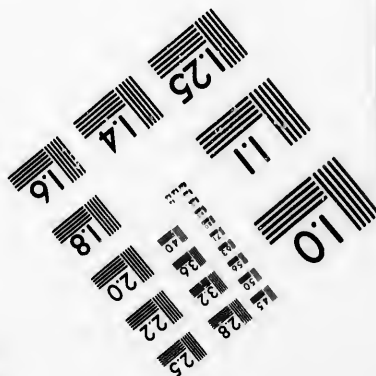
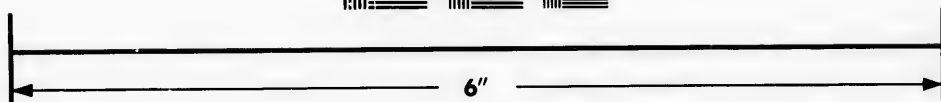
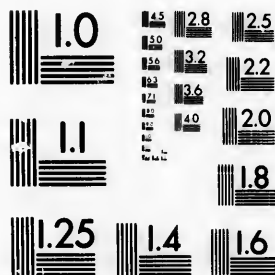


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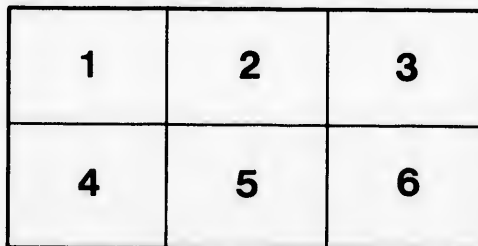
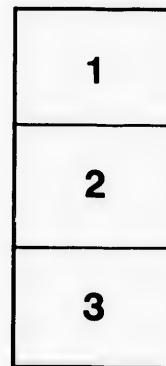
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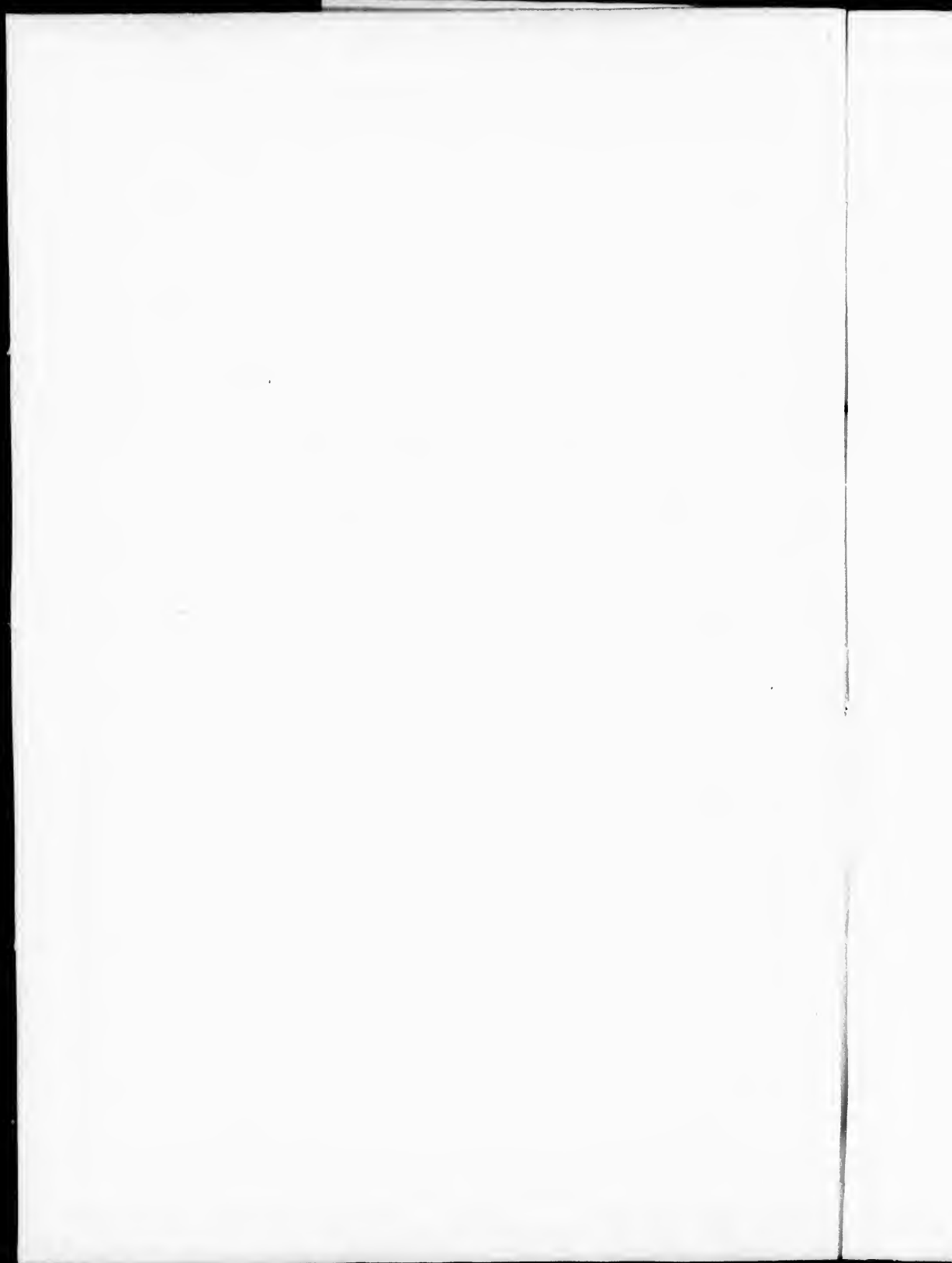
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THE WILL

ITS STRUCTURE AND MODE OF ACTION.

BY

JAMES EDWIN CREIGHTON, A.B.

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PREFACE.

This essay was written during the summer of 1891, while I was a student in the University of Berlin, and presented to the Faculty of Cornell University as a thesis for the doctorate in the spring of 1892. At that time I hoped to be able to return to the subject and make what I had done the basis for a more extensive investigation. The press of other engagements and duties has, however, prevented me from carrying out this plan, and the essay is now published in the form in which it was first written. I have added one or two foot-notes while reading the proofs, but made no other alterations, though if I were writing today I should doubtless lay different emphasis upon certain points.

My interest in the subject of the Will was due mainly to the psychological writings of Wundt, James, and Münsterberg, and my treatment owes much to each of these writers. My other obligations I have tried to acknowledge in full throughout the essay itself.

J. E. C.



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CHAPTER I.

THE CONCEPT OF WILL.

It is of the utmost importance to attempt, first of all, to define the conceptions which are to form the subject of our study. What do the terms 'Will' and 'Willing' signify? The extension of these terms have varied widely, as is well known, with different authors. With many writers 'Will' is only used to denote a conscious choice between alternative directions of activity, and is predicated only of such individuals as are capable of representing to themselves such possibilities.¹ Other philosophers widen the conception by omitting from it the element of consciousness, and that of representation of alternatives, and thus extend the notion of will, so as to make it synonymous with force or energy in general. In this broader sense of the word, Will is predicable not only of persons, but also of all phenomena of the Universe, and of the Universe itself as a whole.² Between these extreme limits, we find various definitions and uses of the term, as one or other of the elements constituting the concept has been emphasized or removed.³

As for the last mentioned theory, that of Schopenhauer and his school, we can only protest against such a confusion of ideas under one term. We know 'Will' only through our own immediate experience, and as an element of our conscious life; and, as thus known, consciousness, not less than force, is always an element of the empirically given fact. To quote from Sigwart: "From this point of view an unconscious Will is a *contradictio in adjecto*. It may be believed

¹ Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, I. p. 198; II. p. 188. Sigwart, *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. II, p. 118 ff.

² Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille. Werke*, II, pp. 113 ff.

³ For various uses, see Martineau, *Study of Religion*, II., p. 188.

that unconscious activities take place, and have the same results as those which we call will; we may perhaps even be justified in calling these activities Will in a wider sense, but only because we have first learned to know a conscious Will; and it will always be safer to choose for the broader concept another term."¹

On the other hand, it seems to me that the notion of will as a separate Faculty has tended to unduly limit the notion. The old Psychology regarded the activities of the self as manifested through a number of 'Faculties' such as Thinking, Perceiving, Willing, etc. It was too often forgotten that these faculties were not each *sui generis*, and that they indicated nothing in themselves apart from the nature of the conscious processes. Apart from the definite content of consciousness, the universal form of activity is only an abstraction which leads us astray and defies treatment. As a result of the same separation, too, a large part of our mental life was conceived as going on without any relation to the Will. It was supposed that ordinarily the Associative process, with its own peculiar laws, sufficed to explain mental occurrences. But at certain points, more or less frequent in the life of the individual, the Will as a kind of miraculous function, as a power of an altogether new and unique nature, was supposed to intervene and to prove its superiority to the ordinary Associative laws, by subordinating them to its commands, or reversing their direction.

Modern psychologists, on the other hand, refuse to make this sharp and absolute distinction between Will and the other processes of the mental life. They lay emphasis upon the fact that in "all sensation, all Association and Comparison a constant coöperation of the Will also takes place."² "Association," says Wundt, "is only the reflex of that central unity of our consciousness which we immediately perceive in

¹ Kleine Schriften, II., p. 116.

² Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Sec. 132.

the inner and outer activity of the Will."¹ Thinking, Perceiving, etc., are different names which signify the employment of this activity in different spheres, and upon different kinds of subject matter.

We may name all psychical activity, all influence which the self exerts upon the course of events, *Will in the broader sense* of the term. In so far as the self asserts itself against inner or outer events, and modifies, or strives to modify them, it may be said to will. But, it may be asked, why should the other psychical activities be subsumed under willing? The answer to this question is to be found in the fact which will be emphasized throughout this essay, that the will process has really its root in the selective activity of attention. And it is true that this activity finds employment in the construction of our perceptive world, and in the formation of our concepts and judgments regarding it, no less than in effecting changes in the stream of thought, or in bodies lying external to us.

Our perceptive world, the world with which we come into immediate contact in every day experience, is the result of choosing, out of the infinite variety of things by which we are surrounded, some objects which are to us particularly interesting. As no two men's interests are exactly identical, the worlds in which they live can not be absolutely identical. The painter's world is more rich in beautiful forms and colors than that of the ordinary man; the musician detects in the moaning of the wind harmonies that are lost on an ear less sensitive. The scientist's perceptive world is made up of a variety of details which simply do not exist for the ordinary man.

The influence of the attention in constituting and determining our world for us is plainly seen as we pass from

¹ *Grundzüge d. Physiol. Psychologie*, 1st Aufl. p. 726; Cf. also Höfding *Outlines of Psychology* (Eng. trans.) pp. 314: "It is not enough to say that will precedes cognition and feeling, for these latter, looked at one from one side, are themselves manifestations of will in the wider sense."

childhood to manhood. I was very much interested lately in walking with a little boy to find that the things he saw were almost entirely different from those which made an impression upon me. Talking to him afterwards of what he had seen, I found that the objects of his experience, what he had actually seen and remembered, were things which are practically absent for the ordinary adult.

This fact of the selective function of the will in perception is well illustrated by Professor James: "Let four men make a tour in Europe. One will bring home only picturesque impressions of costumes and colors, parks and views and works of architecture, picture and statues. To another all this will be non-existent; distances and prices, populations and drainage statistics will take their place. A third will give a rich account of the theatres, restaurants, and public halls and naught beside; whilst the fourth will perhaps have been so wrapped in his own subjective broodings as to tell little more than a few names of places through which he passed. Each has selected out of the same mass of presented objects those which suited his private interests, and has made his experience thereby."¹

Leaving now this field of perception, and coming to what is usually regarded as the higher mental activities, we find that they, too, manifest to a striking degree the selective activity of the self. Concepts are formed from percepts by abstraction, and attention. That is, the concept-process consists in picking out from a variety of percepts, those which seem to us, in accordance with our interests or practical needs, to be the most essential attributes of the things presented to us. The elements thus selected are bound together by means of a common name. While thus essentially individual in their nature, the common or universal aspect of concepts is intelligible from the fact that human beings, as members of the same world, have to a large degree the same practical

¹ *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, p. 286.

needs. Reasoning, again, may be described as a selection of one out of many conceptions each of which stands in subordination to a higher, and of *that particular one* which will serve as a connecting link between that higher and some lower concept or individual with which our practical interests lead us to connect it. Thus in the syllogism,

M is P,

S is M,

S is P,

what we done is to *select* from the numerous notions which are comprehended in P, the appropriate one *M* by means of which S can be brought into relation with P.¹ But not only this formal process of reasoning, but the very content of one's thoughts is the result of selection. As the accompaniment of physiological currents playing through the brain, there are constantly offered to consciousness ideas of which the greater number vanish immediately and without being reflected upon. I choose certain of these ideas, in accordance with my theoretical interests or practical needs, and ponder over them and their relation to other ideas. I deliberately make them the subject of my thought, direct my attention to them, and, at the same time, ignore the great rank and file of the actual mental processes, which, consequently, take no place in my thought series. Out of the infinitude of ideas in the stream of consciousness, I choose those about which I wish to think, I emphasize some and neglect others, and thus literally make my experience what I will it shall be.

It is, perhaps, so obvious as to scarcely require mention that our external actions are only the outcome of a series of selections. As a rule, when I perform any bodily act, contract this or that group of muscles, some other movement is always physically possible; and in so far the act performed may be regarded as chosen. But to say that an act is willed, expresses something more than that an event has taken place which

¹ Cf. James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, pp. 331 ff.

may be regarded as one of several possibilities. Because the results are the same as if willed, because events have occurred which from our point of view can be regarded as selections, we have no right to regard them as manifestations of Will, so long as we understand the term in its ordinary signification. What I mean when I say 'I will' is not only that one out of a number of possibilities will result, but that the selection is the outcome of a *conscious* activity which I identify with myself. There can be no meaning in the term 'Will' unless we understand by it, the act of a conscious being.¹

But we have still more difficult questions before us. So far, we are on ground which today is scarcely disputed. Selection and consciousness are universally admitted to be involved in the ordinary concept of willing. As soon, however, as we inquire into the *degree* of consciousness which must attend an act of Will, we find the greatest differences of opinion. Can there be an act of will without a representation of the end for the sake of which the act is performed; and does such an act always involve the clear consciousness of the several possibilities or alternatives open at the time? Many writers, with the ethical signification of acts of will in view, have answered both these questions in the affirmative. Thus Sigwart says the proposition, 'no will without end,' is analytic, just as 'no effect without a cause' is analytic.² It must certainly be admitted that all action is for the sake of something; but this is not the same thing as to say that this 'something' for the sake of which we act, is clearly present to our ordinary consciousness. It appears to me that it is necessary to distinguish sharply between the ordinary unreflective consciousness which accom-

¹ It might perhaps be said that not only consciousness, but also a *rational* consciousness is pre-supposed in a real act of will. As Professor Watson has lately remarked: "Only a rational being can have a will."

² *Kleine Schriften, II., Der Begriff des Wollens.*

panies a large part of our daily life, and the more deliberative critical consciousness which is evoked when we psychologize, or when some crisis arises which demands closer consideration. In every day life, a conscious end to which we refer each act is as much a fiction as the theory of separate isolated sensations which are consciously compared and related. But analysis proves that the end is always present *in potentia*, in the sense that it has been a real factor in the choice. Subsequent reflection, too, may bring to light the part which it has played.

