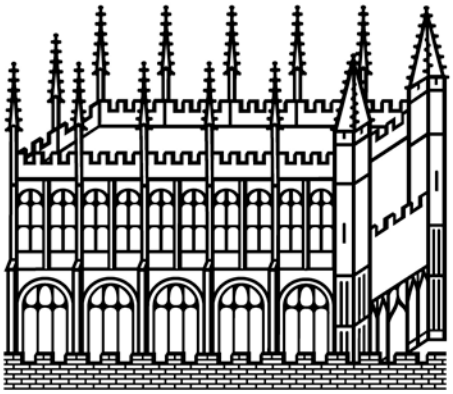

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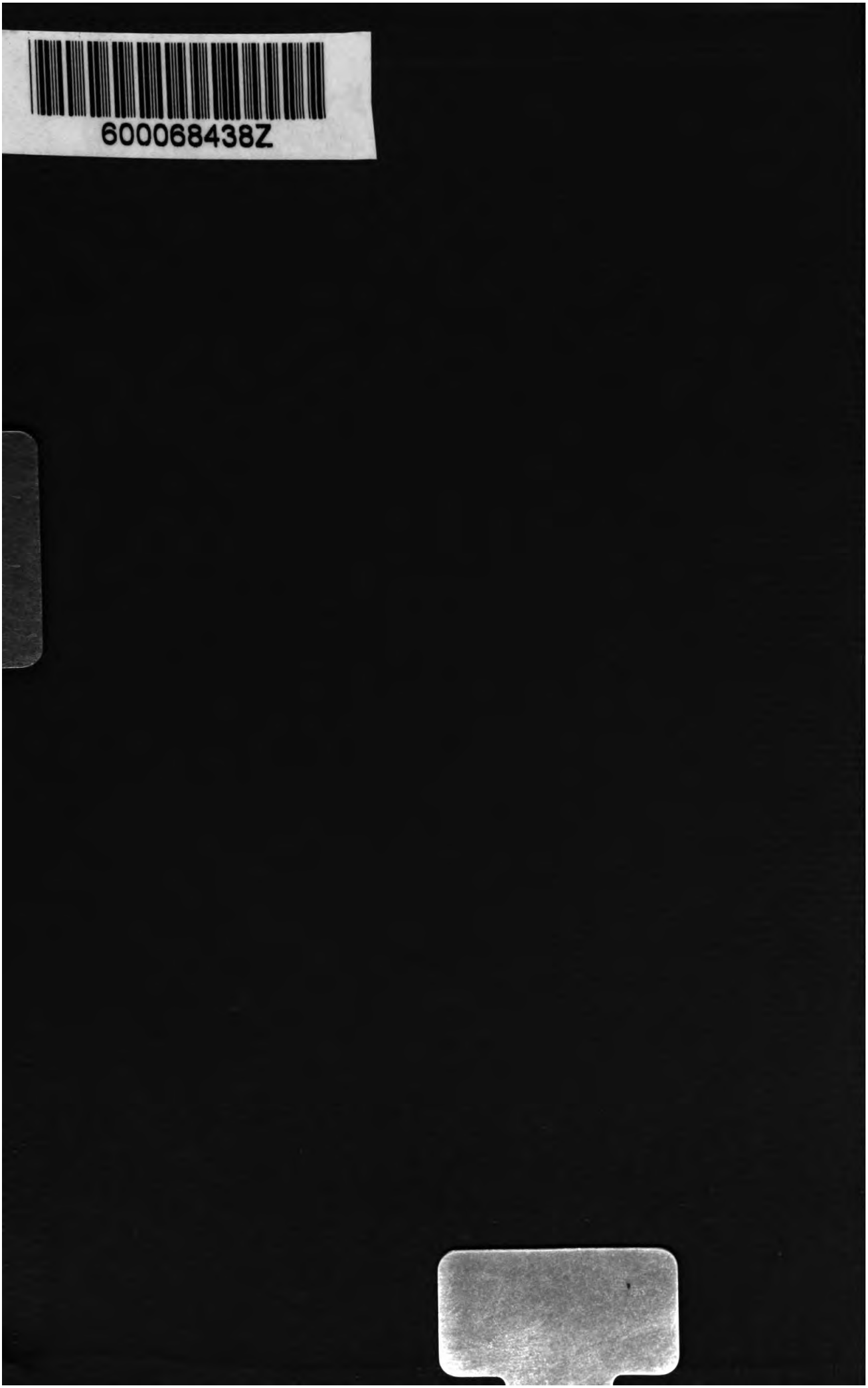
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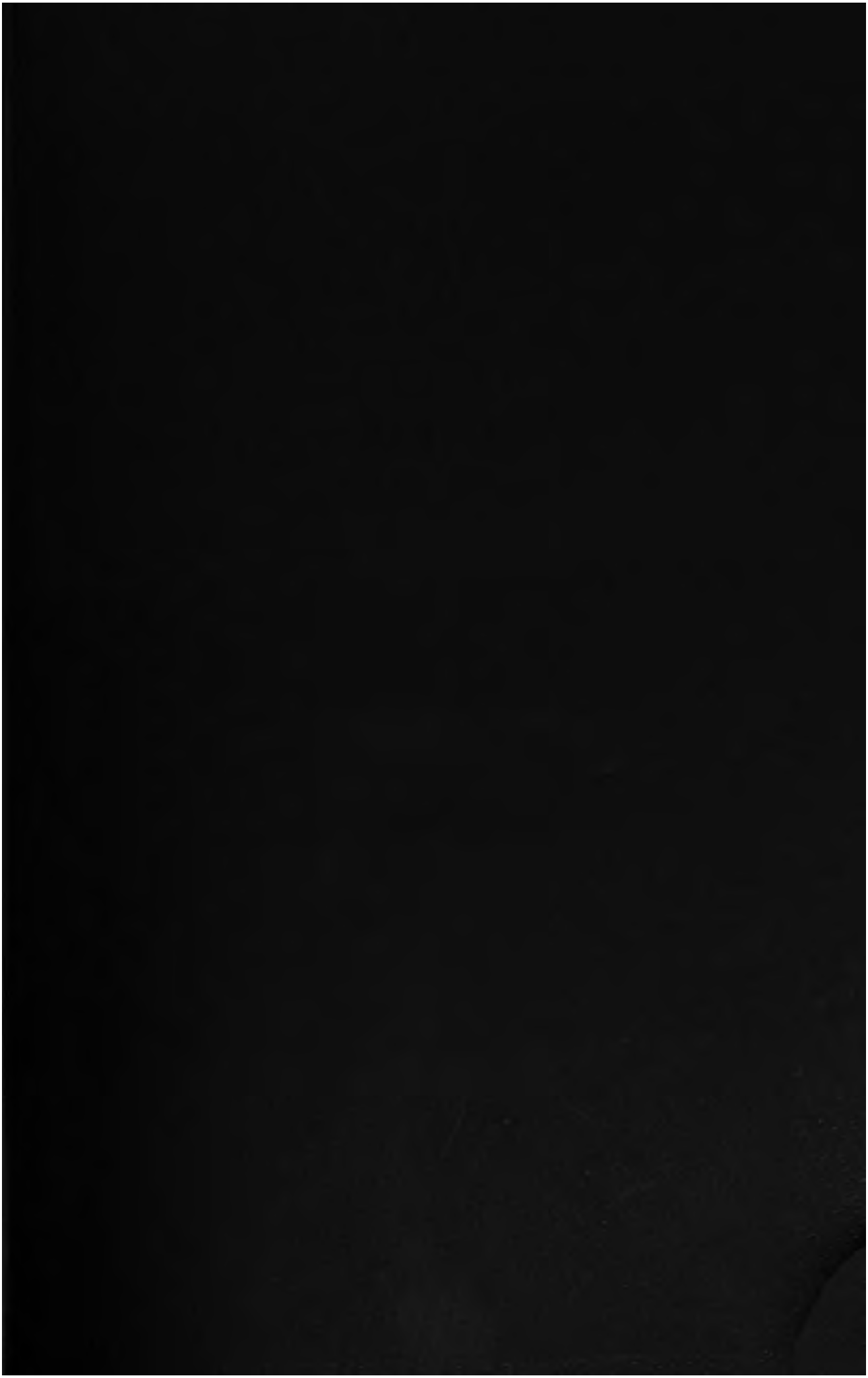

A SUPPLEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION

OF THE

METHODS OF ETHICS

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OF THE

METHODS OF ETHICS

BY

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CONTAINING ALL THE IMPORTANT ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS IN THE THIRD EDITION.

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PREFACE.

In this third edition I have again made extensive alterations, and introduced a considerable amount of new matter. Some of these changes and additions are due to modifications of my own ethical or psychological views; but I do not think that any of these are of great importance in relation to the main subject of the treatise. And by far the largest part of the new matter introduced has been written either (1) to remove obscurities, ambiguities, and minor inconsistencies in the exposition of my views which the criticisms[1] of others or my own reflection have enabled me to discover; or (2) to treat as fully as seemed desirable certain parts or aspects of the subject which I had either passed over altogether or discussed too slightly in my previous editions, and on which it now appears to me important to explain my opinions, either for the greater completeness of my treatise,—according to my own view of the subject,—or for its better adaptation to the present state of ethical thought in England. The most important changes of the first kind have been made in chaps. i. and ix. of Book I., chaps. i.—iii. of Book II. and chaps. i., xiii. and xiv. of Book III.: under

[1] I must here acknowledge the advantage that I have received from the remarks and questions of my pupils, and from criticisms privately communicated to me by others; among these latter I ought especially to mention an instructive examination of my fundamental doctrines by the Rev. Hastings Rashdall.

the second head I may mention the discussions of the relation of intellect to moral action in Book I. chap. iii., of volition in Book I. chap. v., of the causes of pleasure and pain in Book II. chap. vi., of the notion of virtue in the morality of Common Sense in Book III. chap. ii. and of evolutional ethics in Book IV. chap. iv. (chiefly).

In conclusion, I ought to explain that the matter contained in this supplement is only in part new: as in many cases I have thought it more convenient to include portions of the old text, in order to make the new matter more readily intelligible; indeed in some of the passages here given the alterations that have been made are *in extent* slight, though always *in effect* not unimportant, according to my judgment.

At the commencement of each passage I have always noted the line of the page in the second edition at which the passage is to be inserted: but it did not occur to me, until the first seven sheets of this supplement had been printed off, that the reader might sometimes have trouble in finding the place at which he was to return to the text of the second edition at the conclusion of a new insertion. In the remainder of the supplement I have noted the point of return to the old text, as well as the point of departure from it, in the case of all the passages long enough to cause any difficulty; and in order to remedy as far as possible the absence of this indication in the first seven sheets, I have subjoined an exact account of all the longer passages of the second edition which the reader is understood to omit, in introducing the passages given in the first portion of this supplement—i.e. to the end of Book III. ch. ii.

BOOK I.

Chapter i. p. 1, l. 13—p. 2, l. 28; p. 3, l. 9—29; p. 5, l. 14—29; p. 7, l. 27—p. 8, l. 33; p. 9, l. 1—29; p. 13, l. 11—18.

Chap. ii. p. 15, l. 31—38; p. 18, l. 1—p. 19, l. 34; p. 20, l. 27—37; p. 21, l. 8—17.

Chap. iii. p. 24, l. 1—4; p. 24, l. 13—p. 25, l. 24; p. 26, l. 6—8; p. 27, l. 31—p. 29, l. 1; p. 29, l. 20—p. 30, l. 29; the whole of § 4.

Chap. iv. p. 35, l. 9—p. 36, l. 11; p. 36, last line to end of p. 37; p. 38, l. 28—p. 39, l. 23; p. 40, l. 13—35.

Chap. v. § 1 and § 2 to p. 51, l. 25; p. 52, l. 18—20 and l. 29—38; p. 54, l. 13—28; p. 55, l. 10—23; p. 57, l. 29—p. 58, l. 6; p. 59, l. 16—21; p. 60, l. 15—33; p. 61, l. 27—35.

Chap. vi. p. 63, l. 1—10; p. 64, l. 12—p. 66, l. 8; p. 66, l. 23—28; p. 67, l. 1—13; p. 70, l. 35—p. 71, l. 18; p. 73, l. 9—34; p. 75, l. 12—27.

Chap. vii. p. 81, l. 5—p. 82, l. 14.

Chap. viii. p. 85, l. 1—16; p. 86, l. 6—p. 87, l. 13; p. 88, l. 21—p. 89, l. 4; p. 91, l. 2—14.

Chap. ix. p. 94, l. 1—24; p. 96, l. 6—p. 98, l. 13 (the reader should take note that the matter in § 2 is rearranged); § 3, except p. 100, l. 10—33, which now stand as a note to § 2; § 4 to p. 101, l. 34; p. 103, l. 18 to end of chapter.

BOOK II.

Chapter i. p. 109, l. 4—11; l. 24—34; p. 110, l. 32—39.

Chap. ii. p. 111, l. 1—21; p. 112, l. 4—15; § 2 to p. 114, l. 7; p. 114, l. 23—31; p. 115, l. 8—p. 116, l. 9.

Chap. iii. (The reader should note the changed arrangement of the matter in this chapter.) p. 118, l. 37—p. 119, l. 14; p. 120, l. 20—28; p. 121, l. 9—16; l. 30—33; p. 122, l. 26—35; p. 124, l. 28—p. 126, l. 18; p. 129, l. 17—p. 130, l. 5; p. 131, l. 10—p. 132, l. 20; p. 132, l. 30—35.

Chap. iv. p. 136, l. 1—19; p. 136, l. 28—p. 137, l. 2; p. 137, l. 26—29; l. 35—39; p. 138, l. 23—38; p. 141, l. 33—p. 142, l. 7.

Chap. v. p. 146, l. 1—10; p. 147, l. 17—32; p. 147, l. 36—p. 148, l. 4; p. 148, l. 31—p. 149, l. 7; p. 149, l. 36—p. 150, l. 17; p. 150, l. 29—34; p. 151, l. 9—21; p. 152, l. 1—14; p. 153, l. 16—30; p. 154, l. 29—p. 155, l. 16; p. 155, l. 31—p. 156, l. 5; p. 156, l. 16—22; l. 25—35; p. 159, l. 8—p. 160, l. 21.

Chap. vi. pp. 162, 163 and 166 are omitted, and the matter rearranged in the manner explained below.

BOOK III.

Chapter i. p. 176, l. 20—p. 181, l. 13; p. 183, l. 6—p. 185, l. 26 (except p. 184, l. 16—33 which are placed earlier in § 2); p. 186, l. 13—32.

Chap. ii. p. 191, l. 3—18; p. 191, l. 39—p. 195, l. 4.

ERRATA IN SUPPLEMENT.

p. 13, l. 37, for "But" read ..... "p. 26, l. 8. The"
p. 36, l. 11, insert "p. 64, l. 12"
p. 37, l. 11, insert "p. 67, l. 1"
p. 38, l. 25, before "Butler" insert "p. 75, l. 12"
p. 40, l. 1, for "p. 87, l. 4" read "p. 84, l. 5"
p. 74, l. 1, for "p. 143, l. 19" read "p. 143, l. 21"

THE METHODS OF ETHICS.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1 (p. 1, l. 13). ... An objection is sometimes taken to the application of the term 'Science' to such studies as these. It is said that a Science must necessarily have some department of actual existence for its subject-matter: and there is no doubt that the term Ethical Science might, according to usage, denote studies that deal with the actually existent: viz. either the department of Psychology that deals with pleasures and pains, desires and volitions, moral sentiments and judgments, as actual phenomena of individual human minds; or the department of Sociology dealing with similar phenomena, as exhibited by the larger organizations of which individual human beings are elements. We observe, however, that comparatively few persons pursue these studies from pure curiosity, in order merely to ascertain what actually exists, has existed, or will exist in time. Most men wish not only to understand human action, but also to regulate it; they apply the ideas 'good' and 'bad,' 'right' and 'wrong,' to the conduct or institutions which they describe; and thus pass, as I should say, from the point of view of Psychology or Sociology to the point of view of Ethics or Politics. It is true that the mutual implication of the two kinds of study is, on any theory, very close and complete, though the precise nature and extent of their connexion is

very differently conceived in different systems, as will hereafter appear. But, on any theory, our view of what ought to be, must be largely derived, in details, from our apprehension of what is; the means of realizing our ideal can only be thoroughly learnt by a careful study of actual phenomena; and to any individual asking himself 'What ought I to do or aim at?' it is important to examine the answers which his fellow-men have actually given to similar questions. Still it seems clear that an attempt to ascertain the general laws or uniformities by which the varieties of human conduct, and of men's sentiments and judgments respecting conduct, may be *explained*, is essentially different from an attempt to determine which among these varieties of conduct is *right* and which of these divergent judgments *valid*. It is, then, the systematic consideration of these latter questions which constitutes the special and distinct aim of Ethics and Politics: and it is merely a verbal question whether we shall apply the name 'science' to such systematic studies; though it is, of course, important that we should not confound them with the positive inquiries to which they bear respectively so close a relation.

§ 2 (p. 3, l. 9). ...On the other hand, the conception of Ethics as essentially an investigation of the Summum Bonum of Man and the means of attaining it is not generally applicable, without straining, to the view of Morality which we may conveniently distinguish as the Intuitional view; according to which conduct is held to be right when conformed to certain precepts or principles of Duty, intuitively known to be unconditionally binding. In this case we can only regard the conception of Ultimate Good as fundamentally important in the determination of Right conduct if we identify the two notions and say that Right conduct is itself the sole Ultimate Good for man. But this identification would not, I conceive, accord with the moral common sense of modern Christian communities; nor would it be ordinarily made by those who, in such communities have held the Intuitional view of Ethics. The majority of such persons would consider that the notion of human Good or Well-being must include the attainment of Happiness as well as the performance of Duty; even while denying that it is reasonable for men to make their performance of Duty conditional on their knowledge

of its conduciveness to Happiness. Or, to put it otherwise, they would hold that what men ought to take as the *practically* ultimate end of their action is not identical with what we may call its really ultimate or Divine End; the former being often entirely realised in the action itself, while the latter includes ulterior consequences: so that, in such cases, though some conception of these consequences may be indispensable to the completeness of an ethical system, it cannot be important for the methodical determination of Right conduct.

§ 3 (p. 4, l. 29). ...It is therefore interesting to inquire why this is not the case in Ethics; why we do not similarly start with certain premises as to what ought to be done or sought without considering the faculty by which we apprehend their truth.

(p. 5, l. 14). ...One explanation that may be offered is that, since we are moved to action not by Reason alone but also by desires and inclinations that operate independently of reason, the answer which we really want to the question 'why' is one which does not merely prove a certain action to be right, but also is accompanied by a predominant inclination to do it.

That this explanation is true for some minds in some moods I would not deny. Still I cannot but think that when a man asks 'why he should do' anything, he commonly assumes in himself a determination to pursue whatever conduct may be shown to be reasonable, even though it be very different from that to which his non-rational inclinations may prompt. And we are generally agreed that reasonable conduct in any case has to be determined on principles, in applying which the agent's inclination—as it exists apart from such determination—is only one element among several that have to be considered, and commonly not the most important element....

(p. 7, l. 27). Similarly, many Utilitarians hold all the rules of conduct which men prescribe to one another *as moral rules*, to be partly consciously and partly unconsciously prescribed as means to the end of the happiness of the community. But here again it would seem to be the common view that while the rules are relative, the end is unconditionally prescribed. Indeed it seems more obviously held that we *ought* to seek the happiness of the community than that we 'ought' to seek our own; for in the

case of a man's own happiness it may be said with a semblance of truth that the idea of 'ought' is inapplicable to that which, according to a psychological law that has no exceptions, is always the end and aim of his voluntary actions[1]. But it is not similarly thought that all men, by a universal law of their nature, are always aiming at the general happiness.

At the same time, it is not necessary, in the methodical investigation of right conduct, considered relatively to the end either of private or of general happiness, to assume that the end itself is determined or prescribed by reason: we only require to assume, in reasoning to cogent practical conclusions, that it is generally or widely adopted as ultimate and paramount. For if a man accepts any end as ultimate and paramount, he accepts implicitly as his "method of ethics" whatever process of reasoning enables us to determine the conduct most conducive to this end. Since, however, to every difference in the end accepted at least some difference in method will generally correspond: if all the ends which men have practically adopted as ultimate, subordinating everything else to the attainment of them (under the influence of 'ruling passions'), were taken as principles for which the student of ethics is called upon to construct rational methods, his task would be very complex and extensive. But if we confine ourselves to such ends as the common sense of mankind appears to accept as reasonable ultimate ends, the task is reduced, I think, within manageable limits; since this criterion will exclude at least many of the objects which men practically seem to regard as paramount. Thus many men sacrifice health, fortune, happiness, to Fame; but no one, so far as I know, has deliberately maintained that Fame is an object which it is reasonable for men to seek for its own sake: it only commends itself to reflective persons either (1) on account of the Happiness derived from it, or (2) because it attests Excellence of some kind already attained by the famous person, and at the same time stimulates him to the attainment of further excellence in the future. Whether there are any ends besides these two, which it is reasonable to regard as ultimate, it will hereafter be an important part of our business to investigate: but we may perhaps

[1] In a subsequent chapter (iii.) I shall try to shew that this objection has really no practical force.

say that *primâ facie* the only two ends which clearly claim to be *rational ends*, are the two just mentioned, Happiness and Perfection or Excellence of human nature; identifying with perfect or excellent existence the vaguer terms Wellbeing or Welfare, so far as they are interpreted as meaning something distinct from Happiness. And we must observe that the adoption of the former of these ends leads us to two *primâ facie* distinct methods, according as it is sought to be realized universally, or by each individual for himself alone....

(p. 9, l. 1). The case seems to be otherwise with Perfection. At first sight, indeed, the same alternatives present themselves[1]: it seems that the Perfection aimed at may be taken either individually or universally; and circumstances are conceivable in which a man is not unlikely to think that he could best promote the Perfection of others by sacrificing his own. But no moralist has ever approved of such sacrifice, at least so far as Moral Perfection is concerned; no one has ever directed an individual to promote the virtue of others except in so far as this promotion is compatible with, or rather involved in, the complete realization of Virtue in himself[2]. So far, then, there is no *primâ facie* need of separating the method of determining right conduct which takes the Perfection of the individual as the ultimate end from that which aims at the Perfection of the human community. And since Virtue is commonly conceived as the most valuable element of human Perfection or Excellence; while again the realization of Virtue is commonly thought (by those who reject Utilitarianism) to consist mainly in the complete observance of certain absolute rules of Duty, intuitively known; any method which takes Perfection or Excellence of human nature as ultimate End will *primâ facie* coincide to a great extent with that which

[1] It may be said that even more divergent views of the reasonable end are possible here than in the case of happiness: for we are not necessarily limited (as in that case) to the consideration of sentient beings: inanimate things also seem to have a perfection and excellence of their own and to be capable of being made better or worse in their kind; and this perfection, or one species of it, appears to be the end of the Fine Arts. But reflection I think shews that neither beauty nor any other quality of inanimate objects can be regarded as good or desirable in itself, out of relation to the perfection or happiness of sentient beings. Cf. *post*, c. ix.

[2] Kant roundly denies that it can be my duty to take the Perfection of others for my end: but his argument is not, I think, valid. Cf. *post*, B. III., c. iv. § 1.

systematizes and developes what I have before called the Intuitional view: and I have accordingly treated it as a special form of this latter.

§ 5 (p. 10, l. 28)...

The impulses or principles from which the different methods take their rise, the different claims of different ends to be rational, are admitted, to some extent, by all minds.

(p. 11, l. 37)...

I have refrained from attempting any such complete and final solution of the chief ethical difficulties and controversies as would convert this exposition of various methods into the development of a harmonious system.

(p. 13, l. 11...) My object, then, in the present work, is to expound as clearly and as fully as my limits will allow, the different methods of Ethics that I find implicit in our common moral reasoning; to point out their mutual relations; and where they seem to conflict, to define the issue as much as possible. In the course of this endeavour I am led to discuss the considerations which should, in my opinion, be decisive in determining the adoption of ethical first principles: but it is not my primary aim to establish such principles; nor, again, is it my primary aim to supply a set of rules for conduct.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELATION OF ETHICS TO POLITICS.

§ 1 (p. 15, l. 31).

... Let us assume, then, that Ideal Law is to be framed on Utilitarian principles, and consider what its relation will be to Morality similarly constructed. It is evident, in the first place, that the question, what rules of conduct and modes of distributing objects of desire should be legally fixed and enforced, will be determined by the same kind of forecast of consequences as will be used in settling all moral questions: we shall endeavour to estimate and balance against each other the effects of such enforcement on the aggregate pleasures and pains of individuals....

(p. 18, l. 1). I have treated this subject first from the utilitarian point of view, because Utilitarianism—at least of a loose and popular sort—seems to be now commonly accepted in Politics to a much greater extent than it is in the sphere of private conduct: many who recognize absolute rules of private duty, to be obeyed without regard to consequences, still hold that it is a question of expediency what actions and abstinences morally right or allowable should be made compulsory under legal penalties; and similarly that the right form of government for any society is to be determined on grounds of expediency only. At the same time, we still find in current political thought—even in England—an Intuitional method of Politics, which lays down *a priori* certain absolute *rights*, which it should be the primary end of civil law in any community

to maintain; just as Intuitional Ethics lays down absolute duties for private individuals. And further, since among these 'natural rights' is reckoned the Right to Freedom, limited only by the equal freedom of others—indeed by many (as Kant) the Right to Freedom is held to include all truly natural rights—it is inferred by the same method that no man is originally and 'naturally' bound to obey any other: and thus we get as the fundamental principle of a true constitutional code, that the Right of Government to exist and operate must be derived from the consent of its subjects to a limitation of their natural rights. On this view, the main questions to be asked, in considering the legitimacy of any form of government, are, firstly, how far these natural rights are alienable, and secondly how the consent of the members of any society to their partial alienation may be inferred; we must observe, however, that in more or less distinct opposition to this last view it was once held, and the doctrine still lingers, that the natural right of government in any society is vested, as a kind of heritable though not transferable property, in the persons belonging to a particular line of descent.

But both the theory of hereditary rights of monarchs, and the theory of a Law of Nature by which all persons have rights prior to the social compact that binds them into a community, are regarded as more or less antiquated by most educated Englishmen at the present day. The political views now chiefly opposed to Utilitarianism are those which take the Perfection of Society—or Social Welfare or Wellbeing interpreted otherwise than hedonistically—as the ultimate end in Politics as well as in Ethics. According to any such view, the connexion between Politics and Ethics is naturally very close; since on the one hand the Duty or Virtue of any individual is held to consist essentially in the performance of his function as a member of a 'social organism' in such a manner as to realise or effectively promote the Wellbeing of the whole organism; while on the other hand a certain kind of political order is generally held to be an indispensable condition or constituent of such Wellbeing. The degree, however, of separation between the two studies, and their mutual relations of

dependence or priority, can hardly be determined without a clearer conception than I can here attempt to give of that Wellbeing or Welfare which is not Happiness[1].

§ 2. There are, however, thinkers who regard Ethics as dependent on Politics in a manner quite different from any that has yet been discussed: viz. as being an investigation not of what ought to be done here and now, but of what ought to be the rules of behaviour in an ideal society. So that the subject-matter of our science would be doubly ideal: as it would not only prescribe what ought to be done as distinct from what is, but what ought to be done in a society that itself *is* not, but only *ought* to be. Those who take this view[2] adduce the analogy of Geometry to shew that Ethics ought to deal with ideally perfect human relations, just as Geometry treats of ideally straight lines and perfect circles. But the irregular lines which we meet with in experience have spatial relations which Geometry does not ignore altogether; it can and does ascertain them with a sufficient degree of accuracy for

[1] Some further discussion of this question will be found in Book III., chap. xiv.

[2] In writing this section I had primarily in view the doctrine set forth in Mr Spencer's *Social Statics*. As Mr Spencer has restated his view and replied to my arguments in his *Data of Ethics*, it is necessary for me to point out that the first paragraph of this section is not directed against such a view of 'Absolute' and 'Relative' Ethics as is given in the later treatise—which seems to me to differ materially from the doctrine of *Social Statics*. In *Social Statics* it is maintained not merely—as in the *Data of Ethics*—that Absolute Ethics which "formulates normal conduct in an ideal society" ought to "take precedence of Relative Ethics"; but that Absolute Ethics is the only kind of Ethics with which a philosophical moralist can possibly concern himself. To quote Mr Spencer's words:—"Any proposed system of morals which recognizes existing defects, and countenances acts made needful by them, stands self-condemned... Moral law...requires as its postulate that human beings be perfect. The philosophical moralist treats solely of the *straight* man...shews in what relationship he stands to other straight men...a problem in which a *crooked* man forms one of the elements, is insoluble by him". *Social Statics* (c. i.). Still more definitely is Relative Ethics excluded in the following passage of the concluding chapter of the same treatise (the italics are mine):—"It will very likely be urged that, whereas the perfect moral code is confessedly beyond the fulfilment of imperfect men, some other code is needful for our present guidance...to say that the imperfect man requires a moral code which recognizes his imperfection and allows for it, *seems at first sight reasonable. But it is not really so*...a system of morals which shall recognize man's present imperfections and allow for them *cannot be devised; and would be useless if it could be devised.*"

practical purposes: though of course they are more complex than those of perfectly straight lines.

(p. 20, l. 27)... It is generally held by Intuitionists that true morality prescribes absolutely what is in itself right, under all social conditions; at least as far as determinate duties are concerned: as (*e.g.*) that 'Truth should always be spoken' and 'Justice be done, though the sky should fall.' And so far as this is held it would seem that there can be no fundamental distinction drawn, in the determination of duty, between the actual and an ideal state of society: at any rate the general definition of (*e.g.*) Justice will be the same for both, no less than its absolute stringency—though I suppose even an extreme Intuitionist would admit that the details of this and other duties will vary with social institutions.

(p. 21, l. 8). For as in ordinary deliberation we have to consider what is best under certain conditions of human life, internal or external, so we must do this in contemplating the ideal society. We require to contemplate not so much the end supposed to be attained—which is simply the most pleasant consciousness conceivable, lasting as long and as uninterruptedly as possible—but rather some method of realizing it, pursued by human beings; and these, again, must be conceived as existing under conditions not too remote from our own, so that we can at least endeavour to imitate them.

(p. 22, l. 13)... In the one case the ideal involves a great extension and systematization of the arbitrary and casual almsgiving that now goes on: in the other case, its extinction.

CHAPTER III.

REASON AND FEELING.

§ 1. In the first chapter I spoke of actions that we judge to be right and what ought to be done as being "reasonable," or "rational," and similarly of ultimate ends as "prescribed by Reason": and I contrasted the motive to action supplied by the recognition of such reasonableness with "non-rational" desires and inclinations.... On the other hand it is widely maintained that, as Hume says, "Reason, meaning the judgment of truth and falsehood, can never of itself be any motive to the Will"—the motive to action being in all cases some feeling similar to what I have characterized as Non-rational Desire. It seems desirable to examine with some care the grounds of this contention, before we proceed any further.

Let us begin by defining the issue raised, as clearly as possible. Every one, I suppose, has had experience of what is meant by the conflict of non-rational or irrational desires with reason: most of us (*e. g.*) occasionally feel bodily appetite prompting us to indulgences which we judge to be imprudent, and anger prompting us to acts of which we disapprove as unjust or unkind. It is when this conflict occurs that the desires are said to be irrational, as impelling us to volitions opposed to our deliberate judgments: sometimes we yield to such seductive impulses, and sometimes not: and it is perhaps when we do *not* yield, that the impulsive force of such irrational desires is most definitely felt, as we have to exert in resisting them a voluntary effort somewhat analogous to that involved in any muscular exertion. Often, again,—since we are not always thinking either of our duty or of our interest,—desires of this kind take effect in

voluntary actions without our having judged such actions to be either right or wrong, either prudent or imprudent; as (*e. g.*) when an ordinary eupeptic person eats his dinner. In such cases it seems most appropriate to call the desires "non-rational" rather than "irrational." Neither term is intended to imply that the desires spoken of—or at least the more important of them—are not normally accompanied by rational or intellectual processes. It is true that some impulses to action seem to take effect "instinctively," as we say, without any definite consciousness either of the end at which the action is aimed, or of the means by which the end is to be attained: but this, I conceive, is only the case with impulses that do not occupy consciousness for an appreciable time, and do not require any but very familiar and habitual actions for the attainment of their proximate ends. In all other cases—that is, in the case of all the actions with which we are chiefly concerned in ethical discussion—the result aimed at, and usually some part at least of the means by which it is to be realized, are more or less distinctly represented in consciousness, previous to the volition that initiates the movements tending to its realization. Hence the resultant forces of what I call "non-rational" desires, and the volitions to which they prompt, are continually modified by intellectual processes in two distinct ways; first by new perceptions or representations of means conducive to the desired ends, and secondly by new presentations or representations of facts—either as actually existing, or as more or less probable consequences of contemplated actions—which rouse new impulses of desire and aversion.

The question, then, is whether this account of the influence of reason on desire and volition is not exhaustive; and whether the experience which is commonly described as a "conflict of desire with reason" is not more properly conceived as a conflict among desires and aversions; the sole function of reason being to bring before the mind ideas of actual or possible facts, which modify in the manner above described the resultant force of our various impulses.

I hold that this is not the case; that the ordinary moral or prudential judgments which, in the case of all or most minds have a certain—though too often not a predominant—influence on volition, cannot legitimately be interpreted as judgments

respecting the present or future existence of human feelings or other facts of experience; the notion "ought" or "right," which in some form or other such judgments contain, being essentially different from all notions representing empirical facts. The question is one on which appeal must ultimately be made to the reflection of individuals on their practical judgments and reasonings: and in making this appeal it seems most convenient to begin by shewing the inadequacy of all attempts to explain the practical judgments or propositions in which the notion "ought" is introduced, without recognizing its unique character as above negatively defined. There is an element of truth in such explanations, in so far as they bring into view feelings which undoubtedly accompany moral or prudential judgments, and which ordinarily have more or less effect in determining the will to actions judged to be right; but so far as they profess to be interpretations of what such judgments mean, they appear to me to fail altogether.

In considering this question it will, I think, conduce to clearness to take separately the two species of judgments which I have distinguished as "moral" and "prudential" respectively; since though it is widely held that the ultimate obligation of all rules of duty must be rested on the self-interest of the individual to whom they are addressed—so that all valid moral rules have ultimately a prudential basis—it seems clear that in ordinary thought cognitions or judgments of duty present themselves as *primâ facie* distinct from cognitions or judgments as to what conduces to self-interest.

To begin then with the former, *i. e.* with moral judgments in the narrower sense: it is maintained by some that the judgments or propositions which we commonly call moral really affirm no more than the existence of a specific emotion in the mind of the person who utters them: that when I say 'Truth ought to be spoken' or 'Truthspeaking is right,' I mean no more than that the idea of truthspeaking excites in my mind a feeling of approbation. And probably some degree of such emotion, commonly distinguished as 'moral sentiment,' always or ordinarily accompanies moral judgment. But the peculiar emotion of moral approbation is, in my experience, inseparably bound up with the conviction, implicit or explicit, that the

conduct approved is 'objectively' right—*i.e.* that it cannot, without error, be disapproved by any other mind.

§ 2 (p. 27, l. 31). ... In the case of positive law the connexion of 'obligation' and 'punishment' seems indissoluble: a law cannot be properly said to be actually established in a society if it is habitually violated with impunity. But a more careful reflection on the relation of Law to Morality, as ordinarily conceived, seems to shew that it really affords no argument for the interpretation of 'ought' that I am now discussing. For the ideal distinction taken in common thought between legal and merely moral rules seems to lie in just this connexion of the former with punishment: we think that there are some things which a man ought to be compelled to do, or forbear, and others which he ought to do or forbear without compulsion, and that the former alone fall properly within the sphere of law. And it is otherwise evident that what we mean when we say that a man is "morally though not legally bound" to do a thing is not merely that he "will be punished by public opinion if he does not": for we often join the two statements, clearly distinguishing their import: and further (since public opinion is known to be eminently fallible) there are many things which we judge men 'ought' to do, while perfectly aware that they will incur no serious social penalties for omitting them. In such cases, indeed, it would be commonly said that social disapprobation 'ought' to follow on immoral conduct; and in this very assertion it is clear that the term 'ought' cannot mean that social penalties are to be feared by those who do not disapprove. Again, all or most men in whom the moral consciousness is strongly developed find themselves from time to time in conflict with the commonly received morality of the society to which they belong: and thus—as was before said—have a crucial experience proving that duty does not mean *to them* what other men will disapprove of them for not doing.

At the same time I admit, as indeed I have already suggested in § 3 of chap. I., that we not unfrequently pass judgments resembling moral judgments in form, and not distinguished from them in ordinary thought, in cases where the obligation affirmed is found, on reflection, to depend on the

existence of current opinions and sentiments as such. The members of modern civilised societies are under the sway of a code of Public Opinion, enforced by social penalties, which no reflective person obeying it identifies with the moral code, or regards as unconditionally binding: indeed the code is manifestly fluctuating and variable, different at the same time in different classes, professions, social circles, of the same political community. Such a code always supports to a considerable extent the commonly received code of morality: and most reflective persons think it generally reasonable to conform to the dictates of public opinion—to the Code of Honour, we may say, in graver matters, or the Code of Politeness or Good Breeding in lighter matters—wherever they do not positively conflict with morality; either on grounds of private interest, or because they think it conducive to general happiness or wellbeing to keep as much as possible in harmony with their fellow-men....

