

raise it to my lips, and drink the water, in order to quench my thirst. As a number of separate movements may here be distinguished, let us fix attention on the first—the stretching forth of the hand to the glass; and let us suppose that this is consciously done with a view to the quenching of thirst as the ultimate end to be attained. In such a case, the true action is not the outward movement, but the energy which is exerted by the being whom I call myself, and which results in the movement.

Of course, we describe the action by referring to the movement. We say, the hand is moved towards the glass. This mode of speaking is all that the ordinary purposes of life require. But, if we desire to investigate the matter philosophically, we must look beneath the surface of verbal expression, and not derive our views of what actions are from the language in which they are customarily described. The movement of the hand is the purely mechanical effect of certain muscular contractions and expansions, produced through the application to the muscles of the stimulus of the nervous force, in precisely the same way in which the convulsions of the limbs of a dead frog follow a galvanic shock. Such movement, therefore, is not my action, properly so called, but only a result connected, and not even proximately connected, therewith.

This is the first point: Voluntary action is a subjective energy. The next is: It is directed to a definite end in the mind's view.

To say that voluntary action is consciously directed towards an end is the same thing as to say that it is done from motive; the presence of a desirable end to the mind being what constitutes motive.

There is a class of philosophers who carry out the doctrine of Association, and of Habit, as depending on Association, in such a manner as leads them to assert that voluntary actions may be done without motive. Utilitarian moralists, for instance, like Mr. John Stuart Mill, who believe in the existence of disinterested affections, are obliged to take this ground. For their theory of life is that pleasure is the only motive by which human beings can be influenced. And yet they believe in disinterested affections. How do they reconcile these seemingly inconsistent principles? They attempt to do so by showing that dis-