectually is only as it is expressed. Absolute candour, no doubt, is but an ideal. Men are our enemies as well as our friends, and even our friends misconstrue our frankness, so that the most candid of men may scarcely wear

his heart on his sleeve. But a bluff virtue, seeing that insincerity is mainly the suggestion of our fears, scorns a too careful caution or too nice a prudence. The stronger character is the more direct. And the habit of indirection is fatal to that simplicity which charms us in the child, and in those ingenuous natures which, escaping the necessity or the temptation to hide the promptings of the soul, wear the grace of childhood in age.

Or consider the reflex effect of arrogance, a vice of masterful races and men. The quality is not easily appraised. It represents an attitude rather than a range of definable acts, and may attach to a life which fairly satisfies the demands of a prescriptive morality. It may even be vaunted as a virtue. But the moral isolation and self-contraction which it entails stamp it as a vice. The virtues are essentially social, and by fostering the genial habit which makes friendly service instinctive expand the sphere of the self. But arrogance, shutting out others, shuts in the self. It consents to be served by men as with a tool, but disdains to give or to take those good offices which mark the spirit of man as human and humane. And as the self shrivels its satisfactions shrink. With arrest of the friendly function the friendly feeling decays, and its power and benefit are lost from the life. Though forgotten and undesired, they are lost.

Or take dishonesty and the vices which, under

cover of social relations, make prey of one's fellow-men. They tend to isolate the self by an atmosphere of distrust, and even where their presence is unsuspected they still tend to isolation by damming the current of human feeling which should flow forth of the self. The inward reaction none can evade. Treachery disqualifies the self for genuine social service, and a spurious service yields only spurious satisfaction. One may get by indirection, perhaps, certain things which one covets; abundance of lifeless good may be laid at one's feet; but it is at the cost of that vital good which is of the spirit, the spirit which breathes in the social will.

And so we might go the round of our qualities and their perversions. But it is needless. It is enough to have shown that vice, as anti-social, is in a being by nature social essentially morbid, and that the antique definition of virtue as the state of moral sanity or health is something more than a figure of speech. Perfect virtue, however, or complete moral sanity, is rare. Perhaps it is never to be found. We have our ideals. We feign types of a saner or a finer human nature than we know, and life itself offers here and there shining examples of particular excellence. But it is in the moral realm as if disease were the rule and health the exception, so that the character of immorality as disorder, irrespective of the pronouncement of the law, escapes us. Hence the difficulty of

appreciating moral values. Hence the scarcely veiled contempt of the vicious for the self-sophistication of "the good," fooled by a moral ardour which counts no cost. But no sophistication is so complete as that of vice. The charm of sense, the specious promise of the present, the illusive conception of a private good that shall not perish, constantly seduce us and as constantly disappoint us. It were otherwise, perhaps, if the effects of evil were sharp and importunate, like an ache in the bones. But, seen or unseen, their development is certain. The act must act itself out; the seed must bear its fruit.

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to scourge us.

Though a man should mistake evil for good, or, knowing his wrong, should shrewdly conceal it, vice must run its course, corrupting the sources of feeling and thus lowering the values of life.

## CHAPTER XXV

### DISCUSSION CONTINUED: CONSCIOUS MORALITY— CONSCIENCE

WE find, then, that the effect of immorality is a profound derangement in the economy of the conscious life. And the fact of this derangement is independent of our recognition of its presence or of its cause: as a man wastes with paresis whether learned or unlearned in the structure of his nerves, so a morbid habit of the will affects the form and value of the conscious life even in a subject unversed in the pathology of mind. The tone of the infected feeling is lowered though the disease be misconceived as health.

In the ordinary case, however, a man is not without warning of this systemic degradation. Conscience comes to his aid. Where conscience or the instinctive moral consciousness is active it enters its protest at the inception of the immoral act, and is prompt to follow with its pangs disregard of its protest; while compliance with the moral demand yields a deep and enduring sense of satisfaction which dates from the instant of moral choice. As a distinct and well-recognised form

of consciousness, conscience is thus an added incentive to the moral life. Let us consider for a moment the mode of its action.

We have treated the moral consciousness as arising by natural growth under the conditions imposed by social life. But this view, it is said, does not account for the sense of moral obligation as we feel it. The force of the moral obligation, it is urged, is something different from the force of an instinct or an inveterate habit. Our æsthetic judgments are for the most part instinctive, but we seem to be under no such stress of obligation to seek after beauty and shun deformity as to eschew evil and hold fast to that which is good. With the sense of right there seems to be fused the consciousness of an inner requirement, quite distinct from personal choice, to pursue the right, so that the right would hardly be conceived as the right unless it carried this requirement. How does this peculiar sense of obligation arise?