(p. 29, after l. 19). There is, however, another way of interpreting 'ought' as connoting penalties, which is somewhat less easy to meet by a crucial psychological experiment. The moral imperative may be taken to be a law of God, to the breach of which Divine penalties are annexed; and these, no doubt, in a Christian society, are commonly conceived to be adequate and universally applicable. Still, it can hardly be said that this belief is shared by all the persons whose conduct is influenced by independent moral convictions, occasionally unsupported either by the law or the public opinion of their community. And even in the case of many of those who believe fully in the moral government of the world, the judgment "I ought to do this" cannot be identified with the judgment "God will punish me if I do not"; since the conviction that the former proposition is true is distinctly recognized as an important part of the grounds for believing the latter. Again, when Christians speak—as they commonly do—of the 'justice' (or other moral attributes) of God, as exhibited in punishing sinners and rewarding the righteous, they obviously imply not merely that God *will* thus punish and reward, but that it is 'right'[1] for Him to do so:

[1] 'Ought' is here inapplicable, for a reason presently explained.

which, of course, cannot be taken to mean that He is 'bound under penalties.'

§ 3. It seems then that the notion of 'ought' or 'moral obligation' as used in our common moral judgments, does not merely import (1) that there exists in the mind of the person judging a specific emotion (whether complicated or not by sympathetic representation of similar emotions in other minds); nor (2) that certain rules of conduct are supported by penalties which will follow on their violation (whether such penalties result from the general liking or aversion felt for the conduct prescribed or forbidden, or from some other source). What then, it may be asked, does it import? What definition can we give of 'ought,' 'right,' and other terms expressing the same fundamental notion? To this it may be answered that the notion is too elementary to admit of any formal definition; it can only be made clearer by determining its relation to other notions with which it is connected in ordinary thought, especially to those with which it is liable to be confounded. If however it appears that what the questioner wants is really a complete account of the relation of Morality to other objects of knowledge, we must add that it does not belong to Ethics to furnish this, but to some more comprehensive science: at any rate this task is not undertaken in the present treatise, which only attempts to methodize our practical judgments and reasonings, in which this fundamental notion must, I conceive, be taken as ultimate and unanalysable.

We have, however, to distinguish two different implications with which the term is used; according as the result which we judge 'ought to be' is or is not thought capable of being brought about by the volition of any individual, in the circumstances to which the judgment applies. The former alternative is, I conceive, implied by the strictly ethical 'ought:' in the narrowest ethical sense I cannot conceive that I 'ought' to do anything which at the same time I judge that I cannot do. In a wider sense, however,—which cannot conveniently be discarded in ordinary discourse—I sometimes judge that I 'ought' to know what a wiser man would know, or feel as a better man would feel, in my place, though I may know that I could not directly produce in myself such knowledge or feeling by any effort of

will. In this case the word merely implies an ideal or pattern which I 'ought'—in the stricter sense—to seek to imitate as far as possible. And this wider sense seems to be that in which the word is normally used in the precepts of Art generally, and in political judgments: when I judge that the laws and constitution of my country 'ought to be' other than they are, I do not of course imply that my own or any other individual's single volition can directly bring about the change[1]. In either case, however, I imply—as has been before said—that the judgment is objective[2]: *i. e.* that what I judge "right" or "what ought to be" must, unless I am in error, be thought to be so by all rational beings who judge truly of the matter.

In referring such judgments to the 'Reason,' I mean to imply no more than just this 'objectivity.' I do not mean to imply that valid moral judgments can only be attained by a process of reasoning from universal principles, and not by direct intuition of the particular duties of individuals. At the same time it must be admitted that this latter implication would naturally be suggested by the use of the term 'Reason' in other departments of thought. We do not commonly say that particular physical facts are apprehended by the Reason: we consider this faculty to be conversant in its discursive operation with the relation of judgments or propositions: and the intuitive reason (which is here rather in question) we restrict to the apprehension of universal truths, such as the axioms of Logic and Mathematics. Now, as I shall presently observe, it is not uncommonly held that the moral faculty deals primarily with individual cases, applying directly to these the general notion of duty, and deciding intuitively what ought to be done by this person in these particular circumstances. On this view the apprehension of moral truth is more analogous to Sense-percep-

[1] I do not even imply that any combination of individuals could completely realize the state of political relations which I conceive 'ought to' exist. My conception would be futile if it had no relation to practice: but it may merely delineate a pattern to which no more than an approximation is practically possible.

[2] There are certain difficulties or ambiguities involved in the application of the term "objective" to right conduct, which I shall discuss later (Book III. chap. i. § 3). But these do not, in my opinion, necessitate any modification of the simple account of the meaning of the term which I have given in the text.

tion than to Rational Intuition (as commonly understood): and hence the term Moral Sense might seem more appropriate. But the term sense suggests a capacity for feelings which may vary from *A* to *B* without either being in error, rather than a faculty of objective cognition [1]: hence it has seemed to me better to use the term Reason as above explained, to denote merely such a faculty, without restricting it to universal cognitions [2].

Further, when I speak of the cognition or judgment that 'X ought to be done'—in the stricter ethical sense of the term ought [3]—as a 'dictate' or 'precept' of reason to the persons to whom it relates; I imply that in rational beings as such this cognition gives an impulse or motive to action: though in human beings, of course, this is only one motive among others which are liable to conflict with it, and is not always—perhaps not usually—a predominant motive....

§ 4. I am aware that some persons will be disposed to answer all the preceding argument by a simple denial that they can find in their consciousness any such absolute imperative as I have been trying to exhibit. If this is really the final result of self-examination in any case, there is no more to be said. I, at least, do not know how to impart the notion of moral obligation to any one who is entirely devoid of it. I think, however, that many of those who give this denial only mean to deny that they have any consciousness of moral obligation to actions *per se* without reference to their consequences; and would not deny that they recognize some universal end or ends—whether it be the general happiness, or well-being otherwise understood—as that at which it is ultimately reasonable to aim, subordinating the gratification of personal desires to its attainment. But in this view, as I have before said, it appears to me that the unconditional imperative really comes in as regards the end; it is implicitly recognized as an end at which all

[1] By cognition I always mean what some would rather call "apparent cognition," that is, I do not mean to affirm the *validity* of the cognition, but only its existence as a psychical fact.

[2] A further justification for this extended use of the term Reason will be suggested in a subsequent chapter (ch. viii. § 3).

[3] This is the sense in which the term will always be used in the present treatise, except where the context makes it quite clear that only the wider meaning—that of the political 'ought'—is applicable.

men 'ought' to aim; and it can hardly be denied that the recognition of an end as ultimately reasonable involves the recognition of an obligation to do such acts as most conduce to the end. The obligation is not indeed "unconditional," but it does not depend on the existence of any non-rational desires or aversions. And nothing that has been said in the preceding section is intended as an argument in favour of Intuitionism, as against Utilitarianism or any other method that treats moral rules as relative to General Good or Well-being. For instance, nothing that I have said is inconsistent with the view that Truthspeaking is only valuable as a means to the preservation of society: only if it be admitted that it *is* valuable on this ground I should say that it is implied that the preservation of society—or some further end to which this preservation, again, is a means—must be valuable *per se*, and therefore something at which a rational being, as such, ought to aim. If it be granted that we need not look beyond the preservation of society, the primary 'dictate of reason,' in this case would be 'that society *ought* to be preserved:' but reason would also dictate truthspeaking, so far as truthspeaking is recognized as the indispensable or fittest means to this end.

So again, even those who hold that moral rules are only obligatory because it is the individual's interest to conform to them—thus regarding them as a particular species of prudential rules—do not thereby get rid of the 'dictate of reason,' so far as they recognize private interest or happiness as an end at which it is ultimately reasonable to aim. The conflict of Practical Reason with irrational desire remains an indubitable fact of our conscious experience, even if practical reason is interpreted to mean merely self-regarding Prudence. It is, indeed, maintained by Kant and others that it cannot properly be said to be a man's duty to promote his own happiness; since "what every one inevitably wills cannot be brought under the notion of duty." But even granting[1] it to be in some sense true that a man's volition is always directed to the attainment of his own happiness: it does not follow that a man always does what he believes will be conducive to his own *greatest* happiness, or his 'good on the whole.' As Butler urges, it is a matter of

[1] As will be seen from the next chapter, I do not grant this.

common experience that men indulge appetite or passion even when, in their own view, the indulgence is as clearly opposed to what they conceive to be their interest as it is to what they conceive to be their duty. "Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor" is as applicable to the Epicurean as it is to any one else: and in recognizing that he 'chooses the worse,' a man implicitly, if not explicitly, recognizes that he ought to choose something else.

Even, finally, if we discard the belief, that any end of action is unconditionally or "categorically" prescribed by reason, the notion 'ought' as above explained is not thereby eliminated from our practical reasonings: it still remains in the "hypothetical imperative" which prescribes the fittest means to any end that we may have determined to aim at. When (*e.g.*) a physician says, "If you wish to be healthy you ought to rise early," this is not the same thing as saying "early rising is an indispensable condition of the attainment of health." This latter proposition expresses the relation of physiological facts on which the former is founded; but it is not merely this relation of facts that the word "ought" imports: it also implies the unreasonableness of adopting an end and refusing to adopt the means indispensable to its attainment. It may perhaps be argued that this is not only unreasonable but impossible: since adoption of an end means the preponderance of a desire for it, and if aversion to the indispensable means causes them not to be adopted although recognized as indispensable, the desire for the end is *not* preponderant and it ceases to be adopted. But this view is due, in my opinion, to a defective psychological analysis. According to my observation of consciousness, the adoption of an end as paramount—either absolutely or within certain limits—is quite a distinct psychical phenomenon from desire: it is to be classed with volitions, though it is, of course, specifically different from a volition initiating a particular immediate action. As a species intermediate between the two, we may place resolutions to act in a certain way at some future time: we continually make such resolutions, and sometimes when the time comes for carrying them out, we do in fact act otherwise under the influence of passion or mere habit, without consciously cancelling our previous resolve: in this case the act

is, I conceive, clearly irrational as inconsistent with a resolution that still persists in thought. Similarly the adoption of an end logically implies a resolution to take whatever means we may see to be indispensable to its attainment: and if when the time comes we do not take them while yet we do not consciously retract our adoption of the end, it must surely be admitted that we 'ought' in consistency to act otherwise than we do. That Reason dictates the avoidance of a contradiction will be allowed even by those who deny that it dictates anything else: and it will hardly be maintained that such a contradiction as I have described, between a general resolution and a particular volition, is not a matter of common experience.

[§ 4 of the 2nd Edition is omitted, a part of it being transferred to the discussion of "Good" in ch. ix.]

CHAPTER IV.

PLEASURE AND DESIRE.

§ 1 (p. 35, l. 9)... There is, however, one view of the feelings which prompt to voluntary action, which is sometimes thought to involve a particular theory of the principles on which such action ought to be regulated, and so to cut short all controversy on the fundamental question of ethical method. I mean the view that volition is always determined by pleasures or pains actual or prospective. This doctrine—which I may distinguish as Psychological Hedonism—is often connected and not seldom confounded with the method of Ethics which I have called Egoistic Hedonism; and no doubt it is plausible to infer that if one end of action—my own pleasure or absence of pain—is definitely determined for me by unvarying psychological laws, another conflicting end cannot be prescribed for me by Reason.

Reflection however shews that this inference involves the unwarranted assumption that my view of my own pleasure is determined independently of any question as to Rightness or Reasonableness of Conduct: whereas it is manifestly possible that our prospect of pleasure resulting from any course of conduct may largely depend on our conception of it as right or otherwise: and in fact this must be normally the case with the conduct of conscientious persons, who habitually act in accordance with their moral convictions, if the psychological theory above-mentioned is sound. Indeed on looking closer it rather appears that the adoption of psychological Hedonism in its extreme quantitative form, is so far from leading logically to Egoistic Hedonism as an ethical doctrine that it is really incompatible with it. If it were true, as Bentham[1] affirms (with

[1] *Constitutional Code*, Introduction, § 2.

the verbose precision of his later style) that "on the occasion of every act he exercises, every human being is led to pursue that line of conduct which, according to his view of the case, taken by him at the moment, will be in the highest degree contributory to his own greatest happiness[1]"; the proposition that a man 'ought' to pursue such conduct is incapable of being affirmed with any significance. For a psychological law invariably realized in my conduct does not admit of being conceived as a 'precept' or 'dictate' of reason: this latter must be a rule from which I am conscious of being able to deviate. But I do not think that the proposition quoted from Bentham would be affirmed without qualification by any of the writers who now maintain psychological Hedonism....

(p. 36, last line). And in any case this psychological doctrine conflicts with the ethical proposition widely held by persons whose moral consciousness is highly developed: viz. that an act in the highest sense virtuous must be done for its own sake and not for the sake of the attendant pleasure, even if that be the pleasure of the moral sense: and that if I do an act from the sole desire of obtaining the glow of moral self-approbation which I believe will attend its performance, the act will not be truly virtuous. It is clear that if psychological Hedonism were true this opinion would have to be abandoned.

It seems therefore important to subject this generalization, even in its more indefinite form, to a careful examination.

§ 2. It will be well to begin by defining more precisely the terms used and the question at issue. First, there is no doubt that pleasure is a kind of feeling which stimulates the will to actions tending to sustain or produce it,—to sustain it, if actually present, and to produce it, if it be only represented in idea—; and similarly pain is a kind of feeling which stimulates as to actions tending to remove or avert it. These statements, in fact, may be given as adequate[2] definitions of Pleasure and Pain. It seems

[1] I here, as in chap. I., adopt the exact Hedonistic interpretation of 'happiness' which Bentham has made current. This seems to me the most suitable use of the term; but I afterwards (ch. vii. § 1) take note of other uses.

[2] Adequate, that is, for the purpose of *distinction*—whether they are adequate for the *measurement* that Ethical Hedonism requires is a question that we shall have subsequently to consider. Cf. *post*, Book II. ch. ii. § 2.

convenient to call the volitional stimulus in the two cases respectively Desire and Aversion; though it should be observed that the former term is ordinarily restricted to the impulse felt when pleasure is not actually present, but only represented in idea. The question at issue, then, is not whether pleasure, present or represented, is normally accompanied by desire for itself, and pain by aversion: but whether there are no desires and aversions which have not pleasures and pains for their objects—no conscious impulses to produce or avert results other than the agent's own feelings. In the treatise to which I have referred, Mill explains that "desiring a thing, and finding it pleasant, are, in the strictness of language, two modes of naming the same psychological fact." If this be the case, it is hard to see how the proposition we are discussing requires to be determined by "practised self-consciousness and self-observation;" as the denial of it would involve a contradiction in terms. The truth is that there is an ambiguity in the word Pleasure, which has always tended seriously to confuse the discussion of this question[1]. When we speak of a man doing something at his own "pleasure," or as he "pleases," we usually signify the mere fact of choice or preference; the mere determination of the will in a certain direction. Now, if by "pleasant" we mean that which influences choice, exercises a certain attractive force on the will, it is an assertion incontrovertible because tautological, to say that we desire what is pleasant—or even that we desire a thing in proportion as it appears pleasant. But if we take "pleasure" to denote the kind of feelings above defined, it then becomes a really debateable question whether our desires are always consciously directed towards the attainment by ourselves of such feelings. And this is what we must understand Mr Mill to consider "so obvious, that it will hardly be disputed."...

(p. 38, l. 28). I will begin by taking an illustration of this from the impulses commonly placed lowest in the scale. Hunger, so far as I can observe, is a direct impulse to the eating of food.

[1] The confusion occurs in the most singular form in Hobbes, who actually identifies Pleasure and Appetite, "this motion in which consisteth pleasure, is a solicitation to draw near to the thing that pleaseth."

Such eating is no doubt commonly attended with an agreeable feeling of more or less intensity: but it cannot, I think, be strictly said that this agreeable feeling is the object of hunger, and that it is the representation of this pleasure which stimulates the will of the hungry man as such. Of course hunger, is frequently and naturally accompanied with anticipation of the pleasure of eating: but careful introspection seems to shew that the two are by no means inseparable. And even when they occur together the pleasure seems properly the object not of the primary appetite, but of a secondary desire which can be distinguished from the former; since the *gourmand*, in whom this secondary desire is strong, is often prompted by it to actions designed to stimulate hunger, and often, again, is led to control the primary impulse, in order to prolong and vary the process of satisfying it.

Indeed it is so obvious that hunger is something different from the desire for anticipated pleasure, that some writers have regarded its volitional stimulus (and that of appetite generally) as a case of aversion from present pain. This, however, seems to me a distinct mistake in psychological classification. In my ordinary experience, the feeling of hunger is usually what Mr Bain distinguishes as a neutral excitement; it only becomes definitely painful in the case of exceptionally prolonged abstinence from food. No doubt hunger, and desire generally, is a state of consciousness so far similar to pain, that in both we feel a stimulus prompting us to pass from the present state into a different one. But aversion from pain is an impulse to get out of the present state and pass into some other state which is only negatively represented as different from the present: whereas in desire as such, the primary impulse is towards the realization of some positive future result—the desire itself being often not distinctly either pleasurable or painful, even when it reaches a high degree of intensity, but rather tending to assume either quality according to the nature of its concomitants. When a strong desire is, for any reason, baulked of its effect in causing action, it is generally painful in some degree....

(p. 40, l. 13). Take, for example, the case of any game which involves—as most games do—a contest for victory. No ordinary player before entering on such a contest, has any desire

for victory in it: indeed he often finds it difficult to imagine himself deriving gratification from such victory, before he has actually engaged in the competition. What he deliberately, before the game begins, desires is not victory, but the pleasant excitement of the struggle for it; only for the full development of this pleasure a transient desire to win the game is generally indispensable. This desire, which does not exist at first, is stimulated to considerable intensity by the competition itself: and in proportion as it is thus stimulated both the mere contest becomes more pleasurable, and the victory, which was originally indifferent, comes to afford a keen enjoyment.

The same phenomenon is exhibited in the case of more important kinds of pursuit. Thus it often happens that a man, feeling his life languid and devoid of interests, begins to occupy himself in the prosecution of some scientific or socially useful work, for the sake not of the end but of the occupation. At first, very likely, the occupation is irksome: but soon, as he foresaw, his sustained exercise of voluntary effort in one direction reacts on his involuntary emotions; so that his pursuit becoming eager becomes also a source of pleasure....

(p. 45, l. 4). So far, then, from our conscious active impulses being always directed towards the attainment of pleasure or avoidance of pain for ourselves, it would seem that we find everywhere in consciousness extra-regarding impulses, directed towards something that is not pleasure, nor relief from pain....

(p. 46, l. 8). But again, it is sometimes said that whatever be the case with our present adult consciousness, our original impulses were all directed towards pleasure[1] or from pain, and that any impulses otherwise directed are derived from these by "association of ideas."

[1] I must ask the reader to distinguish carefully the question discussed in this chapter, which relates to the *objects* of desires and aversions, from the different question whether the *causes* of these impulses are always to be found in antecedent experiences of pleasure and pain. The bearing of this latter question on Ethics, though not unimportant, is manifestly more indirect than that of the question here dealt with: and it will be convenient to postpone it till a later stage of the discussion. Cf. *post*, Book II. ch. vi. § 2 and Book IV. ch. iv. § 1.

CHAPTER V.

FREE WILL.

§ 1. In the preceding chapters I have treated first of rational, and secondly of disinterested action, without introducing the vexed question of the Freedom of the Will. The metaphysical difficulties connected with this question have been proved by long dialectical experience to be so great, that I am anxious to confine them within as strict limits as I can, and keep as much of my subject as possible free from their perturbing influence. And it appears to me that the identification which Kant and others after him have sought to establish between (1) Disinterested and Rational and (2) Rational and Free action, is in the former case opposed to psychological experience, while in the latter case it is at least misleading, and tends to obscure the real issue raised in the Free Will controversy. In the last chapter I have tried to shew that action strictly disinterested, that is, disregardful of foreseen balance of pleasure to ourselves, is found in the most instinctive as well as in the most deliberate and self-conscious region of our volitional experience: nay, it appears to have a place (as far as any phenomenon known to us only by introspective observation may reasonably be thought to have a place) in the life of the lower animals. We have at any rate just as much ground for saying that a faithful dog acts disinterestedly, as we have for saying that he acts interestedly. Again, the conception of acting rationally, as explained in the last chapter but one, is certainly not bound up with the notion of acting 'freely,' as maintained by Libertarians generally against Determinists: rational action, as I conceive it, remains rational, however complete may be the

triumph of Determinism. I say "Libertarians generally," because in the statements made by disciples of Kant as to the connexion of Freedom and Rationality, there appears to me to be a confusion between two meanings of the term Freedom, which require to be carefully distinguished in any discussion of Free Will. When a disciple of Kant says that a man "is a free agent in so far as he acts under the guidance of reason," the statement easily wins assent from ordinary readers; since it is no doubt true, as Whewell says, that we ordinarily "consider our Reason as being ourselves rather than our desires and affections. We speak of Desire, Love, Anger, as mastering *us*, or of *ourselves* as controlling them. If we decide to prefer some remote and abstract good to immediate pleasures, or to conform to a rule which brings us present pain, (which decision implies exercise of Reason,) we more particularly consider such acts as our *own* acts[1]." I cannot, therefore, object on the score of usage to this application of the term "free" to denote voluntary actions in which the seductive solicitations of appetite or passion are successfully resisted: and I am sensible of the gain in effectiveness of moral persuasion which is obtained by thus enlisting the powerful sentiment of Liberty on the side of Reason and Morality. But it is clear that if we say that a man is "a free agent in so far as he acts rationally," we cannot also say—in the same sense—that it is by his own "free" choice that he acts irrationally, when he does so act; and it is this latter proposition which Libertarians generally have been concerned to maintain. They have thought it of fundamental importance to shew the 'Freedom' of the moral agent, on account of the connexion that they have held to exist between Freedom and Moral Responsibility: and it is obvious that the Freedom thus connected with Responsibility is not the Freedom that is only manifested in rational action, but the Freedom to choose between right and wrong which is manifested equally in either choice. Now it is I suppose an undoubted fact—to which the Christian consciousness of "wilful sin" bears testimony—that men do deliberately and with complete self-consciousness choose to act irrationally. They do not merely prefer self-interest to duty (for here is rather a conflict of claims to rationality than

[1] *Elements of Morality*, Bk. I. c. ii.

clear irrationality): but (*e.g.*) sensual indulgence to health, revenge to reputation, &c., though they know that such preference is opposed to their true interests[1]. Hence it does not really correspond to our experience as a whole to represent the conflict between Reason and passion as a conflict between 'ourselves' on the one hand and a force of nature on the other. We may say, if we like, that when we yield to passion, we become 'the slaves of our desires and appetites': but we must at the same time admit that our slavery is self-chosen. Can we say, then, of the wilful wrongdoer that his wrong choice was 'free'; meaning that he might have chosen rightly, not merely if the antecedents of his volition, external and internal, had been different, but supposing these antecedents unchanged? This, I conceive, is the substantial issue raised in the Free Will controversy; which I now propose briefly to consider. As I shall presently explain, I do not think that a solution of this metaphysical problem is really important for the general regulation of human conduct, whatever method be adopted for framing such regulation: it will appear, however, that the question has a special connexion with one department of morality, according to the common sense view of it, which hereafter in examining the Intuitional Method we shall attempt to make as precise as possible.

§ 2. We may conveniently begin by defining more exactly the notion of Voluntary action, to which, according to all methods of Ethics alike, the predicates 'right' and 'what ought to be done'—in the strictest ethical sense—are exclusively applicable. In the first place, Voluntary action is distinguished as 'conscious' from actions or movements of the human organism which are 'unconscious' or 'mechanical.' The person whose

[1] The difficulty which Socrates and the Socratic schools had in conceiving a man to choose deliberately what he knows to be bad for him—a difficulty which drives Aristotle into real Determinism in his account of purposed action, even while he is expressly maintaining the "voluntariness" and "responsibility" of vice—seems hardly to exist for the modern mind. This is at least partly due to the fact that we have separated the notion of 'one's own good' into the two *primâ facie* distinct notions of 'interest' and 'duty': thus, being familiar with the conception of deliberate choice, consciously opposed *either* to interest *or* to duty, we can without difficulty conceive of such choice in conscious opposition to both.

organism performs such movements only becomes aware of them, if at all, after they have been performed; accordingly they are not imputed to him as a person, or judged to be morally wrong or imprudent; though they may sometimes be judged to be good or bad in respect of their consequences, with the implication that they ought to be encouraged or checked so far as this can be done indirectly by conscious effort.

So again, in the case of conscious actions, the agent is not regarded as morally responsible, except in an indirect way, for effects which he did not foresee at the moment of volition. No doubt when a man's action has caused some unforeseen harm, the popular moral judgment often blames him for carelessness; but it would be generally admitted by reflective persons that in such cases strictly moral blame only attaches to the agent in an indirect way, in so far as his carelessness is the result of some wilful neglect of duty. Thus the proper immediate objects of moral approval or disapproval would seem to be always the results of a man's volitions so far as they were intended—*i.e.* represented in thought as certain or probable[1] consequences of such volitions—: or, more strictly, the volitions themselves in which they were so intended, since we do not consider that a man is relieved from moral blame because his wrong intention remains unrealized owing to external causes.

This view seems at first sight to differ from the common opinion that the morality of acts depends on their 'motives'; if by motives are understood the desires that we feel for some of the foreseen consequences of our acts. But I do not think that those who hold this opinion would deny that we are blameworthy for any prohibited result included in our intention, whether it was the object of desire or not. And though it is certainly held that acts, similar as regards their foreseen results, may be 'better' or 'worse[2]' through the presence of certain desires or aversions; still probably all who hold this

[1] I need not here raise the question how far we are responsible for all the foreseen consequences of our actions, or only, in the case of definite unconditional moral rules, for their results within a certain range—a question which will have to be considered when we come to examine the Intuitional Method.

[2] In a subsequent chapter (c. ix.) I shall examine more fully the relation of the antithesis 'right' and 'wrong' to the vaguer and wider antithesis 'good' and 'bad,' in our practical reasonings.

would admit on reflection that so far as these feelings are not directly under the control of the will the judgment of 'right' and 'wrong' does not strictly apply to them: but rather to the exertion or omission of voluntary effort to check bad motives and encourage good ones, or to the conscious adoption of an object of desire as an end to be aimed at—which, as I have before said, is a species of volition.

We may conclude then that judgments of right and wrong relate properly to volitions accompanied with intention—whether the intended consequences be external, or some effects produced on the agent's own feelings or character. This excludes from the scope of such judgments those conscious actions which are not intentional, strictly speaking; as when sudden strong feelings of pleasure and pain cause movements which we are aware of making, but which are not anteceded by any representation in idea either of the movements themselves or of their effects. For such actions, which we may distinguish as 'instinctive,' we are only held to be responsible indirectly so far as any bad consequences of them might have been prevented by voluntary efforts to form habits of more complete self-control.

We have to observe further that our common moral judgments recognize an important distinction between *impulsive* and *deliberate* wrongdoing, condemning the latter more strongly than the former. The line between the two cannot be sharply drawn: but we may define 'impulsive' actions as those where the connexion between the feeling that prompts and the action prompted is so simple and immediate that, though intention is distinctly present, the consciousness of personal choice of the intended result is evanescent. In deliberate volitions there is always a conscious selection of the result as one of two or more practical alternatives.

In the case, then, of volitions which are preeminently the objects of moral condemnation and approbation, the psychical fact 'volition' seems to be a somewhat complex phenomenon; including besides what I may call the mere sensation of (psychical) action[1] intention or representation of the results of

[1] By this phrase I mean to denote the psychical fact of volition in its most elementary form, as it exists even in instinctive actions. It might perhaps

action and also the consciousness of self as choosing, resolving, determining these results. And the question which I understand to be at issue in the Free Will controversy may be stated thus: Is the self to which I refer my deliberate volitions a self of strictly determinate moral qualities, a definite character partly inherited, partly formed by my past actions and feelings, and by any physical influences that it may have unconsciously received; so that my voluntary action, for good or for evil, is at any moment completely caused by the determinate qualities of this character, together with my circumstances, or the external influences acting on me at the moment—including under this latter term my present bodily conditions? or is there always a possibility of my choosing to act in the manner that I now judge to be reasonable and right, whatever my previous actions and experiences may have been?

I have avoided using terms which imply materialistic assumptions, because, though a materialist—in modern times—is pretty sure to be a determinist, a determinist is not always a materialist. In the above questions a materialist would substitute 'brain and nervous system' for 'character,' and thereby obtain certainly a clearer notion; but I have taken the view of common sense, or Natural Dualism, which distinguishes the agent from his body. For the present purpose the difference is unimportant. The substantial dispute relates to the completeness of the causal dependence of any volition upon the state of things at the preceding instant, whether we specify these as 'character and circumstances,' or 'brain and environing forces[1].'

be described as feeling of the kind which when intense we call effort. This feeling accompanies the initiation of muscular actions in our organism, except where these are unconscious or mechanical; but it must be distinguished from the sense of expended muscular energy: for we experience it when by an effort of self-control we resist a strong impulse to muscular action of any kind and remain passive.

[1] It is not uncommon to conceive of each volition as connected by uniform laws with our past states of consciousness. But any uniformities we might trace among a man's past consciousnesses, even if we knew them all, would yet give us very imperfect guidance as to his future action: as there would be left out of account

(1) all inborn tendencies and susceptibilities, as yet latent or incompletely exhibited;

(2) all past physical influences, of which the effects had not been perfectly represented in consciousness.

(p. 52, l. 18). Again, when we fix our attention on human action, we observe that the portion of it which is originated unconsciously is admittedly determined by physical causes.... Again, when we look closely at our conscious acts, we find that in respect of such of them as I have characterized as 'impulsive,' —acts done suddenly under the stimulus of a momentary sensation or emotion—our consciousness can hardly be said to suggest that they are not completely determined by the strength of the stimulus and the state of our previously determined temperament and character at the time of its operation: and here again, as was before observed, it is difficult to draw a line clearly separating these from the actions in which the apparent consciousness of 'free choice' becomes distinct....

(p. 54, l. 13). It is said, however, that the conception of the Freedom of the Will, alien as it may be to speculative science, both generally and in the special department of human action, is yet indispensable to Ethics and Jurisprudence: that, as Kant says, our recognition of the moral law is *ratio cognoscendi* of the Freedom of the Will; since in judging that I "ought" to do anything I imply that I "can" do it, and similarly in praising or blaming the actions of others I imply that they "could" have acted otherwise. If a man's actions are mere links in a chain of causation which, as we trace it back, ultimately carries us to events anterior to his personal existence, he cannot, it is said, really have either merit or demerit: and thus the reasonableness of the criminal law depends on the same assumption of Free Will; since if he has not merit or demerit, it is repugnant to the moral reason and sentiments of mankind to reward or punish him.

(p. 55, l. 10)... True, the meaning of punishment is altered: it can no longer be regarded as strictly retributory, but rather as reformatory and deterrent: but it may be fairly said that this is the more practical view, and the one towards which civilization—quite apart from the Free-will controversy—seems on the whole to tend. In fact so far as the preventive view of punishment diverges in practice from the retributive view, it may largely claim the support of the common sense of mankind, as exhibited in actual legislation and administration of justice. Thus (*e.g.*) we commonly think it right to punish negligence when it causes death, without requiring proof that

the negligence was the result, directly or indirectly, of wilful disregard of duty; and we do not punish such pernicious acts as rebellion or assassination less, because we know that they were done from a sincere desire to serve God or to benefit mankind: although we certainly consider the illdesert of such acts to be less in this case. If, again, the Libertarian urges that our moral feelings and judgments involve the conception of 'free' agency, since it is unreasonable to resent voluntary harm any more than involuntary, if both are equally resultant effects of complex natural forces; the Determinist answers that the reasonableness depends on the effect of the resentment, which obviously tends to prevent the one kind of action and not the other: nay, he retorts, indignation is only reasonable on the assumption that men's actions are determined by motives, among which the fear of others' indignation may be reckoned.

§ 3 (p. 56, ll. 21—23). ... There seems to be so far no practical necessity for any reflective person considering what it is reasonable for him to do, to determine the metaphysical validity of his consciousness of freedom to choose what he may conclude to be reasonable.

§ 4. It is, however, of obvious practical importance to ascertain precisely how far the power of the will (whether metaphysically free or not) actually extends: for this defines the range within which ethical judgments are in the strictest sense applicable. This inquiry is quite independent of the question of metaphysical freedom; we might state it in Determinist terms as an inquiry into the range of effects which it would be possible to cause by human volition, provided that adequate motive were not wanting. These effects seem to be of three kinds: first, changes in the external world consequent upon muscular contractions: secondly, changes in the train of ideas and feelings that constitutes our conscious life: and thirdly, changes in the tendencies to act hereafter in certain ways under certain circumstances....

(p. 59, l. 16). III. The effect of volition, however, to which I especially wish to direct the reader's attention is the alteration in men's tendencies to future action which must be assumed to be a consequence of general resolutions as to future conduct, so far as they are effective. Even a resolution to do a particular

act—if it is worth while to make it, as experience shews it to be—must be supposed to produce a change of this kind in the person who makes it: it must somehow modify his present tendencies to act in a certain way on a foreseen future occasion....

(p. 60, l. 15).... At the same time it can hardly be denied that such resolves sometimes succeed in breaking old habits: and even when they fail to do this, they often substitute a painful struggle for smooth and easy indulgence. Hence it is reasonable to suppose that they always produce some effect in this direction; whether they operate by causing new motives to present themselves on the side of reason, when the time of inner conflict arrives; or whether they directly weaken the impulsive force of habit in the same manner as an actual breach of custom does, though in an inferior degree[1].

(p. 61, l. 6). ... By any effort of resolution at the present moment we can only produce a certain limited effect upon our tendencies to action at some future time.

§ 5. But though I hold, on the grounds above argued, that it is of no practical importance for a man to decide, with a view to the general regulation of his conduct, whether he is or is not a 'free agent' (in the metaphysical sense); there is a special department of his behaviour to others, in dealing with which it appears to make some practical difference whether or not he is to regard those others as having been free agents—I mean in the determination of what Justice requires him to do to them. For Justice as commonly understood implies the due requital of good and ill Desert, and the common notion of Desert, when closely scrutinized, seems (as I have already said) to involve free choice of good or evil: so that the denial of such free choice, dissipating our primitive notion of Desert, leaves us the problem of determining Justice on some different principle.

[1] It should be observed that the same kind of change is sometimes brought about, without volition, by a powerful emotional shock, due to extraneous causes: and hence it might be inferred that in all cases it is a powerful impression of an emotional kind that produces the effect: and that the will is only concerned in concentrating our attention on the benefits to be gained or evils to be avoided by the change of habit, and so intensifying the impression of these. But though this kind of voluntary contemplation is a useful auxiliary to good resolutions, it does not seem to be this effort of will that constitutes the resolution: we can clearly distinguish the two. Hence this third effect of volition cannot be resolved into the second, but must be stated separately.

CHAPTER VI.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND METHODS.

§ 1. THE results of the three preceding chapters may be briefly stated as follows.

The aim of Ethics is to render scientific—*i.e.* true, and as far as possible systematic—the apparent cognitions that most men have of the rightness or reasonableness of conduct, whether the conduct be considered as right in itself, or as the means to some end conceived as ultimately reasonable[1]. These cognitions are normally accompanied by emotions of various kinds, known as "moral sentiments:" but an ethical judgment cannot be explained as affirming merely the existence of such a sentiment....

What then do we commonly regard as valid ultimate reasons for acting or abstaining? This, as was said, is the starting point for the discussions of the present treatise: which is not primarily concerned with proving or disproving the validity of any such reasons, but rather with the critical exposition of the different 'methods'—or rational procedures for determining right conduct in any particular case—which are logically connected with the different ultimate reasons widely accepted. In the first chapter we found that such reasons were supplied by the notions of Happiness, Perfection (including Virtue or Moral Perfection as a prominent element), regarded as ultimate ends, and Duty as prescribed by unconditional rules. It may seem, however, that these notions by no means exhaust the list of reasons which are widely accepted as ulti-

[1] As I have before said, the applicability of a method for determining right conduct relatively to an ultimate end—whether Happiness or Perfection—does not necessarily depend on the acceptance of the end as prescribed by reason: it only requires that it should be in some way adopted as ultimate and paramount. I have, however, confined my attention in this treatise to ends which are widely accepted as reasonable: and I shall afterwards endeavour to exhibit the self-evident practical axioms which appear to me to be implied in this acceptance. Cf. *post*, Book III. c. 13.

mate grounds of action. Many religious persons think that the highest reason for doing anything is that it is God's Will: while to others 'Self-realization' or 'Self-development,' and to others, again, 'Life according to nature' appear the really ultimate ends....(p. 66, l. 23)...When, on the other hand, we confine our attention to the strictly practical import of each notion, we find that, in so far as it is ascertainable by reasoning and reflection, it is always found to be identical with one or other of the principles previously distinguished.

To begin with the theological conception of 'God's Will.' If an external Revelation is proposed as the standard, we are obviously carried beyond the range of our science: on the other hand, when we try to ascertain by reason the Divine Will, the practical result seems always to lead us back, directly or indirectly, into one or other of the methods already marked out; since we cannot know anything to be the Divine Will, which we do not also, by the same exercise of thought, know to be reasonable.

§ 2 (p. 69, l. 22). ... We can infer from our nutritive system that we are intended to take food, and similarly that we are to exercise our various muscles in some way or other, and our brain and organs of sense.