We may perhaps make the matter clearer in another way. On an analysis of my consciousness, I find over and above the transient psychical states, certain more permanent elements. In addition to the passing sensations of sight, sound, etc., there are present the somewhat fixed muscular sensations; besides the more ephemeral interests and ideals which from time to time becomes satisfied and realized, there are more abiding ends and interests which are more intimately connected with myself. Indeed, it is these which I group together as myself. I am not, however, conscious of them in detail during my ordinary life; but just because they are comparatively permanent they are neglected. Their influence, however, can at once be perceived as soon as an analysis is made by reflecting on previous actions.

The other question, viz., whether in a case of willing there must be present the representation of at least two possible lines of action, is closely allied to this. As a general rule, in performing the routine of every-day life, we scarcely consider or reflect at all; we act as we have been accustomed to act in like circumstances. In familiar circumstances, we act in accordance with certain practical maxims or receipts, and the one line of action is adopted without the others coming into clear consciousness at all. But inasmuch as the act performed was chosen or adopted, we cannot hesitate to say that it was *willed*. The most of cases that come up in ordinary life are at once adopted or rejected, because they are immediately

perceived to be consistent or inconsistent with the purpose of the life, or of the day. It is only more rarely that it is not evident which one of several actions will be best adapted to our purpose, and that we find ourselves confronted by a problem which cannot be settled in the off-hand way described above. When, however, in consequence of a new combination of circumstances, such a crisis arises, the choice cannot be made without a clear representation of the various competing possibilities, nor without more or less prolonged deliberation upon the results of the various courses of action.

It may, perhaps, be advantageous to denominate cases of willing *Will in the narrower sense*, or *explicit* acts of will, where the choice has been made after a clear consciousness of different possible acts, and of their relation to an end. We may then distinguish from this fully conscious stage, *Will in the broader sense*, or *implicit* acts of will, where the consciousness of the other possibilities is not so clearly present, but where the act follows the representation of some one line of action as a matter of course. It must be kept in mind, however, that no hard and fast line can be drawn between explicit and implicit acts of will, nor between acts which are implicitly willed, and those which are merely manifestations of unconscious or subconscious tendencies and instincts.

We shall endeavor to show in Chapter II, that one species of act passes into another by infinite gradations. Just as on the spectrum we cannot say that at any fixed point red ends, and yellow begins, so, I think, we are unable to fix any dividing line in the gradual development of Will, as it passes from unconscious and instinctive manifestations to the clear light of deliberative choice. The distinction just made, however, although not absolute, will prove useful in avoiding confusions in our subsequent discussions.

When we speak of Will, we denote a mental occurrence which has for its object either the production of something which does not yet exist, or the holding fast of something

which we already possess, and which is in danger of being displaced by something else. In both cases, there is a representation of what is willed; and if the act of will has been explicit, there is also a representation of other possibilities. In the first case, when the will is directed towards realizing something that does not yet exist, the act follows oftentimes without the competition of other representations. So soon as the act is thought of, it is at once consented to, and adopted. In the other case, where the will is exerted to maintain the present condition of affairs, it is more likely to be explicit. Very often we simply enjoy the present without willing its continuance. It is only when something else comes into competition with the employment or enjoyment of the present that the will is called into exercise at all. If I am seated at my desk reading or writing, I do not require to constantly exercise my will to remain there. It is only when some other alternative presents itself, *e. g.*, that of taking a walk, or of making a visit, that an act of will is necessary to continue my work. If, however, these competing attractions present themselves and I still decide to remain where I am, it is because this has been *willed* in opposition to the other courses which have presented themselves to me.

Further, Will must be directed to something which I believe myself capable of realizing. It must have reference to an act which I can perform, or believe that I can perform. It is not possible that I should will that a rainy day should become fine; because I can not represent this to myself as lying within my power. The means for the realization of any end which I will must be such as seem to be subject to my control. To will the end implies the willing of the means; and, further, a belief that these means are such as lie within our reach. It is true that subsequent deliberation may teach us that we were mistaken, that the end can only be obtained through the employment of means which we are unable or unwilling to adopt, but when this becomes obvious, we do not any longer will that the end shall be realized.

What has just been said enables us to distinguish between 'Desire' and 'Will'. The former implies only a mere looking towards the end, without any consideration of means. The latter is practical, it sets the machinery agoing to accomplish the end, and begins with the member of the series which lies nearest to hand. A wish, then, may be directed to what lies wholly beyond one's power to realize, and it may be wholly unpractical; *i. e.*, take no account whatever of the means. Thus, for example, one may desire wings, or the power to be in two places at the same time. For the same reason, it is quite possible to desire certain ends while the sole means for their realization is not at all desired. For example, I may desire to become learned or rich, and still may not desire to burn the midnight oil, or to practice prudence and economy, as these ends demand.

One word further regarding the relation of Desire and Will. We have seen that mere Desire is inoperative and ineffectual in attaining its object. Desire, however, passes into Will when the unpractical 'would that it were' is reinforced by the rational 'let it be,' or it 'must not be' of the self, which speaks with a consciousness of what the act really involves. Desire, we may say, is the expression of the nature of a sensitive being, while Will, in the sense in which we propose to use the term, belongs only to a rational being who has already attained some capacity for 'looking before and after," and who is able to perceive the essential unity of end and means.

In conclusion, we may emphasize the fact that will is a mental and not a physical phenomenon. It is not necessary, that is, that an act of will shall be manifested in a series of muscular movements. We may will without moving a muscle. All the phenomena of will may be present in consciousness though there is no perceptible result so far as the external world is concerned. As Professor James somewhere says, 'willing is a relation between the mind and its ideas, not between the mind and the external world.' The

phenomena which are to form the subject of this study, then, are psychological processes, and it is mainly with an analysis and description of these phenomena that we shall be concerned throughout the two following chapters. When this task has been completed, we shall, however, proceed to discuss the relation of mind and body, and shall finally consider in what sense it is possible to speak of the freedom of the will.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WILL.

There is no doubt that it will be more easily possible to analyze an overt and clearly conscious act of will, than to determine the nature of process which are largely instinctive, and which go on for the most part below the threshold of consciousness. In attempting to analyze the phenomena present in consciousness during an act of volition, we shall accordingly select such an overt act as the subject of our analysis. Before we begin this undertaking, however, it seems advantageous to see what light is thrown upon the nature of the explicit will processes by attempting to trace briefly their genesis from earlier and more simple forms.

In the first place, we remark that the will is an elementary and original process of our conscious life. No matter how far back we may push our investigations, we shall always find the will present as a reaction of the self upon the conscious content. All attempts to derive will from something which is generically from it, must necessarily prove fruitless. This assertion scarcely needs proof at the present time, and we may perhaps content ourselves by referring to the futility of Herbart's attempt—which is perhaps now almost universally acknowledged—to derive will from the relation between representations. While emphasizing the uniqueness of the will process, however, modern psychology also points out the organic unity and interrelation of the whole mental life. While the old faculty theory separated sharply between knowledge and volition, modern psychologists maintain that in all sensation, all association and comparison, will is also present as a factor. The voluntary control of thoughts is regarded as a process involving will not less than what we usually call voluntary acts, and which produce an effect in the external world. In short, we may say with Höffding, "the problem of will is

concerned with the right conception and understanding of attention."¹ To understand the nature of will, that is, we must begin with will itself. In other words, our development must be *autogenetic*, not *heterogenetic*.² We must give up all attempts to derive will from something different from itself, and confine ourselves to an investigation of how complex deliberative acts are evolved from more simple purposeless acts. There are, says Wundt,³ two questions to be answered: (1) "What are the relations of the primitive inner activity of will to the other phenomena of consciousness? (2) How does the outer activity of will arise 'from the inner?'" We shall so far as possible treat these questions separately, although it will be found, as we proceed, that inner and outer manifestations of will act and react upon each other.

We have already asserted, that in every stage of conscious development, there is always some activity manifested by the individual, which, however, becomes explicit only in volition. This is the activity of apperception; and without this our experience would be a mere series of separate feelings, entirely wanting in any unity. But since it is in virtue of the synthetic and dynamic character of consciousness that our experience forms a whole, we may regard apperception as an original element. As we find this activity in lower forms of consciousness, however, it is a blind, irrational response to some object which is immediately pleasant or unpleasant. When strong or absorbing sensations fill consciousness, this activity seems crowded out and to give no sign of its existence. Attention in such cases seems to be 'a function of the object' rather than of the subject. But a more or less rapid change of content is a condition both of conscious activity and of consciousness itself. When a change takes place, when a new sensation makes its appearance, the activity of the Will is man-

¹ Vierteljahrsh. f. wissensch. Philos., Bd. XIV., Hft. 3, pp. 29.

² Cf. also Baldwin, *Feeling and Will*, p. 34-7.

³ Wundt, *Grundzüge der Physiol. Psychologie*, 3^{ter} Aufl. Bd. II, p. 465.

ifested in the mode of its reception. The two ways in which this involuntary apperception manifests itself are by attraction and repulsion. If the new state is *interesting*, *i. e.*, if it introduces a pleasant change into the existing state of consciousness, the attention is directed towards it; if, for any reason, it is unpleasant, the activity is employed in suppressing it so far as possible. This constitutes, as Höfding remarks "an elementary choice, and determines the manner in which things shall appear to us. As plants turn to the light, so our perceptive faculties turn to that which excites pleasure and interest, and away from that which excites pain."¹

The selection at this stage, however, is altogether blind and instinctive. It is a mere straining towards what is immediately pleasant, and away from what is immediately painful. A higher stage can only be attained through the development of memory and intellect. This is reached when the action is guided by the idea of the result, as based on previous experience, and represented to consciousness. There is thus a kind of preparation for the result. The function of the representation thus present to consciousness is to determine to a great extent what shall be perceived. We see and hear mainly what we look for and expect. This preparatory action of attention, or of the will, is also shown in the experiments on reaction time. When attention is directed to the movements to be performed, the reaction time is much less than in the cases where it is directed toward the expected stimulus. At this period of development, we have got beyond the stage of blind instinctive action, and are at the stage of impulse. We have not as yet Will in the narrower sense of a choice between motives, but Will which follows a single representation. There can, under these circumstances, be no voluntary choice in the strict sense of the word; for there is only a single motive present, and the action follows unhesitatingly in its direction.

¹Höfding, *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 314.

A real choice first arises when different impulses conflict with each other, and we are accordingly compelled to pause and settle the rival claims of possible competing lines of action. It is evident that we do not find such power of deliberation to any extent among the lower animals. In their case, there is no balancing of motives, no weighing of attractions against each other. In the same way, the child's acts are at first all impulsive in character. The object of the whole course of his practical education is to make him *think*; *i. e.*, to inhibit impulsive action by the idea of consequences; or, at a later stage of development, by the desire to bring all the acts of the individual life into relation with something which he regards as an end in itself. Such a choice requires a degree of mental development, and a power of deliberation and comparison, which is not found in young children nor in most animals. However important an advance is marked by a deliberate choice between several competing motives, yet it is evident that such selections have developed gradually from impulse acts. In a given case, it is often difficult to say whether the act has been determined by a single motive, or whether other considerations were also present, but have been, in comparison with the victorious motive, so weak and ineffectual, that they obtained no hold upon consciousness. According to Lotze and some English ethical writers, Will implies a deliberate choice between two or more competing possibilities.¹ But this is not something radically different from manifestations of which we have been treating at an earlier stage, but is the highest and most complete development of Will. "The selection of passive, the attention of reactive actions, find their fruition in the fiat of volitional consciousness."² We may describe these phenomena as constituting a complex and intensified form of Will. It is com-

¹*Microcosmos I.*, 286. Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II., pp. 35-37.

²Baldwin, *Feelings and Will*, p. 347.

plex, for there are several distinct stages or processes, the representation of several possible decisions, deliberation upon the consequences of each of these, and, finally, the act of Will proper, which last in itself seems more conscious than the activity of the instinctive or impulsive stage.¹

As before remarked, it is impossible to draw any sharp dividing line between uni-motived and plural-motived acts. The one passes by imperceptible stages into the other. Nevertheless, it is a moment of the utmost importance for the development of the Will, when a conflict between different motives arises, and the original impulse is resisted. Now for the first time the action becomes voluntary. The voluntary act, however, is not something which suddenly comes upon the scene and supersedes all other modes of action. But throughout life the great majority of our acts are performed from instinct or impulse, and a deliberate choice is more rare than is generally imagined. Further, in lower forms of conscious life, there are what we may perhaps call incipient choices. "Even in instinct, a certain choice takes place in so far as several simultaneous perceptions awaken several different impulses, of which the stronger leads to action. Further, a sense perception can call up a representation, even before the impulse has led to action, which has as a result, an impulse in direct opposition to the first. The action may at once be determined by the relative strength of the impulses without any lengthened deliberation of which corresponds to an end. Between this instinctive choice (which has more the nature of passive choice) and the fully self-conscious subordination of individual motives under a maxim or a law, there are infinitely numerous intermediate links."² The distinctive feature of voluntary or deliberative acts of will, is the abstraction from the immediate soliciting power of different impulses, and their evaluation according to

¹Kulpe, *Die Lehre vom Willen*, p. 72.

²Schneider, *Der menschliche Wille*, p. 280.

the idea of some permanent end. We can now perceive more clearly why voluntary acts should be called an intensive form of Will. Although the activity of apperception can be perceived even in instinctive, and still more clearly in impulsive acts, yet it manifests itself most unmistakably in voluntary acts. In turning the attention now to this, now to that possibility, in deliberating and reflecting over the consequences, and evaluating the different impulses in relation to an end, the Will manifests itself as the absolute centre of personality. It is this intensified form of Will which compels recognition, and which can not be explained as merely the persistence in consciousness of the strongest impression. For my own part, it seems indisputable that attention is more than 'predominance of an idea in consciousness.'

It is the immediate consciousness of our own activity, as thus emphasized and intensified in the act of choice, which constitutes our feeling of Freedom, upon which the sense of responsibility is often supposed to rest. As an empirically given fact, this experience gives no testimony regarding the ultimate question of freedom; but only asserts that we act without compulsion, that we are forced or pushed by nothing outside ourselves, that the self is the centre from which it has originated.¹ Without that feeling, the moral judgments which we pass upon our own acts would be unmeaning. With that feeling, and because of it, we recognize the action to be our own and accordingly hold ourselves responsible.² This is the basis of our practical freedom, while the more ultimate and metaphysical question can be answered either way without prejudice to our notions of duty or responsibility.³

We have now to consider the development of outer acts of

¹ Cf. Wundt, *Ethik*, 1st ed., p. 398.

² Höffding, *Die Gesetzmässigkeit der psychischen Aktivität*, V. f. w. Phil. XV., pp. 373 ff.

³ Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, p. 70 ff.

Will, as manifested most immediately in changes in the muscles of our own body. This development, of course, goes along with, and is supplementary to, the growth of Will as phenomena of consciousness. We have treated of the development of the latter separately so far merely for the sake of clearness.

All bodily movements may be divided into two classes, the purely physiological, and the psychological. The physiological movements go on mechanically, and are not attended by consciousness, or, at most, it is only the *result* of the movements which enters into consciousness. In psychological movements, on the contrary, a more or less distinct representation of the movement, or of its consequence, precedes its actual occurrence. The former class of movements may be either automatic or reflex. Automatic or spontaneous movements originate within the organism itself, from some change in the condition of the blood, or through some other change in the organism. A reflex, on the other hand, takes place when the nerve current which has been carried to the sensory centre passes out by the motor path without any state of consciousness having preceded. Automatic movements are generally random and purposeless, and continue through life, blind, spontaneous discharges of physiological energy. Reflex movements differ from these in being usually purposive when the stimulus is of medium intensity.