It may be explained in part, perhaps, as the effect of external pressure. Individual conduct is to a great extent guided by social constraint, rather than by independent conviction; but this outward pressure, persistently exerted, may nevertheless produce a state of mind which is in practice tantamount to conviction, and which through the force of habit carries with it a sense of obligation. In some such way we must account for the tenacity with which a mere custom maintains

its hold on men's lives. The unreflective mind simply absorbs its opinions, and tends to fall without question into the prevailing habit; and as feeble intelligence is not inconsistent with strong propensities to action, a borrowed opinion may be maintained with the same pertinacity and force, and with the same sense of obligation, as an opinion deliberately adopted for reasons which convince. We may well believe, therefore, that in many minds the feeling of moral obligation contains elements which have this external origin. There is probably no one, indeed, whose moral habits are all independently formed.

But to assume that the whole force of this feeling of moral obligation is the force of a habit thus imposed from without were to strain the facts. The force of habit, we know, is for good or for evil very great. But a habit which is not grounded in the form of our nature and the general conditions of life, or which tends to no good which the individual originally and spontaneously desires, could scarcely win that universal ascendancy which the habit of deferring to moral good, if not of practising it, tends to acquire. Even a senseless custom may turn out to be a custom once reasonable,<sup>1</sup> for which the reason has dis-

<sup>1</sup> Happily for the Hindus, the cow which supplies them with their only animal food—milk and butter—and the ox, which helps to till their ground, were declared sacred at an early period. Had it not been so, this useful animal might have been exterminated in times of famine. What is now

appeared. Men, after all, are not mere automatons gesturing by mechanic necessity, or mere fools with a trick of imitation. Conventional morality, it is true, is local and changeable. One man may think it a sin to marry his deceased wife's sister; another, to listen to a play, or to drink alcoholic liquors or smoke tobacco. But the moral obligation which is in conformity with the social need, and which is felt, with various admixture, in all the communities of men who have made any considerable advance in the social art, cannot depend upon accident or convention, but must be referred to universal grounds. It must correspond, in other words, to some essential demand of our nature.

And the moral demand is in fact based, as we have seen, upon a permanent and universal human interest. No act is in its moral effect simply private or transient. In the contentions of taste or of mere policy the decision affects, or is felt to affect, restricted or temporary interests. A matter of morals, on the other hand, affects, and is more or less distinctly felt to affect, the interests of all. Fraud or theft or homicide is never a merely personal affair which it were impertinent to meddle with, but threatens the common weal and shocks the sympathetic consciousness which holds the community together. One man's business is here

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a superstition had its origin, like some other superstitions, in a wise foresight.—Monier Williams: *Hinduism*, p. 156, note (1878).

every man's business. However private the injury, morally the offence is public; and in condemning it the moral censor feels that he voices the judgment of all, not excluding the offender when he comes to himself. Hence we are all, on occasion, custodians of the moral law. Conscious, vaguely or distinctly, of the common character of all moral questions, we feel that the law must be obeyed and sustained by all; and, impressed by the gravity of the moral issue, we feel the moral obligation with a force which no other form of obligation can acquire. Other motives may at times prove stronger than the moral motive. Fear or desire may overmaster every other impulse. But no other obligation has claims so permanent or so general as the moral obligation.

It should be noted, however, that the feeling of moral obligation is not in all respects unique. All corporate activity generates in the members of the corporate body a feeling of obligation to further the common ends. Any practical rules, in fact, tend as the interests which they affect become general to assume in the minds of the parties interested an obligatory form. The art critic, censuring an offender against the canons of taste; the lawyer or physician, reproaching an associate for unprofessional conduct; polite society, even, commenting on some social indiscretion, or possibly on some mere disregard of the correct form in dress; all assume something of the tone of

the moral censor condemning the violation of a moral obligation. The indiscretion may have a moral bearing strengthening the force of the reproach, but the authoritative tone may be assumed when no moral censure is intended. And the reason is obvious. The censor speaks as the representative of a class upon a matter in which every member of the class has an interest. It is corporate feeling, more or less consciously present, which suggests the censor's impersonal and authoritative tone, and it is corporate feeling which creates in the offender the sense of obligation to which the censure is directed.