§ 3 (p. 70, l. 35). ... These and other difficulties in our classification will be seen more clearly as our investigation proceeds. In the meantime the list of first principles already given seems to me to omit none that has a valid claim to independent consideration; and it corresponds to what seem the most fundamental distinctions that we apply to human existence; the distinction between the conscious being and the stream of conscious experience, and the distinction (within this latter) of Action and Feeling. For Perfection is thought to be the goal of the development of a human being, considered as a permanent entity; while by Duty, we mean the kind of Action that we think ought to be done; and similarly by Happiness or Pleasure we mean an ultimately desired or desirable kind of Feeling. At the same time I do not profess to prove *a priori* that there are these practical first principles and no more; nor, again, that my statement of methods gives an exhaustive analysis of all possible

modes of determining right conduct. My results have been reached merely empirically, by reflection on the moral reasoning of myself and other men, whether professed moralists or not: and though it seems to me improbable that I have overlooked any important phase of method, it is always possible that I may have done so.

On the other hand my primary threefold division of methods may by some readers be blamed for excess rather than defect.... (p. 73, l. 9)... And such a reason is found in the theory of human action held by Bentham (and generally speaking by his disciples), which has been discussed in a previous chapter—the doctrine, I mean, that every human being always does aim at his own greatest apparent happiness: and that, consequently, it is useless to point out to a man the conduct that would conduce to the general happiness, unless you convince him at the same time that it would conduce to his own. On this view, egoistic and universalistic considerations must necessarily be combined in any practical treatment of morality: and this being so, it was perhaps to be expected that Bentham[1] or his disciples would go further, and attempt to base on the Egoism which they accept as inevitable the Universalistic Hedonism which they approve and inculcate....(p. 74, l. 14)...But that they believed that such observance by any individual tended naturally to promote general happiness, and that the rules had been implanted by Nature or revealed by God to this end.... Butler, I think, was the first writer who dwelt on the discrepancies between Virtue as commonly understood and "conduct likeliest to produce an overbalance of happiness"[2]. When Hume presented Utilitarianism as a mode of explaining current morality, it was seen or suspected to have a partially destructive tendency. But it was not till the time of Paley and Bentham that it was offered as a method for determining conduct, which was to

[1] See note at the end of the chapter.

[2] See Dissertation II. *Of the Nature of Virtue* appended to the *Analogy*. It may be interesting to notice a gradual change in Butler's view on this important point. In the first of his Sermons on Human Nature published some years ago before the *Analogy* he does not notice, any more than Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, any possible want of harmony between Conscience and Benevolence. A note to Sermon XII., however, seems to indicate a stage of transition between the view of the first Sermon and the view of the Dissertation.

overrule all traditional precepts and supersede all existing moral sentiments. And even this complete and final antagonism relates rather to theory and method than to practical results: indeed the discrepancy in results between Utilitarianism and Common Sense has been rather extenuated than exaggerated by most utilitarians. The practical conflict, in ordinary human minds, is so palpably between Self-interest and Social Duty, however determined, that the sense of this continually tends to draw together Utilitarianism and Intuitionism into their old alliance.

NOTE (at the end of Ch. vi.).—I have called the ethical doctrine that takes universal happiness as the ultimate end and standard of right conduct by the name of Bentham, because the thinkers who have chiefly taught this doctrine in England during the present century have referred it to Bentham as their master. And it certainly seems to me clear—though Mr Bain (cf. *Mind*, January, 1883, p. 48) appears to doubt it—that Bentham adopted this doctrine explicitly, in its most comprehensive scope, at the earliest stage in the formation of his opinions; nor do I think that he ever consciously abandoned or qualified it. We find him writing in his commonplace book, in 1773—4 (cf. *Works*, Bowring's edition, vol. x. p. 70), that Helvetius had "established a standard of rectitude for actions"; —the standard being that "a sort of action is a right one, when the tendency of it is to augment the mass of happiness in the community." And we find him writing fifty years later (cf. *Works*, vol. x. p. 79) the following account of his earliest view, in a passage which contains no hint of later dissent from it. "By an early pamphlet of Priestley's...light was added to the warmth. In the phrase 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number,' I then saw delineated, for the first time, a plain as well as a true standard for whatever is right or wrong...in human conduct *whether in the field of morals or of politics.*"

At the same time I must admit that in other passages Bentham seems no less explicitly to adopt Egoistic Hedonism as the method of 'private Ethics' as distinct from Legislation: and in his posthumous 'Deontology' the two principles appear to be reconciled by the doctrine, that it is always the individual's true interest, even from a purely mundane point of view, to act in the manner most conducive to the general happiness. This latter proposition—which I regard as erroneous—is not, I think, definitely put forward in any of the treatises published by Bentham in his life-time, or completely prepared by him for publication: but I must confess that after carefully studying these treatises—especially the "Principles of Morals and Legislation"—I am unable to elicit from them a clear and definite view as to the relations of Egoistic and Universalistic Hedonism, in the field of private morality.

CHAPTER VII.

EGOISM AND SELF-LOVE.

§ 1 (p. 87, l. 4). Even the English term Happiness is not free from a similar ambiguity. It seems, indeed, to be commonly used in Bentham's way as convertible with Pleasure, —or rather as denoting that of which the elements are pleasures—; and it is in this sense that I think it most convenient to use it. Sometimes, however, in ordinary discourse, the term is rather employed to denote a particular kind of agreeable consciousness, which is distinguished from and even contrasted with definite specific pleasures—such as the gratifications of sensual appetite or other keen and vehement desires —as being at once calmer and more indefinite: we may characterize it as the feeling which accompanies the normal activity of a "healthy mind in a healthy body," and of which specific pleasures seem to be rather stimulants than elements. Sometimes, again—though, I think, with a more manifest divergence from common usage—"happiness" or "true happiness" is understood in a definitely non-hedonistic sense, as denoting results other than agreeable feelings of any kind[1].

§ 2. To be clear, then, we must particularize as the object of self-love, and End of the method which I have distinguished

[1] Thus Green (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book III. ch. iv. § 228) says, "it is the realisation of those objects in which we are mainly interested, *not the succession of enjoyments which we shall experience in realising them*, that forms the definite content of our idea of true happiness, so far as it has such content at all." Cf. also § 238.

as Egoistic Hedonism, the kind of feeling which we call Pleasure[1], taken in its widest sense, as including every species of "delight," "enjoyment," or "satisfaction;" except so far as any particular species may be excluded by its incompatibility with some greater pleasures, or as necessarily involving concomitant or subsequent pains. It is obvious that Hedonism, strictly understood, should be a method that aims at pleasure as pleasure and nothing else; and so at pleasure generally, not any particular kind of pleasure. And Self-love, as understood by Butler and other English moralists after him, is similarly a desire of one's own pleasure generally, and of the greatest amount of it obtainable, from whatever source it may be obtained....

(p. 84, l. 3). There remains then Pure or Quantitative Egoistic Hedonism, which, as a method essentially distinct from all others and widely maintained to be rational, seems to deserve a detailed examination. According to this the rational agent regards quantity of consequent pleasure and pain to himself as alone important in choosing between alternatives of action; and seeks always the greatest attainable surplus of pleasure over pain—which, without violation of usage, we may designate as his 'greatest happiness.' It seems to be this view and attitude of mind which is commonly intended by the vaguer terms 'egoism,' 'egoistic:' and therefore I shall allow myself to use these terms in this more precise signification.

NOTE.—The terms "Interest" and "Happiness" are generally used by Butler and his followers, no less than by Bentham and the utilitarians, to denote the total or aggregate of agreeable feeling at which "Self-love" or "Self-regard" is conceived to aim, and of which the elements are variously spoken of as "pleasures," "delights," "enjoyments," "satisfactions." Of these terms I have selected 'pleasure' as that best adapted to denote generally the kind of feeling which we desire to sustain or produce in our conscious experience; as "delight," and perhaps "enjoyment," seems only appropriate to designate such feelings when they reach a certain degree of intensity; and "satisfaction," again, is most properly applied to the pleasures that attend upon the attainment of a desired object. I observe, however, that in Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* the term "satisfaction" is used in a peculiar sense in which it is expressly distinguished from pleasure; since the author, while holding as I do that pleasure

[1] See the note at the end of the chapter.

is not the sole object of desire or conscious pursuit, still maintains that "in all willing" or "all enacted desire" there is "self-satisfaction sought" (pp. 163, 5). Green's statements do not appear to me to give explicitly any definite positive notion of this self-satisfaction; but since it is explained to be "a certain possible state" of the agent "which in the gratification of his desire he seeks to reach," and yet is not pleasure, I infer that it is the cognitive or intellectual element of the consciousness of attainment, as distinguished from the emotional or sensational element. To this view there appear to me to be two decisive objections: (1) many men often desire and aim at other objects besides their own conscious states—(*e.g.*) materialists aim at the welfare of remote posterity: and (2) the mere thought or cognition of fulfilled desire—as distinguished on the one hand from the fact of fulfilment or the existence of the desired object, and on the other hand from the agreeable feeling included in the consciousness of fulfilment—is not desired or judged desirable by me; nor, as I believe, by others.

CHAPTER VIII.

INTUITIONISM.

§ 1. I HAVE used the term 'Intuitional' to denote the view of ethics which regards as the practically ultimate end of moral actions their conformity to certain rules of Duty unconditionally prescribed. There is, however, considerable ambiguity as to the exact antithesis implied by the terms 'intuition,' 'intuitive,' and their congeners, as currently used in ethical discussion, which we must now endeavour to remove. Sometimes, as I before noticed, 'intuitive knowledge' of the rightness of actions is understood to imply that this rightness is ascertained by simply "looking at" the actions themselves, without considering their ulterior consequences. This view, indeed, can hardly be extended to the whole range of duty; since no morality ever existed which did not consider ulterior consequences to some extent. Prudence or Forethought has always been reckoned a virtue: and all modern lists of Virtues have included Rational Benevolence, which aims at the happiness of other human beings generally, and therefore necessarily takes into consideration even remote effects of actions. It must be observed, too, that it is difficult to draw the line between an act and its consequences: as the effects which follow each of our volitions form a continuous series stretching to infinity, and we seem to be conscious of causing all these effects, so far as at the moment of volition we foresee them to be probable.... We must understand then that the disregard of consequences, which

the Intuitional view, according to this interpretation of it, is taken to imply, only relates to certain determinate classes of actions (such as Truth-speaking) where the general notions of the acts indicate clearly enough what events are to be included, and what excluded.

But again; we have to observe that the antithesis between Intuitionism and Hedonism is sometimes inadvertently stated in such a way as to imply that the only consequences of actions which can possibly be of ethical importance are pleasures and pains. It can hardly, however, be denied that men may and do judge remote as well as immediate results to be in themselves desirable, without considering them in relation to the feelings of sentient beings. I have already assumed this to be the view of those who adopt the general Perfection, as distinct from the Happiness, of human society as their ultimate end; and it would seem to be the view of many who concentrate their efforts on some more particular results, other than morality, such as the promotion of Art or Knowledge. Such a view, if expressly distinguished from Hedonism, would probably be classed by many as Intuitional; but if so the antithesis implied by the term would be a different one to that defined in the preceding paragraph: it would be meant that these ultimate ends are judged to be good immediately, and not by 'induction from experience' of the pleasures which they produce. And it would seem to be frequently this latter antithesis that is in the minds of those who contrast 'intuitive' or '*a priori*' with 'inductive' or '*a posteriori*' morality. But such a contrast seems to indicate a certain confusion of thought. For what the 'inductive' moralist professes to know *a posteriori*, by induction from experience, is commonly not the same thing as what the intuitive moralist professes to know by intuition. In the former case it is the conduciveness to pleasure of certain kinds of action that is methodically ascertained: in the latter case, their rightness: there is therefore no proper opposition. If Hedonism claims to give authoritative guidance, this can only be in virtue of the principle that pleasure is the only reasonable ultimate end of human action: and this principle cannot be known by induction from experience. Experience can at most tell us that all men always do seek pleasure as their ultimate end (that it does not

support this conclusion I have already tried to shew): it cannot tell us that any one ought so to seek it. If this latter proposition is legitimately affirmed in respect either of private or of general happiness, it must either be immediately known to be true,—and therefore, we may say, a moral intuition—or be inferred ultimately from premises which include at least one such moral intuition; hence either species of Hedonism, regarded from the point of view taken in this treatise, might be legitimately said to be in a certain sense 'intuitional.' It seems, however, to be the prevailing opinion of ordinary moral persons, and of most of the writers who have maintained the existence of moral intuitions, that certain kinds of actions are unconditionally prescribed without regard to ulterior consequences: and I have accordingly treated this doctrine as a distinguishing characteristic of the Intuitional method, during the main part of the detailed examination of that method which I attempt in Book III.

§ 2. But further; the common antithesis between 'intuitive' and 'inductive' morality is misleading in another way: since a moralist may hold the rightness of actions to be cognizable apart from the pleasure produced by them...

(p. 88, l. 21). The view above described may be called, in a sense, 'ultra-intuitional,' since, in its most extreme form, it recognizes simple immediate intuitions alone and discards as superfluous all modes of reasoning to moral conclusions: and we may find in it one phase or variety of the Intuitional method,—if we may extend the term 'method' to include a procedure that is completed in a single judgment.

§ 3. But though probably all moral agents have experience of such particular intuitions, and though they constitute a great part of the moral phenomena of most minds, comparatively few are so thoroughly satisfied with them, as not to demand some more certain moral knowledge, even for practical purposes. And I conceive that in the case, at least, of reflective persons, even when the decision of the moral faculty relates primarily to some particular action, there is commonly at least a latent belief that its rightness or wrongness must be dependent upon certain general characteristics of the action, agent, and circumstances: and accordingly that the moral truth apprehended must be

intrinsically universal, though particular in our first apprehension of it[1].

(p. 89, l. 32)... And this is not unfrequently the case with the conscientious reasoning of ordinary persons when any dispute or difficulty forces them to reason: they have a genuine impulse to conform to the right rules of conduct, but they are not conscious, in difficult or doubtful cases, of seeing for themselves what these are: they have to inquire that of their priest, or their sacred books, or perhaps the common opinion of the society to which they belong....

(p. 91, l. 2)... From this demand springs a third species or phase of Intuitionism, which, while accepting the morality of common sense as in the main sound, still attempts to find for it a philosophic basis which it does not itself offer: to get one or more principles more absolutely and undeniably true and evident, from which the current rules might be deduced, either just as they are commonly received or with slight modifications and rectifications[2].

§ 4. The three phases of Intuitionism just described may be treated as three stages in the scientific development of Intuitive Morality: we may term them respectively Perceptional, Dogmatic, and Philosophical. The last-mentioned I have only defined in the vaguest way.

[1] This belief affords a kind of justification for the use of the term Moral Reason for the faculty of apprehending moral truth, even as exercised in particular cases.

[2] It should be observed that such principles will not necessarily be "intuitional" in the narrower sense that excludes consequences; but only in the wider sense as being self-evident principles relating to 'what ought to be.'

CHAPTER IX.

GOOD.

§ 1. We have hitherto spoken of the quality of conduct discerned by our moral faculty as 'rightness,' which is the term commonly used by English moralists. We have regarded this term, and its equivalents in ordinary use, as implying the existence of a dictate or imperative of reason, which, according to the Intuitional view, prescribes certain actions unconditionally, without reference to ulterior consequences.

It is, however, possible to take a view of duty in which, though the validity of moral intuitions is not disputed, this notion of rule or dictate is at any rate only latent or implicit, the moral ideal being presented as attractive rather than imperative. That is, we may consider the action to which we are morally prompted as 'good' in itself—not merely as a means to some ulterior Good, but as a part[1] of what is conceived as the agent's Ultimate Good....

(p. 96, l. 6)... And though Plato felt the conflict between Virtue and Pleasure far more intensely, so that in one phase of his mental development he repudiated the latter as an object of rational pursuit: still his general tendency—no less than that of Aristotle—is to regard the two as inseparable. The Good which he investigated persistently and profoundly we must conceive as something of which the manifestation in concrete human life involves the attainment of the greatest real pleasure of which human nature is capable, as well as the

[1] As I have before said, the doctrine that Right conduct is the *sole* Good of the agent does not commend itself to the common sense of a modern Christian community: it rather tends to be regarded as a Stoical paradox.

realization of Virtue. It is not until the post-Aristotelian period that the antithesis presents itself as an absolute antagonism; and that the main influence of philosophy upon mankind is divided between the two schools which present Virtue and Pleasure as competing interpretations of the problematical notion of Ultimate Good.

This, then, is the first difference to be noticed between the two forms of the intuitive judgment. In the recognition of conduct as 'right' is involved an authoritative prescription to do it: but when we have judged conduct to be good, it is not yet clear that we ought to prefer this kind of good to all other good things. In short, the notion of 'rightness' is essentially positive, and that of 'goodness' admits of degrees; so that some standard for estimating the relative values of different 'goods' has still to be sought: and, as a preliminary to such a search, we require to examine the import of the notion 'Good' in the whole range of its application.

§ 2. We may begin by observing that—as it is for the constituents of ultimate good that we require a standard of measurement—we are not primarily concerned with things that are only thought to be good as means to the attainment of ulterior ends. If, indeed, we had only this case to consider, we might perhaps interpret 'good' without reference to human desire or choice, as meaning merely 'fit' or 'adapted' for the production of certain effects—a good horse for riding, a good gun for shooting, &c. But having also the notion of things as good independently of ulterior ends, we must, as the word itself does not seem to have different significations in the two cases, find a meaning for it which will cover both applications.

There is, however, a simple interpretation of the term—which is widely maintained to be the true one—according to which everything which we judge to be good is implicitly conceived as a means to the end of pleasure, even when we do not make in our judgment any explicit reference to this or any other ulterior end. On this view, any comparison of things in respect of their 'goodness' is necessarily a more or less unconscious comparison of them as sources of pleasure; so that any attempt to systematize our intuitions of goodness, whether in conduct and character or in other things, must reasonably lead us

straight to Hedonism. And no doubt, if we consider the application of the term, outside the sphere of character and conduct to things that are not definitely regarded as means to the attainment of some ulterior object of desire, we find a close correspondence between our apprehension of pleasure derived from an object, and our recognition that the object is in itself 'good.' The good things of life are things which give pleasure, whether sensual or emotional: as good wines, good landscapes, pictures, music: and this gives a *primâ facie* support to the interpretation of 'good' as equivalent to 'pleasant.' I think, however, that further reflection on the application of the term to the cases most analogous to that of conduct—i.e. to what we may call 'objects of taste'—will shew that this interpretation of it has not really the support of common sense....

As regards æsthetic pleasures, and the sources of such pleasures that we commonly judge to be good, it is the received opinion that some persons have more and others less 'good taste:' and it is only the judgment of persons of good taste that we recognize as valid in respect of the real goodness of the things enjoyed. We think that of his own pleasure each individual is the final judge, and there is no appeal from his decision; but the affirmation of goodness in any object involves the assumption of a universally valid standard, which, as we believe, the judgment of persons to whom we attribute good taste approximately represents. And it seems clear that the term 'good' as applied to 'taste' does not mean 'pleasant'; it merely imports the conformity of the æsthetic judgment so characterized to the supposed ideal, deviation from which implies error and defect.

§ 3. When we pass from the *adjective* to the *substantive* 'good,' it is at once evident that this latter cannot be understood as equivalent to 'pleasure' or 'happiness' by any persons who affirm—as a significant proposition and not as a mere tautology—that the Pleasure or Happiness of human beings is their Good or Ultimate Good. Such affirmation, which would, I think, be ordinarily made by Hedonists, obviously implies that the *meaning* of the two terms is different however closely their denotation may coincide. And it does not seem that any fundamental difference of meaning is implied by the grammatical variation from adjective to substantive.

What then, it may be asked, can we state as the general meaning of the term 'good'? I should answer that the notion it represents does not admit—any more than that expressed by the words 'right,' 'ought,' &c.—of being analysed into more elementary notions. We can only make it clearer by determining its relations; we can (as above) distinguish Good from Pleasure and the Pleasant; and we can indicate its relation to desire and choice by giving as its equivalent the term 'desirable'. What I recognize as 'desirable' for me I conceive as something which I either do desire (if absent) or should desire if my impulses were in harmony with reason: we may say that I 'ought to desire it,' but—since irrational desires cannot always be dismissed at once by voluntary effort—we can only say this in the wider sense[1] of 'ought'; in which it merely connotes an ideal or standard, divergence from which it is our duty to avoid as far as possible, though, even when it is distinctly recognized, we may not always be able to avoid it at will.

The distinction, however, that is thus drawn between what is 'desirable' and what is actually *desired* would not be universally accepted. Some who would admit 'desirable' as an interpretation or equivalent of 'good,' would maintain that by either term no more is signified than the object of actual desire, whatever that may be. They would admit that we all recognize some desires to be bad, and directed to what is not really good for us: but they would explain this by saying that such desires prompt to actions for the consequences of which, when they arrive, we feel, on the whole, aversion more intense than the former desire. On this view, then, my 'good on the whole' may be taken to mean what I should actually desire and seek if all the future aversions and desires which would be roused in me by the consequences of seeking it could be fully realized by me at the time of making my choice.

There is much in this view that seems to me true and important. I hold myself that the satisfaction of any desire is *pro tanto* good; and that an equal regard for all the moments of our conscious experience—so far, at least, as the mere difference of their position in time is concerned—is an essential characteristic of rational conduct. I cannot, however, admit the fact,

[1] Cf. *ante*, ch. iii. § 3.

that a man does not afterwards feel for the consequences of an action aversion strong enough to cause him to regret it, to be a complete proof that he has acted for his 'good on the whole.' Nor do I think that this is in accordance with common sense: for we commonly reckon it among the worst consequences of some kinds of conduct that they alter men's tendencies to desire, and make them desire their lesser good more than their greater: and we think it all the worse for a man—even in this world—if he is never roused out of such a condition and lives till death the life of a contented pig, when he might have been something better. To avoid this objection, it would have to be said that a man's "true good" is what he would desire on the whole if all the consequences of all the different lines of conduct open to him were actually exercising on him an impulsive force proportioned to the desires or aversions which they would excite if actually experienced. So far as I can conceive this hypothetical object of desire, I am not prepared to deny that it would be 'desirable' in the sense which I give to the term: but such a hypothetical composition of impulsive forces involves so elaborate and difficult a conception, that it is surely paradoxical to say that this is what we *mean* when we talk of a man's 'good on the whole.'

Different meanings, again, are given to the term 'good' by writers who speak of the object—not of Desire generally but—either (1) of the desire that prevails in an act of deliberate purpose, or (2) of any desire that takes effect in conscious action whether impulsive or deliberate, as the 'apparent good' of the agent[1]. The adoption, however, of either of these interpretations implies a denial of the psychological proposition maintained by me in previous chapters[2]; viz. that men not only impulsively but even deliberately yield to appetite or passion in conscious opposition to reason, and choose to act in a way which they believe while choosing will be 'worse' for them on the whole. And this statement seems to me to be borne out by the common experience of reflective moral persons, in modern Christian societies.

[1] The latter of these statements gives what I understand to be the view of Green (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book II. Ch. ii.).

[2] Cf. Ch. IV. § 1 and Ch. V. § 1.

I cannot, then, define the ultimately good or desirable otherwise than by saying that it is that of which we should desire the existence if our desires were in harmony with reason, or (to put it otherwise) with an ideal standard from which our actual desires are found more or less to diverge. Let us turn now to the special application of the term to conduct in which, according to the Intuitional view, conduct is judged to be good, or desirable in itself independently of its consequences. This judgment differs, as I have said, from the judgment that such conduct is 'right,' in so far as it does not involve a definite precept to perform it; since it still leaves it an open question whether this good is the greatest good that we can under the circumstances obtain. It differs further, as we may now observe, in so far as good or excellent actions are not implied to be in our power in the same strict sense as 'right' actions—any more than any other good things: and in fact there are many excellences of behaviour which we cannot attain by any effort of will, at least directly and at the moment: hence we often feel that the recognition of goodness in the conduct of others does not carry with it a clear precept to do likewise, but rather

> the vague desire
> That stirs an imitative will.

In so far as this is the case, Goodness of Conduct becomes an ulterior end, the attainment of which lies outside and beyond the range of immediate volition.

§ 4. It remains to consider by what standard the value of conduct, thus intuitively judged to be good in itself, is to be coordinated and compared with that of other good things. I shall not now attempt to establish such a standard; but a little reflection may enable us to limit considerably the range of objects for which it is required. At first sight, indeed, it may seem that there are many other things regarded as intrinsically desirable; and even that the notion of Ultimate Good is more ordinarily applied to a variety of comparatively permanent results, material or otherwise, than it is to virtuous actions or pleasant feelings. If, however, we consider carefully such permanent results as are commonly judged to be good, other than qualities of human beings, mental or bodily, we find nothing

that, on reflection, appears to possess this quality of goodness out of relation to human beings, or at least to some consciousness or feeling.

(End of chapter.) We may conclude then, that if there be any ultimate permanent Good to be sought by man it can only be the Goodness, Perfection, or Excellence of Human Existence. How far this notion includes more than Virtue, what its precise relation to Pleasure is, and to what method we shall be logically led if we accept it as fundamental, are questions which we shall more conveniently discuss after the detailed examination of these two other notions, in which we shall be engaged in the two following Books.

NOTE. In this chapter I have refrained from discussing the distinction and relation between 'Good' taken absolutely or universally, and the Good of this or that individual; since this discussion, in my view, is more conveniently placed in chap. xiii. of Book III. ('Philosophical Intuitionism').

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRINCIPLE AND METHOD OF EGOISM.

§ 1. THE object of the present Book is to examine the method of determining reasonable conduct which has been already defined in outline under the name of Egoism. It is, perhaps, a sufficient reason for considering this first of the three methods with which this treatise is principally concerned, that there seems to be more tendency to agreement among reflective persons as to the reasonableness of its fundamental principle, than exists in the case either of Intuitionism or of that Universalistic Hedonism to which I propose to restrict the name of Utilitarianism.

...(p. 109, l. 4.) By Egoism we mean Egoistic Hedonism, a system that fixes as the reasonable ultimate end of each individual's action his own greatest possible Happiness: and by 'greatest Happiness,' again, we must definitely understand the greatest possible amount of pleasure[1]; or more strictly, as pains have to be balanced against pleasures, the greatest possible surplus of pleasure over pain—the two terms being used, with equally comprehensive meanings, to include respectively all kinds of agreeable and disagreeable feelings.... We must therefore understand by an Egoist a man who when two or more courses of action are open to him, represents to himself as accurately as he can the amounts of pleasure and pain that

[1] This is manifestly the interpretation implicitly given to the term by Butler and Clarke—and, I believe, by all English writers on Morals until very recently.

are likely to result from each, and chooses the one which he thinks will yield him the greatest surplus of pleasure over pain.

§ 2. It must however be pointed out that the adoption of the fundamental *principle* of Egoism, as just explained, by no means necessarily implies the ordinary empirical method of seeking one's own pleasure or happiness... but since it is generally admitted that pleasures and pains are facts of ordinary experience, of which the quantity and quality are only directly known, by reflection or introspection, to the individual who experiences them; it would seem that—at any rate—the obvious method of Egoistic Hedonism is that which we may call Empirical-reflective: and it is this I conceive that is commonly used in egoistic deliberation.

CHAPTER II.

EMPIRICAL HEDONISM.

§ 1. THE first and most fundamental assumption, involved not only in the empirical method of Egoistic Hedonism, but in the very conception of 'Greatest Happiness' as an end of action, is the commensurability of Pleasures and Pains. By this I mean that we must assume the pleasures sought and the pains shunned to have determinate quantitative relations to each other; for otherwise they cannot be conceived as possible elements of a total of which we are to seek the maximum. It is not absolutely necessary to exclude the supposition that there are some kinds of pleasure so much more pleasant than others, that the smallest conceivable amount of the former would outweigh the greatest conceivable amount of the latter; since, if this were ascertained to be the case, the only result would be that any hedonistic calculation involving pleasures of the former class might be simplified by treating those of the latter class as practically non-existent. And we find it sometimes asserted by persons of enthusiastic and passionate temperament, that there are feelings so exquisitely delightful, that one moment of their rapture is preferable to an eternity of agreeable consciousness of an inferior kind. These assertions, however, are perhaps consciously hyperbolical, and not intended to be taken as scientific statements: but in the case of pain, it has been deliberately maintained by a thoughtful and subtle writer[1], with a view to important practical conclusions, that "torture" so extreme as to be "incommensurable with moderate pain" is an

[1] Mr E. Gurney, in the *Fortnightly Review* for December 1881.

actual fact of experience. This doctrine, however, does not correspond to my own experience; nor does it appear to me to be supported by the common sense of mankind:—at least I do not find, in the practical forethought of persons noted for caution, any recognition of the danger of agony such that, in order to avoid the smallest extra risk of it, the greatest conceivable amount of moderate pain should reasonably be incurred. I think that in all ordinary prudential reasoning, at any rate, the assumption is implicitly made that all the pleasures and pains that man can experience bear a finite ratio to each other in respect of pleasantness....

If pleasures, then, can be arranged in a scale, as greater or less in some finite degree; we are naturally led to the assumption of a hedonistic zero, or perfectly neutral feeling, as a point from which the positive quantity of pleasures may be measured. And this latter assumption emerges still more clearly when we consider the comparison and balancing of pleasures with pains, which Hedonism necessarily involves. For pain must be reckoned as the negative quantity of pleasure, to be balanced against and subtracted from the positive in estimating happiness on the whole; we must therefore conceive, as at least ideally possible, a point of transition in consciousness at which we pass from the positive to the negative.

...(p. 113, l. 6.) So long as health is retained, and pain and irksome toil banished, the mere sense of living and performing the ordinary habitual functions of life is a continual source of moderate pleasures.

§ 2. This last observation will have shewn the desirability of getting a more precise notion of pleasure and pain than we have yet attained. To avoid prolixity, I shall for the future, in hedonistic discussions, speak usually of pleasure only, assuming that pain may be regarded as the negative quantity of pleasure, and that accordingly any statements made with respect to the former may be at once applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the latter.

The equivalent phrase for Pleasure, according to Mr Spencer[1], is "a feeling which we seek to bring into consciousness and retain there;" and I have already (ch. iv. § 2) ac-

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, ch. ix. § 125.

cepted this definition as adequate for purposes of distinction. But it is not therefore clear that it is exactly appropriate for purposes of quantitative comparison of pleasures; and that we can say universally that pleasures are greater and less exactly in proportion as they exercise more or less influence in stimulating the will to actions tending to sustain or produce them. It would be admitted, indeed, by all that the *ideas* of absent pleasures do not stimulate us to aim at their realization in strict proportion to their intensity when actually felt: but it may still be thought that, as Mr Bain says, "pleasure and pain, *in the actual or real experience*, are to be held as identical with motive power." By this Mr Bain does not, of course, mean that all pleasures when actually felt actually stimulate to exertion of some kind; since this is obviously not true of the pleasures of repose, a warm bath, &c. The stimulus must in such cases be understood to be latent and potential; only becoming actual when action is required to prevent the cessation or diminution of the pleasure. But even when thus qualified, Mr Bain's statement does not appear to me to be altogether in accordance with experience. He himself contrasts the "disproportionate strain of active powers in one direction," to which "any sudden and great delight may give rise," with the "proper frame of mind under delight," which is "to inspire no endeavours except what the charm of the moment justifies[1]." And he elsewhere explains that "our pleasurable emotions are all liable to detain the mind unduly," through the "atmosphere of excitement" with which they are surrounded, carrying the mind "beyond the estimate of pleasure and pain, to the state named 'passion,'" in which a man is not "moved solely by the strict value of the pleasure," but also by "the engrossing power of the excitement[2]." It is true that in all such cases[3] Mr Bain seems to hold that the stimulus of the

[1] *The Emotions and the Will*, 3rd Edition, p. 392.

[2] *Mental and Moral Science*, Book IV. ch. iv. § 4.

[3] It ought to be observed, however, that in another work (*The Senses and the Intellect*, Book I. § 12) Mr Bain distinguishes certain kinds of pleasure as "unvolitional" or "serene" in contrast with those that he terms "volitional". But as this passage does not appear in subsequent editions, I am not sure that it represents his present view.

"mere excitement"—which he identifies with the "tendency of a fixed idea to act itself out,"—does not operate[1] when the pleasure is actually felt, but only when it is represented in idea as an object to be aimed at. I do not, however, find in my own experience any support for this latter view: it seems to me that exciting pleasures are liable to exercise, even when actually felt, a volitional stimulus out of proportion to their intensity as pleasures[2]. If this be so, it is obviously to a certain extent inexact to define pleasure, *for purposes of measurement*, as the kind of feeling that we seek to retain in consciousness. Shall we then say that there is a measurable quality of feeling expressed by the word "pleasure", which is independent of its relation to volition, and strictly undefinable from its simplicity?—like the quality of feeling expressed by "sweet", of which also we are conscious in varying degrees of intensity. This seems to be the view of some writers: but, for my own part, when the term is used in the more extended sense which I have adopted, to include the most refined and subtle intellectual and emotional gratifications, no less than the coarser and more definite sensual enjoyments, I can find no common quality in the feelings so designated except some relation to desire or volition. Hence, if it be admitted that we cannot define Pleasure, when we are considering its "strict value" for purposes of quantitative comparison, as the kind of feeling which we actually desire and aim at, it only remains to define it as that which, when experienced by intelligent beings, is implicitly apprehended as desirable or preferable. We thus recognize that the exact equation which is often assumed to exist between volitional stimulus and intensity of pleasure is merely a normal or typical relation, from which the actual relation between the two psychical facts is liable more or less to diverge.

[1] He does not, however, say more than that "the disturbances and anomalies of the will *scarcely* begin to tell in the actual feeling." *Mental and Moral Science*, Book IV. ch. v. § 4.

[2] Mr Bain himself seems to recognize this in a passage where he says (*Mental and Moral Science*, Book III. ch. i. § 8) that "acute pleasures and pains stimulate the will perhaps more strongly than an equivalent stimulation of the massive kind."

(p. 114, l. 23.)

This contradiction may, I think, be avoided as follows. As I have already said, it will be generally admitted that the pleasantness of a feeling is only directly cognizable by the individual who feels it at the time of feeling it. Thus, though others may know (on general grounds) that by preferring this gratification to some other which he might hereafter enjoy he will obtain less happiness on the whole, and so far may rightly pronounce his choice mistaken; and though (as I shall presently argue), in so far as any estimate of pleasantness involves comparison with feelings only represented in idea, it is liable to be erroneous through imperfections in the representation; still, no one is in a position to controvert the preference of the sentient individual, so far as the quality of the present feeling alone is concerned....certainly if we in thought distinguish any feeling from all its circumstances and conditions (and also from all its effects on the subsequent feelings of the same individual or of others) and contemplate it merely as the transient feeling of a single subject; it seems impossible to find in it any other preferable quality than that which we call its pleasantness, the degree of which is only cognizable directly by the sentient individual[1].

It should be observed that if this definition of pleasure be accepted, the fundamental proposition of ethical Hedonism has

[1] In his more recent *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Green again says that "pleasure (in distinction from the facts conditioning it) is not an object of the understanding." To which it seems sufficient to answer that in several parts of this very treatise, arguments respecting pleasure are carried on which are only intelligible if this distinction between pleasure and the facts conditioning it is thoroughly grasped and steadily contemplated by the understanding: and we may add that the distinction is carried by Green to a degree of subtlety far beyond that which ordinary Hedonism requires—as (*e.g.*) when 'pleasure' is distinguished from the 'satisfaction' involved in the consciousness of attainment (p. 166). Nor are these arguments merely critical and negative in respect of the possibility of measuring pleasure: we find for instance that Green has no doubt that certain measures "needed in order to supply conditions favourable to good character, tend also to make life *more pleasant on the whole*" (p. 365); and again that "it is easy to show that *an overbalance of pain would on the whole result* to those capable of being affected by it" from the neglect of certain duties. In these cases it would seem that pleasure and pain, in distinction from the facts conditioning them, being conceived capable—in whatever degree—of quantitative measurement, cannot but be "objects of the understanding."

chiefly a negative significance; for, it being assumed in the definition of pleasure that it is 'desirable,' the statement that 'Pleasure is the ultimate Good' is only important so far as it affirms that nothing is ultimately desirable except desirable feeling. For the same reason it may be made an objection to the definition that it could not be accepted by a moralist of stoical turn, who while recognizing pleasure as a fact refused to recognize it as in any degree ultimately desirable. I do not however think that such a moralist need deny that an implied judgment that a feeling is *per se* desirable is inseparably connected with its recognition as pleasure; though he might hold that sound philosophy shews the illusoriness of such judgments. This, in fact, seems to have been substantially the view of the Stoic school[1].

However this may be, I conceive that the preference which pure Hedonism regards as ultimately rational, should be defined as the preference of feeling valued merely as feeling, according to the estimate implicitly or explicitly made by the sentient individual at the time of feeling it; without any regard to the conditions and relations under which it arises. Accordingly we may state as the fundamental assumption of what I have called Quantitative Hedonism,—implied in the adoption of "greatest surplus of pleasure over pain" as the ultimate end —that all pleasure and pains, estimated merely as feelings, have definite degrees of desirability, positive or negative; observing further, that the empirical method of Hedonism can

[1] A further objection may perhaps be taken to the definition, on the score of its inconsistency with statements made in the preceding book. It may be said that since the term desirable was there explained to mean that which 'ought' to be desired or aimed at, a proposition affirming desirability must come within the class of ethical judgments which has before been said to be 'objective': yet how, it may be asked, can a judgment be objective when it relates to what is only directly cognizable by a single subject? I admit that the application of the term "objective" to such judgments would be somewhat confusing, and I have therefore avoided it; but in applying the term to ethical propositions in general I was careful to explain it as importing only that such propositions could not be contradicted without error on one side or the other: and this remains true of propositions respecting the desirability of feelings, even if the judgment of the sentient individual be taken as incontrovertible. Some further discussion of the terms 'subjective' and 'objective', in their ethical application will be found in the following book (ch. i. and ch. xiv.).

only be applied so far as we assume that these degrees of desirability are definitely given in our experience of pleasure and pain.