One theory of the development of outer acts of will holds that all acts were at first either automatic or reflex; and that from these, voluntary movements were developed. Bain and Preyer suppose that at first all movements were purely physiological, consciousness in the meantime being a mere on-looker and observing the results. In the course of time, however, it learns to direct these movements for its own ends—to inhibit those which have painful results, and to produce those which are pleasant. At first the influence of consciousness is small; but it gradually gains power over the physiological movements, and subordinates them to its con-

trol. If now we separate, as this theory does, consciousness from the original movements, it is difficult to understand how they are again to be combined. Just how the Will should at a certain point take control of movements which previously went on independently of it, we are not told. It is quite inexplicable on this theory, too, how the Will should discover that certain movements are subject to its fiat, and change from a mere onlooker to an actual agent. Moreover, as Wundt says: "What an absurd conclusion to suppose that animals and men have come to the world as purely theoretic beings. After they have experienced many perceptions, and deliberated much, do they suddenly arrive at the idea, How would it be if we should ourselves execute these movements? Said and done; and for the future a new and useful power is gained. The only part of this account which has any relation to the facts is the existence of reflex movements. But we neither know that reflexes must always precede voluntary movements, nor that the will ever takes the former into its service. . . . We can prove that in many cases voluntary movements become mechanical; for the opposite view, on the contrary, there is scarcely a single trustworthy observation."¹

It seems to me that we must refuse to separate outer and inner acts of will as this theory does. There is no doubt that in animals and young children we do find automatic and spontaneous acts; but there is no evidence that these ever become voluntary. What seem to us like physiological reflexes are, however, oftentimes psychological reflexes; that is, at least a large part of the movements even of young children are manifestations of Will. In lower forms of conscious life, every inner act of will manifests itself by means of a movement through which the sense organs are involuntarily adjusted to the character of the stimulus. Although we acknowledge the presence of mechanical movements, we shall still have to say that many

¹ Wundt, *Essays*, pp. 292-93; *Cf.*, also Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, Vol. II, pp. 202-203.

phenomena which appear to be purely physiological are in fact psychological. The outer movement is only the other side, or the immediate result, of the apperception of the idea of the movement. "Outer acts of Will are only a product of Apperception which has arisen under complex conditions.¹ As we shall see more clearly in a later chapter, the apperceiving process of the idea is the inner act of Will upon which the outer manifestation at once follows. We are indeed able in adult life to form the representation of a movement without it actually taking place; but this is because we inhibit the movement by thinking at the same time of its not taking place. There is good reason to suppose that Apperception and outer acts were originally inseparable, and that their separation rests upon a later development of consciousness.² This kind of action, which has been named *ideo-motor*, is the type of all movement, and depends upon the law that every idea of the mind tends to realize itself in movement unless held in check by the idea of other movements.

There seems, then, strong reasons for refusing to separate inner acts of will and outer movements. Wundt argues that we cannot point to a single case where reflex acts have become voluntary, while experience constantly shows us that the opposite is the case. If the will were able to assert its mastery over a sure working reflex mechanism, all the more complicated movements would be acquired at a single stroke. As a matter of fact, however, we learn such movements as walking, dancing, piano-playing, by long practice. It is only after they have been performed voluntarily for a longer or shorter time that they are handed over to a mechanism.³ The order of development of outer acts of will, then, is from psychological reflexes or impulsive acts to voluntary, and

¹Wundt, *Grundzüge des physiol. Psychologie*, Bd. II, p. 470.

²Wundt, *Grundzüge des physiol. Psychologie*, Bd. II, p. 471. Compare also James, *Psychology*, Vol. II, pp. 526-27.

³Wundt, *Essays*, p. 294.

again from voluntary movements to mechanical or physiological reflexes. The impulsive or instinctive acts are first rationalized; *i. e.*, brought into harmony with some universal end, as preservation of self, or species. Indeed, many of these impulses are themselves rational from the beginning. It is not the task of reason to eradicate these natural impulses but to direct and control them. When habits have become formed, consciousness, having done its work, ceases to attend these processes, and they go on themselves in a purely mechanical way. We sometimes are able in later life to catch a glimpse of these old untamed impulses when a temptation seizes us at times to do some utterly senseless act; and sometimes, too, it takes all our will power to inhibit and control such impulses.

Of course, this account does not necessarily imply that all actions go through this transformation. Many movements remain throughout life at the impulsive stage. They may even continue to be subjects for deliberation, or at least continue to be attended by some degree of consciousness. Such, it seems to me, are many of our most common impulses, as for example, that for food, or for revenge. Again, many of the acts which were once performed voluntarily may not yet have entirely passed over to the mechanical stage, but may still be attended by more or less distinct consciousness. The presence of actions of this kind seem, however, rather to confirm our theory than to be opposed to it. For such movements represent intermediate stages of the process, they are acts which are on the way, one may say, to become reflex.

CHAPTER III.

AN ANALYSIS OF WILLING.

Will does not exist as an isolated element of our consciousness which is given to us directly through introspection, but it is rather a concept which is formed through analysis of the highly complex facts which are given to inner perception.¹ There are, no doubt, certain phenomena of consciousness which are usually known as *volitions*, because in them will or activity of consciousness seems to be the most distinctive feature. Yet neither volitions, nor cognitions, nor feelings, form by themselves actually existing states of mind. As Mr. Ward says: "Instead of three coördinate species, cognition, emotion, conation, we have three distinct and irreducible facts, attention, feeling, and object or presentation constituting one concrete state of mind or psychosis."²

Our problem will then be to analyze and describe the empirically given content of that psychical phenomenon which we name volition. Although much attention has been bestowed upon this subject, and much keen introspection has been employed, yet psychologists by no means agree in their descriptions of the facts. However, upon one point all are agreed. When a voluntary act of the clearly conscious sort is performed, there is always present to consciousness a representation or prefiguring of the result. If a movement is to be willed, there is first a representation in consciousness of how the movement feels or looks. It is of course necessary, in order that these conditions may be fulfilled, that this movement should have been previously performed. And so vol-

¹ Cf. Wundt, "Zur Lehre von den Gemüthsbewegungen," *Phil. Studien*, VI., p. 382 ff.

² James Ward, *Mind*, "Psychological Principles," No. 45. See also the same author's article, "Psychology" in the *Ency. Brit.*

untary movements presuppose and are developed from involuntary. We find, then, that our ability to perform any external act at first depends upon our ability accurately to picture to ourselves how the necessary movement feels, *i. e.*, to reproduce the sensations which have previously arisen from muscle and joint during its performance. These sensations have been called the kinaesthetic impressions; and they are of the greatest importance in learning any new movement. But after an act has been performed a number of times, the kinaesthetic impressions are no longer called up, but more remote sensations, often of sight or even of the consequences of them are all that are necessary for the successful accomplishment of the required movement. As Professor James has pointed out in his admirable chapter on the Will,¹ sensations which are of no practical importance tend to pass out of consciousness. When in learning to row, for example, I have by some chance taken a stroke in good form, my attempt to repeat it consists in striving to reproduce the *feel* of that stroke, the kinaesthetic impression of that movement. Later, however, when I have by practice become more expert in the art, I am guided by the more remote sensations derived from sight or sound.

But besides these representations of the more or less remote results of the action, concerning the presence of which psychologists are agreed, is there aught else present? Münsterberg agrees with the ordinary description of volition so far as to admit that there is also present a feeling of inner activity.² How he proposes to explain this activity-feeling, we shall learn in a short time. Let us now, however, turn to the same author's statement of the problem before us: "Modern Psychology names the last analysable elements into which the content of consciousness can be divided sensations" (*Empfindungen*). The will, then, so far as we are concerned

¹ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II., pp. 486-594.

² Münsterberg, *Die Willenshandlung*, pp. 60-63.

with it, is only a complex of sensations. "The group of sensations which we name will, may by its complexity and constancy be distinguished from other sensations, yet the elements which result from the analysis are coördinate with the elements of ideas. Our problem then is to determine what intensity, quality, and feeling tone belong to this group of sensations which we call Will."¹

This statement seems to me to beg the question in a very obvious fashion in favor of the position Münsterberg is concerned to maintain. The statement that sensations are the last elements into which our conscious phenomena can be analysed, is true only of those elements which enter into compounds, or form parts of an objective representation.² The Will, the primary activity of the self, cannot be known as an idea like other ideas, as Berkeley long ago maintained. And to seek for a definite state of consciousness with a fixed individuality of its own is to rest the problem, it seems to me, upon a fundamental misapprehension of the nature of conscious states. Münsterberg seems to demand that there should be found some *peculiar individual state* of consciousness which we call Will, and failing to find this he seeks no further. Wundt, in the article above referred to, excellently describes this tendency to substantialize the content of consciousness. "For the adherents of this theory the mind is a bundle of presentations (*Vorstellungen*.) Like the permanent objects of the outer world to which they refer, the presentations are supposed to modify each other in our consciousness; but, at the same time, to constitute *for us* only objects of passive observation. We can add nothing to them, nor take anything from them. Our own activity is only a presentation, which, like all others, is subject only to our observation. What is not given to us in this way does not exist.

¹ Münsterberg, *Die Willenshandlung*, p. 62.

² Cf. Wundt, "Zur Lehre von den Gemüthsbewegungen," *Phil. Studien*, VI, p. 384.

Our will, therefore, must be a presentation which is analyzable into definite sensations that can be traced back to some physiological stimulus."¹

It is clear that this strictly intellectual account of consciousness is entirely mythological. The true view is rather that there are three 'aspects' in every conscious state, all of which are essential in making it what it is. These aides which belong to every conscious process are: (1) knowledge of its signification; (2) its 'emotive' or 'affective' aspect; the way, that is, in which it affects me; (3) the manner in which I relate myself to it. This latter element, it appears to me, is known as directly as either of the others. We *name* the state according to its signification for knowledge, and fall into the mistake of supposing that this aspect completely exhausts its content. Dr. Münsterberg contents himself with analyzing the content of consciousness into so many 'phenomena' each having a definite content and remaining what it is, altogether independently of its relation to the subject. He materializes the phenomena of consciousness and makes the self a mere onlooker. Then, since it is found there is no such phenomena in the case of Will to analyze and name, the conclusion is reached that the latter can be at the bottom only 'a complex of sensations.' Not sensations nor reproduction of sensations *as such* constitute the phenomena of Will, but sensations and their reproductions which stand in definite relations to one another and to the spiritual essence.² A mental state is not something whose signification is known out of all relation to the self; but the attitude of the self to the sensation is an element in its nature which must not by any means be neglected. The content of the mental state on its knowing side has a more stable constitution than that of the feeling and willing aspects.

¹Wundt, "Zur Lehre von den Gemüthsbewegungen" *Phil. Stud.*, VI, p. 384-85.

²Lipps, *Vier. f. w. Phil.*, Bd. XIII, p. 177.

The former element being of more practical significance is the only one connoted by the name given to it. This element also enters into more complex states of knowledge, while our relation to it which the name does not describe, and which cannot be named, does not form an element of higher compounds and so is often overlooked.¹

To return to Dr. Münsterberg's analysis of Will. The essence of the volitional he finds as we have seen in the feeling of inner activity; but in accordance with his working presuppositions this activity can be nothing more than certain substantive states of mind. Dr. Münsterberg first examines the case where the will is confined to the control of attention and the direction of the processes of thought. In all cases of Voluntary change of content, these preceded the clear consciousness of any representation another state which, in regard its content, already contained the former. In every case of involuntary change there was no element preceded the new state which contained it. When I arrive at *a* through *b* by involuntary association, these states may have certain characteristics in common, but *b* does not contain *a*. When, on the contrary, I think of *a* and seek it in my memory, what I perceive is not *a* nevertheless it is something which agrees with it in content. So long as *a* is not found, I perceive only an *x*; but this *x* exists in a series of relations through which it can be known only as *a* and nothing else.²

Let us now examine this somewhat detailed statement a little more closely, using the concrete example which Münsterberg himself employs, that of trying to recall a name. "I try to think of a word, I remember the place

¹Since the above was written this point has been much more clearly and fully worked out by Professor Andrew Seth. 'Evidently if phenomena or objects of Consciousness are alone to be accepted as facts,' says Professor Seth, 'then all real activity on the part of the subject is necessarily eliminated.' *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, pp. 94, ff.

²*Die Willenshandlung*, pp. 67, ff.

where I read it, I know exactly its meaning, but *it* is not present; finally it comes to me. Now that word is fully given as to its content in the previous state of consciousness."¹ For my own part, I fail to understand what meaning is here to be given to the phrase "as to its content." The name is *not* contained in the previous state, but is only connected with this by many lines of association. Nor is it true that only the name can result and nothing besides. In some cases, all our efforts to remember may prove fruitless. The *x* still remains an *x* and no definite value can be assigned to it. Or the wrong word may be recalled and mistaken for the one of which we are in search. It does not seem that this criterion serves adequately to distinguish voluntary thought processes from the results of involuntary association. In the latter case, as in the former, any state of consciousness must have been preceded by another or others which were related to it *in some way*. But it is an undisputed fact, that in the one case there is an *x*, a state whose content is not determinate, present to consciousness. This is of course not a representation with any definite content, (the *x* in so far as it is an *x* has no content), but it is *the mere form of voluntary willing*. If some thought or word is sought for, the *x* is the consciousness of this striving as directed towards some goal. In a chain of reasoning, the goal to be arrived at is indeed generally present, and determines the steps of the thought process. The representation of the end, however, does not contain the conclusion; for the latter may be directly opposed to it.

It does not seem to me that this analysis which Münsterberg has given is convincing, or the immediate evidence of our consciousness can be so lightly set aside. The belief that we are agents, however, Münsterberg accounts for in two ways. First, when a train of thinking is going on smoothly, we have no especial consciousness of the activity

¹ Münsterberg, *Die Willenshandlung*, p. 67.

of the will. Reflection, nevertheless persuades us that we have been active by the use of the most important criterion, that the representation of the completed act in such cases was always present to consciousness in the previous moment. For this reason, then, we conclude that we have been agents. But, as a matter of fact, "we can only will *a* so long as it remains in us; and so long as it remains, we cannot, as empirical personalities, set it aside. Our Will in this case means only that *a* has remained in our consciousness, that the content of every moment was already contained in the foregoing state."¹

Furthermore, if we are conscious of our own activity during the action itself as we are sometimes in thinking and must always be in bodily actions, this feeling can be analyzed into feelings of strain in the organs or a tightening of the skin of the head. Now it is doubtless true that inner manifestations of Will are invariably accompanied by such bodily feelings. If we try to discover the phenomena of volition, these are the only explicit 'states of consciousness' which can be named and described. Yet these bodily sensations are not themselves the feeling of activity, nor do they constitute the essence of Will. They may often fuse with this latter feeling or be mistaken for it, but yet it is possible by introspection to distinguish the activity feeling from such strain sensations. These bodily sensations which often remain after the feeling of activity has disappeared; and, moreover, after they have vanished, they can be recalled. The feeling of inner activity, on the other hand, is a something altogether *sui generis*, and expresses certain relations of the ego and its content, as opposed to the passive side of representations, which we objectify. The feeling of activity is that which constitutes chiefly our immediate experience of the self, without which bodily sensations would not be experiences at all. "How can one," asks Lipps, "seek in anything which be-

¹ Münsterberg, *Die Willenshandlung*, p. 70.

longs to the world, that feeling of effort by means of which what is and happens both in the external world, and in the world of the body, become for our consciousness an object of doing or suffering."¹ In the case of involuntary changes of content, the new ideas appear as something foreign to ourselves, something belonging to the Non-ego. In the case of voluntary alterations of conscious content, through the agency of the feeling of activity, they are known as mine; *i. e.*, as belong to me in a peculiar sense. How then can this feeling, in virtue of which the world is first made *ours*, or is opposed to us, be attributed to any element of the world itself? In thus defining the feeling as that which expresses the relation of opposition between the self and the world of objective phenomena, we must remember that this definition is not identical with the fact given in immediate perception. The *signification* of the feeling is discovered only by reflection; in actual experience itself, there is no knowledge or no separation of what is given as inner and outer.² It does seem to me, however, that we do know of feelings and volitions immediately, in the same way as cognitions are known, and not merely through results. When we voluntarily attend to any object, our attention is withdrawn from other objects. Instead of being diffused and occupied equally with several representations, it is focused upon a single point. This forms, for the time, the centre around which our thoughts cluster; and the point into agreement with which they must be brought. But this feeling which attends the narrowing of consciousness is not the reason why we feel ourselves active, or, in other words, the feeling of activity is not merely the cognizance of the contraction of consciousness; for in cases where some striking event or object fills consciousness, we

¹ Lipps, "Bemerkungen Zur Theorie d. Gefühl," Vier. f. w. Ph. Bd. XIII, p. 190.

