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ETHICS AND MORAL TOLERANCE



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ETHICS AND MORAL TOLERANCE

BY

ARTHUR KENYON ROGERS

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ETHICS AND MORAL TOLERANCE

Chapter I

AUTHORITY AND FREEDOM

During the last few decades, in particular, philosophers have been increasingly engaged in asking themselves the question: What exactly is it that we mean when we say that such and such a thing has "value"? Classical philosophies were disposed to let this question go by default. Judgments about relative worth never were very far below the surface, but, just as in everyday thinking, these were taken for granted for the most part, and there was seldom any serious effort made to justify them apart from a disparagement of rival claims; each philosopher was satisfied to postulate the special kind of good that most appealed to him—typically it was apt to center about the intellectual life—without trying to explain the source of its peculiar eminence. In the greater philosophies this may often seem to lend a touch of added distinction; to one already disposed to look to rational order, for example, as the highest form of excellence, Plato's serene persuasion that here alone an indubitable good is to be found would very likely lose in impressiveness if it were to take account of doubts and qualifications. Nevertheless, it is clear that by leaving any fundamental premise unexamined we are also leaving it unprotected in case a critic chooses to call the postulate in question; and—an even more serious

matter for philosophy—we are lessening the chances of a mutual understanding. It is perhaps for this more than for any other single reason that systems of philosophy will generally be found engaging perpetually in guerilla warfare without actually coming to grips in a major engagement; each keeps its own most ultimate presuppositions under cover, and these presuppositions nearly always can be translated in the last resort into terms of a difference of opinion about the relative significance of human ends.

It is one of the drawbacks of philosophy that it always is difficult to make its problems—necessarily abstract and technical—appear to have much bearing on the practical concerns that engage the ordinary man; and this is rather notably the case with theories of value. What matters to people generally is the claim of values in particular; and when they are asked to divest themselves temporarily of concrete interests and to consider, not how best to plead some favorite cause, but what they mean when they call anything at all a valuable end, the inquiry will seem not only barren and disappointing but very likely mischievous as well, since it has the appearance of putting in doubt the things to which it is most of all important that we should whole-heartedly yield assent. It may be, however, that circumstances will at times arise to bring home the recognition to a wider circle that such a preliminary task of criticism is after all not as unimportant as it looks at first to be; and something like this situation is now actually confronting us. So far as morals go, there probably has never been an age quite so perplexed and torn by discord as the present one, or so little disposed to be submissive to the ad-

monitions of the good and great; and the reason is that for large numbers of people the things valued in the past have lost their motive power, and no one seems to know just how to go to work to replace them.

In some ways this is a new phenomenon in history. In all ages, probably, a good deal of moral scepticism has been tolerated when accompanied by a decent reticence, and sometimes this has even set the fashion in limited circles without much rebuke from the authorities; but such tolerance has had its explanation in a confidence that polite society was safely insulated, and it has been coincident with a tight rein upon the orthodoxy of the masses. It is also true that in our own day we may be tempted to exaggerate the inroads of scepticism on traditional beliefs; to the New Yorker the signs of an era of enlightenment will seem clearer than to one who draws his evidence from Kansas or Tennessee. Still, it is plain that we are faced by conditions which possess certain elements of novelty. The actual morality, so-called, which earlier generations practiced may have been more or less estimable than that now current. But at any rate their moral professions and—most probably—beliefs were far more definite and assured and widely held; if for no other reason this was bound to follow from the fact that only within recent years has effective public opinion begun to show any readiness to tolerate deviations from accepted patterns. A man might constantly be doing things forbidden by these standards, but it seldom occurred to him to question their abstract right to be obeyed; and even if doubts were entertained a preference for keeping out of trouble would counsel him not to talk too much about them. Of late, however, things have been hap-

pening to change this situation. The subsidence of an aggressive faith in religion and its creeds, the shift from absolutism to democracy in the state, the more cosmopolitan outlook due to modern inventions and to trade, the emergence of class warfare on a self-conscious level, have along with other changes been for some time loosening the grip of moral certainties and creating a general state of mind which even traditional moralities are being compelled to recognize and to take into account. One proof of this lies in a new mental attitude apparent in defenders of the faith; present-day attempts to censor morals are lacking in that imperturbability and sense of conscious mastery which used to mark them, and begin to show signs of something that approaches panic.

I am not proposing here to undertake a cultural history of our times. But if we may assume that the problems of philosophy do not, in intention at any rate, represent arbitrary logical puzzles but are meant to throw light on man's actual experience in dealing with the facts of life, the simplest way of approach to moral theory will be to start by canvassing some of the contradictions implicit in his present-day judgments about conduct. And as the most general and comprehensive of these conflicting claims I shall take up first the dispute between authority and freedom—a dispute which has a long history, but which has seldom or never been quite so clear-cut and acrimonious.

There are two groups of people in society who between them have been responsible for laying down most of its effective rules of conduct, and who in alliance come little short of being irresistible. On the one hand is the moral zealot. In nearly all of us there

exists a turn of mind that disposes us to enact into law the things to which we ourselves are partial; here lies the special source of a good share of the problems with which I shall be engaged. This proclivity the everyday practitioner of morals, and even the occasional moral saint, is able to keep under a measure of control; he is satisfied to lead a decent or a pious life without being too insistent that his ideas should be imposed upon the world at large. But there is another type of mind which finds it hard to get a real savor out of goodness unless it also is engaged in making other people good. It is from this latter class that typically the ranks are drawn of priests and clergy, reformers and uplifters. And the result has usually been a shift of emphasis from the inner claims of virtue to the external claims of some particular set of virtues and the consequent duty of enforcing them. When virtue is tied up closely with the institutions of religion, in particular, this is what habitually takes place in the degree that a hierarchy grows powerful enough to get its way; the Roman Catholic church has, for example, been outspoken in subordinating private pretensions to moral insight and turning submission to authority into a sacred obligation. Dissentient Christian sects are handicapped here by their historical beginnings; since they took their rise from an insistence on the rights of the individual conscience it is a little awkward to try now to restrain its exercise, though it would be risky to set bounds to the capacity of the human mind for jumping logical barriers in the face, say, of such a modern instance as the fervid denunciation of all revolutionary methods by the Daughters of the Revolution. As a matter of fact the small town Methodist or Baptist

is as much circumscribed as the Roman Catholic in his freedom of moral judgment; the authority of the Bible is no great improvement over the authority of the Church so long as the Bible is itself identified with a particular sectarian creed.

However, it is not the church which at the present moment is most vocal and most practically effective in urging the moral duty of obedience. Mistaken zeal in the ecclesiastic, as in the more unattached reformer, is nowadays a minor nuisance rather than a serious danger. There seems no need to get very much alarmed over the chance that the world is moving toward a new régime of blue laws and religious tyranny; the probability is all the other way. Censorship at the present day is a gesture which is singularly lacking in results in view of all the energy that goes into it and the strategic hold it still retains on the outward forms of government. A man usually can get all he wants to read at a little extra trouble, just as he can get all he wants to drink, and in both cases the trouble is compensated by the new enjoyment open to him through the opportunity for growing excited over the menace of Puritanism; it will be time to take censorship more to heart when it shows some sign of being able to censor the public discussion of its own absurdities. So, too, the motives that animate the moral reformer are commonly of a sort to lessen the likelihood that he will get very far in his crusade. These are relatively disinterested motives now that the church has lost its temporal power; and while the pleasure that comes from regulating other people's morals is a lively and appealing one, it will hardly have enough driving force to hold out against active and continued resistance.

But there is another source of the authoritarian emphasis which we can afford to view with less complacency. The people who have the greatest stake in demanding compliance with established virtues are to be found in the ranks of those who possess a vested interest in the material foundations of society; and since they also are the ones in whom political authority resides, they have both the motive and the power to make their wishes more effective. Without their assistance, or at least their passive acquiescence, the moral reformer would, indeed, be shorn of most of his ability to get results; it is a source of weakness, for example, to the forces which stand behind sumptuary legislation that the successful business man is in no mood to have his own pleasures curtailed, and will always be disposed to call a halt if he sees such an eventuality approaching. Still, he does have an interest in keeping his employees and his customers reasonably sober; and in a general way he will feel a natural sympathy with any attempt to prevent the unsettling of moral habits, since if innovations once get started one can never be quite sure where they will stop. And with the stability of certain virtues in particular he has a more direct and powerful concern. Patriotism, submission to law and established legal rights, a becoming humility and respect toward persons in authority—these are things essential to him if he is to feel secure; and when his security is threatened he falls back on them instinctively as the solid and undebatable foundations of the moral order.

And meanwhile he has this special advantage over the mere reformer, in that it lies to an extent within his power to go to the root of things and veto, not alone

acts that violate his creed, but even an unprejudiced discussion of its merits. Within the last decade or so it has been seen to be a punishable offence to criticize the courts, to express admiration for a hero of the Russian revolution, to preach universal peace, to belong to an organization suspected of designs on the security of business profits. Recently we have been told on judicial authority that an alien cannot legally become a citizen of this country unless he will consent to let government control his conscience and agree in advance to take an active part in any future war. And for good measure we have the multitude of earnest unofficial guardians of the true political faith who do their best to make it as unpleasant as possible for such as fail to share in their devotion to existing institutions, and in whose active imagination anarchists philosophical or otherwise, socialists, labor leaders, those who doubt the guilt of Sacco and Vanzetti or the advisability of keeping radicals too long in jail on perjured testimony, pacifists, mildly liberal college professors and welfare workers who think our industrial habits or legal institutions open to improvement, fuse indistinguishably in the common infamy of Bolshevism.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that self-interest and emotional excitement supply the only sources for the vogue of authoritarian ideals. They have a more rational backing also; there is, in fact, something in the normal make-up of the philosophic mind peculiarly conducive to this outcome. That the systems of philosophy which exalt sovereignty in the state and perfection in the universe at large are commonly the ones in best repute is due not merely to their falling in with what the influential classes in society desire, but

to intrinsic qualities which only a real passion for abstract speculation can engender. It would hardly be true to say that this is entirely disinterested; absolutism in philosophy is usually a sign that the philosopher fits in pretty comfortably with social conditions as he finds them. Nevertheless, his serenity of mind is less a result of self-interest than of a peculiarity of the metaphysical temper. It is the philosopher's job to discover order in the universe. This he is more likely to arrive at if he does not pay too much attention to the clutter of empirical details, but follows instead his bent toward universal principles; and the authority of reason on which such principles depend has its natural connection with finality and a reverent acceptance of the cosmic scheme rather than with experiment or with any very searching criticism.

But while historically philosophers of the absolute have enjoyed for the most part a superior prestige and the empiricist and experimentalist has stood as an inferior sort of thinker, this is ceasing to be true of philosophic valuations at the present day; just now the absolute, whether in metaphysics or in political philosophy, is out of favor. And along with this we find a new emphasis making itself felt in current notions of morality. Freedom is no new word in ethical discussion; but it has never before had quite the same disturbing consequences. The most highly esteemed philosophies of the past have usually reserved an honored place for freedom; but they have found this possible without making concessions to the vulgar notion of liberty as a protest against established forms of conduct. By freedom they have meant the sort of life in which man realizes his true or better nature.

Now since this nature of his is determined and limited by the nature of the world in its absolute perfection, it cannot be said that he is free unless he submits to all the laws which the rational universe imposes; and because these laws are open to discovery by reason they are capable of being used as legislative norms. Consequently there are very few forms of institutional compulsion which philosophers have not seen their way to justify in the interests of what they call the freedom of the man who is thus constrained.

But this reasoning has failed to satisfy everybody. There always have been people to whose way of thinking the liberty to do as one pleases provided one does right is no more acceptable as a definition of political freedom, than the liberty to think as one pleases provided one thinks right is a definition of liberty of conscience. And meantime the vast store of human energy and impulse, never more than imperfectly held in check by the restraints of politics and morals, stands always in the background ready at any moment to break through its barriers in case the censor's vigilance or effective power is relaxed. This is what now is happening; freedom in its primary and unsophisticated meaning is confronting with a confident belligerence the most sacred prescriptions of authority.

Only an elementary degree of sympathy is needed to assure us that the revolt is due to something more than an eruption of unruly passions. As one surveys in retrospect its two chief objects of aversion—Puritanism and Victorianism—he probably will be inclined to think that this in a measure is excusable, though it goes to greater lengths than a disinterested judgment might

approve. Repression and intolerance and gloom do not tell the whole truth about the Puritan; he had his full share of the joys of militant action, and indeed can show much more in the way of positive achievement than his contemporary critics. And Victorianism at its best was sponsor for a humanely reasonable and seemly life whose merits are not likely to stand out less clearly when set alongside the turbulence of the present era. Still, the channels of Puritanism, if deep, were also definitely narrow; and the qualities which render the Victorian ideal inviting were subject to a constant risk of passing over into priggishness, insipidity, and a too exclusive preoccupation with domestic and parochial virtues. It was high time once again to call attention to the fundamental human energies and feelings which, because they were likely to get men into trouble, moralists had agreed officially to ban, but which have always proved too strong for the attempt to be particularly successful. Even in the interest of bringing these under some effective measure of control there was a good deal to be said, in view of past failures, for loosening the bonds of authority so as to see what would really happen if men were left to experiment more freely and find out for themselves the limits of a practicable liberty of action. The immediate effects might not prove altogether gratifying. But if experience is endowed with any tendency to correct its own excesses, the final outcome very well might be a material extension of the range of human action and enjoyment.

At the same time one could have prophesied that the substitution for authority of a new abstraction—liberty —was unlikely to escape the drawbacks that attach to

any exclusive interest which is disinclined to qualify and compromise—a state of mind natural to the heated atmosphere of a revolution in ideas but not in all respects to be applauded in a world where "either-or" is seldom a safe form of logical debate. Not to go for the moment into more controversial points, it is allowable to raise the question as to how far the path which the new freedom follows really is leading to the goal it has in view. Hitherto the demand for liberty has been most explicit and insistent in the field of sex. So long as the new morality is satisfied to play the critic here it has an easy task; it is not much trouble to pick flaws in any traditional form the marriage institution takes. But it hardly is enough to be convinced that marriage has often been a failure; what one needs to show is that freedom in sexual relationships is a more likely road to satisfaction. I make no claim to speak as an authority. One may have, indeed, a pretty well-defined impression that marriage which follows on divorce is not apt in any conspicuous way to be a surer guaranty of happiness than the older practice of monogamy—an impression strengthened in proportion to the frequency with which the experiment is repeated; and the instability of less authorized unions is some ground for doubting their entire success. However, in such a matter one is handicapped alike by the fact that he has usually to guess what are the real feelings of the persons most concerned, and because his evidence is in all probability confined to haphazard instances which have come under his observation and which may or may not be typical. For a rather less inconclusive sort of evidence one might perhaps cite the literature of sexual freedom. This is of considerable extent by now,

and it is far from leaving one with any profound conviction that the way has been opened to a new source of human values. Disillusionment, rather, is the note most often struck; on the whole there seems to be a definite loss in that significance attached to sex which earlier and more Victorian novelists were able to convey. At any rate this much is clear, that the new freedom is bound to prove its merits by the testimony of experience rather than by doctrinaire pronouncements; and for this it is not enough to find flaws in rival methods.

A critical consideration of a-moralism as a moral attitude is a good deal handicapped by the fact that only exceptionally has it been presented in a form that lends itself to a sober logical analysis. Mostly it represents a mood rather than a philosophy, and it takes a much greater interest in the literary exploitation of weaknesses inherent in popular notions than it does in an examination of its own premises. It is not very difficult to point out shortcomings in the heterogeneous collection of ingrained prejudices, moral saws, and haphazard arguments, prudential or sentimental, which pass current as morality; and with the assistance of a gift for paradox and for the coining of striking phrases many recent writers have gained some considerable repute for wisdom without finding it necessary to pay any great attention to the stricter demands of consistency, whether with themselves or with the facts. It probably would be a waste of time, therefore, to try to discover in what they have to tell us a precision of meaning which they very likely would themselves think was not to be desired. Since, however, one will fail to understand a good deal that

is most distinctive of the present age unless he is willing to give a sympathetic hearing to what the a-moralist has to say, I shall take the occasion here to offer a few additional remarks, chiefly by way of preparation for the subsequent argument.

The stumblingblock in the way of any moral dogmatism is the existence in the world of an indefinite variety of moral goals. So long as people disagree as to what kind of life is the most desirable kind, the adoption without careful scrutiny even of the best attested and most reputable among them as a moral premise is open to objections. That moralists have been disposed to such a course is only to say that moralists are very much like other men; and it is one of the most universal proclivities of human nature to take for granted that if I prefer a thing only perversity in my neighbor will prevent his sharing in my preference. So long as one can avoid asking himself questions—which usually means so long as he finds the general run of people complaisant toward his own tastes—he may be able to remain indefinitely in this persuasion; and whatever contributes to such an outcome will have, in consequence, a strong appeal. Thus it ranks high among the recommendations of the traditional family ideal that it protects a man from temptations to self-scrutiny by entrenching him within a friendly group which he can count on not to raise annoying doubts about his favorite assumptions; and it is only natural he should resent modernism, therefore, when it encourages his wife and daughters to cultivate opinions of their own. But once forced to take note that there are different preferences current in the world, a man of intelligence is bound to feel himself under some compulsion to

justify his own partialities instead merely of reiterating them.

And under this pressure he may be led to entertain the possibility that no one sort of life represents *the* good life, and that morality needs to find a place for many competing ends. At the very least he will find himself admitting—though if anyone is so impressed by the superior nobility of his own way of living as not to grant this voluntarily I see no way of compelling his assent—that among the ideals to which he may himself not be addicted there are at any rate a certain number which are innocuous and even meritorious; this appears no more than the natural judgment of any reasonably catholic mind. And it is even possible he may be led to draw a further and more radical inference—that a man has no call to bring into comparison rival schemes of life at all. I may for myself discard competing ways for the one I personally favor. But in doing this, it may be said, I concede implicitly to everyone alike a similar privilege; and since each man must settle this for himself, and no one voluntarily will choose a lesser satisfaction when he can get a greater, any universally authoritative difference between good and bad may seem to be deprived of rational support.

A thesis of this sort will to most people seem at first sight preposterous; and it is no occasion for surprise that those who do not share actively in the spirit of revolt should put it down to the impatience of an undisciplined human nature with barriers which the wisdom of the ages has erected against man's inborn gift for making a fool of himself. But before the moralist follows his first indignant impulse to reject it he

might do well to consider what can be said in its behalf. Such a broad extension of the habit of moral tolerance would at least do something to remove the causes which now split up society into so many mutually embittered nationalities and sects and classes, and to facilitate a common understanding that would further the amenities of life. Men who set up to be better than their neighbors are seldom the easiest to get along with; even the giving of advice to others is a luxury in which the prudent man will hesitate before indulging freely if he wishes to be on good terms with his associates. There is no obvious need to draw the consequence from this that everyone ought to be allowed to act as he pleases subject to no restraint. If another man's conduct interferes with me in my pursuit of happiness I shall feel a natural inclination to stop him if I can; and when his actions are of a sort to render him a general nuisance there seems no reason why men should not band together and set up rules which he shall be forced on pain of punishment to respect. But such a practical standard is not to be confused with an assumption of moral superiority. We should then be led in consistency to restrain the lawbreaker not because he is a bad man, or because the ends we ourselves pursue are superior to his, but because his ends are different ends incompatible with ours, and because we are strong enough to make our own prevail.

In such an attitude, I think, there lies without much doubt a considerable amount of salutary truth. It will, as I have said, seem false and vicious to minds that have never tried to exercise themselves in the practice of standing outside their customary moralistic prejudices and assessing disinterestedly the evidence on

which they rest; to such minds even the attempt appears a betrayal of moral principle. But if a man once has seen ground for questioning the assumption that to be virtuous means to feel and act in submission to the mores, he may find it a relief to shed his unction and to credit to those who differ from him a measure of the good faith he claims for himself. Nor are there lacking positive grounds of objection to the current moral practice. As regards many of the commoner forms, at any rate, which moral censure takes, anyone can see that they are due to a failure in good sense and ordinary human friendliness for which little can be said in condonation. Even more plausible claims to the possession of a right to dictate morally are subject at the least to large discount. Thus the wisdom of age, so-called, along with other drawbacks, suffers from a fundamental limitation. Any man who in his riper years looks back on youthful interests and judgments naturally will find himself reassessing these in the light of a maturer understanding. I was a fool, so he may tell himself, to waste myself thus on things of no account; and then he will be tempted to set up as a mentor for the young and to grow resentful when they refuse to listen. What he is likely to forget is the strong chance that there may be no single stage of life whose standards can be applied forthwith to all the rest. The one thing which experience teaches unreservedly is that he is now too old to enjoy the things that once attracted him; no certain inference follows that it would have been the part of wisdom to anticipate these soberer valuations of maturity.

And this disposition to imagine that because one has lost the zest for it a thing is in reality not worth what it

seems to be to those for whom the zest still holds is stiffened by the self-complacency from which a persuasion of superior wisdom seldom is entirely free. Like any other human type the sage has the defects of his qualities. Through a limitation common to the race he is bound to see some things more clearly than he does the rest; and this special interest of his leads him to stake off a little corner of the good in which he comes to feel proprietary rights, so that presently what he may have started out by preaching as a new and revolutionary gospel begins to harden into an orthodoxy with its own creed and litany, and its disciples standing in embattled front against the world. Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris, Whitman—we find so little trouble now in recognizing the one-sided twist of emphasis in what they had to say that the danger is we shall underrate its real importance; and the fate of past generations there is no reason to suppose will not in due time be ours as well.

What is true of the individual sage is true equally of those more indefinite classes in society which enjoy a semi-professional reputation for superior wisdom. Few things, for example, are likely to be more irritating to the political realist today than the condescension toward the voting public on the part of those amiable devotees of secondary reforms—civil service, the improvement of bureaucratic methods, and devices for getting men of their own sort in office—who represent the aristocratic tradition of liberalism in politics. That political salvation lies in the educated classes has, as things go, a constantly diminishing plausibility; even granting, what is of course absurd, that the beneficiaries of our colleges are really educated, there is

hardly any group of men more remote as a whole from the sterner realities of the working world than so-called cultivated people. As for the characteristic dogma of the present age that science may be counted on to provide a substitute for the fading claims of culture or religion, this is almost equally discredited if we turn from aspiration to accomplishment; indeed, for anyone to start out by insisting that he is going to be very scientific is almost a reason in itself for distrusting his advice.

However, it will not do to go too fast and far. Such observations as I have just been making undoubtedly suggest the need for caution before we take at their own valuation pretenders to a special wisdom, but they do not exclude the chance, or even the likelihood perhaps, that a more or less authoritative moral reason may exist. Certainly it will as a matter of experience be found a good deal easier to persuade men to some added measure of tolerance as a concomitant of human fallibility and weakness than to convince them that there is no such thing at all is higher and lower in morality; the most indulgent will hesitate before condoning every sort of human character and behavior. Even the great apostle of tolerance himself, Spinoza, with all his insistence on the illusoriness of value standards and the perfection of a universe in which everything has its necessary place, ends by setting up a standard of his own to which judgments of comparison attach. The man who remains a slave to the emotions may be for theory a link in a determined series which we neither expect nor wish to be other than it is; but it is impossible we should feel for him the same respect we feel for the free spirit who has emancipated himself

from the irrational and slavish passions. To make the end of life full and untrammeled self-expression is itself to suggest a limit to the practice of an indiscriminate tolerance. The thing an ideal of self-expression justifies is not the end a man actually pursues, but the end he *would* pursue if he had genuine self-knowledge. To have any guaranty whatever that a given man's choice meets the demands of a good life we must presume that there exists in him an adequate measure of intelligence; unless he acts thoughtfully and clear-sightedly, unless he knows his own capacities and limitations, and knows the world in a sufficiently realistic way not to misjudge too badly the possibilities it offers, the chances are all against his reaping the reward he seeks. And it would be absurd to claim that people are always the best judges of what is for their own good. Wide experience, a clear head, and a sensitiveness to human values will always give some men a better right to be listened to than others; and no one who thinks himself in possession of such qualities is likely to refrain entirely from using them to set bounds to the liberty of action he is going to approve, no matter what demands his philosophy may seem to make.

And such a proclivity may justifiably raise doubts about the modern tendency to apotheosize the idea of freedom, and suggest the need for a substantial deduction from its claims. That a consistently tolerant attitude toward human conduct—which is what an a-moralism seems logically to issue in—is a very rare phenomenon does not furnish conclusive proof that it is not the attitude we ought to take; it may only be additional evidence that human beings seldom act as impartial wisdom would prescribe. At the same time

the failure to live up to a program one professes in so far does not tend to render it more impressive. At any rate the fact is, clearly, that men almost never are content simply to claim an open field for the things they personally prefer, but go on to add a new relish through running down other courses; and it is not observable that the moral iconoclast is much less prone to such a practice than the ordinary moral dogmatist. The habit of a self-applause that verges on self-righteousness is rather conspicuously, indeed, a note of the advanced thinker in every generation. So nowadays we may see the intellectual contemptuous of Main Street, the radical of the bourgeoisie, the Greenwich Villager of respectability; a good share of the effect that, for example, Mr. Mencken gets comes from this unaffected scorn with which he views all those who do not see eye to eye with him. But apart from the compulsion exercised by some positive standard of perfection man ceases to be an object of rational derision; folly which means no more than that human souls are falling short of their possibilities of good is pathetic rather than absurd to anyone who fails to find his idea of humor adequately embodied in the spectacle of a fat man slipping on a banana peel.

Commonly the a-moralist seems not to be aware that he is running any risk of inconsistency. He can be counted on to be a stout opponent of the obvious forms of moral censorship; this is only natural since his own preferences are the ones most likely to be interfered with. In the same way in an earlier age the effective advocates of freedom for the religious conscience were the dissenters from established creeds. But the Puritan is not on that account to be reckoned as a typical

exemplar of the spirit of religious tolerance. And as a spiritual phenomenon there is no very thoroughgoing difference between the habit of despising anyone less virtuous than oneself and of despising those less enlightened than oneself. The pleasures of condescension may very likely be more refined than those of moral persecution, but they still fall a good deal short of being intellectually disinterested. And since a truth about human nature cannot be independent of the course which as a matter of experience we find normal human nature taking, I should be much inclined, accordingly, to think that the difficulty which the a-moralist finds in living up to a dispassionately universal tolerance is in so far a reason for questioning whether his principle has in fact all the authority he claims for it.

Chapter II

MORALITY WITHOUT STANDARDS

As I have remarked, it is not usual to find the modern advocate of freedom displaying a very serious interest in its logical foundations; it is, therefore, worthy of some special notice when, as happens on occasion, the emphasis does take the form of a well-considered philosophy of conduct. Such a philosophy has been attempted recently in a volume by Professor Warner Fite, and to it I propose devoting some attention in the present chapter. I do this for two reasons. Professor Fite's main thesis is that standards have no place at all in a genuine morality; and if a thing does not exist there would not seem to be much point in going on further to discuss it. But also his position is one to which, within limits, I should myself subscribe; and an endeavor to define wherein I differ from him will supply a convenient introduction therefore to what I shall later have to say.

While in some ways Professor Fite's point of view falls in with modernistic tendencies, it does so with a difference. The thing in which he takes the keenest interest is not so much a defence of one's practical right to live the sort of life he chooses as it is the vindication of a universal tolerance in our *judgments* about differing ideals of life; and it consequently brings into the foreground the point of criticism I have

raised in connection with the typical apologist for non-conformism. Professor Fite's large contention is that morality is *intelligence*—the self-conscious living of life in terms of a realizing sense of what we are about and the meaning which it holds for us; the act most distinctively moral is self-criticism, regarded not as a means to some further end but as itself the essence of significant experience. In this desire to know, not in action, we have the central and fundamental fact of human nature; the only valuable fruit of the doing is the knowing—the gain in imaginative insight which is relatively separable from the overt success or failure of the undertaking, just as the real value of a hand in bridge lies in the intelligence it calls in play regardless of whether we win or lose. This supreme and exclusive importance of the conscious life for its own sake means, furthermore, the supreme value of each *person* for his own sake; the only genuinely moral situation is one where people meet on a basis of mutual understanding and sympathy and tolerance, each accepting the other for what he is and respecting his right to be just this and nothing else.

It follows—and it is in this negative corollary that I am chiefly interested here—that morality has nothing whatever to do with authority or standards. In so far as a man understands himself, in so far as his act is the true expression of his nature brought home to an inward sense of appreciation in terms of insight and imagination, we shall have to say in the only intelligible meaning of the word that he is a moral man, no matter how far removed his conduct may be from conventional notions of right and wrong or what its relation is to my personal approvals or dislikes. And if

actually there exists such a meaning for the agent, that which alone is really interesting to a person of moral intelligence is to find this meaning and in the light of it to deepen or extend his own insight into life; the true business of the critic is not to judge or to condemn, but just to understand. We may, indeed, say that one man is not as good as another in the sense that he is not as intelligent. But in so far as he *is* intelgent no standard of comparison is available; the ranking of human beings in the order of their relative goodness, if it is justified at all, is justified not as a moral undertaking but merely as a device in the interest of practical efficiency in dealing with them. There are no *kinds* of human nature that are intrinsically moral, others intrinsically immoral. The morality of an action is a question simply of the genuineness of the experience behind it; in the degree that it is intensively conscious—is thoughtful, reflective, self-conscious—it is thus far morally significant and morally justified, whatever its factual character.

The special question I am concerned with raising is a little difficult to render into perfectly unambiguous terms by reason of the fact that Professor Fite does not mean by standards precisely what I should want to mean. To him the word always carries the implication of something necessarily dogmatic, categorical, morally prior to choices and judgments, imposed in the last resort externally by some factual authority. Here I rather suspect him of yielding to the temptation, common in philosophy, to sharpen the outlines of his thesis by contrasting it with the extremer forms its rivals take. In allowing the name only to that which has its basis in authority, we have no doubt made it con-

siderably easier for ourselves if we are undertaking to exclude standards from the moral life; but the premise is not itself beyond dispute. After authoritative standards have been set aside it still is possible that something will remain, of a more empirical kind, to which the term properly applies; at any rate it is this latter path that I propose to follow.

And first a point that may perhaps seem academic, though I do not think it really is. To say that truly moral conduct only exists in so far as men are intelligently aware of what they do is itself, one might suppose, to set up a standard of a sort; a conception which can both define morality and in a tentative way distinguish the moral act from unsuccessful claimants to the title we have a *prima facie* right to call a norm. I am not suggesting that Professor Fite is unaware of this. Within limits he doubtless would insist upon it; all it would concern him to deny would be its relevance to his main contention—that even if self-knowledge does in some sense imply a standard this is at least no standard that exalts one special type of life and condemns the rest. But is this a reply that meets the issue quite completely?

The first question that suggests itself is one of fact; to what extent is it really true that judgments of condemnation have been outlawed? I grant for the sake of argument that one is precluded from passing sentence on what by definition is a moral, that is, a fully self-conscious deed. Suppose, however, a man falls short of insight and deceives himself; are we then bound to show an equally complaisant tolerance? Professor Fite's own practice hardly squares with this. I do not mean simply that his whole conception of the

moral attitude implies continuous judgments of discrimination if we are to understand either our own experience or that of other men; discrimination may be critical without presuming to disapprove or censure. But when it comes to a failure to live up to this ideal of intelligence are we then to adopt the same self-denying ordinance that is called for in other cases? Quite distinctly Professor Fite does not himself give the impression of one who suffers fools gladly; not only does lack of self-knowledge mean that a man is falling short of a standard, but the failure to all appearance leaves him in much the same state of mind as that which is characteristic of the ordinary moral critic. Hypocrisy as a form of self-deception is for him the "one really unpardonable sin." When he has occasion to refer to natural as against self-conscious living his tolerance almost always wears a little thin; it is "coarse, brutal, insensitive"—terms in which one may be excused for finding something of the distaste he refuses to let us feel toward "wicked" conduct. No doubt he would in theory have us tolerant toward human weaknesses and limitations; a man owes this to himself if he is to justify his claim to a realistic understanding of the facts of human nature. But tolerance may exist without approval; and that he has succeeded in ridding himself of all traces of disapproval here nothing in his pages would lead one to suspect. In practice, therefore, self-knowledge still remains a standard which asserts authority over our approving judgments, even though the right to judge does not extend to any of the concrete forms which self-knowledge takes.

Before going on to deal directly with the special

point at issue there is another closely related question I should like to raise. Any statement about what morality *is* will call for reasons; it cannot just be postulated as an undebatable premise. Now when we say that morality is identical with intelligence we are by hypothesis debarred from finding such a reason in any form of authority; and that leaves, as I see it, two possible sources for the definition. It might be an empirical induction from the experience men agree in calling moral—a purely general or logical description of what the word in its common usage means, or would mean if those who used it understood themselves. Or, on the other hand, it might stand for an account of some special form of excellence which the maker of the definition finds acceptable, and which thus might enter into competition with other possible ideals of goodness to whose admirers, therefore, this particular definition would not at once appeal as fully evident.

The second reason would complicate Professor Fite's position. If among a host of competing goods I pick out one that to me as an individual appeals most strongly I am not only making a choice that to the outsider is bound to look arbitrary, but in case morals can claim excellence at all in any sense that goes beyond a private experience of satisfaction I am hardly in a position to avoid calling it the "best" type of life —in Professor's Fite's own words, "something than which nothing can be assumed by a man to be better"; and thereby I am in danger of compromising any profession I have made to be renouncing judgment on another man's preference. If, on the contrary, it is not a "best" but only a particular newcomer in a field already occupied by competitors, it has lost its right

to be used for passing judgment of *any* kind upon them; if it is honestly a good for *me* there is no reason why I should not find my satisfaction in it, but I should not in so far be justified in setting it up as an exclusive definition or in telling anyone else what he ought to think about it.

At the same time, whatever the force of this dilemma, it seems clear nevertheless that it cannot be the first of the two courses that Professor Fite is really following—the formulation, namely, of a logical generalization which aims to say only that such and such constitutes the meaning of anything that men ever have called moral. His thesis gets most of its suggestiveness from the fact that it involves a paradox which most men would *not* accept as a true account of what they understand by the moral experience. When I am told that no *kind* of life is better than any other kind, and so that the man whose conduct my natural instincts, or prejudices, call disgusting, or sadistic, or, in short, immoral is nevertheless in the only real sense a perfectly moral man provided his acts self-consciously express his nature, my first disposition is without much doubt to say, Well, that is not what morality means to *me*. And if I were given to drawing fine distinctions I might go on to argue something in this fashion: Very likely the claim that to be moral is to be self-conscious is a valid claim provided we are not trying to *define* morality, but only to point to one of its necessary conditions. We do not call brutes moral, or very young children, or madmen; and the explanation doubtless is that they are incapable of viewing their own conduct in the light of reason and so of knowing *why* they act. As against *mere* authority, accordingly, conduct

will be moral only when also it is conscious or intelligent. But it would not need to follow that intelligence alone is enough to make it so. Quite possibly we are trying here to separate two things when the real question is one of relationship or emphasis; it may be that authority too, in its inner form as obligation, will have to add its positive contribution to the notion of the moral before the popular judgment would recognize or accept the term.

And the fact that in ruling out authority Professor Fite has to leave behind the common judgment is not the only reason for thinking that it is a special form of excellence, and not an inclusive generalization, on which his interest is centered; the influence of one such particular ideal may everywhere in point of fact be seen at work in his discussion. This is the ideal of a reflective experience of insight into meaning—an ideal that finds the highest form of personal good in the living at each moment in the light of the largest possible range of imagination, and that gets expression on the social side in those personal intimacies between human beings which are "the only deeply satisfying things in life," and which rest on a perfect mutual understanding and a tolerant acceptance by each of what the other is. What Professor Fite means here by imagination comes out perhaps most clearly in his criticism of the pragmatist. Pragmatism would have us live for the future, or at least for the present as an experience that is always pointing toward the future; the past has importance merely for these needs of action, and to dwell upon it in its own right is a mark of sentimental unintelligence. In subordinating action to imagination the value of past experience—an intrinsic and not

merely an instrumental value—is reinstated and magnified; in the imaginative or reflective reliving of significant experience a very large share of the positive good of life for Professor Fite consists.

Now it might be that his intention here is purely a defensive one; he might be aiming only to correct the narrowness of social philosophies that leave no place for his personal preference in values. But that would give him no right to *define* morality in terms of such a special value or to claim for it a preëminence in the light of which others stand condemned. And as a matter of fact it is hard to avoid the impression that he means us to regard it not alone as good for those who like it but as absolutely better, and so as offering a standard by which pragmatism may be critically judged. To sense the significance of what one is doing is not merely a condition of morality; it is *the* objective quality which renders any act moral and reveals the realities of life. All moral distinctions are distinctions in the degree of self-consciousness; in the conscious life for its own sake, and in the person for his own sake, the superior and *exclusive* importance of experience consists. And now and again we are asked to accept corollaries which, in a practical if not an authoritarian sense, involve implicitly a judgment of moral comparison. The "highest" moral virtues are honesty, honor, truthfulness and sincerity; hypocrisy is the one unpardonable sin. Strong man worship—an accredited ideal—is "devil worship"—a judgment that surely does not quite avoid the appearance of moral condemnation. The life of utilitarian work for future enjoyment is not a moral life; resignation is no moral ideal; leisure is indispensable to any true living; a

"red blooded" man cannot easily be conceived as capable of appreciating the finer and humaner aspects of experience. All this seems pretty clearly to imply that there is after all one "kind" of life that stands above the rest and so constitutes a standard for appraising them.

At any rate it raises a problem of some logical importance. Whether the goal of a living and imaginative intelligence be the best and highest goal or only one legitimate ideal among others, it still seems a reasonable demand that we should be informed *why* it is good; it is not enough for the philosopher to assume a value without any attention to the further question as to what makes it valuable, or, better, what its value signifies. For Professor Fite and for the pragmatist alike intelligence in some meaning is essential; why, now, is intelligence not only intelligent but good? The pragmatist has his answer; it is good primarily as a means to action, which, however, only pushes the question ahead a little and leaves us asking, Why is action good? For Professor Fite the question is an even more pressing one; if intelligent experience is good in itself and not merely as a means, then what makes *it* good? In particular, if such a form of goodness is better than, we will say, "red blooded" action, then what makes it better?

And to such a question there is only one obvious reply; it is better because in this way life comes home to us in terms of its ultimate satisfaction or enjoyment. This, however, is to add a new dimension to experience which, by the philosopher, cannot simply be mentioned and forthwith ignored. Enjoyment, Professor Fite tells us incidentally, is the "realization of value." He can

hardly mean by this that value is something we recognize intellectually in its own right and that enjoyment then is a separable addition on a different and theoretically irrelevant plane. We surely cannot "know" value prior to its realization; and if the realization constitutes enjoyment, then enjoyment must somehow have a part to play in the nature of the valuing experience. But this once granted, we cannot rule out a further query: Is it actually so that men universally will find their enjoyment where Professor Fite looks for it? If they do not, we may *call* self-knowledge if we will the only moral good; but morality will then be something different from the—to a given man—greatest satisfaction in experience, or the thing "than which nothing can be assumed by him to be better."

What then, if anything, gives me the right to say that man always will find his highest felt good through a realistic exercise of intelligence or imagination? Why is it inconceivable that in a given case the maximum of satisfaction might be secured by shutting one's eyes to facts, including certain facts about oneself, and living in a fool's paradise, a world of fancy and of wishful thinking? Facts are not invariably so pleasant that it is perfectly self-evident we always gain by dwelling on them. It might of course be urged that the facts are there, and are liable to break in tragically upon our self-deception; but it is not very difficult to imagine circumstances that might protect us from the brute impact of realities and so preserve indefinitely our illusions. Or again it might be said that there is something essentially degrading in illusions, which detracts in so far from the highest good of life. Doubt-

less this is so for you and me. But we are assuming that the onlooker has no right to impose his judgments on the agent; and if a man really finds happiness in his fool's paradise why should anyone feel called on to reproach him? I do not presume to say whether or not this ever really is the case; but I fail to see what grounds we have for refusing to allow that it *may* be the case. It is even open to suppose that a man may have momentary glimpses of his own deluded state and still choose deliberately to continue it; to all appearance this happens sometimes, perhaps rather often. Certainly one must have had a singularly fortunate life if he has never on occasion been disposed to ask himself whether sophistication is in all respects an improvement over the carefree enjoyment of the child living in his world of make-believe.

I do not want to leave the impression that I have been engaged in criticizing Professor Fite's understanding of what constitutes the good in life, or any of the consequences which he draws from this *except* the theoretical consequence that it ought to lead us to abandon moral judgments of comparison. If intelligence, or the enjoyment of intelligence, is just one particular ideal among others, then, indeed, it may lend itself to a doctrine of universal charity, but also it has lost its claim to be an exclusive definition of morality; if on the other hand it does make this latter claim, it has itself been turned into a standard. I am willing to leave it an open question which of the alternatives Professor Fite intends, though I suspect strongly that it is the second of the two; in which case the conclusion I draw is not that of necessity his own moral preference is mistaken, but that his analysis at any

rate is incomplete. The life of immediacy, of mere natural enjoyment, is no doubt a different form of life from that of self-conscious intelligence; but why is it a *lower* form? Why not enlarge our moral sympathy and tolerance to cover this as well? Some answer we shall need to give; and any answer raises problems. Is it inferior because such a life is not truly "human"? Then we are assigning to human nature a special constitution which thereby becomes automatically our norm. Is it for the reason that through intelligence alone does a man have the chance of getting what he wants? Empirically there is a good deal to be said for this; but it is a reason based in so far on utility, and it gives us no ground for claiming any superiority in ideal or moral excellence. Or is it because self-conscious experience is the only kind that, for me who am passing judgment, elicits my personal liking and esteem? It is this last motive in particular that I seem to detect in Professor Fite himself; but in the absence of something further it leaves us only with an individual preference which anyone will be at liberty to disregard in case he does not share it.

It is in the interest of this logical demand, accordingly, that I turn to a more detailed consideration of Professor Fite's moral thesis on its negative side. Just what experimentally does he mean, and what are the reasons he has to offer, when he denies our right to apply standards to our neighbors? And I start with one general reason on which there will be no need to dwell at present since I have no fundamental quarrel with it—the respect which a man of intellectual integrity is called upon to pay to the individuality of other men. This concretely is a motive that might be sup-

posed to follow from my own self-respect and the demand that I be permitted to exercise intelligent freedom in my choices; it is one which is bound to have weight with any sensitive and enlightened mind, and without it tolerance would be deprived of an almost indispensable support. What men will not so readily be prepared to grant, however, is that it constitutes a motive whose application has no empirical limits; and it is the logic of Professor Fite's proposal to make it universal that I want now to examine more at length.

To take a particular case by way of illustration, let us suppose a human being in whom a crafty and farseeing intelligence is grafted on the instincts of a beast of prey; to make the picture slightly more human we may add gifts of æsthetic appreciation also. This is the popular conception of the Borgias; but it makes no difference whether a particular application is warranted so long as we grant that the type is one that might conceivably exist. Such a man will find his satisfaction, then, in a ruthless climb to power and aggrandizement uncomplicated by scruples due to sympathy or pity or a sense of abstract justice—motives that by hypothesis are absent from his make-up; for good measure we may add a touch of sadism which gives a positive relish to the miseries he inflicts. Having endowed him with intelligence, he will be bound to realize that he is living dangerously and is creating hazards for himself as well as for his fellows. But he accepts these hazards freely, and may even get an added zest from the opportunities they offer for the exercise of his peculiar gifts of mind.