NOTE.—It is sometimes thought to be a necessary assumption of Hedonists that a surplus of pleasure over pain is actually attainable by human beings: a proposition which an extreme pessimist would deny. But the conclusion that life is always on the whole painful would not prove it to be unreasonable for a man to aim ultimately at minimizing pain, if this is still admitted to be possible; though it would, no doubt, drive a rational egoist to immediate suicide.

CHAPTER III.

EMPIRICAL HEDONISM CONTINUED.

The order of exposition in this chapter has been considerably altered. The main part of what was § 5 in the 2nd edition has become the latter part of § 2 of this edition; what was § 4—substantially—now stands as § 3; the old § 2 is now divided into § 4 and § 5, and the old § 3, with some transposition of paragraphs, into § 6 and § 7.

§ 1 (p. 118, l. 37). If then we confine our attention, for the present, to the objections tending to shew the intrinsic impracticability of Hedonism as a rational method, we find ourselves, in the first place, met by a criticism which, if valid at all, must be admitted to be decisive. It has been maintained, by one of the leading writers of a school which appears to have not a few adherents at the present time, that the phrase "greatest possible sum of pleasures" is "intrinsically "unmeaning" and "nonsense" because "pleasant feelings are "not quantities to be added[1]." By this assertion, however, it is not "intended to deny that there may be in fact such "a thing as a desire for a sum or contemplated series of "pleasures, or that a man may be so affected by it as to "judge that some particular desire should not be gratified;" but merely, as I understand, that a sum of pleasures cannot be possessed or enjoyed *as a sum;* that is, all at once. Each

[1] The writer to whom I refer is the late Professor T. H. Green, from whose posthumous *Prolegomena to Ethics* I have already more than once quoted. The school which he represents has been on various occasions designated by different critics (including myself) as 'Hegelian', 'Transcendentalist', and 'Neokantian'; but no one of these terms appears to be altogether satisfactory to the persons to whom it is applied.

pleasure, we are told, "is over before the other is enjoyed:" a man "cannot accumulate pleasures; if he experiences a "pleasure every hour for the next 50 years, he will have "no more in possession, and will be in no better state, than "if he is pleased the next minute and then comes to an "end[1]." But unless the transiency of pleasure diminishes its pleasantness—which the writer from whom I am quoting does not expressly maintain—I cannot see that the possibility of realizing the hedonistic end is at all affected by the necessity of realizing it in successive parts. The argument seems to assume that by an "end" must be meant a goal or consummation, which, after gradually drawing nearer to it, we reach all at once: but this is not, I conceive, the sense in which the word is ordinarily understood by ethical writers: and certainly all that I mean by it is an object of rational aim—whether attained in successive parts or not—which is not sought as a means to the attainment of any ulterior object, but for itself. And so long as any one's prospective balance of pleasure over pain admits of being made greater or less by immediate action in one way or another, there seems no reason why 'Maximum Happiness' should not provide as serviceable a criterion of conduct as any 'chief good' capable of being possessed all at once, or in some way independently of the condition of time.

§ 2. If, however, it be maintained, that the consciousness of the transiency of pleasure either makes it less pleasant at the time or causes a subsequent pain, and that the deliberate and systematic pursuit of pleasure tends to intensify this consciousness; the proposition, if borne out by experience, would certainly constitute a relevant objection to the method of Egoistic Hedonism. And this view would seem to be in the mind of the writer above quoted (though it is nowhere clearly put forward): since he affirms that it is "impossible that self-satisfaction should be found in any "succession of pleasures[2]"; as self-satisfaction being "satisfaction "for a self that abides and contemplates itself as abiding" must be at least "relatively permanent[3]:" and it is, I suppose, implied

[1] Cf. *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book IV. ch. iv. p. 401; and *Mind*, No. VI. pp. 267—9; also the Introduction to Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature*, § 7.

[2] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 183.

[3] *l. c.* p. 248.

that the disappointment of the Hedonist, who fails to find self-satisfaction where he seeks for it, is attended with pain or loss of pleasure[1]. If this be so, and if the self-satisfaction thus missed can be obtained by the resolute adoption of some other principle of action, it would certainly seem that the systematic pursuit of pleasure is in some danger of defeating itself: it is therefore important to consider carefully how far this is really the case.

So far as my own experience goes, it does not appear to me that the mere transiency of pleasures is a serious source of discontent, so long as one has a fair prospect of having as much pleasure in the future as in the past—or even so long as the life before one has any substantial amount of pleasure to offer. But I do not doubt that an important element of happiness, for all or most men, is derived from the consciousness of possessing "relatively permanent" sources of pleasure—whether external, as wealth, status, family, friends; or internal, as knowledge, culture, self-control, and lively interest in the wellbeing of fairly prosperous persons or institutions. This, however, does not, in my opinion, constitute an objection to Hedonism: it rather seems obvious, from the hedonistic point of view, that "as soon "as intelligence discovers that there are fixed objects, permanent "sources of pleasure, and large groups of enduring interests, "which yield a variety of recurring enjoyments, the rational "will, preferring the greater to the less, will unfailingly devote "its energies to the pursuit of these[2]." It may be replied that if these permanent sources of pleasure are sought merely as a means to the hedonistic end, they will not afford the happiness for which they are sought. With this I to a great extent agree; but I think that if the normal complexity of our impulses be duly taken into account, this statement will be found not to militate against the adoption of Hedonism, but merely to signalize a danger against which the Hedonist has to guard. In a previous chapter[3] I have, after Butler, laid stress on the difference between impulses that are, strictly speaking, directed

[1] I cannot state this positively, because Green expressly distinguishes self-satisfaction from pleasure, and does not expressly affirm that its absence is attended by pain.

[2] Sully, *Pessimism*, ch. xi. p. 282.

[3] Book I. ch. iv.

towards pleasure, and 'extra-regarding' impulses which do not aim at pleasure, though much, perhaps most, of our pleasure consists in the gratification of these latter, and therefore depends upon their existence. I there argued that in many cases the two kinds of impulse are so far incompatible that they do not easily coexist in the same moment of consciousness. I added, however, that in the ordinary condition of our activity the incompatibility is only momentary, and does not prevent a real harmony from being attained by a sort of alternating rhythm of the two impulses in consciousness. Still it seems undeniable that this harmony is liable to be disturbed; and that while on the one hand individuals may and do sacrifice their greatest apparent happiness to the gratification of some imperious particular desire; so on the other hand, self-love is liable to engross the mind to a degree incompatible with a healthy and vigorous outflow of those "disinterested" impulses towards particular objects, the pre-existence of which is necessary to the attainment, in any high degree, of the happiness at which self-love aims. I should not, however, infer from this that the pursuit of pleasure is necessarily self-defeating and futile; but merely that the principle of Egoistic Hedonism when applied with a due knowledge of the laws of human nature, is practically self-limiting; *i. e.* that a rational method of attaining the end at which it aims requires that we should to some extent put it out of sight and not directly aim at it. I have before spoken of this conclusion as the 'Fundamental Paradox of Egoistic Hedonism'; but though it presents itself as a paradox, there does not seem to be any difficulty in its practical realization, when once the danger indicated is clearly seen....

It is true that, as our desires cannot ordinarily be produced by an effort of will—though they can to some extent be repressed by it—if we started with no impulse except the desire of pleasure, it might seem difficult to execute the practical paradox of attaining pleasure by aiming at something else. (The rest substantially as in § 5 of Ed. II.)

§ 3. There is, however, another way in which the habit of mind necessarily resulting from the continual practice of hedonistic comparison is sometimes thought to be unfavourable to the attainment of the hedonistic end: from a supposed incom-

patibility between the habit of reflectively observing and examining pleasure, and the capacity for experiencing pleasure in normal fulness and intensity. And it certainly seems important to consider what effect the continual attention to our pleasures, in order to observe their different degrees, is likely to have on these feelings themselves. (The rest substantially as in § 4 of Ed. II. till the last paragraph.)

I conclude, then, that there is a real danger of diminishing pleasure by the attempt to observe and estimate it. But the danger seems only to arise in the case of very intense pleasures, and only if the attempt is made at the moment of actual enjoyment; and since the most delightful periods of life have frequently recurring intervals of nearly neutral feeling, in which the pleasures immediately past may be compared and estimated without any such detriment, I do not regard the objection founded on this danger as particularly important.

§ 4. More serious, in my opinion, are the objections urged against the possibility of performing, with definite and trustworthy results, the comprehensive and methodical comparison of pleasures and pains which the adoption of the Hedonistic criterion involves. It is not, of course, denied that it is natural and habitual to all or most men to compare pleasures and pains in respect of their intensity: that (*e. g.*) when we pass from one state of consciousness to another, or when in any way we are led to recall a state long past, we often pronounce unhesitatingly that the present state is more or less pleasant than the past: that we declare some pleasant experiences to have been "worth," and others "not worth," the trouble it took to obtain them, or the pain that followed them; and so forth. (The rest substantially as in § 2 of Ed. II.)

(p. 120, l. 20.) This imagination, so far as it involves conscious inference, seems to be chiefly determined by our own experience of past pleasures, which are usually recalled generically, or in large aggregates, though sometimes particular instances of important single pleasures occur to us as definitely remembered: but partly, too, we are influenced by the experience of others sympathetically appropriated.

(p. 121, l. 9.) We have then to consider whether a process of this kind can be satisfactorily developed; a question

which seems to resolve itself into the three following; First, how far can each of us estimate accurately his own past experience of pleasures and pains? secondly, how far can this knowledge of the past enable him to forecast, with any certainty, the greatest happiness within his reach in the future? thirdly, how far can he appropriate, for the purposes of such forecasts, the past experience of others?

...Now for my own part, when I reflect on my pleasures and pains, and endeavour to compare them in respect of intensity, it seems to me that the comparative judgments which I pass are by no means clear and definite, even taking each separately in its simplest form:—whether the comparison is made at the moment of experiencing one of the pleasures, or between two states of consciousness recalled in imagination.... And perhaps it is still more difficult to compare pure pleasures with pure pains, and to say how much of the one kind of feeling we consider to be exactly balanced by a given amount of the other when they do not occur simultaneously: while an estimate of simultaneous feelings is, as we have seen, generally unsatisfactory from the mutual interference of their respective causes.

§ 5. But again if these judgments are not clear and definite, still less are they consistent. I do not now mean that one man's estimate of the value of any kind of pleasures differs from another's: for we have assumed each sentient individual to be the final judge of the pleasantness and painfulness of his own feelings.

(p. 123, l. 11.) For example, I find it at this moment much more easy to recall the discomfort of expectancy which preceded sea-sickness than the pain of the actual nausea: although I infer—from the recollection of judgments passed at the time—that the former pain was trifling compared with the latter.

...(p. 124, l. 2.) But most persons are liable to be thrown by the prospect of certain pains into the state of passionate aversion which we call fear; and thereby led to estimate such pains as worse than they would be judged to be in a calmer mood....

§ 6. These considerations place in a clearer light the extent of the fundamental assumption of Empirical Quantitative

Hedonism as stated in the preceding chapter: viz. (1) that our pleasures and pains, considered merely as feelings, have each a definite degree of desirability or undesirability: and (2) that this degree is empirically cognizable. In the first place, if we admit, as was said, that pleasure only exists as it is felt, it is hard to see how the degree of any pleasure can be proved to have any real existence. For the pleasure only has the degree as compared with other feelings, of the same or some different kind; but, generally speaking, since this comparison can only be made in imagination, it can only yield the hypothetical result that if certain feelings could be felt together, precisely as they have been felt separately, one would be found more or less desirable than the other in some definite ratio. What adequate ground, then, have we for regarding this imaginary result as a valid representation of reality? We can only answer that the general belief in its validity seems to be irresistibly suggested in reflection on experience, and—though not, strictly speaking, proved—remains at any rate uncontradicted by experience.

But secondly, granting that each of our pleasures and pains has really a definite degree of pleasantness and painfulness; the question still remains whether we have actually any means of accurately knowing these degrees. Is there any reason to suppose that the mind is ever in such a state as to be a perfectly neutral and colourless medium for imagining all kinds of pleasures? Experience certainly shews us the frequent occurrence of moods in which we have an apparent bias for or against a particular kind of feeling. Is it not probable that there is always some bias of this kind? that we are always more in tune for some pleasures, more sensitive to some pains, than we are to others? Here again it must, I think, be admitted that the exact cognition of the place of each of our feelings in a scale of desirability, measured positively and negatively from a zero of perfect indifference, is at best an ideal to which we can never tell how closely we approximate. But in the variations of our judgment and the disappointment of our expectations we have experience of errors of which we can trace the causes, and allow for them, at least roughly; correcting in thought the defects of imagination. And since what

we require for practical guidance is to estimate not individual past experiences, but the value of a kind of pleasure or pain, as obtained under certain circumstances or conditions; we can to some extent diminish the chance of error in this estimate by making a number of observations and imaginative comparisons, at different times and in different moods. In so far as these agree we may legitimately feel an increased confidence in the result: and in so far as they differ, we can at least reduce our possible error by striking an average between the different estimates. It will be evident, however, after all that has been said, that such a method as this cannot be expected to yield more than a rough approximation to the supposed truth.

[Here the first paragraph from p. 128 is placed in the new edition: after which comes the following.]

It may be said, however, that no one, in making such a forecast, can or does rely entirely on his own experience: when endeavouring to estimate the probable effect upon his happiness of new circumstances and influences, untried rules of conduct and fashions of life, he inevitably argues from the experience of others. And it is no doubt true that the most important and anxious deliberations in a man's life, and those in which he most strongly feels the need of making the hedonistic calculation as complete and exact as possible, generally concern changes of conduct recommended solely or chiefly by an inference from the advantages that other men have derived from similar changes. But a new source of error is thus introduced; for this inference proceeds on the assumption of a similarity of nature among human beings....

CHAPTER IV.

OBJECTIVE HEDONISM AND COMMON SENSE.

§ 1. BEFORE we examine those methods of seeking one's own happiness which are more remote from the empirical, inasmuch as they change fundamentally the direction of rational aim, and depend on assumptions which carry us into different lines of thought; it will be well to consider how far we can avoid the difficulties and uncertainties of the method of reflective comparison, by relying on the current opinions and accepted estimates of the value of different objects commonly sought as sources of pleasure. It certainly seems more natural to men, at least in the main plan and ordering of their lives, to seek and consciously estimate the objective conditions and sources of happiness, rather than happiness itself: and it may plausibly be said that by relying on such estimates of objects we avoid the difficulties that beset the introspective method of comparing feelings: and that the common opinions as to the value of different sources of pleasure express the net result of the combined experience of mankind from generation to generation; in which the divergences due to the limitations of each individual's experience, and to the differently tinged moods in which different estimates have been taken, have balanced and neutralized each other and so disappeared.

And no doubt many persons are guided more by such current opinions in the direction of their egoistic aims than by any hedonistic calculations of their own....

(p. 136 last line but one...) In any case, therefore, each person will have to correct the estimate of common opinion by the results of his own experience in order to obtain from it

trustworthy guidance for his own conduct: and this process of correction, it would seem, must be involved in all the difficulties from which we are trying to escape.

(p. 137, l. 26). But whether or not they have originally sprung altogether from experiences of pleasure, they are certainly not at any period of our life exactly in harmony with the results of such experiences...men are apt to think desirable what they strongly desire, whether or not they have found it conducive to happiness on the whole: and so the common opinion will tend to represent a compromise between the average force of desires and the average experience of the consequences of gratifying them....

§ 2. But, even if we had no doubt on general grounds that Common Sense would prove our best guide in the pursuit of happiness, we should still be perplexed by finding its utterances on this topic very deficient in clearness and consistency. I do not merely mean that they are different in different ages and countries:—that we might explain as due to variations in the general conditions of human life—but that serious conflicts and ambiguities are found if we consider only the current common sense of our own age and country. We may perhaps make a list of sources of happiness apparently recommended by an overwhelming *consensus* of current opinion: as health, wealth, fame and social position, power, the enjoyment of society, especially family society, congenial occupation and amusement, including the gratification, in some form, of curiosity, and of those more refined, partly sensual, partly emotional, susceptibilities which we call æsthetic[1]....

(p. 141, last line but one)... Certainly whenever any part of civilized society is in such a state that men can freely indulge these passions and at the same time avoid the burden of a family, without any serious fear of social disapprobation, celibacy tends to become common: it has even become so common as to excite the grave anxiety of legislators. And though such conduct has always been disapproved by common sense, it seems to have been rather condemned as anti-social than as imprudent.

[1] The consideration of the importance of Morality as a scurce of happiness is reserved for the next chapter.

(p. 143, l. 19). Catholically authoritative beliefs respecting the conditions of happiness.

(Additional concluding paragraph.) The question then remains, whether any general theory can be attained of the causes of pleasure and pain so certain and practically applicable that we may by its aid rise above the ambiguities and inconsistencies of common or sectarian opinion, no less than the shortcomings of the empirical-reflective method, and establish the Hedonistic art of life on a thoroughly scientific basis. To the consideration of this question I shall proceed in the next chapter but one: but before entering upon it, I wish to examine carefully a common belief as to the means of attaining happiness which—though it hardly claims to rest upon a scientific basis—is yet generally conceived by those who hold it to have a higher degree of certainty than ordinary current opinions. This is the belief that a man will attain the greatest happiness open to him by the performance of his Duty as commonly recognized and prescribed—except so far as he may deviate from this standard in obedience to a truer conception of the conduct by which universal good is to be realized or promoted[1]. The special importance of this opinion to a writer on Morals renders it desirable to reserve our discussion of it for a separate chapter.

[1] In the following chapter I have not entered into any particular consideration of the case in which the individual's conscience is definitely in conflict with the general moral consciousness of his age and country: because, though it is commonly held to be a man's duty always to obey the dictates of his own conscience, even at the risk of error, it can hardly be said to be a current opinion that he will always attain the greatest happiness open to him by conforming to the dictates of his conscience even when it conflicts with received morality.

CHAPTER V.

HAPPINESS AND DUTY.

§ 1. THE belief in the connexion of happiness with Duty is one to which we find a general tendency among civilized men, at least after a certain stage in civilisation has been reached. But it is doubtful whether it would be affirmed, among ourselves, as a generalization from experience....

(p. 147, l. 19)... It appears therefore desirable to subject this opinion to a careful and impartial examination. In conducting this examination, at the present stage of our enquiry, we shall have to use the received notions of Duty without further definition or analysis: but it is commonly assumed by those whose view we are to examine that these conceptions—as they are found in the moral consciousness of ordinary well-meaning persons—are at least approximately valid and trustworthy; and the preceding chapters will have fully shewn that the generalizations of Hedonism must be established, if at all, by large considerations and decisive preponderances, and that it would be idle in considering a question of this kind to take account of slight differences, and to pretend to weigh in our mental scales comparatively small portions of happiness.

§ 2. Accepting, then, the common division[1] of duties into self-regarding and social,... We may therefore confine our attention to the social department of Duty, and consider whether by observing the moral rules that prescribe certain modes of

[1] Whatever modifications of this division may afterwards appear to be necessary (cf. Bk. III. c. 2) will not, I think, tend to invalidate the conclusions of the present chapter.

behaviour towards others we shall always tend to secure the greatest balance of happiness to ourselves.

(p. 148, l. 31).... This classification is important, not merely from the intrinsic differences of the sanctions themselves but also because the systems of rules to which they are respectively attached may be mutually conflicting. The Positive Morality of any community—as no Intuitionist would deny—undergoes development, and is thus subject to changes which affect the consciences of the few before they are accepted by the many; so that the rules at any time sustained by the strongest social sanctions, may not only fall short of, but even clash with, the intuitions of those members of the community who have most moral insight. For similar reasons Law and Positive Morality may be at variance, in details. For though a law could not long exist, which it was universally thought wrong to obey; there may easily be laws commanding conduct that is considered immoral by some more or less enlightened minority of the community, some sect or party that has a public opinion of its own....

(p. 149, l. 36)... But even if we put these cases out of sight, it still seems clear that the external sanctions of morality alone are not always sufficient to render immoral conduct also imprudent. I hardly need occupy time in showing that this is the case with legal sanctions, considered by themselves. We must indeed admit that in an even tolerably well-ordered society, *i.e.* in an ordinary civilized community in its normal condition, all serious open violation of law is contrary to prudence, unless it is an incident in a successful process of violent revolution: and further, that violent revolutions would very rarely—perhaps never—be made by a combination of persons, perfectly under the control of enlightened self-love; on account of the general and widespread destruction of security and of other means of happiness which such disturbances inevitably involve. Still, so long as actual human beings are not all rational egoists, such times of disorder will be liable to occur: and we cannot say that *under existing circumstances* it is a clear universal precept of Rational Self-love that a man should "seek peace and ensue it."... In short, though we may admit that a society composed entirely of rational egoists would, when

once organized, be in a stable and orderly condition, it does not follow that the adoption of rational egoism by a minority of thoughtful persons would tend to bring about this result in any existing community.

§ 3. Let us proceed, then, to consider how far the social sanction in such cases supplies the defects of the legal. No doubt the hope of praise and liking and services from one's fellow-men, and the fear of forfeiting these and incurring instead blame, aversion, refusal of aid, and social exclusion, are considerations often important enough to determine the rational egoist to law-observance, even in default of adequate legal penalties. Still these sanctions are liable to fail just where the legal penalties are defective; social no less than legal penalties are evaded by secret crimes; and even in cases of the most clearly criminal revolutionary violence, the efficacy of the social sanction is apt to be seriously impaired by the party spirit enlisted on the side of the criminal.... Disesteem is only expressed by a portion of the community: and its utterance is often drowned in the loud-voiced applause of the multitude whose admiration is largely independent of moral considerations.

It seems, then, impossible to affirm, without admitting important exceptions, that the external sanctions of men's legal duties will always be sufficient to identify them with their interests. And a corresponding assertion would be still more unwarranted in respect of that part of Positive Morality which extends beyond the sphere of Law. In saying this, I am fully sensible of the force of what may be called the Principle of Reciprocity.... (p. 153, l. 13)...On the principle of Reciprocity... while we may reasonably omit our duties to the poor and feeble, if we find a material advantage in so doing, unless they are able to excite the sympathy of persons who can harm us. Moreover, some vices, (as for example, many kinds of sensuality and extravagant luxury) do not inflict any immediate or obvious injury on any individual, though they tend in the long run to impair the general happiness: hence few persons find themselves strongly moved to check or punish this kind of mischief.

It may perhaps be said that in the last-mentioned cases the mere disrepute inevitably attaching to open immorality is suffi-

cient to render it always really imprudent. But I do not think that this will be seriously maintained by any one who has duly considered the variety of coexisting codes, which we everywhere find when we examine the actual condition of those bodies—or rather streams—of social opinion upon which the good or ill repute of individuals mainly depends.... More generally, we may almost say that in most civilized societies there are two different degrees of positive morality, both maintained in some sort by common consent; a stricter code being publicly taught and avowed, while a laxer set of rules is privately admitted as the only code which can be supported by social sanctions of any great force. By refusing to conform to the stricter code a man is often not liable to incur exclusion from social intercourse, or any material hindrance to professional advancement, or even serious dislike on the part of any of the persons whose society he will most naturally seek; and under such circumstances the mere loss of a certain amount of reputation is not likely to be felt as a very grave evil, except by persons peculiarly sensitive to the pleasures and pains of reputations. I admit the difficulty of giving a general estimate of the relative hedonistic value of this class of feelings, which no doubt varies very much with different individuals: but at any rate we may say that there are many men whose happiness does not appear to depend on the approbation or disapprobation of the moralist—and of mankind in general in so far as they support the moralist—to such an extent as to make it prudent for them to purchase this praise by any great sacrifice of other goods.

§ 4. We must conclude, then, that if the conduct prescribed to the individual by the highest morality of the community of which he is a member can be shewn to coincide with that to which Rational Self-love would prompt, it must be, in many cases, on the score of the internal sanctions only. In considering the force of these sanctions... (p. 155, l. 31), there are very strong grounds for believing that they are not sufficiently intense to turn the balance of prospective happiness always in favour of duty. This will hardly be denied if the question is raised in respect of isolated acts of duty. Let us take an extreme case, which is yet quite within the limits of experience. The call of duty has often impelled a soldier or other public

servant, or the adherent of a persecuted religion, to face certain and painful death, under circumstances where it might be avoided with little or no loss even of reputation. To prove such conduct always reasonable from an egoistic point of view, we have to assume that, in all cases where such a duty could exist and be recognized, the mere pain[1] that would follow on evasion of duty would be so great as to render the whole remainder of life hedonistically worthless.... (p. 156, l. 16) This practice had not made them love virtue so much as to prefer it, even under ordinary circumstances, to the sensual and other enjoyments that it excludes. It seems then absurd to suppose that, in the case of persons who have not developed and strengthened by habit their virtuous impulses, the pain that might afterwards result from resisting the call of duty would always be sufficient to neutralize all other sources of pleasure... (l. 25) Can we say that all, or even most, men are so constituted that the satisfactions of a good conscience are certain to repay them for such sacrifices, or that the pain and loss involved in them would certainly be outweighed by the remorse that would follow the refusal to make them?

Perhaps, however, so much as this has scarcely ever been expressly maintained. What Plato in his most famous treatise, and others since Plato, have rather tried to prove, is not that at any particular moment duty will be, to every one on whom it may devolve, productive of more happiness than any other course of conduct: but rather that it is every one's interest on the whole to choose the life of the virtuous man. But even this is very difficult even to render probable....

[1] Under the notion of 'moral pain' (or pleasure) I intend to include, in this argument, all pain (or pleasure) that is due to sympathy with the feelings of others. It is not convenient to enter, at this stage of the discussion, into a full discussion of the relation of Sympathy to Moral Sensibility: but I may say that it seems to me certain, on the one hand, that these two emotional susceptibilities are actually distinct in most minds, whatever they may have been originally; and on the other hand that sympathetic and strictly moral feelings are almost inextricably blended in the ordinary moral consciousness: so that, for the purposes of the present argument it is not of fundamental importance to draw a distinction between them. I have, however, thought it desirable to undertake a further examination of sympathy—as the internal sanction on which Utilitarians specially lay stress—in the concluding chapter of this treatise: to which, accordingly, the reader may refer.

(p. 159, l. 24)... On a careful consideration of the matter, it will appear, I think, that this abdication of self-love is not really a possible occurrence in the mind of a sane person, who still regards his own interest as the reasonable ultimate end of his actions. Such a man may, no doubt, resolve that he will devote himself unreservedly to the practice of virtue, without any particular consideration of what appears to him to be his interest: he may perform a series of acts in accordance with this resolution, and these may gradually form in him strong habitual tendencies to acts of a similar kind. But it does not seem that these habits of virtue can ever become so strong as to gain irresistible control over a sane and reasonable will. When the occasion comes on which virtue demands from such a man an extreme sacrifice —the imprudence of which must force itself upon his notice, however little he may be in the habit of weighing his own pleasures and pains—he must always be able to deliberate afresh, and to act (as far as the control of his will extends) without reference to his past actions. It may, however, be said that though an egoist retaining his belief in rational egoism cannot thus abandon his will to the sway of moral enthusiasm: still, supposing it possible for him to change his conviction and prefer duty to interest, or supposing we compare him with another man who makes this choice, we shall find that a gain in happiness on the whole results from this preference. It may be held that there is so great a difference in respect of pleasure between the emotions attendant upon such virtuous or quasi-virtuous habits as are compatible with adhesion to egoistic principles, and the raptures that attend the unreserved and passionate surrender of the soul to virtue; that it is really a man's interest—even with a view to the present life only—to obtain, if he can, the convictions that render this surrender possible, although under certain circumstances it must necessarily lead him to act in a manner which, considered by itself would be undoubtedly imprudent. This is certainly a tenable proposition and I am quite disposed to think it true of persons with specially refined moral sensibilities. But—though from the imperfections of the hedonistic calculus the proposition cannot in any case be conclusively disproved—it seems to me opposed to the broad results of experience, so far as the

great majority of mankind are concerned. As I have before said experience would lead us to suppose that most men are so constituted as to feel far more keenly pleasures (and pains) arising from some other source than the conscience; either from the gratifications of sense, or from the possession of power and fame, or from strong human affections, or from the pursuit of science, art, &c.; so that in many cases perhaps not even early training could have succeeded in giving to the moral feelings the requisite predominance: and certainly where this training has been wanting, it seems highly improbable that a mere change of ethical conviction could develope their moral susceptibilities so far as to make it clearly their earthly interest to resolve on facing all sacrifices for the fulfilment of duty.

CHAPTER VI.

OTHER METHODS OF EGOISTIC HEDONISM.

§ 1. In the preceding chapter we have seen reason to conclude that, while the habit of obeying recognized rules of duty is, under ordinary circumstances, an important source of happiness to the agent, there are yet no adequate empirical grounds for regarding the performance of duty as a universal or infallible means to the attainment of this end. Even, however, if it were otherwise, even if it were demonstrably reasonable for the egoist to choose duty at all costs under all circumstances, the systematic endeavour to realize this principle would not—according to common notions of morality—solve or supersede the problem of determining the right method for seeking happiness. For the received moral code allows within limits the pursuit of our own happiness, and even seems to regard it as morally prescribed[1]; and still more emphatically inculcates the promotion of the happiness of other individuals, with whom we are in various ways specially connected: so that, under either head, the questions that we have been considering as to the determination and measurement of the elements of happiness would still have to be answered in some way or other.

It remains to ask how far a scientific investigation of the causes of pleasure and pain can assist us in dealing with this practical problem.

Here, in the first place, a distinction has to be made of

[1] "It should seem that a due concern about our own interest or happiness, "and a reasonable endeavour to secure and promote it,...is virtue, and the con- "trary behaviour faulty and blamable." Butler (in the dissertation 'of the 'nature of Virtue' appended to the *Analogy*).

fundamental importance. It is obvious that for deciding which of two courses of action is preferable on hedonistic grounds, we require not only to measure pains and pleasures of different kinds, but also to ascertain how they may be produced or averted. In most important prudential decisions, a complex chain of consequences, often very long, is foreseen as intervening between the volition we are immediately to initiate and the states of consciousness which constitute the ultimate end of our efforts; and the degree of accuracy with which we forecast each link of this chain—and of other chains compared with it—obviously depends upon our knowledge, implicit or explicit, of the relations of cause and effect among various natural phenomena. But if we suppose the different elements and immediate sources of happiness to have been duly ascertained and valued, the investigation of the conditions of production of each does not, I conceive, belong to a general treatise on the method of ethics; but rather to some one or other of the special arts subordinate to the general art of conduct. Of these subordinate arts some have a more or less scientific basis; while others are in a merely empirical stage and can only be to a very slight extent communicated in a general form. Thus, if we have decided how far health is to be sought, it belongs to the systematic art of medicine, based on physiological science, to furnish a detailed plan of seeking it; so far, on the other hand, as we aim at power or wealth or domestic happiness, such instruction as the experience of others can give will be chiefly obtained in an unsystematic form, either from advice relative to our own special circumstances, or from biographical or other accounts of success and failure in analogous situations. In either case the exposition of such special arts does not appear to come within the scope of the present treatise; and it is obvious that it could not help us to avoid the difficulties of measuring pleasures and pains, which we have considered in the previous chapters.

It seems, however, to be thought by some persons that a knowledge of the causes of pleasure and pain may carry us beyond the determination of the means of gaining particular kinds of pleasure and avoiding particular kinds of pain; may enable us, in fact, to substitute some deductive method of evaluing the elements of happiness generally for the empirical-

reflective method of which we have seen the defects. This view may perhaps have been suggested to some readers by Mr Herbert Spencer's statement[1] that "it is the business of moral science to deduce, from the laws of life and the conditions of existence, what kind of actions necessarily tend to produce happiness, and what kinds to produce unhappiness," and that when it has done this, "its deductions are to be recognized as laws of conduct; and are to be conformed to irrespective of a direct estimate of happiness or misery." Mr Spencer, however, has made clear in his latest treatise that the only cogent deductions of this kind which he conceives to be possible relate to the behaviour not of men here and now, but of ideal men living in an ideal society, and living under conditions so unlike those of actual humanity that all their actions produce "pleasure unalloyed by pain anywhere[2]." The laws—or uniformities—of conduct in this Utopia constitute, in Mr Spencer's view, the subject-matter of "Absolute Ethics;" which he distinguishes from the "Relative Ethics" that concerns itself with the conduct of the imperfect men who live under the present imperfect social conditions, and of which the method is, as he admits, to a great extent "necessarily empirical[3]." How far such a system as Mr Spencer calls Absolute Ethics can be rationally constructed, and how far its construction would be practically useful, I shall consider further in a later part of this treatise, when I come to deal with the method of Universalistic Hedonism[4]: these questions do not concern us at present[5], since I do not understand even Mr Spencer to maintain that his Absolute Ethics is capable of furnishing important practical guidance to an individual seeking his own greatest happiness here and now.

Mr Spencer's authority, therefore, cannot properly be quoted in favour of any method of seeking one's own happiness which claims to dispense with direct estimates of the pleasurable and painful consequences of actions. Indeed a hedonistic method that would dispense with such estimates altogether is almost as

[1] In a letter to J. S. Mill, published in Mr Bain's *Mental and Moral Science*; and partially reprinted in Mr Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, ch. iv. § 21.

[2] *Data of Ethics*, ch. xv. § 101. [3] *Id.* § 108.

[4] Book iv. ch. iv.

[5] They have been already considered to some extent in Book i. ch. ii. § 2.

inconceivable as a method of astronomy that would dispense with observations of the stars. It is, however, conceivable that by induction from cases in which empirical measurement is easy we may obtain generalizations that will give us more trustworthy guidance than such measurement can do in complicated cases; we may be able to ascertain some general psychical or physical concomitant or antecedent of pleasure and pain, more easy to recognize, foresee, measure, and produce or avert in such cases, than pleasure and pain themselves. I am quite disposed to hope that this refuge from the difficulties of Empirical Hedonism may some time or other be open to us: but I cannot perceive that it is at present possible. There is at present, so far as I can judge, no satisfactorily established general theory of the causes of pleasure and pain; and such theories as have most currency are not adapted for the practical application that we require.

§ 2. To shew this, I will briefly examine some of the current theories on this subject. We may begin by noticing the doctrine of Sir William Hamilton[1], which refers pleasure and pain to certain immediate psychical antecedents; defining pleasure as the "reflex"—*i.e.* immediate consequent—of "spontaneous and unimpeded energy of a power of whose energy we are conscious," and pain as the "reflex of overstrained or repressed exertion." The phrases seem to me misleading; since all the terms suggest *active* as ordinarily distinguished from *passive* states, whereas Hamilton explains that "energy" and similar terms "are to be understood to denote indifferently all the processes of our higher and lower life of which we are conscious," on the ground that consciousness itself implies more than a mere passivity of the subject. And I think that Hamilton has been misled by his own terms; and that he does not always keep this wider meaning clearly in view. Thus he says that every energy has "an object about which it is conversant;" and distinguishes "spontaneous" and "unimpeded" as referring respectively to the absence of effort and constraint on the part

[1] It seems that Hamilton's theory still finds at least a modified acceptance in some quarters—in France, if not in England. Cf. Bouillier, *Du Plaisir et de la Douleur*, ch. iii.; and L. Dumont, *Théorie Scientifique de la Sensibilité*, ch. iii.

of the subject, and the absence of obstacles on the part of the object. But what meaning has this distinction in relation to organic feelings of the kind ordinarily called passive—*i.e.* only active in the sense that we are conscious of them? The consciousness accompanying a toothache is as much without effort or constraint on the part of the subject[1] as the consciousness of a warm bath—except so far as "constraint" is implied in the very definition of pain, since it is a feeling that we have, though we desire not to have it; but since this constraint is an essential characteristic of the effect to be explained, no step towards explanation is gained by attributing the same characteristic to its cause. And even if we confine the theory to pleasures that depend on voluntary action, it cannot be regarded as satisfactory. It is not true that the exercise of our powers is always made less pleasant by the presence of obstacles; since some obstacles increase pleasure by drawing out force and skill to overcome them, as in the case of games and sports: and even if we understand "unimpeded" to imply the absence of such obstacles as repress and diminish action, I do not think that the criterion is supported by experience, except so far as the repression causes the specific discomfort of unsatisfied desire. I do not find that the mere weakening or shortening of a pleasure through unfavourable external conditions, has any tendency to turn it into a pain unless it carries with it the sense of a disappointed craving for more pleasure; which is by no means always the case, to any appreciable extent.

The theory becomes more plausible if we drop the antithesis of "spontaneous" and "unimpeded," and, passing to a physical point of view, mean by "activity" the activity of an *organ*. We thus reach what is substantially Mr Spencer's doctrine, that pains are the psychical concomitants of excessive or deficient actions of organs, while pleasures are the concomitants of medium activities[2]; where "excessive" and "deficient" are to be understood in a merely quantitative sense, as meaning action above or below a certain degree of intensity. In considering

[1] It must be remembered that the 'subject' in Hamilton's philosophic terminology is the mind as distinguished from the body. Cf. *Lectures on Metaphysics*, ch. ix. "Explication of Terms."