² Cf. Wundt, "Zur Lehre von den Gemüthsbewegungen," *Phil. Stud.*, VI.

have the contraction without the activity experience. The mere predominance or permanence in consciousness of any idea is not, then, sufficient to explain this feeling. As Mr. Ward says: "It is obviously impossible that what is a constituent in every psychological event, can be explicable in terms of psychological events. And the demand for such an explanation leads logically to a tacit denial of any heterogeneity in mind at all."¹ Nevertheless, Mr. Ward seems to hold that attention can never be known *per se*. It is rather a necessary inference, a *sine qua non* of explanation than a fact which can be known immediately. He writes: "It is neither a presentation nor a relation among presentations, nor, strictly speaking, an unanalysable element in the presentations themselves. An unanalysable element in every state of mind, I admit, but one which even in reflective consciousness is never directly presented. I see no very serious objection to saying that all we know *about* it is an intellectual construction, or even an inference, provided that it be allowed that every proposition in psychology is completely eviscerated if this inference is neglected."²

Höffding also argues against an immediate cognition of the activity of the self. Such a state, he contends, if immediately perceived, must be simple and unconnected like our sense impressions. It must appear with a definite quality which is as little to be mistaken as the quality of the sensation of color. Now, activity and passivity are only relative notions which are indicated by a greater or less concentration of consciousness. To what grade of concentration does this feeling correspond. There can be no such characteristic mark or criterion of Will; for if there were, there could be no mistakes in practical life. But, as a matter of fact where a volition cannot at once be put into effect, we can never be certain that

¹ James Ward, *Mind*, No. 45, p. 66.

² James Ward, *Mind*, No. 48, p. 570. Cf. Also the article, "Psychology," in the *Ency. Brit.*

our resolution has been made, that it will not be 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' Our only criterion is the experience of our own character.¹

These arguments seem to me to rest upon the same implicit demand which has been so often referred to in this chapter; the demand for some definite conditions of consciousness which can be classified as phenomena of will, each having a fixed content which is as definite as a color tone. But our argument has gone to show that just because the Will is indispensable to *all* mental life, it is difficult to discover any *special* mental state to which we can point and say, 'lo, it is here.' As we do not base our notion of the self upon any particular feeling or representation, neither can we do so in the case of the Will. Further, in reply to Höfding's objection, we may say that there is nothing to prevent a decision which has once been made from coming up again for consideration. Every decision regarding the future is made only hypothetically; and another day may bring additional light, or a different frame of mind. But Höfding urges, further, that even when we appear to be most clearly conscious of a resolution, when it is so explicit that we say 'I will,' the real deciding point does not lie here, but the whole matter was really determined much earlier. The explicit 'fiat' is often only the official expression of that which has been already decided.

It is no doubt true that in such cases the decision consists in referring the act under consideration to some end previously adopted, as a permanent principle of action. In this way, many of our customary acts are decided at once with reference to some such end. But if the act of volition is explicit, it marks the termination of a conflict between that end and some other lines of conduct. A mere subsumption would take place quietly, almost unconsciously. The 'I will' do this or that, shows that something else has entered into competition with it, that the end has tottered on its throne; or that up to

¹ Höfding, *Outlines of Psychology*, (Eng. trans.) pp. 340 ff.

this time the minor premise of the practical syllogism, 'this is a case of that kind' has been wanting.¹

We now return to our analysis of Will, and shall consider two cases representing respectively an explicit act of inner volition, and an external act of Will. In what does the essence of an act of inner volition consist? Suppose that we take the case where there are two alternatives offering themselves to us, and suppose that after deliberation, A is chosen although B has stronger immediate attracting power. How shall we describe the act of will by means of which A is chosen?

If we leave out of account the various processes of sensational strains which accompany the volition, as well as the representation of the various consequences of the alternatives under consideration, we must say that the essential moment of will consists in fixing the one alternative before us by means of the selective attention. Putting our analysis in terms of content, we may say that the volition is the immediate feeling of activity, plus the steadiness and predominance in consciousness of A. When we can attend to A solely and continuously, then, as Professor James says, it is willed. "We have thus reached the heart of our inquiry when we ask by what process it is that the thought of anything comes to prevail stably in the mind. . . . We see that attention with effort is all that any case of volition implies. *The essential achievement of the will in short, when it is most voluntary, is to attend to a difficult object, and hold it fast before the mind.*"² Notwithstanding this excellent statement, however, the tendency of James's analysis is to make too little of the conscious activity involved in voluntary experience, and to describe the volition purely from the side of content. When this is done, the alternative chosen seems to fill consciousness because of its superior attractive-

¹Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VII.

²*Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, p. 561.

ness. In other words, the subject appears to be passive rather than active. This is probably the danger in putting the description of an act of will solely in terms of attention. Or, perhaps, we should say that it ought to be remembered that the attention is not merely the power of raising certain mental processes to a greater degree of *intensity*; but is also an intellectual function which has the power of relating and incorporating ideas with the rest of our experience. It is not entirely true, then, it seems to me, to describe a case of deliberate willing as a mere act of holding a representation in consciousness. The idea which has been chosen has been adopted, not merely on account of its greater intensity as a process in consciousness, but because of its significance and its coherence with the permanent ends of our life. This intellectual function of attention or will is very clearly brought out by Professor Baldwin in the following quotation: "The attention moves through the series of elements, grasping, relating, retaining, selecting, and when the integration it effects swells and fills consciousness, that is the 'fiat.' Just as soon as the elements of the end cease to act as partial influences causing the movements of attention by their vividness, and the attention gets its hold upon the integrated content, the fiat goes forth."¹

There is no new element added to the volition as a psychological fact when the act becomes an external one, and effects some change in the world of objects. The arguments of James² and Münsterberg³ seem quite convincing against the existence of any special innervation feelings; and even Wundt has modified his position on this question.⁴ It is not necessary that we should first have the volition as an internal fact, and then add something to it to get external volition. The

¹Baldwin, *Feelings and Will*, p. 355.

²*Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II., pp. 494 ff.

³*Die Willenshandlung*, pp. 75 ff.

⁴*Grundzüge der Physiol. Psychologie*, 3^{ter} Aufl., Bd. I, pp. 400 ff.

truth rather seems to be that the division between internal and external volition is itself an artificial one. Every state of consciousness has its physical side. A volition is at once a psychological fact, and a moving force in the external world. As James says: "We do not first have a sensation or a thought, and then have to add something to it to get a movement. Movement is the natural immediate effect of feeling, irrespective of what the quality of the feeling may be. It is so in reflex action, it is so in emotional expression, it is so in voluntary life."¹

No analysis of deliberate acts of will, however, is complete which does not take account of the subordination of particular acts under a permanent end. In order to complete the analysis of such an act of volition we pass on to a brief treatment of this subject.

In impulsive actions, there is no reference to anything beyond the act itself. There is present in such cases a loss of equilibrium in the psychical condition, and a more or less distinct desire of something to be realized; but there is no conception of an end under which the action is to be brought, or to which it is referred. End and means in this case coincide. Impulsive actions may be defined as movements which follow immediately the perception of the inciting object. There is nothing beyond the immediate act present to consciousness, and so there can be no thought of an end. The actions of children and of animals are almost altogether of this sort. Mankind, however, does not remain at this stage, but in virtue of his reason soon rises above it. "Human Will is not determined by that only which excites, that is, immediately affects the senses; but we possess the power to overcome the impressions made on the faculty of our sensuous desires by representing to ourselves what in a more distant way may be useful or hurtful. These considerations of what is desirable

¹ *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II., p. 527.

with regard to our whole state, that is of what is good and useful, are based entirely on reason."¹ It is man's ability to hold before himself possibilities as yet unattained, which become for him laws, that makes him capable of reaching a higher intellectual and moral plane than the animals.

Besides the impulse to preservation of life and offspring which man shares with the lower animals, and which necessitates some union for the sake of protection, there are other irresolvable tendencies which we regard as peculiarly human. The first of these is the feeling of sympathy in the pleasure or pains of another, in virtue of which we are able to identify ourselves with him, and for the time to make his ends ours. Thus we speak of a man who is incapable of sympathy as inhuman. The second of these peculiarly human impulses may be called the intellectual motive. The animal intellect is the servant of desires and appetites, and is only called into action through their demands. At first, indeed, in the history both of the individual and the race, it is practical needs which arouse intellectual activity. The end at this stage is set by some practical necessity, and the intellect is moved to seek means for relief. But while these practical needs must always remain ends for us, man as an intellectual being finds satisfaction in the exercise of thought for its own sake; and without any practical end in view, reflects upon phenomena and their relations, purely for the pleasure which such activity brings. The result of this reflection is speech. It has been well remarked that animals do not speak because they have nothing to say. They never exercise their faculties for the sake of discovering truth, but always with some practical end in view. Man, on the other hand, in virtue of this intellectual impulse is able to make truth his goal, and to discover facts regarding phenomena and their relations which he expresses in language.

But if these were the only additional equipment of a man,

¹ Kant *Kr. d. r. V.*, (Müller's Trans.), p. 688.

they would involve him in hopeless realism with himself. Sympathy and self love, egoism and altruism come into irreconcilable conflict. In the region of theoretical reason, too, oppositions and antinomies arise. In overcoming these discords and contradictions, man realizes the highest goal of his intellectual and moral nature. It is the last class of human impulses which leads us to seek a harmony, a union in the play of different motives, and agreement and order in the phenomena of our intellectual life. Just as in the intellectual sphere the highest pleasure is experienced when "unity is introduced into the manifold," so the center of our soul life which is disturbed and pained by the clash of disharmonious motives conceives the idea of a union in a supreme end which will include in itself and harmonize all the ends of life. Reason, as Kant tells us, is a "function of unity." In its speculative employment, it leads us to postulate an absolute synthesis, and furnishes the conceptions of truth and beauty, the ideals of Science and of Art. When it is practical, it seeks to subordinate conflicting desires to a higher principle. It seeks beside the many things which we name goods, one Supreme Good in which these other goods are taken up, and through comparison with which their relative values are assigned. This impulse after unity introduces order and harmony into the soul, and so plays the same part as Justice in Plato's Republic. Just how this highest good, this unconditional end, is to be defined is a question to which different ages and peoples have given very different answers. Why this is so we shall see later. At present, we can say that man's potentiality of advancement depends upon the presence of these ends.

To the lower animals, even if they had the power of setting before themselves ends to be realized, the pleasure or pain of another, or the intellectual ideals of humanity, would not appeal. These are ends to us because we will them, and we will them because in virtue of our humanity they are interesting to us. These intellectual and moral impulses are

not, however, so strong and irresistible as the animal appetites. These latter have to provide for the production and maintenance of life itself, and consequently are more imperative in their demands. The distinctly human impulses, on the other hand, are rather gentle forces which work imperceptibly in the individual and the race, and the ends which they prescribe are not so irresistible as to compel man to embrace them. Often the more urgent demands of life crowd them out of sight, and they fail to make their influence felt. This may happen in the moral sphere through either the altruistic or the egoistic impulses (more frequently the latter) assuming such proportions that they dominate the whole life; *e. g.*, a man may be so consistently selfish that no conflict is felt. But where this lack of harmony does exist, it may lead to a desire to overcome the disunion, or the individual may be swayed in turn by selfish and unselfish motives. When the latter is the case, his life is made up of incongruous parts, and does not form a consistent whole.

It is now necessary to consider the part which environment plays in prescribing ends for the individual. We have hitherto spoken as if the ends of life were wholly prescribed by peculiarly human influences. While it is no doubt true that the form is wholly or in part prescribed by natural impulse, yet the content of the end is largely determined by external influence. The intellectual development of the individual, the moral status of the community to which he belongs, or of the persons with whom he is most intimately associated, prescribe to a large extent the ideals which appeal to him. It is a familiar truth that example is more forcible than precept, and that a man may be known by the company he keeps. Every society has certain norms of conduct which it prescribes for its members, certain standards to which it expects them to conform. These are adopted by the individual in a blind unconscious way, and become part of himself. He breathes them in with the air, and, since they are the common property of society, they form a bond of union between the indi-

vidual members. The common stock of hopes and fears, wants and pleasures, constitute the solidarity of mankind. These ideals are as much a part of the inheritance of the individual as his language.

Yet these norms can not in every circumstance of life lay down a complete code of conduct for the individual. And again, these ends may conflict with his own natural impulses or appetites. In the first instance, the individual will strive to bring the act under some general principle by which he has been guided in the past, and in doing so, will give it a concrete content and make it a reality to himself. Or, if the end prescribed by society runs counter to his own inclinations, a conflict will ensue which may result either in his rejecting the end, or in affirming it for himself. In the latter case, he has by affirming it made it his own, and identified himself with it. If a boy, *e. g.*, has been taught the rightness of truth speaking, he may assent to the principle without really adopting it for himself. It is to him abstract and unreal, and without content. But after having affirmed this principle in concrete cases, after, it may be, having brought all kinds of deception under the same category as lying, this end gains for him a wealth of meaning, and a reality which it did not before possess. After having acted in accordance with this principle until it becomes a custom, it may become again less concrete. To speak with Hegel, we might say that the end was at first abstract and universal, then became concrete and enriched with details, and that finally these concrete cases were taken up into the universal. But it is no longer the blank, abstract universal with which we started, but a concrete universal which includes within itself the meanings of the second stage.

But it must be remembered the end is not strictly speaking something distinct from the individual. In truth, the end to be an end at all must be something with which the individual has identified himself. It must form part of the permanent centre which constitutes for the time being himself.

The act by which he strives to realize that end is the expression of his own character. Even when there are two or more competing lines of conduct presented to us, we can not speak of any of them as ends except in an anticipatory way. At first they are all representations external to the self; when afterwards one is chosen, it is taken up into the self, and the rejected possibilities are to us henceforth as nothing.

