

quently hear from persons who find themselves confronted by the sinfulness or harmfulness of some part of their behavior. "I never *thought*," they say. "I never *thought* how mean the action was, I never *thought* of these abominable consequences." And what do we retort when they say this? We say: "Why *didn't* you think? What were you there for but to think?" And we read them a moral lecture on their irreflectiveness.

The hackneyed example of moral deliberation is the case of an habitual drunkard under temptation. He has made a resolve to reform, but he is now solicited again by the bottle. His moral triumph or failure literally consists in his finding the right *name* for the case. If he says that it is a case of not wasting good liquor already poured out; or a case of not being churlish and unsociable when in the midst of friends; or a case of learning something at last about a brand of whiskey which he never met before; or a case of celebrating a public holiday, or a case of stimulating himself to a more energetic resolve in favor of abstinence than any he has ever yet made; then he is lost; his choice of the wrong name seals his doom. But if, in spite of all the plausible good names with which his thirsty fancy so copiously furnishes him, he unwaveringly clings to the truer bad name, and apperceives the case as that of "being a drunkard, being a drunkard, being a drunkard," his feet are planted on the road to salvation; he saves himself—by thinking rightly.

Thus are your pupils to be saved: first, by the stock of ideas with which you furnish them; second, by the amount of voluntary attention that they can exert in holding to the right ones, however unpalatable; and third, by the several habits of acting definitely on these latter to which they have been trained.

In all this, the power of voluntarily

attending is the point of the whole procedure. Just as a balance turns on its knife edges, so on it our moral destiny turns. You remember that, when we were talking of the subject of attention, we discovered how much more intermittent and brief our acts of voluntary attention are than is commonly supposed. If they were all summed together, the time that they occupy would cover an almost incredibly small portion of our lives. But I also said, you will remember, that their brevity was not in proportion to their significance, and that I should return to the subject again. So I return to it now. It is not the mere size of a thing which constitutes its importance, it is its position in the organism to which it belongs. Our acts of voluntary attention, brief and fitful as they are, are nevertheless momentous and critical, determining us, as they do, to higher or lower destinies. The exercise of voluntary attention in the schoolroom must therefore be counted one of the most important processes of training that take place there; and the first-rate teacher, by the keenness of the remoter interests which he is able to awaken, will provide abundant opportunities for its occurrence. I hope that you appreciate this already, without any further explanation.

I have been accused of holding up before you, in the course of these talks, a mechanical and even a materialistic view of the mind. I have called it an organism and a machine; I have spoken of its reaction on the environment as the essential thing about it, and I have referred this, either openly or implicitly, to the construction of the nervous system. I have in fact received notes from some of you begging me to be more explicit on this point.

Now, in these lectures, I wish to be strictly practical and useful, and to keep free from all speculative complications. Nevertheless, I do not wish to leave any ambiguity about my own