But any class or corporate interest, when compared with the moral interest, is seen to be specific and narrow. The corporate body in morals is humanity itself, and though the corporate feeling to which the moral appeal is made has not yet the breadth which the solidarity of human interests should assure it, it tends with the progress of the race to broaden to this measure. The pressure of the obligation which weighs upon the moral consciousness thus tends to correspond to the magnitude of the moral issue. The correspondence is not yet by any means complete. But it is fairly well recognised that no other obligation can compare in breadth or significance with the moral obligation. The difference in this respect is in fact felt to be so great that it is commonly taken to be a difference in kind.

The difference is not so great, however, as to preclude the conclusion that the moral consciousness is developed by natural growth, under the conditions of social life, from the fundamental characteristics of our nature. In the course of the development of social life the appearance of a sense of obligation commensurate with the interests seen to be involved was inevitable, and this sense of obligation, reinforced and made definite by experience and discipline, has led men to discriminate between good and evil, in the more common relations of life, with the assurance and promptness of an instinctive judgment. This instinctive judgment is the judgment of conscience.<sup>1</sup> And conscience has now become, in different stages of development, almost a part of the furniture of the mind. Wanting a conscience, one seems to want a human attribute.

And we have in conscience as judgment, as will be seen from its genesis, a guide of great value in the emergencies of practice. It is important, too, to note at this point that we have in conscience as feeling a more or less active factor

<sup>1</sup> By coalescence, a vast group of social habits of judging others, and of feeling myself judged by them, can get woven into a complex product such as is now my conscience. Conscience is a well-knit system of socially acquired habits of estimating acts—a system so constituted as to be easily aroused into conscious presence by the coming of the idea of any hesitantly conceived act.—Josiah Royce: *Anomalies of Self-consciousness*; *Psych. Review*, Sept., 1895.

in the happiness or unhappiness of the moral agent. In discussing the grounds of moral choice there must be added, therefore, as we have said, to the undefined and uninterpreted feeling of moral distemper or moral health, the more specialised feelings which attend the workings of conscience, which may be called by comparison the articulate moral sense.

And the influence of conscience upon the affective life is, in general, undoubtedly great. Tranquillity of conscience, where there is a keen sense of right, is an index of moral health, comparable with the physical content which goes with sound digestion and settled nerves. The sting of an outraged conscience, on the other hand, may drive a man, brooding on his deeds, to madness. To conscience, therefore, the moralist as mentor continually appeals. And in that more genial treatment of morals which in literature must subserve the purposes of art the conscious revolt of the moral nature is still the supreme penalty of crime. Remorse is Melpomene's ever-recurring theme. But remorse is keen only in finely developed natures. In those grosser dispositions whose moral habit is mainly external and rests in a feeble original sense of right the wounds of conscience quickly heal. As punishment they are in such cases inadequate. And in the mass of mankind we may say, perhaps, that conscience, as one of the later phases in the development of the

conscious life, is too imperfectly organised to be depended on as the sole sanction of the moral demand. It reinforces what we may call the organic penalty, which lies in the degradation of the general affective tone, but it is perhaps only in the exceptional case that it is of itself an adequate penalty.

So far, then, as conscience alone is concerned we do not find that it can offset by its sting all immoral satisfaction, or by its approval compensate for all moral sacrifice. In the main, perhaps, it inflicts the keenest pain on those who, with occasional lapses, most heed its monitions.<sup>1</sup> The graver evil back of moral as of physical pain lies in the morbid or destructive changes of which pain is the index, and which work a permanent disability in the system. The knife will cut and fire will burn the flesh which anæsthetics have made dead to pain; and those generous motions of the spirit which deepen and sweeten our lives are cramped by selfishness and unkindness whether conscience be tender or callous. Nevertheless the specific feelings which attend our conscious relations to the moral law powerfully supplement that organic reaction to evil and to good which is the unconscious sanction of the law. Conscience,

<sup>1</sup> On the whole, it is more than doubtful whether conscience, considered apart from the course of action it prescribes, is not the cause of more pain than pleasure. Its reproaches are more felt than its approval.—W. E. H. Lecky: *Hist. of Europ. Morals*, p. 64. (Appleton, N. Y., 1884.)