[2] *Psychology*, ch. ix. § 128.

this theory it will be convenient to take pleasures and pains separately. As applied to pains, the formula no doubt corresponds to a good deal of our sensible experience; any one can easily recall a number of cases in which the mere intensification of the action of an organ turns the accompanying feeling from pleasant or indifferent into painful. Thus when we gradually increase the intensity of sensible heat, pressure, muscular effort, we encounter pain at a certain point of the increase; "deafening" sounds are highly disagreeable: and to confront a tropical sun with unprotected eye-balls would soon become torture. And it is noteworthy that, as Spencer points out, some pains arise from the excessive actions of organs whose normal actions yield no feelings: as when the digestive apparatus is overtaxed. On the other hand I cannot but regard as unwarranted the general conclusion which Wundt[1] founds on these instances; that there is no quality of sensation absolutely pleasant or unpleasant, but that every kind of sensation as it grows in intensity begins at a certain point to be pleasurable and continues such up to a certain further point at which it passes rapidly through indifference into pain. I cannot agree with Wundt that all disagreeable odours and flavours may be made positively agreeable by diminution; I find that some are disagreeable till they become indifferent and then vanish; hence I should refer the discomfort they cause to some kind of discordant, jarring, inharmonious action of the respective nerves, rather than to mere excess of action. A similar explanation suggests itself for the digestive discomforts which arise, as many do, from an improper kind rather than an improper quantity of food: and even more obviously for the important class of pains which are clearly connected with destruction or disease of organs and tissues, whether due to external or to internal causes. So again, among pleasurable sensations some certainly might be named which shew no capacity of being further intensified into pains—at least in healthy persons. While in the case of emotional pains and pleasures, the notion of quantitative difference seems altogether inapplicable: the pains of shame, disappointed ambition, wounded love, do not appear to be distinguishable from the pleasures of fame, success, reciprocated affection, by

[1] *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie*, ch. x.

any difference of intensity in the impressions or ideas accompanied by the pleasures and pains respectively. On the other hand, if the explanation above suggested be adopted, we are enabled to regard the pains that, according to Mr Spencer, arise from "deficient" action as fundamentally similar in respect of physical causation with those which he attributes to excessive action. As I have before observed[1], we have to distinguish from pains mere "cravings" which may be powerful as impulses to action, without being painful in any appreciable degree: and, so far as my experience goes, it is not the mere inaction of an organ that causes pain, but only such degree of inaction as is beginning to produce some kind of derangement in the organ. Thus hunger, in my experience, may be extremely keen without being at all painful; and when it becomes really painful, a temporarily reduced power of assimilation is apt to follow, shewing that the digestive apparatus has been somewhat disorganized.

However this may be, whether we conceive the nervous action of which pain is an immediate consequent or concomitant as merely excessive in quantity, or in some way discordant or disorganized in quality, it is obvious that neither explanation can furnish us with any important practical guidance: since we have no general means of ascertaining, independently of our experience of pain itself, what nervous actions are excessive or disorganized: and the cases where we have such means do not present any practical problems which the theory enables us to solve. No one doubts that wounds and diseases are to be avoided under all ordinary circumstances: and in the exceptional circumstances in which we may be moved to choose them as the least of several evils, the exactest knowledge of their precise operation in causing pain is not likely to assist our choice.

Still less useful, if possible, is the theory above discussed in its relation to pleasure. In the first place, even if we consent to attribute all pains to "excessive action," the broad statement that pleasures are the concomitants of moderate or normal activities of organs or tissues remains *primâ facie* opposed to common experience: in the *routine* of ordinary daily life

[1] Book I. ch. iv.

pleasure, in any recognizable degree, appears as an occasional phenomenon, the majority of states in which consciousness is of moderate intensity being nearly or quite indifferent. And I know no grounds—except the exigencies of theoretical symmetry —for adopting Mr Grant Allen's suggestion that "doubtless every activity when not excessive or of a sort destructive to the tissues is in itself faintly pleasurable; but owing to the commonness and faintness of the feeling we habitually disregard it[1]." Certainly, so far as my own experience goes, the most careful introspection would leave indifference at least a frequently recurring characteristic of the normal processes of commonplace, everyday, life.

At any rate, all admit that the intensity of pleasure bears no proportion to the intensity of the "medium activity" of which the pleasure is a concomitant. How are we to explain this? One part of the explanation, I have no doubt, is to be found in the preponderant objectivity of our everyday consciousness, the absorption of our attention in contemplation of, or action upon, the objective world: this absorption certainly seems to prevent small pleasures from being felt, and therefore, in my view, from existing as pleasures. The experience of pleasure and pain involves an intensification of the consciousness of self that is faint or evanescent in a great part of our ordinary life: hence Wundt, speaking of pleasures of sense, is inclined to see in the pleasure (or pain) the "symptom of a more central process" than that psychically manifested in the quality or strength of the sense-impression itself. But this seems to me erroneous; as I apprehend my own experience, intensity of pleasure or pain is rather antecedent and cause of the intensification of self-consciousness which attends it; while on the other hand this intensification of selfconsciousness often occurs without the presence of pleasure or pain in an appreciable degree.

Some quite different explanation must therefore be sought for the varying degrees in which pleasure accompanies normal activities. Can we find this in a suggestion of Mr Spencer's, developed by Mr Grant Allen, that the pleasurableness of normal activities depends on their *intermittence*, and that "the amount of pleasure is probably...in the inverse ratio of the natural

[1] *Physiological Aesthetics*, ch. ii.

frequency of excitation" of the nerve-fibres involved. This theory certainly finds some support in the fact that the sensual pleasures generally recognized as greatest are those attending the activities of organs which are normally left unexercised for considerable intervals. On the other hand it does not explain the great differences in the pleasures obtainable at any given time by different stimulations of the same sense: and there are certain facts in my own experience that appear to conflict with it—*e.g.* that the exercise of the visual organs after apparently dreamless sleep does not give appreciably keener pleasure than it does at ordinary times. But accepting the theory as partially true, we may still ask how the intermittence operates. The effect can hardly be attributed—as Mr Spencer and Mr Grant Allen seem rather inclined to attribute it—to the greater intensity of the nervous action that takes place when long unexercised and well nourished nerve-centres begin to act: for why, if that were the explanation, should the normal consciousness of full nervous activity, gradually attained—as when we are in the full swing of energetic unwearied work of a routine kind—be nearly or quite indifferent? It would seem rather that the pleasure of intermittent activities must depend on the *freshness* of the activities; *i.e.* on their relation to the states of inaction that precede them.

This leads us to the doctrine of Mr Bain[1] that "states of pleasure are concomitant with an increase, and states of pain with an abatement of some or all of the vital functions:" which Mr Spencer seems to identify with his own broader but vaguer proposition, that "every pleasure increases vitality, every pain decreases vitality[2]." This doctrine, Mr Spencer says, "is put beyond dispute by general experience as well as by the more special experience of medical men." If this be so, I certainly think that the indisputable conclusion should be more precisely defined. Let us take pain first; it clearly cannot be meant that pain is normally accompanied by abatement in the action of the organ primarily concerned; since we have just heard

[1] A doctrine to a great extent similar to this has been maintained by earlier writers—e. g. Hobbes—but it appears to me more profitable to criticize it in the form in which Mr Bain has stated it.

[2] *Data of Ethics*, ch. v. § 36 and note.

Mr Spencer say that pain accompanies excessive actions. Is it then meant that excessive action of a special organ, when it reaches the degree of pain, is accompanied by a decrease in the activity of the system generally? This is obviously not true of pains that can be repelled by muscular action; the immediate effect of these is to stir and brace the nervous system for the requisite activities: and I think we may go further and say that even where no such repellent action would be useful, the total effect of moderate and transient pains appears to be often tonic and stimulating rather than depressing. Intense pain, if at all prolonged, no doubt tends to be followed by nervous exhaustion: but this is also true of prolonged pleasurable excitement—as *e.g.* of gambling or novel reading at night. Again, while I do not deny that the immediate effect of specific pleasures on the vital functions generally is stimulating; I should hold that mere stimulation, mere increase of activity, may be produced, in an equal degree, not only—as I have said—by pains, but also by the neutral excitements of desire, aversion, suspense, surprise. And even if we limit the assertion, as regards pleasure, to the activities of the special organ or tissue primarily concerned, I do not see how we can attribute the pleasure of intermitted activities to the mere *amount* of change that occurs when they begin to be exercised; for great and sudden nervous changes often produce only the neutral excitement which we call surprise, and not pleasure at all.

It does not therefore seem to me that mere increase of functioning, mere quantity of change within normal limits, can be properly regarded as the physical concomitant or immediate antecedent of pleasure. So far as the cause of pleasure is rightly held to lie in a relation of transition between the nervous state of which pleasure is the psychical concomitant and the antecedent state of the nervous system, it must be in some more special kind or kinds of such relation. We find that the sudden transition from the state of pain causes the pleasure of "relief," the transition from the tension of desire causes the pleasure of satisfaction, the transition from muscular or intellectual exertion not perceptibly painful causes a pleasurable sensation of rest; and perhaps we may some day bring these cases—and others in which we cannot now discern any affinity

with these—under a clearer common conception than we are at present able to do. But for our present purpose it would hardly be worth while to pursue this psychophysical speculation any further; since it must evidently have reached a much more advanced stage before it can furnish us with any practical criterion for the attainment of the greatest pleasure possible.

I may suggest, however, that in certain cases of apparently simple pleasures, where we have no ground for explaining the character of the consciousness by reference to any kind of transition or contrast, it may probably be due to some latent harmony between different elements of feeling, or of the nervous action which immediately precedes or accompanies it: *i.e.* to a cause similar in kind to that which is manifestly operative in the case of the complex pleasures which we distinguish as "æsthetic." These latter undoubtedly constitute an important element in the total happiness of cultivated persons: but the difficult task of explaining them is one which, I conceive, we are not here called upon to attempt; since the impossibility of giving any such explanation of them as would at all enable us to predict their intensity in any particular case would be almost universally admitted. All would agree that æsthetic gratification, when at all high, depends on a subtle harmony of different elements in a complex state of consciousness; and that the pleasure resulting from such harmonious combination is indefinitely greater than the sum of the simpler pleasures which the uncombined elements would yield[1]. But even those who estimate most highly the success that has so far been attained in discovering the conditions of this harmony, in the case of any particular art, would admit that mere conformity to the conditions thus ascertained cannot secure the production of æsthetic pleasure in any considerable degree. However subtly we state in general terms the objective relations of elements in a de-

[1] Writers who would agree in this general statement would differ considerably as to the more or less intellectual interpretation to be given to the æsthetic sensibility. Some would attribute the æsthetic result merely to the mutual strengthening of feelings having some degree of similarity or affinity; others would suppose an, at least, semi-conscious perception of ordered differences, "unity and variety." Both these views appear to me to be partially true: but the question is one which it would here be unduly discursive to discuss at all adequately.

lightful work of art, on which its delight seems to depend, we must always feel that it would be possible to produce out of similar elements a work corresponding to our general description which would give no delight at all; the touch that gives delight depends upon an instinct for which no deductive reasoning can supply a substitute. This is true, even without taking into account the wide divergences that we actually find in the æsthetic sensibilities of individuals: still less, therefore, is it needful to argue that, from the point of view of an individual seeking his own greatest happiness, none but a mainly inductive and empirical method of estimating æsthetic pleasures can be made available.

§ 3. I now pass to consider a theory which may be distinguished from those discussed in the preceding section as being biological rather than psychophysical: since it directs attention not to the actual present characteristics of the organic states or changes of which pleasures and pains are the concomitants or immediate consequents, but to their relations to the life of the organism as a whole. I mean the theory that "pains are the correlatives of actions injurious to the organism, while pleasures are the correlatives of acts conducive to its welfare." Mr Spencer, from whom the above propositions are quoted[1], subsequently explains "injurious" and "conducive to welfare" to mean respectively "tending to decrease or loss of life," and "tending to continuance or increase of life": but in the deductive argument by which the above conclusion is summarily established "injurious" and "beneficial" are used as equivalent simply to "destructive" and "preservative" of organic life: and it will be more convenient to take them first in this simpler signification.

Mr Spencer's argument is as follows:

"If we substitute for the word Pleasure the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to bring into consciousness and retain there, and if we substitute for the word Pain the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to get out of consciousness and to keep out; we see at once that, if the states of consciousness which a creature endeavours to maintain are the correlatives of injurious actions, and if the states of consciousness which it endeavours to expel are the correlatives of beneficial actions, it must quickly disappear through

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, § 125, and *Data of Ethics*, § 33.

persistence in the injurious and avoidance of the beneficial. In other words, those races of beings only can have survived in which, on the average, agreeable or desired feelings went along with activities conducive to the maintenance of life, while disagreeable and habitually-avoided feelings went along with activities directly or indirectly destructive of life; and there must ever have been, other things equal, the most numerous and long-continued survivals among races in which these adjustments of feelings to actions were the best, tending ever to bring about perfect adjustment."

Now I am not concerned to deny the value of this summary deduction for certain purposes. But if we consider it from the special point of view with which alone we are here concerned—in respect, namely, of the possibility of basing on it a deductive method of seeking maximum happiness for the individual, by substituting Preservation for Pleasure as the end directly aimed at—its inadequacy to afford such a basis is manifest on several grounds. To begin: Mr Spencer only affirms the conclusion to be true, as he rather vaguely says, "on the average": and it is obvious that though the tendency to find injurious acts pleasant or preservative acts painful must be a disadvantage to any species of animal in the struggle for existence, it may—if existing only to a limited extent—be outweighed by other advantages, so that the organism in which it exists may survive in spite of it. This, I say, is obvious *a priori:* and common experience, as Mr Spencer admits, shews "in many conspicuous ways" that this has been actually the case with civilized man during the whole period of history that we know: owing to the changes caused by the course of civilization, "there has arisen and must long continue a deep and involved derangement of the natural connexions between pleasures and beneficial actions and between pains and detrimental actions." This seems to give a sufficiently strong presumption against the possibility of founding a deductive method of Hedonism on Mr Spencer's general conclusion. But, from our present point of view, we are perhaps less concerned with the notorious tendency of civilized men to take pleasure in various forms of unhealthy conduct and to find conformity to the rules of health irksome; it is more important to note that they may be, and actually are, susceptible of keen pleasure from acts and processes that have no material tendency to preserve life. It need hardly be said

that the "evolution hypothesis" affords us no general solution of the psychophysical question as to the relation of nervous action to feeling: hence we cannot argue from it *a priori* that the development of the nervous system in human beings may not bring with it intense susceptibilities to pleasures from non-preservative processes, if only the preservation of the individuals in whom such susceptibilities are developed is otherwise adequately provided. Now this latter supposition is obviously realized in the case of persons of leisure in civilized society; whose needs of food, clothing, shelter, &c., are abundantly supplied through the complex social habit which we call the institution of private property: and I know no empirical ground for supposing that a cultivated man tends, in consequence of the keen and varied pleasures which he seeks and enjoys, to live longer than a man who goes through a comparatively dull round of monotonous routine activity, interspersed by slightly pleasurable intervals of repose and play.

§ 4. If, however, the individual is not likely to obtain a maximum of Pleasure by aiming merely at Preservation, it remains to consider whether "increase of life" will serve any better.

(Then follows the substance of pp. 167—171 of Ed. II., shortened and rearranged: then the following paragraph:)

There is, however, another and simpler way in which the maxim of 'giving free development to one's nature' may be —and often has been—understood: *i.e.* in the sense of yielding to spontaneous impulses, instead of endeavouring to govern these by elaborate forecasts of consequences. This course is doubtless frequently taken by persons who do not find it necessary to provide themselves with a scientific justification for it: but such a justification has been found in the theory that spontaneous or instinctive impulses really represent the effects on the organism in which they appear—or its ancestors—of previous experiences of pleasure and pain. Hence, it has been maintained that in complicated problems of conduct, experience will "enable the constitution to estimate the respective amounts of pleasure and pain consequent upon each alternative," where it is "impossible for the intellect" to do this: and "will further cause the organism instinctively to shun that course which

produces on the whole most suffering[1]." That there is an important element of truth in this contention I would not deny.

(Then follow pp. 164, 5 of Ed. II., slightly modified: then the concluding paragraph of the Book.)

[1] The quotations are from Mr Spencer's *Social Statics*, ch. iv: but I should infer from the manner in which Mr Spencer has referred to this earlier work in his more recent *Data of Ethics* that no doctrine in *Social Statics* can now with certainty be attributed to the author. I ought to add further that in the passage quoted Mr Spencer is not writing from the point of view of Egoistic Hedonism.

BOOK III.

INTUITIONISM.

CHAPTER I.

INTUITIONISM.

§ 1 (p. 176 after l. 19). ...In saying this, Butler appears to me fairly to represent the common moral sense of ordinary mankind, in our own age no less than in his. The moral judgments that men habitually pass on one another in ordinary discourse imply for the most part that duty is usually not a difficult thing for an ordinary man to *know*, though various seductive impulses may make it difficult for him to do it. And in such maxims as that duty should be performed 'advienne qui pourra,' that truth should be spoken without regard to consequences, that justice should be done 'though the sky should fall,' it is implied that we have the power of seeing clearly, within a certain range, what actions are right and reasonable in themselves, apart from their consequences;—or rather with a merely partial consideration of consequences, from which other consequences admitted to be possibly good or bad are definitely excluded[1]. And such a power is claimed for the human mind by most of the writers

[1] I have before observed (Book I. ch. viii. § 1) that in the common notion of an act we include a certain portion of the whole series of changes partly caused by the volition which initiated the so-called act.

who have maintained the existence of moral intuitions; I have therefore thought myself justified in treating this claim as characteristic of the method which I distinguish as Intuitional. At the same time, as I have before observed, there is a wider sense in which the term 'intuitional' might be legitimately applied to either Egoistic or Universalistic Hedonism; so far as either system lays down as a first principle—which if known at all must be intuitively known—that happiness is the only rational ultimate end of action. To this meaning I shall recur in the concluding chapters (XIII. and XIV.) of this book; in which I shall discuss more fully the intuitive character of these hedonistic principles. But since the adoption of this wider meaning would not lead us to a distinct ethical method, I have thought it best, in the detailed discussion of Intuitionism which occupies the first eleven chapters of this book, to confine myself as far as possible to Moral Intuition understood in the narrower sense above defined.

§ 2. Here, perhaps, it may be said that in thus defining Intuitionism I have omitted its most fundamental characteristic; that the Intuitionist properly speaking—in contrast with the Utilitarian—does not judge actions by an external standard at all; that true morality, in his view, is not concerned with outward actions as such, but with the state of mind in which acts are done—in short with "intentions" and "motives." I think, however, that this objection is partly due to a misunderstanding. Moralists of all schools, I conceive, would agree that the moral judgments which we pass on actions relate primarily to intentional actions regarded as intentional. In other words, what we judge to be 'wrong'—in the strictest Ethical sense—is not any part of the actual effects, as such, of the muscular movements immediately caused by the agent's volition, but the effects which he foresaw in willing the act; or, more strictly, his volition or choice of realising the effects as foreseen[1]. When I speak therefore of acts, I must be under-

[1] No doubt we hold a man responsible for unintended bad consequences of his acts or omissions, when they are such as he might with ordinary care have foreseen; still, as I have before said (p. 57), we admit on reflection that moral blame only attaches to such careless acts or omissions indirectly, in so far as the carelessness is the result of some previous wilful neglect of duty.

stood to mean—unless the contrary is stated—acts presumed to be intentional and judged as such: on this point I do not think that any dispute need arise.

The case of motives is different and requires careful discussion. In the first place the distinction between "motive" and "intention" in ordinary language is not very precise: since we apply the term "motive" to foreseen consequences of an act, so far as they are conceived to be objects of desire to the agent, or to the desire of such consequences: and when we speak of the intention of an act it is usually, no doubt, desired consequences that we have in view. I think, however, that for purposes of exact moral or jural discussion, it is best to include under the term 'intention' all the consequences of an act that are foreseen as certain or probable; since it will be admitted that we cannot evade responsibility for any foreseen bad consequences of our acts by the plea that we felt no desire for them, either for their own sake or as means to ulterior ends[1]. Thus the intention of an act may be judged to be wrong, while the motive is recognized as good; as when a man commits perjury to save a parent's or a benefactor's life. Such judgments are, in fact, continually passed in common moral discourse. It may, however, be said that an act cannot be right, even when the intention is such as duty would prescribe, if it be done from a bad motive: that, to take a case suggested by Bentham, a man who prosecutes from malice a person whom he believes to be guilty, does not really act rightly; for, though it may be his duty to prosecute, he ought not to do it from malice. It is doubtless true that it is our duty to get rid of bad motives if we can; and it is important to observe that morality prescribes internal acts—i.e. volitions in which the foreseen consequences are conceived as solely effects on the agent's own feelings and character—no less than external acts. But no one, I think, will contend that we can always at

[1] I think that common usage, when carefully considered, will be found to admit this definition. Suppose a nihilist blows up a railway train containing an emperor and other persons: it will no doubt be held correct to say simply that his intention was to kill the emperor; but it would be thought absurd to say that he 'did not intend' to kill the other persons, though he may have had no desire to kill them and may have regarded their death as a lamentable incident in the execution of his revolutionary plans.

will get rid of a strong emotion; so that, in the case supposed, what is prescribed strictly as duty can only be the internal act of suppressing as far as possible the feeling of personal malevolence; and such suppression will be especially difficult if one is to do the act to which the malevolent impulse prompts; while yet, if the prosecution be clearly a duty which no one else can so properly perform, it would be absurd to say that we ought to omit it because we cannot altogether exclude an objectionable motive. Hence, while I quite admit that many actions are commonly judged to be made better or worse by the presence or absence of certain motives, it still seems to me clear (1) that our judgments of right and wrong strictly speaking relate to intentions; and (2) that intentions to produce certain external effects form the primary content of the main prescriptions of duty, as commonly affirmed and understood[1].

It has, no doubt, been maintained by moralists of influence in different ages that the moral value of our conduct depends upon the degree to which we are actuated by the one motive which, as they hold, is truly moral: viz. the desire or free choice[2] to do what is right as such, to realize duty or virtue for duty or virtue's sake[3]. In the next and subsequent chapters I shall try to show that this doctrine—which we may conveniently distinguish as Stoical—is not on the whole sustained by a comprehensive survey and comparison of common moral judgments: that there are important classes of duties, in determining which we do not usually take account of motives as distinct from intentions: while in other cases acts appear to have the quality of virtue even more strikingly when performed from some motive other than the love of virtue as such. For the present I am more concerned to point out that the Stoical

[1] The view that moral judgments relate primarily or most properly to motives will be more fully discussed in ch. xii. of this Book.

[2] I use these alternative terms in order to avoid the Free Will Controversy.

[3] Many religious persons would probably say that the motive of obedience or love to God was the highest. But those who take this view would generally say that obedience and love are due to God as a Moral Being, possessing the attributes of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, and not otherwise: and if so these religious motives would seem to be substantially identical with regard for duty and love of virtue, though modified and complicated by the addition of emotions belonging to relations between persons.

doctrine above stated is diametrically opposed to what I have called Psychological Hedonism—the view that the universal or normal motives of human action are either particular desires of pleasure or aversions to pain for the agent himself, or the more general regard to his happiness on the whole which I term Self-love; that it also excludes the less extreme doctrine that duties may be to some extent properly done from such self-regarding motives; and that one or other of these positions has frequently been held by writers who have expressly adopted an Intuitional method of Ethics. As an example of a thinker who held the hedonistic view in its extremest form we may refer to Locke....

As an example, again, of thinkers who, while recognizing in human nature a disinterested regard for duty or virtue as such, still consider that self-love is a proper and legitimate motive to right conduct, we may refer to Butler and his disciples. Butler regards "reasonable self-love" as not merely a normal motive to human action, but as being—no less than conscience—a "chief or superior principle in the nature of man;" so that an action "becomes unsuitable" to this nature, if the principle of self-love be violated. Accordingly the aim of his teaching is not to induce men to choose duty rather than interest, but to convince them that there is no inconsistency between the two; that self-love and conscience lead "to one and the same course of life."

This intermediate doctrine appears to me to be more in harmony with the common sense of mankind on the whole than either the Stoical or the Lockian. But, though I have thought it important to bring the three positions into clear contrast, I do not conceive that we are here called upon to exclude any of them as inconsistent with fundamental assumptions of the present method. The Intuitionism which tends to the exclusion, so far as possible, of non-moral motives, the Intuitionism which aims merely at the regulation of such motives, and the Intuitionism which rests ultimately on an egoistic basis, may all agree as to the particular kinds of intended outward effects, to the realisation of which the different motives ought to prompt. Even those who hold that human beings cannot reasonably be expected to conform to moral rules disinterestedly, or from any other motive than that supplied by the sanctions divinely

attached to them, still commonly conceive God as Supreme Reason, whose laws must be essentially reasonable: and so far as such laws are held to be cognizable by the 'light of nature' —so that morality, as Locke says, may be placed among demonstrative sciences—the method of determining them will be none the less intuitional because it is combined with the belief that God will reward their observance and punish their violation. On the other hand those who hold that regard for duty as duty is an indispensable condition of acting rightly, would generally admit that it is not the only cognizable condition; that acting rightly is not adequately defined as acting from a pure desire to act rightly. In a certain sense, no doubt, a man who sincerely desires and intends to act rightly does all he can, and completely fulfils duty: but it will hardly be denied that such a man may have a wrong judgment as to his outward duty, and therefore, in another sense, may act wrongly. If this be admitted, it is evident that even on the view that the desire or determination to fulfil duty as such is essential to right action, a distinction between two kinds of rightness is required; which we may express by saying that an act is "formally" right, if the agent in willing is moved by pure desire to fulfil duty or chooses duty for duty's sake; "materially" right, if he intends the right particular effects. This distinction being taken, it becomes plain that there is no reason why the same principles and method for determining material rightness, or rightness of particular effects, should not be adopted by thinkers who differ most widely on the question of formal rightness; and it is, obviously, with material rightness that the work of the systematic moralist is mainly concerned.

§ 3. Here, however, it should be observed, that the term 'formal rightness' may be also used, as implying not a *desire* or choice of the act as right, but merely a *belief* that it is so[1]. Now it is obvious that I cannot perform an act from pure love of duty without believing it to be right: but I can believe it to be right and yet do it from some other motive. Accordingly

[1] It is not, I conceive, commonly held to be indispensable, in order to constitute an act right, that a belief that it is right should be actually present in the agent's mind: it may be right, although the agent never actually raised the question of its rightness or wrongness.

there is more agreement among moralists who adopt the Intuitional Method as to the moral indispensability of such a belief, than there is with respect to the question of motive: at least, it would, I conceive, be universally held that no act can be absolutely right, whatever its external aspect and relations, which is believed by the agent to be wrong. It may still be asked whether it is better in any particular case that a man should do what he mistakenly believes to be his duty, or what really is the right thing for him to do—when considered apart from his mistaken belief—and would be completely right if he could only think so. The question is rather subtle and perplexing to Common Sense: it is therefore worth while to point out that it can have only a limited and subordinate practical application. For no one, in considering what he ought himself to do in any particular case, can distinguish what he believes to be right from what really is so: the necessity for such a choice between what we may call 'subjective' and 'objective' rightness can only present itself when we are considering the conduct of another person whom it is in our power to influence. If another is about to do what he thinks right while we believe it to be wrong, and we are able to bring other motives to bear on him that may overbalance his sense of duty, we have to decide whether we ought thus to tempt him to realize what we believe to be objectively right against his own convictions[1]. The moral sense of mankind would, under ordinary circumstances, pronounce against such temptation; thus regarding the Subjective rightness of an action as generally more important than the Objective, either for itself or for its ulterior consequences[2]. But however essential it may be that a moral agent should do what he believes to be right, this condition of right conduct is too simple to admit of systematic development: it is, there-

[1] It is of course clear that it is right for us to alter his convictions if we can: the difficulty only occurs when we find ourselves unable to do this.

[2] The decision would, I think, usually be reached by weighing bad consequences to the agent's character against bad consequences of a different kind. In extreme cases the latter consideration would certainly prevail. Thus we should generally approve a statesman who crushed a dangerous rebellion by working on the fear or cupidity of a leading rebel who was rebelling on conscientious grounds. Cf. *post*, Book IV. ch. iii. § 2.

fore, clear that the details of our investigation must relate mainly to 'objective' rightness.

.....

(p. 183). We may conclude then that the moral judgments which the present method attempts to systematize are primarily and for the most part intuitions of the rightness or goodness (or the reverse) of particular kinds of external effects of human volition, presumed to be intended by the agent, but considered independently of the agent's own view as to the rightness or wrongness of his intention; though the quality of motives, as distinct from intentions, has also to be taken into account.

§ 4. But the question may be raised, whether it is legitimate to take for granted (as I have hitherto been doing) the existence of such intuitions? For this, no doubt, is frequently disputed: there are not a few persons who deliberately deny that reflection enables them to discover any such phenomenon in their conscious experience as the judgment or apparent perception that an act is in itself right or good in any absolute sense —i.e. in any other sense than that of being the right or fit means to the attainment of some ulterior end. I think, however, that such denials are—at any rate to a great extent—due to some confusion between three questions which ought to be carefully distinguished: viz. the psychological question as to *existence* of such moral judgments or apparent perceptions of moral qualities, what we may call the 'psychogonical' question as to their *origin*, and the ethical question as to their *validity*. This confusion has been partly, perhaps, caused by the use of the term "intuition," which has sometimes been understood to imply that the judgment or apparent perception so designated is *true*. I wish therefore to say expressly, that by calling any proposition as to the rightness or wrongness of actions "intuitive," I mean no more than it is affirmed unhesitatingly, and not as the result of reasoning, in ordinary thought and discourse: I do not mean to prejudge the question as to its ultimate validity, when philosophically considered. Any such "intuition" may turn out to have an element of error, which subsequent reflection and comparison enables us to correct—just as many apparent perceptions through the organ of vision are found to be

partially illusory and misleading—indeed the sequel will shew that I hold this to be to an important extent the case with moral intuitions commonly so-called.

The question as to the validity of such intuitions being thus left open, it becomes obvious that the simple question 'whether they actually exist' is one which can only be settled for each person by direct introspection, supplemented by observation of the present phenomena of other minds as made known to us by means of language or other signs: and is altogether distinct from any question as to the origin of such phenomena, which has obviously to be investigated by quite different methods. ...in the growth of new mental phenomena, the psychical consequent is in no respect exactly similar to its antecedents, nor can it be resolved into them: and I know no established laws of psychical causation, which should lead us to regard the antecedents as really constituting the consequent.

It remains to ask whether there is more to be said on behalf of the connexion that has been held to exist between the Origin of the psychical facts which we call moral intuitions, and what I have called their Validity: that is, their truth when expressed as judgments or propositions. It has been very commonly assumed, both by Intuitionists and their opponents, that if our moral faculty can be shewn to be 'derived' or 'developed' out of other preexistent elements of mind or consciousness, suspicion is thereby thrown upon its trustworthiness; while if, on the other hand, it can be shown to have existed in the human mind from its origin, its trustworthiness is thereby established. The two assumptions appear to me equally devoid of foundation. On the one hand, I can see no ground for supposing that a faculty thus derived, as such, is more liable to error than if its existence in the individual possessing it had been differently caused: to put it otherwise, I cannot see how the mere ascertainment that a certain class of apparently self-evident judgments has been caused in certain known and determinate ways, can be in itself a valid ground for distrusting such cognitions. I cannot even admit that those who affirm the truth of such judgments are bound to shew in their causes a tendency to make them true: indeed the acceptance of any such *onus probandi* would seem to me to render the

attainment of philosophical certitude impossible; since the premises of the required demonstration must, I conceive, consist of caused beliefs, which as having been caused will equally stand in need of being proved true; and so on *ad infinitum*. Unless, indeed, it is held that we can find among the premises of our reasonings certain apparently self-evident judgments which have had no causes, and that these may on this ground be accepted as valid without proof!—paradoxes which are certainly not expressly maintained by the thinkers with whom I am now arguing. Otherwise, if all beliefs are equally in the position of having had invariable antecedents, it seems evident that this characteristic alone cannot serve to invalidate any of them.

I hold, therefore, that the *onus probandi* must be thrown the other way: those who dispute the validity of moral or other intuitions on the ground of their derivation must be required to shew, not merely that they are the effects of certain causes, but that these causes are of a kind that tend to produce invalid beliefs. Now it is not, I conceive, possible to prove by any theory of the derivation of the moral faculty that the fundamental ethical conceptions 'right' or 'what ought to be done', 'good' or 'what it is reasonable to desire', are invalid, and that consequently *all* propositions of the form 'X is right' or 'good' are untrustworthy: for such ethical propositions, relating as they do to matter fundamentally different from that with which physical science or psychology deals, cannot be inconsistent with any physical or psychological conclusions. They can only be shewn to involve error by being shewn to contradict each other: and such a demonstration cannot lead us cogently to the sweeping conclusion that all are false. It may, however, be possible to prove that particular ethical beliefs have been caused in such a way as to make it probable that they are wholly or partially erroneous: and it will hereafter be important to consider how far any Ethical intuitions, which we find ourselves disposed to accept as valid, are open to attack on such psychogonical grounds. At present I am only concerned to maintain that no general demonstration of the derivedness or developedness of our moral faculty is an adequate ground for distrusting it....

Note to p. 182.

[1] Mr Abbott (Kant's *Theory of Ethics, Memoir*, p. l) has denied the statement in the text, affirming that Kant "never attempted to deduce a complete code of duty from a purely formal principle." Mr Abbott refers to the *Tugendlehre*, which appeared in 1796 when Kant was 72, and in which, no doubt, the deduction of duties is worked out in a way which renders my criticism not obviously applicable. But I am surprised that Mr Abbott should deny its applicability to the *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, published ten years earlier; in the face of Kant's unmistakeable statements in the second chapter of this treatise (pp. 269—273, Hart: pp. 54—63 of Abbott's translation). Here Kant first says "There is therefore but one categorical imperative, namely, this: *Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law.* Now, if all imperatives of duty can be deduced from this one imperative as from their principle.....we shall at least be able to shew what we understand by [duty] and what this notion means." He then demonstrates the application of the principle to four cases, selected as representative of "the many actual duties"; and continues: "if now we attend to ourselves on occasion of *any* transgression of duty, we shall find that we in fact do not will that our maxim should be a universal law, for that is impossible for us".....: then, summing up the conclusion of this part of his argument, he says, "we have exhibited clearly and definitely for *every practical application* the content of the categorical imperative which must contain the principle of all duty, if there is such a thing at all." I can hardly conceive how the view attributed by me to Kant could be more clearly enunciated than it is in these passages.

CHAPTER II.

VIRTUE AND DUTY.

§ 1. (p. 191, l. 3.) We should therefore keep most close to usage if we defined Duties as 'those Right actions or abstinences, for the adequate accomplishment of which a moral impulse is conceived to be at least occasionally necessary;' but as this line of distinction is vague, and continually varying, I shall not think it necessary to draw attention to it in the detailed discussion of duties.

It may be said, however, that there is another implication in the term duty which I have so far overlooked, but which its derivation—and that of the equivalent term 'obligation'—plainly indicates: viz. that it is "due" or owed *to* some one. But I think that here the derivation does not govern the established usage: rather, it is commonly recognized that duties *to* persons, or "relative" duties, are only one species, and that some duties—as (*e.g.*) Truth-speaking—have no such relativity. No doubt it is possible to view any duty as relative to the person or persons immediately affected by its performance; but it is not usual to do this where the immediate effects are harmful—as where truth-speaking causes a physically injurious shock to the person addressed—: and though it may still be thought to be ultimately good for society, and so "due" to the community or to humanity at large, that truth should even in this case be spoken, it rather belongs to the utilitarian than to the intuitional view to lay stress on this relation. But again, it may be thought by religious persons that the performance of duties is owed not to the human or other living beings affected by them, but to God as the author of the moral law. And I cer-

tainly am not prepared to deny that the conception of duty, in ordinary minds, carries with it this implied relation of an individual will to a universal will conceived as perfectly rational: but neither am I prepared to affirm that this implication is necessary, and an adequate discussion of the difficulties involved in it would lead to metaphysical controversies which I am desirous of avoiding. I propose, therefore, in this exposition of the Intuitional method, to abstract from this relation of Duty generally to a Divine Will: and, for reasons partly similar, to leave out of consideration the particular "duties to God" which Intuitionists have often distinguished and classified. Our view of the general rules of "duty to man" (or to other animals)—so far as such rules are held to be cognizable by moral intuition—will, I conceive, remain the same, whether or not we regard such rules as imposed by a Supreme Reasonable Will: since in any case they will be such as we hold it reasonable for all men to obey, and therefore such as a Supreme Reason would impose. I shall not therefore treat the term Duty as implying necessarily a relation either to a universal Imponent or to the individuals primarily affected by the performance of duties; but shall use it as equivalent generally to Right conduct, while admitting that it is commonly restricted to acts for which a moral impulse is thought to be more or less required.

The notion of Virtue presents more complexity and difficulty, and requires to be discussed from different points of view. We may perhaps conveniently begin this discussion by inquiring how far the sphere of Virtue coincides with that of Duty as above defined. Here the first point to notice is that there seem to be some virtues (such as Generosity) which may be realized in acts objectively wrong, from want of insight into their consequences: and even some (such as Courage) which may be exhibited in wrong acts that are known by the agent to be such. But it is doubtful whether in such cases we should deliberately regard the quality thus manifested as a Virtue, though it certainly excites in us a quasi-moral admiration: and we should not at any rate call such conduct virtuous. It will therefore involve no material deviation from usage if, in treating of the particular Virtues, we confine ourselves to qualities exhibited in actions judged to be right: accordingly for con-

venience of exposition I shall adopt this limitation in the present Book[1]. Shall we say then that the spheres of Duty and Virtue (as thus defined) are completely coincident?.....