The first question likely to present itself is one I have asked before: Are we really satisfied to say that

such a person is a moral man? Certainly not in the way most people use the term; either, then, we must lose the support of common usage and make our private definition, or else we have overlooked something of which morality may be supposed to take account. And here Professor Fite seems to me a little inclined to hedge. To meet objections likely to be forthcoming he brings in two alternative considerations. It may be that the man who makes the sort of choice we normally should hesitate about approving is really not so clever as he thinks. A degree more of enlightenment might show him that his way of life is actually self-defeating; then we should be permitted to withdraw the concession that his act is moral. Or it may be he has glimpses of meaning to which we still are blind, in which case we shall have a warrant acceptable to the ordinary moralist for making an understanding of this unfamiliar insight take the place of censure as the proper moral attitude.

Either supposition, I should be inclined to say, points to something in the moral judgment for which the thesis does not readily find a place. As regards the first, it is of course more than probable that an examination of men's conduct will often in point of fact leave us with good reason to suspect that it falls short of adequate self-knowledge; it is not without significance, however, that the impulse to look for this deficiency, when it does not lie upon the surface, is set going and directed mainly by the presence in ourselves of moral requirements which we tend to think "ought" to be expected in other men as well. This may have no decisive theoretical importance; but it does at least call attention to the fact that as a method of moral

criticism Professor Fite's procedure here has no necessary connection with the absence of a standard.

It is the second suggestion that brings us closer to a real difficulty. Why is it I should be led to entertain the likelihood that, even though a man's conduct be exceedingly distasteful to me, it may for him have a meaning which, were I sympathetically to enter into it, would mollify my disapproval? To put the point I want to raise concretely let me make use of one of Professor Fite's own illustrations. He cites the instance of a Jewish writer who desires to protest the common prejudice against certain characteristics of his race. But in his book the author himself gives involuntary evidence of one of the traits from which the prejudice derives; and it is through his inability to see that this is so that he convicts himself of a failure in the intelligence which morality demands—an intelligence that, had it been present, would have nullified our disapproving judgment. But just what is it that is lacking here? Would it have been enough to satisfy the conception of morality had there been a recognition of the bare *fact* that he was himself an object of disparagement by others? That is hardly in Professor Fite's sense to "understand" his critics, whose attitude rests on an emotional prejudice against the trait in question; truly to be appreciated the feeling must find a reflex in the breast of anyone who sets out intelligently to weigh it. But then we really are asking the Jew to be emotionally affected as the gentile is; and this seems to mean that certain approval feelings, representing presumably a common human heritage, are enlisted surreptitiously as a standard. And the same consequence would follow in case he were able

to justify himself in a way to disarm his critics and lead them to substitute his emotional response for theirs.

As it is here I find the chief ambiguity in Professor Fite's position I shall try to make the source of my doubts a little clearer. It is, of course, entirely probable that to a far greater extent than actually is the case men might learn to extend their own insight into moral realities by striving to understand the aims and motives that rule the conduct of their fellows. At the lowest this represents a gain; I cannot recognize facts of any sort without some incidental benefit, if it be only the benefit that comes from an open-minded exercise of intellectual vision. But what is the chance, empirically, that understanding will always mean a *sympathetic* understanding such as will compel me, if I am not already in agreement, to realize deficiencies of insight that have to be corrected by the new light I get from others? Why is it not possible that the more fully I come to see the sort of thing my neighbor —clear-sightedly we will assume—demands, the surer I may grow that this is not a claim I either can accept for myself or take up with sympathetic approval into an impersonal outlook upon human good? Presumably the brute creation "lives its own life," expresses itself just as nature means it to, though it may not do this "consciously." But if it were possible for me actually to become acquainted with the meaning life has for the cobra or the jackal it is hardly likely I should feel under compulsion to adjust my own values to theirs; I should have extended my knowledge of natural history, perhaps, but my moral insight not at all. And unless we postulate a preëstablished harmony which

renders it impossible that any man should see life in a way that has not some ultimate relevance to the way *I* see it, no reason is apparent why the same thing might not be true in the case of the human animal as well; indeed, when we look about us it is only through the exercise of a resolute faith that we are able to escape this verdict.

And the reason is that sympathy does not involve an intellectual perception merely. It calls for an identity of feeling also; and if—what is clearly possible—two men are by nature so constituted as to be unable to feel the same way toward a common object, they are of necessity excluded from the moral relationship which Professor Fite desiderates. Nor will the fact—it may be a fact—that each is endowed with genuine self-knowledge alter the case a particle. Let us suppose that an act of brutality stirs me to a horrified resentment, while another man, equally self-conscious, finds in himself no capacity for indignation but accepts the fact with complacency or even with applause. What earthly chance exists for a sympathetic intimacy in such a case, or how can my insight into the meaning of experience be enlarged by taking account of his alien insight? The moral meaning of experience is its meaning for *me;* and I cannot incorporate into a single harmonious sense of significance elements that not only differ but that actively exclude one another. Professor Fite himself seems to be saying this in principle when he remarks, apropos of a disloyal friend: "Put the thought of Jones' frailty and your enjoyment of his friendship into the same act of consciousness and combine them into one act of thought; you may, indeed, preserve your self-con-

sciousness in a cynical enjoyment of Jones' weakness, but that is hardly an enjoyment of friendship."

What I am trying then to say is, that both "intelligence" and "tolerance" will have a different connotation according as we do or do not think of them as combining with a naturalistic understanding an emotional acceptance also. A "discriminating intelligence" is one thing, a "conscious appreciation" may be quite another. And by overlooking a distinction here Professor Fite leaves his meaning open to possible dispute. It might be that he is recommending as a moral ideal something not very different from that "cynical enjoyment" which he contrasts with friendship. In that case our good would be attained in proportion as we dissociate ourselves from any concrete human goal—our own included—regarded as in itself to be desired or approved, and set out as detached observers merely to view the human scene; and our tolerance would spring from the conviction that among competing ends all are equally natural, and none really to be preferred to others. And there are passages which on the surface might be taken to point in this direction. Professor Fite speaks of the moralist as a naturalist who studies not conduct but persons; a collector of persons and their points of view as another man may collect butterflies or coins. "Thus I may in the proper sense enjoy the moralities presented by the various experiences of mankind. I will understand them all. I will make them all my own. I will be in bondage to none." And he speaks of the moral excellence of tolerance, again, as constituted just by this intellectual insight into human nature. Such an ideal as I am here interpreting it—and it is a possible ideal—so far from identifying

me emotionally with all the conflicting ends that rule mankind would be open to attainment only because I am able to free myself from special preferences and view men as natural specimens, interesting no doubt, but only as other things are interesting to the scientific mind. I still should be able in an intellectual way to "understand" my neighbor's conduct. The lusts which govern him are such as I have felt, though in me they may have been restrained by scruples to which he is immune; and this immunity, too, I can understand as the absence in him of identifiable possibilities of motivation. But all this supposes me to be adopting the attitude of the scientist, not of the moralist; like the physical scientist I must resolutely refuse to let my sympathies become engaged, and must hold in check the natural feelings that interfere with a perception of the facts uncolored by any emotion save that which accompanies the desire to know.

However, I do not really suppose that this is the way Professor Fite means us to interpret him, and I think I can see how the ambiguity may have come about—from the working, namely, of two motives which do not completely coalesce. He wants to get rid of moral condemnation with its implications of self-righteousness; he wants also to commend a particular ideal of living—the ideal of a sympathetic understanding between friends—in which he finds the most excellent of human goods, and which the spirit of censure is pretty sure to hamper. Now in so far as this last ideal can be attained there is given to "understanding" and to "tolerance" a new and more positive signification. The understanding between friends *is* a sympathetic understanding just because it pre-

supposes a community of interest, the absence of permanently jarring notes, the intimate contact of two personalities each of which may contribute meanings to experience that the other can not only see but love. Even here some measure of human forbearance may be called for. But its character as tolerance will undergo a change; it will not be a tolerance gained by suppressing natural partialities but will mean, primarily, the retention of an open mind which keeps our sympathies from hardening and leaves experience free to add to its stock continued new possibilities of personal appreciation.

It is not altogether easy to make clear the ambiguity which runs through Professor Fite's discussion by reason of the absence of any explicit distinction between these two meanings of intelligence; but let me quote a few typical passages. To say—this is his thesis—that another intelligence has seen what I did not see is always in some degree to say that I also ought to have seen. If it should happen, for example, that further acquaintance with one of the reputedly "shrewd but unscrupulous" only increases my respect for his intelligence, I must then deeply question my own previously formed moral ideals; for if his insight is generally so superior to mine, how can he be altogether mistaken about what is really good? Or again, if people can be supposed to be deliberate hypocrites—that is, self-conscious in their hypocrisy—it would mean that they had sounded depths of wisdom by you or me unsuspected, and so would be adding to the significance of human life.

A number of queries are suggested by such judgments. In the interest of clear thinking we shall need

first to identify plainly the locus of these moral meanings. "That which is already comprehended has its moral significance assured"; let us suppose, to begin with, that this means it is comprehended not by me but by the agent. Now assume also, as empirically we have a perfect right to do, that such an agent is lacking in certain capacities for sensitiveness, for being impressed by this or that form of conduct in the way it impresses people generally. In the resulting world of antagonistic ends the moral critic may be prepared to acquiesce; they may even "add to the significance of life" by setting scientific problems or providing dramatic entertainment. But first the moralist would have, as I have said, to divest himself of his own sentimental preferences, which he cannot retain without finding himself inevitably unsympathetic toward some of the forms human effort takes. He may still understand these in a speculative way. But in so far as his spontaneous human reaction has not been entirely supplanted by the dispassionate mood of the scientist, or the artist, he will continue to dislike them; and the more fully he understands their implications the more certain are they *not* to have in the ordinary meaning moral significance for *him*.

That for Professor Fite there appears to be no serious problem involved in identifying the two standpoints looks naturally to a conclusion for which there is other evidence; what he is thinking of is significance that *can* be shared by me the observer, and shared on its emotional as well as on its scientific side. "To understand an action is nothing less than to appreciate the meaning of the action from the agent's point of view"; such an "appreciation" must surely be intended to in-

volve not a fact of natural history simply, but the presence of something capable of harmonizing with my own feeling of significance and so of adding to the sense of value I already bring to the appraisal. "Those who understand will mark the presence of moral quality, and for them it will have moral dignity." But there is no moral dignity, for me, in an act that does violence to my sensitiveness to considerations of justice or of decency; and the act does not acquire dignity simply because the agent knows, and I know that he knows, that such a capacity for sensitiveness is denied him, so that to pretend to it would be to stultify his nature. The assumption must be, pretty clearly, that if what he sees I ought also to have seen, this will not be a form of appeal due to a deficiency in his nature as compared with mine, but a positive insight which I can use to extend and clarify my own appreciations without loss to their present significance.

And so regarded, Professor Fite's more paradoxical illustrations tend to become little more than verbal. To say that hypocrisy or lack of scruple ought to lead me to revise my own ideals in case I have reason to regard them as the outcome of a genuine self-knowledge is really to suppose a practical self-contradiction. Unless we give some new and undetermined meaning to the words, the qualities in question stand utterly opposed to what most men, Professor Fite included, choose to regard as moral virtues; to accept their claims would be not to enlarge our present meanings, therefore, but to substitute other and inconsistent ones. The thing he has in mind must be, it would appear, not what might constitute self-knowledge for some given and perhaps exceptional person, but insight into the

universal realities of a common human nature. Such an insight might perhaps, without destroying the values we already see, cast some added light upon the so-called vices and lead us to think of them more leniently. But Professor Fite does not really contemplate the possibility of any actual reversal in his own convictions about what is moral such as would make hypocrisy a virtue. My neighbor, he says, enters into a moral relationship with me when he responds with a "finely discriminating sense of *what is just and honorable*"; rule out such a positive moral content, and the chance of human fellowship becomes illusory. Moral dignity is something which no conduct, not even self-conscious conduct, possesses in its own right; it is acquired only as an act is capable of impressing me in a certain way. And it cannot possibly give rise to this impression except as it finds in me a power of sympathetic understanding in which my own spiritual being is involved, and which inevitably I bring to it, therefore, in order to test its claims.

It is, then, for the reason that he has implicitly before his mind his own very positive belief about what constitutes the good that Professor Fite finds so little trouble, I suspect, in ignoring the chances of discord and antagonism in the common life of man. Because he thinks of life as a "symphony," an order sustained by mutual understanding, an enjoyment of personal intimacies, he is led to overlook or minimize the limitations that in practice render his ideal precarious. These have to do with the presence in human nature, along with its possibilities of fellowship, of things also that are shocking, abhorrent, despicable or revolting. "The growing friendship"—he is talking about the ideal he

wishes to recommend—"is itself the process of analysis, and so far as it is satisfied there is no further appeal. It would be a very different matter if I were swallowing a mass of revolting obscenities or closing my eyes to a taste for sharp practice for the sake of the introductions he could offer me or for his tips in the stock market." But why this hint of condemnation when for all we know the obscenities and sharp practice may be just the things a given man really wants and knows he wants? or would they cease to revolt us and to offer obstacles to friendly intercourse were we merely to divorce them from motives of self-interest? What most naturally we should be led to say is that between ourselves and such a supposititious person no truly moral relationship would exist; we should simply be compelled to drop the man whose meanings contradict our own from our universe of moral discourse, just as we do the brutes. But the reason is not that such a man is lacking in self-knowledge; by hypothesis he does know himself. It is because something more is needed to make me judge his way of life a moral life—a "something more" that is brought to light in the sense of revolt which his conduct stirs in me. So long as such a feeling is in evidence the "mutual understanding" which constitutes friendship automatically is barred; though I may understand in a factual way his point of view as due to the absence in him of feelings similar to mine this will not be sufficient to disarm my protest, while he for his part cannot understand *me* at all, since the emotional basis for an understanding we have assumed is lacking.

And once this is recognized, it sets a problem that carries us beyond the range of considerations to which

Professor Fite for the most part chooses to confine himself, and raises again the question of a standard. I do not say that these value feelings give me the right to judge my neighbor when he does not share them; so far as he remains outside what is for me the moral situation he is beyond the judgment of condemnation also. Nevertheless, the fact that it is so nearly impossible to avoid judging him must be significant of something; and what most naturally it signifies is the presence in the moral experience of a "sentiment" which acts spontaneously to set up a judgment standard. That our tendency to follow this sentiment may mislead us, that at best it can be justified only within limits, is very likely true. But it cannot be ignored. And so long as it remains a factor in human nature's actual course it follows that beyond a certain point Professor Fite's thesis tends to grow a little academic. Few men if any are capable of turning an initial feeling of repulsion toward "immoral" conduct into a sympathetic understanding which has got rid of any trace of censure; what happens much more frequently is that such tolerance as we are able to attain in practice will have to coëxist along with a continued emotional dissatisfaction. But this is not the sort of tolerance the theory demands. "The motive of respect for the personality of your fellow"—just how are we to take this? It will not mean of necessity a "practical" respect in the sense that we decline to interfere with him; Professor Fite leaves plenty of room for social interference so long as it is put on the ground of utility rather than of morals. But it is difficult also to suppose that it means respect in the sense in which I respect the qualities I spontaneously regard as good

or moral. I do *not* respect the sadist or the voluptuary or the sneak, even though intellectually I recognize that each may be "expressing" an exceptional but genuine personality; on the contrary, these particular forms of self-expression clash with innate prejudices which are incompatible with real respect.

In saying this I do not overlook the fact that the man may at the same time possess other qualities which I *can* approve, and, in particular, that the honesty and clarity of his judgments about his own aims and motives is itself such a quality. If one waives questions about a possible future conversion to a different way of thinking, the business man or politician who, frankly a pirate at heart, entertains no illusions about himself cuts in so far a better figure than the one who, equally acquisitive, persuades himself that it really is patriotism or public service or religion that dictates his conduct. In certain ways we may even prefer him to some of those who seem to share our own convictions; if a man thinks straight and is willing to tell us exactly what he thinks we at least can argue with him, whereas there can be no real intellectual communion with a mind that fundamentally is muzzy and obtuse and afraid to call a spade a spade. But if actually we cannot in the end agree on our estimates of value, as soon as we reach this point the possibilities of fellowship break down. There still may be enough other things we have in common to keep us friends; but the difference has only to go deep enough and affect our more ultimate valuations to destroy the intimacy of friendship altogether. At best we respect such a man only as an intellectual antagonist; in terms of emotional sympathy or of active coöperation in living he re-

mains an alien for whom we find it hard to feel any genuine regard.

What I have been trying to point out narrows down to one fundamental question: What are we to do about these instinctive disapprovals from which we find it so difficult to get away? Their existence is hardly in dispute; Professor Fite himself gives expression to them, as I have more than once had occasion to observe. What, then, is our practical obligation toward them? Is it to do our best to root them out, or, if we allow them to remain, to try to do this without prejudice to the claims they contradict? Or may it not be that these too are an intrinsic part of human nature, and that while we are doubtless called on to subject them to a rigorous examination they nevertheless may hold their ground so obstinately that "self-knowledge" will itself be forced to approve our continuing to bow to the authority they profess to exercise? Does morality, in short, mean identically the same thing as "life," or does it involve a special way of viewing life in the light of what it "ought" to be?

It is the latter alternative that appears to me the natural one. Certain forms of sexual gratification, we will say, arouse in me a strong feeling of disgust; how can I keep this from being translated into an objective standard? As a Spinozist I may tell myself that the propensity to pass value judgments ought to be discouraged. But a reflective repugnance is itself a judgment. The only way I can manage to escape the sense that here is an act unbecoming human nature is by trying to eradicate my aversion, and that I shall hardly be prepared to do; being what I am, I should

despise myself if I did not have the feeling. And I should hesitate still more to try to rid myself of the emotional revulsion that seems a natural response to brutality, inordinate greed, malignancy or treachery, or any of the other qualities that render a man a menace to his neighbors. Tolerance is in its way an excellent thing, but it is going too far when we tolerate the intolerable.

One suggestion might be made to relieve the difficulties which the exercise of this privilege may undoubtedly create. The essential vice of intolerance lies not so much in the attitude of disapproval as in the self-righteousness that may accompany it; disapproval is in itself not something of which we are bound to disapprove. Now to the majority of men a too easy-going tolerance will seem a rather cheap substitute for human sympathy if, following its natural logic, we are led to stand aside and wash our hands of any responsibility for the common good; between a forbearance that comes from liking people, and a forbearance due only to the fact that we really don't much care what happens, there is almost a difference in kind. But here a motive comes into view for a concern with the moral welfare of our neighbors which is not identical with a claim to moral superiority. This is the motive of a personal interest that keeps us from drawing back entirely when we think we have reason to suppose they are not going to work in a way to bring them permanent satisfaction. Even here a gentleman will exercise restraint in intruding on premises that are not his own. Nevertheless, the wish not to see another through ignorance or inattention fail

of his real desire is a motive a good deal easier to defend than the more pretentious motive that actuates the moral rigorist.

And I should be much disposed, indeed, to think that in the absence of such a personal interest in the good of concrete individuals any disposition to pass moral judgment is incurring hazards, however fortified it may be by general principles. But unfortunately this runs some chance of turning out a counsel of perfection. For the most part a man is laying himself open to a considerable risk of self-deception when he tells himself that it is only because he loves his neighbor that he desires to correct him; and so long as the fact is so, sympathy is likely in practice to need supplementing by another feeling with which only in rare natures will it blend completely. I may have a measure of success in making allowances for those whose conduct I dislike, and I may refuse to be vindictive in the sense that I am ready to forgive a repentant sinner and not pursue him with penalties beyond the point where they are needed for his reformation. But to ask me not to feel an active resentment toward one who persists in offending my sense of what is just and honorable in his dealings is to ask for something psychologically so very difficult as to lie outside the sphere of practical politics.

At the same time there remains even so a possible way—and it is the only way I am able to discover on the premises which I share with Professor Fite—for resolving in principle the difficulty which the extension of moral standards to another man creates. Once grant that he really is barred from sharing in my moral insights and my hands, as I said before, are tied; I can-

not in reason say that he *ought* to feel something which nature has made him incapable of feeling. It is only on one condition I should have the logical right to apply my own standards to my neighbor's conduct—in case, that is, he has in point of fact some potential capacity for sharing the sentiments I find within myself, so that a more adequate self-understanding would lead him to pass the same judgment that I pass upon him. This involves an act of faith; in fact it calls for a double act of faith. It postulates, to begin with, something like a generic human nature in view of which I may commonly presume that any normal man is open under the right conditions to certain motives and incentives. So much is implied in Professor Fite's own moral standpoint; at least I do not see how his confidence in an "order based on mutual understanding" could have any other ground. And in the second place it postulates—a still more rash assumption very likely—that in certain particular sentiments of my own I have been able to identify this common nature. But once allow such hidden possibilities, and judgments of disapprobation still may plausibly be allowed their place as an instrument of moral education which not only does not contribute to the self-congratulation of an aristocratic morals, but whose edge is dulled in proportion as a broad human sympathy is lacking. We seldom add much to the cause of moral enlightenment by setting up to be better than our neighbors and making censoriousness in itself a virtue. But neither is it certain we are serving them by being too indulgent toward what we think to be their faults.

For the first step in reformation commonly will be that a man should see himself as others see him and

feel the same repugnance to his acts that they excite in impartial bosoms; and until this comes about the feeling of antagonism which gets expression in the form of moral condemnation has on the face of it a useful and even a necessary part to play. The offender *may,* once more, be constitutionally insensitive to his iniquity. But we never empirically can be sure of this. And if the latent possibility exists, we normally do not add to the likelihood of its emergence by being too chary of expressing our resentment; to permit a man to go his thoughtless way protected from the bad opinion of his neighbors is to render him no genuine service. It follows that the incidence of condemnation will in terms of such a motive be shifted somewhat. It will no longer be a mere appetite for vengeance on an act that calls for a restoration of the balance through a corresponding act of retribution; its object will rather be the callousness and dullness of a mind that will not face squarely the true nature of its deed. A rational censure directed, for example, toward a disregard of the just claims of the weak by the strong does not stop with the mere fact of injury; it is fed by the natural reaction of intelligence against the blindness which refuses to see what it does not want to see, and the smugness which takes refuge in conventional appraisals and even applauds its own lack of vision.

And now to the extent that this is so vengeance has a chance of being leavened by the claims of sympathy. So long as a man persists in such a state of mind we feel that it is for his own good, as well as that of others, that he should get hurt in consequence; and therewith the ultimate end of condemnation and of punishment ceases to be the mere satisfaction of a

grudge and connects itself in some real sense with an interest in the moral status of the culprit himself. Psychologically this last motive may for the moment be engulfed in a wave of feeling. But if it is not there implicitly we are left with no clear rational justification for our moral zeal; the instinct to strike out at the doer of injustice, to break down his self-satisfaction and make him see and confess his own obliquity, is open to excuse just because it is directed toward an object that conceivably may thus be altered for the better.

That the attitude of moral fault-finding does not represent the highest and humanest form of man's experience I am quite ready to concede; it may be, indeed, that Professor Fite is right when he locates the truest source of human satisfaction in those intimate relationships between self-conscious persons where moral judgments have given place to the enjoyment of a friendly understanding. He would call this last the concept of the moral; I should prefer to call it the concept of the good. The difference is, however, not a purely verbal one. To enjoy the best doubtless is man's final aim; and this leaves the "moral" in its popular meaning only a second best, a stage in the journey rather than its culmination. I have merely been arguing on the assumption that it is nevertheless a stage through which most men will have to pass, and that we are oversimplifying things, accordingly, not for theory only but for practice also, if instead of trying to render standards more rational and useful we turn our backs on them completely.

Chapter III

IDEALISM AND REALISM

In what I have had occasion hitherto to say there has been present one presumption in particular which it is time to begin making rather more explicit, since it will have an important bearing on the argument of the later chapters. It is with this especially in view that I choose to turn next to the consideration of a second large difference of opinion, or emphasis, which runs through contemporary thinking, cutting across the lines of other and for the time being more conspicuous tendencies. I refer to the perennial dispute between the "idealist" and the "realist"—a dispute which in its own right occupies less attention, probably, than at certain periods in the past, but which nevertheless continues to affect materially prevailing attitudes toward moral questions.

In some interpretation, it is realism that one would be inclined to pick as most characteristic of the modern temper. Even current idealisms propose usually to be tough-minded, and they often in fact attain a touch of rigor through the persuasion that their universal insight has penetrated to a hard core of being which resists the private claims of individuals with their whims and subjective pleasures. For the libertarian, on his part, it is just these concrete facts of impulse and emotion, as against empty principles and abstract

logic, which prove to him that he rather than the idealist possesses the realistic mind. But the realism of logic and the realism of emotion have a vulnerable point in common: they both fall short of being objective in the sense that is most practically relevant to man's everyday affairs. Human logic binds the mind, but it reveals shortcomings when it tries to coerce the world of things; while the preoccupation with our feelings is always on the point of turning sloppy and sentimental. The reality to which both ideals and the demands of self-expression are compelled to bow is the reality of those specific facts and forces which make the world the particular sort of world it is at any given moment; and it is a third type of philosophy, accordingly, the scientific or "pragmatic" type, which by interpreting conduct in terms of these factual situations takes its realism most seriously. Unquestionably it is modern science that has been the most powerful influence in undermining the historical prestige of "ideals"; and with certain general questions which this raises I propose dealing in the present chapter.

It is not difficult to understand why a standing quarrel should exist between the scientific theorist and the man of practical or imaginative ideals—a quarrel crystallized in the formula of opposition between what ought to be and what is. It is a natural upshot of the scientific temper that it should be inclined to adopt a tone of patronage and rebuke toward enthusiasms generally and to confine the imagination rather to the sober task of catching the drift of the working laws of things as they are; and in essaying thus to beat back man's faith in his own ideal demands by calling to his mind their factual character, their relativity,

their dependence on impersonal conditions, it performs a necessary task. Nevertheless, this is to leave unanswered various questions that cannot be allowed to go simply by default. After all, men do and must work more or less consciously for purposes or ends that have to come from somewhere; and if science assumes the right to outlaw ideals as we have been wont to think of them it makes itself responsible for putting something in their place. It is not enough to refer us simply to the world of fact. When we once free ourselves from our first naïve provincialism and look about us, what we find is a vast confusion of conflicting currents of opinion and of action; to have any ground of choice, what we shall need in addition is a mark that distinguishes between tendencies all equally existent.

In case we set out to find such a mark in some empirical difference merely, there is only one obvious place in which to look for it—in the character of success or dominance. This has a backing in an attitude notoriously common. It is what is called getting on the band wagon; and much of the prevalent talk about progress would, indeed, appear on scrutiny to amount to little more than telling us we ought thus to decide the line we are going to take by looking around to see what actually seems to be getting the upper hand, to be the biggest thing going. As a sound principle of choice, however, this has drawbacks. To pick the winner in the movements of the day is no simple task. It is not altogether easy to persuade oneself that any great and unquestioned sweep of moral tendency exists outside the pages of the tidy-minded historical philosopher; very noisy tendencies, tendencies stamped

with approval by the trend of popular elections, tendencies that in a variety of ways seem for the moment to be having the best of it, it may be possible to discover, but a person of intelligence is not likely to regard this as a sufficiently enlightening method of deciding on his duty. And when we bring in the time element it even becomes doubtful whether we can apply the criterion at all; how long is a tendency to have kept advancing, just how many votes must it capture, before it shall have proved itself the law of the world? If, consequently, success means apparent and temporary success it is plainly unfitted for a rational standard; if it means success in the long run, then one has either to wait for the historians and sociologists to come to an agreement as to whether the run has by this time been long enough to settle anything, or else—and this might seem the sounder method—he has to recognize that the things which show the clearest title to permanence and mastery are the things of longest standing and so take tradition as his guide.

There is a second reason for questioning the appeal to success; to the ordinary man it has an unheroic flavor. When a movement is young and helpless and needs every assistance it counsels us to stand aloof; the moment to declare for it is after it has shown itself bound to succeed without our aid. There has always been a prejudice in favor of a different attitude; how else could what even now is best have made headway against the brute immensity and inertia of the world? It is surely not man's sole business to find out which way the wind is blowing and then add his own breath to swell it. Every cause must once have been young;

if it cannot gain adherents until it has already shown that it will succeed how is it ever to make a start?

All this is relevant, however, it may be said, only in case we suppose that social and ethical tendencies are arrived at simply through empirical observation; it loses its importance if science is able to arrive at causal and necessary laws. And very likely we should have to grant that within modest boundaries science does have in fact some claims to certainty; the extreme limits to the possibilities of human nature are definitely fixed by biological conditions governing the continued life of individuals and of the species, and these conditions may be capable of scientific formulation. But how short a distance this will carry us is plain when we reflect that all the multiplicity of forms that working ideals take on must in some measure have complied with such conditions or they would not now be in evidence. And when we ask what more science has to offer it is not by any means so evident what answer it can give. At once there begin to step in notions, not of life, but of certain kinds of life—the best life, the most satisfying life, the fullest life; and for none of these is the biological necessity apparent.

So far as I know only one suggestion has been made that carries much promise of assistance—the notion of adaptation to environment. Here we have, it may be, a real principle of causation. But anything whatever must of course have had its cause; the point is whether a given cause can be counted on to continue producing its effects. Certain ultimate biological conditions *must* be met, otherwise the whole problem lapses; but outside of this does an appeal to the environment give any decisive power of forecast? Only,

I should say, on one condition, that we take it as a fixed limit toward which change is supposed to be directed. The moment the notion is recognized as a fluid one, essentially relative to an organism in itself extremely unstable, the whole pretence to prediction comes to nothing; to indulge in prophecy in terms of a goal which shifts with every step of the progress toward it is a waste of good time and energy. If one were trying to formulate objective tendencies he might be led to prophesy, for example, that when so-called inferior peoples come in contact with more civilized ones they will degenerate and finally disappear. But if we take this as something inevitable, which therefore calls for acquiescence or collaboration, we are halted by a doubt as to whether any real necessity is present; so long as dominant races stick to their traditional ideals and practices we may expect the same results, but there is nothing in nature to hinder these from changing, as, indeed, they have been changing slowly in the century past.

In point of fact the proposal here misinterprets the aims of science. The business of science is not absolute but conditional prediction; the disposition to regard it as a form of clairvoyance, a means of peering into the future in the deterministic sense, is to lose sight of its significant value. It is true that to some slight extent science may predict the inevitable, more particularly in connection with the larger operations of nature that men cannot control. But such cases are themselves an indication that its real excuse lies elsewhere. If a collision in space were destined to destroy this planet, scientific foreknowledge of the fact would only be a nuisance. It is by giving a cue to action that

science comes to mean something of importance to us; the point of prediction is not that certain things must surely happen but, quite the contrary, that through an acquaintance with nature we are able to escape anything merely *happening* to us, and so escape the inevitable.

In other words, science has its place in human life as a means to an end; but the end itself science is incompetent to set. An end is a thing that appeals to us as having importance or value; and values cannot be enforced in scientific terms. To be sure, appreciations like all other things may be brought in a sense within the realm of science; but they cease thereby actually to *have* value, and with this loss their legislative function disappears. The science of æsthetics, if there be such a thing, is not absorbed emotionally in the values which it calls æsthetic; it stands on the outside and views them impartially as factual data, whereas in life their whole effectiveness depends on their coming home to feeling. A value is always something personal and in the last resort undebatable; as Mr. Chesterton remarks, you cannot argue with the choice of the soul. The prestige of scientific method carries no weight whatever if the assumption of worth itself is once in question. One who accepts the scientific standpoint must submit to scientific reasoning. But if anyone, a poet, say, were to deny that science is a fitting occupation for a man of sense there is no way of using scientific methods to refute him; the scientist can only point mutely to the self-evident values which science serves, precisely as the poet presupposes the self-evident value of poetry.

And this suggests the alternative to either science or

history as a final determiner of ends. It is to human nature that one has to look in the form of immediate appreciations of worth—subjective appreciations if one pleases—and to human nature viewed in the light of its empirical character as a growing fact that only gradually and tentatively comes to a knowledge of itself. To try to make what has been or what at present is the standard for the future is in reality to emasculate the idea of evolution; it leaves out the important fact of variation. A variation is something novel; to undertake to show there is nothing in it which was not already there before is to give up the right to call it variation. Any variation, therefore, if it takes place, is concretely incalculable in terms of the processes that precede and do not contain it; it is a new departure, and has actually to show what difference it is going to make before we can sum this up in a new set of empirical formulas.

And in ideals we have, it might appear, precisely the variations most capable of serving as instruments of human and social growth. Variations are individual, and so, in their origin, are ideals. The point of an ideal lies in the fact, first that it has still to be realized and so is a novel element in factual experience, and, secondly, that it goes back for its motivation to a personal demand. The force of an ideal depends not on my finding it true, but on my insistence that it shall be true; and this insistence sometimes may seem to be against precedent and history and the massed experience of mankind. How, indeed, would progress be conceivable were it not for this budding forth of new insights and cravings which thereupon try to constrain nature to their bidding? And whatever cooler minds

may have to say, mankind seems likely to continue honoring such ideals because it realizes, however vaguely, that out of them comes all the possibility of a better sort of good than has yet been reached. The caution of science on the other hand, however admirable in its place, is bound when it is pressed too far to leave the impression of over-timidity. It does too little justice to the free, living intellect of man. It bids us wait too much on occasion, be too timorous of risks, too distrustful of ourselves and our far-glancing intuitions fully to satisfy that perennial element in man's nature which longs for the world of adventure, and which in his heart he admires and regrets even in the days when poetry and religion and enthusiasms generally may seem to be giving place to the sober discretion of a philosophy that will take no steps for which it cannot give itself the most convincing reasons, and that will never believe the world is on its side until it can find its proof in accomplished fact.

Of course when one has urged that the final motive for our choice is not objective but subjective, that it rests on an incalculable impulse in ourselves, and that in the end we must trust ourselves and not the world and have faith that what we want the world is willing to give on condition that we are prepared to wrest it from circumstances even against odds, it does not follow that one should not be ready to correct the interpretation of his wishes by the widest knowledge he can get of the way the world actually works. Unless we can find the conditions of its satisfaction present in the world an ideal has no rational support; and when, in consequence, we have to do with causes that have been at work some time already and that show

no signs of growth, there may be a reasonable presumption that their continued ill-success points to a lack of those objectively favorable conditions apart from which idealism becomes sentimentalism or fanaticism. This affords no ground for condemning what in any true sense is a new departure. But here again, if we find that we are calling for a new departure, we should do well to sound ourselves carefully in order to make sure that what is prompting us is genuine insight and not mere eccentricity or self-conceit. In point of fact the greater prophets have usually been more conscious of their community with the past than of their own originality, and an insistence on novelty, on being advanced and ahead of one's age, is apt to be a bad sign. Nevertheless, if there is to be anything new and better in human life someone must at some time begin it. It is true we take the risk. But that in itself is not irrationality; it may be only courage. And in the end, the long run, the scientific mind will judge us. If finally the effort comes to nothing, if it can get no point of attachment to reality sufficient to make it go, then its lack of success is certain to be used against it. My demand is not a proof that the ideal is justified, but only a reason why I should try to justify it; I should recognize that I am fallible, and to prove that my ideal is right I must make good. But neither is the scientific test infallible because, no matter how long it waits, there is still more time coming in which things will happen; and one of the things *may* be the reversal of what has seemed hitherto the settled trend of the world's movement.

Between the two fallibilities I see no way of methodic and scientific decision; which means that

it must be left after all in the last resort to a personal decree with its source in the manner of man I am. The difference between the long run and the short run is the difference between an academic judgment on the past and a starting-point for new action and choice. The objective or scientific judgment has the former purpose. It is final only in so far as a given choice has fallen below the level of a live alternative, has become dead and embalmed in the past. In our actual choosing it may create a burden of proof. But in itself it is not, and is not meant to be, a final determiner of action; it must always leave open the possibility of a new turn to affairs which is a pure variation, a sport, a thing essentially individual and personal. Until the world has stopped growing, or until we are able to forecast the form it is to have when it does stop growing, the last word at any given moment of choice must be spoken not by knowledge but by faith—by an ideal, that is, not in the form of an absolute and supernatural ought, but as a personal demand irreducible to the formulas of objective fact or law.

So far all I have been undertaking is a formal defence of the right of the ideal to be regarded as a constituent of any rational plan of life. But this, of course, is just a starting-point for the practical moralist. Ideals may take a great many different forms, and any one of them may presume upon its abstract merit to usurp privileges that do not belong to it. This is what has an excellent chance of happening in practice, with the result that idealism in the popular mind has come to carry a more restricted meaning than I have been assigning it; the "idealist" exemplifies a distinctive hu-

man type, with peculiarities that do not endear it universally to men of a different temper. And it is only in this narrower sense that idealism stands sharply opposed to realism—a term more general than science, though the two have much in common.

Historically realism and idealism have commonly been interpreted in a way that leaves them open to no easy reconciliation; if the idealist commits himself unreservedly to the cause of perfection while the realist urges the finality of facts as they here and now exist, they have by definition closed the door to any likely compromise. However, if we resist the logically dangerous temptation to regard extremes as absolute, there is no great trouble in perceiving that both antagonists have something to contribute to the understanding of the moral life. The idealist is in the right when he maintains that in using the words good or value we are not taking actualities as final; we are viewing the world in the light of possible changes rendered necessary through its failure to satisfy directly certain personal demands we make upon experience. The realist on his part is warranted in urging that such demands are futile in the absence of a practicable means to their accomplishment in facts which we do not ourselves create but find existing. To be realistic is, on this understanding, merely to recognize and act upon the practical conditions to which action must submit if it is to be successful; and while it is seldom we shall find men living up to the full demands of such a principle, few of them will deny its general authority. The most inveterate idealist will tell you that he also is a realist, and indeed the only true one, since the force that rules the world is in the end the

force of the ideal; where people disagree is in their judgment as to what *is* real.

To give a sharper definition to the issue I may take an example which has become a generally recognized line of cleavage in the modern world. The outstanding social fact of the last few generations has been the industrial revolution; it is not surprising, therefore, that our attitude toward this dominant fact should have come into common use for measuring our degree of realism or tough-mindedness. The idealist nowadays more often than not is the man who is dissatisfied with an industrial civilization and who proposes to remodel it; the realist is he who, whether reluctantly or gladly, accepts it as inevitable. Most of the candidates for philosophic favor at the moment are distinguished by their own peculiar stand on such an issue. Most vigorous in denunciation is the romantic individualist; as an object of his disapproval the business man has a place well alongside the Puritan, and if he does not turn aside from the competitive struggle to little bucolic experiments in coöperative living he will at least be found doing what he can to ignore the tides of industry and commerce that surge about him. The professional idealist is more complaisant and rather less consistent; he is disposed to appropriate the benefits of an industrial society while at the same time patronizing it as devoid in itself of ideal merit, and only to be tolerated because it makes possible a cultivated class that can forget its dependence on trade and manufacture and occupy itself with the worthier things of the mind. It is the pragmatist, more especially, who accepts the new age frankly as something which by an

intelligent exploitation of its possibilities we may turn into an actual source of human values.

However, it is not pragmatism that offers the best illustration for my present purpose; the pragmatist, whatever he may leave unsaid, is a meliorist even if not an idealist, aiming at a world better than the present one, and his philosophy is in any case too distinctive and too closely reasoned to be disposed of in passing. It is in certain other quarters that the deficiencies of realism are more plainly visible. They are most evident of all in the typical conservatism of the business man; here they are so clear that it hardly would be worth spending time upon them were it not for the influence such a philosophy exerts on a wider public also. The latter fact does not, however, go very far in providing rational support; indeed, it serves to call attention rather to a weakness implicit in the theory of a business realism. It seems improbable that the vast multitude of men who draw modest not to say meager salaries and wages would look with such mild and unresentful eyes at millionaires and their exhibitions of conspicuous waste, at political lobbies and vast industrial mergers and paternalistic labor policies, were it not for that admixture of glamour and intimidation which the *status quo* has always exercised on all save the few who are specially endowed by nature to resist it. This is an anomaly from the standpoint of self-interest. Anybody in a free country may of course himself become a millionaire, just as any boy, or any girl for that matter, may look forward to becoming President; but this as things go is never likely to become a working motive for the masses. And while

there are not lacking economic arguments to prove that the best thing that could happen to a man is that for every dollar he finds in his pay envelope others should receive their thousands, still arguments, even when more unexceptionable than this, seldom go a great way toward removing active discontent. A good deal of the general acquiescence is due doubtless to timidity, since those who live on the verge of poverty may choose not unnaturally to endure the ills they know rather than risk changes whose issue they cannot foresee. But behind the fear lies also a more ultimate presumption in the form of an instinctive feeling that anything that has achieved the status of accomplished fact holds a prescriptive title to existence; and if this feeling is strong enough to sway the mind even of those for whom the existing arrangements of society are of doubtful benefit, when backed by self-interest as well it will carry still greater weight.

It is unnecessary, therefore, to suppose that in subscribing to the pious creed that whatever is is right and that all things work together for good to those who serve mammon, the successful business man is consciously a hypocrite. In point of fact he is often quite sincere; he really believes that dissatisfaction with the way things are run by those whom a wise Providence has entrusted with business interests is rebellion against the moral order of society which ought to be discouraged sternly. The conviction is probably not of a sort we can hope to overcome by argument; nevertheless if we do set out to reason about it, it plainly has one logical weakness. After all, the main driving force behind the realism of the industrial conservative is self-interest with its apparatus of desire

and sentiment—partly fear, once more, since the ownership of property is sometimes even more conducive to timidity than a lack of it, and in part the positive allurements of wealth and power; inertia that rests upon a philosophic worship of the given fact will become a political motive only because somebody is better satisfied to leave things alone than to alter them. But if the desires of one class in society are once allowed to constitute a claim upon our loyalty to things as they exist we have adulterated our realism with an ideal preference, and so are precluded in theory from ruling out the preference other men may feel for change. If desire can be efficacious in the one direction it equally can be so in the other; which means, once more, that the active force of an ideal is itself an element in the factual world.

That this actually is so is one of the plainest lessons of experience. Time and again people who have been content to leave things without change have been met and thwarted by the active efforts of other people bent on something which in their view was better; and a realism which pays no attention to such patent facts at least does not owe to reason any authority that it possesses. Perhaps nothing puts this in a clearer light than the surprising indifference shown by the typical conservative toward history. Professing to find his own justification in historical reality, what he really does is to take one little segment of human life with which he happens to be familiar while ignoring its broader sweep; he finds something—marriage customs, forms of government, a particular distribution of property rights—and he goes on to argue that what has always been must always be. Of course the real

inference we are justified in drawing is that since nothing has "always" been we have no business to assume on the basis of its mere existence that anything in particular will stay indefinitely fixed; on the contrary, if things in the past have changed repeatedly we may reasonably expect that they will change again. It is only such human facts as take the shape of relatively steady demands for satisfaction that we even conceivably may hope will supply a compass for giving direction to man's life in the ever-shifting play of its environment; to be rational, that is, an aim must set itself to discover, not special forms of satisfaction that are final, but a constant procession of new and better ways of meeting persistent needs. But in that case we are committed to ideals again.

In denying finality to the plea of the conservative we need not overlook the relative merits it can claim. While "fact" is not eternal it does confront us here and now, exerting compulsion on the action of the moment. And those in consequence who carry the responsibility for guiding the affairs of industry or of the state are hardly to be blamed, perhaps, if they hesitate to endanger the delicate machinery already in existence by giving heed to the advice of irresponsible idealists. But we have a way of testing roughly the validity of any plea in extenuation. A given act will nearly always have to compromise with facts and so fall short of a possible future best. An industrial enterprise may be faced by the immediate necessity either of refusing demands from its employees that in themselves are proper or of going out of business; a statesman in a belligerent world may not see his way to conceding all that the enthusiastic pacifist desires.