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in other words, by intensifying the individual's interest in the social or general good, in which the moral good lies, tends to identify it more closely with the general interest, and to make the possibility of an absolute moral sacrifice somewhat more remote.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### DISCUSSION CONTINUED: VALUE OF MORAL PRINCIPLES SEEN ONLY IN LIFE AS A WHOLE

SOME of the difficulties which beset us in any attempt to determine whether we have in the conscious and unconscious effects of conduct on feelingsin's full requital or virtue's sufficient reward arise from the use of misleading terms or a false method of appraisal. One of these difficulties, already noted, is the tendency to restrict the word "pleasure" to merely sensuous or egoistic relations. This restriction is based on popular usage, but it has given rise to much misunderstanding in ethical discussion. The appeal to what we call the "higher" self, with its finer and more enduring satisfactions, is made with a certain awkwardness when couched in terms which are commonly applied to the grosser and more transitory satisfactions of the "lower" self. But there ought to be no difficulty on this account in intelligent inquiry. Yet even philosophers are misled. Men writing in a grave and for the most part dispassionate spirit, having degraded the term pleasure to the level of its ordinary acceptance, gird at it with facile scorn. But sometime,

perhaps, patient iteration will expose the futility of this procedure. We shall not dwell on the point now.

There is, however, a difficulty which does not spring from the use of a word, and which demands more careful consideration. It turns on the method of estimating values. We find writers of every school ignoring the unity and continuity of the conscious life. They assume, in the evaluation of conduct, that each act may be isolated, and that its affective worth must be determined by the sole consideration of the act, thus torn from its setting, with its specific accompaniment of feeling. Take any instance at hand. Prompted by some inconvenient scruple, a man revolts at the lie or indirection which the interests of his employer are supposed to require, forfeits his position, lingers in poverty, and dies in neglect. Or a passing stranger, entering a burning house to rescue a child, saves its life, but loses his own. By what hedonic calculus can we measure the worth of any such sacrificial act? How with any candour can we talk of compensation? Detached from the personality of which the act is the expression, it would seem that the act is, on the basis of affectional values, simply indefensible.

But the method of evaluation is false. The conscious life is not a mere sum of separable states. It is a vital whole. Each several act is

determined by the general nature of the ego as the gait of a man is determined by the structure of his frame. And this unity, as we have seen, is a continuing unity. The vice or the heroism of to-day dates back to the wilful or serviceable habit of the child, and feeling, as indissolubly associated with function, follows the same vital law. The ego is, in short, a development, and while the whole is effectively present in every act, each act becomes in itself a cause which in its degree modifies the constitution of the whole. Every act in effecting its object reacts on the subject. Each setting of the will thus becomes a factor in the constitution of the ego, and tends, through the relation of function to feeling, to raise or depress, refine or imbrute, the general emotional tone. And in this effect it increases or diminishes the value of life.

There are gradations, it is true, in the subjective import of the act. It is a volitional act by which a man, for instance, chooses the cloth for his coat, or makes up an order from a bill of fare, or takes the beach rather than the mountains for his walk. But the effect on the general tone of the life is in such case infinitesimal. Only trivial issues are involved in the choice. But it is of the nature of the moral choice that its effect is never trivial or merely personal. The moral demand, as we have seen, is the demand of man's social nature, and immorality is an attack on the

scheme by which society coheres and under which the individual develops. Few of us, perhaps, have a definite conception of this truth, but fewer still can shake off the conviction that momentous issues are involved in each moral decision. Each springs from and reacts upon the social or moral nature of the man. Whether he perceives the import of his decision or not, whether he wills to subdue himself to the moral demand or to defy it, the origin and effect of his decision are as deep as is the social impulse of which morality is the rational law.

Morality thus stands in vital relation to the development and general tone of the psychic life. Inasmuch as the whole self as built up in the past is effectively present in each act of moral choice, no estimate of the subjective value of the act can be just which dissociates the act from the self in its wholeness, and from the spirit and tone which have marked the whole life of the self. The particular act is but the expression of a principle which characterises the permanent and essential nature of the man, and the justification of the sacrificial act must be sought, not in certain pulsations of feeling directly evoked by the act, but in the whole effect of the principle on the life which it has controlled.

If it shall happen, then, that the will has acquired a force of moral habit which urges the self to some act of self-effacement, it seems not impossible that

the act may be justified even from the hedonic point of view. The courage of the physician or the nurse who braves contagion and dies, or of the shipmaster who in saving his charge goes down with his ship, is a permanent attribute of the will; and as the act flows from the attribute, it is the value of the attribute rather than the value of the act that should be gauged in the affectional estimate. We might say, perhaps, that even in the isolated act the subject is in part at least indemnified by the moment's exaltation. And possibly, in natures of the finest fibre, the ecstasy of self-surrender in a cause which the self holds dear may outweigh in the affectional scale all immunities and satisfactions that might be purchased by defection from the cause.<sup>1</sup> But the evaluation which takes account of present feeling only is incomplete. The sacrificial act is the product of a habit which has had a lifetime for its growth, and the habit, which now yields its costliest fruit, has already enhanced the conscious worth of the life whose attitude it has ruled. The compensation for sacrifice thus begins to run before the consummating act. It lies in the

<sup>1</sup> For he [the good man] would prefer being pleased for a short time exceedingly, than for a long time, slightly; and to live one year honourably than many years in the ordinary manner; and to perform one honourable and great act, rather than many small ones. Those who die for their country this perhaps actually befalls.—Aristotle: Book ix., chap. viii. (Browne's tr.)

permanent tone of feeling characteristic of the attitude which makes the sacrifice possible.