We have been all along attempting to show the close connection between speculative and practical Reason. In the former not less than in the latter, we have one end which we strive to realize. What we keep before ourselves in thinking, as the goal towards which our efforts are directed, is the completion of the process itself; the understanding and clear perception of a system of relations which we think of as already existing in reality, whatever meaning we attach to reality. In willing, the end sought for is some new condition or event which we wish to call into being. Yet the two processes are not essentially different, and cannot be divorced from each other. While Will cannot be derived from thinking, or thought from Will, yet each process involves the other. At least all cases of conscious volition involve thought, and are in fact only an application of the practical syllogism. In other words, "every action implies a sense of a general principle, and the applying of that principle to a particular case, or it implies desire for some end coupled with perception of the means necessary for attaining the end."¹ And we have already had occasion more than once to refer to the fact that thought involves Will, and is really a series of selections.

¹ Sir A. Grant, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, Vol. I., p. 266.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PSYCHO-PHYSICAL PROBLEM.

Although "volition is a psychic or moral event pure and simple, and is absolutely completed when the stable state of the idea is there,"¹ yet it seems to produce effects in the external world. The most immediate result of such an outer act of will is a movement, due to some modification of muscular tissue. It is not, however, the fact that there are movements which seems to demand explanation, but that these movements should correspond to, and seem to obey, states of consciousness. Though there remain many gaps for physical science to fill in before we can understand exactly what takes place in the different stages of the volitional process, yet we can not doubt that as a physiological event it can be accounted for mechanically. Nevertheless the *direction* of nerve currents, the fact that the organism is directed and controlled according to the idea of certain ends, seems to indicate a connection between the two series—indeed at first sight it points to the dependence of physical phenomena upon psychical. On the other hand, there are certain facts which point to the dependence of mental states upon physiological processes. In the first place, it is to be noted that the psychic phenomena with which psychology busies itself, do not form a continuous series. There are gaps which it seems impossible to fill up completely from the mental side. Consciousness appears in the first place to derive all its original material in the form of sensations through the media of the brain and nervous system. These organs seem to hand over to consciousness 'the raw material' of sensation, and to be constantly introducing foreign matter into the thought series. It is undeniable at the same time that the nature of psychic states, and even their existence, is con-

¹James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II., p. 560.

ditioned equally by the character of consciousness itself; but in sensation we always seem forced to refer for an explanation to something further, something outside of ourselves. And not only is this the case in sensation, but also in explaining the connections of the psychical content, we are often obliged to put our account in terms of brain and nerve physiology. Professor Wundt remarks: "Since the connection of representations in our consciousness refers everywhere to conditions which lie outside of consciousness, and therefore can not be given to us in the form of mental phenomena, Psychology will be not seldom under the necessity of having recourse to physiological investigation. In cases where the causal connection of inner experiences seems to be interrupted, it is necessary to give an account of those physical phenomena which run parallel to them. With this object in view, the Psychology of sensation calls the Physiology of the sense organs to its assistance. And, in the same way, the explanation of the changes of conscious states can not refrain from referring to the Psychology of the brain."¹

This apparent reciprocal dependence of mind and brain, forces upon us the question regarding their exact relation. This is a most perplexing problem and one for which we cannot perhaps expect to find a complete solution. It may not be in vain, however, to state the problem clearly, and endeavor to come face to face with the difficulties involved in it. There are at least two questions which we can keep separate from each other. The first is the problem which science, adopting as it does the common sense standpoint, must raise in regard to the relation it is warranted in predicating between the phenomena with which Physiology and Psychology deal. It is, one may say, a methodological question regarding the most profitable way in which these sciences shall carry on their investigations. The other question is metaphysical, and is concerned with the ultimate nature of body and

¹Wundt, *Essays*, p. 116.

mind. It has to attempt to discover a tenable theory of the ultimate underlying unity in virtue of which these different classes of phenomena can both belong to the same world. We have every reason to suppose that all states of consciousness are accompanied by corresponding nervous states. We know that any considerable change in the physical organism, particularly in the brain, is attended by disturbances in the mental sphere. We also became convinced, in analysing the phenomena of Will, that when any representation fills consciousness a muscular movement at once follows. Further, we may point to the fact of the quantitative relation between the external stimulus and the resulting sensation which has been formulated by Weber's law. All these facts of correspondence seem to indicate that the two series are not ultimately separated, but belong in some way to the same world.¹

The question which will first concern us is that regarding the relation which, from the scientific standpoint, we are warranted in predicating between mental and physical phenomena. There are at least three possible attitudes toward this question. The first of these conceives it to be the business of science to limit itself to some particular field, and to attempt to find invariable connections and sequences between the phenomena in that field. The science of Psychology deals with "the uniformities of succession, the laws whether ultimate or derivative, according to which one mental state succeeds another."² The subject matter of neurology is the nervous system and its functions and changes. There must then be no confusion of the respective spheres of these two sciences. "Functions of the brain may correspond to, or may hold some other relation to mind; yet mind and brain are not the same, the study of the brain is not the study of the mind, physiology of the nervous system is not psychology."³

¹An excellent account of the parallels and analogies of the two series is given by Höffding, *Outlines of Psychology*, (Eng. trans.) Chap. II.

²Mill, *System of Logic*, Book VI., Chap. IV.

³Scripture, "The Problem of Psychology," *Mind*, No. 63.

It is no doubt often advantageous and desirable where one series can not be completed, where some of its links are wanting, to give the corresponding links of the parallel series. However, where this done, it can never be regarded as a final explanation. This can only be done—to quote again from Dr. Scripture's article referred to above—"with the recognition that they are but temporary substitutes." While thus limiting Physiology and Psychology to a particular sphere, the question is still left open as to the *ultimate* relation of the phenomena with which they deal. "It is not to be understood that by this limitation of the problem of psychology any opinion whatever is expressed regarding the relation between mental phenomena and bodily phenomena. Let the relation be what it will, the question must be kept out of psychology."¹ One cannot but approve heartily of such a clear statement of the subject-matter of the two sciences. It cannot be doubted either, that a protest is called for against the tendency discernible in the writings of some psychologists, to explain mental phenomena by furnishing a more or less mythical account of what takes place in the brain.

There is, however, another set of facts which is not included in either of these sciences, which we may call the fact of the *correspondence* of the physiological and the mental series. If we say that it is the province of physiological-psychology to investigate the correspondences and connections of the two series, the question inevitably recurs concerning the relation which such a science is able to predicate regarding the relation of the two kinds of phenomena with which it deals. It may be said that it is the business of a science, as a science, to discover uniformities of action, invariable sequences between phenomena. As a science, it knows nothing of any bond linking the phenomena together, or of any action or interaction between antecedent or consequent. It professes only to discover sequences and uniform modes of acting.

¹ Scripture, "The Problem of Psychology," *Mind*, No. 63.

Nevertheless, we do call "that antecedent which is invariably present when the phenomena follows, and invariably absent when the latter is absent, other circumstances remaining the same, the cause of the phenomena in these circumstances." Shall we not use the same word in describing the relation between the phenomena with which physiological-psychology deals?

If the word 'cause' denotes only invariable sequence, there can, of course, be no question about its use in this case. However, it must not be forgotten that, from its employment in describing the relations of phenomena in the material world, the term has taken on some peculiar shades of meaning which are altogether inapplicable in dealing with the phenomena of consciousness. This peculiar modification which has come to attach to the word 'cause' in recent times is the result of the relation of equivalence, which we always think of as obtaining between the cause and effect in the material world.¹ By 'equivalence' we mean that the series is conceivably reversible, that cause and effect have the same power of doing work. This fact is expressed in the law of the conservation of energy. This law has come to be an axiom of modern physical science, and is a direct consequence of our postulate that the amount of matter in the universe remains constant. Now such a law can have no application for psychology, or for psycho-physics. If this is clearly recognized, it seems to be a mere matter of words whether we shall or shall not use the term 'cause' to describe the relation between the phenomena with which these sciences deal. If we speak of causal connections between mental states, or between nervous states and states of consciousness, we must do it with the express recognition that here the principle of equivalence has no place.

The second point of view is that held by the advocates of the so-called 'automaton theory.' This view can not be re-

¹Wundt, *Ethik*, 1st ed., p. 399.

garded as a mere indication of the proper subject-matter of physical and mental science; it is a metaphysical theory which asserts the impossibility of any connection whatever between the physical and the mental world. However close and invariable is the connection between bodily movements and states of consciousness, yet *in reality*, it is maintained, they go on in entire independence of each other. "But little reflection is required to show that consciousness does not make the mighty difference which is commonly supposed. Consciousness, when it is present, is the light which lightens the process, not the agent in its accomplishment. We are never conscious of the thing until the thing is. Consciousness does not go before the event, it only comes into being with its accomplishment."¹ From this point of view consciousness is a mere 'epiphenomenon,' a shadow which 'ought not to exist.' The advocates of this theory not only recognize the gulf which Descartes pointed out between matter and mind, but they make it absolute. There are three reasons urged for thus wrenching the world apart. First, the utter disparateness of the two kinds of phenomena; secondly (and partly in consequence of the first), the impossibility of conceiving of any action or reaction between the two worlds; and, thirdly, the direct consequences of the law of the conservation of energy.

All kinds of physical energy, it is said, are comparable because they are all forms of motion, and can be reduced to a common measure, so many foot-pounds of work. States of mind, on the contrary, are incommensurable with any form of motion, and we *do not therefore explain anything* by referring them to some physical event. Suppose that we grant this to be a valid ground for keeping *the two sciences* separate, yet the objection says nothing regarding the ultimate relations of members of the two series. The phenomenal dis-

¹ Maudsley: "The Cerebral Cortex and its Work." *Mind*, XV, pp. 171-72.

parateness of the two series may be a reason for prohibiting a science which deals with one set of phenomena from explaining by means of members of the other series; but there is so far no ground for believing that this disparateness is the ultimate fact. The constant correspondences of the two series, and the fact, upon which I shall not dwell here, of the adaptation of the bodily movements to the external environment, forbids us to suppose that such an assertion as that of the automatists is a final statement regarding the nature of the two series. There still remains the rational demand that the seeming disparateness of these spheres shall be harmonized. And the very fact that the phenomena of these two fields are manifested in conjunction, not only strengthens our belief in their ultimate unity, but shows that reconciliation is not impossible.

In the second place, it is asserted that the action of consciousness on brain, or of brain on consciousness is inconceivable. 'The passage from the physics of the brain to the facts of consciousness is unthinkable,' and by unthinkable is meant picturable, "continuously imaginable."¹ It seems to me that, as before remarked, while this may be an argument for refusing to entangle psychology with physiological explanations, it can say nothing regarding the ultimate connection of the different varieties of the real. The word 'inconceivable' has, as Mill pointed out,² three meanings at least. Anything may be termed inconceivable which we are unable to believe. Thus it was inconceivable to the French peasant girl that the Germans could take Paris. Or, secondly, the term may refer to something which contradicts a fundamental law of our thinking, as that two and two should amount to five. Thirdly, any thing or any event may be pronounced inconceivable when we are unable to represent it by an image in our consciousness. It is manifestly in this last sense that action or

¹ Münsterberg. *Die Willenshandlung*, p. 27.

² *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, p. 150.

reaction between brain and consciousness is held to be inconceivable. I can not picture to myself how 'the idea of a beefsteak should bind together molecules' in such a way as in any way to modify my movements. We may say in general that we can only represent to ourselves what has been first presented. Since, then, this act on the part of consciousness (supposing it to take place) is never immediately known, it is plain that it must forever remain in this sense of the word 'inconceivable.' We are apt, however, to talk as if there is no difficulty in conceiving just how one physical body acts upon another. The fire melts the wax before our eyes; but, after Hume, we are compelled to admit that we have given only an antecedent and consequent, and know nothing of any bond which unites them. We can say too that after Lotze's analysis,¹ it is impossible to think of any state, or of any action, as passing over from cause to effect. Modern physicists, too, are abandoning the conception of a force which detaches itself from one object, and attaches itself to another, and beginning to admit that they know nothing regarding the nature of force at all—or rather to doubt whether or not there is anything which corresponds to that conception. It seems then the reciprocal action of brain and mind is inconceivable, in the sense that it is not 'continuously imaginable' how any one thing acts upon any other. We may perhaps admit that there is more difficulty in conceiving how any reaction could take place between mental and material phenomena, than there is in the case of physical causation, but this difference is not sufficient support for a metaphysical theory.

The third, and perhaps the strongest argument for the independence of the two series, is taken from the law of the conservation of energy. "According to the causal principle everywhere maintained in physiological investigations, we can speak of a causal connection between phenomena, only

¹ Lotze, *Metaphysics*, Book I, Chap. V.

when the effect can be derived from the cause according to definite laws. Such a derivation is possible only when we are dealing with homogeneous phenomena. This derivation is consequently either thinkable or actually performable in the entire realm of outer phenomena, since an analysis always leads back to some form of motion where the effect is represented as equivalent to the cause. That is, under special conditions, the causal relation can be reversed. . . . It is evident that there can be no question of such an equivalence between our representations and the physiological phenomena which accompany them. As the effects of the latter, nothing but physical phenomena can ever come into existence. In this way alone is that closed system of nature possible which finds its most perfect expression in the law of the conservation of energy. This law would be violated if anywhere a physical cause should bring about a mental effect."¹ Thus also Scripture, in the article quoted above, writes: "There is one fundamental axiom on which Psychology can work, and without which it becomes involved in the mazes of theory. *Mental phenomena can not influence, or be influenced by material phenomena.* . . . The discovery, the development, and the proof of the law of the conservation of energy by Mayer, Helmholtz, and Joule, have rendered the opposite of the axiom inconceivable."²

There can be no objection to these statements, in so far as they are to be understood merely as prescribing the limit for the physical sciences. It is a working postulate of physiology, that material phenomena shall not be explained by anything except material phenomena; and of psychology that psychical states shall be referred only to some antecedent psychical states. Yet this is not quite the same thing as the assertion which is so often made that 'mental phenomena can not influence, or be influ-

¹ Wundt, *Essays, Gehirn und Seele.*

² Scripture, "The Problem of Psychology," *Mind*, No. 63.

enced by physical phenomena.' Such a statement seems to dogmatise regarding the metaphysical question concerning the ultimate nature of body and mind. If it is true that the assertion is to be regarded as indicating the final truth regarding phenomenal facts—that in reality one set of phenomena proceeds in entire independence of the other—it is difficult to understand how any metaphysical theory can overcome the dualism. Or, perhaps, it would be better to say that the statement is a metaphysical theory. But if, on the other hand, it is only intended to indicate the mode of procedure of the physical sciences, and the ideal which psychology must hold up for itself, we must keep constantly in mind that this division is only a methodological one, and not a statement regarding reality itself. This is all that the writers from whom I have quoted mean to convey; yet it seems to me that they have stated what is an axiom of science regarding its own mode of explaining facts, as if it were an expression of the ultimate nature of these facts themselves.