What remains as the real point at issue is: Does the act in question fit into a policy that looks to progress, or are the present difficulties only used as excuses for making no effort at improvement? Unfortunately this last is the impression the industrial apologist most often leaves; and to that extent his realistic claims are open to attack.

Meanwhile on its merits the particular ideal of the business conservative is, to say the least, no more immune to criticism than those which he proscribes. It is just as dangerous to take prosperity as a self-evidently valid goal as it is to commit oneself to any other abstraction without first making sure what it stands for in particular. In its current use prosperity means a state of things where manufacturers and traders are able to count on high prices and a large excess of profits. But this, when it is stated plainly, will arouse much more enthusiasm in those who have commodities to sell than in their customers; while a measure of prosperity no doubt may filter through to many of the buying public, official assurances that the best way to aid the poor is to increase profits and lessen taxes for the rich cannot escape an air of paradox. One may even go farther still and question whether conspicuous economic prosperity in whatever form is an end that can be counted on to meet the approval of all reasonable men. In the past it has appeared a truism to nearly all of those reputed wisest in their understanding of man's ways that prosperity cannot go beyond a certain point without risk to his more creative and spiritual activities; and while such a judgment has ceased to carry weight to the present generation, the fruits of its rejection are not wholly

reassuring. Art and religion cannot be in a very healthy state when the one has more and more to turn to the service of commercial exploitation for its rewards, and when Christian zeal is led to find its escape from a contented smugness in crusades against Darwin, in baiting co-religionists, or in forcing personal abstentions on protesting neighbors. I use the word spiritual with some misgivings, since there clings to it a flavor of piety which is repellent to many minds; all I mean it to imply, however, is the existence of human preferences in the form of self-conscious possibilities of feeling or enjoyment which can be distinguished from the utilitarian values of biological preservation or industrial efficiency. Not that success in getting on in the world is without its contribution to the art of living. But once its value is seen to lie not in itself but in the inner satisfaction which it brings, the way is open to the further recognition that it enters into competition with an indefinite variety of other ends against which it will need on occasion to be justified.

A more complex situation meets us in a second case. The realism of the business world is apt to take the form of a generalized prejudice rather than a philosophy; and when it is made explicit, as in recent years by Mr. Coolidge for example, it largely evades disinterested argument by its habit of proceeding on the basis of naïve assumptions and ignoring facts that do not suit its purpose. But the same faith in the essential rightness of economic forces may be given an entirely different turn that brings it more openly into the arena of debate. The premises on which the conservative relies go back to preëvolutionary days; he views economic laws in terms of their accrued results

rather than of their intrinsic nature as a process. But one has only to reverse the emphasis to get the starting-point for a realism that may be enlisted in the service not of the existing order but of a radical reform. The economic interpretation of history, so-called, is an attempt thus on a large scale to show how every aspect of man's life is the unintended and necessary outcome of a mutual interplay between given instincts or habits and the conditions of the material world; and in this latter shape, in certain forms of the historical movement to which Marx in particular has given a name, we find the most self-conscious and intellectually respectable example at the present time of a subordination of individual ideals to industrial realities.

It is not my purpose to enlarge upon the various objections, practical or otherwise, that have been raised to such a political philosophy; it will be enough to enter one general caveat. There is no point in trying to deny that economic laws and forces have had a great and continuing part to play in the course of man's life on earth; statistical science, for example, reveals a vast number of such laws which when our attention first is called to them are apt to leave upon the mind a rather appalling sense of mysterious and stern fatality. Without much doubt many human beliefs and habits have arisen in just the way the economic realist supposes; they are in a well-defined sense of the word necessitated. It is the peculiar difference of the present age, however, that it is learning slowly to take control of its destiny instead of leaving this to economic forces; and it has a chance of doing this precisely when it comes to see what has been happening in the past. Recognizing this, the influence no longer operates

automatically; if we can discover the actual causes that lead now to this or that result then we can, *if there is any general demand for it,* alter the statistics indefinitely. One may find an illustration in the new art of salesmanship. This is a conscious attempt to do in a limited field what nature is supposed to be doing on a grander scale—catch us when we are not looking and persuade us to something which previously we had not been conscious that we wanted, and for reasons of which we equally are unaware. But the theory is inclined to overlook one point, that to succeed it must cover its tracks. People may be able to manage me so long as I do not suspect that I am being managed, but they must be careful not to let me into the secret. I make my purchase at a shop and the clerk says to me, "What else?" Theoretically I am supposed to respond to the suggestion and think up another purchase; my own first impulse is to answer "Nothing" and to leave the store, even though there may be other things that I desire. Substitute mother nature for the advertising expert and we have the same essential situation; science in stealing from nature the secret of how she has fooled us in the past has put it out of her power to keep on fooling us in the future.

As I have been proposing to define it, then, the general lines which a critique of idealism needs to follow will not call for much elaboration. Attacks on idealism are very apt to miss the point; more often than not they are directed against certain ideals in particular, and even so they frequently are due to a resentment aroused by faults of manner to which the professional idealist is disposed almost as much as to the nature of the ideal itself. But from the standpoint

of the analyst this is accidental and irrelevant. To object to a certain sort of ideal does not mean that we are getting rid of the ideal in human life; indeed, the controversy usually resolves itself into a family quarrel among idealists, though some of them claim the name and glory in it while others prefer a terminology that keeps their personal predilections under cover. For it is the weakness of any general broadside against ideals that, as I have been insisting, it disregards an inherent property of man's nature. No normal human being comes to experience as a mere matter-of-fact succession of events. However hard-boiled he may think himself to be, he almost never is content to stop with refusing to accept the inflated values of his neighbors. If nothing more, he will go on to erect this very refusal into an ideal good; it is seldom that the dogmatic realist, in business or politics or letters, fails wholly to conceal his satisfaction with himself as one immune from sentimental weaknesses and so as meriting a higher claim to rational admiration.

Meanwhile this still leaves us free in practice to distinguish idealists from realists as relatively contrasting human types; and in the popular sense it remains true that idealism is subject to various special strictures. What its critic is safest in deprecating is the influence an emotional prejudice exerts in leading those who feel it to close their minds to limiting conditions and uncongenial facts. This, to be sure, is a weakness of human nature generally; the most thoroughgoing devotee of facts finds it hard not to pick and choose among them, and, in particular, he is tempted to forget that wishes and emotional approvals are themselves also facts which act as effec-

tive causes. Nevertheless where feelings are strong—and it takes this to make an idealist in the distinctive sense—the effect is naturally intensified, and it tends to breed a degree of indifference toward actualities which no enthusiasm for an ideal good excuses. Not that such a consideration settles anything; it merely warns us to be on our guard. It gives us no right to condemn ideals in general, or any ideal in particular until we have found out what specific facts, if any, stand in the way of its attainment. But it does tell us something about the state of mind which we shall find it most profitable to bring to any dispute about ideals.

And it enables us to lay down one negative rule, at least, which we may reasonably take to have a general application. No ideal is in a position to do its duty toward the facts so long as it claims to have an adequate embodiment in some general formula presumed to be sufficiently attested by its self-evident emotional or rational appeal. This is the typical failing of the moralist; he is always tempted to suppose that moral terms and standards—temperance, honesty, good citizenship, justice—have a simple and easily definable significance that only needs enforcement by exhortation to be a guide to conduct. But that is to make a merit out of a practical liability. The more one relies on the authority of abstract values the less he will feel called on to interpret these in terms of actual conditions, and the more certainly, in consequence, will the ideal take refuge in a realm remote from everyday realities. Ideals, that is to say, become divorced from ideas; and what in practice tends to happen, therefore, is either that they are identified with mere vague

good intentions, or else that in the absence of realistic thinking it is possible to persuade ourselves that the course which expediency prompts is consistent with a loyalty to principle and that a Versailles treaty embodies adequately our fourteen points.

Even this criticism needs some qualifying. No accredited ideal, to be sure, is a safe thing to universalize and impose on all the world. Life has too many elements of good to be compressed even within a noble formula; indeed, the more ideals there are the better and the more the demands of the good life are likely to be met. And the lesson which this points is that an ideal in its more honorific sense has its affinity less with a legal code than with a work of art; it is the apotheosis of some special claimant to the title of the good cast in a form that lends it æsthetic persuasiveness and charm as well. It cannot, to repeat, be made exclusive; to insist that everyone should be a mystic or a stoic or a reformer is an infallible receipt for insuring the loss of many things that are indispensable to a general human happiness. But as a corrective of man's natural one-sidedness through calling his attention forcibly to things he might otherwise have missed it often serves a valuable end; and for such a purpose even its intellectual shortcomings are not an unmixed evil. In the claim to stand for something finished and unchanging and indefectible there is present a power to stir the imagination in which more sober and cautious working programs fall a little short. History and literature are strewn with shining patterns of perfection which it would be a questionable service to the life of man entirely to cast aside because they are unattainable or because they do not make the same

appeal to every mind alike; chivalry, asceticism, stoic endurance, Christian charity—no realistic judgment that these are overdrawn and even a little absurd perhaps can help being tempered for a sensitive intelligence by the impression of something really admirable and engaging, which man very well may need to supplement the staider intellectual and practical virtues.

Chapter IV

THE ETHICS OF PRAGMATISM

In the previous chapter I have, without specially intending it, found myself passing every now and then from ideals as they concern the individual man and his conceptions of the good to the part ideals play in the "social" situation. This last does not represent the most spectacular interest of the present generation, but it certainly is not the least significant. For the last hundred years and more man's thinking increasingly has been engaged with the problems that have to do with his political as distinct from his directly personal good; and in so far, therefore, as the a-moralistic individualism of the contemporary world is tempted to disparage social claims it takes the risk of damaging its own prestige. The logical issue of a-moralism in terms of a political philosophy is anarchism. This still has a vogue in certain quarters, but on the whole anarchism is nowadays outmoded; the tendencies at present dominant are so far from minimizing social control that they make this their main objective, with the human individual getting for the most part rather scant attention. The thing with which they are immediately concerned is not the emancipation of man's inner life, but the technique of a new form of social authority which shall substitute rational or scientific understanding for prescription. Since they aim to free man from

his former masters their outcome is typically a philosophy of progress. But it is progress in terms mainly of the economic life; that spiritual benefits also will accrue is taken for granted, but commonly these are left vague and undefined. I have already in a general way suggested reasons for thinking that such a tendency may go too far. After all, any form of good must in the end approve itself to *me* before it will constrain my rational suffrage; and in consequence no "science" of society can offer final guidance unless it is willing to take account of personal ideals and can provide the tools for resolving the conflict that palpably exists among them. And it is in the light of this judgment that I am undertaking in the present chapter to examine more at length one current philosophy in particular which proposes to interpret the moral life in terms primarily of scientific method.

Freed from the shreds of metaphysics which still cling to it through its emergence from the strife of past systems of philosophy, pragmatism is, in the hands of Professor Dewey whom I shall take as its official representative, an attempt to get away alike from the stereotypes created by tradition or by an abstract moral reason, and from the confusion of mere private feelings and desires, by substituting a new emphasis in the shape of a scientific understanding of the conditions in detail under which the biological creature man meets as they arise the practical problems of his everyday experience. Instead of regarding reason in the traditional way alike of science and philosophy as a system of indubitable truths that can be brought to bear on a disorganized material of sense and feeling, it undertakes to substitute the notion of mind as one phase

or aspect of a moving equilibrium of action, life or conduct. We do not do our thinking for the sake of envisioning a world of everlasting truth, but in order to settle how we shall act as living organisms in an environment constituted, not by unchanging objects, but by a shifting flux of circumstance that makes ever new demands upon us. In this constant succession of practical emergencies two factors come to be distinguished. Intellectual principles and laws stand for the relatively ordered outcome of our past experiences—points of view, generalizations, tentative ends and methods which we have found useful in previous calls to action; sense is the name for the new and as yet unorganized conditions that demand attention; and the thing in which both issue is not a mere intellectual picture of the world but a form of conduct. Consequently we are not to take "truths" as if they were ready-made instruments for interpreting reality; our conceptual tools are themselves altered and rendered more precise in the process of applying them. We do not know truths to start with and then try to make the world conform to them. A truth is simply a suggestive hint, an hypothesis which progressively is shaped and reshaped as we go on to bring it into contact with fresh data; even when it defines and approves itself by removing obstacles and setting action free it does not rest on its laurels and settle down for life, but is simply one further addition to the stock of provisional and plastic judgments on which we have to draw for settling the next problem that arises.

In terms of ethics, what this means is that the moral experience is not a movement toward some well-defined goal which man's reason can anticipate and

delimit and to reach which we have authoritative guide posts in the shape of universal maxims and categorical imperatives; it neither attains nor aims at an ultimate summation, but goes on endlessly to gather up fresh resources of insight and enjoyment. Plainly this, if it is true, lends a new complexion to the moral quest, and alters radically some of its traditional features. For my guidance as an individual, it will shift the emphasis away from a conscientious performance of accepted duties to the task of moral education. My obligation is not to be loyal to some model of perfection, but to learn how best my conception of the good may keep pace with expanding opportunities and knowledge; instead of its being a merit never to let moral convictions waver, we shall have constantly to be on guard against their hardening into forms that put a stop to growth.

The difference is still more conspicuous when we turn to the larger field of social action. In the case alike of traditionalist and reformer it has been the usual practice of a political philosophy to justify itself by setting up the idea of a perfect social order, and using this as a yardstick for determining the worth of practical proposals. The conservative finds his ideal already fashioned for him by the work of past generations; and he proceeds to give it sanction by clothing it in the moral dress of large and pretentious principles —law and order, patriotism, the wisdom of the fathers —about all of which the essential thing is that they are meant not to help us solve new problems but to persuade us that there are no problems which the past has not already met. This assumption the radical rejects, and for the old slogans he devises new ones—liberty, the rights of man, the happiness of the greatest number.

But typically he still clings to the belief that a social goal is something to which we are constrained to give a definite and final contour; he simply substitutes for an ideal deposited by history another constructed in his own mental workshop. The socialist, for instance, has usually been a good deal more concerned with a distant utopia that with the political needs of the moment, though it ought to be clear that unless he can tell us how here and now to act it is only through the intervention of a miracle that his hopes stand a chance of being realized.

As against such an attitude the pragmatist proposes a new method—the method of experimental science. He does not profess to know just what the future will bring forth; he is only certain it will be something different from the past and different, most probably, from any forecast we now are competent to make. Luckily, however, we do not have to act in the future but only in the present; and meanwhile we do have some acquaintance, sufficiently exact, with our immediate surroundings and with the particular occasions for reorientation brought home to us by the failure in the satisfaction that belongs to unimpeded and effective action. A man, for example, does not need to have settled views about the destiny of capitalism to be convinced that monopolistic tendencies in water power are having empirical results not altogether to his liking as a consumer or a citizen; and it is the business of political reason to discover how these defects in particular can be remedied in view of man's actually existing opportunities and limitations.

In the light of this experimentalism the notion of a moral principle or standard may not need to be dis-

carded altogether, but at least it will require large revision. To take one example among many, liberty is a word that has had an enormous emotional force in modern politics; but on the whole one must admit that it has generated far more heat than light. Now and again it has been an instrument for the discomfiture of decadent institutions; but it has been a good deal more effective for purposes of violence and negation than as an agent of positive reconstruction. And one reason plainly is that liberty has been too generally regarded as an absolute good or final end. By being isolated from the particular subject-matter of experience and set up as a value in itself it has lost contact with the specific needs of action; as a slogan of political revolt, in consequence, it is apt to leave us pretty much in the air, with an added sense indeed of resentment and discontent, but also with no very definite idea of what to do about it. The pragmatist is himself a libertarian. But he is chary of emotional appeals to liberty in general, and aims rather to fix attention on the specific ways in which action may be freed from the constraint of this or that obstacle as it presents itself.

With the general merits of this standpoint I am not at all disposed to quarrel; it seems to me quite fundamental to any philosophy of moral progress. At the same time it suggests certain possibilities of danger if interpreted without due caution. The fashion of adopting a laudatory attitude toward the pragmatic claims of scientific research as a basis for social programs may win a too uncritical acceptance; and there is some reason to fear that this is what nowadays is happening. Already the movement has made considerable headway. Unless the facts unearthed prove

too annoying even the loyal partisan will accord a measure of respect to the social statistician; he can afford to do this because, for one thing, factual evidence is seldom unambiguous, and he always is at liberty to substitute for inconvenient data considerations more congenial. Any cause whose treasury will justify the expense is now apt, accordingly, to have its own fact-finding agencies, with the result that a sceptical observer might be excused for questioning whether the net outcome may not be to render somewhat easier that prevailing state of mental confusion which is the great desideratum of those who are desirous of putting something over. It is true the possibility is present of overbearing the prestige of special and competing interests by the higher authority of the state. But what the advocates of a "science" of politics still have failed to do is to show any very compelling reason to suppose that governments are going to be more scrupulous in their use of facts than those they are relied on to correct. A government is nothing but a group of men who happen to have got control of the political machinery; and if they refrain from doctoring the conclusions of their expert advisers or, what is still more effective, from picking advisers on whose soundness they can count in advance, it will not be because they lack the will. It is not the least of the public services performed by our recent national administrations that they have shown the possibilities that reside in a conscientious attention to the personnel of commissions intended to determine the facts on which political action may be based.

More relevant, however, to my present purpose is another objection to a sole dependence on scientific fact-

finding to meet political requirements—the inability, that is, of factual information to offer much guidance unless we already are agreed about the direction in which we want to move. The reason this second point is so often overlooked is the existence of a variety of human ends which we are accustomed with some excuse to take for granted. Health is, for example, one of these, and consequently most of the problems about health we can afford perhaps to leave in the hands of biologists and doctors. To a lesser extent the same thing holds good of a fairly extensive group of problems with which economic theory has been wont to deal. Few persons are prepared to adopt a public policy which means a loss of natural resources or an interference with the healthy processes of trade; and the only way to forecast the probable effect a given policy will have upon the wealth of nations is through an accurate knowledge of economic data which no one but the expert can supply. But it also is perfectly apparent that such forms of agreement are far too vague and general to stand much chance of mediating between all the concrete differences of opinion as to what men think they want. We have only to turn our eyes to the actual situation to recognize that human antagonisms have their source not alone in controversies about the best way to reach an end on which men are agreed, but in disputes, often sharp and embittered, about the nature of the end itself. Before we can apply any method, however scientific, these disputes will need to be adjusted; and for this we shall have to take some account of the more concrete and personal content of those objects of desire which method is intended to secure.

If I call such objects "final ends" I have no intention of trying to reinstate the sort of thing which the pragmatist denies—the validity of ideals in the shape of concrete goals of living that can be intellectually defined prior to experience. I am assuming merely that there are certain large conditions of human satisfaction capable of a more or less definite statement and of a tentative evaluation, and that before we can deal rationally with any specific situation these will call for scrutiny and criticism. For an example it is not necessary to go outside the case just cited. It is not after all quite true that liberty deserves to be called a good simply in an instrumental sense; those who have urged it as a positive end or value have not been without excuse. "Why," Mr. Taft once wrote, "do we approve popular government? It is not because there is something inherently good in a people's governing itself. We do not seek liberty just because it is called liberty. Popular government, self-government, are merely means to an end, and that end is the happiness of the community and the individual." But such a judgment overlooks the fact that liberty or self-direction enters into the content of happiness itself when this is viewed concretely. Liberty is not a *mere* means, a mere external piece of machinery; the sense of being enfranchised and unhampered has a tonic zest of its own whose absence leads to serious deductions from the satisfying life. Our holidays and merry-makings would be rather sad affairs were it not for the expansive sense of well-being which arises in us when we throw off responsibilities and tell ourselves that we now can do exactly as we please, and which helps atone for the mildness of most of our accessible

diversions. However illusory it may seem to the judgment of maturity the zest of youth, again, which it is so hard later to recapture, gets no inconsiderable enhancement from the feeling that one is out from under the controlling hand of parent and teacher and has the world before him. And we shall probably as sober penologists never quite understand those who elect to live outside the law if we fail to make allowance for the positive exhilaration that may accompany a release from conventional taboos; this rather than a desire for particular indulgences explains the sneaking admiration which the good citizen not infrequently is disposed to feel toward those who have ventured to throw off restraints that he finds at times a little irksome.

It is true that the joys of freedom may turn out to be unsubstantial; and here lies the catch in the philosophy of the immoralist. No matter how much I should like to cut loose from all restraining ties, the fact is that the world will not permit this to come off. The moment I start to do one thing rather than another I automatically begin to pick up impedimenta that limit my future liberty of action; and a good deal can be said for the advantages of choosing my own responsibilities in the light of deliberate judgments of approval instead of leaving them to the pressure of events. Actually the criminal is, of course, far from being in a position to do what he likes; he is hemmed in by barriers to which the law-abiding citizen is a stranger, and has continually to hedge and watch his step if he is not to lose his liberty outright. Still, there is in this notion of liberty something so fundamental that it merits the right to be called in an intelligible sense an absolute good. And this becomes still plainer

when we note one further element that enters into its appeal; to the self-respecting man freedom is a good not merely by reason of the pleasures to which it lets down the bars, but because it is an essential condition of his self-respect that he should refuse to accept a status of subordination to external forces.

In view of such considerations, then, a disparagement of final ends may very well be premature. If "experiment" is to reach the human level it will have to presuppose aims consciously adopted and kept in view because experience has taught us that they cannot be disregarded without sacrificing the sort of satisfaction that alone justifies us in talking about the "good" life at all. Were man no more than a biological specimen, and life mere physical activity successful in so far as it is vigorous and expansive and sufficiently prolonged, we should have no need to trouble ourselves about ideals. But while such a life might seem to possess elements of goodness to the thoughtful bystander, we have no reason to suppose that the animal itself has any use for such a concept. It is otherwise with man, however. He does reflect upon his interests, with the resultant discovery that some of them are more worth while than others; and the moment this recognition gains entrance to his mind the face of experience is altered. The end one fixes on as meriting approval may itself be no more than an ideal of animal vigor or efficiency. But in adopting it consciously as a desirable goal man ceases to be simply a natural phenomenon and becomes a rational agent. In place of living from one moment to the next and depending on instinct or native ingenuity to get him out of trouble when the necessity arises, he begins to take long views

and plan ahead. And for such planning he will have to take account not only of the physical determinants of action, but likewise of certain inner revelations of relatively steady sources of enjoyment and esteem which serve as guiding principles, or ideals, to a life which would otherwise have nothing but a little added cunning to distinguish it from what in our assurance of superiority we call the brute creation.

If now the general standpoint suggested in the last few paragraphs is kept in mind it perhaps will make it easier to follow the more difficult and detailed analysis I am going on to undertake. And first a brief restatement of the pragmatist's position, with a view to making more explicit the large presumptions underlying it.

To begin with, pragmatism as a philosophy or metaphysics tends to identify itself with a psychological behaviorism, and most of the consequences in which at present I am interested flow pretty directly from this identification. As I have remarked already, life or experience for Professor Dewey is a function, or, more accurately perhaps, a description, of the natural world as a process of continuous readjustment; and as such it alternates between two complementary forms or phases. Now and again it will attain a state of momentary equilibrium with action moving forward smoothly and efficiently. But because the world is essentially a process this will be only temporary; new conditions meet the organism to which it is forced to adapt itself. To effect the necessary reconstruction is the work of intelligence; reason is the instrument through which the world is pressing on toward an increasing degree of stability, unification, coherence.

Only in the second stage, then, do such terms as mind, knowledge, subject and object, first appear and get their meaning. Up to this point we are not engaged in knowing, but in doing. The process of reconstruction is, to be sure, itself a kind of action. But it is action to which a different context gives a different form; it is the act of *thinking*—the practical act of solving problems and overcoming difficulties. Thought remains still a natural process. But while previously "things" were fused in an immediate pulse of life, in meeting with obstacles they lose their immediacy and adequacy and force attention to themselves and their deficiencies; and it is through the consequent need for reorganization that knowing emerges with its apparatus of distinctions—sensation and concept, self and not-self, means and ends, and the like. Such distinctions are, therefore, not to be interpreted as absolute; they do not represent realities or entities which, given in separation, the philosopher has then to relate and harmonize. The one reality is the continuous process of experience itself, within which they arise only when the occasion calls for it; and they work solely to the end of remodeling experience, rendering its objects more adequate, and so reinstating the immediate flow of life in a more satisfying form. The "truth" which intelligence desiderates is just this pragmatic value, determined not by the demands of intellectual consistency, or by our success in copying an independently existing world, but by the proficiency with which thinking is able to free conduct from its difficulties and set it on its course again.

In order to follow the consequences that are drawn from this analysis it will be necessary to bear in mind

one of its features in particular. On such a showing knowledge has been made strictly equivalent to "thinking," as a concrete process of reconstituting objects in order to meet the needs of a specific practical situation. By definition, therefore, there can be no object of knowledge outside this transitional and constantly shifting activity of practically applied intelligence. A "known" object has literally no meaning except as it takes the form of a concretely identifiable content in some creative act of thinking—a content that passes through all the vicissitudes of our changing thought; in the experience which precedes and which follows thinking there is nothing in the nature of knowledge, but only the immediate sense of prosperous action or behavior. We do not know food, for example, while engaged in appeasing our hunger; that which is implicit as a condition of taking nourishment becomes "food," is presented to the mind as something known, only as we are forced through the presence of a hindrance to objectify it in order that the satisfying process may be permitted to continue.

And in the same way a "value" *is* nothing outside the process of evaluing. We do not start with values as something settled and objective. In the stage of immediate experience things are not valued but are just things; indeed, it is only because they are *not* satisfying values that they need to be evaluated at all. They first become "valued" objects when through the knowledge process they are brought into relationship to other factors in experience and are seen to perform a service for the attainment of some further end. All forms of intelligence alike—science, morality, æsthetics—"manifest the same duality and present the same

problem—that of embodying intelligence in action which shall convert casual natural goods whose causes and effects are unknown into good valid for thought, right for conduct, and cultivated for appreciation." The essential relationship involved in value is thus the relationship of means to end; to value is to appraise, and we appraise values not in terms of some intrinsic property they possess but by taking account of their causes and consequences. Values, accordingly, do not appear suddenly as ready-made entities to which recognition is extended, least of all in the form of some absolute end to which present reality is pointed; the crux of the situation is that no such end is yet in view but has to be *discovered,* and the whole meaning of intelligence is that it represents the way in which this discovery is brought about. As objects are constituents of the valuing process only in so far as they take on intellectual meaning in terms of their relationships and consequences, achieving value in proportion to their efficacy in unifying and stabilizing the active process into which they enter, so equally the end is not given at the start, as if the purpose of intelligence were merely to find out how to reach an already settled goal. The end, too, is defined in the process of attaining it; means and end are not two things externally juxtaposed, but are mutually related aspects of a single continuous movement. It is the issue that verifies them both, an issue that itself, however, constitutes no final goal, but merely marks a new stage of experienced satisfaction which as partial and temporary is bound presently in its turn to lead to a new process of evaluation. "To arrive at new truth and vision is to alter. The old self is put off and the

new self is only forming, and the form it finally takes will depend upon the unforseeable result of an adventure. No one discovers a new world without forsaking an old one; and no one *discovers* a new world who exacts guarantees in advance for what it shall be or who puts the act of discovery under bond with respect to what the new world shall do to him when it comes into vision."

It follows from all this that, for Professor Dewey, a theory of ethics or of value concerns itself with *method,* not with content. The business of moral theory is not at all with consummations and goods as such. I think, he writes, that an interest in technique is precisely the thing which is most promising in our civilization; to ask what can be done with the "machine" for the creation and fulfilment of values corresponding to its potency, and to begin organized planning to effect them, is the distinctive moral problem of our day. "The art which our times need in order to create a new type of individuality is the art which, being sensitive to the technology and science that are the moving forces of our time, will envisage the expansive, the social culture which this may be made to serve. I am not anxious to depict the form which this emergent individualism will assume. Indeed, I do not see how it can be described until more progress has been made in its production."

About this judgment I shall raise a further question presently; for the moment it is enough to notice that for Professor Dewey the emphasis on method means something quite specific. It represents, to begin with, the repudiation of a certain historic tradition in ethics —the disposition to deal in ultimates and absolutes; the

fundamental flaw in moral theory has been its concern with ends and values rather than with the *criticism* of ends and values, its ambition to discover and define the *bonum* once for all as a terminus to be reached instead of regarding it as the active process of transforming the existing situation. For pragmatism, the only moral "end" is growth itself; what it sets out to do is to transfer the burden of the moral life from following rules and pursuing fixed goals to the detection of the concrete ills that here and now call for remedy. In fact, Professor Dewey might seem at times to hint that man's securest if not his highest good lies just in the work of the reforming intellect itself rather than in any resultant values. "The identification of the bias and preference of selfhood with the process of intelligent remaking achieves an indestructible union of the instrumental and the final; for this bias can be satisfied no matter what the frustration of other desires and endeavors."

And now to this something further can be added. For Professor Dewey the "existent situation" is primarily a social or, even more specifically, an economic one. I need not for the moment stop to call attention to the close connection which this has with the logic of his general premises; it is enough to note that at any rate it represents his personal interest, which everywhere is pretty largely limited to technology as applied to the changing economic order. And put in such terms the analysis just briefly sketched takes on a more special character. The thesis that intelligence is the reinterpretation of past objects of satisfaction, under the stress of concrete situations by which the organism is confronted, to the end that these objects and activities

may be reconstituted in a more stable and satisfying form, becomes the thesis that the central task of the present generation is to supplant the ideals that have governed man in the past—ideals that arose from social conditions now superseded—by new tools of analysis better fitted to meet the changed circumstances of his life. We are living in an age of collective and corporate activity made necessary by the technological development of the industrial machine. This has come about through no conscious human intention, and it is not a state of things to be evaluated by intelligence and approved or condemned as such. Whether we want it or not, here it is; it is the situation within which human life goes on; and the work of intelligence or evaluation is simply to discover ways of turning it from a brute fact into a source of new and securer values, so that man shall no longer struggle against it or be borne blindly on its current but instead shall understand it, and through understanding shall regain the sense of harmony with his environment which now so conspicuously is absent. Our troubles do not come from the machine, but from the older conceptions of individualism that have been carried over into a radically different social milieu. The collective art of technology has been deflected by individuals to their merely private ends; the machine has been harnessed to the dollar rather than to the liberation and enfranchisement of human life. Man's present task is to create a new individuality consonant with the objective conditions under which we live; to internalize and give qualitative meaning to the objective facts of corporate development by becoming conscious of the human relationships that hold individuals together; to make corporate

society contribute to the free culture of its members so that the emotions will be aroused and satisfied in the course of normal living and not in abrupt deviations to secure the fulfilment which is denied them in the incomplete situation. "It is, indeed, foolish to assume that an industrial civilization will somehow automatically, from its own inner impulse, produce a new culture. But it is a lazy abdication of responsibility which assumes that a genuine culture can be achieved except by our active and alert intellectual recognition of the realities of an industrial age and then by planning to use them in behalf of a significantly human life."

The merits of a philosophy such as this can, as I have been implying, only be appreciated if we keep in mind constantly the sort of thing to which it is meant to offer an alternative. On the one hand it stands opposed to the policy of drift; it is only by the exercise of intelligence and conscious planning that man can hope to control the forces which now hold him in their grip. Also, and in particular, it sets itself against "idealisms" in the form they traditionally have taken—ideals that have grown up under different conditions and that have no living relationship to the situation in which now we find ourselves. But when we have conceded all that this involves—and I have no desire to undervalue it—there still remain questions to be put to a philosophy of pragmatism to which the answer is perhaps not altogether clear.

The first query I present rather as a suggestion of theoretical incompleteness than as a serious practical drawback. Professor Dewey declines to go behind that character of the present age which sets our chief social

problems at the moment; he does not recognize the possibility that this itself may need evalution. Such an attitude is a corollary of his conception of the "situation" as a matrix within which both intelligence and value have their entire being, and which has simply to be accepted for what it is. I have no present interest in the practical conclusion which he draws; I am quite ready to agree that the tendency toward economic organization is one to which opposition seems rather futile. But I do so wholly on empirical grounds which are open at any time to argument, and so without prejudice to the contention in a former chapter that there is nothing objective to man's will that compels him to acquiesce in a state of things just because of its existence. There is nothing in industrialism, any more than in earlier forms of human living, that is foreordained; if a sufficient number of people were convinced of its undesirability there is no good reason to suppose that the tendency could not be checked. In point of fact, the potential value of the machine in terms of human good is so evident that there appears to me little chance that such a general revolt will come about. But I should hesitate to take this as a metaphysical first principle, which justifies us without further argument in denying rational standing to anyone who is not prepared to grant it. After all, there are features closely and perhaps necessarily connected with the new economic order about which it is not unreasonable to have our doubts; and the fact that seemingly intelligent people may still be found who are disposed to think it would be better to resist the dominant trend is not, to the philosopher at least, altogether an irrelevance. However, it is a different sort of query I am

here concerned to raise. Granting that the new tendencies are with us to stay and that man's business, consequently, is to discover how to manage them through the application of intelligence, does Professor Dewey's account of intelligence give sufficient weight to all the factors needed for making the effort a probable success?

The difficulty which one who is not himself a professed pragmatist is likely here to feel is fairly simple. By rendering intelligence in terms of method, questions of content are left pretty much to look out for themselves. It is hardly enough, however, as I have said before, to know how to do things; method cannot really be applied till we know also what we want to do. Now what we want to do is in our ordinary way of speaking an end, or ideal, or final cause; and unless we can envisage it, know it in some sense, before we set out however scientifically to act, the common verdict almost certainly would be that intelligence will at best be fumbling. What *sort* of a world do we prefer to live in? To what human aspirations and satisfactions must it lend itself and what ought it to discourage? How or to what extent is it to find a place for the many divergent notions of the good? To questions such as these the reader of Professor Dewey's pages will find no very explicit answer. He is told, to be sure, that the outcome will liberate man's action, be welcomed by him as a relief from preceding strain and conflict, coördinate and harmonize his interests. But concretely its nature comes to light only when it is already in existence; we are forbidden, apparently, to anticipate the outcome, because that is being false to the essence of intelligence as a process in which means and end alike are mutually determined

only when they fuse—and as objects of knowledge disappear—in a resultant action. This, if we take it literally, is as if an inventor were to busy himself with eliminating friction, calculating stresses and strains, devising more adequate adjustments, while leaving the end his machine is to serve to be settled by what happens when it is running smoothly; or, more strictly perhaps, it is to say that the smoothness of its running *is* its only end.

There are so many qualifications to complicate the criticism that is here implied, and, in particular, it is so entangled with certain large philosophical presuppositions, that it is not easy to defend it without doing injustice to the positive significance which pragmatism may claim. I can best go to work, perhaps, by singling out certain things that are open to possible misunderstanding; in this way I shall hope to clear the ground for the point which alone I am interested in making.

And first it may be well to say again that in a qualified sense I have no quarrel with the pragmatist's attack on final ends. If by an end we mean a fully characterized goal which exists ready-made in the mind to direct the course of action, this I agree is both a theoretically inadequate and a socially dangerous view. It leaves no real place for progress; its natural issue is a complacent satisfaction with restricted goods—restricted alike in their nature and in the number of those who are in a position to enjoy them—which sets a barrier to any readjustment to changing conditions such as the world empirically presents. This is the form that, most commonly perhaps, idealisms have assumed. But it is not the form they necessarily have to take; an ideal end may itself be plastic, needing to

be defined progressively in terms of the conditions it is forced to meet and the means available for its achievement. All I am saying is that it nevertheless may still present specific features recognized as constituting a desirable goal, and that as a matter of fact ideals in this sense are always present to direct the working of intelligence on its technological side. The inventor does not know exactly and in detail what sort of machine is going to be the outcome of his experimental efforts; if he did he would not have to invent it. Still less can he anticipate all the ulterior consequences it is going to have when once it is brought into being. Nevertheless, he does know in a general way what he wants it to accomplish; and apart from the conscious presence of such an end he would never achieve success —never, indeed, get started. In this sense we may accordingly, and do, talk of ends as fairly concrete ideas in the mind; though also it no doubt is true that such ends need constantly to undergo revision if intelligence is to be genuinely creative and is not to be limited to the mechanical adaptation of means to a hard and fast goal impervious to the teachings of fresh experience.

It is not my intention to imply that to what I have just been saying Professor Dewey would object; in point of fact he says much the same thing himself. He speaks of the ideal realm as "that collection of imagined possibilities that stimulates man to new effort and realization"; while ideals are presumptive and not final, nevertheless *as* presumptions, tools of insight, stable guides to preferred possibilities, goods stable in quality and hence worthy of determined and persistent choice, they have a necessary part to play. A particular ideal may be an illusion, but having ideals is no il-

lusion. All men agree that we want the good life, and that the good life involves freedom and a taste that is trained to appreciate the honorable, the true and the beautiful. "A true wisdom discovers in thoughtful observation and experiment the method of administering the unfinished processes of existence so that frail goods shall be substantiated, secure goods be extended, and the precarious promises of good that haunt experienced things be more liberally fulfilled." All this seems clear enough when taken by itself. But it is not always so easy to bring it into line with other sides of the pragmatist's contention.

Let me turn back to the large presumptions of Professor Dewey's philosophy in the light of the practical difficulty I have raised. If we try to make technological method all-important in morality and relegate ends to the status of an outcome, as yet undetermined, in which method issues and which in itself has the form of action rather than of mind, we are unavoidably rendering any statement we can make about such ends so indefinite that their pragmatic value is compromised. In spite of an insistence on the specific character of every moral problem—in a way just because of this—ends as objects of intelligence tend to become not specific but highly general; the more they lose caste as concrete objectives the more we are left with abstractions such as stability, free movement, satisfaction, to describe our goal. Before anything further can be said about an end in the *de facto* sense we shall have to wait for the situation to clear up, for the problem to solve itself; in other words, it does not come into existence till the emergency has passed, which means that it does not qualify as a tool at all. Now it is true, once

more, that the exact and fully specified thing we are after *does* have to wait till intelligence has performed its work. But unless the *sort* of thing we want is consciously present to the mind *before* the process is completed there is nothing that can be called intelligent direction; and the more clearly we are aware of what this is, the more concrete and well-defined the form it takes, the more control it offers. The alternative to an unintelligent conservatism in morals is not, of necessity, that we should be unclear about the nature of our wants, but that we should be ready always to reconsider them in the light of new experience.

It may be that, as I have said, there is nothing in theory to prevent the pragmatist from granting such a claim, though I shall show in a moment ground for questioning this; but at least he is disposed in practice to make very little use of the admission. There is not a great deal I can find in Professor Dewey's pages to define, or to justify critically, desirable human ends. The existence of valid forms of good is, to be sure, assumed. Poetry, art, religion, we are told are precious things; nothing but the best, the richest and fullest experience possible, is good enough for man, and such a life will utilize a host of natural values. On occasion more personal judgments of relative significance appear: the free working of mind is one of the greatest joys open to man; shared experience is the greatest of human goods and to it there belongs an almost mystic force; the contribution which anything makes to a shared good, to a general well-being, is the final standard of approbation. But it has been my thesis that we cannot take the nature of the good as evident without falling short alike of the proper business of philosophy

and of the demands of the actual human situation. For men do not, once more, agree on the sort of concrete good in which as individuals they find their satisfaction. That their differences stand a chance of being arbitrated only through an understanding of the true method of intelligence is altogether probable. It may even be that ethics as a "science" is limited to the setting forth of general method and has nothing to say about its outcome in terms of personal conceptions of the good. But if that is so, its value for practice has been substantially curtailed. Controversies about *what* is good plainly contribute not a little to the intellectual chaos of the day; and men will have to see its bearing on their own ideal preferences before they are likely to agree on a social method which interprets "ideals" simply as the process of "idealizing." This does not mean that ethics has the task of telling a man what his personal ideals should be. But somehow or other it must be able to go beyond the general needs of "action" or of "social order" and focus critically on those diverse notions of the good life, relatively concrete in content, about which men actually dispute.

Put in different terms, the peculiar interest of an ethical philosophy, or of intelligence, lies for Professor Dewey in the task of supplanting the narrow and self-centered individualism of the past by a new social conception of individuality, a new psychological and moral type of human nature, and in pointing the way to a society which aims to set free the active capacities of every man alike in so far as these gain significance through coöperating toward a shared or common good. So regarded, the problem becomes one primarily of distributing more widely and equitably goods assumed

in a general way already to be known. But even in terms of such an interest the possibilities of co-operation can hardly be determined apart from a critical assessment of the widely varying content of man's claims to satisfaction. And in any case it seems to leave outside the proper field of ethics another task which historically has always been regarded as belonging to it. It tends to slight, that is, the personal quest for my own distinctive good—a neglect made easier for Professor Dewey in that individuals are for him not ultimately real but only phases in a social process, their place being taken by "individuality" as a unique "mode of acting."

The particular question I am raising about pragmatism, then, is the question as to what extent it offers a practicable way of arguing with people when they disagree about the things they personally want. There are several roads the pragmatist conceivably might take. He might say to anyone who differs from him: "Wait for the event and you will see that I am right, because your way cramps action while mine sets it free"; but saying, "I told you so," is seldom altogether profitable. Or he might employ argument to convert men to his own philosophy, on the presumption that a true understanding of pragmatic method will automatically remove the sources of contention. Still another way is to take for granted that certain values have so self-evident a grounding, in scientific fact or in a universal human agreement, that no further mediation through argument is required. A dogmatic assurance of this sort is, however, the very thing on which the existing situation casts most doubt; there is *no* human goal which with some show of reason men

may not dispute. And if the thing one questions happens to be the capacity of the new industrial age for providing the chance of a satisfying human life for all, the sceptic cannot possibly be convinced by an argument which takes either its goodness or its inevitability for granted; all there is left to do is to set aside his opinion as negligible from our own more enlightened standpoint.

The only alternative I see remaining, if we are to debate moral questions with any likelihood of success, is to go back to the thesis I have been maintaining. A thing we want, an ideal, a good, is something we here and now regard as desirable. It may be very imperfectly defined; it may need to be modified by subsequent experience; it may even have to be discarded altogether. But it constitutes an entirely proper object of debate, whose credentials will depend not on the demands of any philosophical theory but on its empirical conformance with the individual human nature of the man to whom argument is addressed. And since empirically anything that presents itself to us not as an end merely but as a desirable end, a "good" end, is always a thing which we consciously approve, which arouses a sentiment or feeling, the nature of the sentiment, the conditions that arouse it, and the objects to which it attaches must receive some attention from any fundamental ethical analysis.

Here again I do not mean to leave the impression that Professor Dewey has nothing to say about feeling. He speaks of the reward of satisfaction that comes from a sense of social fulfilment; of a heightened appreciation of the positive goods which human experience has achieved and which provide a necessary

basis for criticism; of ideas and beliefs that are deepened and intensified because spontaneously fed by emotion and translated into imaginative vision and fine art; of individuality as a distinctive way of feeling the impacts of the world and showing a preferential bias in response to these. "A person must *feel* the quality of acts as he feels with the hand the qualities of roughness and smoothness in objects before he has an inducement to deliberate or material with which to deliberate." But before taking such statements at their face value there are qualifications to be noticed; whatever existential standing be allowed to feeling, the fact is that for the pragmatist it plays at any rate a very inconspicuous role in scientific method, and this for several reasons.