And there is no method of proving the affectional worth of one's governing principle except by a free and fearless response to its demands. What it prompts one to do one must do with the whole heart. To doubt and to waver and to yield a hesitant adherence is in a measure to surrender the principle, and through the effect of distraction on the feeling robs even final compliance of much of its subjective value. Take the quality of personal affection. The subjective value of a strong affection is indisputable, but no real affection can be said to exist where there is no disposition to incur in its expression a personal risk. A strong affection indeed will court the risk, and for the sake of its object will tranquilly face danger or death. The affection proves its own worth to the subject, and the exaltation of the feeling, or its subjective worth, is in proportion to the strength of the affection.

Like considerations apply to every principle of the conscious life. The force of the vital impulse is measured, in fact, by the odds it will face, and a careful prudence which reckons to evade every risk benumbs each impulse and forestalls its satisfaction. A principle or an idea, to prove its full worth for the feeling, must be followed in scorn of consequence to the person. The self must merge in the idea; and where the idea, as in

any question of morals, has such breadth that it touches all human good the personal consideration is obviously a fatal impertinence. It expels the idea and checks the effort and enthusiasm which the idea might inspire. The effect of its intrusion is thus to paralyse the finer part of our conscious activity and to reduce the self and its satisfactions to the personal limit. To bargain for creature comforts, to shrink from suffering, to count the cost, in the service of that fraternity which promises the fruition of all human hopes, is to renounce the service, though it excels all service in its power to satisfy the soul. Whither the idea leads the self must follow, and if it leads to personal defeat or physical death the sacrifice is not therefore absolute. These things but attest its strength and its power to satisfy.

Morality is, in fine, not an act, but a habit of action, and the subjective worth of the habit must be rated by its whole effect in the life. Perfect virtue we shall hardly find. Some lapse we must allow for, with its reaction in the will and in the quality of the feeling. But if the defection is not justified by the sophisms of self-esteem, if error is in candour taken for what it is and the will holds in its main direction true, action and feeling may maintain their high general level. For the feeling must rate with the main course of the action. Honesty may miss some of the prizes which dishonesty covets and wins. Com-

pliance may, in its own way, profit more than sincerity and a nice sense of honour. The devotion of affection or of duty may lead to unnoted suffering, or to the sleep which is unconscious of suffering as of joy. But the will loyal to the human interest cannot miss the exalted feeling which its loyalty inspires.<sup>1</sup> And if the moral purpose leads to some act of sacrifice, the act virtually began when the purpose was embraced, and at that instant its compensations began. For the moral purpose tends, from the moment it becomes active in the will, to raise the plane of action and feeling, and as it deepens and strengthens it clears up the paradox, at which prudence stumbles, that the greater sacrifice is the easier, that the life of most worth to the subject is the life most freely flung away.

<sup>1</sup> Suppose, however thickly evils crowd upon you, that your unconquerable subjectivity proves to be their match, and that you find a more wonderful joy than any passive pleasure can bring in trusting ever in the larger whole. Have you not now made life worth living on these terms? —Prof. W. James: *Essays in Popular Philosophy*, p. 60.

## CHAPTER XXVII

DISCUSSION CONCLUDED: THE MORE COMPLETE  
THE VIRTUE THE MORE COMPLETELY IS VIRTUE  
ITS OWN REWARD

MAY we conclude then, without qualification, that the moral choice has on affectional grounds the same justification in the individual life as in the general life? Can we be assured, in other words, that virtue, whatever the sacrifice it demands, brings its own recompense?