In the same way, it is not unusual for psychologists to take high ground when dealing with the law of the conservation of energy. It is not uncommon to find it referred to as 'proven by Mayer, Helmholtz, and Joule,' or as '*a fact* that has now been fully demonstrated.' A little consideration, however, shows us that the law has never been proved—nor can it ever be—in the universal sense claimed for it. It would of course be forever impossible for physiologists, by means of actual measurements, to demonstrate that the nervous processes which are attended by consciousness, do not influence the latter in any way, and are entirely uninfluenced by it. The law has been verified, with greater or less exactitude, in fields where consciousness can not be thought of as a factor. There has been no disproof of the influence of consciousness; and, from the very nature of the case, there can be none. But it is sometimes claimed that although experience can never demonstrate to us this law, it is really identical with a law of our thought, being another form of the law of

persistence of matter.¹ To make this law a necessity of our thought, is simply an absurdity, in face of the fact that the majority of mankind have never heard of it, and that many scientists do not understand it as anything more than 'a leading principle of natural science,'² or 'a valid and useful working hypothesis under which we may bring certain classes of physical phenomena.' As Professor Ladd says: "Even in the sphere of physical events, the law is as yet demonstrably true only to a limited extent. The various forms of physical energy in the inorganic world are by no means yet all reducible to the terms of this law. . . . No mathematical formula, or picture framed by the imagination, has thus far bridged over the gap between the molecular energy of inorganic and that of organic structures. . . . Nerve force—what it is and what it will do; what it *is* as judged by what it will do—cannot at present be correlated with any of the forms of energy which act as nervous stimuli."³ Many examples might be given, not only of the incompleteness, but also of the actual impossibility of reducing all causal relations under the law of the correlation and conservation of physical energy. The ideal physical explanation is thus formulated by Du Bois Reymond: "Before the differential equations of the world formula can be formed, all natural phenomena must be reduced to the movements of a substratum substantially homogeneous, and therefore entirely destitute of quality, or of that which appears to us as heterogeneous matter—in other words all quality must be explained by the arrangement and motion of such a substratum."⁴

Now, however far physical science may be from the attainment of such an ideal, it is useless to deny that its adoption has led to enormous advancement in the work of understand-

¹Münsterberg, *Die Willenshandlung*, p. 9.

²Höffding, *Outlines of Psychology*, (Eng. trans.), p. 58.

³Ladd, *Elements of Physiological Psychology*, p. 657.

⁴Du Bois Reymond, *Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens*, p. 16.

ing natural phenomena and their modes of behavior. Modern physiology owes, perhaps, all its success to the adoption of this point of view, and its abandonment of the principle of 'vital force.' In accordance with this principle, every change in the organism has its 'chemical or physical equivalent either in the organism or without it.' Such hypotheses have justified their adoption by proving themselves useful; *i. e.*, by reducing to unity and definiteness the relations of what seems at first glance heterogeneous and disparate phenomena. So long, then, as we remember that we are dealing with methodological hypotheses, no objection can or should be raised. But a protest must be urged against any attempt to make such hypotheses the basis for assertions respecting the ultimate constitution of things, and the universal order of nature. This is doubtless a danger to which scientific investigators are exposed, especially when dealing with long-standing hypotheses. "So thoroughly axiomatic have the doctrines of the absolutely independent and passive existence of matter, and of the constitution of bodies as aggregates of absolutely constant physical units, become in the minds of modern physicists that they not only regard them as the indispensable foundations of the whole structure of physical science, but do not hesitate to use them as supports for professorial chairs of metaphysics."¹⁶

Biologists have almost given up the attempt to produce life artificially, and are constantly obliged to recognize a spontaneity, a permanent centre of force which cannot be accounted for on mechanical principles. Just in the same way, it seems to me, neurologists and physiologists may hold fast the law of the conservation of energy as a fruitful working hypothesis, without asserting dogmatically that life is only a play of molecules. This law should be regarded merely as a didactic or 'regulative' principle, not as a metaphysical theory of

¹⁶Stallo. *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics.* (Int. Science Series.), p. XIII.

the nature of ultimate facts. It may, perhaps, justly offend the scientific instincts of many persons to speak of consciousness 'binding molecules together,' or of 'the idea of a beefsteak as directing nervous currents' in one direction rather than another. Statements of this kind are thoroughly false and objectionable, because they invade the scientist's territory, as it were, and make use of the scientist's categories and conceptions to connect phenomena which, from the standpoint of the particular sciences, are not to be brought together. Against any such a naïve formulation of the relation between body and mind, or against the attempt to make imaginable the connection between consciousness and brain, the law of the conservation of energy has its proper sphere and legitimate use. At the same time, we must remember that the assertion that 'mental states do not influence or are not influenced by material states,' is equally mischievous when it is understood as a metaphysical statement of 'parallelism' or dualism. Höffding, after enumerating very fully and clearly the correspondences between mind and body, writes: "We must assume that these parallels have a real significance; there must be an inner connection between conscious life and the brain."¹

But the law of the conservation of energy is sometimes assumed to be identical with the causal postulate itself; or, at least, the want of equivalence between antecedent and consequent among the phenomena with which psycho-physics deals, is urged as a ground why we can never say that a causal relation exists. It is of course perfectly plain that no quantitative equivalence is ever to be found between states of brain and states of consciousness, and that if this is to be the criterion of causality, we are forever excluded from postulating such a relation. But the demand for explanation, which is the source of the causal postulate, does not seem to me necessarily to imply the fact of equivalence. We should still seek

¹Höffding, *Outlines of Psychology* (Eng. transl.), p. 59.

for the causes of natural phenomena and construct our sciences, if the energy of the effect was, say, only $\frac{1}{10}$ of that of the cause. If there were *any* fixed ratio between them, we could even deduce results in the same way as we do at present. If, however, there were no such quantitative relations expressible at all, we should go on discovering uniformities and laws in just the same way. When dealing with mental phenomena there is no possibility of discovering any such relations. We are in a sphere where, from the very nature of the case, mathematics does not apply. As Wundt writes: "In its employment in nature, the causal conception receives a specific stamp which is altogether foreign to its logical meaning. The conception of constancy implies certain principles to which all causality of nature is subordinated, so that finally these principles have come to be regarded as corollaries of the law of causality. Among these are the law of conservation of matter and force, and the principle of the equivalence of cause and effect."¹ But as Wundt goes on to say, these conceptions have no meaning when carried over to the mental sphere. They are not then to be regarded as consequences of the causal postulate in general; but are necessitated only by the theories and concepts by means of which we undertake to interpret external nature. If, then, in the mental sphere the law of causality does not imply an equivalence between cause and effect, such a lack cannot be used as an argument against predicating a like relation between the phenomena with which psychophysics deals. We shall, of course, have to remember (as we do in the relations of mental phenomena) that the relation is not the same as that which exists between a material cause and its effect. "No such phenomenal bond can exist as that which connects two physical events and we can only say that the cause is invariably succeeded by the effect."²

¹Wundt, *Ethik*, 1st ed., p. 399.

²*Strong*, "Dr. Münsterberg's Theory of Mind and Body and its Consequences," *Phil. Rev.*, Vol. I, No. 2.

While this is true, it is also true that, even granting the equivalence of physical cause and physical effect, we do not understand in the least, even in this field, how one thing can *produce* another. Nor does science attempt to do so. It seeks only for invariable sequences and uniformities. "The Law of Causation, the recognition of which is the main pillar of inductive science, is but the familiar truth that invariability of succession is found by observation to obtain between every fact in nature, and some other fact which has preceded it, independently of all considerations respecting the ultimate mode of *production* of phenomena, and of every other question regarding the nature of 'things in themselves'."¹ Nor does the law of conservation impose any new task upon science, nor interfere in any way with the above theory of causation. "The manifestations which the theory regards as modes of motion, are as much distinct and separate phenomena when referred to a single force, as when attributed to several. . . . The indestructibility of Force no more interferes with the theory of causation than the indestructibility of Matter, meaning by matter the element of resistance in the sensible world. *It only enables us to understand better than before the nature and laws of some of the sequences.*"² Since, then, we use the term *Causation* to express the relation between antecedent and consequent both in the physical and mental spheres, and since the word when used in physical science does not imply any conception of one thing *producing* another, but only denotes an invariable uniformity, I see no reason why it should not be used without any metaphysical implications of the uniformities which psycho-physics discovers. In employing it in this field, we shall, of course, be obliged to keep in mind that we denote something different from physical causality.

There is still another psycho-physical theory which is a

¹ Mill, *System of Logic*, Book III, Chap. V, Sect. 2.

² Mill, *Ibid*, Book III, Chap. V, Sect. 10.

blending of the common-sense and automaton theories, and which we may connect with the name of Münsterberg. According to this theory, physical movements of the organism go on in entire independence of consciousness. They are mere mechanical results; and Münsterberg describes in detail how such a machine as the nervous system, capable of transmitting and coördinating forces in such a way as to bring about purposive actions, could arise in accordance with the laws of evolution. But, on the other hand, he points out that psychical phenomena do not form a continuous series by themselves, but depend on, and are conditioned by, physical phenomena.¹ In the same way, Huxley, while emphatically denying that the physical series can be interfered with by the mental, declares that we have as much reason for believing that physical processes are the causes of mental processes as we have for believing that any one thing is the cause of another.² If these assertions are intended only to indicate scientific methodological principles, they might perhaps be allowed to pass unchallenged. Psychology is dependent upon the physiology of the brain and nervous system. The phenomena with which it deals do appear to be discontinuous and incomplete, and it is compelled, at least provisionally, to complete its explanation by attempting to give an account of the parallel physical series. I have already noticed the dangers to which this method of explanation is exposed. But a materialistic psychology too often takes the reference to the nervous system as the final word on the subject. When this view is put forward as a metaphysical theory it seems to me to involve a double absurdity. In the first place, if states of brain 'condition' states of mind, all talk about the utter disparateness of the series, and the inconceivability of any relation between them, must cease. The process from consciousness to brain, which Mün-

¹ Münsterberg, *Die Willenshandlung*, p. 109.

² Huxley, *Essay on Descartes*, in *Lay Sermons and Addresses*.

sterberg rejects on the ground that it is not continuously imaginable, is just as unthinkable when we attempt to trace it in a reverse direction. Furthermore, this theory does violence to the law of conservation of energy. For to assert that a physical state *a* has as its result another physical state of exactly the same amount of energy, *b*, plus a state of consciousness, *c*, is to make the effect greater than the cause.¹ Moreover, it seems to me that this principle, if regarded as a statement of fact, is opposed to the conception of causality. Action is unthinkable without interaction. Every case of causality when rightly understood is seen to involve the conception of reciprocity. It seems to me, then, that if states of brain condition states of consciousness, it is impossible to suppose that the former are totally unaffected by the latter.

We must leave the discussion at this point without attempting to answer the ultimate metaphysical question regarding the relation of body and mind. We have attempted to clear up some of the confusions which attach to the ways in which the problem is often stated. In the meantime, we must conclude that such a relation exists. The fact that it cannot be embraced in the somewhat simple formula provided by the law of the conservation of energy, shows us that this relation is more complex than that which obtains between the phenomena of physics and chemistry, but it throws no doubt upon the fact of relation.

¹ Cf. Scripture, "The Problem of Psychology", *Mind* 63.

CHAPTER V.

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

We have still to consider the vexed question of the Freedom of the Will. This has been the Sphinx problem of modern philosophy, and is not unrelated to the Greek question, whether virtue is innate or acquired. The difficulty of the problem is due to the fact that the demands of our intellectual and moral natures seem to be antagonistic. If experience is to be possible, we must regard nature as a system of necessary laws. "We can explain nothing but that which we can reduce to laws; whenever the determination by necessary laws ceases, there ceases also the possibility of any explanation."¹ But, it is maintained that if our morality is to be real, we must postulate a certain sphere where every phenomenon is not necessarily determined by that which precedes it, or a realm of Freedom. These postulates, both of which appear absolutely necessary, the one for knowledge, the other for our moral life, seem to be incompatible.

Thus arises the antinomy which it appears can only be solved by doing violence to the demands of either our intellectual, or of our ethical consciousness. On the one hand, it is pointed out by Determinists that the individual is moved to action by certain motives; that his actions are the resultants of certain influences playing upon his character. This character again is the product of previous acts, either of his own, or of his ancestors; so that at any time the act performed is the necessary expression of the individual under the given circumstances. Those who adopt Determinism point out further, that there is an unbroken line between actions which are governed by impulse or instinct, and where consequently there can be no talk of freedom, and the most complicated and deliberate acts of choice.

¹Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Abbott's Translation, p. 79.

On the other side, it is argued by those who contend for Freedom, that it is impossible to consider man as a part of nature, and subject, like it, to invariable laws. They urge in support of their position, that the reason, the personality, cannot be represented as one factor, on a par with others; but that it is the determining ground in reference to which, and through which, motives have any value for us at all. Further arguments are adduced to prove that it is only on the hypothesis of Freedom that we can give any meaning to such terms as 'Duty,' 'Obligation,' 'Remorse,' etc., and that these terms express real experiences of our moral life.

If we are to attempt a reconciliation of these views, it is well to try what admissions can be made by each side to the arguments of the opposite party. To begin, then, it appears that the Determinist must admit that man is more than a part of Nature. If we speak of him as determined by motives, these must not be taken to indicate mere external objects, or occurrences in time or space. For it is only when external events and objects are taken up, evaluated, and identified with the self, that they have any significance as motives at all. Just as in the intellectual sphere the understanding makes Nature, and the unrelated sensation is 'as good as nothing,' so it is only as adopted by a self that 'circumstances' or 'environment' can have any meaning for us. There can be no external determination of our actions: the conscious self is the centre from which they proceed. It is just as impossible to explain acts of Will without reference to the self, as it would be to conceive of our knowledge as thrust upon us from without. Nor is the statement that our acts are the resultant of an external and internal factor an accurate account of the facts; just as it is not a true account of our knowledge, to describe it as a compound, one element of which is given from without, the other contributed by the understanding. In both cases, the internal factor is logically prior, and is the presupposition of the external. There is always a translating, a coördinating, and evaluating, of the externally given

element ; and it is only as thus brought into relation to that permanent center of experience which constitutes ourselves, that external objects can be in any sense motives for us.

On the other hand, the modern defenders of Freedom have given up (at least in name), their claim to a freedom of indifference. It is quite evident that such a conception contradicts all our experience. No act of Will can be regarded as unmotived. Even when our volition is determined by mere whim or caprice, there is always present some motive— it may be the mere irrational desire to do something unusual. The idea of motive or end is an essential part of an act of Will. An act which is not directed to some end, were it possible, could in no sense be the object of praise or blame, but would be wholly irrational and irresponsible. Nor would a Libertarian of today claim that an act of choice has no reference to the character of the agent. He would, however, justly point out that the character is not something external to the individual, a foreign power which determines his actions. If there were no relation between the act of the individual and his character, how would either degeneration or regeneration be possible? Furthermore, whatever view we take of Freedom, we must admit the conditioning effect of the environment in which the lot of the individual is cast. External forces, such as climate, soil, and geographical position, limit within certain bounds the directions which the activity of a particular individual can take. The social environment has an even more powerful conditioning influence than the physical. The grade of society into which a man is born, the education which he receives, and the moral precepts which he imbibes, are all potent factors in his life.

It is worthy of note that neither physical nor social environment can be said absolutely to determine the conduct of an individual, though both circumscribe its sphere. This limitation takes place in two ways. In virtue of environment, certain lines of conduct may be closed, and so can not possibly be willed. But oftentimes a line of activity may

also be impossible simply because it never occurred to us. *Homo tantum potest quantum scit.* The free man can choose only between possibilities which he knows, and cannot create his purposes at pleasure out of nothing. He cannot attain a perfection, the thought of which has never come into his mind. He cannot decide for something which is not a possible object of his will, since it exercises no influence upon him. He is only able to prefer one end which solicits him to another, to turn away from one motive in order to 'follow another.'¹ All this, it seems to me, will be readily admitted by an advocate of Freedom, without prejudicing the cause which he is seeking to defend. "It is not necessary to moral Freedom (the Freedom which the Libertarian is concerned to maintain), that on the part of the person to whom it belongs there should be an indeterminate possibility of becoming and doing anything and everything."² The only Freedom which is required is the ability to choose, within a limited sphere, the possibilities which present themselves to us as ends.