I think we shall best interpret common sense by distinguishing between the questions 'what a man ought to do or forbear' and 'what other men ought to blame him for not doing or forbearing:' and recognizing that the standard normally applied in dealing with the latter question is laxer than would be right in dealing with the former. We should agree that a truly moral man cannot say to himself, "This is the best thing on the whole for me to do but yet it is not my duty to do it though it is in my power": this would certainly seem to common sense an immoral paradox[2]. How comes it then that in judging of the acts of others we commonly recognize that virtuous conduct may go beyond the limit of what we regard as a person's duty: and that even when there seems no doubt that the virtue beyond duty was within the power of the individual in question? One explanation of this may be found in the different degrees of our knowledge in our own case and in that of others: there are certain acts 'and forbearances' of which we can lay down definitely that they ought to be done or forborne under all circumstances, but with regard to other acts we can only decide when we have the complete knowledge of circumstances which a man commonly possesses only in his own case, and not in that of other men. Thus I may easily assure myself that I ought to subscribe to a given hospital: but I cannot judge whether my neighbour ought to subscribe, as I do not know the details

[1] It is more convenient, for the purpose of expounding the morality of common sense, to understand by Virtue a quality exhibited in right conduct; for then we can use the common notions of the particular virtues as heads for the classification of the most important kinds or aspects of right conduct as generally recognized. And I think that this employment of the term is as much in accordance with ordinary usage as any other equally precise use would be.

[2] If the phrase in the text were used by a moral person, with a sincere and predominant desire to do duty, it must, I conceive, be used in one of two senses: either (1) half-ironically, in recognition of a customary standard of virtuous conduct which the speaker is not prepared expressly to dispute, but which he does not really adopt as valid—as when we say that it would be virtuous to read a new book, hear a sermon, pay a visit, &c.; or (2) it might be used loosely to mean that such and such conduct *would* be best if the speaker were differently constituted. Cf. *ante*, pp. 69, 70.

of his income and the claims which he is bound to satisfy. I do not, however, think that this explanation is always applicable: I think that there are not a few cases in which we refrain from blaming others for the omission of acts which we do not doubt that we in their place should have thought it our duty to perform. In such cases the line seems drawn by a more or less conscious consideration of what men ordinarily do, and by a social instinct as to the practical effects of expressed moral approbation and disapprobation: we think that moral progress will on the whole be best promoted by our praising acts that are above the level of ordinary practice, and confining our censure—at least if precise and particular—to acts that fall clearly below this standard. But a standard so determined must be inevitably vague and tending to vary as the average level of morality varies in any community, or section of a community: indeed it ought to be the aim of moral persons to raise it continually. Hence it is not convenient to use it in drawing a theoretical line between Virtue and Duty: and I have therefore thought it best to employ the terms so that virtuous conduct may include the performance of duty as well as whatever good actions may be commonly thought to go beyond duty; though recognizing that Virtue in its ordinary use is most conspicuously manifested in the latter.

§ 2. So far I have been considering the term 'Virtuous' as applied to conduct. But both this general term, and the names connoting particular virtues—"just," "liberal," "brave" &c.—are applied to persons as well as to their acts: and the question may be raised which application is most appropriate or primary. Here reflection, I think, shews that these attributes are not thought by us to belong to acts considered apart from their agents: so that Virtue seems to be primarily a quality of the soul or mind, conceived as permanent in comparison with the transient acts and feelings in which it is manifested. As so conceived it is widely held to be a possession worth aiming at for its own sake; to be, in fact, a part of that Perfection of man which is by some regarded as the sole Ultimate Good. This view I shall consider in a subsequent chapter. Meanwhile it may be observed that Virtues, like other habits and dispositions, though conceived as compara-

tively permanent attributes of the mind, are yet attributes of which we can only form definite notions by conceiving the particular transient phenomena in which they are manifested. If then we ask in what phenomena Virtuous character is manifested, the obvious answer is that it is manifested in voluntary actions, so far as intentional; or, more briefly, in volitions. And many, perhaps most, moralists would give this as a complete answer. If they are not prepared to affirm with Kant that a good will is the only absolute and unconditional Good, they will at any rate agree with Butler that "the object of the moral faculty is actions, comprehending under that name active or practical principles: those principles from which men would act if occasions and circumstances gave them power." And if it be urged that more than this is included (*e.g.*) in the Christian conception of the Virtue of Charity, the "love of our neighbour," they will explain with Kant that by this love we must not understand the emotion of affection, but merely the resolution to benefit, which alone has "true moral worth."

I do not, however, think that this doctrine is really in harmony with the common sense of mankind. I think in our common judgments certain kinds of virtuous actions are held to be at any rate adorned and made better by the presence of certain emotions in the virtuous agent. No doubt the element of volition is the more important: beneficent dispositions unattended by the emotion of love are undoubtedly better than benevolent emotions that do not take effect in action: but we commonly think that a due combination of volition and emotion is more excellent than either. We recognize that benefits which spring from affection and are lovingly bestowed are more acceptable to the recipients than those conferred without affection, in the taste of which there is admittedly something harsh and dry: hence, in a certain way, the affection, if practical and steady, seems a higher excellence than the mere beneficent disposition of the will, as resulting in more excellent acts. In the case of Gratitude even the rigidity of Kant[1] seems to relax, and to admit an emotional element as indispensable to the virtue: and there are various other af-

[1] Cf. *Tugendlehre*, § 33: "diese Tugend welche mit Innigkeit der wohlwollenden Gesinnung zugleich Zärtlichkeit des Wohlwollens verbindet."

fections, such as Loyalty and Patriotism, which it is difficult—without paradox—either to exclude from a list of virtues or to introduce stripped bare of all emotional elements. Nor is it only benevolent feeling that is thus thought to enhance virtue: the same may in some cases be said of emotional aversion: thus the Virtue of Chastity or Purity, in its highest form, seems to include more than a mere settled resolution to abstain from unlawful lust, it includes some sentiment of repugnance to impurity. If it be objected that such emotions cannot be commanded at will, I can only answer that it does not seem to be characteristic of virtues as commonly conceived —any more than of other human excellences—that it is in the power of any one by a sufficient effort of will to exhibit them at any time in the form or degree which we judge to be the best possible. I admit, indeed, that no quality of conduct is ever called a virtue unless it is thought to be *to some extent* immediately attainable at will by all ordinary persons, when circumstances give opportunity for its manifestation: in fact it appears to me that the line between virtues and other excellences of behaviour is commonly drawn by this characteristic of voluntariness;—an excellence which we think no effort of will could at once enable us to exhibit in any appreciable degree is called a gift, grace, or talent, but not properly a virtue. Writers like Hume[1], who obliterate this line, seem to me to diverge manifestly from common sense. Still I regard it as at least an equal divergence on the other side to maintain that virtue in all degrees is completely voluntary: there are several other cases, besides those above discussed, in which it would be manifestly paradoxical to affirm this: thus (*e.g.*) no one would deny that courage is a Virtue, and yet no one would affirm that any ordinary man can at will exhibit the highest degree of courage, when occasion arises.

If the view above given of the relation of virtue to natural affection be accepted, the question (raised in the preceding chapter), whether an act is virtuous in proportion as it was done from regard for duty or virtue, is implicitly answered, so far as the morality of Common Sense is concerned: for it is admitted that common sense does not hold this to be true of acts to

[1] Cf. *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix IV.

which affection normally prompts. But I should even say that in some cases we commonly attribute virtue to conduct where regard for duty or virtue is not consciously present at all: as in the case of a heroic act of courage—let us say, in saving a fellow-creature from death—under an impulse of spontaneous sympathy: so again, what we call a "genuinely humble" man is a man who is not conscious that he is fulfilling a duty—still less that he is exhibiting a virtue—by being humble.

It further appears to me that in the case of many important virtues we do not commonly regard the ultimate spring of action at all—whether it be some emotional impulse or the rational choice of duty as duty—in attributing the virtue to particular persons: what we regard as indispensable is merely a settled resolve to intend or will a certain kind of external effects. Thus we call a man veracious if he has a settled habit of endeavouring in his speech to produce in the minds of others impressions exactly correspondent to the facts, whatever his motive may be for so doing: whether he is moved, solely or mainly, by a regard for duty or virtue generally, or by a love of truth in particular, or a sense of the degradation of falsehood, or a conviction that truth-speaking is in the long run the best policy in this world, or a belief that it will be rewarded hereafter, or a sympathetic aversion to the inconveniences which misleading statements cause to other people. Similarly we attribute Justice, if a man has a settled habit of weighing diverse claims and fulfilling them in the ratio of their importance; Good Faith if he has a settled habit of strictly keeping express or tacit engagements: and so forth.

And even when we take motives into account, it is often rather the force of seductive motives resisted than the particular nature of the prevailing springs of action which we consider; thus we certainly think virtue has been manifested in a higher degree in just or veracious conduct, when the agent had strong temptations to be unjust or unveracious; and in the same way there are certain tendencies to good conduct which are called virtues when there are powerful seductive motives operating and not otherwise; *e.g.* when a man eats and drinks a proper amount with no desire to exceed we do not attribute to him the virtue of temperance. We must note, however, that Common

Sense seems to be involved in a kind of perplexity and even contradiction as to the relation of virtue to the moral effort required for resisting unvirtuous impulses. On the one hand a general assent would be given to the proposition that virtue is especially drawn out and exhibited in a successful conflict with natural inclination. On the other hand we should surely agree with Aristotle that Virtue is imperfect so long as the agent cannot do the virtuous action without a conflict of impulses; since it is from a wrong bent of natural impulse that we find it hard to do what is best, and it seems absurd to say that the more we cure ourselves of this wrong bent, the less virtuous we grow. Perhaps we may solve the difficulty by recognizing that there are two fundamentally different kinds of Virtue, the one constituting the most perfect ideal of moral excellence that we are able to conceive for human beings, while the other is manifested in the effort of imperfect men to attain this ideal: thus in proportion as a man comes to like any particular kind of good conduct and to do it without moral effort, we shall not say that his conduct becomes less virtuous but rather more in conformity with a true moral ideal; while at the same time we shall recognize that in this department of his life he has less room to exhibit that other kind of virtue which is manifested in resistance to seductive impulses and in the energetic striving of the will to get nearer to ideal perfection.

So far I have been considering the manifestation of virtue in emotions and volitions, and have not expressly adverted to the intellectual conditions of virtuous acts: though in speaking of such acts it is of course implied that the volition is accompanied with an intellectual representation of the particular effects willed. It is not, however, necessarily implied that such effects must be thought in willing them to be right or good: and I do not myself think that, in the view of common sense, this is an indispensable condition of the virtuousness of an act; for it seems that some kinds of virtuous acts may be done so entirely without deliberation that no moral judgment was passed on them by the agent. This might be the case for instance, with an act of heroic courage, prompted by an *élan* of sympathy with a fellow-creature in sudden peril. But it is, I conceive,

necessary that such an act should not be even vaguely thought to be bad. It is perhaps more difficult to say how far an act which is conceived by the agent to be good but which is really bad can ever be judged to be virtuous: I do not, however, think that the term would ever be applied to an act that is judged bad on the whole (though no doubt conduct in some respects defective through ignorance is often regarded as highly virtuous[1]). If this be so, it is again obvious that the realization of virtue may not be in the power of any given person at any given time, through lack of the requisite intellectual conditions. This, I think, is a conclusion which common sense must accept: though I note a considerable reluctance to accept it; which, however, is not shown in the attribution of virtue to persons who do clearly wrong acts, but rather in an effort to explain their ignorance as caused by some previous wilful wrongdoing. We try to persuade ourselves that if (*e.g.*) Torquemada did not know that it was wrong to torture heretics, he might have known if he had not wilfully neglected means of enlightenment: but there are many cases in which this kind of explanation is unsupported by facts, and I see no ground for accepting it as generally true.

To sum up the results of a rather complicated discussion: I consider that Virtue is primarily attributed to the mind or character of the agent, and conceived to be only manifested in feelings and acts; but that as we only know it through such manifestations, in endeavouring to make precise our conceptions of the particular virtues, we are necessarily concerned mainly with the emotions and volitions in which they are manifested. Examining these, we find that the element of volition is primarily important, and in some cases almost of sole importance, but yet that the element of emotion cannot be altogether discarded without palpable divergence from common sense. Again, concentrating our attention on the volitional element, we find that it is primarily the volitions to produce certain particular effects which we regard as grounds for attributing virtue; the

[1] I have before said that decidedly wrong acts are frequently considered to exhibit in a high degree the tendencies which, when exhibited in right acts, we call particular virtues—generosity, courage, patriotism, &c.: and this is especially true of acts bad through ignorance.

general determination to do right as right, duty for duty's sake, is indeed thought to be of fundamental importance to a man's moral life; but rather as a generally necessary spring of virtuous action than as an indispensable condition of our attributing virtue in any particular case. Similarly in considering the emotional element, though an ardent love of virtue or aversion to vice generally is a valuable stimulus to virtuous conduct, it is not a universally necessary condition of it: and in the case of some acts the presence of other emotions—such as kind affection—makes the acts better than if they were done from a purely moral motive. Such emotions, however, cannot be commanded at will: and this is also true of the knowledge of what ought to be done—or rather of the absence of more than a certain amount of error through ignorance—which, in the view of common sense, seems required to render conduct virtuous. For these and other reasons I consider that though Virtue is distinguished by us from other excellences by the characteristic of voluntariness—it must be *to some extent* capable of being realized at will when occasion arises—this voluntariness attaches to it only in a certain degree; and that Virtue in the highest degree is not always capable of being so realized. And thus we have a further explanation, besides those discussed in the previous section, of the common conception of Virtue exceeding strict Duty; since Duty is something that we can always do if we will. Or perhaps we should rather say that Virtue in some cases only comes indirectly within the range of duty, so far as we recognize a duty of cultivating it. (to p. 195, l. 4)...

(after p. 195, l. 22.) The complicated relation of virtue to duty, as above determined, must be borne in mind throughout the discussion of the particular virtues, to which I shall proceed in the following chapters. But, as we have seen, the main part of the manifestation of virtue in conduct consists in voluntary actions, which it is within the power of any individual to do—at least if they are recognized as right,—and which therefore come within our definition of Duty, as above laid down; it will not therefore be necessary, during the greater part of the ensuing discussion, to distinguish between principles of virtuous conduct and principles of duty; since the definitions of the two will coincide....(to l. 29.)

CHAPTER III.

WISDOM AND SELF-CONTROL.

§ 2. ...(p. 203, l. 13). It is clearly our duty so to adhere, in so far as it is within the power of the will: as a resolution made after deliberation, in accordance with our view of what is right, should not be abandoned or modified except deliberately —at least if time for fresh deliberation be allowed—: and the tendency to resist impulses prompting to such abandonment or modification is commonly recognized as an indispensable auxiliary to Wisdom. But this species of Self-control, which we may perhaps call Firmness, can hardly be said to be altogether attainable at will, at least when it is most wanted.....(to l. 20.)

§ 3. In examining the functions of Wisdom, other subordinate excellences come into view, which are partly included in our ideal conception of Wisdom, and partly auxiliary or supplementary. Some of these however no one would exactly call virtues....(l. 36.) The same may be said of Caution, so far as Caution implies taking into due account *material* circumstances unfavourable to our wishes and aims: for by no effort of will can we certainly see what circumstances are material; we can only look steadily and comprehensively. The term 'Caution,' however, may also be legitimately applied to a species of Self-control which we shall properly regard as a Virtue: viz. the tendency to deliberate whenever and so long as deliberation is judged to be required, even though powerful impulses urge us to immediate action.

And, in antithesis to Caution, we may notice as another minor virtue the quality called Decision, so far as we mean by Decision the habit of resisting an irrational impulse to which

men are liable, of continuing to some extent in the deliberative attitude when they know that deliberation is no longer expedient, and that they ought to be acting. 'Decision,' however, is often applied (like 'Caution') to denote solely or chiefly a merely intellectual excellence; viz. the tendency to judge rightly as to the time for closing deliberation.

I conclude then that so far as such qualities as those which I have distinguished as Firmness, Caution, and Decision, are recognized as Virtues and not merely as intellectual excellences, it is as being, in fact, species of Self-control; i.e. as involving voluntary adoption of and adhesion to rational judgments as to conduct, in spite of certain irrational motives prompting in an opposite direction. Now it may seem at first sight that if we suppose perfect correctness of judgment combined with perfect self-control, the result will be a perfect performance of duty in all departments; and the realization of perfect Virtue, except so far as this involves the presence of certain special emotions not to be commanded at will. And no doubt a perfectly wise and self-controlled man cannot be conceived as breaking or neglecting any moral rule. But it is important to observe that even sincere and single-minded efforts to realize what we see to be right may vary in intensity; and that therefore the tendency to manifest a high degree of intensity in such efforts is properly praised as Energy, if the quality be purely volitional; or under some such name as Zeal or Moral Ardour, if the volitional energy be referred to intensity of emotion, and yet not connected with any emotion more special than the general love of what is Right or Good.

CHAPTER IV.

BENEVOLENCE.

§ 1.... (p. 206, l. 9.) When, however, we contemplate these, we discern that there are other virtues, which, in different ways, may be regarded as no less comprehensive than Wisdom. Especially in modern times, since the revival of independent ethical speculation, there have always been thinkers who have maintained, in some form, the view that Benevolence is a supreme and architectonic virtue, comprehending and summing up all the others, and fitted to regulate them and determine their proper limits and mutual relations. The phase of this view most current at present would seem to be Utilitarianism, the principles and method of which will be more fully discussed hereafter: but in some form or other it has been held by many whose affinities are rather with the Intuitional school. This widely supported claim to supremacy seems an adequate reason for giving to Benevolence the first place after Wisdom, in our examination of the commonly received maxims of Duty and Virtue.

The general maxim of Benevolence would be commonly said to be, "that we ought to love all our fellow-men," or "all our fellow-creatures": but, as we have already seen, there is some doubt among moralists as to the precise meaning of the term "love" in this connexion: since, according to Kant and others, what is morally prescribed as the Duty of Benevolence is not strictly the affection of love or kindness, so far as this contains an emotional element, but only the determination of the will to seek the good or happiness of others. And I agree that it cannot be a strict duty to feel an emotion, so far as it is not directly within the power of the Will to produce it at any given time. Still (as I have said) it seems to me

paradoxical to deny that this emotional element is included in our common notion of Charity or Philanthropy, regarded as a Virtue: or that it adds a higher excellence to the mere beneficent disposition of the will, as resulting in more excellent actions (to p. 207, l. 33)...(p. 208, l. 22.) It follows that there is a corresponding ambiguity in the phrase 'doing good:' since, though many would unhesitatingly take it to mean the promotion of Happiness, there are others who, holding that Perfection and not happiness is the true ultimate Good, consistently maintain that the real way to 'do good' to people is to increase their virtue or aid their progress towards Perfection. There are, however, even among anti-Epicurean moralists, some—such as Kant—who take an opposite view....(to l. 32.)

§ 2. It remains to ask towards whom this disposition or affection is to be maintained, and to what extent. And, firstly, it is not quite clear whether we owe benevolence to men alone, or to other animals also. That is, there is a general agreement that we ought to treat all animals with kindness; but it is questioned whether this is directly due to sentient beings as such, or merely prescribed as a means of cultivating kindly dispositions towards men. Intuitional moralists of repute have certainly maintained this latter view: I think, however, that Common Sense is disposed to regard this as a hard-hearted paradox and to hold with Bentham that the pain of animals is *per se* to be avoided; but the point is one which I am not prepared dogmatically to determine. It is of more importance to consider how our benevolence ought to be distributed among our fellow-men. Here we may conveniently make clear the Intuitional view by contrasting it with that of Utilitarianism (to p. 210, l. 12)...(l. 23) the inequality, on the Utilitarian theory, is secondary and derivative. Common Sense, however, seems rather to regard it as immediately certain without any such deduction that we owe special dues of kindness to those who stand in special relations to us. The question then is, on what principles, when any case of doubt or apparent conflict of duties arises, we are to determine the nature and extent of the special claims to affection and kind services which arise out of these particular relations of human beings. Are problems of this kind to be solved by considering which course of conduct is on the whole

most conducive to the general happiness? or can we find independent and self-evident principles sufficiently clear and precise to furnish practical guidance in such cases. The different answers given to this fundamental question will obviously constitute the main difference between the Intuitional and Utilitarian methods; so far as the 'good' which the benevolent man desires and seeks to confer on others is understood to be Happiness.

(p. 213, l. 7.) And the same may be said of the less comprehensive affection that impels men to promote the well-being of the community of which they are members; and again of the affection that normally tends to accompany the recognition of rightful rule or leadership in others. In some ages and countries Patriotism and Loyalty have been regarded as almost supreme among the virtues; and even now Common Sense gives them a high place.

But when we pass to more restricted, and, ordinarily more intense, affections, such as those which we feel for relations and friends, it becomes more difficult to determine whether they are to be considered as moral excellences and cultivated as such.... (to l. 16.)

(l. 26).... If now we ask whether intense Love for an individual, considered merely as a benevolent impulse, is in itself a moral excellence, it is difficult to extract a very definite answer from Common Sense: but it perhaps inclines on the whole to the negative. We are no doubt generally inclined to admire any kind of conspicuously 'altruistic' conduct and any form of intense love, however restricted in its scope; yet it hardly seems that the susceptibility to such individualized benevolent emotions is exactly regarded as an essential element of moral Perfection, which we ought to strive after and cultivate like other moral excellences; we seem, in fact to doubt whether such effort is desirable in this case, at least beyond the point up to which such affection is thought to be required for the performance of recognized duties. And though we think it natural and desirable that in general each person should feel strong affection for a few individuals, and that his efforts to promote directly the well-being of others should, to a great extent, follow the promptings of such impulses; we are hardly prepared to recommend that he should render services to special

individuals beyond what he is bound to render, and such as are the natural expression of an eager and overflowing affection, without having any such affection to express. (to p. 214, l. 10.)...

§ 4. (p. 217). In order then to ascertain how far we possess such principles, let us examine in more detail what Common Sense seems to affirm in respect of these duties.

They seem to range themselves under four heads. There are (1) duties arising out of comparatively permanent relationships not voluntarily chosen, such as Kindred and in most cases Citizenship and Neighbourhood: (2) those of similar relationships voluntarily contracted, such as Friendship: (3) those that spring from special services received, or Duties of Gratitude: and (4) those that seem due to special need, or Duties of Pity. This classification is, I think, convenient for discussion; but I cannot profess that it clearly and completely avoids cross divisions; since, for example, the principle of Gratitude is often appealed to as supplying the rationale for duties of the first class; such as those owed by children to parents. Here, however, we come upon a material disagreement and difficulty in determining the maxim of this species of duty. (to l. 16.)...

(p. 219, l. 9).... Others, however, hold that children as such have no claims to their parents' wealth: but only if there is a tacit understanding that they will succeed to it, or, at any rate, if they have been reared in such habits of life and social relations as will render it difficult and painful for them to live without inherited wealth.

.....(insert p. 222, l. 17). Further, a general obligation of being 'useful to society' by some kind of systematic work is vaguely recognized; rich persons who are manifest drones incur some degree of censure from thoughtful persons.

(insert in § 5, p. 223.)... A more serious difficulty of a somewhat similar kind arises when we consider how far it is a duty to cultivate the affection of Loyalty: meaning by this term—which is used in various senses—the affection that is normally felt by a well-disposed servant or official subordinate towards a good master or official superior. On the one hand it is widely thought that the duties of obedience which belong to these relations will be better performed if affection enters into the motive, no less than the duties of the family relations: but in the former case

it would seem that the habits of orderliness and Good Faith—ungrudging obedience to law and ungrudging fulfilment of contract—will ordinarily suffice, without personal affection: and it is urged, on the other hand, that a disposition to obey superiors beyond the limits of their legal or contracted rights to issue commands may easily be mischievous in its effects, if the superiors are ill-disposed. In a well-ordered modern state every individual's right to originate commands is strictly limited by law or custom: and though in the case of a wise and good superior it is obviously advantageous that inferiors should be disposed to obey beyond these limits, it is not clear that this disposition is one which it should be made a duty to cultivate beyond the degree in which it results spontaneously from a sense of the superior's goodness and wisdom. Nor do I think that any decided enunciation of duty on this point can be extracted from Common Sense.

(p. 233, l. 3.) In conclusion, then, we must admit that while we find a number of broad and more or less indefinite rules unhesitatingly laid down by Common Sense in this department of duty, it is difficult or impossible to extract from them, so far as they are commonly accepted, any clear and precise principles for determining the extent of the duty in any case. And yet, as we saw, such particular principles of distribution of the services to which good will prompts seem to be required for the perfection of practice no less than for theoretical completeness; in so far as the duties which we have been considering are liable to come into apparent conflict with each other and with other prescriptions of the moral code.

In reply it may perhaps be contended that if we are seeking exactness in the determination of duty, we have begun by examining the wrong notion: that, in short, we ought to have examined Justice rather than Benevolence. It may be admitted that we cannot find as much exactness as is sometimes practically needed by considering the common conceptions of the duties to which men are prompted with natural affections; but it may still be maintained that we shall at any rate find such exactness adequately provided for under the head of Justice. This contention I will proceed to examine in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

JUSTICE.

(p. 237, l. 23).... We may conclude, in short, that, in laying down the law no less than in carrying it out, all inequality affecting the interest of individuals which appears arbitrary, and for which no sufficient reason can be given, is held to be unjust.

...(p. 238, l. 15).... What then do we mean by a just man in matters where law-observance does not enter? It is natural to reply that we mean an impartial man, one who satisfies all claims which he recognizes and does not let himself be unduly influenced by personal preferences. And this seems an adequate account of the disposition of justice so far as we consider it merely subjectively, and as a strictly moral quality, independently of the intellectual insight required for the realization of objective justice in action: if we neglect to give due consideration to any claim which we regard as reasonable, our action cannot be just in intention. This definition suffices to exclude wilful injustice: but it is obvious that it does not give us a sufficient criterion of just acts, any more than the absence of arbitrary inequality is a completely distinctive characteristic of just laws[1]. We want to know what are reasonable claims. (to l. 26.)

(p. 240, after l. 35.) The difficulty just pointed out extends equally to the stringent and sacred duties of the domestic and

[1] It should be observed that we cannot say, in treating of the private conduct of individuals, that *all* arbitrary inequality is recognized as unjust: it would not be commonly thought unjust in a rich bachelor with no near relatives to leave the bulk of his property in providing pensions exclusively for indigent red-haired men, however unreasonable and capricious the choice might appear.

other affections, discussed in the previous chapter: and it now seems clear that we cannot get any new principle for settling any conflict that may present itself among such duties, by asking 'what Justice requires of us:' the application of the notion of Justice only leads us to view the problem in a new aspect—as a question of the right *distribution* of kind services—it does not help us to solve it. Having no clear and precise intuitive principles for determining the claims (*e. g.*) of parents on children, children on parents, benefactors on the recipients of their benefits, we cannot say generally at what point or to what extent the satisfaction of one of these claims ought in justice to be postponed to the satisfaction of another, or to any worthy aim of a different kind.

§ 3. If now we turn again to the political question, from which we diverged, we see that we have obtained from the preceding discussion one of the criteria of the justice of laws of which we were seeking—viz. that they must avoid running counter to natural and normal expectations—: but we see at the same time that the criterion cannot be made definite in its application to private conduct, and it is easy to shew that there is the same indefiniteness and consequent difficulty in applying it to legislation. (to l. 37.)...(p. 241, l. 13.) Hence when such expectations are disappointed by a change in the law, the disappointed persons complain of injustice, and it is to some extent admitted that justice requires that they should be compensated for the loss thus incurred. But since these expectations are of all degrees of definiteness and importance, and generally extend more widely as they decrease in value, like the ripples made by throwing a stone into a pond, it is impossible to compensate them all: at the same time, I know no intuitive principle by which we could separate valid claims from invalid, and distinguish injustice from simple hardship.

But even if this difficulty were overcome further reflection must, I think, shew that the criterion above given is incomplete or imperfectly stated: otherwise it would appear that no old law could be unjust, since laws that have existed for a long time must create corresponding expectations....(to p. 242, l. 2.)

(p. 246, l. 36).... If, however, we include in the idea absence from pain and annoyance inflicted by others, it becomes at

once evident that we cannot prohibit all such annoyances without restraining freedom of action to a degree that would be intolerable; since there is scarcely any gratification of a man's natural impulses which may not cause some annoyance to others. Hence in distinguishing the mutual annoyances that ought to be allowed from those that must be prohibited we seem forced to balance, in the Utilitarian manner, the evils of constraint against pain and loss of a different kind: while if we admit the Utilitarian criterion so far, it is difficult to maintain that annoyance to individuals is never to be permitted in order to attain any positive good result.

Thirdly, in order to render a social construction possible on this basis, we must assume that the right to Freedom includes the right to limit one's freedom by contract; and that such contracts, if they are really voluntary and not obtained by fraud or force, and if they do not violate the freedom of others, are to be enforced by legal penalties. But, in the first place, it does not seem clear that enforcement of Contracts is strictly included in the notion of realizing Freedom; for a man seems to be most completely free when no one of his volitions is allowed to have any effect in causing the external coercion of any other....(to p. 247, l. 18.)

(p. 248, l. 15.) For it is commonly thought that the individual's right to Freedom includes the right of appropriating material things. But, if Freedom be understood strictly, I do not see that it implies more than the right to non-interference while actually using such things as can only be used by one person at once: the right to prevent others from using at any future time anything that an individual has once seized seems an interference with the free action of others beyond what is needed to secure the freedom, strictly speaking, of the appropriator. It may perhaps be said that a man, in appropriating a particular thing, does not interfere with the freedom of others, because the rest of the world is still open to them. But others may want just this object: and they may not be able to find anything so good at all, or at least without much labour and search; for many of the instruments and materials of comfortable living are limited in quantity. This argument applies especially to property in

land: and it is to be observed that, in this case there is a further difficulty in determining how much a man is to be allowed to appropriate by 'first occupation.' If it be said that a man is to be understood to occupy what he is able to use, the answer is obvious that the use of land by any individual may vary almost indefinitely in extent of surface required, while diminishing proportionally in intensity. For instance, it would surely be a paradoxical deduction from the principle of Freedom to maintain that an individual had a right to exclude others from pasturing sheep on any part of the land over which his hunting expeditions could extend[1]. But if so can it be clear that a shepherd has such a right against one who wishes to till the land, or that one who is using the surface has a right to exclude a would-be miner? I do not see how the deduction is to be made out....(to p. 249, l. 1.)

(p. 253, l. 13).... We ought to endeavour to make compensation for all harm, voluntary or involuntary, of which we have been the physical cause—at least unless it has been caused with the free consent of the person harmed. Common Sense does not seem clear on this point: and even if we could settle it without hesitation, there would still remain some difficulty, as we shall see presently, in drawing the line between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' harm[2].

Between the principle of Reparative and that of Retributive

[1] It has often been urged as a justification for expropriating savages from the land of new colonies that tribes of hunters have really no moral right to property in the soil over which they hunt.

[2] Cf. *post*, p. 292. The reader will find an interesting illustration of the perplexity of Common Sense on this point in Mr O. W. Holmes jun^{r}'s book on *The Common Law*, chap. iii.; where the author gives a penetrating discussion of the struggle, in the development of the doctrine of torts in English Law, between two opposing views: (1) that "the risk of a man's conduct is thrown upon him as the result of some moral short-coming", and (2) that "a man acts at his peril always, and wholly irrespective of the state of his consciousness upon the matter". The former is the view that has prevailed in English Law; and this seems to me certainly in harmony with the Common Sense of mankind, so far as legal liability is concerned; but I do not think that the case is equally clear as regards moral obligation.

It may be added that there is often a further difficulty in ascertaining the amount of compensation due: for this frequently involves a comparison of things essentially disparate, and there are some kinds of harm which it seems impossible to compensate.

Justice there is now[1] no danger of confusion or collision, as the one is manifestly concerned with the injured party, and the other with the wrongdoer....

§ 6. (p. 255, l. 19).... On the necessarian view, then, it would seem to be ideally just (if anything is so) that all men should enjoy equal amounts of happiness: for there seems to be no justice in making *A* happier than *B*, merely because circumstances beyond his own control have first made him better. But why should we not, instead of 'all men,' say 'all sentient beings'? for why should man have more happiness than any other animal? But thus the pursuit of ideal justice seems to conduct us to such a precipice of paradox that Common Sense is likely to abandon it. At any rate the ordinary idea of Desert has thus altogether vanished[2]. And thus we seem to be led to the conclusion which I anticipated in Bk. I. ch. v.: that in this one department of our moral consciousness the idea of Free Will seems involved in a peculiar way in the moral ideas of Common Sense since if it is eliminated the important notions of Desert and Justice require essential modification. However, perhaps it would be superfluous to discuss this further. For in any case it does not seem possible to separate in practice that part of a man's achievement which is due strictly to his free choice from that part which is due to the original gift of nature and to favouring circumstances[3]: so that we must neces-

[1] In the earlier stage of moral development, referred to in the preceding paragraph, retribution inflicted on the wrongdoer was regarded as the normal mode of reparation to the person injured. But this view is contrary to the moral Common Sense of Christian Societies.

[2] The only possible necessarian interpretation of Desert is, I think, the Utilitarian: according to which, when a man is said to deserve reward for any services to society, the meaning is that it is expedient to reward him, in order that he and others may be induced to render similar services by the expectation of similar rewards. Cf. *post*, Book IV. ch. iii. § 4.

[3] No doubt, it would be possible to remove, to some extent, the inequalities that are attributable to circumstances, by bringing the best education within the reach of all classes, so that all children might have an equal opportunity of being selected and trained for any functions for which they seemed to be fit: and this seems to be prescribed by ideal justice, in so far as it removes or mitigates arbitrary inequality. Accordingly in those ideal reconstructions of society, in which we may expect to find men's notions of abstract justice exhibited, such an institution as this has generally found a place. Still, there will be much natural inequality which we cannot remove or even estimate.

sarily leave to Providence the realization of what we conceive as the theoretical ideal of Justice, and content ourselves with trying to reward voluntary actions in proportion to the services actually rendered (that is, if *intentionally* rendered; for otherwise no one would think it deserving of reward).

If, then, we take as the principle of ideal justice so far as this can be practically aimed at in human society, the requital of voluntary services in proportion to their worth, it remains to consider on what principle or principles the comparative worth of different services is to be rationally estimated. There is no doubt that we commonly assume such an estimate to be possible; for we continually speak of the 'fair' or 'proper' price of any kind of services as something generally known, and condemn the demand for more than this as extortionate. It may be said that the notion of Fairness or Equity which we ordinarily apply in such judgments is to be distinguished from that of Justice; Equity being in fact often contrasted with strict Justice, which is held to be either realized in the fulfilment of contracts when made, and of definite legal prescriptions; and which is even capable of coming into collision with Equity. And this is partly true: but I think the wider and no less usual sense of the term Justice, in which it includes Equity or Fairness, is the only one that can be conveniently adopted in an ethical treatise: for in any case where Equity comes into conflict with strict justice, its dictates are held to be in a higher sense just, and what ought to be ultimately carried into effect in the case considered—though, not, perhaps, by the administrators of law. I treat Equity, therefore, as a species of Justice; though noting that the former term is more ordinarily used in cases where the definiteness attainable is recognized as somewhat less than in ordinary cases of rightful claims arising out of law or contract. On what principle, then, can we determine the "fair" or "equitable" price of services? When we examine the common judgments of practical persons in which this notion occurs, we find, I think that the 'fair' in such cases is ascertained by a reference to analogy and custom, and that any service is considered to be 'fairly worth' what is usually given for services of the kind....(to p. 257, l. 9.)

(p. 258, l. 8).... But on examination it seems likely that

the majority of men are not properly qualified to decide on the value of many important kinds of services, from imperfect knowledge of their nature and effects; so that, as far as these are concerned, the true judgment will not be represented in the market-place. Even in the case of things which a man is generally able to estimate, it may be manifest in a particular case that he is ignorant of the real utility of what he exchanges; and in this case the 'free' contract hardly seems to be fair: though if the ignorance was not caused by the other party to the exchange, Common Sense is hardly prepared to condemn the latter as unjust for taking advantage of it. For instance, if a man has discovered by a legitimate use of geological knowledge and skill that there is probably a valuable mine on land owned by a stranger, reasonable persons would not blame him for concealing his discovery until he had bought the mine at its market value: yet it could not be said that the seller got what it was really worth. In fact Common Sense is rather perplexed on this point: and the *rationale* of the conclusion at which it arrives must, I conceive, be sought in economic considerations, which take us quite beyond the analysis of the common notion of Justice[1].

Again, there are social services recognized as highly important which generally speaking have no price in any market, on account of the indirectness and uncertainty of their practical utility: as, for instance, scientific discoveries. The extent to which any given discovery will aid industrial invention is so uncertain, that even if the secret of it could be conveniently kept, it would not be profitable to buy it.