The common-sense of mankind, not always a safe guide perhaps, shrinks from such a conclusion. A cool head, applying the hedonic test, and comparing the losses of an uncompromising virtue with the gains of the temporising spirit which listens to the suggestions of policy, might think it reasonable, on occasion, to make certain concessions. And, indeed, a man with little inclination to compromise, a man of courage and resolve, might find it hard to prove that he runs no risk, if loyal to his ideals, of unrequited self-sacrifice or absolute loss. The fragmentary nature of human experience and the relative contingency of human events in general as effects of an infinity of causes seem to infect every aspect of life

with uncertainty. Apparently any rule of action may at some time fail us. Intelligence may be baffled, courage may be defeated, affection may be spent on ingratitude; and, in view of the mistakes, miscarriages, and misfortunes which bulk so largely in the individual life, it would seem that no principle is so secure that we may embrace it with an assurance that is absolute.

It may be urged, on the other hand, that this uncertainty affects only the external form of our experience. The issue of our acts, the course of events, our tenure of life and of the perishable goods of life, are indeed incalculable.

"Chances mock  
And changes fill the cup of alteration  
With divers liquors."

But the reaction of conduct upon consciousness takes a definite and more or less calculable course. Human nature is a finite system. It develops in function and feeling and is degraded or refined in accordance with laws of its own. In choosing a mode of life, therefore, which is founded deeply and securely in the laws of our nature the risks attending the choice must be such as affect the outer rather than the inner experience, the accidental form rather than the subjective value of life. And in the appraisal of ultimate values, according to the Stoic's contention, the attitude of the spirit, as the only thing within our power,

is the only thing which counts. The moral attitude, at any rate, is the attitude of a spirit sane and whole, that is, the attitude most consonant with the nature of man; and, counting the goods of life at their real value, what risk worth considering can be run in the conservation of spiritual sanity and health? The rule of life, while life runs on, would seem to be plain. The profoundest interest of the human spirit is in the right, and if the choice should lie between merely external loss and the degradation of the affectional tone which follows betrayal of the right, it were better, in view of that which gives life its chief value, to surrender the outer good. So the Stoic.

But death, we may be reminded, concludes both the external and the internal life, and if death is the sacrifice, the whole meed of virtue must be found in the forerunning life. That such a sacrifice has indeed a forerunning compensation we have seen good reason to believe. But is the compensation in such case adequate?

It would seem that the answer cannot be in all cases the same. If there be a creature human in form but so like an animal that it lives only for animal gratification, loss of life for such a creature would simply be uncompensated loss. Doubtless there is no such creature, human nature being essentially social, and therefore to a certain extent moral; but the nearer a human being approaches to the brutish type the less adequate is

the forerunning compensation for the sacrifice of life, or indeed for any moral sacrifice. To persons very near this type the moral appeal is therefore vain. It must be supplemented by fear. But the body of civilised society is made up of men and women with a fairly developed social nature, which renders them susceptible to moral pain and moral satisfaction, and therefore amenable to moral discipline and treatment. Manifestly it is to such persons alone that the question of compensation for moral sacrifice is applicable, and it applies with increasing force as the social or moral nature is more highly developed. But we must allow, perhaps, measuring the good of life by the satisfaction it yields, that a moral sacrifice which involves the surrender of life cannot, for certain gross and callous natures, be offset entirely by the gains brought by the principle for which the sacrifice is made. In other words, it would seem that there must be cases in which the sacrifice of life involves a greater loss of satisfaction or pleasure than the sacrifice of principle.

In cases like these we cannot deny that the moral choice involves a certain risk. And possibly most men feel the hazards of virtue. But, as we have said, there is no principle of life or of action that is not subject to the contingency of human affairs. Yet the principle is not necessarily impeached because of the risks attendant on its choice. One plays the game of life accord-

ing to its rules, and whatever the theory which a man embraces he cannot hope to reap the benefits of his theory if he is unwilling to incur its risks. In other words, a man cannot get much out of life unless he is capable of risking his life, and if a man elects to be governed by the moral law he loses the supreme benefit of the law unless he is willing to face death as the possible consequence of his choice. A half-hearted or vacillating morality can hardly be called morality or yield much moral satisfaction, for the moral law is in its claim as social law paramount, and to shrink from the risks which its observance incurs is practically to abandon the law as a principle of conduct. It is as if a man assuming to be brave should be found full of courage save when his safety is threatened. He has neither the quality nor the meed of courage.