The first and least debatable reason is, that when Professor Dewey speaks of feeling as a source of moral standards he commonly is thinking of, and rejecting, a particular type of theory, for which moral good or duty is revealed by some immediate intuition standing in no need of critical validation and correction. If in this sense the content of the good is supposed to be finally determined by the fact that at some particular moment I have an inner feeling of approval, no doubt the objections are serious enough; but since I have no interest in upholding such a claim it will not be necessary to stop upon them. Two other points, however, are more relevant to my argument.

The first of these has to do with the psychology of behaviorism. And here I cannot help suspecting that his words will at times be likely to mislead the unwary reader. "Finding a thing good," he writes, "apart from reflective judgment, means simply treating

the thing in a certain way, hanging on to it, dwelling upon it, welcoming it and acting to perpetuate its presence, taking delight in it"; and such a practical, non-intellectual attitude he goes on to describe by such further terms as prizing, holding dear, loving and cherishing. It is hard not to feel that Professor Dewey is combining here two sets of phrases which for our natural understanding do not have the identity he seems to presuppose. Hanging on to an object, acting to perpetuate its presence—these are *acts* in their usual and literal sense; taking delight in it, prizing it, loving and cherishing it, are, on the other hand, words which commonly do not stand for actions but for what we are wont to call feeling, emotion, conscious appreciation. If we are to identify the two only one way is open; we must hold that delighting in, loving, prizing, esteeming, *are* nothing but a "way of behaving" toward an object, a "mode of organic action"; as, indeed, Professor Dewey tells us that they are. Now *if* all life and experience is really thus interpretable as a form of action, a part of the history of the same natural objects with which physical science deals and with no new dimension added in the shape of "consciousness," then doubtless it is true that feeling as an inner sense of appreciation drops automatically out of the picture. But if Professor Dewey had consistently expressed himself in such biological terms it is safe to say that his words would have carried much less general conviction; the fact that he is forced continually to use expressions that convey to others a "subjective" implication is in so far evidence that he feels the inadequacy of biological concepts pure and simple to set forth his meaning fully.

And such a judgment has an important bearing on the main objective of the present argument. For this I shall need to make a final return to Professor Dewey's general account of knowledge. It will be recalled that knowledge has been represented as a special section of experience, where stable activity has temporarily been left behind and we are engaged instead with thinking, that is, with actively re-forming objects that no longer give satisfaction. Anything is "known" only as it has a part to play in this constructive service. But "feeling" is something which Professor Dewey connects characteristically with experience not in its intellectual but in its stabler phases. It seems to follow, consequently, that objects as they elicit value feeling are not in strictness known; so long as a thing is working smoothly it does not exist for knowledge but is just an inarticulate activity, and when the process of reconstitution has been effected it returns to its status of immediacy. In proportion, therefore, as felt value is identified with unimpeded action it *cannot* enter into the intellectual process; the very fact that we now are engaged in thinking shows that the sort of action capable of being described in terms of appreciative feeling has for the moment disappeared, been superseded.

There is one obvious objection, to begin with, to which such an analysis would appear to be exposed; these immediately satisfying objects must, it would seem, be known in *some* sense or we could not think about them, talk about them, and convey to other minds our meaning. Such an assumption Professor Dewey has himself constantly to make in order to put his theory over. Thus he speaks of the dominating objects

of past valuations which present themselves as standardized values; of intelligence as conceiving the values that natural conditions generate; of the need of fostering at every opportunity direct enjoyment of the kind of good reflection approves; of ideal values as goods which when they present themselves to imagination are approved by reflection after wide examination of their relations. It is true we verbally can refuse to call this a case of knowing if we *define* knowledge as *nothing but* the process of intellectual readjustment. But what name *shall* we give, then, to the act of holding before the mind an experience now in the past and so nonexistent? The earlier experience cannot be the object as it now enters into the act of thinking; *this* object is undergoing continuous transformation as the intellectual process carries on. In calling to mind a past experience of felt value, on the other hand, I must believe that it once had existentially the specific character which I now attribute to it, or else my recollection would be *of* no describable reality. I must, that is, be able in some sense to know a thing that is not at the present moment being experienced by me or by any other agent.

And what is true of known objects generally will also be true when the object is an "end." If an end as a determinate existence is *nothing but* the *de facto* outcome of a knowledge process, this seems to say that it cannot be known at all; while it is in process of being created it has as yet no status in the actual world, and when it finally emerges in action knowledge has ceased and it simply *is*. But we do talk about ideal ends and expect others to understand what we have in mind; and unless ends could be thus envisaged, thought of, known,

as projected results which we hope will have a future existence outside the process of attaining or creating them, and which possess intelligible characteristics that can be recognized and responded to intellectually with approval or disapprobation, there is no way either of controlling action consciously or of discussing with other men the nature and comparative validity of the ideals that govern conduct. When, or if, the ideal becomes an object of direct experience it will take on a character of immediacy for which knowledge may not be the most appropriate term. But in the meantime it is not experienced, but thought of; and unless the thought somehow carries over to a reality which in its bodily presence still is in the future then we are not talking about *it* at all, and there is no common meaning that can be communicated to other men.

What then I am trying to get at is this: that the exigencies of Professor Dewey's theory of knowledge compel him to divorce two different senses of the term "value," only one of which can be allowed to have significance for the intellectual problems of a scientific ethics. On the one hand there are immediately experienced values, natural goods, which represent the starting point of intelligence and its goal, but which cannot enter into knowledge because for knowing they already have disappeared or have not yet come into existence. I have just raised the question whether in strict logical consistency he has the right to talk about such goods at all in view of the fact that we cannot "know" them. But waiving this, at any rate their content plays no important part in the actual work of intelligence, and, indeed, the name "value" is allowed them only grudgingly. "Possibly we might have some

right to call an immediate experience a 'value' in the sense that it is something the organism welcomes, clings to, aims to perpetuate, but if so we should distinguish this sharply from a 'valued' object. A thing is valued in the rational sense only as it enters into the process of evaluation, and for such a process qualities it may have possessed in its immediacy become irrelevant; determining a thing found good *to be* good means, precisely, ceasing to look at it as a direct self-sufficient thing and considering it in its consequences. As reasonable terms, good and bad involve a relationship to other things exactly similar to that implied in calling a particular object food or poison; value objects thus mean simply objects as judged to possess a certain *force* within a situation temporally developing toward a determinate result." In other words, the sort of value that alone has significance for ethical method is causal or instrumental value in terms of the relationship of means to end; it is what is good *for* something rather than what is good in itself. "The properties and relations that entitle an object to be found good in belief are extraneous to the qualities that are its immediate good; they are causal, and hence found only by search into the antecedent and the eventual." In the rational sense an object becomes good when it takes on "meaning"; and by meaning we are to understand, not significance for appreciation, or the recognition of intrinsic excellence, but its natural effects and causes, as the meaning of fire lies in the potential consequences of its existence.

I ought perhaps to note again that what Professor Dewey has primarily in mind in such statements is something I have no intention of denying. Objective

qualities, he tells us, are the data of valuation, not objects of valuation; it is not the health antecedently possessed, but the restoring of health, that pragmatically is judged a value. In so far as this means that natural values cannot be taken as final but will need to be criticized in the light of their relational significance before they can serve the concrete needs of action it is manifestly true. But so interpreted it has no necessary bearing on what I am maintaining; it appears to do so only by reason of an ambiguity to which Professor Dewey's account of knowledge lends itself. "Values as such," he writes, "even things having value, cannot in their immediate existence be reflected on; they either are or are not, are or are not enjoyed." Now natural values are not, to be sure, reflected on *so long as* they are being enjoyed, since reflection and immediate enjoyment are by definition different forms of experiencing. But that they can be recalled to the mind, recognized intellectually, appraised, Professor Dewey has himself admitted; and such a recognition and appraisal presumably is a matter for intelligence to deal with. So he speaks, for example, of the need of "fostering at every opportunity direct enjoyment of the kind of goods reflection approves." The office of reflection is the "formation of a judgment of value in which particular satisfactions are placed as integral parts of conduct in a consistent and harmonious whole." Such judgments are "not mere registrations of previous attitudes of favor and disfavor, liking and aversion, but have a reconstructive and transforming effect upon them, by determining the objects that are worthy of esteem and approbation." "A good is a good anyhow, but to reflection those goods approve themselves which

steady, vitalize and expand judgments in the creation of new goods and the conservation of old goods." The adequate control of evaluating judgments is "facilitated by judgments of the worth of objects which enter as ends and means into the action contemplated." If words such as these mean what they seem to mean they concede everything that I am trying to claim; and they imply that the work of intelligence has a double aspect. An adequate ethical theory represents a "change from inquiring into the nature of value in general to inquiring as to the particular values that ought to be realized in the life of everyone, and as to the conditions which render possible this realization"; such words extend an explicit recognition, it might seem, to the fact that before we can determine technological conditions we shall need first to have some knowledge about what *are* the particular values that, as worthy of esteem and approbation, "ought to be realized in the life of everyone."

Let me restate in conclusion the only point with which the polemics of the present chapter has been much concerned. The pragmatic difficulty which I find with pragmatism is that it tends to minimize the importance of one tool which intelligence is called upon to use in the control of conduct. Before a man stands much chance of a satisfying life he ought, as we say, to know what he wants, and this seems naturally to mean that an attention to "method" does not go far enough; there must be some consideration also of one's conscious or "subjective" interests, in so far as they have yet come to light, in order to discover whether or to what extent they really justify themselves on reflection to our sense of personal approval. It is hardly

an accident that pragmatism has had so little to say about that search for individual satisfaction, for self-realization, for "salvation," which historically has been not the least significant motive in man's spiritual history, and instead has occupied itself almost exclusively with the problem of the "social" good. I should be the last to underrate the pressure of this latter problem; perhaps it represents the most insistent need of the present day and generation. We may have reached a point in history where it is less immediately important to measure values nicely than to find a way whereby the array of relatively undisputed values deposited by experience may be brought within the reach of those classes in society which hitherto have had to get along without them—a task that leads us pretty directly to the economic basis of the good, since the first and indispensable condition of a satisfying life for all is economic security and a sufficient support in material resources. But such a task does not define exclusively the field of moral philosophy. For philosophic theory, we are not even justified in taking the democratic or communistic goal itself for granted; an aristocratic or Nietzschean ideal is not so self-evidently absurd that we can afford to pass it by without reasons given. And in any case our work is not completed when the social obstacles to freedom and opportunity have been removed; there would still remain for each individual the task of determining the direction his freedom ought to take and of adjusting this to the possibly competing claims of other men—a task which, if not "science," at least cannot well be excluded from the jurisdiction of intelligence.

And for such a task the formulation and criticism

of ends is a primary concern. To say, with Professor Dewey, that ends are not set by preference but by the objective nature of experience, that we act ultimately just because we must, is true in a way; but it goes a very short distance toward offering intelligent guidance. That we must act *somehow* is a purely general requirement which points us nowhere in particular; every act that is intelligent is action which has in view some special goal, and this goal, even though it be the continuance of life itself, is not necessitated. It is chosen not because it has to be, but because we feel that its attainment is desirable; and to judge it a desirable end it has to approve itself to us here and now—to enlist, that is, our emotions and affections. Nor, as I have just remarked, is the need any less insistent when we turn to social ideals. No social or economic status puts constraint upon the reason, no matter how solidly it may seem to be intrenched in existing tendencies and agencies. In order to approve itself as rational it must be something also that we want; even if we judge that in point of fact man's true good lies in adjusting himself to contemporary economic forces we still should need to justify the judgment through considerations other than the existence of these forces. And such a justification is impossible until the content of the good has been independently determined by a rational criticism of ideals, as distinct from an understanding merely of the method of idealizing.

In a word, ethical method will need to concern itself not simply, or indeed primarily, with the environment, social and economic, within which action goes on, but also with the latent possibilities already existing in the human constitution; as Professor Dewey has

himself put it, the business of ethics is to render nature more amenable to human desires, to effect a release of individuality for affections and deeds more congenial to its own nature. Such possibilities will come to light only in the course of overt action under determinate conditions. But *what* they are will be determined, not by consequences alone, but by the degree in which these consequences prove "congenial" to my inward and individual sense of satisfaction or approval. The world acts not merely through the forces that work upon us to "build minds after their own pattern," but also by setting free real potentialities in the organism such as may conceivably, will certainly to some indeterminate extent, refuse to be molded to existing trends and seek to refashion these trends themselves more in accordance with the heart's desire.

And this will make it necessary, I think, to qualify somewhat the pragmatist's emphasis on the unique "situation." For action the good no doubt always is a specific good, a unique response to special circumstances. But "intelligence" in ethics is not limited to the special case; if it were, Professor Dewey's whole preoccupation with method would be ethically irrelevant. Method has to do with action in general, not with actions in particular. And all I am trying to say is that this same relative divorce from particular emergencies will be imposed by a further task—the critical examination of actual ideals and ends. When applied, as they ultimately must be applied, to needs of action, these will always get a more specific content, and may have to be modified or even to be abandoned altogether. But by having already subjected them to the sort of disinterested intellectual inquiry which normally can be

carried on to advantage only as we are released from the pressure of having to do something in particular, the chances of their being rationally effective in guiding conduct are substantially increased. Our conclusions will no doubt be tested finally by their success in practice. But provisionally they may receive a testing in thought as well; and it is difficult to see what form this could take apart from judgments of value that find their immediate support in the feelings of approval and disapproval which the available data of experience call forth.

Chapter V

FEELING AND OBJECTIVITY

NOTHING in philosophy becomes quite reputable until it has received a name by which it can be identified and placed, preferably among tendencies already familiar to the critic. In view, then, of what has gone before I presumably should have to class the position I am taking as an "ethics of sentiment." But names, while convenient in their way, are also apt to be misleading, since they tempt us to assume that a given doctrine has only to be put into its appropriate pigeonhole to become amenable at once to a whole list of stock objections that have accumulated in the history of thought. It is for the sake chiefly of guarding myself against certain traditional objections to the theory in question that I propose in the present chapter to say something about the form it more commonly has taken. And to avoid an unduly long digression I shall confine myself to a single philosopher—Edward Westermarck—who probably would by pretty general consent be regarded as its most important present-day representative.

For Westermarck, the vice common to most ethical philosophies is the assumption that moral good and evil stand for objective principles, discoverable by reason, which are the source of authoritative rules of conduct. A genetic investigation will, on the contrary,

show that the moral experience springs not from reason but from certain emotions. Specifically these emotions or sentiments take the form of moral approval and moral disapproval or indignation. Each is a sub-species of a wider class of feelings—moral disapproval of resentment, which includes also such emotions as anger and revenge, and moral approval of a non-moral retributive kindly emotion which in its most developed form is gratitude. The first may be defined as a "retributive" sentiment of hostility directed toward a living being—a sensitive and volitional agent—regarded as a cause of pain; the second as a retributive kindly emotion, or friendly attitude of mind, toward a living being as a cause of pleasure.

The peculiar character which justifies the term "moral" is that of disinterestedness or impartiality. Resentment and its opposite—kindly feeling—become moral when they are assumed to be uninfluenced by the particular relationship in which he who pronounces judgment stands both to those who are affected and those who perform the acts. This disinterestedness has a complex nature; it is compounded out of an instinctive sympathetic reaction, physical in nature, toward the source of pain or pleasure, plus the recognition of an association between cause and effect, plus the "altruistic" sentiment. It is more important to observe that impartiality is primarily a communal product; it has its root in the public indignation aroused by the transgressor of a socially accepted rule of conduct. Society is the birthplace of the moral consciousness. The first moral judgments express not the private emotions of individuals but emotions felt by the organized community; this is how they get eman-

cipated from the limitations of the particular instance, the degree of emancipation being gradually extended with the growth of the altruistic sentiment. It follows that moral judgments passed on ourselves are secondary and derivative. But here the general definition still holds good; self-approval is a kindly emotion felt toward oneself, while self-disapproval or remorse involves a retributive desire to punish oneself.

Moral *concepts* are to be accounted for in the light of their source in the moral emotions; ultimately they are generalizations of tendencies to feel either moral approval or disapproval with reference to that of which the concepts are predicated. Conduct that tends to arouse the feeling of moral approval is judged to be "good," while that which tends to arouse moral resentment is called "bad"; thus to say of theft that it is wrong means no more than that an act of theft has this latter tendency. Another and important concept arising from the emotion of resentment is that of duty. The "ought" is a conation of imperative character, plus a recognition of the possibility of its not being done, plus moral disapproval. Its most striking characteristic is its claim to authority, and this it gets from its social origin; the authority assigned to conscience is only an echo of social and religious sanctions. Finally, there are the secondary concepts of "right" and "virtue"; right means that which is conformable to duty, while virtue is a disposition of mind characterized by some special form of goodness.

Taking this as in a general way a description of the moral experience and of the terms which it employs, I turn now in particular to the consequences of the analysis for the problem of "objectivity." Wester-

marck's answer is explicit and emphatic; since they are based on emotions, moral judgments cannot be objective. There are no such things as right or wrong emotions; while it is, of course, true or not true that at a given moment we have a certain emotion, in no other sense can the antithesis of true and false be applied to it. No doubt we have a natural disposition to objectify our tendencies to feel moral approval or disapproval and to interpret them as dynamic tendencies in the phenomena which give rise to the emotion. But such an objective validity assigned to values is an illusion. Just as we call an object "fearful" because people fear it, so we call a thing good because people approve it; the so-called moral intuitions are no more than these actual tendencies formulated as judgments that are calculated to give moral values an objective status they do not in reality possess. The moral emotions depend upon cognitions which *are* objectively true or false. But the same cognition may give rise to emotions that differ widely, in quality or intensity, in different persons or in the same person on different occasions; and this lack of agreement among feelings there is no power in cognition to alter.

Meanwhile, for interpreting this, two qualifications in particular call for notice. For one thing, we are not saying that the dependence on emotion is a dependence on the emotions felt by persons at the moment they are pronouncing judgment; our "tendency" to feel this emotion is something different from the presence of an actual feeling, so that there is nothing here to contradict our normal readiness to judge, we will say, an act to have been good even prior to the appearance of ap-

proval feelings. Furthermore, in calling a thing good or bad we do not *state* the existence of such emotional tendencies even; we refer the subject of the judgment to a class of phenomena which we are used to call good or bad, though we are used to call them so only *because* they have evoked moral approval or disapproval.

One further qualification should be added. A denial of objectivity to standards does not prevent me from pronouncing judgments which claim to be morally superior provided we understand what is meant by this. Thus when I say that some moral rules exhibit a higher morality than others, I mean primarily that they are my morality; the emotional approvals of other men I set down as morally unjustified when I myself cannot share them. Also this might be supposed to have a more rationally valid standing in the degree that I attribute to myself a clearer insight into the causes and effects of conduct. For reflective emotions likewise are, in general, "higher" than unreflective ones, in that they represent a more developed moral consciousness, are more influenced by thought and reason, more enlightened.

Now the suggestion which this last sentence brings before us is one we perhaps should hardly have expected in view of the repudiation of objective standards; and since it has an important bearing on the statement of my own alternative position I shall, before completing what I have to say about Westermarck himself, take the occasion to make a somewhat extended digression for the sake of examining it in more detail. And first by way of introduction a few general words about the reason why "objectivity" may be thought to

constitute a genuine problem—a reason which Westermarck's conception of ethical method tends to obscure. From this latter standpoint ethics is a matter primarily of the psychological and social *genesis* of the moral consciousness and not of its validity; it is rather taken for granted that a genetic treatment is the only one to which morality is open. Such an assumption is not self-evident, however. I waive the question whether any other method deserves to be called "scientific"; that depends on what we mean by science—a point in which I am not interested here. But whatever name we give it, some pretty insistent human interest plainly exists behind the claim to objectivity, which is worthy of consideration in its own right before we harness it to any special theory of morals.

Taking history in the large, it very probably is true that authoritative moral standards have grown out of the supposed needs of "society"; it also is true that, except under very primitive conditions, this has taken shape in a class morality whose hold on other classes has tended always in large measure to rest on authority pure and simple—that is, on the exercise of social power. But for the modern man such facts set a problem rather than supply a moral premise. The history of morals has, among other things, been increasingly a translation of custom and social compulsion into a form of duty to which the individual conscience can subscribe. This may only mean that the individual continues to accept the values with which he is familiar and merely adds the further sanction that comes from having their social significance brought before his conscious mind. But it also happens more and more frequently as time goes on that he finds himself dis-

carding these generally accepted values and substituting others of his own which have no such large public sanction. Furthermore, when this occurs it relatively seldom happens that the idea of authority as such has been abandoned in the interest of an anarchical freedom; ordinarily the man who ventures to set himself in opposition to the weight of mass opinion does so only under the coercion of some new and positive conviction to which he feels that traditional notions of what is moral "ought" to bow. So long as this is limited to sporadic cases nothing very important happens; public morality goes its way, and the dissenter has either to conform or to suffer unpleasant consequences. But the tendency has only to grow general enough for the whole machinery of society to become disorganized; and a problem then arises which men are compelled to face no matter to what theoretical opinions they may be inclined.

What I am saying is, accordingly, that any purely genetic explanation of morals leaves untouched the practical issue which at the moment is particularly urgent. A society without standards is one which is on the road to chaos; and a standard with any chance of rational acceptance is bound to raise the question of validity. It may be possible in terms of genesis to show the mechanism by which traditional social values have been created, and to account psychologically for the revolt of the individual against them; but the recognition of a fact of history, psychological or social, exercises in so far no compulsion. We no longer can stop with an appeal to the authority of the mores; it is precisely this which has lost in large measure its emotional force. And plainly it is not enough to say

that the "higher" or more authoritative standard is the one which *I* accept; this furnishes no reason why others should accept it also, and the whole possibility of its serving a practical end lies in its being more than a personal affair. Whether or not we choose to call it science, morality cannot refuse to concern itself with this demand; any theory which ignores it will fall short of what we have a right to ask of theory—some relevance to practical needs.

Dismissing for the moment, then, questions about Westermarck's particular theory of sentiment in ethics, I propose to ask what the notion of objectivity itself may be supposed to mean on its practical side as a condition of rational debate. It has been the commoner practice here to assume that we are forced to choose between two alternatives; either authority has its foundation in some absolute deliverance of "reason," or else the whole concept of authority and objectivity must give place to mere subjective facts of feeling. But as a matter of logic are these alternatives exhaustive?

As a text I may take the query which Socrates puts to Euthyphro: Is that which is holy loved by the gods because it is holy, or is it holy because it is loved by the gods? Few things in the history of ethical speculation have been the source of a more fundamental difference of opinion than the disjunction here implied; and both alternatives have enough initial plausibility to warn us not to make too hasty a choice between them. Plato's own preference, to take this first, finds its support in the common demand for validity in moral judgments. Feeling, we are told, is a purely psychological phenomenon, and varies so incalculably with circumstance and personal taste that to make the good de-

pendent on it is to leave goodness with no rational basis of comparison. So long as the general run of people approximate sufficiently to an agreement about their feelings of approval this objection will not greatly worry them. In primitive civilizations where the mores still hold undisputed sway, or even now in communities or sectarian groups that have remained apart from the wider currents of opinion, questions about the standard of morality do not count for much; everybody knows that there is one plain standard, and the business of the moralist is not to defend this but to use it for rebuking those who do not measure up to its requirements. But once this confidence is shaken the need grows evident for showing why one particular set of moral opinions has superior authority; and the fact that I and certain other people feel this way is then seen to be in so far no compelling reason for giving such a particular approval preference.

And even apart from this logical demand there still remains ground for possible dissatisfaction. Regardless of the variety of forms which feeling takes, toward *any* sort of feeling the reflective mind may find itself tempted to indulge a sense of disparagement and condescension. It might not prove an altogether simple matter to justify this attitude to anyone disposed to take exception to it; indeed, if among things all claiming equally to be real any sort of reality is to be given precedence as a source of value judgments it might even be urged that feeling has the clearest title. It is the peculiarity of a feeling that, while and in so far as we are feeling it, it seems to carry a more immediate sense of its own importance than any rival form of experience can boast; and in the

minds of people who are given to emotional indulgence it is by no means easy, therefore, to instil a doubt regarding its pretensions. But once set it before the mind as an object of contemplation and it tends to lose its natural compulsion; when in a cool moment we come to realize that we have been forming judgments under the influence of some strong emotion few of us are likely to find our assurance wholly undisturbed. A feeling is then likely to appear a rather specially flimsy bit of mental stuff; while as a source of value it rests in so many instances on unimpressive grounds that it is not hard to understand the low esteem in which it has commonly been held by those who aspire to philosophy.

So much for the case against feeling; but there is another side. A sole reliance on emotion may afford no basis for comparative valuation; but if we rule out feeling we are left, so far as surface appearances go at any rate, with no values to compare. One has only to lend himself to the experiment of trying wholly to divest himself of feeling to become aware that in the degree in which the experiment succeeds all things alike settle down to the dead level of a factual existence to which the term worth would seem to be irrelevant. Differences in the way of bulk, or temporal persistence, of the number of ensuing consequences would still be present, but there would be no point in calling one thing "better" than another; for man's recognition, a value is inextricably bound up with a human valuing process whose issue is the human feeling of approval. Accordingly, the physical sciences have nothing to say about significance; everything alike, and on an equal footing, is fish for the scientific net. No doubt even for the scientist this attitude is one which he finds it difficult always to

maintain; at least he seldom escapes the temptation to think of science itself as a higher value, and to look down on the paltrier world of the teleologist or the humanist. This is understandable, but only in case we realize that he no longer is speaking as a scientist, but as a human being capable of being emotionally impressed by the spectacle which his own universe of passionless fact or law presents to his imagination.

Granting, then, that things may be said for both points of view, we may next take note of certain corollaries implied in this admission. We shall have in the first place, presumably, to accept the dictum that the mere *existence* of a feeling is not by itself sufficient to give rational assurance. Most of the attacks on feeling have started from this true perception; and if they are open to rejoinder it will not be because the contention is itself invalid, but because the opposing view is not in reality committed to the position which is challenged. On the other hand, while it is true that "mere" feeling is not to be identified with a rational norm, the presence of feeling is one of the things we are bound to take into account for interpreting the nature of anything we can call a standard. Except on the not very natural assumption that feeling may in point of fact be an invariable accompaniment of the perception of value without itself having any part to play in determining what value means, the "rationality" of a value cannot be taken to imply something *purely* intellectual in its nature; there is an element in moral perception which is empirical and not open to rational demonstration. It also may be true that even intellectual reason rests likewise in the end on ultimate relationships which cannot be proved, but which have simply to be perceived

for what they are. Such relationships are, however, so implicated in the whole structure of the world of thought that no disputant can afford to disavow them; otherwise his reasoning becomes a mass of contradictions and absurdities. And there is no similar compulsion that can be brought to bear on anyone who chooses to deny a given judgment about the good; he still lives in the same intellectual world, though not in the same emotional and practical world, with other men. And the natural reason for the difference is, once more, that the recognition of worth or value involves the presence of a fact of feeling to which no rational necessity attaches. We cannot prove even to those who agree with us in feeling it that it *has* to be there, or that it *ought* to be there; it simply *is* there, and we must take it as we find it.

There is a third and important consequence—and here I am anticipating a point that will have to be more fully dealt with later—which likewise seems to be involved in the possibility of reconciling the conflicting demands of reason and emotion; only certain kinds of feeling are directly and necessarily implicated in a value judgment. This follows from the fact—a fact that can be tested simply by looking at the empirical character of the experience itself—that when we call anything "good" we are not absorbed in an immediate active interest or in the mere enjoyment of the moment; we are standing off and looking at something which we reflectively approve. Every immediate interest, by virtue of being an interest, is a source of pleasurable feeling. But the æsthetic pleasure one derives from a beautiful object is empirically not convertible with the judgment that beauty is a good, since their

reference is not identically the same. In the one case attention is possessed by the presence of the picture or the sunset; in the other this inarticulate experience of enjoying the picture or the sunset comes itself to consciousness and in virtue of it we make a new pronouncement. If goodness were taken to mean no more than pleasurable interest, or pleasure, it perhaps would not be easy to escape a criticism traditionally urged against a hedonistic ethics; whenever a man feels pleasure he will be in possession of the good, and so long as he feels it no one has any obvious ground for questioning his taste. But if we suppose that goodness as an intellectual concept emerges only when by a shift of attention the pleasure experience is envisaged, the difficulty seems no longer fatal. Then there is nothing to prevent our thinking with displeasure or disapprobation even of a pleasure; there can be no impossibility because the thing is constantly occurring. And when we shift thus from the feeling of a pleasure to the feeling of approval or of disapproval, of like or dislike, in the contemplation of a pleasure, the chance is now present of comparing pleasures and so of setting up a standard. We should still have to determine the conditions in particular of such a value judgment; but the logical possibility is there.

And accordingly the problem can now be more accurately defined. The feeling which constitutes the irreducible condition of any judgment about goodness is the feeling that arises in a reflective experience; it is the emotionally toned feeling which we call empirically a sense of approval or disapprobation, and not pleasure or desire in the large. Any pleasure may become an *object* of approval, may be taken as *a* good.

But in itself it is just pleasant; if it is to be recognized as possessing goodness another and a special feeling has to intervene. This, to be sure, is no *mere* feeling; it involves a judgment also. The very essence of approval is to have an object other than itself, to approve *of* something; this the critic is apt to overlook when, with Mr. Rashdall for example, he raises the objection that if moral disapproval is a mere feeling it can claim no superiority over other feelings. Disapproval does not, indeed, try to say that as a sentiment it is better than other sentiments; it is not talking about itself at all. But it does claim to be a judgment *on* other sentiments, and to say that these are bad; that is its nature as a concrete experience. It may not have a *right* to make this claim—that is another question; but it makes it nevertheless. Disapproval *means* attributing badness to an object; apart from this it would be just a dumb bit of sensuous stuff and not disapproval at all.

Before I have finished I shall, as I have said, need to give more attention to approval and disapproval as the distinctive moral feelings. But for the moment all I am concerned with is their bearing on "objectivity"; and for this it will be enough to stop with the empirical evidence for their existence. Assuming, then, that feelings of this sort are really present in the moral judgment as a non-rational or factual constituent, does such an admission force us to take morality as something arbitrary and individual and subjective merely?

There are two steps in the answer to this query, and the first belongs still to the general logic of the case. I have just had occasion to distinguish the original

sense of pleasure in an objective situation from the secondary feeling of approval when this experience is called good. But now it is possible to shift the focus of attention once again and to bring before the mind the feeling of approval as itself a new experience. This third state of mind agrees with the second in that it is a reflective experience; it differs in that it is not a judgment of approval, but a judgment of fact. It recognizes, that is to say, the approval feeling as a portion of the real or existential world.

But this last statement carries various implications. The unfriendly critic almost always tends to talk as if feeling were an isolated thing, a mere casual and unattached intruder. But such is plainly not the case. A feeling is a part of the universal scheme; it arises under specific conditions that involve objective causes, and it plays a rôle that may have all sorts of consequences for man's future life. It is really not a question, therefore, of opposing objectivity to the *merely* subjective. It is rather a question of interpretation; in what precisely are we to take the objectivity of a value to consist? Let us suppose the universe to be so constituted that normally under certain circumstances it gives rise to a particular feeling in man's experience, and that the feeling determines his way of estimating things and so the current of his life; why should such a feeling be left outside the objective frame of a world that expresses itself in these causal sequences? If feelings have important effects upon man's destiny, at least we cannot be debarred from saying that it is to "nature" that the effects are due. Whether we are justified in going farther and after some fashion attributing to nature herself the approvals man is so

constituted as to feel will be more doubtful, though even here the path is logically not closed if we choose to exercise our faith to that extent; in fact, those who decline to allow the possibility that our desires, tastes and interests may afford some clue to the character of the world at large might seem to be going farther than they have an obvious right to do in separating man from nature. The only thing I wish however to insist on is that if the sentiment of value is a determinate and, from the human standpoint, a fundamentally significant effect of natural forces, we cannot dispose offhand of the view which assigns it a constituent part to play in the moral judgment simply by using the opprobrious term "subjective."

So far I have done no more than clear the ground by pointing out why it appears to me that the blanket objection to an ethics of sentiment—the objection that value is in this way dissociated from the permanent and objective structure of reality—fails to be decisive. But while in the abstract feeling judgments thus may be entitled in some genuine sense to a standing in the real world, it still remains to ask whether they are capable of lending themselves to concrete norms which can be used for guiding conduct. For it is of course not enough, for morals, to establish a general claim to objectivity that applies to all feelings equally; it must be possible to show that certain feeling judgments have superiority over others.

It is worth noticing that the difficulty of turning theory into practice is not peculiar to an ethics of sentiment; in some ways feeling might even be thought to have an advantage over reason. It is notorious that

the highly generalized rational principles to which a speculative ethics has been accustomed to resort are at a long remove from practical affairs of conduct. Before they can tell us what in particular we are to take as good or bad they need to be supplemented by other considerations; and as a consequence there never has been any certainty of agreement about their concrete application. A feeling, attaching as it does to a particular set of circumstances, will at least lead us to do something definite; and this is no small advantage provided also any way appears of assigning superior authority to some items in the realm of feeling as compared with others. I shall leave the more concrete consideration of this possibility to a later point; but meanwhile there are certain very general logical conditions that are relevant to my more immediate purpose.

The first suggestion likely to occur is already implicated in the objection that feelings are too unstable to constitute a standard. Empirically this is not a criticism that applies to all feelings in the same degree. Here once more we must take care not to prejudice the case by an arbitrary limitation. If we choose to take feelings merely as isolated items of experience it may be that one will appear just as significant or as insignificant as another. But this is the same error which led to the conclusion that feeling can have no relation to objectivity. For the genuine empiricist a feeling is not a *mere* feeling; it is a link in an articulated world. And so regarded, it is *not* true that feelings are on an equal footing; in the light of our knowledge of the human animal and of the

environment in which he has his being we can say with confidence that a wide difference may exist among them.

There are two tests which more commonly are resorted to in order to distinguish thus between what we incline to think of as arbitrary individual tastes and more valid and settled feelings of approval. The first and more obvious of these is also more open to attack. The existence of something like a consensus of opinion, the tendency of men on a wide scale to agree in their approving judgments, in so far points to the judgment in question as having some connection with man's normal constitution. If the general likeness which exists in the case of the emotions proper—love, jealousy, hatred, ambition—is a sound basis for constructing a natural history of man, so equally does the fact that men tend to concur in their feelings of approval and disapproval furnish ground for the conclusion that these are not arbitrary but are rooted in a common nature. And those in consequence who look to the mores for determining the standard of human good have a *prima facie* case for their contention.

Nevertheless, it also is apparent that when traditional morality once is called in question the criterion no longer can be sure of working. And if, accordingly, the moral protestant is entitled to any claim upon our sympathy—and without him there could at least be no such thing as development in morals—the mere fact of popular agreement cannot be taken as conclusive. There is a sense in which agreement might still be regarded as the most decisive test; what is called the judgment of history stands simply for the

fact that in the end a given judgment has prevailed and dissentient voices have been stilled. This is what frequently has happened in the history of opinion; a good many things once contenders for rational assent no longer are taken seriously enough to make it necessary to go to the trouble of disproving them. But unfortunately in the field of morals the criterion is one that can be appealed to only after it ceases to be useful. So long as men are in the process of groping after a human good whose nature still is in dispute they necessarily are dependent on a more immediate and personal verification; and at such an intermediate stage the resort to a majority vote is always a source of moral risk. Its effect is to discourage individual insight and reasoned argument, and to give to mass opinion and tradition an importance which they cannot fairly claim.

An effective criterion, then, will have to be translatable into the possibility of such a personal judgment. And for making a start at this we do not need to leave behind the previous test. Looked at more closely, the standard of social agreement shows another and more fundamental mark. It is not the mere number of those who hold to an opinion at some arbitrarily selected point of time, but its persistence, the fact that it maintains its ground as an item of human experience, that really gives it standing. If we see reason to accept something like a generic human nature, then it is reasonable to assume that, given time enough, men will tend to meet on common ground; and to the extent to which this comes about we are in sight of an objective test. But the rational source of our assurance is not a consensus of belief here and now, but its continuance

under a sufficient variety of conditions to verify the claim that it represents a permanent possession of the human spirit. It is on this account that the moral ideals of an early and relatively stable civilization, however widely held, fall short of a ground for rational acceptance; we have no real test of their permanence until they have passed through periods of stress and strain, and have shown their ability to adapt themselves to the many vicissitudes and changes in the world. I am not assuming that of necessity there will be found any such permanent moral structure; it may be—the view is popular just now—that morality is purely relevant to particular changing forms of economic society and that it is futile to try to sift out universal principles. But *if* man has any settled moral constitution it is by the fact of its persistence under changing conditions that we are most likely to detect it.

And the point I started out to make is, that when we look beneath the criterion of moral agreement to the conditions which thus tend to render it an acceptable test we shall find that these apply equally to the exercise of that personal judgment apart from which a general uniformity leads to stagnation rather than to progress. If my approvals have no settled character but shift this way and that under the influence of chance happenings, the state of my health and spirits, the dominance of special passions, to such feelings the strictures of the rationalistic critic will apply. But empirically these strictures will have much less compulsion in case it happens, as it very well may do, that in all such vicissitudes I find that certain reflective likes and dislikes persist in reappearing whenever I stop long enough to give them an opportunity

to be felt, and so constitute a relatively steady nucleus which time may modify but does not destroy.

To this we have, however, immediately to add a saving clause. While empirical persistence under varying conditions furnishes a rebuttal to the charge that feeling is of necessity unstable, and while it thus affords a basis for something in the nature of a possible standard, it still needs a further qualification before it constitutes a "rational" standard. This is evident when we consider that persistency in value judgments may exist alongside other things that undermine its appeal to our intellectual respect—wilful stubbornness, stupidity and insensitiveness, the pathological overemphasis of particular emotions and desires. The proper corrective is however manifest. A persistent feeling of approval has no right to claim rational authority unless it holds its own under a considerable variety of experimental conditions. But in order that this should constitute a genuine test it is necessary not only that the conditions should be present, but that they should be recognized and intellectually responded to. A feeling *may* remain constant in a new environment simply because one refuses to admit the change and to make his readjustment to it; this is the familiar mark of the bourbon type of mind, and proves nothing except that human nature may be unequal to the demands that experience puts upon it. Only in case the feeling finds itself spontaneously reëmerging after the new facts have been faced and candidly appraised is its persistence a matter of rational importance. But when this *does* happen, it has advanced in so far toward a status which weakens empirically the rationalist's complaint.

The bearing of these remarks is evident. The rationalist quite properly insists that there must be an intellectual side to the moral judgment if it is not to remain an arbitrary personal taste. But before taking refuge in the not wholly transparent notion of an absolute value apprehensible by reason, one should not overlook the other and simpler way in which reason may be drawn on to define the moral situation. On the hypothesis that values are objective in the empirical sense that there are determinate causes in the world capable of setting up approval feelings which serve as revelations of the genuine conditions of a satisfying human life, there still is a wide field left for the exercise of "mind." A feeling is evoked by the perception of an objective situation, and its authority, therefore, will depend upon the precision of the mental operation through which the nature of this is grasped. Take as an instance that intimate and elusive state of mind known as a sense of honor. Considered merely as a feeling we might have reason to maintain that this is ultimate, and that no intellectual probing will substantially affect its nature; it is an appreciation of a certain reflective kind which we shrink from overriding, and one either feels it or he does not feel it as the case may be. But it is possible, nevertheless, to go beyond the mere fact that it is present and to evaluate it; and this is accomplished by a more realistic appraisal of the circumstances that call it forth. And if we find, accordingly, that it is attached to a relatively unanalyzed and unrationalized source—the conventions of a social class, or some highly emotionalized stock situation such as war for example offers—we may be justified in setting it aside because, on a

closer scrutiny, we discover other determinate considerations which the judgment disregards. To estimate these is an affair of reason, and it may prove to be no easy task. But at least we are using reason here in a familiar and intelligible meaning—the analysis of factual data. And if in the end we arrive at a "truer" sense of honor it is not because of some mysterious perception of an absolute value; it is because the emotion which we are so constituted as to feel is now joined to a more adequate understanding of the relations that exist between the world of nature and the human sense of satisfaction which is one of its expressions.

Up to the present point two closely related conclusions have emerged. No moral judgment, to begin with, can dispense with an emotional ingredient which has its source in factual elements in the human constitution, and which takes the form of a reflective appraisal of comparative worth among the conditions which excite it. Taken solely by itself this, no more than any other feeling, constitutes a standard in the sense that it affords a ground for rational argument. But it is never taken by itself in point of fact. Good does not have its being in a void. It presupposes a creature with specific energies and powers of enjoyment which he seeks to exercise in a world that, while malleable, has a fairly definite structure and lends itself to predictable results. Here we are dealing with data of the sort we call scientific, dependent not upon our wishes but upon the testimony of concrete experience, and open to scrutiny and testing by methods more or less exact. The facts would carry no logical or moral obligation were it not that they are capable of being pressed into the service of some

conception of the good, some end of action weighted with emotional approval. But conjoined with such a preference they inevitably have something to say about its content and direction. If we desire actual happiness, and not its ghost in a nebulous realm of abstract values, our only chance of getting it lies in doing our best to see that our emotional insights are shaped by a realistic understanding of the facts of the working world; and it is thus not only possible, but certain, that we shall find ourselves necessitated to accept rules of conduct which are rationally imposed on us—and which therefore can be utilized in debate—by our committal to the quest for good in determinate surroundings.

And such a conclusion is no more than seems to be implicitly allowed by Westermarck himself when he calls reflective emotions in general "higher" than unreflective ones; if enlightened morality is superior to morality which is unenlightened, it can only be because it is more "objective." In any case, it will be the conditions which render judgments more intelligent, rather than those on which all judgments equally are dependent, that will have to claim the particular attention of the moral critic if he wants to be in a position to apply moral theory to the actual needs of individual or social practice. To say, as Westermarck does, that because the same objective conditions may give rise to emotions that differ in different persons there is nothing that could make the emotions uniform, is simply to pass up as a bad job any attempt to give a rational character to morals. Doubtless we have no *a priori* assurance of agreement in the end. But unless we can hope for some approximation to agreement in

proportion as the real facts of experience and of human nature come to light we are pointed either toward a sceptical indifference, or toward an uncritical reliance on our personal feelings and a consequent intolerance toward all judgments that conflict with these.

It is with this outcome presupposed that I turn back now to add a few words about certain of the features in particular of Westermarck's analysis. There are, it will be recalled, two main aspects of the moral judgment as he describes it; it is a retributive emotion, kindly or hostile, toward a living being regarded as a source of pleasure or of pain, and it is disinterested or impartial—independent, that is, of particular persons or relationships. Both of these call for some attention. And I waive once more the question as to how the moral experience first got started; that is a question of very real importance, but the answer does not constitute of itself any claim upon our present loyalty or guide us in the practical problems which the modern world presents. Such guidance will be found, if anywhere, through an examination of what goes on in the most enlightened conscience rather than in the experience of primitive man or of his successor, the man in the street; and this means that it is with the logic of convictions rather than with their natural history that we are primarily concerned. For practice the important question is, not how moral beliefs came into existence, but what gives anyone the right to continue holding to them when they are challenged, or to ask other reasonable beings to ratify his personal findings.

