

paper, the infliction of which you will endure with your usual forbearance.

"By most analysts of consciousness, the unity and perpetual identity of the 'I' of psychology has long been held to be a cardinal doctrine, notwithstanding the various views of recent time advancing different types of 'double' and 'multiple' personality, identifications of the self with the body, and other like tenets. I do not recall that any of these latter views suggests any *law of consciousness for united personalities*. I venture to think there is an explanation of many difficulties in what may be termed 'coalescence of egos'—analogous to the coalescence of focuses of light;—in short that *every conscious unit has a faculty of coalescing, and of decoalescing, its consciousness with that of any other conscious unit.*

To go over some familiar ground, and (for the sake of avoiding the unnecessary details of the standard discussion) to use the simplest examples.

1. Taking for granted, for the moment that types like the amoeba and the white blood corpuscle have conscious life and therefore an ego, what other thesis will explain the psychological side of the fact that a fragment of one, broken off even accidentally, lives on and acts like the original amoeba? Apparently before the division the creature had yet one self, but has two after it. True, several arguments are advanced against the contention that such early life is conscious at all. It is said that chemical and physical processes sufficiently explain the movements of protozoa and cell-life. But if we had not our own consciousness as a guide, we should have to admit the same objection to be applicable to human life; and even in the most conscious forms of willing, we never escape the parallelism of the material world,—the appearance of purely mechanical, non-conscious action. It is also objected that our functional forms of internal bodily life go on without our consciousness, and that these correspond to the lower forms of animal life, which it is claimed are probably therefore unconscious. (The extreme automatism of Descartes—that even higher animals below man are but machines—is mostly abandoned to-day.) But to this it may be answered that instincts and functions are the records of ancient acts and habits which began as conscious ones, and even now certain acts of ours, highly conscious at first, gradually become subconscious habits. Is it not then more probable that each protozoön has its own vivid consciousness from moment to moment. We know that a child's feelings are very intense while they last, but speedily pass into oblivion. They have both these characteristics from a very early stage. This momentary vivid consciousness, without memory or complicated content, may well be the primitive cell-being's. On the hypothesis of coalescence, our so-called unconscious nerve-apparatus is simply carrying on its own cell-consciousness separately from the consciousness in which we ordinarily move. There is in my estimation, yet another proof of such a consciousness in all lower life; it is drawn from the universality of the plan of all conscious action of every kind—aimed at happiness and away from pain. Here I must repeat