It should be noted, moreover, that there is a compensatory reaction in the feelings even for such risk as virtue may be deemed to hazard. The pleasure we take in any pursuit varies, other things equal, with the interest we feel in the result, and our interest in any projected end is never quite complete without some spice of fear that the project may miscarry. Certainty dulls the edge of desire, and attainment itself, if assured from the first, fails to satisfy. Whether we are in sport or in earnest, some perilous condition, some risk of failure, is necessary to evoke and sustain such

interest as incites the will to that supreme effort on which supreme satisfaction depends. May we not say, then, that if man in his great moral struggle ran no hazard, the moral purpose itself would be weakened, and the moral life, losing the sense of possible loss, would lose also that supreme interest in the right and that sense of exaltation which attend the power to make sacrifice for the right? The principle is general. The uncertain tenure of any good appears to be essential to an appreciative consciousness of the good. A friend were less a friend were there no dread of parting; art, knowledge, action were less satisfying were the time to create, to learn, and to do, not so short; and life itself were less vital and sweet could we escape from the shadow of the wings of death. Fear, failure, and death give form and relief to hope, achievement, and life; and though Virtue, threading the mazes of experience, may risk life and much that is precious in life, the possibility of loss but endears the face of Virtue to her followers. Goodness is in itself the more blest for the good which it may lose.

Our conclusion, then, is that the moral life is so far justified by its effect in the feeling of the moral agent that we cannot say, speaking of the ordinary social unit, that the virtuous choice is ever, from the hedonic point of view, a mistaken choice. For men really sharing the social life the presumptions are all in its favour. More

than this it were perhaps rash to affirm. Men stand on so many different moral planes, the facts of any moral situation are so complex, and feeling is so elusive and so difficult to compare and appraise, that proof positive in any particular case can hardly be supplied.<sup>1</sup> But thus much seems certain: while we may admit that below a certain level of moral development the moral motive as we understand it is inadequate, nevertheless the strengthening and refining of the moral habit intensifies the pains of immorality on the one hand and increases the satisfactions of moral conduct on the other; that is to say, the moral progress of the individual makes it progressively more certain and more apparent that virtue is, in the feeling of the subject, its own reward. And we may add, where the virtue is complete there doubtless its compensation is without hazard or qualification complete.

<sup>1</sup> Πᾶς ὁ περὶ τῶν πρακτῶν λόγος τύπῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀκριβῶς ὀφείλει λέγεσθαι. Aristotle: *Eth. Nic.*, II., ii., 3.

Everything said on moral subjects ought to be said in outline, and not with exactness. (Browne's tr.)

## SECTION VII

### SCOPE OF MORALITY

#### CHAPTER XXVIII

MORAL DISCIPLINE PRESUPPOSES OTHER DISCIPLINES. ALL MERGED IN RELIGION

THE moral law, as we have seen, is based on the promptings of the social impulse and the requirements of the associative life. It is the law of the socialised will. And its general adoption is an essential condition of that free union of independent minds which constitutes a true society, or a society in which human nature may find the incentive, the means, and the opportunity for its completest expression.

It is important to note, however, that while the matter of ethics or morals is conduct in general, the science of ethics is not, strictly speaking, a general science of life. We have seen how it is parted off from politics and jurisprudence, sciences with which it is closely conjoined. It is much more sharply distinguished from the natural sciences, from industrial and the finer arts, and from a host of special disciplines and pursuits

for which it offers no specific guidance. For such guidance we must turn to the arts and pursuits themselves. Ethics is not to be conceived, however, as applying to any isolated sphere of conduct, or as standing entirely aloof from any form of volitional action whatever. The arts and pursuits of life, being themselves a social product, all have social and moral significance; and they cannot be pursued to their perfect results except in that "sad sincerity," or fidelity to the aspirations of humanity, which is, one may say, the substance of the moral habit. But though morality has respect to all action and all volition, it has but one end directly in view: its aim is to give such form and direction to the will as shall prove most effective in promoting the social union of our kind. This is the office which makes its discipline specific. It deals with life as a whole, and in a sense indeed with life in all its parts, but its distinctive function is to socialise all functions. And it owes its dignity and authority to the vastness of the interests which depend upon the discharge of its office.

But the value of the social union which it is the purpose of morality to establish depends on the equipment and effectiveness of the social units. If we could conceive of men as associated, without art or science or letters, in perfect amity and helpfulness, such a union might represent a certain social ideal. There are inoffensive animals who

present some approach to such an ideal. But the commanding importance of the social union for which we are prepared by moral discipline rests upon the fact that it is an association, not of animals or of sweet-natured imbeciles, but of men socially conjoined in the exercise and development of every capacity of man. Moral discipline should therefore anticipate, as it must be supplemented by, the several special disciplines. The various interests of the conscious subject, sensuous, cognitive, artistic, speculative, practical, all demand recognition. Their demand rests, in fact, in the same organic need as the moral demand itself, namely, the need of the organism to discharge its functions; and the moral demand is supreme only in the sense that its fulfilment in the establishment of the associative life is the supreme condition of the complete development of our functional capacity.