The consequences of this shift of emphasis are most

apparent in connection with that character of compulsion which attaches to the concept of duty or of moral obligation. With Westermarck's account of the origin of conscience I see no special reason to quarrel so far as it goes. It is entirely possible that the sense of disapproval may take its start from the resentment which disposes me naturally to repay an injury, and that it becomes a public concept of duty when the feeling is shared by the community and given the backing of social or religious sanctions, this imperative character belonging to law and custom being then reflected back into the consciousness of the individual as a sense of "ought." Still, there is some ground for thinking that even in terms of primitive morality this oversimplifies the matter; and as an account of conscience in the modern man—where alone we can examine it at first hand—it plainly is in need of supplementing.

Its most conspicuous shortcoming is its failure to supply any obvious reason why a man who has reached the stage of critical reflection should ever continue to regard duty as a valid concept—as something, that is, capable of being rationally justified to his own consciousness as binding upon him. Of course it may be that it *has* no binding quality, and that a proper understanding of the origin of duty will release us from its yoke. But this last is not in point of fact a universal or even a very general consequence. The enlightened conscience is an undoubted fruit of man's experience; indeed, the feeling may very well be strengthened as it grows more refined and sensitive. Here, then, is something that needs to be explained; and if it is so that we find no ground for it in one

set of factors we ought to look elsewhere before concluding that it has no warrant.

That a justifying explanation cannot be found in any external source of authority seems pretty clear. It is easy to understand why a creature like man, susceptible as he is to the power of suggestion and indisposed to think much for himself so long as he can avoid that troublesome exertion, should be ready to fall in with a set of judgments coming from a sufficiently impressive source. But to hold, with Westermarck, that the *essential* fact contained in the notion of duty is that the man who refrains from doing his duty suffers public disapproval, is to have recourse to a tool much better adapted for giving rise to social conformity than to an enlightened personal conscience. I am rational only to the extent that reasons appeal to *me* as valid; validity is always in the end a personal and not a communal affair. It is of course possible, and probable, that the motives which influence groups of men will in greater or less degree be shared by me as well, and where some other person is the object of a public judgment there is usually no reason why I should not acquiesce in this; often it is definitely to my interest to do so. But it is not what I naturally should call my interest to suffer the penalties of the law in my own person; on the contrary I dislike the idea, and my first impulse is to escape them if I can. That my betters, or even the community at large, are prepared to chastise me for doing what I want to do is a social consequence which I am compelled to face, but taken alone it is no more rationally binding than the stock market or the weather; I may *want* to escape the resentment of my fellows or to win their good opin-

ion, but in this there is nothing to make me feel that I have any duty in the matter. Or, again, common sense may tell me that social regulations are in general to my own advantage as a member of the community, and so that under ordinary circumstances it will pay me to submit to them. But this also is a motive purely of self-interest; and if I see my way to violate the rule while escaping retribution, there is no reason why I should not do it and feel nothing but self-congratulation in the event that I succeed. This is the "rational" attitude of the unregenerate man which we can see exemplified conspicuously in the so-called criminal classes; and the respectable citizen gives it his implicit assent when he brags of his dealings with his bootlegger or his ingenuity in getting by the customs house.

Nor is it apparent that we are much better off when we add the second ingredient of the ought—the feeling of retributive resentment. This also, up to a point, works in readily enough with social judgments upon other people. The instinctive tendency to requite a personal injury will naturally be directed against one who by violating the common law has put me in jeopardy along with my neighbors; nor is it hard to see how under the influence of mass suggestion we might extend our resentment to any wrongdoer even though we might not feel ourselves personally aggrieved. We should do so, that is to say, provided there were no counteracting reasons. But such reasons may evidently be present. If the offender is a friend and the injured person an object of indifference, we are not likely to feel any strong desire to see the former punished even though we may acquiesce passively in the general ver-

dict; and when we are ourselves to blame the desire will be even less in evidence. The moral terms which I get in the habit of using I might find myself automatically applying to my own conduct in a similar situation; but why I should turn the *emotion,* too, against myself, should really *feel* that I also ought not to perform the act which I disapprove when someone else is guilty of it, is a nicer question. A resentment toward ourselves, the active wish to see ourselves punished when we have injured others, has hardly more than a verbal connection with the wish to see others suffer when they have injured us; emotionally the two experiences have no real identity, and there is no direct passage from one to the other which is capable of standing up under critical reflection.

If we try, then, to define the ought as an emotional bent toward paying back an injury reinforced and universalized by the power of social suggestion, we appear to fall short of explaining why duty should have any rational hold upon ourselves in cases where it is not coincident with what we happen also to desire. And one of two things seems to follow: either the sense of duty when it leads to moral self-condemnation is rationally an illusion, a mere reflex of external social sanctions, or else the disapproval which as a matter of experience we undoubtedly may feel towards our own acts will have a character that can be distinguished from the instinctive resentment toward an external cause of injury. In that case the demand for retribution will not be the essence of moral disapproval; it will be, as empirically it seems to be, a consequence that follows from the recognition of something of which we already have cause to disapprove and which we

think on that account *deserves* reprisal. And *what* we thus disapprove is primarily the nature or quality of the act and not the personal object of a grudge. Very possibly at the start there is no distinction made; indeed, since it is only injuries inflicted by a conscious agent that arouse rational resentment it always comes psychologically a little hard even for the enlightened moralist to keep the two things separate. Nevertheless, it is one of the distinctive marks of a growing moral discrimination that more and more we find ourselves content to damn the sin rather than the sinner. And the point is still plainer in the case of approval or of kindly feeling, especially as this is directed toward ourselves. It may be that self-disapprobation does normally carry with it a desire, or a willingness, to see ourselves punished for an unrighteous act. But moral self-approval has no such close connection with a desire to be rewarded for our virtues; in fact, any intrusive claim to personal merit and reward interferes with the moral character of the act. At any rate, the claim to recompense *is* not the self-approval; this last can only follow from a conviction that the act has itself a value which we independently perceive.

And with this there is opened up a new way of accounting for that character of impartiality which clearly is, as Westermarck maintains, essential to morality. I am ready to concede, once more, that his own explanation may in terms of genesis contain a large element of truth. Historically the tribal judgment hardly can have failed to exercise an important influence in depersonalizing men's instinctive approvals and resentments; and the factual point to which impartiality is in practice carried will everywhere be

found as a matter of experience dependent on the range of human sympathy or "altruism." A disinterestedness, however, which stops where personal sympathy stops is resting its case on a *de facto* and localized state of mind, and consequently in so far lies outside the field of rational persuasion. Meanwhile by implication Westermarck has himself suggested the alternative. "I cannot find it unreasonable," he writes, "to endeavor to promote the welfare of my own family or country in preference to that of other families or countries. But my moral emotions tell me that I must allow everybody to show a similar preference for *his* family or country." It is true that the source of impartiality is identified here with the moral *emotions;* and Westermarck goes on at once to note the indisposition of men generally to extend any such privilege which they lay claim to for themselves much beyond the range of their sympathy with other men. But the motive which leads us to apply a principle only to certain cases cannot be the source of the principle which it presupposes. This principle must clearly be, not an emotional altruism which has limits, but a rational perception which, *because* it is rational, is also universal—the perception, namely, that what I admit in one instance I cannot refuse to admit in a similar instance unless I can point out specific circumstances that make a relevant difference. I may stop short, or society may stop short, of meeting fully this demand. But that does not mean that the principle is limited; it only means that we are to that extent acting in a way which, supposing we have any desire for consistency, we are bound rationally to disapprove.

What therefore I am trying to point out is that

true impartiality is not in the first instance an emotional but an intellectual quality, though it may need its own accompaniment of feeling to make it practically effective; it rests not on the number of people to whom I am ready to extend my tolerance, but on my will to be self-consistent in my rational judgments. Once enter the field of intellectually perceived truths about conduct, and impartiality follows directly as a consequence regardless of personal sympathies or of public sanctions; a truth is in its nature universal, no less true of another man than of myself. The emotion of altruism, on the other hand, not only has no need to be more than incompletely universal, but it is hard to see how a consistent impartiality could in any case have sprung from it. That men, some men at least, have come to accept as morally binding an abstract justice which makes no difference between one man and another is a fact in the history of the moral experience; anything short of this an enlightened morality nowadays would commonly condemn. But if before such a judgment could be passed men had to feel an emotional sympathy toward the entire race, the chances are considerable that its appearance would have been indefinitely delayed. And if it is doubtful whether more than a handful of individuals have ever attained such a comprehensive altruism, it is certain that no society has as yet come within striking distance of it. Neither law nor effective public opinion in any existing state countenances the same treatment of aliens, still less of enemy nations, that it demands for its own citizens; and in the degree, therefore, that we try to account for impartiality through a social imperative we inevitably fall short

of a universal morality. If people do in any considerable number approach to this—and as a matter of fact they do—it cannot find a sufficient explanation either in a love of humanity which is largely verbal or in a public opinion which is non-existent, but will need to call in, as well, certain intellectual judgments about conduct whose rational application admits of no exceptions.

And not only is it so that a rational impartiality fails to be accounted for in terms of such very imperfect catholicity as historical societies achieve; it may even come into active conflict with the social judgment. Organized society may persuade itself that it is just to condemn a Sacco or a Mooney for a crime they did not commit because it resents their attacks on institutions which it cherishes; and with such a feeling in the air the majority of men may acquiesce in the penalty as right and proper. That the victim should decline to call this justice might perhaps be due merely to his natural dislike of being punished. But when other and disinterested individuals join in protesting against an act which the opinion of the community approves, their state of mind will be something different from a concurrence in the general verdict. And plainly it often is something different, as well, from a personal sympathy which may be conspicuously absent.

It is only, I think, by distinguishing thus between the quality of an act which we disapprove and the retributive emotion directed toward some person that we are able to straighten out certain logical kinks in Westermarck's analysis. Moral judgments, he tells us, are not passed on emotions. To call a thing good or bad is to refer it to a class of phenomena which nor-

mally evoke approval or disapproval; we are not even *stating* this emotional tendency, though it is *because* there is such a tendency that we use the terms. Now it is true that as an incident in the formulation of general rules calling a thing good may mean ranging it under a more inclusive concept. But this is not the moral judgment proper. We must already have recognized a sort of thing as good before we assign a new instance to a class; and such a prior act is therefore what needs first to be explained. For Westermarck the explanation lies in the "tendency" to feel approval. But again, the perception of certain factual tendencies can hardly be the source of a new quality—goodness; unless we pronounce an individual instance good or bad mere repetition will not make it so. The real question has to do with the reason why in the first instance the judgment is pronounced; it is here the final issue lies. And such a reason will, I have tried to argue, involve something more than the instinctive reaction to a cause of pleasure or of pain. To feel a retributive hostility toward a person is not identically the same thing as to attribute the quality of badness in a judgment; if there were nothing in the act itself to occasion such a judgment it would not be recognized as of a sort to call for retribution, though we still might automatically strike back at the aggressor. That an immediate aversion leading to a judgment may exist toward an act even though there are no consequences calling for reprisal is implied in Westermarck's own thesis that aversion when taken by itself is not a sufficient excuse for moral censure. What he has it in mind here to deny is that it offers valid ground for social penalties; but there must still be supposed

to be some natural tendency present to translate aversion into censure or there would be no need for the disclaimer. Finally, it is only on such a showing that any possible justification can be found for our undoubted readiness to take our own morality as "higher." To call it higher simply because it is *mine* is a pure irrelevance. We have no real right to prefer our own feelings except for some assignable reason; and the reason can only be looked for in the persuasion of a truer understanding of the objective character of the act.

Chapter VI

THE NATURE OF GOODNESS

In the preceding chapters I have had occasion to make a number of assertions on the authority of what I have assumed would be their popular acceptance, their consonance with what people generally will recognize as a natural description of their meaning when they talk about goodness or morality. In this sense we may say that they rest upon their own self-evidence; and I have taken for granted all along that such empirical self-evidence is in fact, in the last resort, the only source of assurance open to us. No theory about morals can carry conviction unless it presupposes man's everyday ways of judging and leads to conclusions harmonious with these. Nevertheless, such judgments may very well turn out to need a more rigorous statement if a rational being is to find himself capable of subscribing to them all; and to an attempt at this the present chapter will be given.

To limit the immediate task I begin by calling attention to the relative independence of two moral terms, good on the one hand, and duty or obligation on the other. These plainly, whatever their relation, are on the surface distinguishable concepts, and we cannot mix them uncritically without getting into trouble. It is necessary to insist upon this for the reason that both the plain man and the philosopher are very likely

to confuse the two. The term good has two connotations. In its more comprehensive sense it refers to what we may call a "naturalistic" good. A pleasure for example—any pleasure—is, we are inclined to say, "in so far" good; it is something which, if we could exclude all extraneous matters such as its harmful consequences, anyone probably would call an addition to the sum of good in the world, preferable to pain or to a neutral state. But it would not need to be on that account a "morally valid" good, though when we use the word this latter notion is apt to slip in unobtrusively. So it might be argued, for example, as against a theory which traces goodness back to feeling, that I clearly may doubt whether a thing is good even when I entertain no doubt that there are people who have the feeling in question toward it; or, as a variant, it will be asked whether it is really possible to believe that goodness could be brought into existence just because some man or other, no matter how vicious or stupid or ignorant, has a particular feeling; or again, it is said that since two men may have opposing feelings the same act will need to be set down as both good and bad—a contradiction in terms. But such considerations, whatever force they may have in their place, are shifting the problem from the nature of goodness to the validity of a certain kind of good. If I call something good which another man calls bad, we still may be attaching the same meaning to the predicate goodness even though we differ sharply as to *what* is good; the thing which a vicious or stupid man feels to be good does constitute, for the moment at least, a good *for him;* if any person whatsoever has the feeling of approval toward an object he at least is employing

the *concept* of goodness, and any point in doubt will concern the question whether it is *really* good—an important question but a different one, and a question for which the generic meaning of the concept is already presupposed. Substitute "seems good" for "is good," and the apparent absurdities will disappear; but the supposed difficulties would themselves be unintelligible unless goodness had a meaning which all the disputants must be able to understand if there is to be any possibility of argument.

In saying this there is a distinction presupposed which calls for a more explicit statement. There are a great many things which we are disposed without much hesitation to call good—health, beauty, pleasure and the like. But the question, "What particular things are good?" cannot forthwith be identified with the question, "What do we mean when we call them good? or what constitutes their goodness?" The first is a question to be answered by pointing to the empirical fact that such and such an object has at some time, by somebody, been made the object of a value judgment; the second calls for logical analysis, and is directed not to the things to which the term good applies but to the meaning of the term itself. Goodness and *a* good cannot be taken as equivalents. We might indeed put the question, "Is not goodness good?" but only at the risk of talking nonsense. Goodness is an attribute, while *a* good is something to which the attribute belongs; in strictness the question ought to take the form, "Is goodness goodness?" which presumably it is. Since, then, it always is desirable that we should be as clear as possible about what we mean by a word before we use it, the nature of goodness as a concept is

the first problem with which the theorist will need to deal; and it is the only one with which the present chapter will be concerned.

In setting out to distinguish between good things and their goodness, the natural path might seem to be to examine all the various objects men have at any time called good and to single out some common quality which is present in them to enable them to form a class. Supposedly we ought to be able to discover some such common essence; and when we start to look for it the chances are that we shall find ourselves moving in the direction of a particular type of theory. In its most familiar form this is the theory of hedonism, which finds the nature of goodness in the character of pleasurable feeling. The presence of pleasure, it is argued not unplausibly, is the only thing in which all the various forms of good agree. Beauty, for example, would never have been called good if it gave no pleasure to the man who contemplates or creates it, and so of all the other claimants to the title; while anything that *is* a source of pleasure becomes by that very fact in so far a good. Goodness, then, is pleasantness.

At the present day such a general point of view is very likely to assume a more sophisticated form, and to substitute for pleasure feeling the more active concept of "desire." If we assume, as commonly is done, that pleasure and desire are intimately connected in that the feeling of pleasure arises only as impulse or desire undergoes satisfaction, there might not appear to be any radical opposition between the two forms of statement; nevertheless there are advantages to be claimed for the second form. Psychologically, desire

is more ultimate than feeling. It is an active cause rather than a passive consequence; it brings us into closer contact with the biological organism as an agent in the naturalistic world of science; and it throws much more light, therefore, on the concrete nature of life and conduct. Also, it has the advantage that it enables us to keep closer to the natural use of words. It does not sound quite true to say that the only thing good is a state of pleasant feeling; most good things we tend to cast in the form of "objects"—health, money and the like. And since desire aims at objects and not for the most part, by conscious intention at any rate, at the mere pleasure they afford, it falls in line better with our normal moral judgments.

Up to a point it does not seem easy to deny this general sort of claim and still adhere to the beliefs of a sophisticated common sense. So viewed, we may regard these two forms of the theory as complementary rather than competing. Thus if we start out to *justify* any judgment about the good we find it extremely difficult, many would say impossible, to do this without bringing in the feeling of pleasure or satisfaction. When we talk about beauty we do not for the most part have our æsthetic pleasure consciously before the mind; we tend to think of beauty as objective, and if a man is peculiarly susceptible to its charm he may be able to persuade himself that even were all traces of mind and feeling to be wiped out from the universe the rose would still be lovely and the starry heavens sublime. But more commonly we should be disposed to think that this is going too far in the apotheosis of a value. The rose may be beautiful even though *I* do not feel its beauty, provided there are other more

fortunate percipients in existence. But if all such beings were removed, the persisting beauty of the rose would then only mean that it remains capable of giving æsthetic pleasure when or if the appropriate conditions reappear; while if no organism were *capable* of getting pleasure from it, beauty would cease to have any meaning at all except as it stood for certain objective relationships and mathematical proportions. That this is our natural attitude is indicated by the fact that we commonly should judge that a man is deceiving himself in accepting something as good merely because other people call it so; and the only way of bringing this home to him is to ask him to look inside himself and see whether it really can be translated into terms of actual satisfaction.

As it is to the presence of feeling that we naturally turn in order to make our ascriptions of value seem plausible, so when, on the other hand, we undertake not to justify but to *explain* values we seem brought back to their relation to desire. Desire stripped of feeling and reduced to pure behavior would, indeed, fail to account for value judgments; a machine may fulfil its function perfectly, but because it gets no gratification in the process it is commonly felt as an abuse of language to call the things which feed or issue from its action goods or values for it. Nevertheless, feeling is a consequence rather than a cause; the creative source of felt values is to be looked for, rather, in that innate propensity to action which we may speak of as desire. And since this is so, good can plausibly be identified with desire in the sense that desire is the active agency in its production.

But when we have allowed for both these claims

there still remains something to be added. After all, as various philosophers in recent times have urged, it is not enough to point to the common quality of pleasurableness or to a common relation to desire in order to account fully for what we mean when we use the term goodness. It may be that the only things we intelligibly can call good are pleasures or objects of desire—that *the* good, we will say, is pleasure. But such a common quality does not exhaust the meaning of "goodness," as is shown by a very simple consideration. Pleasantness and goodness, namely, are not in terms of human language exact equivalents; if they were, then "pleasure is pleasant" and "pleasure is good" would be identical propositions, which as a matter of fact they are not. Everyone would agree that pleasure is pleasant. But not everyone would agree that pleasure and pleasure alone is good, as necessarily would have to be the case were the two words the same in meaning. This last assertion often has been doubted; and the bare possibility of doubting it shows that when we say, "pleasure is good," we suppose ourselves to be adding something to the tautological proposition, "pleasure is pleasant." The same thing is true of desire; to assert that an object is good is not *merely* to say that it is desired. It may be that nothing is called good *unless* it also is desired. But the fact that this, too, is capable of being doubted is enough to show that the two words "good" and "desired" are not synonyms, as they would have to be if the quality of being desired were not only required for making objects good but were the sole meaning of goodness.

If we grant this—and it is, to repeat, nothing but a statement about the meanings which certain words

actually carry in human speech—there is a consequence that might seem to follow. What has been said about pleasure and desire will be equally true of any other word or phrase we might select; any except one, that is, the word good itself. The only strictly self-evident proposition here appears to be that good is good. And if, therefore, we abide by the plan of identifying goodness with some common quality residing in objects, we have the makings of a new theory of value. This is the theory that the common element in all good things is just goodness; that good, namely, is a simple, ultimate and unanalyzable concept which is irreducible to any other quality that an object may possess and simply has to be perceived for what it is. Other qualities may possess goodness, but they *are* not goodness; they are what they are, just as goodness is what *it* is. Goodness is arrived at not by analysis, but by intuition; it shines by its own light, and one has no need to look farther for its meaning.

As a matter of pure logic there seems nothing wrong with this; it can be stated, so far as I can see, without self-contradiction, which is more than can be said of the theories it is intended to supplant. When we turn empiricists, however, and try to interpret it in concrete terms, the chances are that we shall find ourselves in some perplexity. I can *say* that goodness is something *sui generis* which I perceive directly just as I perceive redness, and which is no more to be defined than redness is definable. But when I try to realize exactly what I mean by such a claim, I am likely to find my mind groping after something so very tenuous as to raise a serious question whether I really mean anything at all. We might perhaps compare the percep-

tion of value to that of a mathematical relationship, which we do appear to recognize by a sort of immediate intuition. But the theory in question does not usually propose to reduce goodness to a relation, which in point of fact it does not seem to be. Is it, then, perceived as a sense quality is perceived? But a sense quality has always a specific content which can be retained by attention, scrutinized, brought into various relationships with other *sensa,* and even to a slight extent analyzed. Goodness has to all appearance none of these advantages; tenuous, opaque, contentless, incapable of setting up relationships to other things, it effectively eludes my grasp when I try to pin it down. In short, I find it very difficult to avoid the suspicion that I am fobbing myself off with a mere *word.* I cannot set it down dogmatically that others may not have better luck. Nevertheless, they seem to have a burden of proof to overcome. Traditionally the only objects of intuition are sensations and relations; and we ought at any rate not to be asked to accept a third and wholly different kind of intuition without some sympathetic consideration of its stumblingblocks. Conceivably we might by the lack of alternatives be forced to take this path no matter what difficulties it may present. But we should first be sure that the alternatives are exhausted; and in the present instance there is one, at least, which has so far not been mentioned.

We have hitherto, that is, been looking for goodness in a quality inhering in good objects. But there is something else that empirically we can say about the value situation. Whatever the nature of the objects we approve or value, also we do necessarily approve them; there would be *for us* no values in the absence

of an approving judgment or awareness. But this brings to light another place in which the source of goodness as a concept *might* be located—not in the objects, but in the approval which we as conscious minds extend to them. This is, in principle, the thesis to which in an unsystematic way I already have committed myself; I shall try now to render it a little more specific and to take account of some of the objections to which it has been supposed by critics to be open.

The first point I need to make is that good is a "reflective" notion, by which I mean that it is a quality which is *judged* to belong to an object and not merely the presence to experience of a passive quality or feeling; more strictly, approval like sense perception is an awareness with an objective reference, which may then if we so desire be unfolded into the explicit judgment *that* so and so is good. This is a distinction which the popular use of language sometimes covers up. I may say, for example, "that feels good," or, "that tastes good," when I mean by good nothing more than pleasant; in such a case I am merely picking out a felt character of experience and giving it a new and more or less appropriate name. It is in this sense that we might agree with the objection sometimes brought against a theory of sentiment, that a pleasure may *be* good without its being necessary that we have another feeling toward it. But when in the stricter sense I say that a pleasure is good, or that this is a good pleasure, I then do mean something more than that pleasure is pleasant or that this is a pleasant pleasure. Goodness is not a description of felt experience but a new character added by an act of judgment to the

original experience; if we must use philosophical language, it is synthetic and not analytic.

In the second place, if to say in this specific sense that something is good is to adopt toward it an attitude of approval, anything new in the way of a concrete psychological content will not belong to the original experience—it would complicate things if I could not approve an object without thereby altering its nature—but will have to be looked for in the state of mind that takes this object up and contemplates it. I should perhaps stop here long enough to make it clear again that I am not talking about *moral* approval. I am not intending to imply anything whatever about the relative ranking of a value or about my duty toward it; I am taking approval in its widest and most generic —its naturalistic—meaning, where it stands merely for the fact that someone at some particular moment is viewing an object with a pleasurable sense of liking. *Unless* the thought of it is pleasant there seems, as I have said before, nothing very intelligible in the claim that it is good; if my mind turned away from the thought of virtue in dislike, virtue could hardly be for *me* a value. And the *only* obvious new content that approval introduces is just this sense of pleasure that accompanies the act of contemplation. Here again we have to take care to avoid an ambiguity of language. I may be said to "like" a thing when no judgment is involved; in that case I only mean that I am absorbed in it, am enjoying its presence and striving to hold on to it. But if I stop with this the adjective "good" has not yet put in an appearance; I *call* it good, approve it, only when immediate enjoyment passes into reflective appreciation. This last is a new experience;

and while the two things may very well depend on the same psychological conditions in the organism, its immediate character as sentiment is due to the pleasure which I get in contemplation and not to the original pleasure of *active* liking.

What I am suggesting, then, is that goodness as an intellectual category arises from the nature of approval and is not a quality found inhering in the object *which* is approved. In support of such a thesis it remains to ask what more exactly is the anatomy of this approval judgment as a psychological phenomenon. Here I am entering very controversial territory which it is not my present business fully to explore; all I shall try to do is to call attention to certain facts of experience which I assume can be verified with a measure of assurance by anyone who will take the necessary trouble.

The most general statement of the problem involved in any theory of sentiment as a determinant of values may perhaps be put in terms of the question: How, if goodness is a feeling, can it also be a judgment? That approval is in *some* sense a judgment the term itself implies; but in what sense? If we can answer such a question plausibly we shall have found a way, I think, to meet a number of the more serious objections that have been raised against an ethics of sentiment.

To do this will necessitate a brief incursion into the theory of what takes place when we claim to "know" any object whatever; and the simplest and most fundamental case is that of sense perception. I pass the judgment, "this coffee has a bitter taste." Now the bitter taste, most people would allow, primarily is in

myself; it is what older psychologists would almost invariably have called a certain kind of sensation as a form of conscious experiencing, and if we never had had the sensation we should not be in a position to call anything bitter. Nevertheless, our natural propensity is to assume that the bitterness is actually present in the coffee. This does not mean that a "bitter sensation" is located somewhere in the outer world. We do not suppose that the coffee is itself feeling a bitter taste; to have sensations is the prerogative of conscious beings only. But a sensation, on the old-fashioned view, has two aspects. It *is* a bit of conscious stuff, or feeling. But also any such feeling—taste, hearing, color, smell—has its own particular quality or essence; and it is this essence, or specific character, which we attribute to the outer object—in the present instance not a bitter sensation, but "bitterness." How it happens that we thus transfer to the object a quality whose nature comes home to us in immediate feeling is a further question, which finds its simplest answer in the conditions of organic life; the interaction, that is, between the organism and something which has to be responded to in its environment leads us automatically, without paying any attention to the sensation which has arisen from the interaction and perhaps without even knowing that there are such things as sensations in existence, to project the "nature" of the sensation, its bitter quality, as a means of identification into the thing on which our organic welfare is dependent, and so not merely to have a bitter taste but to judge, "bitter object."

This is, I am aware, a very sketchy treatment of a disputable issue; but it may be enough to convey an

understanding of what I am going on to say about approval. For in approval—this is my thesis—the situation is essentially the same in principle. Approval, as I have just remarked, is one of those numerous psychological experiences that can be characterized as pleasant—a statement for which the only proof takes the form of an appeal to the empirical fact that no one really can see himself approving anything in a state of mind which itself is emotionally neutral or, in so far as it approves, is painful. But approval also is a judgment, implied if not explicit; it professes to find a certain quality—goodness—in various specific objects. And by following the previous pattern we are led to a similar result; while the quality we now perceive is not a sense quality, the method of perceiving it may be the same. Under the influence of the animal organism and its needs, that is, the logical character or "essence" of something in my immediate experience—the pleasurable feeling which accompanies the act of contemplation—is transferred automatically to the thing contemplated, just as bitterness is attributed to the coffee; and such a quality of pleasantness—not, I repeat, the concrete *feeling* of pleasure of which I need not be attentively aware at all—becomes thereupon interpreted as the "goodness" of the object. Goodness is thus the abstract character of pleasant feeling—one might call it "satisfactoriness"—to which alone our conscious preference goes out whether in action or in thought. If this seems an over-subtle and evasive description of the term, it has to be remembered that goodness on any showing *is* a highly evasive concept when we try to pin it down and anatomize it.

I perhaps can make the essential point a little clearer

by noting a possible objection. If goodness is the quality or character of pleasantness transferred from our approving attitude to the thing approved, then, one might ask, what ground is there for the difference already recognized between the pleasant and the good? To "know" a thing as pleasant I must also, it would seem, utilize some essence as the source of the objective quality; and what could this be other than the "pleasantness" that already has been employed to account for goodness? The good and the pleasant would thus spring from an identical kind of mental reference, and in that case the distinction between them which has been seen to be logically demanded would have disappeared.

It may help to obviate this objection if we go back to an earlier distinction. Pleasantness, so the rationalistic critic is constantly insisting, is a subjective attribute, while goodness is an objective one; what does this mean? Empirically I think it grows out of the fact that when we are careful about our words we apply pleasant only to psychological experiencings, whereas good is a character primarily of objects. I do not, when I am using language in its first intention, naturally call feelings as such good. I call them what they really are, that is, pleasant; if I say, "how good this pleasure is," actually I only mean, "how pleasant this pleasure is." On the other hand, I do not think that in strictness we call objects "pleasant"; health or wealth or beauty are not in themselves pleasant but the *source* of pleasure.

And if this is a proper use of terms, we have a way of distinguishing between the judgment of pleasantness and the judgment of goodness; both utilize the same

character or essence, but they utilize it in different ways. In judging an experience pleasant I am not attributing to it a character attaching to my act of judgment; I am scrutinizing it in its own right and discovering by analysis a quality that actually belongs to it. When I call some object good, on the contrary, goodness is precisely what I do *not* find simply by analyzing the object; it is a new and imported quality. Furthermore, after having noted an experience as pleasant I may think about the same experience later; for doing this I shall need an "idea" of pleasure to convey my reference or meaning, and such a thought of pleasure I may have without feeling the least degree of pleasure in the thought. But with the reinstatement of certain organic conditions of activity I *may* also get a new sense of pleasure when the thought of a past pleasure occurs; and it is only in this latter case that I have, not recollection merely, but approval, and so may call the pleasure not only pleasant but a good. It is this empirical difference, then, between pleasantness and goodness that makes it impossible to identify the two; goodness is a "tertiary" quality, not a constitutive one. The situation may be compared with what happens when I call an object "dreadful." For our spontaneous awareness dreadfulness seems to be something inhering in the dreaded object; though when we stop to think we have no trouble in discovering that "dread" exists only in ourselves, and that all we really have the right to say about the object is that it is fear-*inspiring*. In a similar way we tend to carry over from our approval its felicific character and to locate it in the object we approve as a tertiary quality—goodness. But here, too, a closer inspection

seems to show that such a quality really stands not for something that beauty, we will say, possesses in its own right, but for the power which beauty has of arousing in us an appreciative esteem.

It has been with some reluctance that I have entered on the foregoing brief analysis; to the non-philosophical reader it will seem over-subtle and, very likely, unnecessary and unimportant, while the philosopher will regard it as unduly meager. With the first objection I have a certain amount of sympathy; I am not sure that an ultimate analysis of value is needed to make good an empirical defence of the rôle of sentiment in ethics. There are, however, various speculative difficulties to which a theory of sentiment is exposed that in the absence of such an analysis I should have no way of meeting; and to some of the more important of these I wish now in conclusion to return.

The main objections of the rationalistic critic may, I think, in nearly all cases be evaded by making use of the distinctions I have tried to draw. As against the present analysis, stock criticisms tend to lose their point because, in the first place, the pleasure which may be an object of approval is seldom dissociated sharply from the sense of pleasure that attaches to approval itself as an act of reflective awareness, and because, in this latter act, there is an almost universal failure to distinguish feeling as a momentary psychological existent from the abstract "essence" which alone, when referred to an object, constitutes its goodness. The result is, typically, the assumption that when we judge, "something is good," this must mean the *same thing* as judging, "someone has a feeling"; an assumption which then is shown to lead to

contradiction. "The question in dispute," so Mr. G. E. Moore for example writes, "is whether when we judge that an action is a duty or a state of things good, *all* that we are thinking about the action or the state of things in question is simply and solely that we ourselves or others have or tend to have a certain feeling toward it when we contemplate or think of it." But I have not been saying that when I approve a thing I am thinking *about* my approval or its pleasurable character; quite the contrary. The *medium* through which I call an object good is a state of feeling, but what I am really and truly thinking *about* is the object itself as qualified in a certain way; it is only in a subsequent act of psychological analysis that I discover that a feeling actually has been present. As a consequence, what is perhaps Mr. Moore's most decisive argument loses all compulsion. This is the argument that if each man in calling a thing right or good is only making an assertion about his own feelings no two men ever would be denoting the same predicate; and their opinions consequently would not clash and neither would be in error. If whenever anyone judges an action to be good he is merely judging *that* he has himself a particular feeling toward it his judgment is a true one, just as when one man says that that he does and another that he does not like sugar both may be equally correct. There is nothing in the previous analysis, however, to prevent disputants from applying the same predicate to the same object; the only thing it says is, that the *reason why* they pass contradictory judgments is that they feel differently towards this object, as they may discover later by reflection. To say that the whole of what I mean is that I have some

particular feeling toward the object is thus true or false according to what we mean by "meaning." If I intend to say that my original *reference* was to the feeling I am plainly wrong. But if I only am maintaining that subsequent investigation reveals the fact that a particular feeling was involved as the condition that made the reference possible, there at least is no logical contradiction that prevents the claim from being true.

And it is by overlooking such a distinction that the critic is led by a natural logic to draw a conclusion which does not on the whole, I think, tend to recommend the theory he himself prefers. "The distinction between right and wrong," to quote Mr. Rashdall, "is objectively valid and not a mere statement as to the emotional constitution of a particular individual or even of a particular species." If this means, once more, that we are not thinking *about* our emotional constitution when we pass the judgment, I have agreed that the fact is so. But if it means that goodness is something whose quality is independent of what actual human beings feel about it, that the nature of the good can be divorced from human nature, the case is not by any means so clear. It is to this outcome, as I say, that the criticism seems pointed. For Mr. Moore, a thing intrinsically good is something which it would be worth while should exist even if there were absolutely nothing else in the universe besides—no conscious mind, therefore, to approve it or get satisfaction from it; it stands for a character that "might have been possessed by an object even if human psychology had been quite different from what it is." Now it doubtless is true that a thing might be called good which no one

ever has approved. But should we likewise call it good in any human sense if it were *incapable* of being felt as good by a being constituted as man is constituted? A good not yet recognized may actually be good if it is a *potential* source of human satisfaction and esteem. But an implicit reference to such a future possibility seems for our natural judgment always to be present; if it were never to arouse a favorable response it is hard to see what would be left to justify its title. And here it may be well to call attention to the reason why I have preferred for the most part to speak of "goodness" rather than of "value." The term value has a certain tendency to evade the issue. It is not very difficult to keep separate two notions of the good —that which is good in its own right, and that which is good *for* something; in the case of value, however, the distinction is easier to overlook. An object may be spoken of as valuable when all we mean is that it stands in a significant relationship to something else, "matters" somehow to its potentialities of action, as rain matters to a growing plant or—to use an illustration of Professor Laird's—as the filing matters to the magnet. In this sense value *is* a purely objective category, hardly distinguishable from the relationship of cause and effect; it holds regardless of any conscious knowledge or appreciation. But most people would hesitate to call such a value "good," unless, indeed, they were prepared to say that "good for" exhausts the meaning of goodness.

All this need not, to repeat, deny objectivity to the good; rather, objectivity is presupposed. It is quite true that a person cannot change the fact that a thing is good for him by declining to recognize it as good;

approval, to have any chance of standing firm, must submit to the realities of life. But the thing to which objective truth attaches is the whole natural situation into which an object of approval enters, and where it gets its claim to valid goodness not as though it were independent of man and his feelings, but through its contribution to a worth while human life that concretely would not be recognized as worth while in the absence of feeling and emotion. Naturally this gives us no right to say that every spontaneous act of approval supplies its own credentials without calling intelligence in play; it is easy to discredit feeling if we make it the antithesis of thought. But to assume that any rational addition to the pristine purity of immediate feeling destroys the constituent rôle of feeling is surely to press an abstract logic too far; at best it only refutes philosophers—if there are any such—for whom the bare presence of feeling is a final test of goodness and who deny the possibility therefore of subjecting goods to critical examination and reinterpretation. So when Professor Laird argues that approval cannot be simple feeling or inclination because we may approve the hangman's deed without having any liking for it or inclination toward it, the force of the illustration pretty clearly rests on such an exclusive logic. The hangman's deed is not, to be sure, felt as in itself a good; if we approve it we do so only because we recognize intellectual implications which it has as a necessary, and very likely a regrettable, means to a further end. But it would not be approved at all were it not that this ulterior end *does* call forth some degree of liking or inclination.

As a matter of fact, what the ethical rationalist

really is after is not objectivity; it is absoluteness, certainty for knowledge, strict universality. This last is something that sentiment will fail to give us. But where do we get the right to say that goodness loses its human significance unless for our knowledge it also is indubitable? That we have a propensity to believe it so is true; but that the propensity is justified is itself one of the matters in dispute. In practice even the rationalist has usually to grant that concrete goods are debatable, unless, indeed, he is prepared to set himself up as an ultimate authority and condemn everyone whose moral judgments happen not to coincide with his. Meanwhile the alternative is not pure subjectivity and chaos. A reasonable belief does not need to be identical with certainty. One may have a considered confidence that some things are binding on the normal human constitution without going on to claim that he cannot possibly be mistaken; and to refuse to be satisfied with the sort of practical belief that has to serve us elsewhere is to set up a goal that quite conceivably may rest, as empirically it seems to rest, not on reason, but on prejudice and a dogmatic self-assurance.

Before leaving the theory of an absolutistic ethics there is one variant to which I shall stop to give a brief consideration, not so much for the purpose of refuting it as because it offers a convenient chance to call attention to a fundamental issue of which, as involving an ultimate metaphysics, the present discussion must of necessity stop short. It would not be impossible theoretically to accept the claim of value to an absolute and universal standing while still allowing to sentiment something like the rôle I have been assigning it; one might suppose, in other words, that values have indeed

a being independent of human consciousness, but that the organ of their apprehension is feeling rather than the logical intellect. This is the thesis of a recently translated volume by Professor Nicolai Hartmann, and it might seem to have certain advantages over the intellectualistic realism which English ethicists have preferred. On the main issue, however, the two variants agree—that values, namely, are pure essences possessing self-existent being, which we are forced to discriminate alike from the physical world of science and from human or psychological experience; they constitute a "genuine *κόσμος νοητός* which exists beyond reality just as much as beyond consciousness, an ideal ethical sphere, not manufactured, invented or dreamed, but actually existing and capable of being grasped in the phenomenon of the feeling for values." The nature of this being, or subsistence, we can only recognize, not define; but it may be compared with another and perhaps more persuasive instance—that of mathematical relationships. Just as we may seem forced to believe that the relation of two to four would *be* whether or not any mind had ever grasped it, and whether or not there were any objects to be numbered, so values, each with its own specific content, *are,* are related, and are capable of being known for what they are, independently of the actual existence of any knowing act or of their embodiment in the realm of nature. Consciousness can grasp or miss them, but cannot make them or spontaneously decree them; the value abides as unaffected by the beholding as does any object of knowledge by the fact that it is known. So far we have a statement that realists generally could accept.

Professor Hartmann goes on to give this a more elaborate formulation. Subsistent values, it has appeared, come to be known by man through an immediate cognition which can best be described in terms of feeling. This cognition is *a priori* in the sense that value awareness, although it takes place in experience, is a new dimension of experience not explainable in terms of natural events. "The appraisement of value precedes experience; for that which is striven for is still unreal, at least not yet 'experienced.' " It is also absolute and universal; accompanying every genuine judgment of value is the conviction that all other men must judge in the same way and have the same impression. Not everyone is capable of perceiving this or that particular value; not everyone has the eye, the intellectual maturity, the spiritual elevation, for seeing the true nature of the fact. Nevertheless the universality, necessity and objectivity of the valuational judgment holds good in idea; whoever has attained the adequate mentality *must* feel and judge thus and not otherwise. It is as little possible to summon up arbitrarily a sense of value as it is to construct a mechanical truth arbitrarily; in both cases there is an objectively beheld existent which presents itself, and which the feeling, the intuition, the thought, only follows and cannot dominate.

Philosophy thus is forced to postulate three realms of being: there is the natural world with its physical categories, which as such does not contain the ideal; there is the ideal realm of the ought-to-be which subsists in its own proper sphere with its own laws; and there is the human self which belongs primarily to the realm of nature but which also has the power of recog-

nizing and responding to the ideal "ought." And in the relationship in which these three realms stand to one another the comprehensive meaning of the universe is realized. Ideal values have no hold directly over the world of physical existence. But indirectly they secure a hold through the human person; by virtue of the power of attraction whereby, in knowledge, the ought-to-be is translated into the ought-to-do they get a leverage on the world of things. The ideal value does not *compel* man to realize it; this is the source of his peculiar dignity in creation. But also he *may* choose to follow the impulsion of these self-existing values; and since he is himself rooted in the world of nature, values thus attain the power of directing existence toward the fuller embodiment of their ideal demands. To discover in detail the nature of ultimate values, their laws and ranking, in order thus to contribute to the drama of the universe, is the business of an ethical philosophy. Ethics does not teach what here and now ought to happen in a given case, but how that in general is constituted which ought to happen universally.

Between such a philosophy and the path which I by preference have followed the most general difference might be put in terms of method; the defender of independent essences is primarily, if not exclusively, a logician, while the sort of analysis on which I have been relying resorts in the first instance to psychology. In the few remarks I have left to make I shall aim merely to indicate some of the reasons why the latter emphasis seems to me the one to be preferred.

The first point I have already had occasion to remark upon. Since the ethical experience, whatever else may

be said about it, is at any rate a form of human experiencing, *some* empirical account of it may presumably be given; every aspect which it shows will have meaning of a sort in psychological terms. But a method whose interest first of all is logical may be expected not to feel this need acutely. Thus "good," for instance, is undoubtedly an actual concept which the mind employs. Its abstract character "goodness" constitutes for logic, therefore, a perfectly definite term of discourse among other logical essences, and as such may seem to stand in need of no further definition; it is simply what it pretends to be—a specific abstract character which, for all I am prepared to say, may be the inhabitant of a special realm of ultimate being. Nevertheless, for the more psychologically-minded philosopher the inability to give it in his own field a more empirical content will continue to be a source of real discomfort. Any object of thought whatever, real or imaginary, has no doubt its own objective content or essence. But if an essence enters into the human world at all—and it is bound to do this in some sense when it becomes a matter of experience—our strong and not obviously gratuitous impulse is to try to give it a psychological interpretation. This the "realist," as has been seen, finds it difficult if not impossible to do. The valuational essence as such, to quote Professor Hartmann, "remains floating in a certain incomprehensibility; it is marked by a strain of the irrational." And what is true of goodness applies equally to the "ought." Oughtness is a perfectly good logical term which, when imported into a realm of logical entities, we perhaps have a right to speak of as an "ought-to-be." But for the psychologist such

an absolute ought-in-itself is likely to seem less ultimate than the ought-to-do, as an empirical experience with, presumably, a definable content that analysis may uncover. And so too it might be added that only in case duty and the good are taken as facts of psychology is much hope held out of our being able to assign to the act of knowing them a describable mechanism of knowledge; for the realist knowledge reduces itself also to conceptual terms—the awareness of something by a bare act about whose nature we appear unable to say anything more than that it *is* awareness.