Let us now seek to discover a single proposition which may perhaps be admitted by both parties as forming a provisional statement of the relation between the individual and his actions. The favorite deterministic formula is that 'every action is the necessary result of character and circumstances.' To this statement we may at this stage bring the objection that it is not correct to speak of the character as a permanent factor, on a par with the external environment; and, secondly, to denominate the act as necessary, is to beg the very point for which the Libertarians contend. We shall perhaps avoid the above mentioned objections, and find a proposition in which both parties can agree, if we say that 'all deliberate action is the expression of a man's character or self as it reacts upon given circumstances.' It is true that a single act may not be

¹Sigwert, *Vorfragen der Ethik*, p. 24.

²Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 110.

a complete or adequate expression of the permanent character of the individual, yet, if it is not made after deliberation, it must represent the self of the moment.

We have now to ask what is implied in the term 'character' which up to this time we have used in a merely provisional way? What notions does the word include? Character is attributed to races or classes, as well as to individuals. We speak of the national character of Englishmen, Frenchmen, etc., and also of the character which belongs to different ages and sexes. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the notion of character has no meaning apart from the act in which it expresses itself. As an independent entity or reality, it is an abstraction; for if we say that it denotes "hollowed out paths in the brain," this only expresses the fact that the nerve currents most often run in this direction. "Character is simply that of which individual pieces of conduct are the manifestation; it is the force of which conduct is the expression, or the substance of which conduct is the attribute."¹

But if we define character simply as a mode of responding in a definite set of circumstances, our previous proposition will be true, yet manifestly identical. What is evidently contained in the notion, is the thought that there is, both in individuals and races, a somewhat constant mode of acting under given circumstances. The soliciting power of different representations retain a more or less constant ratio to each other. No individual is equally receptive for all motives; but each proves through his actions that he has a standard of valuation, in virtue of which he chooses one object rather than another. It is just this permanent core of individuality, as practically manifested, which we name character.

Furthermore, human character seems to imply something more than a mere degree of uniformity in acting. Although the lower animals act with almost invariable

¹ Alexander, *Moral Order and Progress*, p. 49.

regularity in like circumstances, yet we do not ascribe 'character' to them in the same sense as we do to human beings. There is implied in the conception of human character, the additional idea of the possession of definite ends or ideals, into relation to which our natural springs of action, as mere impulses, have to be brought. Thus there are for mankind two standards of value which may be used to determine the efficiency of any impulse. First, its mere strength or impetuosity, (*Hefigkeit*); and secondly, its conformity to, or disagreement with some permanent or deep-rooted center of our being, as represented by some end. In a rational volition, it is this latter circumstance which largely fixes the value of any line of conduct, and leads to its adoption or rejection. The more deliberate and rational the choice, the less important will be the former factor, and the more permanently will the latter manifest itself. It is this power of modifying the immediately given impulses, or the lack of it, which constitutes a strong or a weak character. The man who constantly determines himself by reference to the idea of the end, who chooses, not the immediate good, but that which seems to be good 'on the whole,' we name a man of strong character, or strong will.

If now the alternative were always chosen which best agrees with the permanent ends of the individual, the question of Freedom would never have arisen. We would then be in possession of the only Freedom which appears to me to have any meaning, the Freedom which is prescribed by rational considerations. A freedom of indifference, or the ability to choose any of the presenting possibilities without reference to any more ultimate consideration, would not be the mark of a rational being. The greatest amount of Freedom conceivable is the ability to determine one's self by the thought of the highest end, and not the power of acting out of all relation to that end. When we speak in this way, however, we must not regard the end as something objective, with

the valuation of which we have nothing to do. As we have already had occasion to remark, the end is not to be thought of as something external to ourselves; but it is constituted by us, and receives its value partly from its immediate hold upon our feelings, partly from its relation to some more universal end. The highest end, that which is not sought for the sake of anything else, is so constituted simply on the basis of its immediacy as feeling. It is the highest good for us simply because of its intimate connection with our inmost being. It is for the time being ourselves, to cease to strive for its realization would be to lose our identity.

The chief, perhaps the only psychological argument which is used by Libertarians, consists in an appeal to the fact to which consciousness testifies in volition—the sense of Freedom which seems to assert our ability to choose between alternatives. “I hold, therefore,” says Professor Sidgwick, “that against the formidable array of enumerative evidence offered for Determinism there is but one opposing argument of real force; the immediate affirmation of consciousness in the moment of deliberate action. And certainly when I have a distinct consciousness of choosing between alternatives of conduct, one of which I conceive as right or reasonable, I find it impossible not to think that I can now choose to do what I so conceive—supposing that there is no obstacle to my doing it except absence of adequate motive—however strong may be my inclination to act unreasonably, and however uniformly I may have yielded to such inclinations in the past.”¹ There can be no doubt regarding the feeling of Freedom, the only question is as to what fact it attests. Now, it appears to me that the evidence of this feeling at the moment of acting is that when we act we are not compelled by anything outside ourselves. Our external actions may be constrained by foreign powers, our mental life is free. “Freedom is the capability of a being to determine himself through conscious

¹ Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, p. 69.

motives. . . . It is not want of causality, but absence of such causality as would wholly or partly destroy the psychological causality. . . . One cannot appeal to the consciousness of Freedom in this question; for it only testifies that we act without external compulsion, but never that we act without cause; or that the reasons which determine us are independent of our original structure or the events of our own life."¹ But it may be urged that we are not concerned to prove that we act without causes, but only that alternatives are open to us. "It is not the possibility of merely indeterminate choice, of an arbitrary freak of unmotivated willing with which we are concerned from an ethical point of view, but the possibility of action in conformity with practical reason."² Does consciousness then bear witness to such a power to conform to the rules of reason or to refuse to conform? While we are yet in a state of deliberation, either alternative seems to us equally possible, we have the immediate consciousness of Freedom, *that the decision lies wholly in our power; i. e., that there is no force external to us which prescribes to us what course we shall follow, or in other words, that we are self determined and not compelled.*

But this feeling cannot be used retrospectively as an evidence that in any given case we could have acted otherwise. It is often urged that without such an interpretation 'Remorse', and 'Sense of Sin', must be regarded as delusions. I shall have to return to this point later on, but here I need only mention that actions for which we afterwards feel remorse are not generally attended by such a distinct feeling of Freedom. In cases where we sin and come short, the temptation seems to destroy the sense of Freedom. There can be no doubt that this feeling is more prominent in cases where the immediate soliciting power of an impulse or appetite has

¹ Wundt, *Ethik* (1st ed.), p. 397.

² Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, p. 67 (note).

been subordinated to some more permanent and remote good. It is to cases of this latter character that defenders of the Free Will theory always point; the causality of the Ego as attested to by immediate consciousness is naturally then so strong as to make it impossible for them not to believe that they could have acted differently. But if the theory of alternatives is valid, we must face the other side, which is unfortunately too common, where the action seems 'to follow the line of least resistance.'

In our analysis of Willing (Chap. III.), we found that the essence of volition consists in holding fast one representation in consciousness, and that if we could succeed in retaining the proper representation, the act would take place of itself. Now the question of Freedom will come to be whether, in cases where the ideal by means of which we ought to determine ourselves, is crowded out of consciousness by some present attraction, it is really possible to hold fast to it, and resolutely keep it before consciousness. Our experience in cases where we succumb to the immediate solicitations, is that the object is so interesting and attractive that it appears to take possession of us, and the more remote ideal is allowed to slip out of sight.

It may perhaps be pointed out here that a general end or principle of action is rarely, if ever, consciously abandoned. It is pushed more and more into the background and eviscerated by single acts. We excuse ourselves in each case with the thought that for this once it does not matter, or that there are here some peculiar circumstances and the act does not really conflict with the end. As Aristotle says: "The minor premise—this act is of a certain kind—is unknown." Many examples could be given to show that under the influence of some attractive force, our intellectual insight is perverted, and we really persuade ourselves to believe what we wish.

To return to the problem of freedom. The question which we were considering was whether, in the case where the decision had been made in what appears to be 'the line of least re-

sistance,' the act of will can be called free. It appears to me that since we have supposed the choice to have been made after deliberation, the act in this case is also the expression of the self, and therefore free. It is just because the individual possesses such a definite character, that this line of action seemed to him at the moment of deciding, the greater good. What is to appear to him as the most desirable line of conduct at any time, is determined by his original constitution, and, by his whole past history. Of course, that history is to a large extent his own production; but it is impossible for an individual to wipe out the past, and start as if it had never existed. Advocates of Free Will differ greatly regarding the influence of character upon an individual. Professor Sidgwick says: "I recognize that each concession to vicious desire makes the difficulty of resisting it greater when the desire recurs; but the difficulty always seems to remain separated by an impassable gulf from impossibility."¹ On the other hand, Dr. Martineau, an even more strenuous defender of Free Will, writes: "In the earlier period of responsible life there will, no doubt, be some wavering and alternation between defeat and victory; but so rapidly does weakness or force of conscience set in and become habitual, that every lapse is a fearful portent of another, and every faithful achievement a presumption of more; and the volitions of the sane mind fast assume a determinate complexion, rarely differing much from the premonitory symptoms of its first probation. Men certainly differ greatly . . . but rarely does a man vary greatly from himself, victor today and vanquished tomorrow. *An incalculable proportion of what are called diversities of character are constitutional rather than moral distinctions, no more the ground of any judicial award, than the fact that when you were tempted I did not sin.* Were this class of differences removed and men arranged solely by their fidelity or infidelity in dealing with

¹ Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, p. 67.

their own problems, who shall say how near the classification would approach the two-fold distribution of the ever yielding and the ever firm."¹ It is impossible for any individual to begin as if his past were not. Even if we were to take the original first pair in the garden, we should have to say that the forbidden fruit was a temptation to them, because in virtue of their nature they were receptive to its influence. At the moment of choice, supposing it to be made deliberately, it must have appeared to them as the object most to be desired.

It will be necessary once more to insist, however, that temptation does not come from without, but from within. 'We are tempted when we are led away by our own lusts and enticed.' The witches could not have tempted Macbeth had not his own soul responded to their suggestions. Banquo is 'armed so strong in honesty' that their words have no effect upon him. No solicitation from without can take possession of a man against his will. 'My poverty, but not my will consents,' says the apothecary to Hamlet; but at the moment of the exchange, the money he received for the poison was more important in his eyes than a human life.²

It appears, then, that the consciousness of freedom cannot be appealed to after the act has been performed, as an evidence that we might have done otherwise. Such an idea, when referred to a past action, must be regarded "partly as the confusion of a metaphysical notion with psychological experience, partly as an illusion, which is very natural when the individual, with his new conviction, and with the strong desire to have acted otherwise, vividly conceives himself at the moment of action, without, however, being able to survey and realize all the inner and outer conditions in actual opera-

¹ Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II, pp. 68-69. Cf. also James "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," *Int. Jour. of Ethics*, Vol. I.

² "The deepest difference practically in the moral life of man is the difference between the easy going and the strenuous mood."

³ Cf. Professor Corson's *Introduction to Shakespeare*, pp. 223 ff.

tion at the time."¹ After the individual has willed the act, and has repented of it, he projects himself into the past, and imagines that the act might have taken place at *that time*, as he *now* wishes that it had. Again, the condition of the self looking back upon the act with remorse, is widely different from that in which it made the decision, yet we ascribe to the past self both the mental status which led to the volition, and that which at the present moment leads to its condemnation. Further, any state of deliberation is a state of inhibition. The volition is the removing of the brakes which have prevented action, and brings with it a peculiar feeling of unrestrictedness which drives into the background the thought that this state has been caused. With regard to the future, every act appears to be undetermined, because we cannot form any clear picture of it without images of other possibilities coming in.²

A great deal of controversy has taken place as to whether human actions are contingent or necessary. We shall have later to examine the moral arguments and to determine, whether or not contingency is a postulate of morality. Here we must first try to understand what meaning we can give to the terms. Contingency and necessity then, it seems to me, are categories that express, as Kant says, no determination of the objects themselves, but only a relation to our mode of cognizing them. If we call a future act contingent, we mean by the word, that any one of several possibilities may occur; or better, that our knowledge does not enable us to make any prediction. On the other hand, 'necessity' only expresses our expectation founded upon uniformity of experience, or upon complete knowledge of all the conditions at work. "A thing can in no respect be called contingent except in relation to the imperfection of our knowledge, and our ignorance of its causes. It is only

¹Höffding, *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 348.

²Cf. Höffding, "Die Gesetzmässigkeit der psychischen Activität," *Vierteljahrsh. f. wissenschaftl. Philosophie*, XV., 4.

called *necessary* when our state of knowledge is such that we perceive that it will *certainly* happen."¹ It is quite usual to conceive of things as substances with certain rights and prerogatives of their own apart from the order of the world to which they belong; or perhaps a more common mode of thought regards a law as an absolute *prins* over and above the things and events in which it is manifested. Both of these views evidently depend upon a false abstraction of our thought. As Lotze says, "The fact which we have to recognize is the process of becoming itself, and as given along with it we have also to recognize the *direction* which this progress takes."²

It is only with reference, then, to our *expectation* of what is about to happen, that necessity and contingency have any meaning. The past is neither contingent nor necessary, nor can these predicates be applied to things in themselves. Nevertheless, in the physical world it may be, perhaps, allowable to speak of an event as the result of certain conditions. True, we imply nothing by means of the word except our own conviction that the occurrence will take place. But in virtue of the conceptions of the permanence of matter, and the conservation of energy which we call to our aid in interpreting external nature, we are able in a great many spheres to predict with mathematical accuracy the character of future events. It is, then, just this power of prediction which we mean to denote when we call any event necessary. But in the case of a conscious individual, we use no conceptions analogous to those of the conservation of matter and energy. These material notions, as we have already seen (p. 50), lose their meaning when applied to the activities of knowing and willing. In the spiritual sphere, there is an increase of mental force in the development of each individual. "As an immediate consequence of this it follows, that in the psychical

¹ Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Prop. 33. (Note).

² Lotze, *Metaphysics*, (Eng. trans.), Vol. I, p. 197.

world a sufficient causal explanation is possible only in a backward direction. We are able beforehand, at most, merely to indicate the general character of the result, but never to foretell the exact form which it will take. There is a spiritual history of the past but none of the future. Laplace's 'world formula' cannot be referred to mental events, not only because of the infinite complications in that realm, but also because it is in itself in fundamental opposition to the laws of spiritual phenomena."¹

But, after all, I may be accused by both parties of evading the real question at issue. The old interrogation may again be urged, 'whether at the moment of action the other alternative might not have been chosen'. I cannot but think that this puzzle is entirely futile, and of a piece with the question, 'whether or not the world as a whole might not have been otherwise'. Before the choice was made, during the time of deliberation, neither alternative is possible. But when the evidence is all in, one act only is the proper expression of the individual's character. But those who contend for 'contingency', however, may still insist that the self can step in at the moment of action and determine the event this way or that, without any reference to the character or motives. This is to relapse into the old position of *librium arbitrii*. It is to separate the act from the sum of its conditions, to make it irrational, and entirely incapable of any explanation.