But even if we confine our attention to products and services generally marketable, and to bargains thoroughly understood on both sides, there are still serious difficulties in the way of identifying the notions of 'free' and 'fair' exchange. Thus, where an individual, or combination of individuals, has the monopoly of a certain kind of services, the market-price of the aggregate of such services can under certain conditions be increased by diminishing their total amount; but it would seem absurd to say that the social Desert of those rendering the services is thereby increased, and a plain man has grave doubts

[1] Cf. *post*, Book IV. ch. iii. § 4.

whether the price thus attained is fair. Still less is it thought fair to take advantage of the transient monopoly produced by emergency: thus, if I saw Crœsus drowning with no one near, it would not be held fair in me to refuse to save him except at the price of half his wealth. But if so, can it be fair for any class of persons to gain competitively by the unfavourable economic situation of another class with which they deal? And if we admit that it would be unfair, where are we to draw the line? For any increase of the numbers of a class renders its situation for bargaining less favourable: since the market price of different services depends partly upon the ease or difficulty of procuring them—as Political Economists say, 'on the relation between the supply of services and the demand for them'—and it does not seem that any individual's social Desert can properly be lessened merely by the increased number or willingness of others rendering the same services. Nor, indeed, does it seem that it can be decreased by his own willingness, for it is strange to reward a man less because he is zealous and eager in the performance of his function: yet in bargaining the less willing always has the advantage. And, finally, it hardly appears that the social worth of a man's service is necessarily increased by the fact that his service is rendered to those who can pay lavishly; but his reward is certainly likely to be greater from this cause.

Such considerations as these have led some political thinkers to hold that Justice requires an entirely different mode of distributing payment for services from that at present effected by free competition: and that all labourers ought to be paid according to the intrinsic value of their labour as estimated by enlightened and competent judges. If this Socialistic Ideal —as we may perhaps call it—could be realized without counterbalancing evils, it would certainly seem to give a nearer approximation to what we conceive as Divine Justice than the present state of society affords. But this supposes that we have found the rational method of determining value: which, however, is still to seek....(to p. 259, l. 23.)

(p. 260, l. 8).... I do not see how these questions, or the difficulties noticed in the preceding paragraph, can be met by any analysis of our common notion of Justice. To deal with such points at all satisfactorily we have, I conceive, to adopt

quite a different line of reasoning: we have to ask, not what services of a certain kind are intrinsically worth, but what reward can procure them and whether the rest of society gain by the services more than the equivalent reward. We have, in short, to give up as impracticable the construction of an ideally just social order, in which all services are rewarded in exact proportion to their intrinsic value. And, for similar reasons, we seem forced to conclude, more generally, that it is impossible to obtain clear premises for a reasoned method of determining exactly different amounts of Good Desert....(to l. 15.)

P. 261, l. 10, for 'deterrent' read 'regarded as preventive'.

(p. 262, l. 5).... In such cases there is a widespread feeling that punishment ought to be mitigated: and so far as this sentiment is held in check, it is rather by a consideration of the mischievous consequences likely to result from leniency, than from any insight into a supposed principle of Justice as distinct from expediency.

CHAPTER VI.

LAWS AND PROMISES.

(p. 266, l. 25.) But we hardly find this view in the Common Sense of civilized Europe, upon which we are now reflecting: at any rate in our societies there is not thought to be any portion of the definite prescriptions of positive law which, in virtue of its origin, is beyond the reach of alteration by any living authority.

(p. 267, l. 23).... This, as was noticed in the preceding chapter, is involved in the adoption of Freedom as the ultimate end of political order: if no one originally owes anything to another except non-interference, he clearly can only be placed in the relation of Subject to Sovereign by his own consent. And thus, in order to reconcile the original right of Freedom with the actual duty of Law-observance, some supposition of a social contract appears necessary; by means of which Obedience to Law becomes merely a special application of the duty of keeping contracts.

In what way, then, are the terms of this fundamental compact to be known? No one now maintains the old view that the transition from the 'natural' to the 'political' state actually took place by means of an "original Contract," which conferred indelible legitimacy on some particular form of social organization. Shall we say, then, that a man by remaining a member of a community enters into a 'tacit undertaking' to obey the laws laid down by the authority generally recognized as lawful in that community. In this way however the most unlimited despotism, if established and traditional, might claim to rest on free consent as well as any other form of

government: so that the theoretical freedom of the individual would become a useless fiction. To avoid this result, we must suppose that certain 'Natural Rights' are inalienable, and that laws are not strictly legitimate which deprive a man of these.... (to p. 268, l. 28.)

...(p. 270, l. 34.) For some think that a nation has a natural right to a government approximately conformed to the ideal, and that it ought to be introduced by force.

(p. 271, l. 23.)... And this last seems, on the whole, the view of Common Sense; but it seems impossible to determine the point at which the metamorphosis is thought to take place, otherwise than by considerations of expediency.

(p. 273, last line). Others, however, think this principle too lax; and certainly if a wide-spread preference of penalty to obedience were shewn in the case of any particular law, the legislation in question would be thought to have failed. Nor, on the other hand, does there seem to be any agreement as to whether one is bound to submit to unjust penalties.

(p. 277, l. 12): otherwise one could evade any moral obligation by promising not to fulfil it, which is clearly absurd. And the same principle is of course applicable to immoral omissions or forbearances to act: here, however, a certain difficulty arises from the necessity of distinguishing between different kinds or degrees of obligatoriness in duties; since it is clear that a promise may sometimes make it obligatory to abstain from doing what it would otherwise have been a duty to do. Thus it becomes my duty not to give money to a meritorious hospital if I have promised all I can spare to an undeserving friend; though apart from the promise it might have been my duty to prefer the hospital to the friend. We have, however, already seen the difficulty of defining the limits of strict duty in many cases: thus (*e.g.*) it might be doubted how far the promise of aid to a friend ought to override the duty of giving one's children a good education. The extent, therefore, to which the obligation of a promise overrides prior obligations is practically somewhat obscure; however clear the abstract principle for determining it may seem to be. (to l. 24.)

(p. 278, l. 23).... We may observe that certain kinds of concealment are even justified by the law: in most contracts

of sale, for example, the law adopts the principle of 'caveat emptor,' and does not refuse to enforce the contract because the seller did not disclose defects in the article sold, unless by some words or acts he produced the belief that it was free from such defects. Still, this does not settle the moral question; on which we do not seem to find any clear intuition. The same may be said of promises obtained by illegal violence and intimidation. (to p. 279, l. 8.)

(p. 280, l. 16).... Under this head we may consider the undertaking of society to execute the testaments of dead persons: because, though there is here no express promise, there may be a sufficiently clear understanding to impose on society a duty of Good Faith. We have not now to discuss the political problem how far the right of bequest ought to be legally unrestricted in a well-ordered state: but rather whether, when a bequest of funds to certain public uses, under certain regulations and conditions, has once been legitimately made and carried into effect, the state has still a right to change the destination of the funds, at any subsequent period. There seem two distinct principles upon which it is sought to limit the obligation of a community in such cases.... (to l. 32.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF DUTIES.—VERACITY.

NOTE (at the end of the chapter).—Mr Stephen (*Science of Ethics*, ch. v. § 33) explains the exceptions to the rule of truth-speaking as follows.

"The rule, 'Lie not,' is the external rule, and corresponds approximately to the internal rule, 'Be trustworthy.' Cases occur where the rules diverge, and in such cases it is the internal rule which is morally approved. Truthfulness is the rule because in the vast majority of cases we trust a man in so far as he speaks the truth; in the exceptional cases, the mutual confidence would be violated when the truth, not when the lie, is spoken."

This explanation seems to me for several reasons inadequate. (1) If we may sometimes lie to defend the life or secrets of others, it is paradoxical to say that we may not do so to defend our own; but a falsehood in selfdefence obviously cannot be justified as an application of the maxim "be trustworthy." (2) Even when the falsehood is in legitimate defence of others against attacks, we cannot say that the speaker manifests "trustworthiness" without qualification; for the deceived assailant trusted his veracity, otherwise he would not have been deceived: the question therefore is under what circumstances the confidence of A that I shall speak the truth may legitimately be disappointed in order not to disappoint the confidence of B that I shall defend his life and honour. This question Mr Stephen's explanation does not in any way aid us to answer.

CHAPTER VIII.

OTHER SOCIAL DUTIES AND VIRTUES.

(Note to p. 294,)

[1] It is to be observed that men derive pleasure from the pains and losses of others, in various ways, without the specific emotion which I distinguish as malevolent affection: either (1) from the sense of power exercised—which explains much of the wanton cruelty of schoolboys, despots, &c.—or (2) from a sense of their own superiority or security in contrast with the failures and struggles of others, or (3) even merely from the excitement sympathetically caused by the manifestation or representation of any strong feeling in others; a real tragedy is interesting in the same way as a fictitious one. But these facts, though psychologically interesting, present no important ethical problems; since no one doubts that pain ought not to be inflicted from such motives as these.

On p. 296, l. 13, I have omitted the words "with Butler"; adding instead the following note.

[1] This last view does not differ much from Butler's (see Sermon VIII. *Upon Resentment*): but he recognizes that deliberate resentment "has in fact a good influence upon the affairs of the world;" though "it were much to be wished that men would act from a better principle".

(p. 299, l. 4).... The mean man then is apt to be despised as having the bad taste to shew this symbol needlessly, preferring a little gain to the respect of his fellow-men.

CHAPTER IX.

SELF-REGARDING VIRTUES.

§ 1. ...(p. 300, l. 9) within the limits fixed by other duties, Common Sense considers, I think[1], that it is a duty to seek our own happiness, except in so far as we can promote the welfare of others by sacrificing it. This "due concern about our own interest or happiness" may be called the Duty of Prudence. It should, however, be observed that—since it is less evident that men do not adequately desire their own greatest good, than that their efforts are not sufficiently well directed to its attainment,—in conceiving Prudence as a Virtue or Excellence, attention is often fixed almost exclusively on its intellectual side.... (to p. 301, l. 3.)

[1] Kant argues (*Metaph. of Ethics* § iv.) that as every one "inevitably wills" means to promote his own happiness this cannot be regarded as a duty. But, as I have before urged (Book I. ch. iv. § 1) a man does not "inevitably will" to do what he believes will be most conducive to his own *greatest* happiness.

The view in the text is that of Butler (Diss. 'Of the nature of Virtue'); who admits that "nature has not given us so sensible a disapprobation of imprudence and folly as of falsehood, injustice and cruelty"; but points out that such sensible disapprobation is for various reasons less needed in the former case.

CHAPTER X.

COURAGE, HUMILITY, &c.

§ 1. (p. 306, l. 23).... Now it seems plain that if we seek for a definition of *strict duty*, as commonly recognized, under the head either of Courage or of Fortitude, we can find none that does not involve a reference to other maxims and ends. For no one would say that it is our *duty* to face danger or to bear avoidable pain generally, but only if it meets us in the course of duty. And even this needs further qualification: for as regards such duties as those (*e.g.*) of general Benevolence, it would be commonly allowed that the agent's pain and danger are to be taken into account in practically determining their extent: thus one is not bound to attempt to save even the life of another if the risk of losing one's own is very great: and similarly for smaller services. On utilitarian principles it seems clear that we ought to endure any pain for the prevention of manifestly greater pain to another, or the attainment of an equivalent amount of positive good: and that we are bound to run any risk, if the chance of additional benefit to be gained for any one outweighs the chance of loss to ourselves if we fail. But it is doubtful whether the common estimate of the duty of Benevolence could be said to amount quite to this.... (to p. 307, l. 27.)

(Note to p. 308, l. 12.)

The above remarks apply in a less degree to the "moral courage" by which men face the pains and dangers of social disapproval in the performance of what they believe to be duty: for the adequate accomplishment of such acts depends less on qualities not within the control of the will at any given time.

(p. 309, l. 20).... I think that if we reflect carefully on the common judgments in which the notion of Humility is

used, we shall find that the quality commonly *praised* under this name (which is not always used eulogistically), is not properly regulative of the opinions we form of ourselves; for here as in other opinions we ought to aim at nothing but Truth: but tends to the repression of two different seductive emotions, one entirely self-regarding and internal, the other relating to others and partly taking effect in social behaviour. (to l. 28) ...(p. 310, l. 4). For all admit that self-respect is an important auxiliary to right conduct: and moralists continually point to the satisfactions of a good conscience as part of the natural reward which Providence has attached to virtue: yet it is difficult to separate the glow of self-approbation which attends the performance of a virtuous action from the complacent self-consciousness which Humility seems to exclude. Perhaps we may say that the feeling of self-approbation itself is natural and a legitimate pleasure, but that if prolonged and fostered it is liable to impede moral progress: and that what Humility prescribes is such repression of self-satisfaction as will tend on the whole to promote this end. On this view the maxim of Humility is clearly a dependent one: the end to which it is subordinate is progress in Virtue generally.... (to l. 19.)

(For last two sentences of p. 310.) It is thought to be our duty not even to exact, in many cases, the expression of reverence which others are strictly bound to pay.

CHAPTER XI.

REVIEW OF THE MORALITY OF COMMON SENSE.

...(p. 313, l. 29.) I now wish to subject the results of this survey to a final examination, in order to decide whether these general formulæ possess the characteristics by which self-evident truths are distinguished from mere opinions.

§ 2. There seem to be four conditions, the complete fulfilment of which would establish an apparently self-evident proposition in the highest degree of certainty attainable: and which must be approximately realized by the premises of our reasoning in any department of enquiry, if that reasoning is to lead us cogently to true conclusions.

I. The terms of the proposition must be clear and precise....

II. The self-evidence of the proposition must be ascertained by careful reflection. It is needful to insist on this, because most persons are liable to confound intuitions, on the one hand with mere impressions or impulses, which to careful observation do not present themselves as claiming objective validity; and on the other hand, with mere opinions, to which the familiarity that comes from frequent hearing and repetition often gives an illusory air of self-evidence which attentive reflection disperses. In such cases the Cartesian method of testing the ultimate premises of our reasonings, by asking ourselves if we clearly and distinctly apprehend them to be true, may be of real use; though it does not as Descartes supposed, afford a complete protection against error.... (to p. 314, l. 30.)

...(p. 321, l. 30). And if we confine ourselves to the special relations where Common Sense admits no doubt as to the broad moral obligation of at least rendering such services as affection

naturally prompts, still the recognized rules of external duty in these relations are, in the first place, wanting in definiteness and precision: and secondly, they do not, when rigorously examined, appear to be, or be referable to, any independent intuitions so far as the *particularity* of the duties is concerned. Let us take, for example, the duty of parents to children. ...(p. 322, l. 9). If, however, we consider the duty of parents by itself, out of connexion with this social order, it is certainly not self-evident that we owe more to our own children than to others whose happiness equally depends on our exertions. To get the question clear, let us suppose that I am thrown with my family upon a desert island, where I find an abandoned orphan. Is it evident that I am less bound to provide this child, as far as lies in my power, with the means of subsistence, than I am to provide for my own children? According to some, my special duty to the latter would arise from the fact that I have brought them into being: but, if so, it would seem that on this principle I have a right to diminish their happiness, provided I do not turn it into a negative quantity. (to l. 24.)...

...(p. 325, l. 12)... when we ask how far we are bound to give up our own happiness in order to promote that of our fellows, Common Sense seems not distinctly to accept the Utilitarian principle, and yet not definitely to affirm any other.

And even the common principle of Gratitude, though its stringency is immediately and universally felt, seems yet essentially indeterminate: ...(l. 27)... And if we scrutinize closely the common moral notion of Retributive Justice, it appears, strictly taken, to imply the metaphysical doctrine of Free Will; since, according to this conception, the reasonableness of rewarding merit is considered solely in relation to the past, without regard to the future bad consequences to be expected from leaving merit without encouragement: and if every excellence in any one's actions or productions seems referable ultimately to causes other than himself, the individual's claim to requital, from this point of view, appears to vanish.... (to l. 36.)

(p. 327, l. 19 for 'control' read 'cause an external control of".)

(p. 335, after l. 36.) For example, the distinction between perfectly stringent moral obligations, and such laxer duties as may be modified by a man's own act, is often taken: and it is

one which, as we saw, is certainly required in formulating the Common Sense view of the effect of a promise in creating new obligations: but it is one which we cannot apply with any practical precision, because of the high degree of indeterminateness which we find in the common notions of duties to which the highest degree of stringency is yet commonly attributed.

CHAPTER XII.

MOTIVES OR SPRINGS OF ACTION CONSIDERED AS SUBJECTS OF MORAL JUDGMENT.

§ 1. In the first chapter of this third Book I was careful to point out that motives, as well as intentions, form part of the subject-matter of our common moral judgments....

(l. 17.) To avoid confusion, it should be observed that the term 'motive' is commonly used in two ways. It is sometimes applied to those among the foreseen consequences of any act which the agent desired in willing: and sometimes to the desire, or conscious impulse itself....(p. 338, l. 10.) In this chapter then I shall use the term Motive to denote the desires of particular results, believed to be attainable as consequences of our voluntary acts, by which we are stimulated to will those acts[1].

[1] In Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book II. chaps. i. and ii. a peculiar view is taken of "motives, of that kind by which it is the characteristic of moral or human action, to be determined." Such motives, it is maintained, must be distinguished from desires in the sense of "mere solicitations of which a man is conscious;" they are "constituted by the reaction of the man's self upon these, and its identification of itself with one of them." In fact the "direction of the self-conscious self to the realization of an object" which I should call an act of will, is the phenomenon to which Green would restrict the term "desire in that sense in which desire is the principle and notion of an improbable human action."

The use of terms here suggested appears to me inconvenient, and the psychological analysis implied in it to a great extent erroneous. I admit that in certain simple cases of choice, where the alternatives suggested are each prompted by a single definite desire, there is no psychological inaccuracy in saying that in willing the act to which he is stimulated by any such desire the agent "identifies himself with the desire." But in more complex cases the phrase appears to me incorrect, as obliterating important distinctions between the two kinds of psychical phenomena which are usually and conveniently distinguished as

(p. 341, l. 34).... For moralists of a Stoical cast (such as Kant) regard all actions as bad—or not good—which are not done from pure love of virtue, or choice of Right as Right. While Hutcheson, who represents the opposite pole of Intuitional Ethics, equally distinguishes the love of Virtue as a separate impulse.

"desires" and volitions. In the first place as I have before pointed out (ch. i. § 2 of this Book), it often happens that certain foreseen consequences of volition, which as foreseen are undoubtedly *willed* and—in a sense—*chosen* by the agents, are not objects of desire to him at all, but even possibly of aversion—aversion, of course, overcome by his desire of other consequences of the same act. In the second place, it is specially important, from an ethical point of view, to notice that, among the various desires or aversions aroused in us by the complex foreseen consequences of a contemplated act, there are often impulses with which we do not identify ourselves, but which we even try to suppress as far as possible: though as it is not possible to suppress them completely—especially if we do the act to which they prompt—we cannot say that they do not operate as motives.

CHAPTER XIII.

PHILOSOPHICAL INTUITIONISM.

(p. 348, l. 16)... One important lesson which the history of moral philosophy teaches is that, in this region, even powerful intellects are liable to acquiesce in tautologies of this kind; sometimes expanded into circular reasonings, sometimes hidden in the recesses of an obscure notion, often lying so near the surface that, when once they have been exposed, it is hard to understand how they could ever have presented themselves as important.

(p. 353, l. 20).... Nor is it even true to say that we ought to do to others only what we think it right for them to do to us; for no one will deny that there may be differences in the circumstances—and even in the natures—of two individuals, A and B, which would make it wrong for A to treat B in the way in which it is right for B to treat A. In short the self-evident principle strictly stated must take some such negative form as this; 'it cannot be right for A to treat B in a manner in which it would be wrong for B to treat A, merely on the ground that they are two different individuals, and without there being any difference between the natures or circumstances of the two which can be stated as a reasonable ground for difference of treatment.' Such a principle manifestly does not give complete guidance—indeed its effect, strictly speaking, is merely to throw a definite *onus probandi* on the man who applies to another a treatment of which he would complain if applied to himself; but Common Sense has amply recognized the practical importance of the maxim: and its truth, so far as it goes, is certainly self-evident. (to l. 34.)

...(p. 354, l. 26). I have already referred to this principle[1] as that 'of impartial concern for all parts of our conscious life':—we might express it concisely by saying 'that Hereafter *as such* is to be regarded neither less nor more than Now.' It is not, of course, meant that the good of the present may not reasonably be preferred to that of the future on account of its greater certainty: or again, that a week ten years hence may not be more important to us than a week now, through an increase in our means or capacities of happiness. All that the principle affirms is that the mere difference of priority and posteriority in time is not a reasonable ground for having more regard to the consciousness of one moment than to that of another. (to l. 32.)

(p. 355, l. 27).... And as rational beings we are bound to aim at good generally,—so far as we recognize it as attainable by our efforts—not merely at this or that part of it; we can only evade the conviction of this obligation by denying that there is any such universal good.

This, then, I hold to be the abstract principle of the duty of Benevolence, so far as it is cognizable by direct intuition; that one is morally bound to regard the good of any other individual as much as one's own, except in so far as we judge it to be less, when impartially viewed, or less certainly knowable or attainable.... I think that a 'plain man,' in this age and country at least, if his conscience were fairly brought to consider the hypothetical question, whether it would be morally right for him to seek his own happiness on any occasion if it involved a certain sacrifice of the greater happiness of some other human being, —without any counterbalancing gain to any one else—would answer unhesitatingly in the negative.

I have tried to shew how in the principles of Prudence, Justice and Rational Benevolence as commonly recognized there is at least a self-evident element, immediately cognizable by abstract intuition; depending in each case on the relation which individuals and their particular ends bear to the wholes of which they are parts. I regard the apprehension, with more or less distinctness, of these abstract truths, as the permanent basis of the common conviction that the fundamental precepts

[1] Cf. *ante*, note to p. 120.

of morality are essentially reasonable. No doubt by loose thinkers these principles are often placed side by side with other precepts to which custom and general consent have given a merely illusory air of self-evidence: but the distinction between the two kinds of maxims appears to me to become manifest by merely reflecting upon them. I know by direct reflection that the propositions 'I ought to speak the truth,' 'I ought to keep my promises'—however true they may be—are not self-evident to me; they present themselves as propositions requiring rational justification of some kind. On the other hand, the propositions, 'I ought not to prefer a present lesser good to a future greater good,' and 'I ought not to prefer my own lesser good to the greater good of another[1]' do present themselves as self-evident; as much (*e.g.*) as the mathematical axiom that 'if equals be added to equals the wholes are equal.'

It is on account of the fundamental and manifest importance, in my view, of the distinction above drawn between (1) the moral maxims which reflection shews not to possess ultimate validity, and (2) the moral maxims which are or involve genuine ethical axioms, that I refrained at the outset of this investigation from entering at length into the psychogonical question as to the origin of apparent moral intuitions. For no psychogonical theory has ever been put forward professing to discredit the propositions that I regard as really axiomatic, by shewing that the causes which produced them were such as had a tendency to make them false: while as regards the former class of maxims, a psychogonical proof that they are untrustworthy when taken as absolutely and without qualification true is, in my view, superfluous: since direct reflection shews me that they have no claim to be so taken. On the other hand, so far as psychogonical theory represents moral rules as, speaking broadly and generally, means to the ends of individual and social Good or well-being, it obviously tends to give a general support to the conclusions to which the preceding discussion has brought us by a different method: since it leads us to

[1] To avoid misapprehension I should state that in these propositions the consideration of the different degrees of *certainty* of present and future, Self and Other, respectively is supposed to have been fully taken into account *before* the future or alien Good is judged to be greater.

regard other moral rules as subordinate to the principles of Prudence and Benevolence. It may, however, be thought that in exhibiting this aspect of the morality of Common Sense, psychogonical theory leads us to define in a particular way the general notion of 'good' or 'well-being,' regarded as a result which morality has a demonstrable natural tendency to produce. This question will be most conveniently considered in subsequent chapters[1].

§ 4. I should, however, rely less confidently on the conclusions set forth in the preceding section, if they did not appear to me to be in substantial agreement—in spite of superficial differences—with the doctrines of those moralists who have been most in earnest in seeking among commonly received moral rules for genuine intuitions of the Practical Reason. I have already pointed out[2] that in the history of English Ethics the earlier intuitional school shew, in this respect, a turn of thought on the whole more philosophical than that which the reaction against Hume rendered prevalent. Among the writers of this school there is no one who shews more earnestness in the effort to penetrate to really self-evident principles than Clarke. ...(to p. 356, l. 25.)

(p. 357, l. 24).... And thus his principle is implicitly what was stated above, that the good or welfare of any one individual must as such be an object of rational aim to any other reasonable individual no less than his own similar good or welfare.

(p. 360, l. 12).... But the subjective ends of other men, which Benevolence directs us to take as our own ends, would seem, according to Kant's own view, to depend upon and correspond to their *non-rational* impulses—their empirical desires and aversions. It is hard to see why, if man *as a rational being* is an absolute end to other rational beings, they must therefore adopt his subjective aims as determined by his non-rational impulses. And, as I have before argued[3], the rational end or good of the individual cannot be identified with the object of his actual desires, even if we add the qualification 'so far as these desires are mutually consistent.'

[1] Cf. *post* ch. xiv. § 1: and Book iv. ch. iv.

[2] Cf. *ante* Book i. ch. viii. pp. 98, 99.

[3] Book i. ch. ix. § 3.

The nature of Ultimate Good will be further considered in the next chapter. Meanwhile I observe that by whatever arguments it is reached, Kant's conclusion is in substantial agreement with the view of the duty of Rational Benevolence that I gave in § 3. (to l. 26.)...

(after l. 30.) I must now point out—if it has not long been apparent to the reader—that the self-evident principles laid down in § 3 do not specially belong to Intuitionism in the restricted sense which, for clear distinction of methods, I gave to this term at the outset of our investigation. The axiom of Prudence, as I have given it, is the self-evident principle on which, according to me, Rational Egoism is based; it makes explicit the ground on which Butler, Reid and their followers have attributed "reasonableness" and "authority" to self-love[1]. Again, the axiom of Justice or Equity as above stated—'that similar cases ought to be treated similarly'—belongs in all its applications to Utilitarianism as much as to any system commonly called Intuitional: while the axiom of Rational Benevolence is, in my view, required as a rational basis for the Utilitarian system.

§ 6. We seem then to have arrived, in our search for really clear and certain ethical intuitions, at the fundamental maxim of Utilitarianism. It must be admitted indeed that the thinkers who in recent times have taught this latter system, have not, for the most part, expressly tried to exhibit the truth of their first principle by means of any such procedure as that above given. Still, whenever they do offer any "considerations capable of determining the reason to give assent[2] to the principle of utility," their reasoning seems to involve some such procedure, or at least to be logically incomplete without it....(to p. 361, l. 2.)

(p. 361, l. 21).... in giving as a statement of this principle that "the general happiness is *desirable*," he must be understood to mean (and his whole treatise shews that he does mean) that it is what each individual *ought* to desire, or at

[1] On the relation of Rational Self-love to Rational Benevolence—which I regard as the profoundest problem of Ethics—my final view is given in the last chapter of this treatise.

[2] Cf. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. i. p. 6.

least—in the stricter sense of 'ought'—to aim at realizing in action. But this proposition is not established by Mill's reasoning, even if we grant that what is actually desired may be legitimately inferred to be in this sense desirable. For an aggregate of actual desires, each directed towards a different part of the general happiness, does not constitute an actual desire for the general happiness, existing in any individual; and Mill would certainly not contend that a desire which does not exist in any individual can possibly exist in an aggregate of individuals. There being therefore no actual desire—so far as this reasoning goes—for the general happiness, the proposition that the general happiness is desirable cannot be in this way established. In fact there is a gap in the expressed argument, which must, I think, have been consciously or unconsciously filled in Mill's mind by what I have above tried to exhibit as the intuition of Rational Benevolence.

Utilitarianism is thus presented as the final form into which Intuitionism tends to pass, when the demand for really self-evident first principles is rigorously pressed....(to l. 34.)

CHAPTER XIV.

ULTIMATE GOOD.

§ 1. At the outset of this treatise[1] I noticed that there are two forms in which the object of ethical inquiry is considered; it is sometimes regarded as a Rule or Rules of Conduct, 'the Right,' sometimes as an end or ends, 'the Good.' I shall presently explain why, in my view, the distinction between these two notions is to be treated as ultimate and irreducible: for the present, it is enough to say that in the moral consciousness of modern Europe the two notions are *prima facie* distinct. (to l. 9)...(l. 18.) But now, if the conclusions of the preceding chapters are to be trusted, it would seem (1) that most of the commonly received maxims of Duty—even of those which at first sight appear absolute and independent—are found when closely examined to contain an implicit subordination to the more general principles of Prudence and Benevolence: and (2) that no principles except these—and the formal principle of Justice or Equity, which is included in Universal Benevolence, as commonly conceived[2]—can be admitted as at once intuitively clear and certain. (to p. 364, l. 1.)

(p. 365, l. 25.) And if this be true of Virtue, it seems to be yet more evidently true of most of the other graces and gifts, bodily or mental, which make up the common notion of human Excellence or Perfection. Although the goodness of such gifts and skills may be recognized and admired instinctively, reflection shews us that they are conceived as essentially relative to some Good which they contribute to produce and maintain. Thus, though from a practical point of view I fully recognize the importance of urging that men should aim at an ideal of cha-

[1] Cf. Bk. I. ch. i. § 2.

[2] My own exact view of the relation of Justice to Rational Benevolence will be given later (Book IV. ch. i. § 2).

racter, and consider action in its effects on character, I cannot therefore infer that virtues or talents, faculties, habits, or dispositions of any kind, are the constituents of Ultimate Good. Indeed it seems to me that the opposite is implied in the very conception of a faculty or disposition; it can only be defined as a tendency to act or feel in a certain way under certain conditions; and such a tendency is obviously not valuable in itself but for the acts and feelings in which it takes effect, or for the ulterior consequences of these—which consequences, again, cannot be regarded as Ultimate Good, so long as they are merely conceived as modifications of faculties, dispositions, &c. When, therefore, I say that effects on character are important, it is a summary way of saying that by the laws of our mental constitution the present act or feeling is a cause tending to modify importantly our acts and feelings in the indefinite future: the comparatively permanent result supposed to be produced in the mind or soul, being a tendency that will shew itself in an indefinite number of particular acts and feelings, may easily be more important than a single act or the transient feeling of a single moment: but its comparative permanence is no ground for regarding it as a constituent of ultimate good; as it is as permanently conducive to something else that we value it. The skill of a chess-player is permanent as compared with the games in which it is exhibited: but it would be paradoxical to say that the games are desirable for the sake of the skill and not the skill for the sake of the amusement; and the same thing is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of all the elements of our common notion of perfection of intellect or character.

Have we then simply to fall back on the other answer which Greek speculation brought out in continually sharper antithesis to the view that Ultimate Good was Virtue; and say that it is Pleasure or Happiness? Perhaps the majority of mankind would affirm this without hesitation; and accordingly in my examination of the common rules of morality I have sometimes stated 'general happiness' as the end or standard to which the rule was found implicitly to refer[1]. But more often it has

[1] I have done this (*e.g.*) in the case of Benevolence; and elsewhere where *pain* or *pleasure* of any kind seemed clearly to come within the purview of Common Sense.

seemed to me more correct to give the reference vaguely to 'good' (or sometimes 'expediency') or wellbeing; recognizing that there are many persons who are not prepared to interpret these wider notions in terms of Pleasure. It remains, then, to ask, what we can say of Good or Wellbeing, if we are not to say that it is Happiness, nor yet Perfection of Character?

§ 2. In ch. ix. of Book I. we were led to the conclusion that none of the comparatively permanent things which we commonly judge to be good could, on reflection, be maintained to be ultimately good and desirable for man, except some quality of human existence itself: and if, on the grounds above stated, Goodness of character is excluded, the only alternative seems to be to say that what is ultimately Good, must be Good or desirable Conscious Life.

And we may limit the notion yet further: for when we reflect upon Conscious Life, it becomes evident that we can attach no intrinsic value to the merely corporeal side of our organic life, the movements in the particles of organized matter which we suppose to be inseparable concomitants of our ever-varying conscious states. That these movements, considered in themselves, should be of one kind rather than another, or that they should be continued for a longer rather than a shorter period, is in itself quite indifferent to us. If therefore a certain quality of human Life is that which is ultimately desirable, it must be human Life regarded on its psychical side, or, briefly, Consciousness.

I cannot therefore accept a view of the wellbeing or welfare of human beings—as of other living things—which is suggested by current zoological conceptions and apparently maintained with more or less definiteness by influential writers; according to which, when we attribute goodness or badness to the manner of existence of any living organism, we should be understood to attribute to it a tendency either (1) to self-preservation or (2) to the preservation of the community or race to which it belongs —so that what "Wellbeing" adds to mere "Being" is just promise of future being. It appears to me that this doctrine needs only to be distinctly contemplated in order to be rejected. If all life were as little desirable as some portions of it have been, in my own experience and in that (I believe) of all or

most men, I should judge all tendency to the preservation of it to be unmitigatedly bad. Actually, no doubt, as I am not a pessimist, I regard what is preservative of life as generally good, and what is destructive of life as bad: and I quite admit that a most fundamentally important part of the function of morality consists in maintaining such habits and sentiments as are necessary to the continued existence, in full numbers, of a society of human beings under their actual conditions of life. But this is not because the mere existence of human organisms, even if prolonged to eternity, appears to me in any way desirable; it is only assumed to be so because it is supposed to be accompanied by Consciousness on the whole desirable; it is therefore this Desirable Consciousness which we must regard as ultimate Good.

At this point it seems that many utilitarians would consider that no further establishment of their fundamental principle is required; that when we have limited the application of the notion Good to Consciousness, we have really identified it with Happiness; that to say that all other things called good are only means to the end of making consciousness intrinsically better or more desirable, is in fact saying that they are means to the end of happiness. But very important distinctions remain to be considered. In the first place, it is not a sufficient account of the elements of happiness to say that they are "desirable feelings": it is essential, as I before explained, to state that the desirability of each feeling is only directly cognizable by the sentient individual at the time of feeling it, and that therefore this particular judgment of the sentient individual must be taken as final[1] on the question how far each element of feeling has the quality of Ultimate Good. Now no one, I conceive, would estimate in any other way the desirability of feeling considered merely as feeling: but our conscious experience includes other psychical phenomena besides feelings; it includes Cognitions and Volitions, and it is not obvious that the desirability of these is to be estimated by the standard above stated.

[1] Final, that is, so far as the quality of the present feeling is concerned. I have pointed out that so far as any estimate of the desirability or pleasantness of a feeling involves comparison with feelings only represented in idea, it is liable to be erroneous through imperfections in the representation.

I think, however, that when we reflect on a cognition as a transient fact of an individual's psychical experience,—distinguishing it on the one hand from the feeling that normally accompanies it, and on the other hand from that relation of the knowing mind to the object known which is implied in the term "true" or "valid cognition[1]";—it is seen to be an element of consciousness quite neutral in respect of desirability: and similarly as regards Volition. It is no doubt true that in ordinary thought consciousness, active and passive, is judged to be preferable on other grounds than its pleasantness: but the explanation of this seems to be (as was suggested in Book II. ch. ii. § 2) that what in such cases we really prefer is no longer the present consciousness itself, but either effects on future consciousness more or less distinctly foreseen, or else something in the conditions or concomitants of the present consciousness. (to p. 367, l. 7.)

(p. 367, l. 27).... Similarly, a man may prefer freedom and penury to a life of luxurious servitude, not because the pleasant consciousness of being free outweighs in prospect all the comforts and securities that the other life would afford, but because he has a predominant aversion to that relation between his will and the will of another which we call slavery: or, again, a philosopher may choose what he conceives as 'inner freedom' —the consistent self-determination of the will—rather than the gratifications of appetite; though recognizing that the latter are more desirable, considered merely as transient feelings. Here, too, he may perhaps be led to regard his preference as mistaken, if he be afterwards persuaded that there is no such thing as Freedom; that we are all slaves of circumstances, destiny, &c. (to l. 36.)

(p. 371, l. 15.) It may, however, be said that the individual who prefers another's happiness to his own, on the ground that it is reasonable to do so, must regard the realization of Reason, and not happiness, as his own Good—since we have defined Good to be what a man may reasonably desire—; and that if it be a Good for him to act on this preference he must recognize it as a

[1] The term "cognition" without qualification more often implies what is signified by "true" or "valid": but for the present purpose it is necessary to eliminate this implication.

Good for others; so that there will be two incommensurable ultimate Goods for each and all, Conformity to Reason and Happiness. Here we must carefully distinguish a mere question of words from a question of ethical principle. The latter it will be perhaps easier to raise clearly by asking (1) whether real self-sacrifice —the sacrifice of one's own 'good on the whole' to that of others—is conceivable; and (2) whether, if so, what appears to be real self-sacrifice is under any circumstances dictated by the moral Reason and Conscience of mankind. It seems to me clear that Common Sense answers these questions in the affirmative; while at the same time holding—as Butler interprets it—that "self love" no less than Conscience is "reasonable" and therefore a ruling principle in the nature of man, which must somehow be reconciled with conscience if action in conformity with man's rational nature is to be really possible. I follow Butler in recognizing this Dualism of the Practical Reason, which I regard as an irreducible result of ethical reflection: and I consider that the best mode of recognizing it is to adopt as final the distinction in ordinary use between the terms Right and Good, and say that, in the case supposed, self-sacrifice is judged to be morally Right, though—*ex vi termini*—it is not judged to be Good on the whole for the self-sacrificing individual. My object in thus distinguishing the terms is not in any way to obscure the apparent conflict of Practical Reason with itself; but rather to assist in making clear wherein it consists: i.e. in the inevitable twofold conception of a human individual as a whole in himself, and a part of a larger whole. There is something that it is reasonable for him to desire, when he considers himself as an independent unit, and something again which he must recognize as reasonably to be desired, when he takes the point of view of a larger whole; the former of these objects I call his own Ultimate "Good," and the latter Ultimate Good taken universally; while to the sacrifice of the part to the whole, which is from the point of view of the whole reasonable, I apply the different term "right," to avoid confusion[1].

The fact that, in the earlier age of ethical thought which

[1] This 'Dualism of the Practical Reason' will be further discussed in the concluding chapter of the treatise.