I said that I was not undertaking here to defend a psychological as against this logical procedure. Nevertheless, there appears to be some natural force to the contention that a method which leaves the mind with, potentially at least, an analyzable meaning has a certain advantage over one that seems compelled at various critical points to fall back on indefinables. In particular will this be true if the first method offers a way of interpreting empirically the premises of realism itself. I am not, I repeat, professing to judge the credentials of a realm of self-existing essences; but it is not without pertinence to observe that "essence" still will have a psychological sense attaching to it regardless of its ultimate status. For an essence, whatever else it may be, is for man's experience primarily just the "character" which any existent has or is believed to have, and which through the power of abstraction can be thought of in independence of the object it defines and be held before the mind as a pure quality or description. As such it—any essence—is absolute; it is precisely what it is, and because by an act of thinking it has been separated from its local embodi-

ment—from existence—it is independent of time and place. So regarded, therefore, anything the philosopher can say about essence is translatable into psychological terms *except* its supposed self-existence. Whether it has this further essence also is important for an ultimate philosophy. But so far as I can see it has no pressing importance for the moral experience itself *unless* we start by assuming that value *must* have a status outside the world to which concrete human nature belongs before it can make a valid claim on man's acceptance and approval—a conviction which at best falls back on faith rather than on reason.

I may add one further difference of emphasis, again without presuming to constrain the reader's choice. The logical issue of a realism of values in this special metaphysical sense is one which stands out with special clearness in Professor Hartmann's theory. In the last analysis ethics becomes a matter of cosmic rather than of human import; primarily it aims to set forth the way in which a non-human realm of values transforms existence to meet more adequately the demands of the ought-to-be. In this process the human person plays a leading rôle. But it is a rôle of mediation rather than of fulfilment; it is not in man and his experience that the claims of the good have intrinsically their locus, but in the cosmic outcome. And this explains why the realist is usually found disparaging, or at least minimizing, the "subjective" facts of human happiness and personal satisfaction. That these have some close connection with the good will probably be granted, though their function psychologically is left none too clear. But for the natural logic of a realistic metaphysics they are by-products, incidental to the

high dignity which impersonal values as such have in the universal scheme; man exists for the glory of God —of eternal essences that Ought-to-Be.

I have so far been dealing with a rather loosely defined group of theories whose most general point of agreement lies in the fact that their procedure takes the form of logical analysis. It remains to add a few words about another type of realism which may—though no necessity exists for this—share much the same metaphysical premises, but which resorts to psychology or biology for its working method. This is the theory which identifies value with desire or interest; and I shall take Professor R. B. Perry as its representative.

Any object acquires value, Professor Perry tells us, when an interest is taken in it, just as anything becomes a target when anyone aims at it; whatever is an object of interest is *ipso facto* invested with value. This excludes the thesis that value depends upon approval. A value in the generic sense arises when an interest is generated regardless of any knowledge about it; the interest that creates it is always other than the judgment that cognizes it; it is not a value because it is approved, but we approve it because it already is a value, an object of interest. The predicate of the judgment of value is thus the act or state of interest itself; value is identical with the desired.

That there is a sense in which such claims are true is very likely. The source of value, presumably, is something more ultimate than the approval it elicits, and such a source may plausibly be looked for in connection with desire; the "basic factor" which accounts for concrete human values is desire or interest, not

feeling. In so far it may be correct to say that to be valuable—to be *a* value—is to be an object of interest. But the case is less clear when we go on to say, with Professor Perry, that to be judged valuable is to be judged an object of interest. Certainly if judging a thing valuable means no more than being aware of it *as* valuable, there seems no need that we should also be aware of it as an object of interest; it *is* this very likely, but the fact is under no necessity of appearing in the content of our approving state of mind. There is no reason why I may not apply the term good to an object without *thinking* about its relation to my interest; indeed, commonly we do nothing of the sort when we are not psychologizing. And if this is so, if no conscious reference to desire need be present when I judge approvingly, then in its meaning or content the statement, "this is valuable or good," is not the same as the statement, "this is desired." At any rate there is something here that will require attention.

And for this we are called upon to ask what more precisely Professor Perry understands by approval. The act of approval, it has appeared, does not create the object of interest; rather, it is a judgment of which value is itself the object, or which assigns value as a predicate. In such a judgment there is created a new value which is superimposed upon the original one. The term approval is "ordinarily intended to refer to the fact that the object of interest is thus antecedently qualified in terms of interest. In such cases interest is taken in what is *deemed* good, or, there is a value found as well as a value conferred. One and the same act of sentiment both judges a value which is independent of itself, and creates a value which is dependent on itself

and which may be the object of a second judgment. Interests taken in that to which value is ascribed have a peculiarly "objective" character, in that their objects are already objects of interest. But the value which is ascribed, or which is already there, is not the same as the value introduced. Nor can there be any reason other than that of verbal convenience for limiting the term value to such a case of double or multiple interest. In these special cases value is created by an interest which is mediated by a judgment of value. But it would be incorrect to say that a judgment of value creates that value which it judges. The mediating judgment of value judges one value and creates a second, not directly by judging it, but indirectly by conditioning the formation of the sentiment which creates it."

I find it difficult to make sure that I am following this analysis; but if I interpret it correctly it seems to me to be open to objection. For Professor Perry, as I understand him, "approval" is limited to the explicit judgment *that* a given object is a value, which he interprets as a judgment to the effect that interest is taken in it; and this represents a new interest over and above the original value-creating desire, which last is not a pleasure taken in the idea or judgment of an object but just an active tendency to realize. But to begin with, are we really justified in holding that the sentiment of approval, in whatever meaning, creates a new value different from the earlier value of desire? I should think this very doubtful. The interest of approval is a new psychological activity, but hardly a new value; any value that is present is not something in addition to the object of desire but belongs, as indeed Professor Perry says, precisely to that object

itself. What I *do* have a right to say is that my approval creates a new *predicate*—the quality of goodness. But this is what all along I have been maintaining; and it would mean, once more, that while desire may be the *cause* of value, its valuableness or goodness, as an intelligible concept, has to wait upon approval.

And this perhaps will help to locate the point at which I am disposed to diverge from Professor Perry's thesis. What under the name of approval I have been undertaking to account for is primarily the value perception which takes the form of a direct awareness of something as good—an awareness of which the judgment *that* it is good is a more explicit formulation without essential change. But then two problems face us: What is the reason *why* a thing should be felt as good? and, What does the sensing of it as good itself involve? Desire as an objective condition of approval may be the answer to the former question, as a subsequent judgment *may* recognize; but here we are not dealing with a value judgment but with a statement about the factual result of psychological analysis. And in any case it does not supply an answer to the second question, since the thing to be explained is a conscious appreciation where the relation to desire lies outside the field of conscious content. It is because we are thus not thinking of desire that, while it may be true that to *be* valuable—a value—is to be desired, we cannot also go on to say that to be aware of value—approval—is to be aware of desire. It does not have to follow that to desire is to be aware of value as a distinctive and prior concept. All that follows is that the thing desired cannot be recognized as *good* in the absence of such an

awareness; it is still not for consciousness a "value" therefore, *unless,* indeed, value is something which does not necessarily possess the quality of goodness. Desire may in a biological sense be present; we may cling to the object and aim to perpetuate it. But such expressions are not synonyms of goodness, since it is always possible to go on to ask: Are the things we aim at or desire also good? An object may not, to repeat, be capable of being called good in the absence of desire. But neither does the presence of desire ensure its claim upon the title, since without any abuse of language desires may themselves sometimes be called bad.

It is possible that a way remains of adjusting Professor Perry's meaning to my own. He prefers on the whole the term "interest" to "desire," I suppose because interest suggests more explicitly that relation to feeling and conscious awareness which is implied in its definition as a "motor-affective" act. Now if, in the act of creating value, feeling thus already is involved, it might seem pertinent to inquire what precisely the rôle is that feeling plays. Such a task of analysis Professor Perry does not undertake, and I am not even sure about the identification of the feeling element which he has in mind. Feeling may for him, as I suspect it does, stand for the hedonic accompaniment of desire-fulfilment; in that case it will serve no very useful purpose unless the objections to making goodness equivalent to pleasure can be removed. But it *might* represent the agreeable state of mind which holds in view the object of desire at the moment we desire it; and then it would seem to mean very much what I have intended by approval. At any rate some

further argument is needed before this last possibility can be set aside.

There has been one presupposition underlying this entire discussion which in conclusion I want again to emphasize. Controversies about value almost always have a good deal of trouble in keeping two things distinct: *generic* goodness, *anything* that is found good by *anybody,* and the special kind of goodness, most relevant to ethical inquiry, which involves judgments of comparative validity. So far I have said, or have meant to say, nothing whatever about the desirable as opposed to the desired, about worthy pleasures as opposed to pleasure pure and simple, about "excellence" or "betterness" or "best." My assumption has been—and it seems a reasonable one—that we are in no position to rank goods or values till we first can attach some meaning to this more inclusive, this naturalistic and non-moral, concept. We have taken only a short step, however, in the ethical problem until the second and more distinctive inquiry has been undertaken; and to it I shall turn therefore in the following chapter.

Chapter VII

CONSCIENCE AND DUTY

To be on the safe side, let me make plain again that in the preceding chapter I have been dealing only with the question: What does goodness mean? and not with the further and more practically interesting question: What things in particular are good? To this last question the only answer has so far been an empirical one; *anything* is good—may have the name good applied to it—which we find *anyone* approving, and what these things are can only be determined by looking to see what people actually do approve. And there seems no objection to this answer so long as we keep in mind the limitation so far set to the inquiry. I have made no attempt to say what is *really* good, what is best, or what is better; there has been, that is to say, no reference to a standard for ranking goods, to possible differences of quality among them, or to duty, conscience, oughtness. All these things may be implicated in a special and perhaps commoner use of the term approval; and possibly it would have been safer had I avoided the term altogether and spoken only of "liking," "finding pleasure in the thought or contemplation of." However, no harm is done if it is clearly understood that up to the present point approval has meant no more than liking. Hereafter I shall feel free to use the word when necessary, and the corre-

sponding term goodness, in their more limited and "moral" and honorific sense.

In this new sense the good is, roughly, that which maintains its right to be called good when it comes into conflict with competitors, and which claims in consequence a higher ranking. There are various ways in which such a superiority may be expressed. The least complicated way might be to say that goods differ somehow in intrinsic "quality"—a self-evident difference discovered by immediate inspection; and, indeed, something of this sort *seems* to be the case. But when philosophers have looked more closely at such a claim they have not found it altogether easy to decide just what is meant by it.

The most familiar way of putting it would be to say that "pleasures" show among other differences—in intensity, say, or duration—differences in *kind* as well. There is one sense in which plainly this is true; æsthetic pleasure, for example, may be said to have a special quality of its own as compared with the pleasure of eating, just as red is a different quality from blue or sweetness from bitterness. However, an intrinsic quality of this sort will hardly serve the present purpose. Among sensations of color one is not "better" than another, and it is only as it stands for something better that quality is relevant to morals. Furthermore, after the previous discussion we seem justified in saying that a qualitative difference in pleasures will not in any case explain the quality of "goods." Goodness has been seen to be, not an outcome of analysis, but a new or synthetic character; and pleasure differences, accordingly, do not account directly for its possible gradations.

A more plausible suggestion might appear to be that if quality is to set a standard it must not only *be,* but must be *preferred* to something else. This too can appeal to the testimony of experience. Empirically it does seem to be the case that anything for which I distinctly feel a preference has a tendency to lead me to call it better. Things for which I have little relish never rank very high in my estimates of good, and those who fancy them I seldom am able to regard with much respect; if another man likes plenty of sugar in his coffee while I prefer it straight, I have no great trouble in believing something must be wrong with him. Even in the case of things that do make some real appeal to me I find my judgment constantly affected by this incalculable fact of preference. I may quite possibly prefer one pleasure to another even though in its more obvious hedonistic features it is a lesser pleasure; a comparatively small amount of æsthetic pleasure might be deliberately chosen in preference to what I myself recognize as more intense and more prolonged sensuous enjoyments. And when this happens I shall very likely justify my choice by saying that the former is a better or higher pleasure in spite of its deficiency in other ways.

But even if this is granted residual questions still remain; and one point in particular is of special interest for ethics. Most people nowadays, when morality is talked about, think first of conduct which is approved or disapproved by "conscience"; an act is moral if we ought to do it, immoral if it ought not to be done. We cannot, it is true, assume offhand that this is the only proper usage. The character of duty has in the past not always held a central place in

theories of ethics; probably we are justified in saying that not till the rise of Christianity did it come into its own. Greek ethics centered about the notion of the good, with a strong disposition to interpret this in naturalistic terms; and it is always possible that naturalism ought to speak the final word and that the one distinctive question for morality is: How shall I best attain the positive goal of my desire, the happiness which my human nature craves? Actually, however, naturalism even in its classical forms has seldom remained pure and undefiled; for it the good nearly always tends to take on a further character. The "highest good" is not merely something we want, something toward which we spontaneously reach out as the child reaches for his toy; implicitly, at any rate, it is a thing we also "ought" to want, and in comparison with its intrinsic excellence other conduct stands condemned as worthless if not actually shameful. Whether the fact is recognized or not, this new attitude of mind alters in a significant way the concept of the good; the desired tends to give place to the desirable, the thing we want to the thing which exposes us to blame in case we do not want it. And what the Greek notion of the *summum bonum* suggests by implication has in the modern world become explicit; here moral good typically gets itself marked off from natural good as the good that "ought" to be. In order to keep distinguishable things distinct I shall, therefore, when I speak of moral good, always intend a good that also is subject to the judgment of the ought, as opposed to the generic concept which includes both natural and moral objects of approval.

It already has appeared that a rather prevalent dis-

position exists on the part of modernism to rule out the moral conscience and its supposed authority as a significant human fact; and I do not mean here to retract my partial and provisional concurrence in the reasons for this judgment. I am not aware that there is any virtue to which it is safe to give an unqualified endorsement, and this is true of the virtue of moral reverence among the rest; too great an exuberance in any of our admirations almost always will be found putting an undue check upon a healthy exercise of the critical faculty and so limiting an appreciation of competing forms of good, and even moral excellence cannot call forth an unrestrained enthusiasm without the same risk of circumscribing the emotions and imprisoning the free play of spirit in schools and sects and dogmas. At the same time there is some excuse still for thinking that men will be better off for continuing to develop a conscience of a sort, even if they entertain conscientious scruples about carrying it too far. And in any case we cannot afford to reject the claims of conscience without knowing first just what it is we are rejecting.

To what the ordinary man means by conscience it is not difficult to give a rough and ready definition. Practically everyone has had the experience on occasion, when inclined to some course of action, of finding his natural desire obstructed by a sense of uneasiness that arises on a contemplation of the thing which he proposes. It is immaterial at the moment what source we assign to this deterrent; it appears as a matter of fact to have a variety of sources. In its cruder forms it may often seem no more than a vague reluctance due to unfamiliarity, the force of opposing habit, or the

restraining influence of public disapproval; or again it may be relatively rational and have its origin in a felt antipathy toward some consequence against which rival strains in our complex nature rise in arms. Whatever its source, however, it has the appearance of springing spontaneously from the depths of our human constitution in a way we have little difficulty in distinguishing empirically from that other species of restraint on conduct which we call utilitarian or prudential. If I see effects that follow from a desired course of action that would mean pains entailed or pleasures forfeited, I then proceed in a different fashion; I go on to compare the various consequences and decide where the resultant gain is greatest. But I do not in so far call this naturally a case of conscience. There are, to be sure, pleasures and pains attaching to conscience in its own right, and I might subject these to the test of utility and elect to violate my conscience if I thought I could do so at the expense of moderate pangs. But here too there would be a pretty general agreement that in thus resorting to a pleasure calculus I should no longer be acting as a moral agent in the distinctive meaning of the term; conscience in its strict sense, whatever its ultimate rewards, is something which claims categorical authority to override immediate pleasure or desire.

One other consequence follows from such an empirical description; conscience acts primarily in the way of *self*-restraint and *self*-condemnation. It is true I have an almost irresistible temptation to apply my moral judgments to my neighbor also and to think that he "ought" to follow the same rules that I impose upon myself. But whatever our ultimate right

to such a step we are bound to start by recognizing that at any rate it gives rise to a problem which does not face us where a personal sense of duty is alone concerned. What, we shall need to ask, gives us the right to turn our reluctance to violate emotional taboos into a legislative act and insist that another man shall share our feelings. It is quite obvious there is danger in this transfer; the difficulties that beset man's common life, serious enough in any case, are notably increased by such a readiness to make over everyone into the pattern we personally prefer. Doubtless "social" judgments, which always lean thus toward conformity and standardization, may in some sense be thought to possess for morals a superiority over merely private ones. But the only thing that beyond question this can stand for is a certain presumption that the wider experience of mankind will have hit upon many facts about the good life which the individual would not discover for himself, and so that he always should be ready to give it his candid and impartial attention; it does not warrant making for it any *moral* claim until it has passed through the crucible of his own experience and been precipitated as a personal duty.

Meanwhile there is a still more fundamental reason for keeping, in terms of a theoretical analysis, public and personal morality distinct. Along with the feeling of dislike or disapproval which always enters into conscience, a sense of compulsion or constraint must also of necessity be present to it as a living and first-hand experience; and for such a feeling there is no occasion unless the dislike is accompanied by some active tendency to disregard it. Apart from this latter factor we should have no "temptation" for duty to overcome;

and when, having got its way, it no longer represents an active influence, "duty" is superseded by "remorse." In other words, conscience implies a disapproval of something which at the same moment is engaging desire or active interest; it is only because it thus comes in conflict with desire that there can arise the sense of compulsion which is necessary to its being distinctively a case of duty.

But while in this way constraint is inherent in duty as a personal affair, it is otherwise when we use the moral claim to regulate another person's conduct. Here we have cut loose from the active element of desire. More often than not it is dislike pure and simple which leads us to condemn the acts of other men, and the less we feel a similar proclivity the more unhesitating is our censure apt to be; this is why judgments passed on others are normally more rigorous than those passed upon ourselves, since the influence of personal desire is naturally toward moderation. It is true our condemnation also may on occasion be accompanied by a fellow-feeling for the sinner due to a recognition that we are subject to the same temptations; and in such a case it may be that what we do is to put ourselves imaginatively in his place and pass on to him by proxy the moral reluctance we should feel in a similar situation. Then our militant morality usually will be abated, and we shall be more apt by finding excuses for his weakness to avoid the intolerance that constitutes the vice of moral zeal. But even here the primary judgment ought logically to take the form, "this act would be wrong for *me*"; and we still, accordingly, should have to ask ourselves whether, and why, we are justified in its transfer to another man

whose nature may be such as to make a relevant difference.

In saying that the judgment of conscience is primarily upon oneself I may seem to be going against a widely accepted dictum—that conscience in its origin is a public rather than a private matter. The contradiction is, however, more in appearance than reality. It is quite possible that we pass judgment on our fellows before we do upon ourselves, as we have found Westermarck's analysis of obligation presupposing. But such judgments are not yet "conscience" in the distinctive sense, though they may lend themselves later to its purposes. Partly they represent a passive acquiescence in social sanctions without thought of any sort behind it. In part they are an expression, in terms of a communal interest, of that ingrained egoism which resents whatever blocks its way, strikes back instinctively even at stocks and stones, and leads us, when it is brought to consciousness, to feel that things "ought" to be arranged to suit us. On this showing, the ascription of a social duty means simply that I, *qua* member of society, want something done and resent its omission. But the feeling that people or things ought to do what I want of them is empirically a very different sort of experience from the feeling that *I* ought to do what I do not want to do, as is shown, among other things, by the difficulty that earlier was found in deriving the latter from the former—a difficulty which had its special locus just in the sense of inner compulsion present in the one case and absent in the other. It is much easier to argue that the duty we call on others to perform gets its *moral* flavor only as it comes to reflect the experience of a personal sense

of duty; apart from this last it is no more than a form of instinctive dislike reinforced, it may be, by a logical recognition of the demands of self-interest and by the assurance that comes from the backing of our fellows.

It is hardly necessary to add that once the concept of duty has been formed we may then employ it logically to cover instances where its full character as a concrete experience is not immediately in evidence. If I get in the habit of calling certain things my duty, I may continue so to call them when they no longer carry the feeling of compulsion. I say that it is my moral duty to refrain from theft or murder even though I may have not the slightest inclination to such acts. In the proper sense, however, this is not an experience of conscience. It presupposes we have had such a prior experience of duty from which the logical meaning of the term has derived, but it is not such an experience itself; in strictness it only means that conscience and its attendant emotion *would* make themselves felt were the temptation to arise.

The natural corollary of what I have been saying is that the special differentia of the *moral* good can be looked for in connection with the experience of "ought"; what is morally better is the thing I ought to do. Granting that there is empirically a difference between a natural and a moralistic good, a good becomes moral only when, potentially at any rate, it is approved by conscience, or, more exactly, since conscience tells me primarily what *not* to do, when its omission would be a source of moral disapproval. That this last is not bound to happen in the case of all the things we reflectively call good seems evident; a good dinner is unquestionably a natural good, but there is

no need that we should feel under any obligation to enjoy it. Consequently, when we say that we ought to do the thing which we approve, "approval" has taken on a new and specifically moral meaning; it carries now an implication of remissness in case its object fails to win our choice. This negative implication may not be explicit, but it is seldom wholly absent even, as I have said, in theories that aim professedly at naturalism. Thus self-realization as a human goal nearly always will be found imputing some degree of essential inferiority to the man who fails to meet its honorific standards; the whole claim to set up standards possessing any force outside our personal preferences is meaningless apart from this judgment of condemnation passed on rival ways of living. A logically consistent naturalism in ethics is committed to a universal tolerance; the moment it goes beyond purely factual judgments it has imported surreptitiously an expression of moral disapproval.

If the thesis I have just set forth is justified, it is apparent that duty no more than goodness can be explained apart from a constitutive sentiment, though here the sentiment most vitally concerned is that of *dis*approval rather than approval; we *feel* a thing to be our duty, as distinct from a recognition of its positive appeal to our desire, only if there is something else which at the moment we should like to do but which is held in check by an opposing sentiment or disposition, the outcome being a sense of distaste and of self-condemnation if the restraint is overriden. Such a thesis the rationalist in ethics will, of course, not find acceptable, and it may be well to stop here to consider his position further.

The first objection I can deal with briefly, since it represents in principle the same sort of argument that was encountered in the case of goodness. It rests, that is, on the presumption that if feeling is to be constitutive this means that moral approval or disapproval has no place for thought or reason. A moral value, Professor Laird tells us, should not be confused with the desires or the gratifications actually felt at any moment; "to approve an action is *either* to say that I have a feeling *or* that I think it to be right, and to think a feeling to be right is a further judgment which cannot be completely settled by showing that any man or set of men have certain feelings about it." The form of the first alternative here would have to be modified if the argument is to have any relevance to the previous analysis, since I have agreed that the mere *existence* of a feeling never constitutes approval; but the point I am now concerned with is a different one. We still might say, in terms which I prefer, that value in the rational sense ought not to be confused with an immediate and unreasoned acceptance of value by any individual. But this is only saying that to judge a value to be ultimately right or valid is not the same as stopping with the statement that for me here and now it is felt to be a value; and such an admission tells us nothing about the possibility or impossibility of going on to subject felt values to rational evaluation. As a matter of fact I agree that here is precisely where the business of the moralist lies. It is a task, however, which does not dispense with feeling but which presupposes it. What remains the real question is whether reason is to be taken in its empirical sense as a way of setting values in their proper

context in experience where they attain validity by meeting the reflective test of felt satisfaction and fulfilment, or whether reason is bare rational insight divorced from feeling, which in some absolute way perceives, directly and without mediation, qualities and imperatives of an intrinsic logical nature.

The superiority claimed for this latter method is, once more, that it alone will confer that *certainty* which ethics is supposed to need; reason is universal while feeling is individual, and only reason, therefore, can give infallibility. One might, indeed, raise a question here. It is *not* true that the *sense* of assurance is a prerogative of reason solely; on the contrary, the advantage might be thought to lie with feeling. No one is surer he is right than the man who clings obstinately to his immediate emotional beliefs; he does not question these just because they are unreflective, whereas any critical judgment of validity whatsoever can be and has been doubted. It is true that the moment one begins to reflect he sees, or ought to see, that the mere fact of his feeling something to be of supreme importance does not by itself *prove* anything about it beyond cavil. But even so, reflection has no need to undermine his practical conviction. It may reinforce the feeling rather than unsettle it; how, indeed, could we ask for any greater assurance that a thing is wrong than that which comes from the organic repugnance which our whole nature feels to it when its meaning for human life has received the widest and clearest recognition possible? Any narrowly intellectual perception is bound to seem weak and pallid in comparison.

That is not to say that reason in its narrower sense does not lend its own force to the result. Reason, too,

has its claim upon us; the impulsion toward impartiality, and the dislike of inconsistency, are genuine forms of human nature which may well have a decisive part to play in our evaluation of the good. But it does not follow that they do this at the expense of feeling; rather, they appear to get their hold on our approving judgment only because they also are a part of our "emotional" constitution. I see no "rational" reason why being irrational should need to cause me any emotional discomfort, though doubtless I should be out of luck if it failed to do so; I may even find amusement in logical absurdities, my own included. But apart from such a potential feeling of discomfort, consistency and fair-mindedness would never present themselves to me as a duty. *If* I want right conclusions to follow from my premises I "ought" to follow logical rules; but this sort of logical obligation due to the nature of the rational process is quite distinct from any moral obligation to prefer good reasoning to bad. In this latter sense I feel that I ought to be consistent only in case intellectual inconsequence strikes me as something to be disliked and despised. I do not care to make myself ridiculous, in other people's eyes or in my own; and to be ridiculous is not merely to reason badly in point of fact, or even to come to grief because of this, but to display a quality that calls forth an active repugnance when it is reflected on. It is no doubt true, as Professor Laird says, that impartiality implies logic and insight, and as such cannot be the consequence of a special sort of feeling. But the point is not that logic can be reduced to feeling; the only issue is the question whether, on reflection, fair-mindedness would be recognized as a duty unless it were backed by some

feeling which leads us to call it good, whereas bias and prejudice are condemned as bad.

The issue may be put in another and perhaps simpler way; what is the source of the "command" which values impose? I have been assuming that for a human being no command will lie except the command of his own human constitution with its apparatus of desire and sentiment; even if a duty looks to some objective quality, this bare quality requires a psychological mediation before it can take hold. For the newer rationalism, on the contrary, authority will have its origin in the character of excellence itself as a non-human essence. It is a part of the nature of excellence, we are told, that it should command without further reason given; by pure logical inspection we discover not only that it ought to be, but that man should help to actualize it.

The considerations adduced to lend color to such a thesis are not lacking in persuasiveness—a persuasiveness from which the emotional flavor of which they commonly avail themselves does nothing to detract. It is always a man's duty, Professor Laird tells us, to do the *best,* or the best he can; the ultimate moral question for any right-thinking person is concerned with making the best use of the whole of his resources, capacities and opportunities. That the greater good ought to be preferred to the less, and that it is always right to promote the greatest public good, are for Mr. Rashdall "absolutely self-evident propositions;" a larger amount of good always is more valuable, and therefore I ought not to prefer for myself a smaller amount to a larger, or to prefer a smaller amount of my own good to a larger amount of other people's. Such

claims will make to most men an ethical appeal. But before taking them as unimpeachable deliverances of reason we should first make sure that they contain no ambiguities of meaning.

One possible ambiguity I have already had occasion to remark. When I say that a larger amount of good always is more valuable than a smaller amount I am indeed, as everyone would agree, uttering a self-evident truth on one condition, that I am merely intending to use "value" as a logical concept regardless of its specific content or of the range of its appeal. More of anything is more; more of value, accordingly, is more of value. But this in so far does not say that it will be *felt* as more valuable, still less that it will be felt as obligatory, by a particular man or even by any man. More good music means, abstractly, more of value and in that sense is more valuable, but if the program maker takes this—and if he be an amateur he is rather apt to do so—as a practical precept, and argues that the more numbers he gives his audience the more value they will get for their money, he is going to work in a way likely to defeat his purpose; at a certain point weariness sets in, and an excess of excellence then becomes a liability. In its actual human meaning valuableness is determined not solely by the sum of valuable things but by a new and "subjective" factor also.

There is a second sense in which likewise we might say that the proposition is self-evident. When we declare that a man ought always to do the best he can, one main reason why the statement carries conviction is that "best" may be used in a way such as already to imply an "ought"; it has become a moral

concept. So understood it represents undoubtedly a truth; indeed, it is a truism. Naturally I ought to do everything that I ought to do. But *what* ought I to do? —this, the real question, is left undetermined; and apart from a presumption which is not itself self-evident it remains a possibility, at any rate, that "best" derives its persuasiveness from what is best for *me*— the sort of thing that most fully meets my personal approval and that has no need consequently to imply any universal property overriding personal differences of constitution. It follows that if we are to import such a universal content into the perception of the best we shall need to give it a more precise interpretation.

This is what the type of theory in question professes to do. It is assumed that there is a large realm of intrinsic values or excellencies, with a definite ranking, which exists, or subsists, independently of man, and which he may recognize by intellectual insight. Any qualitative excellence somehow in its own right lays an obligation on the percipient; oughtness is a claim exercised by excellence as such, imposed on man and not located in his human constitution. The moral life takes thus a double form; we are called on first to recognize the nature and ranking of values as they independently *are,* and then to become ourselves moral agents by endeavoring to realize as many of these values as we can, taking account alike of their number and of their relative degrees of excellence. The more excellencies the better; and man's duty, therefore, is to do his part toward creating a better state of the world, that is, one containing more things that men are justified in calling good.

It is obvious that the procedure is complicated here

by one notion in particular—the notion of degrees of qualitative excellence; and to make use of this without first trying to find out whether or not it is capable of further analysis is to shirk a necessary intellectual duty. It will be more convenient, however, to postpone such an inquiry. For the moment I shall confine myself to certain less fundamental questions; some of these have already been suggested, but it will do no harm to repeat them.

Now in the first place, to ask of a man that he should know *himself*, his needs and his reflective valuations, is to set him a sufficiently exacting task, even though we are ready to let him off with a tentative and experimental knowledge that stops short of certainty; but if before he can have a rational acquaintance with his duty he must also have made a "critical and comprehensive survey of the whole domain of expetible values," and have attained an authentic understanding of the absolute gradations of excellence among them, that surely is to render the moral quest a strenuous one to say the least. As a matter of fact, I doubt whether this really is in the mind of most men when they acquiesce in the assertion that a man is bound to do his best; in part, at any rate, such a contention has a simpler and more empirical significance. What it means to say is that, since human capacities are capable of indefinite expansion, I should in my own interests not be too tolerant of inferior goods but should always be pressing forward to a possible better; it is this hortatory meaning which in large measure, I suspect, makes the principle seem obvious. But as an admonition it tells us nothing about the particular sort of good at which we ought to aim, even for ourselves; and

still less does it require us to think that there is some universal goodness that will constrain everyone alike.

In the second place, supposing that in spite of difficulties the intellectual task I have been set is once accomplished, there is a new question that arises. In terms of pure logic, if the source of duty lies in intrinsic excellence as such there is something to say for the conclusion that, just as religion has sometimes found the goal of man's duty in the moral perfection of his creator, so here his duty is to bring all excellence to birth, with no substitute for the divine mercy to temper his obligation; that the ideal is unrealizable might seem to have no obvious logical bearing on what the being of excellence requires. As a matter of fact the theory never goes so far as this; but while it recognizes limitations in my personal duty their ground is not altogether on the surface, nor do they relieve the situation entirely of its difficulties. Let us grant that a man's duty is only to create all the excellence he *can;* for one thing, that automatically will limit duty to what he can *see* or *know*. This taken by itself however will not be enough to make the principle really workable; if *power* to create excellence is our criterion, at least there is no intuition to tell us where our power stops, and our logical duty accordingly would seem to be to try our hand at every value we perceive until the effort shows itself to be in vain—not a sound receipt for human happiness at any rate. Actually a further limitation always is presupposed. Some recognition we seem bound to give to the fact that for any man there are values that make a special and individual appeal regardless of what he may judge to be their absolute ranking; to rule out this empirical consideration would

be to subject the human search for good to an intolerable regimentation. But it *is* empirical; it rests on facts of existence which possess no rational necessity; and in consequence it introduces into the idea of duty a new element for which the bare statement of the thesis makes no obvious allowance. What are we to say about the natural claim that a thing may be good and yet not good for me? or that an act may fall short of the best that could be done while it still may at times not be wrong for me to do it? Why normally should we approve an act more in proportion to the effort it requires while at the same time holding it to be a less stringent duty? The need for effort will, on a theory of sentiment, tend rightly to lessen the feeling of disparagement in the event of failure; but it has no apparent bearing on the claims of excellence. Questions of this sort may perhaps be managed more or less successfully; but they are easier to answer on a less "objective" theory.

There is another corollary of the doctrine of intrinsic values that deserves to be considered by itself. One special merit likely to be claimed for it is that it offers a simple method of justifying the authority of the "social" good over that of the individual; the mere fact that the former is more comprehensive gives it the right of way. That *a* motive may in this way be enlisted there is no reason to deny. But it cannot be taken as *the* ultimate and sufficient motive without going at any rate beyond our ordinary judgments. It may be that the principle does not, as it seems to do, require us always to act with the good of humanity primarily in mind; it may justify some attention to an exclusive happiness on the ground that, humanly speak-

ing, this will turn out the best way of adding to the general sum. But the need for justification still presupposes that the social outcome will require first to be attended to; and it is hardly so that we feel necessitated always to produce such an excuse. In any case it sets a task that for the most part lies beyond the power of a definitive reason. Outside special cases no one, I feel sure, can prove to himself decisively that he will best be advancing the cause of a universal good if he abandons a general calculus and follows his natural bent; the presumption is the other way if actually disinterested reason is the all-important factor in the moral life. Nevertheless, we all do act constantly under the influence of personal demands whose intrinsic superiority falls short of rational self-evidence; to suppose otherwise is to delude ourselves, which is never a moral merit. Very likely we ought not to follow such a lead without stopping now and then to take the large consequences into some account. But the point at which personal motives need to be subordinated empirically is one which no impersonal logic can determine; and to that extent the certainty we are supposing to reside in reason is compromised.

That the claims of the social good cannot in practice be made to rest in any final way on the authority of a universal reason is suggested, too, by a more realistic examination of their nature. That society has within limits precedence over any individual is a judgment, not perhaps self-evident, but highly plausible; most people would subscribe to it without much hesitation. But if they were asked their reasons it is unlikely that any great number of them would think of appealing first to mathematics. They have a direct interest in common

undertakings which do, indeed, subserve a more general welfare, but in which they join first of all because they find the interest a natural one; and while the fact no doubt is so that they feel it their duty often to sacrifice their private claims, empirically this always presupposes such an interest of their own as well. A man may give his life willingly for a cause, but only when it is *his* cause, to which he feels he cannot be false if life is still to be worth living. True enough, it is not my own satisfaction which I have, or ought to have, primarily before my mind when I aim at a more public good; the thing I approve, and really want, is this larger good itself. But *unless* I also get my meed of satisfaction from it, even though on occasion it may be no more than the vicarious satisfaction that comes from contemplating in idea a promised land into which I cannot enter, there would be nothing at all to explain why it should be *my* good. So again, if we approve the extension of happiness to others, in the first instance this is not as a result of general principles but because of a human preference for sharing enjoyments with the people for whom we entertain a liking, as is shown by the fact that altruism always tends to be coextensive with the range of sympathy. And if we make allowance for its limitations, many people would be disposed to think that such a direct human interest in our fellows is a motive not obviously inferior to the motive deriving from an abstract computation of impersonal goods.

Moreover, even when we do employ a calculus it is by no means certain we shall find ourselves subscribing to all the conclusions which the theory in question wants to draw. There are two directions here that the

moral judgment empirically might take, according as the sum of good is to be settled on the basis of relative degrees of abstract merit or in terms of ordinary human happiness. The latter motive will need supplementing; there would be a wide agreement that a social outcome describable in terms of pleasure merely would still be inferior to one which also finds a place for certain special forms of value to which we are disposed to ascribe a higher "quality." Nevertheless, as a practical social goal democratic happiness possesses some real advantage over aristocratic excellence. It is much more workable, for one thing; we know here pretty well what we are after, whereas differences of opinion will at once arise as soon as we undertake to pick out this or that special type of excellence as our objective. Then there are the positive drawbacks that attend in practice the ideal of a qualitative best; intolerance is liable to enter in, with the resulting possibility that in trying to make safe our preference, or the preference of our class, the just claims of a general happiness will suffer some abridgment. It has been the almost invariable tendency for the man who claims superior insight to disparage simpler forms of good and to view everyday evils with complacency if he thinks that in spite of or even because of them some higher spiritual benefit can be attained. If we could be *sure* that this was the way to a better world we might possibly have the right to disregard the more homely interests of those who are sacrificed to its creation; and when, indeed, inevitable evils confront us we can take some comfort from the thought that their existence may be expected to hasten the march of progress. But to condone such evils, or even, as we are sometimes asked to

do, to aggravate them in the hope of contributing to the cause of moral elevation, argues a faith in our own infallibility which the evidence does not warrant. I do not say that considerations such as these are final; they are not. But at least they limit the rational pretensions of any actually existing insight into absolute values to determine concrete social duties.

Meanwhile in what has just been said there is implied one aspect of the ethical thesis I have been examining that calls for special notice. In so far as its emphasis is on a "comprehensive" good its natural direction is toward a communistic goal. But such a tendency in practice is counterbalanced by another motive, especially congenial to the rationalistic temper, which leans rather toward an aristocratic morality. It is always a man's duty, we have seen Professor Laird asserting, to do the best he can just because it is the best; and no one would have a rational knowledge of this duty unless he had made a critical and comprehensive survey of the whole domain of expetible goods. But this seems to leave the man of culture, with leisure and capacity for disinterested contemplation, in a privileged position. Values explicitly are general, not individual; and therewith the ethical emphasis tends to swing away from the concrete scene of human conduct, where values take their color from specific situations calling forth determinate emotional responses, to an intellectual appraisement of a realm of absolute distinctions. I am far from underrating the importance of such a task, though I fail to see clearly how this absolute ranking is to be reconciled with the apparent fact of experience that no value whatever can be set down as having a universal claim on conduct

regardless of what may be the concrete circumstances which action always presupposes. But there is one consequence that may very well give rise to doubt. How, since it is plain that living creatures vary widely in respect to what for them is valuable, are we to decide between conflicting claims? If we take such a question seriously the most obvious reply is that which Aristotle gives; the ranking of values rests in the end on a judgment about the relative superiority of those who see and act upon them. Why should we assume dogmatically, for instance, that the good which satisfies an animal is subordinate in creation to that which satisfies a man? Professor Laird's answer is that a dog or a pig is intrinsically less important and excellent than a human being, as the human being has himself no trouble in perceiving. But if a man is intrinsically superior in excellence to a dog, so equally we need to hold on the same showing that one man is intrinsically superior to another if we are to have a way to assess their opposing valuations; we must even say that I, in the assurance of my higher insight, am a more excellent being than my obtuser neighbor.

That we are inclined to say, or think, something very like this may be true, and there may even be good reasons for our doing so. But at least we cannot take these reasons for granted in any unqualified form without running a serious risk. The only approximately safe moral judgment is on qualities and acts, and not on men; the moment we pretend to make actual human beings the objects of a concrete valuation the way is opened for the aristocratic self-complacency out of which many of our troubles grow. Any man with a sensitive moral insight will hesitate a long time be-

fore he sets himself on a pedestal above even his humblest neighbor; he will be too keenly aware of the many hidden flaws present in his make-up, and while he need not underrate any real excellence that belongs to him, he will see so many others in his fellows to which he has no valid claim that he will be disinclined to plume himself on its possession. And what he will refuse to do in the case of the one man whom he knows the best he will, if he is wise, be slow in claiming the right to do where others are concerned. There is no reason why he should not extend approval to higher qualities when he sees them, or should hesitate to feel a higher admiration and affection for their owners; these last he may even in a qualified and popular sense call better men. But he will be well advised to keep such a judgment separate from a science of ethics. Our ignorance of human nature is still too profound to render any attempt to place concrete persons in a scale of excellence a profitable undertaking for man's limited powers of mind and sympathy; there are too many conflicting strands that enter into the making even of a saint.

Before proceeding it may be useful to gather together some of the general conclusions to which the discussion in the last two chapters has lent itself, more especially as they have a bearing on the use of moral terms. Starting from the analysis of goodness, if a thing is, for us, good when we like the thought of it, the range of generic good will be theoretically unlimited. Almost anything may, so far as we can tell beforehand, be the source of a pleasurable liking—objects and events and acts and qualities, things present, past and future, ends actually attained, or

possible, or altogether unattainable; and this universal character we shall need to presuppose before dividing goods into more special classes.

Among these secondary divisions the most general is that between contributory and intrinsic goods. A contributory or instrumental good is, as the name implies, one which we recognize on reflection as incapable of standing on its own feet and as acquiring its character of goodness only through the service it renders to something beyond itself. When, on the contrary, a good is felt to constitute a goal we can stop with independently of further consequences it is an intrinsic good. A good may start out by being instrumental and then become intrinsic; if a miser finds genuine satisfaction in counting his hoard of gold it is for him an intrinsic good. Such a good will always carry a sense of immediate gratification—the residual truth in a hedonistic ethics. It follows that we shall need to distinguish the terms "intrinsic" and "absolute." If we ask, What is an absolute good? the answer is, "anything and nothing." All goods are absolute in the sense that the logical character of goodness has no reference to time or local circumstances; no good is absolute in the sense that it is bound to be a good for everybody, or a good for me always and without restriction.

Here I ought perhaps to say a word about another term of which I have not had occasion to make much use—the concept of "right" or "rightness." In strictness right is not an ethical but a relational term; anything is right when it is appropriate to a given end or standard, and standards may be of many kinds. In its most common usage we speak of an act as right when it is in accordance with a legal norm; it is æsthetically

right, again, when it fulfils the demands of an æsthetic standard, and logically right when it satisfies the requirements of consistency in reasoning. Rightness will acquire a moral flavor only when the norm which it meets is itself a moral norm. But this implies that right is not the object of an ultimate perception which sets a moral standard; the standard must already have been arrived at before rightness can acquire a meaning.

Duty and conscience are terms that are intimately connected though they are not for human language coextensive, and of the two conscience is psychologically the more ultimate; it is the experience of conscience which makes me feel something as a duty, and not a thing already perceived intellectually as a duty that arouses conscience. *De facto* duties, legal duties in particular, may be presented to me in advance of any sentiment; their nature then will be determined by purely objective factors. But so far nothing has been said about their moral claim; "that is my duty" means, "that is the right thing to do in terms of an accepted standard of legality." The moral question is a supplementary one, as is shown by the fact that I can and do ask in an intelligible sense: Ought I to do my (legal) duty? It is this further ought that first makes the situation moral; as a psychological experience, "I ought to do this" means, not that the law demands it, but that I should condemn myself if I did not do it. It is the dependence of the moral ought on disapproval, I might note in passing, which explains the somewhat paradoxical fact that while undoubtedly I often feel it a duty to produce pleasure for another I may hesitate about saying that it is my duty to produce it for myself. Unless I already want a thing it will not appeal

to me *as* a pleasure; and *if* I want it I do not need any further spur in the form of duty, and there is nothing normally to elicit disapproval. And the exceptions prove the rule. About the only time when I am likely to judge that I ought to secure pleasure for myself is, not when some concrete action is in question, but when I am laying down general rules about the conditions of the good life. But here all I mean is that, assuming a certain amount of pleasure to be a condition of human satisfaction, I shall be foolish not to take measures for ordering my life so as to get my share of it; and to think of myself as a fool is to pass a judgment of self-condemnation.