On the other hand, the increasing complexity of the associative life which follows development of capacity and increase of knowledge brings new matter to which we may address ourselves in the spirit of the moral aim. As the pursuits of life multiply, the points of sympathetic contact multiply. Though the organisation of society tends in certain directions to the specialisation of function, it finds the individual, as it advances, a constituent and sympathising element in a broader general life. A man's very craft or voca-

tion draws him out of himself, linking his activities to those of his fellows, and he acquires through membership in the general body social, civil, political, and intellectual interests which stimulate his own development. The richer the general life, or the greater its progress in literature, science, art, philosophy, and methods of social organisation, the richer the individual life. Each advances with the other, and the sympathy which expressed itself at first in a few rude affections and tribal instincts binds at length the individual to the race, and expands into that most composite and most powerful of feelings, the passion for humanity, which is the stimulus of thought, the inspiration of art, and the motive of that self-renunciation which is the completest self-expression.

Moral progress thus depends on general progress. Neither the moral law nor the moral consciousness can be developed by itself. Each expands by application to an expanding life. The moral life has, it is true, an end of its own, namely, to socialise the will, or to re-cast the general form of our life in the social interest. But it presupposes a body of instincts, habits, and occupations, upon which the social form may be imposed, and it cannot develop save through the development of the material upon which it works. It is, in a word, not a closed sphere, or a distinct and separate life; it is the infusion of the social spirit into every impulsion of life.

And as the moral life cannot be isolated from the general life of the self, neither can the self be severed from the social body of which it is an element. The self, being a social product, is true to its nature only when it shapes its activities in conformity with general or social ends. It can never be conceived as in itself complete. As the moral feeling which torments itself with continued self-inspection, self-disparagement, and self-correction becomes egoistic and in a real sense immoral, so self-culture or self-development, if conceived in too strict a sense, tends to the degeneration of the self. The intellect demands the stimulating service of generic and impersonal aims. The ego must be conceived in its social essence, in its need of human sympathy and support, and in its dependence for supreme inspiration upon ideals which transcend the self. Self-respect may remind us, indeed, that the self remains throughout a constitutive element of the social union, and that there can be no social progress apart from the progress of the social elements or units. But the processes of life run forth of the self: the stream of all healthful activity tends outwards. The self is most its own when lost in its object, and it is most completely occupied and therefore most completely satisfied when devoted to the service of universal ends, ends in which the self is absorbed and forgotten.

But the idea of the self is yet incomplete if

the self is conceived merely as an element in the general life of human kind. The broad current of humanity's life is itself but a phase of that eternal process which, in accordance with the analogies of human thought, we may call the Universal Life. And the self, reading its own nature in the light of its own experience, and finding in the service of humanity the indispensable condition of its own supreme activity and satisfaction, recognises in this condition an aspect of the Universal Will or Law upon which the self and humanity and all things depend. In this recognition the moral self becomes religious. The moral ideal, strictly conceived, is but an aspect of a more general ideal, in which the self is conceived in the fulness of its functional life. But the idea of the self is further expanded and merges in the idea of Man, which, conceived in the perfection of all its qualities as a goal or term within the processes of the Universal Life, is the religious ideal; and the progress of man as he advances in social amity and unity towards the realisation of this ideal is the divine event in which, for us, the infinite activity takes intelligible direction and character. It is true that the Infinite, as such, transcends all qualification, all limit. But to apprehend in any sense the Infinite we must in some manner define or seize upon some intelligible aspect of the Infinite. Here it is the supreme human interest which defines. For us all else is

irrelevant. The Infinite is in the religious consciousness identified with that aspect of universal power which tends in all and through all to the manifestation or accomplishment of our human ideals. To religious feeling all that in nature or in human nature is fine or excellent appeals as the gift of the Infinite Giver, in whom it thus sees the source of all beauty, all wisdom, all goodness. But the religious consciousness, impressed by the gravity of its perennial conflict with moral evil, is preoccupied mainly with moral ideals, and finds by preference a symbol for all excellence in the Good. Hence the Infinite is to the religious sense Infinite Goodness. In this habit of the religious mind we see that the moral spirit is still dominant in religious feeling. And possibly it will remain so, even when religion, as the quest of the ideal, expands to the full measure of its office and adopts into its cult the pursuit of all excellence; for it is only through the association of human effort in fraternal union, which is the moral aim, that humanity can press all its energies to ideal achievement and measurably fulfil its aspirations.

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