Greek philosophy represents, men sometimes judged an act to be 'good' for the agent, and what he for his own sake would reasonably desire to do, even while recognizing that its consequences would be on the whole painful to him,—as (*e.g.*) a heroic exchange of a life full of happiness for a painful death at the call of duty—should be explained, I think, in two ways combined: partly, in my opinion, it is to be attributed ...(to p. 371, last line.)

Omit from p. 374, l. 20 to the end.

BOOK IV.

UTILITARIANISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE MEANING OF UTILITARIANISM.

...(p. 380, l. 25.) An Intuitionist might accept this theory, so far as it is capable of scientific proof, and still hold that these moral sentiments, being found in our present consciousness as independent impulses, ought to possess the authority that they seem to claim over the more primary desires and aversions from which they have sprung: and an Egoist on the other hand might fully admit the altruistic element of the derivation, and still hold that these and all other impulses (including even Universal Benevolence) are properly under the rule of Rational self-love: and that it is really only reasonable to gratify them in so far as we may expect to find our private happiness in such gratification. In short, what is often called the "utilitarian" theory of the origin of the moral sentiments cannot by itself provide a proof of the ethical doctrine to which I in this treatise restrict the term Utilitarianism. I think, however, that this psychological theory has an important though subordinate place in the establishment of Ethical Utilitarianism, the precise nature of which I shall hereafter examine[1]. (to p. 381, l. 29.)

[1] Cf. *post*, ch. iv.

...(p. 382, l. 10.) And of course, here as before, the assumption is involved that all pleasures included in our calculation are capable of being compared quantitatively with one another and with all pains; that every such feeling has a certain intensive quantity positive or negative (or, perhaps, zero), in respect of its desirableness, and that this quantity may be to some extent known: so that each may be at least roughly weighed in ideal scales against any other....

...(p. 385, l. 2.) The principle which most Utilitarians have either tacitly or expressly adopted is that of pure equality—at any rate so far as the persons among whom happiness is to be distributed do not include the agent[1]—as given in Bentham's formula, "everybody to count for one, and nobody for more than one." And this principle is obviously the simplest, and the only one which does not need a special justification; for, as we saw, it must be reasonable to treat any one man in the same way as any other, if there be no reason apparent for treating him differently[2].

[1] Utilitarians have not usually considered very closely the question *how far* it is right for *A* to sacrifice his own happiness for that of *B*: and probably most of them would consider it extravagant to demand that the agent should give no preference to himself, in the case supposed in the text.

[2] It should be observed that the question here is as to the distribution of *Happiness*, not the *means of happiness*.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROOF OF UTILITARIANISM.

In Book II., where we discussed the method of Egoistic Hedonism, we did not take occasion to examine any proof of its first principle: and in the case of Universalistic Hedonism also, what chiefly concerns us is not how its principle is to be proved to those who do not accept it, but what consequences are logically involved in its acceptance. At the same time it is important to observe that the principle of aiming at universal happiness is more generally felt to require some proof, or at least (as Mill puts it) some "considerations determining the mind to accept it," than the principle of aiming at one's own happiness. From the point of view, indeed, of abstract philosophy, I do not see why the Egoistic principle should pass unchallenged any more than Universalistic. Apart from the aversion, already noticed, which many minds have to Egoism as base and despicable, which leads them to cling eagerly to that state of choice in which they prefer something else to their own feelings, and refuse to acquiesce in any other attitude[1], I do not see why the axiom of Prudence should not be questioned on a ground similar to that on which Egoists refuse to admit the axiom of Rational Benevolence. If the Utilitarian has to answer the question, 'Why should I sacrifice my own happiness for the greater happiness of another?' it must surely be admissible to ask the Egoist, 'Why should I sacrifice a present pleasure for a greater one in the future? Why should I concern myself about my own future feelings any more than about the feelings of other persons?'... (to p. 387, l. 9.)

[1] I have before suggested a Utilitarian explanation of this. Cf. B. III. ch. xiv. § 3.

(l. 19.) However, I do not press this question now; since it undoubtedly seems to Common Sense paradoxical to ask for a reason why one should seek one's own happiness on the whole; nor do I myself require such a reason. Arguments for conforming to the commonly received rules of morality are not, perhaps, held to be equally superfluous: indeed we find that utilitarian reasons are continually given for this and that particular moral maxim. Still the fact that certain rules are commonly received as binding renders it generally unnecessary to prove their authority to the Common Sense that receives them: while for the same reason a Utilitarian who claims to supersede them by a higher principle is naturally challenged, by Intuitionists no less than by Egoists, to demonstrate the legitimacy of his claim....(to l. 31.)

(p. 388, l. 27.) If the Egoist strictly confines himself to stating his conviction that he ought to take his own happiness or pleasure as his ultimate end, there seems no opening for any line of reasoning to lead him to Universalistic Hedonism as a first principle[1]; it cannot be proved that the difference between his own happiness and another's happiness is not *for him* all-important....(p. 389, l. 6.) When, however, the Egoist puts forward, implicitly or explicitly, the proposition that his happiness or pleasure is Good, not only *for him* but from the point of view of the Universe,—as (*e.g.*) by saying that 'nature designed him to seek his own happiness',—it then becomes relevant to point out to him that *his* happiness cannot be a more important part of Good, taken universally, than the equal happiness of any other person....

[1] It is to be observed that he may be led to it in other ways than that of argument: *i.e.* by appeals to his sympathies, or to his moral or quasi-moral sentiments.

CHAPTER III.

RELATION OF UTILITARIANISM TO THE MORALITY OF COMMON SENSE.

§ 1. It has been before observed (B. I. c. vi.) that the two sides of the double relation in which Utilitarianism stands to the Morality of Common Sense have been respectively prominent at two different periods in the history of English ethical thought. Since Bentham we have been chiefly familiar with the negative or aggressive aspect of the former method. But when Cumberland, replying to Hobbes, put forward the general tendency of the received moral rules to promote the "common Good[1] of all Rationals" his aim was simply Conservative:...In Hume's treatise this coincidence is drawn out more in detail, and with a more definite assertion that the perception of utility[2] (or the reverse) is in each case the source of the moral likings (or aversions) which are excited in us by different qualities of human character and conduct....(to p. 391, l. 22.)

[1] It ought to be observed that Cumberland does not adopt a hedonistic interpretation of Good. Still, I have followed Hallam in regarding him as the founder of English Utilitarianism: since it seems to have been by a gradual and half-unconscious process that 'Good' came to have the definitely hedonistic meaning which it has implicitly in Shaftesbury's system, and explicitly in that of Hume.

[2] I should point out that Hume uses "utility" in a narrower sense than that which Bentham gave it, and one more in accordance with the usage of ordinary language. He distinguishes the "useful" from the "immediately agreeable": so that while recognizing "utility" as the main ground of our moral approbation of the more important virtues, he holds that there are other elements of personal merit which we approve because they are "immediately agreeable", either to the person possessed of them or to others. It appears, however, more convenient to use the word in the wider sense in which it has been current since Bentham.

(p. 395, l. 35.) In the first place, we must carefully distinguish between the recognition of goodness in dispositions, and the recognition of rightness in conduct....(p. 396, l. 16)... Secondly, although, in the view of a Utilitarian, only the useful is praiseworthy, he is not bound to maintain that it is necessarily worthy of praise in proportion as it is useful. From a Utilitarian point of view, as has been before said, we must mean by calling a quality 'deserving of praise', that it is expedient to praise it, with a view to its future production; accordingly, in distributing our praise of human qualities, on utilitarian principles, we have to consider primarily not the usefulness of the quality, but the usefulness of the praise: and it is obviously not expedient to encourage by praise qualities which are likely to be found in excess rather than in defect....(to l. 23)...(p. 397, l. 4) so that humility gives us an agreeable surprise, and hence Common Sense may naturally overlook the more latent and remote bad consequences of undue self-distrust.

We may observe further that the perplexity which we seemed to find in the Morality of Common Sense, as to the relation of moral excellence to moral effort, is satisfactorily explained and removed when we adopt a Utilitarian point of view: for on the one hand it is easy to see how certain acts—such as kind services—are likely to be more felicific when performed without effort, and from other motives than regard for duty: while on the other hand a person who in doing similar acts achieves a triumph of duty over strong seductive inclinations, exhibits thereby a character which we recognize as felicific in a more general way, as tending to a general performance of duty in all departments. So again, there is a simple and obvious utilitarian solution of another difficulty which I noticed, as to the choice between Subjective and Objective rightness in the exceptional case in which alone the two can be presented as alternatives; *i.e.* when we are considering whether we shall influence another to act contrary to his conviction as to what is right. A utilitarian would decide the question by weighing the external felicific consequences of the particular right act against the infelicific results to be apprehended hereafter from the moral deterioration of the person whose conscientious convictions were overborne by other motives: unless the former effects were very

important he would certainly regard the danger to character as the greater: but if the other's mistaken sense of duty threatened to cause a grave disaster, he would not hesitate to overbear it by any motives which it was in his power to apply. And in practice I think that the Common Sense of mankind would come to similar conclusions by more vague and unconscious modes of reasoning. (to p. 397, l. 7.)

(p. 399, l. 6.)...And besides, it is under the stimulus of self-interest—at least as expanded into *domestic* interest—that the active energies of most men are most easily and thoroughly drawn out ... (p. 399, l. 27) a spectator is often unable to judge whether happiness is lost on the whole, as (*a*) he cannot tell how far he who makes the sacrifice is compensated by sympathetic and moral pleasure, and (*b*) the remoter felicific consequences flowing from the moral effects of such a sacrifice on the agent and on others have to be taken into account.

(p. 410, after l. 2.) Here in the first place we may explain, on utilitarian principles, why apparently arbitrary inequality in a certain part of the conduct of individuals[1] is not regarded as injustice or even—in some cases—as in any way censurable. For freedom of action is an important source of happiness to the agents, and a socially useful stimulus to their energies: hence it is obviously expedient that a man's free choice in the distribution of wealth or kind services should not be restrained by the fear of legal penalties, or even of social disapprobation, beyond what the interests of others clearly require; and therefore, when distinctly recognized claims are satisfied, it is *pro tanto* expedient that the mere preferences of an individual should be treated by others as legitimate grounds for inequality in the distribution of his property or services. Nay, as we have before seen, it is within certain limits expedient that each individual should practically regard his own unreasoned impulses as reasonable grounds of action: as in the rendering of services prompted by such affections as are normally and properly spontaneous and unforced.

Passing to consider the general principles upon which 'just claims' as commonly recognized appear to be based, we notice that the grounds of a number of such claims may be brought

[1] Cf. *ante*, p. 266 note.

under the general head of 'normal expectations: but that the stringency of such obligations varies much in degree, (to l. 5.)...

(p. 412, l. 31.) It seems, however, that what we commonly demand or long for, under the name of Ideal Justice, is not so much the realization of Freedom, as the distribution of good and evil according to Desert: indeed it is as a means to this latter end that Freedom is often advocated; for it is said that if we protect men completely from mutual interference, each will reap the good and bad consequences of his own conduct, and so be happy or unhappy in proportion to his deserts. In particular, it has been widely held that if a free exchange of wealth and services is allowed, each individual will obtain from society, in money or other advantages, what his services are really worth. We saw, however, that the price which an individual obtains under a system of perfect free trade, for wealth or services exchanged by him, may for several reasons be not proportioned to the social utility of what he exchanges: and if we inquire how far and why Common Sense admits this proportion as legitimate, the answer seems to be that it does admit it to some extent, under the influence of utilitarian considerations correcting the spontaneous utterances of our common moral sentiments.

To take a particular case: if a moral man were asked how far *A* is justified in taking advantage in bargaining of the ignorance of *B*, probably his first impulse would be to condemn such a procedure altogether. But reflection, I think, would shew him that such a censure would be too sweeping: that it would be contrary to Common Sense to "blame *A* for having, in negociating with a stranger *B*, taken advantage of *B*'s ignorance of facts known to himself, provided that *A*'s superior knowledge had been obtained by a legitimate use of diligence and foresight, which *B* might have used with equal success. What prevents us from censuring in this and similar cases is, I conceive, a more or less conscious apprehension of the indefinite loss to the wealth of the community that is likely to result from any effective social restrictions on the free pursuit and exercise" of economic knowledge. And for somewhat similar reasons of general expediency, if the question be raised whether it is fair for a class of persons to gain by the unfavourable economic situation of any class with which they deal, Common Sense at

least hesitates to censure such gains—at any rate when such unfavourable situation is due "to the gradual action of general causes, for the existence of which the persons who gain are not specially responsible[1]".

And, to speak more generally, the principle of 'requiting desert', so far as Common Sense really accepts it as practically applicable to the relations of men in society, is quite in harmony with Utilitarianism, if only we give the notions of 'good' and 'ill' desert a Utilitarian interpretation: to which Common Sense when dealing practically with particulars, seems at least to offer no obstacle (to p. 413, l. 5.)....

(p. 418, l. 37.) This view has perhaps a superficial plausibility: but it ignores the essential fact that it is only by the present severe enforcement against unchaste women of the penalties of social contempt and exclusion, resting on moral disapprobation, that the class of courtezans is kept sufficiently separate from the rest of female society to prevent the contagion of unchastity from spreading; and that the illicit intercourse of the sexes is restrained within such limits as not to interfere materially with the due development of the race. This consideration is sufficient to decide a Utilitarian to support generally the established rule against this kind of conduct, and therefore to condemn violations of the rule as on the whole infelicific, even though they may perhaps appear to have this quality only in consequence of the moral censure attached to them[2]. Further, the 'man of the world' ignores the vast importance to the human race of maintaining that higher type of sexual relations which is not, generally speaking, possible, except where a high value is set upon chastity in both sexes. (to p. 419, l. 18.)...

[1] The quotations are from my *Principles of Political Economy*, Book III. ch. ix.: where these questions are discussed at somewhat greater length.

[2] It is obvious that so long as the social sanction is enforced, the lives of the women against whom society thus issues its ban must tend to be unhappy from disorder and shame, and the source of unhappiness to others; and also that the breach by men of a recognized and necessary moral rule must tend to have injurious effects on their moral habits generally.

CHAPTER IV.

THE METHOD OF UTILITARIANISM.

(Omit from p. 425, l. 12 to p. 426, l. 35, and insert) Indeed from the considerations that we have just surveyed it is but a short and easy step to the conclusion that in the morality of Common Sense we have ready to hand a body of Utilitarian doctrine; that the "rules of morality for the multitude" are to be regarded as "positive beliefs of mankind as to the effects of actions on their happiness[1]," so that the apparent first principles of Common Sense may be accepted as the "middle axioms" of Utilitarian method; direct reference being only made to utilitarian considerations, in order to settle points upon which the verdict of Common Sense is found to be obscure and conflicting. On this view the traditional controversy between the advocates of Virtue and the advocates of Happiness would seem to be at length harmoniously settled.

And the arguments for this view which have been already put forward are certainly strengthened by the probability of the hypothesis, now widely accepted by naturalists and sociologists, that the moral sentiments are historically derived from experiences of pleasure and pain....

(p. 427, l. 11.) This theory does not, in my view, account adequately for the actual results of the faculty of moral judgment and reasoning, so far as I can examine them by reflection on my own moral consciousness: for this, as I have before said, does not yield any apparent intuitions that stand the test of rigorous examination except such as, from their abstract and general character, have no cognizable relation to particular experiences of any kind. But that the

[1] Cf. J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. ii. Mill, however, only affirms that the "rules of morality for the multitude" are to be accepted by the philosopher provisionally, until he has got something better.

theory gives a partially true explanation of the historical origin of particular moral sentiments and habits and commonly accepted rules, I see no reason to doubt; and I regard it as furnishing a valuable supplement to the arguments of the preceding chapter that tend to exhibit the morality of common sense as unconsciously or 'instinctively' utilitarian.

But it is one thing to hold that the current morality expresses, half consciously and half unconsciously, the results of human experience as to the effects of actions: it is quite another thing to accept this morality *en bloc*, so far as it is clear and definite, as the best guidance we can get to the attainment of maximum general happiness. However attractive this simple reconciliation of Intuitional and Utilitarian methods may be, it is not, I think, really warranted by the evidence. In the first place, I hold that in a complete view...(to l. 16) (l. 29) ...and the compromise may easily be many degrees removed from the rule which Utilitarianism would prescribe. For though the passions and other active impulses are doubtless themselves influenced, no less than the moral sentiments, by experiences of pleasure and pain; still this influence is not sufficient to make them at all trustworthy guides to general, any more than to individual, happiness—as some of our moral sentiments themselves emphatically announce. But even if we consider our common moral sentiments as entirely due to the accumulated and transmitted experiences of primary and sympathetic pains and pleasures;...(to p. 428, l. 2.)

(between p. 428, and p. 429.) On the other hand, we must suppose that these deflecting influences have been more or less limited and counteracted by the struggle for existence in past ages among different human races and communities; since so far as any moral habit or sentiment was unfavourable to the preservation of the social organism, it would be a disadvantage in the struggle for existence, and would therefore tend to perish with the community that adhered to it. But we have no reason to suppose that this force would be adequate to prevent any material tendencies to the divergence of positive morality from a Utilitarian ideal. For (1) imperfect morality would be only one disadvantage among many, and not, I conceive, the most important, un-

less the imperfection were extreme,—especially in the earlier stages of social and moral development, in which the struggle for existence was most operative: and (2) as before noticed, a morality perfectly preservative might still be imperfectly felicific, and so require considerable improvement from a Utilitarian point of view[1]....

(Insert before concluding paragraph on p. 434.) At this point certain thinkers of the evolutionist school would suggest that these difficulties of Utilitarian method should be avoided by adopting, as the *practically* ultimate end and criterion of morality, "health" or "efficiency" of the social organism, instead of Happiness. This view is maintained, for instance, in Mr Stephen's *Science of Ethics*[2]; and deserves careful examination. We have first to get the meaning of the terms clear. As I understand Mr Stephen, he means by "health" that state of the social organism which tends to its preservation under the conditions of its existence, as they are known or capable of being predicted; and he means the same by "efficiency"; since the work for which, in his view, the social organism has to be "efficient" is simply the work of living, the function of "going on and still to be." It is necessary to state this distinctly; because "efficiency" might be understood to imply some 'task of humanity' which the social organism has to execute, beyond the task of merely living; and similarly "health" might be taken to mean a state tending to the preservation not of existence merely, but of *desirable* existence—desirability being interpreted in some non-hedonistic[3] manner: and in this case an examination of either term would lead us again over the ground traversed in the discussion on Ultimate Good in ch. xiv. of the preceding Book[4]. But I do

[1] On this point I shall have occasion to speak further in the next section.

[2] See especially chap. ix., Pars. 12—15.

[3] It is obvious that if 'desirability,' in the above definition, were interpreted hedonistically, the term "health" would merely give us a new name for the general problem of utilitarian morality; not a new suggestion for its solution.

[4] The notions of "social welfare" or "wellbeing," which Mr Stephen elsewhere uses, are still more obviously ambiguous: I have therefore avoided them: but I do not think that Mr Stephen means by them any more than what I understand him to mean by "health" or "efficiency"—*i.e.* that state of the social organism which tends to its preservation under the conditions of its existence.

not understand that any such implications were in Mr Stephen's mind; and they certainly would not be in harmony with the general drift of his argument. If then we take "health" and "efficiency" to mean merely that state or internal condition of an organism in which it tends to be preserved, we may make the issue clearer by asking whether if Happiness be admitted to be the really ultimate end in a system of morality, it is nevertheless reasonable to take Preservation as the practically ultimate "scientific criterion" of moral rules.

My reasons for answering this question in the negative are two-fold. In the first place I know no adequate grounds for supposing that if we aim exclusively at the preservation of the social organism we shall secure the maximum attainable happiness of its individual members: indeed, so far as I know, of two social states which equally tend to be preserved one may be indefinitely happier than the other. As has been before observed[1], a large part of the pleasures which cultivated persons value most highly—æsthetic pleasures—are derived from acts and processes that have no material tendency to preserve the individual's life[2]: and the statement remains true if we substitute the social organism for the individual. And I may add that much refined morality is concerned with the prevention of pains which have no demonstrable tendency to the destruction of the individual or of society. Hence, while I quite admit that the maintenance of preservative habits and sentiments is the most indispensable function of utilitarian morality—and perhaps almost its sole function in the earlier stages of moral development, when to live at all was a difficult task for human communities—I do not therefore think it reasonable that we should be content with the mere securing of existence for humanity generally, and should confine our efforts to promoting the increase of this security, instead of seeking to make the secured existence more desirable.

But, secondly, I do not see on what grounds Mr Stephen holds that the criterion of "tendency to the preservation of the

[1] Bk. II. ch. vi. § 3.

[2] I do not mean to assert that 'play' in some form is not necessary for physical health: but there is a long step from the encouragement of play, so far as salutary, to the promotion of social culture.

social organism" is necessarily capable of being applied with greater precision than that of "tendency to general happiness," even so far as the two ends are coincident: and that the former "satisfies the conditions of a scientific criterion." I should admit that this would probably be the case, if the Sociology that we know were a science actually constructed, and not merely the sketch of a possible future science: but Mr Stephen has himself told us that sociology at present "consists of nothing more than a collection of unverified guesses and vague generalisations, disguised under a more or less pretentious apparatus of quasi-scientific terminology." This language is stronger than I should have ventured to use; but I agree generally with the view that it expresses; and it appears to me that if Mr Stephen holds this view, he ought to maintain the practical superiority of the evolutional to the utilitarian criterion by some special arguments more positive than a mere statement of the defects of the latter. Such special arguments, however, I am unable to find.

Holding this view of the present condition of Sociology, I consider that, from the utilitarian point of view, there are equally decisive reasons against the adoption of any such notion as "development" of the social organism—instead of mere preservation—as the practically ultimate end and criterion of morality. On the one hand, if by "development" is meant an increase in "efficiency" or preservative qualities, this notion is only an optimistic specialisation of that just discussed (involving the—I fear—unwarranted assumption that the social organism tends to become continually more efficient); so that no fresh arguments need be urged against it. If, however, something different is meant by development—as (*e.g.*) a disciple of Mr Spencer might mean an increase in "definite coherent heterogeneity," whether or not such increase was preservative—then I know no scientific grounds for concluding that we shall best promote general happiness by concentrating our efforts on the attainment of this increase. I do not say that it is impossible that every increase in the definite coherent heterogeneity of a society of human beings may be accompanied or followed by an increase in the aggregate happiness of the members of the society: but I do not perceive that Mr Spencer, or any one

else, has even attempted to furnish the kind of proof which this proposition requires[1].

Still less can I agree with Mr Spencer[2] in thinking that it is possible—in the present condition of our sociological knowledge—to construct the final perfect form of society, towards which the process of human history is tending; and to determine the rules of mutual behaviour which ought to be, and will be, observed by the members of this perfect society. Granting that we can conceive as possible a human community which is from a utilitarian point of view perfect; and granting also Mr Spencer's definition of this perfection—viz. that the voluntary actions of all the members cause "pleasure unalloyed by pain anywhere" to all who are affected by them[3];—it still seems to me quite impossible to forecast the nature and relations of the persons composing such a community with sufficient clearness and certainty to enable us to define even in outline their moral code. Even if it were otherwise, even if we could construct scientifically Mr Spencer's ideal morality, I do not think such a construction would be of much avail in solving the practical problems of actual humanity. For a society in which—to take one point only—there is no such thing as punishment, is necessarily a society with its essential structure so unlike our own, that it would be idle to attempt any close imitation of its rules of behaviour. It might possibly be best for us to conform approximately to some of these rules; but this we could only know by examining each particular rule in detail; we could have no general grounds for concluding

[1] It may be observed that the increased heterogeneity which the development of modern industry has brought with it, in the form of a specialisation of industrial functions which tends to render the lives of individual workers narrow and monotonous, has usually been regarded by philanthropists as seriously infelicific; and as needing to be counteracted by a general diffusion of the intellectual culture now enjoyed by the few—which, if realized, would tend *pro tanto* to make the lives of different classes in the community *less* heterogeneous.

[2] I refer especially to the views put forward by Mr Spencer in the concluding chapters of his *Data of Ethics*.

[3] This definition, however, does not seem to me admissible, from a utilitarian point of view: since a society in this sense perfect might not realize the maximum of possible happiness; it might still be capable of a material increase of happiness through pleasures involving a slight alloy of pain, such as Mr Spencer's view of perfection would exclude.

that it would be best for us to conform to them as far as possible. For even supposing that this ideal society is ultimately to be realized, it must at any rate be separated from us by a considerable interval of evolution; hence it is not unlikely that the best way of progressing towards it will be some other than the apparently directest way, and that we shall reach it more easily if we begin by moving away from it. Whether this is so or not, and to what extent, can only be known by carefully examining the effects of conduct on actual human beings, and inferring its probable effects on the human beings whom we may expect to exist in the proximate future.

To sum up: I hold that the utilitarian, in the existing state of our knowledge, cannot possibly construct a morality *de novo* either for man as he is (abstracting his morality), or for man as he ought to be and will be. He must start...(to p. 434, l. 15.)

CHAPTER V.

THE METHOD OF UTILITARIANISM CONTINUED.

(p. 436, l. 18.) We have therefore to consider by what method he will ascertain the particular modifications of positive morality which it would be practically expedient to attempt to introduce, at any given time and place. Here our investigation seems, after all, to leave Empirical Hedonism as the only method ordinarily applicable for the ultimate decision of such problems—at least until the science of Sociology shall have been really constructed. It is no doubt true that changes in morality might be suggested — and have actually been proposed by persons seriously concerned to benefit their fellow-creatures—which even the imperfect sociological knowledge that we possess would lead us to regard as not merely infelicific but dangerous to the very existence of the social organism. But such changes for the most part involve changes in positive law as well; since most of the rules of which the observance is fundamentally important for the preservation of an organized community are either directly or indirectly maintained by legal sanctions: and it would be going too far beyond the line which, in my view, separates ethics from politics, to discuss changes of this kind in the present book. The rules with which we have primarily to deal, in considering the utilitarian method of determining private duty, are rules supported by merely moral sanctions; and the question of maintaining or modifying such rules concerns, for the most part, the happiness rather than the existence of human society. The consideration of this question, therefore, from a utilitarian

point of view, resolves itself into a comparison between the total amounts of pleasure and pain that may be expected to result respectively from maintaining any given rule as at present established, or endeavouring to introduce that which is proposed in its stead. That this comparison must generally be of a rough and uncertain kind, we have already seen...(to l. 29.)

(insert p. 437, l. 5.) It is perhaps not surprising that some thinkers[1] of the Utilitarian school should consider that the task of hedonistic calculation which is thus set before the utilitarian moralist is too extensive: and should propose to simplify it by marking off a "large sphere of individual option and self-guidance," to which "ethical dictation" does not apply. I should quite admit that it is clearly expedient to draw a dividing line of this kind: but it appears to me that there is no simple general method of drawing it; that it can only be drawn by careful utilitarian calculation applied with varying results to the various relations and circumstances of human life. To attempt the required division by means of any such general formula as that 'the individual is not responsible to society for that part of his conduct which concerns himself alone and others only with their free consent' seems to me practically futile: since, owing to the complex enlacements of interest and sympathy that connect the members of a civilized community, almost any material loss of happiness by any one individual is likely to affect some others without their consent to some not inconsiderable extent. And I do not see how it is from a utilitarian point of view justifiable to say broadly with J. S. Mill that such secondary injury to others, if merely "constructive or presumptive," is to be disregarded in view of the advantages of allowing free development to individuality; for if the injury feared is great, and the presumption that it will occur is shewn by experience to be strong, the definite risk of evil from the withdrawal of the moral sanction must, I conceive, outweigh the indefinite possibility of loss through the repression of individuality in one particular direction[2]. But further: even sup-

[1] For example, Mr Bain in 'Mind' (Jan. 1883, pp. 48, 49).

[2] It may be observed that Mill's doctrine is certainly opposed to common sense: since (*e.g.*) it would exclude from censure almost all forms of sexual immorality committed by unmarried and independent adults.

posing that we could mark off the "sphere of individual option and self-guidance" by some simple and sweeping formula, still within this sphere the individual, if he wishes to guide himself reasonably on utilitarian principles, must take some account of all important effects of his actions on the happiness of others; and if he does this methodically, he must, I conceive, use the empirical method which we have examined in Book II. And—to prevent any undue alarm at this prospect—we may observe that every sensible man is commonly supposed to determine at least a large part of his conduct by what is substantially this method; it is assumed that, within the limits which morality lays down, he will try to get as much happiness as he can for himself and for other human beings, according to the relations in which they stand to him, by combining in some way his own experience with that of other men as to the felicific and infelicific effects of actions....(to l. 14.)

(insert p. 437, l. 29)... And in saying that this must be the method of the Utilitarian moralist, I only mean that no other can normally be applied in reducing to a common measure the diverse elements of the problems with which he has to deal. Of course, in determining the nature and importance of each of these diverse considerations, the utilitarian art of morality will lay various sciences under contribution. Thus, for example, it will learn from Political Economy what effects a general censure of usurers, or of land-owners who take the full advantages of unrestricted competition in determining rents, or the ordinary commendation of liberality in almsgiving, is likely to have on the wealth of the community; it will learn from the physiologist the probable consequences to health of a general abstinence from alcoholic liquors or any other restraint on appetite proposed in the name of Temperance; more generally, it will learn from the experts in any science how far knowledge is likely to be promoted by investigations offensive to any prevalent moral or religious sentiment. But how far the increase of wealth or of knowledge, or even the improvement of health, should under any circumstances be subordinated to other considerations, I know no scientific method of determining other than that of empirical Hedonism. Nor, as I have said, does it seem to me that any other method

has ever been applied or sought by the common sense of mankind, for regulating the pursuit of what our older moralists called 'Natural Good,'—*i.e.* of all that is intrinsically desirable *except* Virtue or Morality,—within the limits fixed by the latter; the Utilitarian here only performs somewhat more consistently and systematically the reasoning processes which are generally admitted to be properly decisive of the questions that this pursuit raises. His distinctive characteristic, as a Utilitarian, is that he has to apply the same method to the criticism and correction of the limiting morality itself. The particulars of this criticism will obviously vary with the almost infinite variations in human nature and circumstances: the construction of a detailed system of Utilitarian casuistry, even if limited to our own age and country, would carry us far beyond the limits of the present treatise. I here only propose to discuss the general points of view which a Utilitarian critic must take, in order that no important class of relevant considerations may be omitted.

§ 2. Let us first recall the distinction previously noticed[1] between duty as commonly conceived,—that to which a man is bound or obliged—, and praiseworthy or excellent conduct; since, in considering the relation (to p. 438, l. 20.)

(p. 446, l. 7.) In fact, the Kantian principle, as accepted by me, means no more than that an act, if right for any individual, must be right on general grounds and therefore for some class of persons; it does not prevent us from defining this class by the above-mentioned characteristic of believing that the act will remain an exceptional one....(l. 26.) the principle in question, applied without the qualification above given, would make it a crime in any one to choose celibacy as the state most conducive to his own happiness. But Common Sense (in the present age at least) regards such preference as within the limits of right conduct;...

(p. 447, l. 5.)... We are supposed to see that the happiness of the community will be enhanced (just as the excellence of a metrical composition is) by a slight admixture of irregularity along with a general observance of received rules; and to justify the irregular conduct of a few individuals, on the

[1] Cf. especially Bk. III. c. ii.

ground that the supply of regular conduct from other members of the community may reasonably be expected to be adequate.

It does not seem to me that this reasoning can be shewn to be necessarily unsound, as applied to human society as at present constituted: but the cases in which it could really be thought to be applicable, by any one sincerely desirous of promoting the general happiness, must certainly be rare. For it should be observed that it makes a fundamental difference whether the sentiment in mankind generally, on which we rely to sustain sufficiently a general rule while admitting exceptions thereto, is moral or non-moral; because a moral sentiment is inseparable from the conviction that the conduct to which it prompts is objectively right—i.e. right whether or not it is thought or felt to be so—for oneself and all similar persons in similar circumstances; it cannot therefore coexist with approval of the contrary conduct in any one case, unless this case is distinguished by some material difference other than the mere non-existence in the agent of the ordinary moral sentiment against his conduct. Thus, assuming that general unveracity and general celibacy would both be evils of the worst kind, we may still all regard it as legitimate for men in general to remain celibate if they like, on account of the strength of the natural sentiments prompting to marriage, because the existence of these sentiments in ordinary human beings is not affected by the universal recognition of the legitimacy of celibacy: but we cannot similarly all regard it as legitimate for men to tell lies if they like, however strong the actually existing sentiment against lying may be. If therefore we were all enlightened Utilitarians, it would be impossible for any one to justify himself in making false statements while admitting it to be inexpedient for persons similarly conditioned to make them; as he would have no ground for believing that persons similarly conditioned would act differently from himself. The case, no doubt, is different in a society as actually constituted; it is conceivable that the practically effective morality in such a society, resting on a basis independent of utilitarian or any other reasonings, may not be materially affected by the particular act or expressed opinion of a particular individual: but the circumstances are, I conceive, very rare, in which a really

conscientious person could feel so sure of this as to conclude that by approving a particular violation of a rule, of which the *general* (though not *universal*) observance is plainly expedient, he will not probably do harm on the whole. Especially as all the objections to innovation, noticed in the previous section, apply with increased force if the innovator does not even claim to be introducing a new and better general rule.

It appears to me, therefore, that the cases in which practical doubts are likely to arise, as to whether exceptions should be permitted from ordinary rules on Utilitarian principles, will mostly be those which I discussed in the first paragraph of this section: where the exceptions are not claimed for a few individuals, on the mere ground of their probable fewness, but either for persons generally under exceptional circumstances, or for a class of persons defined by exceptional qualities of intellect, temperament or character. Here the Utilitarian may have no doubt that in a community consisting generally of enlightened Utilitarians, these grounds for exceptional ethical treatment would be regarded as valid; but he may, as I have said, doubt whether the more refined and complicated rule which recognizes such exceptions is adapted for the community in which he is actually living; and whether the attempt to introduce it is not likely to do more harm by weakening current morality than good by improving its quality. Supposing such a doubt to arise, either in a case of this kind, or in one of the rare cases referred to in the preceding paragraph, it becomes obviously necessary that the Utilitarian should consider carefully the extent to which his advice or example are likely to influence persons to whom they would be dangerous: and it is evident that the result of this consideration may depend largely on the degree of publicity which he gives to either advice or example. Thus, on Utilitarian principles, it may be right to do and privately recommend, under certain circumstances, what it would not be right to advocate openly; it may be right to teach openly to one set of persons what it would be wrong to teach to others; it may be conceivably right to do, if it can be done with comparative secrecy, what it would be wrong to do in the face of the world; and even, if perfect secrecy can be reasonably expected, what it would be wrong to recommend by

private advice or example. These conclusions are all of a paradoxical character: there is no doubt that the moral consciousness of a plain man broadly repudiates the general notion of an esoteric morality, differing from that popularly taught;...(to p. 448, l. 15; omit from l. 16 to l. 36 of p. 449 "and if so... consideration.")

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

THE MUTUAL RELATIONS OF THE THREE METHODS.

...(p. 457, l. 19.) as the variations in the moral code of different societies at different stages correspond, in a great measure, to differences in the actual or believed tendencies of certain kinds of conduct to promote the general happiness —at least of certain portions of the human race: while, again, the most probable conjectures as to the pre-historic condition and original derivation of the moral faculty seem to be entirely in harmony with this view....(to l. 26.)

...(p. 458, l. 2.) We have seen, however, that the application of this process requires that the Egoist should affirm, implicitly or explicitly, that his own greatest happiness is not merely the rational ultimate end for himself, but a part of Universal Good: and he may avoid the proof of Utilitarianism by declining to affirm this....(l. 11.) Indeed, if an Egoist remains impervious to what we have called Proof, the only way of rationally inducing him to aim at the happiness of all, is to shew him that his own greatest happiness can be best attained by so doing: and even if he admits the self-evidence of the principle of Rational Benevolence, he may still hold that the ultimate validity of the maxim of Prudence is no less self-evident, and that a reconciliation of the two must be somehow found. This latter indeed (as I have before said) appears, to me, on the whole, the view of Common Sense: and it is that which I myself hold. It thus becomes needful to examine how far and in what way this reconciliation can be effected.

(p. 459, l. 23.) The first and third of these questions Mill did not clearly separate, owing to his psychological doctrine that our own pleasure is the sole object of our desires.

(p. 460, l. 18)...For, in fact, though I can to some extent distinguish sympathetic from strictly moral feelings in introspective analysis of my own consciousness, I cannot say precisely in what proportion these two elements are combined. For instance: I seem able to distinguish the "sense of the ignobility of Egoism" of which I have before spoken—which, in my view, is the normal emotional concomitant or expression of the moral intuition that the Good of the whole is reasonably to be preferred to the Good of a part—from the jar of sympathetic discomfort which attends the conscious choice of my own pleasure at the expense of pain or loss to others; but I find it impossible to determine what force the former sentiment would have if actually separated from the latter; and what others communicate of their experience inclines me to think that the two kinds of feeling are very variously combined in different individuals. (to l. 25.)...

(p. 465, l. 29)... Or, again, we may argue thus. If—as all Theologians agree—we are to conceive God as acting for some end, we must conceive that end to be Universal Good, and, if Utilitarians are right, Universal Happiness: and we cannot suppose that in a world morally governed it can be reasonable for us to act in conscious opposition to what we believe to be the Divine Design (to l. 35)....

(p. 467, l. 1) or whether it is forced to borrow a fundamental and indispensable premiss from Theology or some similar source....

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