A "*moral* value," finally, is dependent on a duty; though here certain distinctions will be called for. Strictly speaking conscience issues primarily in an *act,* in something we ought to *do,* and not in a value or a good; it presupposes value, but is not directed toward it in its first intention. An act may be itself a good, and an intrinsic good if it carries immediate satisfaction, but it is not such a good in so far as it is the object of an ought; the thing we ought to do is morally *right,* not morally good, and for rightness a standard of value is, as I have said, implied already. I ought to tell the truth not because a false statement is in its own essence evil, but because it is out of harmony with something I accept as good. Nor is this ulterior good itself a *moral* value; it is a naturalistic good, accepted as good because human beings want it. And that leaves, it would seem, only one place to look for moral values in the stricter sense—in the "virtues" or human dispositions that embody motives conducive to the attainment of what we think of as desirable ends. Truth-

fulness and honesty are values because they do lend themselves to natural goods; they are moral values in the degree that we think of them as something whose cultivation we ought not to omit; and they may become intrinsic values because they empirically are capable of borrowing from their source a sense of felt satisfaction in their exercise.

Chapter VIII

MORAL REASON

So far, in talking about conscience and the sense of duty, I have limited myself pretty much to an analysis of the terms in their generic meaning; and in the course of this analysis I gave reasons in a general way for thinking that in the thesis that duty involves a collision between active desire and some sentiment or disposition which tends to put constraint upon it there is nothing to exclude the action of intelligence or reason. It will now be necessary for my purpose to give to this a somewhat more concrete interpretation. And to that end I shall first take up again the empirical experience in which duty comes to light and consider it in more detail.

I may start by enlarging a little upon the evidence for the claim that factors do really exist in experience capable of acting as the definition of conscience has assumed. The simplest form of conscience, and very likely its original form, we may take to be the relatively blind force of inhibition due to custom. It hardly calls for proof that normal human nature is so constituted that any settled habit of conduct or opinion has a way of acting automatically to guard against an infringement of its rights. It sets up a protest whenever we are moved to try more unfamiliar paths, an uneasy sense of something wrong that blocks antagonistic

promptings. This is the basis of that innate conservatism of the human mind without which primitive morality would stand very little chance, and which still remains an active agent in more enlightened stages. Even when one has come to think that some taboo which he has hitherto accepted is in fact not rationally binding —sexual or sumptuary scruples for example—a vague feeling of disquiet will probably continue to accompany its violation until a new habit has had time to form.

This crude type of conscience has one plain defect, however, whose nature will appear when we compare it with certain other forms of emotional constraint. The clearest example of this latter sort is furnished by the sympathetic feelings. Even a rather strong desire for personal enjoyment may find itself held in check by a humane revulsion against the harm we thereby cause some fellow creature. I presume it would be generally agreed that here we have a sounder basis for moral aversion than in the case of custom; and it is not difficult to see the reason why. Mere habit, we cannot help perceiving, will no longer exercise compulsion after it is once clearly recognized as the source of our moral hesitation; it can be sure of working only under cover, and the instinct of conservatism is wise in objecting, therefore, to too open a discussion of its tenets. If the moral agent once allows himself to realize that it is habit alone which is restraining him and then tries to argue explicitly that it is always wrong to do what one has never done before, he is bound to become aware that his footing is insecure; and he will be forced, in consequence, to turn instead to the extrinsic reasons for thinking this particular custom laudable.

But the same thing does not happen in any comparable degree in the case of the sympathetic feelings; to bring sympathy before the mind is in no wise to destroy it, and may even serve to lend it added force as a deterrent agency.

But even the sympathetic conscience falls short of the demands of a fully enlightened morality. I cannot stop with the bare presence of a restraining feeling without laying myself open to the charge of resting too heavily on a subjective and unprincipled foundation. For my personal satisfaction it may be enough that I do really feel this way. But if another man refuses to admit that the feeling has authority I appear in so far to have no ground for arguing with him; and even as a personal matter I am left too much at the mercy of changeable emotions to feel altogether comfortable in my more critical moments. Empirically this has been a real drawback to sympathy as a moral legislator; in its dependence on the accidental fluctuations of our emotional temperature it fails to ensure the steadiness of moral principle that is presumably to be desired, and is likely instead to issue in spasmodic spurts of sentiment. Unless I am able to resort to considerations which, as intelligent or rational, will stand some chance of maintaining their ground regardless of the ebb and flow of feeling, my moral convictions undergo the risk of sharing in this mutability.

But men are not in point of fact entirely at a loss for argument when the claims of a feeling such as sympathy are brought into court. It is possible to bring forward further reasons for respecting them; and these reasons take in particular one direction that is fairly well defined. I am, we will say, a manufacturer,

and I can make a good deal of money by putting harmful drugs upon the market. Now if I possessed no sympathetic fellow-feeling to begin with the question of morality might not arise at all. Nevertheless we are not wholly limited to such a plea; we might go on to back our protest by aiming at a further source of motivation that calls reasoned argument more explicitly in play. We might try, that is, to arouse a man's sense of shame, or his intellectual self-respect, by pointing out the disparity between the comparatively paltry benefit of a larger bank account and the vastly greater good sacrificed for its attainment, and by urging the shabbiness of a disregard for this disparity under the influence of merely selfish motives. To the importance of this last consideration for relieving some of the difficulties attaching to the notion of a moral standard I shall have occasion later to return; here it is sufficient to point out that empirically men do for the most part have some natural dislike to being recognized, and to having to recognize themselves, as impervious to considerations that people in general call reasonable; and by such an appeal it is sometimes possible to influence their conduct.

It is true this last source of conscience still implies the presence of feeling; it will have no effect upon a man so long as he does not really mind laying himself open to the charge of injustice, baseness or unreason. But the new feeling has this advantage over sympathy, that it is enabled through the nature of its determining conditions to contribute a real principle for arguing moral questions. About this principle I have had something to say in the preceding chapter, and I rejected it as an ultimate and non-empirical deliverance

of reason from which the nature of duty can be itself derived; but that it has in a less absolute form a foundation in our natural judgments I had no intention of denying. The principle is, in brief, that conduct needs to be regulated by a preponderance of good; otherwise if we choose a lesser in preference to a greater good we not only are likely to fall short of our desire, but we lay ourselves open to the penalty of an emotional discontent and self-condemnation. It is not, indeed, wholly true that other feelings which exercise constraint upon desire are incapable of being turned into something that might be called a principle. Any one of them can be generalized; thus we may be prepared to say that cruelty is a vice and therefore always wrong. But such a vice, as has frequently been pointed out, owes in the main its universal and principled character to a verbal convention; we do not apply the word cruel to an act unless it already is assumed to merit disapproval. Consequently, the generalization still leaves the question open as to what acts in particular *are* cruel; for an answer it is apt to refer me back to the emotional response which certain acts evoke, and this, however decisive to the one who feels it, does not as such lend itself readily as an instrument for intellectual debate. The principle that I should choose the larger good is, on the contrary, up to a point a serviceable tool of reason; and the emotion which supports it, just because it is an "intellectual" and relatively disinterested one, is freer from the fluctuations to which more "active" emotional tendencies are liable.

That the principle cannot be taken as an ultimate solution of the moral quest it is perhaps hardly neces-

sary to repeat; whatever may be thought about more theoretical considerations, at least it is sufficiently apparent that it will have to be discounted considerably in practice. It is not enough to tell men to prefer the greater good; there is still a large field open for a reasonable difference of opinion about what it is in which this good consists. A very cursory view of moral judgments is enough to show how widely at variance men often find themselves even in their more disinterested appraisals. There is, for example, the traditional dispute between the moral rigorist and the utilitarian; the former we find insisting on the claims of a personal integrity of conscience and prepared to risk a universal cataclysm rather than tell a lie or violate some conscientious scruple, while to the latter this appears no more than superstition and pernicious selfishness. I do not say that one opinion here is just as good as the other. But to all appearance both may honestly be held; and to try to mediate between the disputants by appealing to the principle of the greater good so long as they cannot agree which value *is* the greater will obviously not carry us very far. Or take the question as to whether we ought to regard intelligence or simple moral goodness as the higher quality; people have argued about this interminably and probably will go on doing so, though to each disputant his own preference will very likely seem self-evident. Such examples might be multiplied indefinitely; for the moralist to attempt to rationalize all these divergent judgments in the interest of some universal code of duties is to set himself a hopeless task. Any employment of the principle is foredoomed to failure, therefore, if we ignore its limitations; an absolute and uni-

versal standard, empirically even if we shrink from granting this in theory, lies beyond our reach. But within limits it continues to be a serviceable instrument; and we may go on next to inquire what in general and preliminary terms these limits are.

We may distinguish to begin with, as its least disputable function, its use within a field where the previous strictures are no longer fatal. People may differ widely in their estimates of worth, but also they may be to an indefinite extent in virtual accord; more than this, they are often considerably less divergent than at first appears. We are constantly acting upon hasty and ill-considered notions which represent no honest and realistic effort at self-understanding; we take current judgments at their face value because they satisfy people generally, or we stop short with some facile pleasure or desire without troubling to raise questions about its ultimate rewards. Whatever may be true about ourselves, we seldom have much trouble in discounting other people's judgments because, through ignorance or inattention or prejudice, we see them overlooking in this way considerations that we think have a bearing on the issue; and while it notoriously is difficult to eliminate such disturbing factors, more especially when they take the form of prejudice, we nevertheless may feel rationally assured that if only both parties to the dispute were to converge on the same real facts the extent of their disagreement would at any rate be substantially reduced. Very many times indeed, opposing moral judgments are not really contradictory because they are talking about different things; it is not the same Cæsar or Napoleon, commonly, whom one man admires and another disap-

proves, or identically the same qualities which may lead us to dispute whether ambition is a virtue or a vice.

Here consequently, where it is a matter not of feelings that are fundamentally in conflict but rather of latent judgments that command assent when brought to light, the principle can be put to use with visibly good results, not only for personal guidance but likewise as an instrument of public persuasion. If I wish to convince a man that money or ambition falls short of being an authentic good it is seldom, in a society more especially where such ideals are generally acclaimed, that I can make much headway by bandying moral epithets or flogging the emotions through appeals to inherited pieties. My best chance lies in getting him to turn away from stereotyped assumptions to a critical assessment of concrete satisfactions; and then if he can be made to see how easy it is to exaggerate the real enjoyment one can get from the rewards of a shallow popularity alloyed with envy, or from costly pleasures as compared with simple and natural ones that require no such elaborate machinery, some of the disturbing complications of the moral life will very likely fall away. It is impossible but that a person of intelligence should recognize that many of the objects on which he is inclined to set his heart are quite unable to substantiate their pretensions to importance when they are soberly examined; and especially when they come in conflict with natural human sympathies will they stir him to a sense of the sorry figure he is cutting in a way that is bound to interfere with a lasting satisfaction in them. To live laborious days for the sake of a title or a ribbon, to sacrifice human affections and wholesome diversions to a swollen bank account, to cheat

and lie and double-deal in order to enjoy a little temporary power and political prestige—no one with a sensitive intellectual conscience can very well fail of some misgivings about the consistency of such conduct with any genuine standard.

But while criticism in the light of relative values may aid in smoothing out conflicts in the moral judgment, always supposing that men can be induced to face the facts, it has once more to be acknowledged that the method displays empirical limitations. Sooner or later we are likely to come up against opposing notions of the good that do not yield readily to rational adjudication. Even in the instances just cited, while it unquestionably is true that the aspirant after wealth or fame is often sacrificing realities for a shadow it would be rash to say that this is always so. Such things after all are values in their own degree, and it would be going beyond the evidence were we to lay it down as a universal law that they must always and for everyone be inferior to competing goods. It is entirely conceivable that for a given man they constitute a source of gratification which in his own eyes justifies him in making them supreme; the elder Mr. Rockefeller, for example, still looks back with a keen and naïve relish on a career dominated by the shrewd and thrifty virtues of the money-getter, and there is not the least evidence available that he has it in him to view life through different eyes. And whenever this turns out to be the case the principle of the greater good will itself lead a man to dispute the consequences which his mentor draws from it.

Here, consequently, difficulties begin to force themselves upon the moral theorist; granting that in some

sense man in so far as he is rational is bound, under penalty of self-disapproval, to aim at the greater sum of good, what are we to do when there is a real difference of opinion as to where the good resides? Of course we may still maintain that somewhere there exists an actual standard with a universal application, and that the trouble only comes from our human inability to determine what the standard is. But this leaves our profession an academic one. Until we have settled on the standard we have no way of putting our faith to the test; we shall need to supplement our principle before we can convert it into concrete moral judgments.

The simplest solution is, again, one which even moral philosophers have not been disinclined in practice to adopt; what fixes on a special estimate of value as *the* authoritative value may be the fact that it is mine. But two things cast doubt on the solution. One is the obvious consideration that this is a game which everyone can play, and if another man, therefore, has a different candidate for the rôle of moral guide I am thrown back on my original perplexities; all there is left for me to do is to insist that my rival is either stupid or dishonest—a persuasion gratifying to my self-esteem but getting me nowhere in debate. And also it brings up the other point of doubt—the drawbacks likely to attach to a claim to moral infallibility. The practical objection to an authoritative moral standard as employed by human beings is the encouragement it lends to the habit of intolerance; and this is so dangerous a trait that any moral theory ought, it would seem, to take pains to guard against it.

At the opposite extreme is that thoroughgoing moral anarchism which would disallow our right altogether to

pass general moral judgments, leaving the good a matter of personal temperament or taste uncomplicated by the need to consult at all a common standard. This will at least avoid the snare of self-righteousness and moral prejudice. But it suffers the defect, as I have pointed out, that men generally show a strong reluctance to accept it—a reluctance which they may have trouble in defending but which nevertheless is there. And their disinclination gets a backing not only from natural feeling but from something likewise in our nature as supposedly rational creatures. It seems to leave the common and coöperative life without plan or order; and while the bias toward lucidity and order may possibly be itself an unfounded prejudice, it is so embedded in our mental make-up that it cannot for any long time together go unheeded. We are confronted, then, by two demands whose reconciliation is not plainly evident; instinctively we are disposed to some considerable extent to pass on our moral disapprovals to our neighbors, while at the same time reasons can be produced for questioning whether we have in reality any sound excuse to plead for this outside the presence in experience of feelings which, if others do not share them, can only owe their authority to the power of coercion.

The thing that follows most unequivocally from all I have hitherto been saying is the general verdict that any moral standard, if we are going to apply it where others are concerned, must unavoidably contain an element of dogmatism. Apart from an initial community of feeling among men we have no starting point for moral argument, and the only conclusive evidence for such a common basis would be its ad-

mitted existence as a social fact; that the feeling happens merely to be strong in me is in itself no decisive ground for saying that someone else has it or that he ought to have it. Even if I am able to persuade myself that it exists potentially in other men—and there is always the chance that this may be the case—the persuasion remains an act of faith due to my own sense of its paramount importance; there is no exact science of human nature to render it more than a presumption. It does not follow that I am without the right to act *as if* a moral judgment were sufficiently universal to be publicly imputed; any act whatever involves in point of fact an element of faith, and if we were never to allow ourselves to act until we were possessed of certain knowledge the business of the world would be brought to an abrupt conclusion. Nevertheless, when once we see that this is how the matter stands the rational compulsion of the judgment is materially affected.

Thus it limits, to begin with, the force of a strictly moral reprobation toward those we commonly regard as sinners. Since I can seldom be quite sure of what is going on in another person's mind, it is hazardous to pass judgment on him as a moral recusant; if the peculiar feeling which in myself is the condition of a sense of obligation or of guilt happens not to be native to him—and so far as my actual knowledge goes this may be the case—to blame him for having a nature that is different from mine is an act of moral arrogance. Let me repeat that from this it does not follow that I am debarred from any interference with his conduct; there are two grounds on which I may justify myself in such an interference. I may, on the one hand, feel reason-

ably confident that the sources of my personal way of judging are latent in him, and so may undertake for his own good to do what seems advisable to promote a better insight, by correction or by moral suasion. The former method, more especially, is a risky one and opens the road to the dangers of moral truculence, but it would be rash to deny it any place in moral education; at least where children are concerned it is unlikely ever to be entirely supplanted, however well-grounded the objections to its traditional abuse. Or, in the second place, we may simply dislike some kinds of action so intensely that regardless of the agent's wishes we set ourselves dogmatically in opposition. Here also we are taking a moral chance. When, in particular, the act is one that is mainly the agent's own concern, our mere antipathy to it always is a dubious ground for intervention; and even when it has wider possibilities of harm these need to be rather serious to outweigh the insidious evils that arise from a general habit of meddling with free self-experiment. Nevertheless, we cannot in principle very well give up our claim to the privilege of putting a stop to conduct that makes too grave a threat against a wider good, subject, of course, to the limits imposed by good sense, open-mindedness, and a knowledge of the facts.

Meanwhile, in the interest of practice even more than that of theory, it remains advisable to keep separate the differences of mental attitude which these various discriminations logically involve. Thus the motive of good will or sympathy which aims primarily at moral education not only is different from that of active condemnation or dislike, but the two have great difficulty in coexisting in the mind; we cannot well yield to in-

dignation without at least a temporary loss of sympathetic interest. And neither feeling is identical with the distinctive sense of moral blameworthiness as I have been defining this. Moral blame may go along at times with good will and a desire to be helpful, but here also the alliance is uncertain; it requires some effort to retain a tolerant sympathy toward those we think are violating conscience. And there is a similar unlikeness between moral blame and moral indignation, though it is one less easy to keep clear. The latter phrase is in fact misleading, since indignation is a naturalistic emotion of dislike rather than a case of moral reprobation; and it is just because we thus are able to resent an act without presuming that the agent of necessity is faithless to his own conception of the good and so a "sinner," that effective indignation may be relatively free from the unction that lends a flavor of self-righteousness to moralistic judgments in the proper sense.

It is one corollary of what I have been saying that in the particular field where it seems least feasible to avoid general legislative rules—the field of social action—we shall find our task lightened by keeping pretty closely to the utilitarian aspects of the ethical situation and avoiding these strictly moralistic judgments. This is not to say that the work of laying down social or political commands and prohibitions is itself free from the embarrassments already cited. Nevertheless, it can be simplified substantially if we are willing to shed our disposition to apportion degrees of moral guilt and to confine ourselves to a reckoning of consequences in terms of what men commonly agree to think of as harmful or beneficial. Here at least the nature of the problem is left relatively free from ambiguity; and the

chances are that the occasions for disagreement, if not on the intrinsic excellence of competing ends at least on the advisability of using social force to further them, will be materially reduced. It is on the inveterate disposition to universalize private likes and dislikes that the responsibility rests for the more stubborn conflicts in the field of social morals; if we could rid ourselves of the persuasion that because some special form of good—piety or good manners or æsthetic taste—strikes us as much to be desired it ought therefore to be legislated into the habits of the community, or if we could approach sumptuary laws or birth control or moral censorship without ascribing personal viciousness to dissenters, we should be more likely to come to a mutual understanding. We should then have only to meet the specific question: How serious must admitted evils be, or how considerable the advantage in the way of positive gain, to justify interfering with that individual freedom of action which also has a claim to social consideration? About the answer differences of judgment would continue to exist; but the case would be a justiciable one. Most people are ready to admit that good or evil consequences should attain a certain bulk before the risk is justified that attaches always to compulsion, while on the other hand not many would refuse to say that the bulk may at times be great enough to make the risk inevitable; and if the moral obsessions standing in the way of a candid survey and appraisal of the entire group of consequences were removed, it is not unlikely the dispute might be reduced to manageable limits.

The case is not so clear in the broader field in which judgments of a more distinctly moral sort claim

commonly the right to exercise a general authority, if not on the political conduct of the citizen at least upon his conscience. I have already given my reasons for thinking that the difficulty is an honest one, since neither of the opposing claims from which it springs finds it a simple matter to make good its case in any unqualified way. On the assumption that all value preferences, for my human recognition, rest in the end on feelings which psychologically are my private property, I am brought to something like a logical impasse. It would in theory, as I have said, be relatively easy going if I could persuade myself either that a feeling has no relevance whatever outside my personal domain, or else that the sense of approval which for me determines value is *ipso facto* final, so that in my particular set of preferences the voice of the cosmic whole is speaking. Against the first alternative the objection lies—and it is a good psychological objection even if it is not logically decisive—that my emotional constitution does not readily accept the consequences; and a universal tolerance which it is practically impossible to achieve is of no great service to us. And in the other alternative our native modesty must on consideration, it would seem, decline to acquiesce. Theoretically a middle ground exists; if there is such a thing as a generic human nature, it will supply in an intelligible sense an objective basis for a possible standard in so far as I have reason to suppose that a given approval which I feel individually has as well this common backing. But for practice the question still is left unanswered: Which of my more or less miscellaneous approvals are thus valid in the larger human sense? And I am, accordingly, thrown

back again either on a unanimity of opinion which does not exist, or on the force of a psychological conviction; in other words, I am left with no logically decisive test.

If this really is the situation which we find existing, there is nothing in so far to do but to accept it. But such an acquiescence is itself not without consequences. If it leaves unsettled the locus of our problematic standard, at least it may tell us things about the state of mind most likely to be profitable in the task of looking for it. What most obviously it serves to recommend is that need for an indefinitely large extension of the habit of moral tolerance on which I have been dwelling. The special occasion for the difficulties I have noticed has lain in the undoubted fact that men do differ in what they regard as the most valuable elements of human good. Now it does not follow from this diversity that one is logically compelled to give up the quest for a basis of comparison and to say that all judgments are valid in the same degree; nevertheless, it is reasonable to think that by giving candid consideration to all sorts of claims we are more likely to reach an understanding of the possibilities of human life than if we stood pat on the very limited set of preferences that come easiest to us. The drawback of moral dogmatism is not simply that it leads us to cultivate a censorious attitude towards our fellow men and so stands in the way of the friendly and sympathetic virtues; what is equally important is the fact that it impoverishes the fund of human good, and substitutes for a catholic receptivity of mind a niggardly spirit which reacts unfavorably even on our personal chance of satisfaction. To escape these conse-

quences we shall need to encourage actively the habit of trying to enter into forms of good that do not naturally appeal to us, and to check our first tendency to think that tastes other than our own are fit subjects only for indifference, condescension, or outright blame. Just as I always take chances in rejecting a belief as false unless I am able first to see the reasons why to another man it seems a true belief—though at the same time my fuller knowledge may enable me to criticize the reasons as inadequate—so in the degree a conception of the good is wholly unintelligible to me, so far as I can form no understanding of the motives that determine it, I am safest in postponing condemnation. And this means, at any rate, abandoning the state of mind most congenial to the zealous moralist, for which it seems to be the good man's duty to refuse at all costs to compromise convictions by having any sort of commerce with claims that cast doubt on their finality and self-sufficiency; with the result that moral fervor seldom has been notable for breadth of sympathy and vision.

At the same time we are not to overlook the limits of this inference. It does not say that all pretensions equally deserve our sympathy. Pragmatically it only counsels us to approach them with an open mind and give them an opportunity to defend themselves; if after this we still find them antipathetic the result will have to be accepted like any other fact of ultimate experience. But here one further corollary may be thought to follow, though the everyday moralist will have, perhaps, a little more trouble in allowing it.

Even this residual bias, namely, we may fairly be recommended to accept without forgetting that it

does rest after all upon a private feeling which never can as such claim absolute authority; when we are most fully persuaded of its merits we shall still need to keep in mind the limitations that follow from its status, and to temper our dogmatism with empirical caution. The reason why such an attitude may give rise to moral hesitancy is a natural readiness to feel that a value cannot be sincerely and whole-heartedly adopted unless we close our thoughts to any question about its supreme and final excellence. And in fact this may require some intellectual effort. It is very likely there will always be a difficulty felt in reconciling zeal for an idea with the admission that there are other ideas afloat equally deserving of attention; the enthusiast turns easily into the fanatic, surest of his ground when most certain of his opponent's viciousness or imbecility. No society, writes Canon Hannay in a recent book on America, can be both enthusiastic and free; meaning that the more certain a man feels of the importance of his own beliefs the less he will be willing to allow an open field to others. But while it most commonly has been the case that the earnest man has been the self-sufficient and intolerant man and that tolerance has been gained at the expense of conviction, I see no reason why this should have to be, or why it should not be possible to recognize that it takes all sorts of people to make up a world without at the same time giving up the worth of one's own ideal demands.

What makes this a possibility is, in particular, a distinction which the practical moralist may overlook. The thing of which we reasonably can be assured is that a given estimate of excellence is *for us* a valid

one; it defines, so we may have sound reason for believing, our moral constitution, and we cannot ignore it, therefore, without failing in our quest for happiness. An attitude of scepticism here might well affect the sources of the moral life and put in jeopardy its practical effectiveness; if I cannot feel convinced that what I am working for is genuinely worth my while I shall find it hard to take the business very seriously, and my efforts will in consequence be fumbling and half-hearted.

But the assurance never can be quite the same when I turn from my personal good, the knowledge of my moral constitution, to the pretensions of this good to define a universal nature. This is what a value naturally purports to do; nor do I see how, even were it desirable, the tendency is ever to be entirely eradicated so long as we feel a value strongly. But it may be a question to what extent it is helpful to morality to cultivate quite the same frame of mind here that is proper in the other case, since it is just the unfaltering certitude that the universe is committed to this or that value in particular out of which moral intolerance arises. In the interest of an ultimate sanity, and in order to hold in check our native propensity to see no good outside the narrow purview of our private and always limited organs of appreciation, we shall probably do well to form the habit of mounting on occasion into the more rarefied atmosphere of a universal contemplation, and of viewing even our most cherished values dispassionately and apart from the fervor of pursuit. As a suggestion of what I mean I may take an example from the field of literary criticism. I presume it may be set down as a large cri-

terion that to attain the highest rank a novelist will need to be morally more or less uncommitted, to occupy an elevation above his characters, and to depict their actions impartially as facts of natural history instead of using them to expose a personal and uncritical taste in heroes or to recommend his own favorite opinions; provided, of course, he does not spoil his good intentions, as realists have been known to do, by insinuating that this same unbiassed attitude which as an artist he adopts is itself the substitute for other values in the actual realm of conduct. To take a rather flagrant case, one nowadays can hardly fail to be impressed by the serious deductions that need to be made from Kipling's standing as an artist through such a failure in aloofness. Everywhere he finds himself hedged in by the narrow emotional limitations of the good imperialist; a particular sort of admiration undertakes to coerce his suffrage and to offer a touchstone through which all other types of character and opinion are tested and found wanting; and the outcome is an unavoidable defect in realism which frustrates the desire, inseparable from any rational standard, to see things as they are.

Such a critical detachment, then, is one of the most valuable of the contributions that art may make to morals. But it can perform its service without affecting seriously the genuineness of our practical moral interests. It does not detract from the proper emphasis upon a value that we should decline to overemphasize it; and overemphasis is a natural consequence of any uninterrupted preoccupation with concrete emotions unrelieved by the attempt to get outside them and see them in perspective. For no form of good can possibly have

all the significance we tend to feel belongs to it when we are under its emotional sway; when we see it in relation to the whole of life we are bound to realize that, however valid in its place, it is not a final standard of perfection. Because we are thus enabled to discount its claim is not in the least a reason why we should not continue to pursue it with a sense of its real and even for practice its paramount importance; but it will help save us from the pomposity which is the natural fruit of an insistence that one form of good should rule the world. A slightly satirical eye for the absurdities even in the most earnest exercise of the moral conscience is a prophylactic which may help relieve some moral ailments, while it has no need, if we take due care, to stand in the way of wholesome moral preferences.

And safeguarded by the intellectual habits I am recommending we may enter on the search for standards with some assurance that we have a chance of not going too far astray. With due allowance made for the insecurity of the feelings that establish values, it may still be possible to utilize the principle of the greater good in a way to serve most practical needs. And since the limitation of this principle lies not in itself—few men will refuse to grant it in the abstract—but in the conditions that circumscribe its application, we can with no great risk set down one preliminary clause in the tentative description of a general moral standard. While differences in men's notions of the good set bounds to the use of moral denunciation in terms of the special content of the moral judgment, we are somewhat less restricted in connection with its general form. We have, that is, a warrant in

logic for condemning anyone, if not for the conclusions which he reaches, at least for a refusal to put in practice the only method of arriving at a rational conclusion—a reason, it may be remarked in passing, why an intolerance toward intolerance is not quite so inconsistent as at first it may appear. If a man himself admits that the greater good can claim authority, he already has deprived himself of any sound excuse in case he is indifferent or dishonest in the task of seeking impartially to discover where the greater good resides. And since this is primarily a matter for the intellect rather than the emotions it is open to a relatively convincing test, and so justifies less hesitancy in the use of moral blame than we might feel was allowable in other cases.

Here once more is the problem, then: What if any are the reasons I can give which offer a rational ground for urging men to agree upon a particular estimate of values? The traditional answer is that certain of these values approve themselves by their own intrinsic nature; and when accordingly they seem self-evident to me I am right in demanding that everyone else adopt them. The trouble starts when we try to identify such universal maxims; we then discover it is not so easy to find specific values to which all men can be induced to yield assent. This is the crux of the situation that confronts the present generation. The established foundations of the moral order have been shaken and values subjected to transvaluation; the very things that have been wont to seem most evident have turned for many into something like a liability. Even the inclusive ideal of the "social" life, after gaining in the last century an almost overwhelming prestige,

is showing signs of wear; not only is the prevailing note of the new generation among its intellectuals an aggressive individualism which shows slight respect for social authority, but on all sides there is in evidence a practical disregard for law which extends, whenever the law is not content simply to discountenance the things for which they have themselves no inclination, to the most reputable members of society, not excluding judges and legislators and policemen. One should not be misled by taking too seriously official spokesmen of the existing order; the most casual examination is enough to show that the clamor in behalf of constitutionalism and authoritarianism is inspired not by assurance but by fear, due to a perception of the growing strength of hostile forces.

This factual premise granted, we can take either of two courses. We may with as much persuasive skill as we can bring to it present the merits of the particular way of life that most attracts us; this has been the commonest plan. It sets out primarily to recommend ideals, or standards, by disturbing through the power of contagion the balance of emotional preference; the traditional method of the pulpit takes this form. The drawback to such a method lies in its uncertainty and lack of staying power, as well as in the generally clamorous, shortsighted and impenetrable quality of mind it is likely to encourage. Still, in its place there appears no important reason to object to it so long as the temptation to set ourselves up as a pattern is resisted; and the accompanying contribution to the cause of human good we may expect to find notable in the degree that emotion and imagination are always

more effective with the generality of men than argument.

The other and less exciting course is that of "rational" persuasion. Rationality may however, as I have already argued at some length, take two forms that need to be distinguished. The difficulties I started by exploiting are mainly difficulties attaching to reason in the sense in which the rationalist and the authoritarian are disposed to use the term; and to these no satisfactory answer has been found. But there is another and less ultimate way in which reason may be employed. In the empirical sense which sets it apart from speculative reason, logic is primarily an instrument of human debate; it deals with the conditions under which we are justified in asking others to accept what we regard as reasonable ourselves. As such it has to do not with the certainty of our premises but with the correctness of the inferences we draw from them. To this limitation the typical rationalist in philosophy has never been resigned. His goal is a state of final and absolute assurance; and to reach this he needs to take the ultimate premises of argument as themselves demonstrably valid in a universal sense. I have been going on the assumption that for ethics, at any rate, this does not represent the actual situation; our troubles come from the fact that men do *not* agree in their notions in detail of what is good and right. They do not altogether disagree, and in so far as they are in accord they can reason together more or less amicably. In terms of such premises as they hold in common it is possible to urge that one conclusion "ought" to be accepted by them rather than another. But the premises themselves do not in

the same sense carry logical compulsion. We can arrive at them not by asserting that they must be so, but only by appealing to the empirical facts of human nature; and about such facts we never shall be able to avoid the chance of error. However, these will be errors open to the ordinary testing of experience; and while the facts give us no right to say that a man ought to believe an ultimate truth or accept an ultimate value which he does not actually concede of his own accord, the situation has at least this much in its favor, that for the special purpose of argument or debate the concession once made will need no further backing.

Let me try to summarize again a conclusion which I am afraid may tend to get unnecessarily involved. The point I am now concerned with is one primarily of method, and it sets out from the thesis, first, that men do have definite and often very strong preferences among the various things presented as forms of human good for their approval—preferences which they tend to think others also should accept—and, secondly, that they do not always find themselves in accord about their choices. The moralist accordingly is set the problem: How are we to go to work to remedy this confusion? Assuming that there are times when we cannot be content, either practically or sentimentally, simply to take our own line and let others do the same, and assuming also that the method of forcing everybody to conform to one authoritative standard has not proved successful, our only hope lies in coming to terms through deliberation and discussion. One manner of doing this is by painting the good as we ourselves see it in such glowing colors that others will

be led to feel its superiority and to substitute our way of thinking for their own; and up to a point, as I have just said, this is a laudable ambition which may be attended by a measure of success. But it leaves a wide margin of uncertainty; few moralists, if any, can be trusted to be sympathetic toward every genuine form of good alike, while among the values they are themselves inclined to favor some are bound to be too personal to carry a general appeal. Further methods therefore will be needed, other than the force of sentiment that belongs to all ideals alike, for sifting out generic values from more individual ones. And in any case it will continue to be true that our common starting point, if attainable at all, will be dependent on the actual measure of success we have in securing an empirical agreement. So long as the uniformity only represents a pious hope, then no matter how confident we may be that it is desirable and possible we are without a logical hold on the man who still remains unconvinced.

It follows that if we want to make the moral experience a matter of reason rather than of dogma, what we shall have to do is to turn aside from the path of moral exhortation and look among the empirical facts of human nature for considerations which there is reasonable ground for thinking will appeal to anyone who understands himself and what he wants. Any such source of legislation, to repeat, will itself be empirical and factual; its validity will depend not on our ability to demonstrate it, but on the presumption that others will find it relevant to their own way of judging and so will accept it when it is pointed out to them. But allowing that the considerations we are after must

always remain rather broad and general if they are to leave room for a legitimate divergency in interests and desires, there is no *prima facie* reason for supposing that we may not be able to discover certain propositions on which the great majority of people will agree; and in that case there is nothing to forbid the hope that, after all deductions have been made, something may be left with enough validity to furnish rules of guidance.

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Chapter IX

QUANTITATIVE STANDARDS

In turning now from more general considerations to the nature of moral standards in particular, I may start by reminding myself once more of the cautions I have been laying down. It is extraordinarily difficult for anyone to make sure that he is keeping the value appreciations that chiefly come home to him as an individual from playing a major rôle in his plans and specifications for the life of the greater good. This is not altogether a misfortune; for some purposes it may constitute a merit. Even the philosopher is called on to practice abnegation here only when he is exercising the function of the analyst—not a function on which his widest reputation has depended; while the literary artist, who has been on the whole a much more prolific contributor to the art of living, is failing in his duty unless he is more or less one-sided and extreme. When Wordsworth or Thoreau preach the beauties of the simple life or Tolstoi the gospel of peace and human kindness, we do not expect or want to be all the time caught up by limiting clauses. The moral seer is effective in proportion as he sticks to the things that stir his own imagination, leaving it to his readers to make the deductions that are called for and to accept only so much as their own appetite may welcome; if he is apt to be a bit intolerant of other insights than his

own that is a foible we can afford to treat indulgently.

But it is another matter when we are starting out not to recommend the positive merits of some special way of living but to lay down rules which, as involved in any tenable ideal, are binding on all men alike. Here we shall need to hold our private enthusiasms well in check and keep constantly in mind the danger of supposing that because I like a thing I can count on its seeming equally significant to others. I suppose we are never sure of avoiding entirely this pitfall; with human nature what it is, my judgment about what is going to make possible a solid and dependable enjoyment can hardly fail of being influenced by my individual capacities for appreciation. But we may minimize the risk by an honest attempt to lay aside for the time being private objects of approval and make it our business to examine the objective conditions on which a rational acceptance of any human standard will depend.

It is an outcome of the previous analysis that the final question to be put to any claimant to the title of a human good is: Does it really satisfy? An answer to this question does not of course put us, when taken by itself, in possession of a general standard; the current discontent with standards arises just from the bewildering variety of things that men find satisfying and the trouble they have in subjecting these to a common measure. Nevertheless, to make a beginning at all we must start by recognizing that concrete satisfactions furnish the foundation on which any standard will have to be erected. It is hardly necessary to enlarge upon the risks attendant on the common disposition to establish general rules and then forget about

the particular elements of good that recommend them; the effect of this, in the few, is to breed a fanatical devotion to some narrow form of good of which the natural outcome is to set men by their ears, while in the many it tends to desiccate the content of the good and leave it a stale convention rather than a source of positive well-being. Under such treatment the loftier virtues become at best sublime abstractions which we are content vaguely to admire at a distance without any sedulous attempt to make them real; and even the homelier forms of good lose most of their reason for existence by taking on the guise of conformity and correct procedure. A tactful friendliness, for example, degenerates into the quasi-virtue of politeness; there are certain proper things to do, and we insist on doing them even when everyone concerned would be happier and more comfortable through their omission. For the most part, and for the most of us, words speak louder than actions; if conduct can be squared with familiar slogans our impulse is to take this as a substitute for concrete satisfaction. But this is to give up any hope of a rational morality; for being rational we stand in need of principles, indeed, but of principles that keep close to the actual details of human good.

Perhaps we should make sure before we start that even an empirical intelligence is not interpreted unintelligently. "Being reasonable" is itself capable of turning into just another special and exclusive end such as only a particular type of mind will find inviting. "A short life and a merry one" may be a perfectly rational motto if one really feels that way about it; to say nothing of the large consideration

that, with the future so uncertain, prudence itself would seem to counsel us that we be not too prudent, people undoubtedly exist for whom too staid and cautious a pursuit of happiness may actually be self-defeating. It needs the impulse of the moment, the charm of the fresh and unpremeditated, to quicken the emotional pulse and give the full sense of being alive; and it may prove to be that for such a temper vividness and poignancy of feeling will compensate for much attendant loss. But this does not really touch the point. The ideal of an emotional intensity of experience is a defensible ideal, but only in case it springs from a genuine self-knowledge. The vastly greater number of those who neglect the rules of prudence and common sense live to regret it, which is all the proof one needs that they have missed their calling; such a failure in prudence is a sign of unintelligence, and reason condemns it rightly, therefore, because it is forced to confess its own shortcomings when faced by the accomplished fact.

If intelligence as a source of possible restraint on impulse is to be taken neither as absolute reason nor as a form of genteel humanism but as an attempt to subject the actual facts of living to conscious and controlled experiment, it will need to start, then, from the crude stuff of human nature; the first maxim of a rational morality must always be in the Socratic dictum, "Know thyself." Until a man has formed the settled habit of bringing every claimant to the title of human good or human virtue to the only court that can have final jurisdiction over him—the evidence of his own actual satisfaction with the consequences after he has given them his best attention—morality

is doomed to gravitate toward that safe and sane spirit of conformity which at best can do little more than set up an unstable barrier against the commoner perils to which human life is subject. But genuine self-knowledge means, of course, something more than a knowledge of myself alone. Men frequently have been disposed to think self-knowledge could be attained by the simple process of looking inside themselves and finding there certain feelings and desires. This rests, however, on the dubious assumption that man is a being whose nature can be recognized by mere inspection apart from the rôle he plays in a changing world. "I shall never," once wrote that colorful protagonist of modernism the poet Shelley, "make a lying estimate of my own feelings"; and an emotional realism of this sort no doubt offers a necessary contribution to any intelligent morality, without which the hypocrisies of conventional society would have things largely their own way. The danger comes when we are satisfied to stop with our first naïve emotional reactions toward the world and allow their immediate compulsion to keep us from giving them a thorough testing; our apparent immunity to certain feelings or the commanding claims of others may in point of fact be due to a failure in intelligence rather than to unescapable demands of our human constitution. An emotional realism needs, in other words, to be interpreted always in the light of an objective realism also. There are limits to self-expression in the shape of natural barriers which, since they cannot be removed or entirely surmounted, are saved from being ruinous to the quest for good only in case they lead to some revision of the immediate forms that impulse takes; through his un-

willingness to recognize this need Shelley's own life carried to the end a touch of the fantastic and absurd which no sympathy with his good intentions can entirely dispel.

This is not to turn restraint into a value in itself, as current humanisms seem disposed to do; though even such a claim might find a limited warrant in experience. The worth of self-restraint does not rest wholly on negative and prudential grounds; it is not without merits of its own to qualify the extremer claims of liberty. The mere sense of being free may give rise to a genuine satisfaction of its own but only for a time—it is not a value for the long run; if for no other reason this will follow from the fact that it makes too little call on man's active capacities of mind and will. Because it brings riper powers into play it may often happen, therefore, that we get more solid satisfaction when our liberty is not too unrestricted. It probably is true, for instance, that the man of moderate means who has to plan shrewdly his expenditures is often in a position to get more out of it, if he knows his business, than his supposedly more fortunate fellow who needs only to sign a check in order to gratify his wants; the very necessity for intelligent management and planning is the potential source of an increment of pleasure. But at any rate, whether we find it enjoyable or not, some measure of constraint cannot possibly be avoided so long as the world is what it is; and it is just this necessity which has led in the first instance to the demand for standards and which supplies the main conditions of their possibility.

The suggestions I am going on to make do not pre-

tend to be exhaustive, and if the reader is disposed to call them platitudes I shall not object; any maxim sufficiently grounded in a general experience to appear self-evident must needs when put in words run the risk of seeming trite. My only purpose is to indicate what in general an empirical standard will be like, and to justify our natural persuasion that standards of a sort are within our reach. And for the sake of clearness I shall divide these proposed principles of valuation into two groups which, whatever their ultimate connection, on the surface seem distinguishable, and which we may call respectively the quantitative and the qualitative. The first type of principle is much the easiest to defend and simplest to apply, and I shall deal with it, therefore, before taking up the more difficult notion of moral quality.

If I were engaged upon the commoner task of recommending a special preference in morals I should have no great trouble here in expanding my remarks indefinitely. It should not be difficult by a clear-headed estimate of pains and pleasures to make out in considerable detail a practicable road to happiness—or at least to more happiness than we otherwise should get—such as might hold good not only for my private guidance but also for other men in proportion as their ways of thinking are similar to mine. The practical difficulty, however, for anything like a general standard, lies in making sure that there is such an identity of temper; until I can count on this I may continue to offer what I think is good advice, but I have not shown my right to turn it into moral exhortation. My neighbor may be going to work in a way that I regard as thoroughly foolish and misguided if hap-

piness is his goal; but while he continues to insist that this is how personally he gets his good I have no rational hold upon him. One thing in practice may give me a leverage in argument. So long as a man is prepared to take the risks and accept the consequences without grumbling he has his critic at a disadvantage; once he puts himself solidly behind any resolve whatever, little chance is left to show conclusively that he has misjudged his good. But he has no business to whine about the outcome and complain that the world is not treating him as he deserves. To do this is to confess that he has miscalculated somehow, and it gives me a fair excuse for questioning the realism of his judgment; the one way of living that can show no claim to reason is that which betrays a divided and hesitating mind. This, however, is a test which it would be unsafe to count on being able to apply; until, in addition, my own premises have been conceded I am not in a very good strategic position to debate the matter.