But there are some advocates of freedom who put the matter in a much more intelligible form. The freedom which they demand is the power to determine oneself according to the conception of an end. They admit that every human act is necessary, in this sense, that when the entire series of its conditions are present, it cannot fail to appear; and that it could not have happened otherwise, since this would have demanded other conditions. But among these conditions the most important is this: that the ego itself had decided for

¹Wandl, *Ethik*, (1st. ed.), p. 400.

one alternative rather than the other. "Besides the effects of which I am the accumulation, I claim also a *personal* causality which is still left over, when my phenomena have told me the tale of what they are and do."¹ Those who uphold this theory maintain that it is conceivable that the self should originate absolutely new beginnings in the course of things. Every such a new beginning must, just because it is a beginning, be inexplicable as regards the way in which it comes to pass; for to explain means nothing more than to show that a definite event is the result of its antecedents in accordance with general rules. If it is claimed that such a beginning is unthinkable, they reply that the incomprehensible character is no argument against the assumption of it, but, indeed, is a result of that very assumption. "A necessity of happening for human thought and an antecedent real necessity are two entirely different things."²

The real truth which gives plausibility to this position is found in the fact that the self is more than the sum of its conditions. We can never fully explain an act of an individual by giving an account of the conditions under which he lived. The individual is something over and above this *sum*; he is the *synthesis* of the conditions; yet apart from the conditions he is nothing. The transcendent self is a mere *caput mortuum*. To make the result depend upon the action of such a self would be to contradict all experience. It would be to call in the aid of a *deus ex machina* to explain what we are as yet unable to reduce to law. True, the self is the center into relation with which all external agencies are brought and from which they all receive their value. This is the freedom of self-determination, which must, as the action of a rational being, take place according to laws.

The point of view of those who contend for contingency,

¹ Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II, p. 39.

² Rümelin, *Reden und Aufsätze, Ueber einige psychologische Voraussetzungen des Strafrechts*.

seems very much akin to that of those who base their faith on the miraculous in nature. The motive in both cases is the same, to vindicate the supremacy of the spiritual principle against a material conception of the universe. The old deism supposed that God is a being outside of the world, who occasionally manifested his presence by a miracle. Events at certain points of time, the creation, the flood, etc., were appealed to as proofs of the divine existence. Just in the same way, it has been too often the custom to write and speak as if in the greater part of the mental life, the self were a mere on-looker. But yet in order to demonstrate the existence of the self, whose function they have almost taken away, the same writers claim that at certain points in the history of the individual, this power steps in and originates new beginnings. Both these truths rest on a surer basis than such defenders have found for them. We have not in psychology to vindicate and exhibit the action of self at this point or that. On the contrary, we have found reason for maintaining that the whole psychical life is a manifestation of the self. No part of our experience can be regarded as going on automatically, or as handed over to us ready made by means of nervous processes. We not unfrequently find the process of external association regarded as a mental event that is sufficiently explained by the connection between the brain ganglia. That being assumed, the next step is to endeavor to show, as Münsterberg has done,¹ that the so-called 'inner association' is reducible to outer. Against this point of view, it is necessary to raise the previous question. We must endeavor to show that external association is not in itself intelligible without postulating an activity of the self.²

We have now to investigate the moral arguments for the freedom of the will. It has been urged that indeterminism

¹ See Münsterberg, *Beiträge zur exper. Psychologie*, Heft I.

² For a full and convincing demonstration of this point, cf. Höffding, "Über Wiedererkennen, Association, etc.," *V. f. w. Phil.*, 1889-90.

is implied both in the rewards and punishments that are dealt out by the state to its citizens, and also in the moral judgments which we pass upon our own conduct or that of others. It is generally admitted that it is impossible to explain or justify indeterminism from a theoretical standpoint, but yet it is claimed as a necessary postulate both of criminal law, and of the facts of our moral life. We shall have to examine these cases separately.

In the first place, it is maintained that responsibility before the law implies contingency, or a power of acting otherwise. A judge is not justified in condemning a prisoner to loss of liberty or to other punishment, it is said, unless he is convinced that the man could have acted differently. All due place for the function of punishment as a reforming and deterring influence being conceded, it is claimed that these elements by no means exhaust its nature, and that there is something still necessary to explain its nature and justify its existence. This additional element is contained in the thought that justice demands that the offender shall be punished. This is alone what justifies punishment, or at least what justifies us in awarding severe punishment for great crimes, and in punishing with less severity for smaller offences.¹ "What is really true for the ordinary consciousness, what it clings to and will not let go . . . is the necessary connection between responsibility and liability to punishment, between punishment and desert or the finding of guiltiness before the law or moral tribunal."² In other words, the idea of justice demands that the offender shall suffer and make reparation for his crime. This view is strongly emphasized by Kant in the *Rechtslehre*: "Judicial punishment (*poena forensis*), which is distinguishable from the natural punishment (*poena naturalis*) which overtakes wickedness

¹Rümelin, *Reden u. Aufsätze, Ueber einige psych. Voraussetzungen des Strafrechts.*

²Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, p. 5.

and of which the law-giver takes no account, can never be regarded as a mere means to the good of either the individual himself, or of society. But it must always be directed against the transgressor because he has broken the law. . . . The individual must be found worthy of punishment before there can be any thought of making this punishment of service to him or to his fellow citizens. The law of punishment is a categorical punishment, and woe to him who follows the serpentine windings of a utilitarian theory in order to discover what advantage there is to be derived from punishment, according to the pharisaical maxim, 'it is better for one man to die rather than all the people perish.' For if righteousness should cease to exist, human life would no longer have any value. . . . Only the right of retribution (*jus talionis*) as exercised, of course by a judge, not by a private individual, is a real and accurate description of the quality and quantity of punishment; all other descriptions are wavering and evasive, and have no resemblance to the dictates of justice in its strength and purity."¹

The same, or almost the same view of the function of punishment is taken by Hegel, who regards punishment as the inevitable negating of the crime.² Several modern writers also insist upon 'the idea of reparation or retribution,' as a necessary element of the idea of punishment.³

In spite of such high authorities, however, I cannot admit that criminal law presupposes the power of alternative on the part of the law-breaker. It is only if we insist in

¹Kant, *Werke*, Bd. VII, pp. 149, 150 (Hartenstein's ed.).

²*Werke*, Bd. VIII, p. 138.—Since this essay was written several articles dealing with Hegel's theory of punishment have appeared in philosophical journals. Cf. J. E. McTaggart, *Int. Journ. of Ethics*, Vol. VI, pp. 479 ff.; and S. W. Dyde, "Hegel's Theory of Crime and Punishment," *Phil. Review*, VII, pp. 62 ff.

³Cf. J. Seth, "The Theory of Punishment," *Int. Journ. of Ethics*, Vol. II, No. 2.

finding in punishment a retributory element, an attempt on the part of the state to obtain a *quid pro quo*, that we require to attribute any such unaccountable power to the individual. All a judge is concerned to know is that the individual has acted with full self-conseiousness. The instinct to take vengeance, however useful it may have been in a militant state of society, does not find a place in the civilization of the present time.

The prevalent view of the present age is that punishment is not retribution for past crime; but that its purpose is to prevent future wrongdoing. What is aimed at, and what is felt to be the only justification of punishment, is the reformation of the criminal, and the protection of society. This later end is accomplished in two ways; namely, by freeing society from those who violate its laws, and by deterring others from following their example. The second duty which the state owes to its citizens, that of education, is becoming more and more prominent in dealing with the criminal class. These are regarded as a class who require some special attention on the part of the state, not as wilful and deliberate offenders upon whom the state is called to take vengeance.

There are two conditions under which it is possible to say that if the individual cannot help doing the act, he should not be punished. Firstly, if the act is not the expression of the character of the individual, if it has been extorted from him by an external agency, he is not justly considered dangerous and separated from the rest of society. Nor has he shown that he requires that special treatment which the state deals out to those who do not realize themselves in conformity with the required norm. Secondly, if his character were fixed and unalterable, all efforts toward reform would be in vain, and it might be a question as to how far the state is justified in using him as a 'means' to deter others. But punishment obtains its final justification from the fact that the offender can be induced to act differently. That is, through the help of the means provided by the state, he can become

another man, acquire new ends, and take up a different attitude toward the world.

The reformation of the criminal, and the protection of society, appear to me, then, the only ends which are, or should be, aimed at in punishment. But in a certain sense we may say that all punishment is retributive. Punishment is the denial or negation of the wrong by the reaffirmation of the right; and the wrong exists in the will or self of the criminal, therefore by punishing him we seem to destroy the evil which we may regard as personified in him. This is in effect what really does take place, and what the popular consciousness demands. The state, then, as the suppressor of crime and promoter of good, may be regarded as a moral or spiritual agent;¹ yet, although legal punishment is retributive in its nature, it is not retribution which is consciously aimed at. Such a theory would offend our moral natures. Its truth, however, has been well expressed by Mr. Alexander as follows: "The value of the theory lies in its placing human punishment in a line with the process of self assertion by which species maintain their life. The human institution of punishment is comprised under the wider law of nature, of the reaction of an organism against anything which impedes its vitality. From this comprehensive point of view, punishment, therefore, is retributive. Men do like the rest of the world. But though it is true to say that punishment avenges the evil deed, if we go on to say, that we punish for the sake of vengeance, or that punishment is its own end, we are not only stating something repulsive in itself, but are guilty of positive confusion."²

Our conception of punishment, then, seems to square as

¹ Cf., Rashdall, *Int. Journ. of Ethics*, "The Theory of Punishment," Vol. II, pp. 20 ff.

²Alexander, *Moral Order and Progress*, p. 329. Cf. Also Hegel, *Werke* VIII, p. 130. "Die That des Verbrechens ist nicht ein Erstes, Positives, zu welchem die Strafe als Negation käme; sondern ein Negatives, so dass die Strafe nur Negation der Negation ist."

well with determinism as with freedom. Indeed, we may claim, that only upon the supposition that a man's acts represent his character, and take place according to fixed laws, does there appear to be any hope of influencing him in any way. We may, perhaps, then assert, that if the retributory theory of punishment postulates freedom of alternatives, the reformatory conception demands as a presupposition, determinism. It is just because a man *cannot help* acting as he does, that he requires to be separated from society, and subjected to a special kind of treatment.

The distinctively moral argument is based on the feeling of obligation, and the retrospective judgments we pass on our own conduct. It is contained in Kant's famous statement, "the ought implies the can." Now it is urged with great force by some modern writers, that although, from the point of view of psychology, we cannot escape deterministic conclusions, yet the fact of morality compels us to postulate indeterminism. In other words, the recognition of an act as one which I ought to perform, implies ability on my part to perform it. The feeling of remorse, which is the consequence of the neglect of some duty, would be utterly vain and unmeaning, it is said, if I am so constituted as to be incapable of acting otherwise. "Either free will is a fact, or moral judgment a delusion."¹ "Whatever may be the case with the intellectual problem, the facts which we call moral, the supreme facts of human existence, do, as Kant insisted, demand such reference to a freely acting personality."²

If determinism really destroys our moral conceptions, we must admit that this is a strong argument against it. For it is undoubtedly true that the facts of our moral consciousness are as real and authoritative as any other facts of our life. I venture to think, however, that moral conceptions and facts will not be found incompatible with determinism. We may

¹ Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II., p. 141.

² J. Seth, *Freedom as Ethical Postulate*, p. 24.

indeed have to modify to some extent our traditional notions of morality; but I believe that when thus modified, they will be more in accordance with our every-day experience, and with the laws of psychology. First, then, it seems evident that the importance of freedom as an ethical postulate has grown out of the conception of morality as moral law. "It is through the jurial conception of ethics that the controversy of free will chiefly becomes important. A plain man does not naturally inquire whether he is free or not to seek his own good, provided only that he knows what it is, and that it is attainable by voluntary action. But when his conduct is compared with a code, to the violation of which punishments are attached, the question whether he really could obey the rule by which he is judged is obvious and inevitable; since if he could not, it seems contrary to our sense of justice to punish him."¹ But in modern times we seem to have reverted to Aristotle's conception of morality as action according to an end. It seems quite possible, then, that morality will remain just what it is, whether we are free or determined. Ethics, like logic, is a normative science. Just as logic prescribes certain laws or standards for thought, so ethics attempts to discover the norms of right conduct. These norms may be prescribed by society, yet the individual in virtue of his moral nature, must adopt them as his own. The feeling of obligation is simply the immediate consciousness of the individual that these ends have a right to him. They carry with them, as Kant remarked, a certain dignity and majesty before which our moral nature bows down. A feeling of obligation is simply the recognition of the authority and universality of certain norms of conduct. What then is the truth in the argument that the 'ought' implies the 'can'? Not that we could have acted otherwise

¹Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*, p. 10. Compare Paulsen's description of the problem as one "which arose under certain conditions and has disappeared with the disappearance of these conditions, a problem which exists only for a theological or scholastic philosophy." *Ethik*, p. 357.

than we did in cases where we have failed ; but that we are *capable of becoming* something better than we are at present. The 'ought' does not imply that we can here and now realize any ideal which we recognize as binding upon us ; but it implies 'canhood,' the potentiality of attaining a position higher than we have yet reached. The recognition of something as that which ought to be realized is the sole condition of future progress. The feeling of obligation, so to speak, contains in it 'the promise and potency' of all moral improvement. And it is because we recognize these moral ends as attainable that they have any binding force for us. If our characters were not subject to change, fatalism would be the logical outcome of Determinism. If I were persuaded that any external force prevented me from becoming other than I am, no ideals of a better life would be recognized as obligatory. The fatalist says: 'If my act is the resultant of my character and environment, my future conduct is absolutely necessary. My character is given and my circumstances as well, therefore the result is something over which I can have no control.' If such were the actual facts of the case, moral obligation would be entirely meaningless. The feeling of responsibility which has as its basis 'the immediate consciousness of Freedom' is a valid argument against any such position.

We have next to consider in what way a Determinist can interpret the feeling of remorse, and the consciousness of sin. It is urged with great force by the advocates of Free Will, that if we do not admit the possibility of doing otherwise, at least in crucial cases, these terms represent mere illusions. We may err, it is said, but we cannot sin, nor can we have any reason for remorse. I venture, however, to think that a real meaning and a sufficient justification can be given to these feelings without recognizing any such postulate. If the individual admits that the action in question has been consciously willed by him, and that nothing but his own character led to its adoption, and if now he has come to a better

mind and recognizes that it is not in conformity with some ideal which is regarded as higher, and hence as obligatory, he has every possible motive for reproaching himself. The feeling of remorse is the immediate result of the perception of the discrepancy existing between the ideal and the actual. The Determinist, regarding his act as the expression of his character, and not of some unmotivated freak of willing, has the strongest possible reasons for feeling remorse. It is when he fully realizes that the act is his own—that he is a man of such a character—that his feeling of remorse becomes most poignant, and he is ready to abhor himself and exclaim, ‘wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me!’ He judges and condemns not merely the act, but his own character, which the action has shown to fall so far short of what it ought to be, and of the standard which his own moral nature demands. Remorse when applied by an individual to his own character in this sense, has a real regenerating influence. If, on the contrary, it is indulged in as vain regrets regarding the past, it is debasing and unmanly. The pain which I feel today when some act has shown me that I am mean or cowardly, becomes a force, a motive, to lead me to a better life. Ethical judgments, whether passed upon ourselves or others, are justifiable only if they are used as ethical forces in order that a different course of action may be followed. “When we pronounce ethical judgment upon others, the question is not whether or not they could have acted otherwise; but we blame an act in order that the will of the individual may act differently in future. We have no right to pronounce ethical judgments upon others except from ethical motives. Every one who expresses an ethical judgment uses forces which are among the strongest and deepest in the world, and imposes upon himself, therefore, an ethical responsibility.”¹

¹Höffding, “Die Gesetzmässigkeit der psych. Activität,” *V. f. w., Phil.* XV, 4.

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