

seem to indicate his belief in this doctrine. That is especially the case with an interesting paper of his on the theory that animals are automata,—a paper which seems to have been suggested by a study of Descartes, and in which he endeavours to show how Descartes' doctrine is confirmed by some of the discoveries of modern philosophy. It may, therefore, be worth while to stop for a moment and consider what this theory with regard to the relation of mind and body implies. Now, I do not know that anyone is in a better position to test the theory by facts than the medical practitioner; for try to realise what medical practice would imply on this theory. Suppose, then, a patient in whose organism a morbid process begins. If that morbid process is not in the nervous tissues themselves, it will by-and-by attack these tissues and send a thrill up into the brain. Reacting from this excitement, the brain sends a stimulus along the motor nerves, sets the limbs of the patient in action, and causes him to move towards the residence of his medical adviser. There the vocal organs of the patient are set into activity, and produce vibrations of the air which strike upon the ear of the doctor, who is led in his turn to move the organs of his voice, and probably also to move his fingers for the purpose of writing out a prescription. The prescription is taken to an apothecary and made up, and ultimately administered to the patient. Now, according to the theory of Descartes, all this would go on precisely in the way in which it actually happens, even if there were no conscious thought or feeling either in the patient or in his medical adviser; that is to say, the purely physical or bodily actions are totally separate from any mental or conscious actions, and the two have no influence upon each other. I venture to say, however, that if the matter is put in this form, the theory of Descartes becomes obviously incredible. It may well be feared that, if a patient had no thoughts and feelings of a painful character, there would be very little chance of his proceeding to take medical advice and very little chance of the practitioner obtaining any fees. But the theory may be tested in another way; it may be tested in the light of modern evolutionism; for how is the origin of pain and pleasure to be explained on any