

as essentially habits of will; so that character is truly described, in an often-quoted saying of Novalis, as completely formed will.

In this saying, Novalis seems to have had in view character in its highest sense, that is, what we name distinctively *moral* character. For an immoral or vicious character is not a completely formed will; it is a will that is yet but incompletely developed, that has not yet delivered itself from the bondage of natural or irrational passion into the free activity of reason. A will thus completely formed is virtue. Such a will, therefore, is the end of all culture; and consequently Kant was right in describing it as the Sovereign Good, for it is the only object that is good in itself. It is true, there are objects apart from the will which are spoken of as naturally good, as bringing a good by mere natural causation independently of moral effort. Such an object is pleasure, — the various forms of agreeable excitement which arise from the action of natural sensibility. But neither is natural pleasure in itself a good, nor natural pain in itself an evil. It depends on the voluntary use we make of them, that is to say, it depends on their relation to our will, whether pleasure and pain shall be evil or good. They are therefore not absolutely, but only relatively, good; they are good by reference to the will that controls them, while the perfect will remains the Sovereign Good which gives goodness to every other object in life.

It thus appears that men can find their Sovereign Good only in volition, in intelligent moral action; and Ethics, even as a speculative science, would fail