And this in the first place would appear to say that no positive form of satisfaction in detail can be counted on securely as a source of general standards. Here almost without exception we have to recognize the chance that a genuine and ineradicable difference in human quality may be present to vitiate our plea. Thus to one man it may seem self-evident that a substantial element of leisure, even of laziness perhaps, is a requirement for a satisfying life. But if my neighbor is the sort of man who asks for something doing every moment I have no way to prove to him that he is wrong and that my preference is the better one; and similarly he is stopped from calling me to task for my less strenuous temper. So of humanitarian or

domestic pleasures, of the love of beauty, of mystic or religious rapture, of an interest in business success, of the common bodily pleasures even; not one of these in a form concrete enough to do service as a standard can be taken as a universal good without presuming a degree of uniformity in human nature for which the evidence to say the least is not conclusive.

If we rule out the positive content of the good as a source for rules of conduct that may plausibly be supposed to have a universal or at least a general application, there is left the alternative of looking for such rules in connection with the question, not of "what," but of "how"; and this indeed is where we might expect to find them if mind rather than feeling is to be our guide. Method is something with which it is definitely the business of intelligence to deal; and because method rests on rational deductions from objective data it has some hope of winning general assent. And such a judgment is reinforced when we note a further advantage which is an adjunct of this intellectual status. The difficulty confronting the problem of a standardized morality is the absence of motives general enough to allow us safely to infer from one man to another. Now of all the motives one could name, I doubt if any approaches more nearly to an empirical universality than the dislike of being set down as stupid and unenlightened by one's fellows. The same man who may bear with equanimity the charge of being vicious will be restive under the imputation that he is a fool; probably, indeed, it will be his inner persuasion that sense and realism are actually on his side that explains his failure to be more concerned about the opinions of the virtuous. When backed by

the assurance that he is really being very clever he may be willing for a time to assume the guise of folly if he thinks he can in this way better gain his ends; but he is very little likely to forego looking forward to an eventual vindication in the eyes at least of those whose judgment he respects. I am not sure just why it is that this imputation of stupidity is so difficult to bear serenely, unless it be the implicit conviction that intelligence is the one mark that gives man his ranking in creation. But the fact itself remains; a lively wish not to seem inferior to others in intelligence is so nearly universal that we commonly are safe in assuming its existence. And if, therefore, empirical conditions can be pointed out so tied up with the chance of satisfaction that it is plainly foolish to ignore them, this will lend itself in so far to a general standard.

As a first instance I may cite the principle involved in a value estimate of which I have just had occasion to make use: up to a point, the content of satisfaction has a close relationship to the effort we put forth in its attainment. This is no more than a psychological account of pleasure might lead us to expect; if, as seems likely, the feeling of satisfaction is in the large a concomitant of activity or of energy exerted, we should look to find it strong in proportion to the degree in which it calls our powers into exercise. And what theory suggests the facts of life pretty generally bear out. The man who sets out to get something for nothing is usually disappointed. "Things" may sometimes come his way by a fluke of fortune without payment rendered; in fact there may be a peculiar satisfaction in unexpected windfalls now and then, and I am not sure that an arrangement of society based too inflexibly

on the principle of abstract justice and of only so much pay for so much work might not by cutting off such a pleasurable anticipation rather irk our spirits. But the allurement of a windfall lies in its casual and unexpected nature; to turn into anything like a general policy the gambler's hope of getting what one has not earned is not only, as the world goes, to take desperate chances, but it is calculated to make us less appreciative of the benefits we may actually secure. In the long run one finds more solid satisfaction in the thing he has made a part of himself by honest effort; "easy come easy go" is a truism that suggests not prudential risks alone, but the light esteem in which casual benefits are likely to be held. Even of bodily pleasures the same thing in a general way holds good; the disparagement by the moralist of sensual indulgences may be overdrawn, but it rests on a true perception that as a major aim in life, at any rate, the more difficult and strenuous delights have a definite advantage over those whose enjoyment calls for nothing more than letting oneself go. For the pursuit of indulgences to be reasonably successful we are almost sure to find that it must have obstacles to overcome, and that in large measure the resultant satisfaction is the unintended product of the effort this calls forth.

Closely related to this first suggestion is another one: generally speaking, a value gets a secure place in a rational scheme of life only when it connects itself primarily with the process of attainment rather than with the finished product. Here lies in practice one of the most fertile sources of a blundering estimate of good. There are few surer ways of missing happiness than to set before oneself a distant goal whose abstract

or sentimental claim is assumed to justify long preparatory stages devoid in themselves of immediate appeal. Even the mere pleasure-seeker may lay claim to more intelligence than this; he at any rate within limits is sure of some reward, whereas an end projected into an indefinite future substitutes hope for experimental evidence and may lose out entirely. It is man's good fortune, to be sure, that he is in general so constituted that most honest labor can be made to yield some incidental modicum of pleasure; if it were not for this the lot of most people would be unendurable, since the world that man has created for himself is a world in which the postponement of good has come generally to be taken as a necessity if not as a positive virtue. So we find education everywhere recommended as a preparation for life rather than as a form of living; the best years of youth are passed in doing things whose value we have to take on trust, and which go so much against the grain that the new generation does its best to mitigate their dulness by crowding into the educational process the largest possible number of extraneous activities and interests. A "career," again, means for the most part years of drudgery which may or may not be partly compensated by the smug satisfaction of feeling one has at last arrived; while our whole economic system is contrived so badly that the great majority may think themselves extremely lucky if a life of thrift and abstinence enables them to spend their declining days in tolerable ease. It is poor comfort to be told that all this is good for character. For one thing, there is no certainty that such a result is going to follow; and in any case character whose final fruit is resignation is not a sufficient substitute for happiness,

and we may be excused for feeling discontented with a moral leadership which is satisfied to stop with pious admonition instead of tackling the harder job of changing the conditions that go to make a virtue out of resignation.

Naturally, since with the best intentions the world is not going to be transformed overnight, we cannot expect intelligence here to have things all its own way. But it is plainly possible to pick our ends with greater care and judgment so as to make more certain that the process of securing them will call in play our genuine capacities and interests, and, when secondary and instrumental ends are forced upon us, to recognize them at any rate for what they are and not be defrauded into taking them as final and satisfying forms of good. Money is the commonest case in point; and because the business motive takes the direction naturally of money-getting it is peculiarly liable to a mistaken estimate of worth. The business game may of course be itself a form of pleasurable excitement which by enlisting ingenuity and the love of combat becomes a veritable good. But to the extent that immediate satisfactions of whatever sort yield to the mere spirit of acquisitiveness a deduction follows from the actual sense of value; the whole career of modern business shows how easy it is, when once the difference between means and ends becomes obscured, to magnify the unessential and upset a rational scale of merit. A time was when the American business man felt little need for self-apology; with a continent to subdue, and the obligation on him to devise new and better ways of meeting human needs, his vocation took on an aspect of dignity which went far toward satisfying the imagination, and

which compelled a measure of respect even when its practice was most ruthless. But as the captain of industry has been subordinated more and more to the mere financier the whole emotional tone of the business life insensibly has fallen off, and there has crept in an uneasy sense of the need for self-justification. The reality of public service has been supplanted by service as a rather cheap and fulsome slogan of the advertiser; bigness has demanded the respect which no longer could be claimed for honest worth; the most sensational rewards have tended to be the outcome of a catering to superficial human wants; and the business man has turned to golf, a frothy patriotism, or a sentimental enthusiasm for the feats of popular aviators as a makeshift for the satisfactions in which he feels instinctively that his proper work has grown deficient.

Meanwhile in saying this we are already pointed to another and complementary principle. While ends tend to lose their rational significance unless the process of attaining them claims in its own right our interest, it also is in general true that an activity needs to deposit some relatively permanent fund of good to rank very high in the reflective scale. If interest is exhausted in the process and has nothing to show for itself when this is over, it will need to be particularly engrossing to escape a judgment of futility. This is why "sports"—unless they are weighted by professional motives—have normally their function as an incidental rather than a cardinal value; they leave behind no outcome sufficient in retrospect to make an overindulgence in them seem quite rational. For any activity to be fully satisfying, no matter how exciting

in itself, it must look ahead to at least a minimum of achieved result. The painter may be absorbed in the pure joy of creation, but he nevertheless is painting a picture that remains to justify his effort; the writer works, it may be, for the fun of it rather than for fame or profit, but his zest would suffer were he conscious all the time that his manuscript was destined only for the wastebasket; even our games, no matter what we sometimes say, we play not solely for the playing but for the momentary prize of victory as well. And if our doings are to rise at all above the level of the child's joy in random movement and reflect our rational judgments, it is inevitable that the reflective estimate we put upon the issue should qualify the process also.

For determining this estimate there is one general consideration, to begin with, which while it does not in itself carry us very far constitutes a not unimportant negative condition; at the lowest, there must not be too great a discrepancy between anticipation and fulfilment if our zest is not to be substantially abated. If when it lies within our grasp we find a pleasure pretty persistently failing to come up to advance notices we are bound in reason to turn elsewhere for our satisfaction. That there are things whose significance men generally are inclined to overrate is an opinion almost universal among moral sages; and while it is the privilege—and the duty even—of the individual to subject such a judgment to his own appraisal, it at least creates a presumption which he would be foolish to ignore. Thus it would warn us not to put a very high estimate on the good opinion of the world in a well-considered reckoning of values. To stand well

with our fellows is a laudable desire, and indeed, apart from very special cases, it is almost a necessity for a contented life; but this is so for the most part only as it is the outcome, largely unintended, of estimable qualities and conduct and does not assume any major rôle in the specifications of the ideal good. The lure of a facile popularity, the anxiety to shine in the eyes of admiring neighbors, notoriously do not lend themselves to serenity of mind. Popular fancy shifts too easily; the wish to be admired or envied, by diverting attention from the sources of esteem to their incidental and uncertain product, is likely to be self-defeating; and the satisfactions actually resulting, seldom very substantial, are further diluted by the strain of living up to an acquired reputation and the fear of disappointing expectations.

And in terms of its larger consequences popular repute is a still more dubious good. Regarded simply as a social tool a case can be made for the virtues of reputation and respectability; without their help it is perhaps a question whether enough social conformity could be secured to enable men to live together. But such good as this ensures is a good first of all for society rather than to the man himself. The official status of respectability carries the implication that what its sponsors chiefly are concerned about is the advantage to themselves rather than the moral welfare of those on whom they urge it; and this means, on the one hand, that conformity invariably is pushed too far, and, on the other, that the conformist is himself led to take as virtuous a mental habit which in its own right is nothing of the sort. To be afraid of what other people think of you is to be ruled by

fear, and nothing can make fear an authentic good. It is not the least among the merits to which modernism can pretend that it has undermined the claim of respectability to be a virtue; rather than court the opinion of the world, one's moral integrity may be better served even if he goes too far in flouting this. Unfortunately the virtue of self-dependence is an onerous one, much easier to preach than to put in practice. It is not acquired by exchanging one servitude for another; there is no more merit in a fear of seeming conventional than in a fear of seeming unconventional. And of course, too, the refusal to be intimidated by what others say or think does not exempt one from the need of being realistic; no one has any call to be so self-assured as not to recognize the chance that he has something to learn from others. But he will learn by assaying facts rather than by submitting uncritically to what his neighbors think about him; and with this he is bound to find that automatically his scale of values will have shifted.

Meanwhile if the judgment that a good, when we get it, hardly pays for the trouble it entails is to enter into rational debate and not represent a personal feeling simply, it will need to look further for something like principled ways of assessing resultant values. And two things, at least, suggest themselves as carrying some compulsion for a rational mind. Security is one of these. Here is another reason why money, things, possessions, tend with the process of enlightenment to lose the relative importance they start out by claiming; their tenure seldom is very secure, and this precariousness has as its natural consequence a state of mind that is damaging to a realistic conception of

the good. It is notorious that money gravitates toward an intellectual timidity; the man who puts his faith in riches nearly always can be counted on to be in the opposition when bold experiments are proposed. But fear, again, is an ingredient which must be exorcised before human happiness has any firm support; not only does it hold us back from taking chances that may be essential to our getting what we want, but fear is in itself a depressing agency which subtracts from the joy of living. It follows that a good which depends upon external possession is likely to be inferior as such to elements of good that spring directly from inner and relatively self-dependent resources such as find expression in activities of will or active fruits of character. This does not mean that it will be found in general the part of wisdom to cut oneself off from the world of things and look for happiness in a stoic apathy or an epicurean imperturbability. It may even be, sometimes, that the very insecurity of the things we grasp turns to a source of value; to the adventurous soul it is no merit that the world should be made too safe and comfortable. But this constitutes no exception to the rule; the spirit of adventure is least of all dependent on possession, since its good lies in its own exercise and in a zest for which the uncertainties of fortune are needed as a spur.

More important as a source of possible standards is what Bentham calls fecundity. It is a matter of experience that goods vary widely in this respect. Some tend naturally to be dulled by repetition; they grow stale and unprofitable, and no longer give much pleasure even in anticipation. Partly this is due to direct organic causes; one of the reasons why the

pleasures of sense or of emotional excitement find difficulty in standing up under disinterested criticism is clearly because the bodily flow of energy from which they spring is so easily exhausted. But a more decisive reason is the fact that any good which is relatively passive and absorbed in its own goodness—and this in general is the case with feelings—bears in itself the seeds of ennui. Variety is the spice of life, and variety, fruitfulness, is a function of intelligence, which alone can objectify enjoyments by relating them to their sources and so to a complex and growing world. It is intelligence, active and creative, to which we have to look if values are to bud out into fresh and enduring satisfactions; a man is cramping himself in the degree that he refuses to keep his interests plastic through the continuous exercise of mind. Fortunately mind may be applied to anything whatever; money, for example, when it does not set up as a value on its own account, becomes a very substantial blessing as a tool for liberating human energies. But also different forms of effort will lend themselves in differing degrees to the service of mind. Thus intellectual pursuits, in a world where truth is infinitely varied, has in so far an advantage over the simpler pleasures for one who is capable of both; the larger scope of social interests offers obviously more play for variety than a self-centered career; occupations that allow freedom and call for self-direction are more fecund than those carried on under orders or by rule. Generally speaking, then, a value which is wide ranging, which by submitting to intelligent exploitation can be made to renew and enlarge itself indefinitely, must

be preferable to one which is inelastic and monotonous and incapable of growth.

It would be tempting to try to carry the principle a little farther. Since the application of intelligence is a function of persisting interest, and since the more interests we can enlist the more opportunity there is for intelligence to act, this sometimes has led moralists to say that the ultimate good will take the form of an organization of life in a single comprehensive unity of will or purpose where every aspect of man's nature gets its satisfaction. As a suggestive ideal this has its obvious merits; as a universal principle, however, it runs up against empirical limitations. To give it any concrete meaning, such an inclusive purpose will have to presuppose some relatively determinate interest in particular, some individual preference in ways of living. Certain forms of interest—art, philosophy, statesmanship, religion—may seem to have real possibilities here, and the man to whom they happen to appeal has open to him, therefore, special sources of enjoyment. But it is not everyone that we can summon to such honorific vocations; the vast majority of people are directed by their natural bent to more limited careers which plainly fall short of employing, directly and to the full, all the capacities of human nature. Indeed, one may question whether in strictness this ever is the case; any good that is subordinated to another good is pretty sure to be more or less perverted in the process. To this one may add the external obstacles which human society creates. At best it is only to the very few that the exigencies of an industrial civilization offer a career at

all commensurate with the needs of man's many-sided nature; and the demand for specialization and subordination is all the time increasing as the economic life grows more complex. But while the ideal of "wholeness" thus tends to become somewhat evasive if it is interpreted in terms of any one controlling purpose, there is a looser sense in which it does seem to offer something more nearly in the nature of a generally applicable principle. Other things being equal, the fund of good is bound to be augmented in proportion as we increase the number and variety of objects which appeal to us as interesting and exciting; this approaches closely to a mathematical truth.

Like most truth it is subject still to limitations; there are two qualifications, in particular, that lie at opposite extremes. Due to man's limited capacities, his interests may conceivably spread out so thin as to lose in intensity more than they gain by being multiplied; the quest of culture, when it is not reinforced by a real creative gift, is notoriously thus inclined to run to an ineffectual dilettantism through being overextended and watered down. On the other hand in some men—not on the whole a very numerous class—a special sort of interest may bulk so large as to crowd out rival claims; and since by hypothesis this presumes the presence of a genuine and powerful endowment of nature, it may very well turn out to be one of those legitimate exceptions that make it so hard to generalize about man's good.

Nevertheless the principle still leaves us free to make certain observations. One caution, at any rate, it enables us to enter; the justification of a contracted interest will hold only in case it rests on genuine self-

knowledge. In the ordinary run of things narrowness will mean a loss of good, since it is seldom thus preceded by a realistic self-examination; it is due to a parochial outlook, to ignorance of life, to the ease of falling into ruts and the difficulty then of getting out again. This rather than any intrinsic incapacity is why business so often proves an illiberal occupation; there is no essential reason why the business man should be debarred from a full human life, but the machinery of trade has become so ponderous and exacting that few have the fortune to escape its inhibitions. Business, however, has no monopoly in this respect. The life of the scholar, fountain of liberalism though it has some claim to be, is often as arid and meager as its traditional rival; indeed, it would be hard to name an occupation that does not run a similar risk. And any defence that exclusiveness can put forward is subject at least to the rejoinder that it seldom fails in a measure to be self-defeating. A man will probably even be a better business man, as certainly he will be a better scholar, when he does not confine himself too strictly to his special trade; there is no occupation that will not be fructified by a breadth of interest that extends beyond its immediate demands.

More inexcusable is another way in which things capable of enriching life are disregarded; this comes from allowing active prejudice of any sort to govern estimates of good. Particularly indefensible, because it goes along with a claim to superior enlightenment, is the gratuitous sacrifice of lesser values through the persuasion that we are in possession of a higher excellence. This is what lends a fantastic quality to

many of the modernistic trends in literature and art. It takes no great discernment to realize the probable shortsightedness of going out of one's way to circumscribe possibilities of enjoyment, at best none too abundant, by restricting our tastes within the limits of this or that special school of music or poetry or painting; and while the loss is compensated in a way by the self-congratulation it inspires, still, since no one can hope to keep always in the van, and he who today utters the last word in art tomorrow will be on the defensive against a still newer heterodoxy, the plea is not one much to be relied on. And there is in any case the drawback always attendant on the intrusion of the pleasures of self-complacency into the field of objective interests. As a pretender to rationality, a human being can no more afford to make a merit of his cultural attainments than of his moral virtues; in a world where no man plays more than a minor rôle a reasonable degree of modesty is an intellectual necessity if one is to lay claim to realism—a point especially worth while to keep in mind in these days when through the verbal expedient of calling it an inferiority complex modesty has largely ceased to be regarded as a virtue.

There are two further considerations that may be thought to have a bearing on the claims of specialism. The reason why some degree of specialism is in practice always capable of rational excuse is the factual limits to which action must submit. No one can hope to do everything, or to do many things successfully; and he must be his own judge as to where his versatility ends. But whatever bounds he may settle on—and a refusal even at the risk of social censure to be

drawn into things that are not one's special forte is an element in any rational scheme of life—it is certain that one's capacity for intellectual participation will outstrip his capacity for active participation. And when we set out to limit the mind's sharing thus in the widest accessible variety of interests, we need to take special care that we are not impoverishing beyond necessity the content of the good. Here also factual bounds exist; some things I must shut my eyes to if I am to have time and energy for my proper work. But there is no intrinsic merit in this limitation, as the sophisticate may be tempted to assume; the more widely one finds himself able to get a vicarious satisfaction out of the many interesting and diverting things that go on in the world the more in so far will the content of the good expand.

And I should be inclined, too, to defend the superiority of a partisan over a purely contemplative interest. Normally an added relish comes from taking sides. The current vogue of sports would disappear overnight if athletic contests had to rely for gate receipts on the magnet of mere dexterity or science; if there is nothing naturally to identify the spectator with one particular contestant he creates for himself an artificial interest—a need to which the universality of the betting habit is a tribute. To be sure, the ideal of the disinterested onlooker at the human spectacle is also an accredited ideal; there are men for whom the pure spirit of intellectual curiosity seems to offer a sufficient lure. But at best this is not a motive free of all suspicion. The real motive sometimes has the look of being less a disinterested curiosity than a claim to merit for having cleared one's mind of all

desires save the desire to understand, aided, perhaps, by a certain timidity of character which makes a man hesitate to commit himself to ends that may lead to disappointment.

One further consideration sets bounds to a man's rational right to a special and restricted form of good; this is the need for making sure that it does not conflict unnecessarily with other particular kinds of good which as a normal human being he is not really prepared to sacrifice. The existence of many such incompossibilities is one of the disadvantages to which we have to reconcile ourselves; a commitment to one sort of thing automatically is bound to limit and sometimes entirely to exclude satisfactions that may be equally appealing. And if by submitting to revision, therefore, an interest can be rendered less exclusive, it ordinarily will be worth our while to make the effort. It would carry me too far were I to start in to canvass the numerous ways in which this might affect a realistic reckoning of values; one case will be enough to serve as an example.

The problem of sexual freedom is an outstanding one among present controversial issues. I do not feel so certain of my ground that I should care to be dogmatic here. I have to confess that there are aspects of the newer freedom which personally I find unpleasant; this however may be due to the trammels of a lingering superstition which hamper a realistic judgment. But also I am handicapped by a difficulty in always making sure just where the new ideal is pointing. In the mouth of some of its defenders it seems to rest on a canonization of love and sex; for others the relaxing of conventional taboos looks more like a protest

against taking too seriously a casual and biologic function.

On the whole this last may perhaps be thought to have an advantage in the way at least of critical detachment. It is not hard to understand why love between the sexes should have played so preponderant a rôle in literature and art; art deals with the emotions first of all, and no emotion is more universal or more naturally exciting than that of love. But it is doubtful whether art in this case has been altogether true to life; in the everyday experience of men, and now increasingly of women also, love is hardly so overwhelmingly important as it is in books. Ambition, the routine of daily tasks, companionship and sport, occupy normally a larger share of attention than the erotic impulse; and when this is not the case it usually may be put down either to the influence of cramping circumstances which leave sex as the only easy outlet for the emotional life, or to specific abnormalities which the common judgment refuses to regard as admirable. We do not naturally approve the man who is too much engrossed either with the animal passions or with the more saccharine delights of sentimental love; it is difficult not to feel that he is overrating a type of interest that ought to fit more unobtrusively into a larger background.

In view of this it may therefore be that a relatively disparaging assessment of the sexual relationship performs a corrective service; we are more likely to see things as they really are when the veil of sentimentalism has been removed, and even if this is torn off with unnecessary roughness there may follow a resultant gain. The sexual life is one of those parts of human

nature which need a firm discipline, no doubt, if they are not to get out of hand; the casual lover is in the natural course of things in the way of becoming a voluptuary. But this may be counteracted when there is a plentiful supply of virile and active interests—the austerer pleasures of the mind, the exacting demands of a career, the vigorous and healthy activity of a life of hard work or hard play. Under such conditions sexual freedom may be held down to something like a proper place in our thoughts and conduct; and when this is so it has commonly been viewed, except by the severer moralist, with a measure of indulgence. It is true this matter-of-factness in the sexual life runs the risk that always attends an unreflective naturalism; in the casual pleasure-seeker in the field of sex a sensitiveness to other and subtler human values is likely to be blunted. Still, the popular judgment makes a considerable allowance for him in view of the strength of human passions and the instinctive dislike it feels to hypocritical pretensions. However it is also worth observing that when, as in recent days, sex freedom ceases to be a matter primarily of practical behavior and sets up as a philosophic dogma, the safeguards I have just referred to are likely to be weakened. The very habit of dwelling on sexual pleasures and of minimizing their shortcomings, when taken along with a poverty in the more strenuous springs of life such as is liable to accompany the philosophic or the literary temper, is almost sure to magnify them in the perspective of the modernist even though he may mean his emphasis to be the other way. And the consequence has been what might have been expected; to be too much preoccupied with any form of good which by

one's own confession has no more than an incidental and biological significance sooner or later issues not in real satisfaction but in disillusionment.

What I started out to say, however, concerns more directly the apologist for freedom who starts from the paramount rather than from the minor rôle of sex. That the romantic note of sentiment on which certain forms of modernism dwell may be a real constituent in the good of life I am not disposed to question. But it is not the whole of life, and it is not the whole of love, which as the modern world understands it is woven of many strands; to say nothing of the distinctive satisfactions that attach to children, sympathy and comradeship and helpful coöperation are also things which every normal person wants, and which have a chance of being attained—not the only chance of course—in the close relationship between a particular man and a particular woman. It is man's good fortune that all of these various forms of good are capable of being made to supplement and reinforce one another. But to this end we need to bring a habit of mind that is propitious; and there is reason to question whether modernism lends its influence on the whole to such an outcome.

For it is in the nature of the second group of qualities to aim at security, steadfastness, mutual trust and dependability; and eroticism as a natural phenomenon is pointed the opposite way. Generally speaking, neither physical attraction nor vehement emotion can be counted on to last; as biological contrivances which nature has devised their function does not call for this. The more we put the claim to freedom therefore in the foreground, the more likely is the consequence

to be a stimulus to change and instability; and in that degree we are lessening the chance that the other and more civilized demand is going to be met. It is not a reasonable expedient for ensuring this to overemphasize an experimentalism that militates against its possibility. Marriage may in a given case have failed to secure the values that go to justify it in the large; and if in urging freedom we only mean to vindicate man's right to retrieve the blunders that may always be expected from his impulsiveness and shortsightedness there is presumably a good deal to be said for it. But one has a right to be suspicious of any method of correcting an abuse when the natural effect is to aggravate the abuse in question.

In the suggestions I have somewhat casually been making there has been no effort to explore the various virtues in particular, most of which are at the present day more likely to give rise to controversies than to settle them; my concern has been with the larger considerations to which virtues have to look for their rational evaluation. But before concluding it may be found useful if in the light of such principles I add a few remarks that bear more directly on one special type of good which has a peculiar importance for morality. Among the vast variety of values open to a catholic mind, those that men call social always have had a dominating place. Empirically this finds its clearest warrant in the principle of a multiplied interest; to the power of expansion which a coöperation with one's fellows lends the personal life philosophers pretty generally have been wont to look for the least controvertible if not the profoundest sanction of the social virtues. The ground here is too familiar to make it

necessary I should try to cover it again, but I shall comment on a few points more immediately relevant to my purpose.

One way of putting this particular form of the social sanction is by calling it enlightened self-interest. Since to those who deal in large moral principles any infusion of the selfish motive has a way of being felt to be degrading, one is called on to use discrimination here; the moralist's objection to self-interest is, indeed, pretty certain to be justified unless the word is divested first of its dyslogistic associations. There is no great trouble, for example, in making a case against the current business philosophy which would have us think that greed is on the whole a useful and rather laudable state of mind and that one is most likely to serve his fellows by thinking only of himself. But this is hardly to give weight enough to the qualifying term. Under the influence of a genuine enlightenment self-interest tends not only to revise its methods, but to undergo itself an inner change. A man is not seeing things as they really are when he declines to recognize the claims of other men as objective facts which not only represent obstacles for him to overcome, but which call for a reconsideration of his own demands. It is almost the essence of that very rare thing, a liberal education, that it should enable us to enter sympathetically into alien points of view; to have no capacity for this is the sign of an intellectual myopia one of whose first results will be to damage the causes a man has himself at heart. Thus an enlightened class interest is certain to fall short of genuine intelligence when its realism stops with a recognition of the external difficulties in the way of keeping its special privileges intact; without a more

generous understanding of the reasons that lead other classes to dispute its claims—and this will mean some revision of the claims themselves—it will always underestimate their force and move too slowly and grudgingly for safety. But after we have made allowance for the risks of an unduly narrow definition, the fact remains that the social virtues would have but a frail support in the absence of self-interest; at least it is true that in an appeal to motives that are not altruistic in the ideal sense, but that give a promise of personal satisfaction, our best chance lies of bringing social conduct into a field where argument may be expected to get results.

It is a plausible contention, for example, that my own freedom is materially furthered in a society of free men. That the tyrant is least of all an untrammeled agent is a commonplace of history, and the same thing in a lesser degree is true of an aristocracy erected on the foundation of unprivileged classes. A good that is restricted is in its nature bound to be less secure; and with insecurity comes a subtly pervasive apprehension whose natural effect is to aggravate the evils which it dreads and so augment the stuff it feeds upon. For as innumerable instances make evident—the Southern planter for example, or the Englishman in India—fear acts automatically to intensify caste prejudice; and the inevitable effect of prejudice is to darken intellectual vision and thus put further obstacles in the way of intelligent compromise. We see an example at the present moment in the hysteria which is driving a capitalistic order to a senseless policy of violence whose natural consequence in

adding to the forces of discontent should be evident to any unbiassed mind.

There is, no doubt, something to be set down on the other side. An arrogant and arbitrary power must have its own rewards, or men would not have been so keen about it. But the deductions to be made are equally apparent. To say nothing of the underlying current of uneasiness at the spectacle of great inequalities, from which only dulness of mind will entirely protect us, there is one disadvantage in particular of a more rational complexion. Authority that rests on force is authority that takes the easiest way, and the easiest way is, normally, not the one from which the highest satisfaction follows. The imperialist, the political dictator, the modern business overlord, is exercising relatively simple and primitive endowments; while we may admire in a way his driving force, the chances are that he is missing other potential satisfactions more genuinely human. The chief reward of power, as of other things, lies not in the enjoyment of possession but in the activity it calls in play; and this active satisfaction will in general be proportionate to the degree in which it gives employment to a man's full energies of mind. But in that case we should expect to find the most satisfying exercise of power not in compulsion but in "influence." It takes a higher type of mind, and calls for far more genuine intelligence, to get one's way by bringing about a rational and voluntary coöperation on the part of other men than by riding roughshod over them; and in the end it is the democratic statesman rather than the despot who enjoys more real power even, though to the super-

ficial mind this may be obscured by the pomp and circumstance that dictators commonly affect.

And the same judgment will hold good in other fields. If the final justification of the business life—and this is what captains of industry would like to have us think—is the scope it gives to better brains and the pleasure that derives from putting them to use, then the more democratic and the less despotic business can be made the more valid its pretensions will appear to be. It is a real deduction from the claims of our highly advertised business intelligence that it has still largely failed to recognize this truth. The business man who does not apply the best scientific knowledge of the day to the process of production is by general consent adjudged second-rate; but without suffering in the esteem of his associates he still continues for the most part to refuse to give his mind to devising better ways of managing his relations with his workmen, preferring to keep to the old and stupid methods of dictatorial force. It is even probable that in the long run he may be losing money by such a failure, but this is not the most significant result; the immediate rewards of the business life are in any case curtailed. The reason why the employer is generally content to drive his workers rather than coöperate with them is plainly in large measure that such a method calls for less thought and effort. But this, whatever else it may be, is not a rational excuse; if his work as a producer gets a dignity only in proportion as he declines to follow easy and beaten paths and brings to it his best intellectual resources, there is no reason to suppose that the same thing will not be true as well of the human relationships that also are a part, and

not the least important part, of the modern business problem.

I shall have failed to make clear the purpose of the present chapter unless it is remembered that what I have been looking for is not general principles merely, but principles of which it may plausibly be claimed not only that most men will accept them as a basis of common argument, but that they are specific enough actually to mediate to some extent between competing notions of the good. Argument, it seems evident, will move with greatest assurance within the field of desire, and of desire in terms of more or less; if we can show men that they themselves really want one thing more than they do another we have some leverage upon their action. For the purpose of setting up anything like a general standard this rules out a number of possible suggestions, partly, as has been said, because dominant desires differ in different men so widely, and in part because some of the things that might be said about desire, however true, are too indefinite to be of much use for guidance. Thus it might be urged that the quantity of good is proportionate to the "intensity" of desire; but this, even if we were to waive qualifying clauses, does not seem to tell us much about how to reckon intensities in rational terms. We should get a workable principle here only in case there could be pointed out some general rule governing intensity, as perhaps within limits it may be possible to do. Thus it seems plausible to say that intensity is determined, among other things, by a confluence of interests; an end which in its attainment calls into play a variety of independent desires is in so far likely to arouse a stronger interest than

one which is relatively simple, an intellectual interest, for example, being heightened when it also serves æsthetic or practical needs. In any case, it is only as argument can appeal to such a concrete and factual consideration that we have the sort of principle than may be expected to lend itself to the creation of a common standard.

Meanwhile there unquestionably would be a widely held opinion that, with reason thus limited, the most serious problems of the moral life remain untouched. It is not enough to get men to agree on what they want. There is still the question whether this is what they *ought* to want; and this question, so it will probably be said, is incapable of settlement in quantitative terms. "Ought" seems to imply a reference not merely to something which is desired more, but to something also which is "better," and which, because it is better, has the right of way even over strong desire; in the various forms of good, that is to say, we may detect a new qualitative character through which goods can be ranked in the order of their excellence, those which rank higher having a superior claim on our moral allegiance. It is only in this way that the favorite principles of a morality of reason can be made empirically convincing. A good that is *purely* naturalistic does not to our natural judgment appear to assert any authority other than that which comes from the force of our desire; there is no reason, for example, why of necessity we should feel under moral compulsion to eat more rather than less simply because this would double our enjoyment, or why, if the world were overflowing with sensual pleasures, we should be led to say that this in so far is what the world "ought" to be.

If it is true that it is our duty to aim always at the best, any self-evidence attaching to the principle will derive, as I have said before, from the fact that we are importing into the notion of the best an implicit reference to what *morally* is best—to some quality of excellence exercising moral compulsion. But this brings up again the practical difficulties in the way of getting people to agree in their judgments of qualitative preference. Is there, now, any way of adjudicating such quarrels without having to fall back on the notion of ultimate deliverances of reason independent of man's practical and emotional constitution? To answer this it will be necessary to consider more carefully what "quality" may be supposed to mean.

Chapter X

QUALITATIVE STANDARDS

The notion of quality is one which the thoroughgoing modernist often thinks it possible to exclude from the premises. For the Freudian, in particular, repression of the natural instincts, instead of being what makes man distinctively a moral being, is the one original sin; the aim of intelligence is to release every particle of human energy, which otherwise would fester and spread contagion to the inner life; and the business of the expert in human living is, in consequence, not to apply standards of value to items all equally deserving of respect, but merely to regulate their flow so that instead of being diverted into stagnant backwaters they may join a single onward-moving current. And sensibly interpreted such a claim plainly has a good deal to be said for it. But on its working side the ideal of a full play of impulse is likely to turn out to be only another of those generalities which gratify the speculative demand for a formula much more completely than they meet the need for guidance. We shall have to possess a far more adequate knowledge of human nature than at present before it can be accepted as an adequate definition of practical intelligence; what is likely to happen in such a case is not a judicious subordination of the relatively unimportant, but a crowded emotional experience where intensity and spontaneity

of feeling count for more than rational self-knowledge. At the same time we have to grant that the attempt to correct the deficiency by a resort to qualitative differences is by no means certain of success. Quality is a term we shall find it a good deal easier to talk about than to assign an explicit meaning; and so before we can look for principles to govern it we shall have first to settle on its definition.

Is there to begin with, we may ask, any simple and unanalyzable property that can be attributed to certain impulses or certain satisfactions such as gives us the right to rank them higher in the scale of excellence? Without much question this is what we find ourselves inclined to do. Over and above the mere fact that I may want them more it is difficult without putting restraint upon the feelings to avoid a tendency to judge some forms of good higher than other forms, and to think that such a qualitative eminence ought to outweigh intensity or bulk; it is here, indeed, that moralists habitually have looked to find a support for authoritative standards. But also this is the natural source of moral dogmatism. If a man has only to point to some innate superiority which his own moral preference can show, he has given up any attempt to prove his case. The superiority may be real, and he may conceivably be able to bring others to feel with him that it is so. But there is no rational way of doing this in the everyday sense of producing assignable reasons that will sway the mind; if the claim is not admitted he has only an inner assurance to fall back upon. The situation here, it will be observed, bears a somewhat different face from that which comparisons of quantity present. In rating values quantitatively we

can for the most part suppose a sufficient likeness among human beings to give warrant for assuming that the fundamental sources of enjoyment are a common property. Consequently, both of the things to be compared have potentially a value for the disputants; and while they may differ in the way they rank them, at least they know what they mean when they say that one has a greater value than the other. But intrinsic quality, as something *sui generis* that by definition is inherent in a single item of experience, will be nonexistent for the man who does not feel it; and it is hard to see, therefore, in what direction one can look for a common ground of rational discussion.

Unless, accordingly, we are content to stop with an unsupported faith, we are compelled to ask whether it may not be possible to discover more positive and empirical grounds for a qualitative preference. If the difference is a real one there presumably is *some* psychological reason to account for it. It may not be a good reason in the sense that it is bound to carry "rational" conviction; that can only be determined when we know what the reason is. But at least we are pointed to the road we need to follow; and the best way to locate such a possible determinant will be to pass under review one or more of the actual claimants to qualitative rank.

A familiar case in point, which has the advantage also of being relatively uncomplicated by the special perplexities attending moral virtue, is that version of a higher versus a lower life which is bound up with the claims of culture. In the form in which most clearly they distinguish human nature from the brutes, men's interests diverge alike from the simpler pleas-

ures and from the quest for material possessions in the direction of the more refined enjoyments—intellectual or æsthetic—of the mind. That here we have a difference that deserves in some sense to be called a qualitative one is too widely accredited a judgment to be entirely without basis; what reason, then, is one to plead for it?

The first and simplest reason is not good enough. It is not sufficient for a man to say that one pleasure is higher than another because he in his superior sophistication gets more pleasure out of it; there is no one who can be kept from making for himself a similar claim, and to rule this out merely by saying that he is not so enlightened as ourselves is a bit presumptuous. Quality carries the implication not of liking simply, but of respect or admiration also; this involves the further activity of an intellectual judgment; and there will have to be something therefore, overt or implicit, which is present in the one case and absent in the other, and which the mind must be able to grasp before a difference in ranking has any chance of being justified.

One consideration lies upon the surface. We may take a fancy to almost anything, and we are not called on of necessity to give a reason for the liking other than the fact that we are so constituted as to like it. On the other hand, we do not "admire" a thing except for some special character which it does not share with other and more commonplace forms of good; and one such character is just the fact that it *is* different and distinctive and relatively rare. We do not find our admiration going out to ordinary gifts or virtues or achievements; what is equally within the reach of all is entitled to no special credit. Nor do we have to look

far to discover how large a part in practice this plays in the popular notion of qualitative rank. A very considerable number of the things that currently are lauded get their importance primarily from the fact that they are *not* widely shared; the principle that what is rare is therefore precious is one with a spiritual as well as a commercial application. Almost any possession that a man feels to be peculiarly his own he may be led to cherish as the title to a special excellence, sometimes to the point of plain absurdity; he is even capable of prizing his very vices and defects if these are sensational enough. The exceptional in other people is not so certain of arousing admiration; since each man's interests constitute for him a touchstone, anything in character or manners that lies outside the ordinary, from genius down, may strike the outsider rather as an eccentricity, calling for derision rather than respect. But this is only when a community of interest is lacking; the thing another has, or does, toward which we also entertain ambitions, and which he does better than the generality, is always a signal for our admiration.

But while an admiration for what is rare or exclusive may be a natural human trait, it also has to be observed that it need not lead us to despise, still less does it justify us always in despising, the lesser or the common. To confuse the common with the vulgar is, indeed, the distinctive mark of snobbery. The common may in point of fact be vulgar, but it is not its commonness that makes it so; this last persuasion is the source of characteristic vices. Where a man feels that he has a sufficient backing in other similar pretenders it issues in the aristocratic vice of supercil-

iousness and pride of caste; and whatever the source of this—it may range all the way from money or the accident of birth to genuine gifts of mind—it is pretty sure to be the sign of a failure in intellectual competence, since it can hardly be imagined that the things most representative of the human race are to be excluded from a rational understanding of man's good. And the plebeian on his side is likely to find his sources of enjoyment tainted; either he envies what he cannot have to the impairment of the happiness which lies within his reach, or he turns to the onerous vocation of the social climber and the elusive pleasures of a precarious contact with the great.

At least, then, a qualitative excellence resting solely on such adventitious grounds has little claim upon our settled confidence. However, it will probably be felt that this is not fair to the real merits of the case that can be made for intellectual or æsthetic quality; the impression is still likely to remain that there is something here that does really function as a standard. At any rate, standards of a sort have been commonly assumed to belong to a cultural equipment, and it may help clear the issue if we consider what such a claim implies.

Recently an acrimonious dispute has been going on about this matter of literary and æsthetic standards; among the modernists there has been a tendency to question their existence in the traditional sense at least, while the humanist has seized on the denial to support his repudiation of the whole modern program. The unattached observer may be excused for hesitating to take sides whole-heartedly with either party to the controversy. He may sympathize with the modernist's

dislike of fixed standards in literature and art, since their natural upshot is a disparagement of novelty and fresh experiment; but on the other hand he will scarcely be content to leave everything to the dogmatic utterance of a personal taste. As a matter of fact no one really proposes to do this, whatever he may sometimes seem to say. The critic must perforce assume that some things artistically are better done than others; and if they are better then they are being measured by a standard, whatever the difficulties in the way of rendering this explicit.

A part of the trouble here is due to an easily avoidable confusion. The real quarrel that the modernist has with classicism concerns not the reality of standards, but the supremacy of certain standards in particular; what he wants to say is that art may set itself an indefinite variety of ends, and that the rules which govern one of these need not be applicable to the rest. It is only when it is insisted that some special artistic model has an intrinsic superiority that the issue becomes controversial. To this last claim the modernist presumably has grounds for his objection; the artist, he will say, has a perfect right to aim at any effect he pleases, and his standing is measured by the degree in which he succeeds in getting this effect and not by a conformity to rules that have in view a different goal. To others the effect may seem not worth producing. But that is their affair, not his; and it is their affair not in the rôle of critic, but as human beings exercising their inalienable privilege of declining to take an interest in things for which they have no liking. Only in case the artist becomes himself a dogmatist and proceeds—as unhappily he is apt to do

—to rule out older and more familiar forms of interest does he begin to forfeit his immunity.

But while the artist may consistently refuse to follow traditional patterns when they have no relevance to the things he himself is aiming at, it is not open to him to try to get along without a standard of his own after he once has made his choice. Something in the nature of a standard is involved in the existence of objective conditions of accomplishment, and his ranking will be determined by the degree in which he masters these. The standard may be nothing more than a recognition of the methods required for producing certain mental and emotional impressions, and that, too, not in every man but in an audience fitted to receive them. Nevertheless so far as it goes it is a perfectly good standard, and it offers an indispensable way of assessing artistic merit. This puts upon the serious critic a duty not properly fulfilled by the mere exploitation of his personal likes and dislikes. But at the same time it falls very far short, once more, of the demands of classicism. Once committed, every true artist accepts the conditions of workmanship which his design necessitates; but there is nothing in so far to tell us that only certain ends are artistically permitted or that among legitimate standards one ranks higher than another—nothing, that is, except the personal predilections of the critic, and these exercise no rational compulsion. If we still retain the right to say that an epic stands in a sense on a higher level than a sonnet or a symphony than a folk song, this does not mean that the composer is of necessity a truer artist, but only that he is drawing on larger resources of mind and character. Art as such does not lay itself open to dis-

paragement because it chooses to accept restrictions in its subject matter; in point of fact its method does not in all respects take kindly to the universal, and what it gains in breadth it is apt to lose in poignancy.

And now this conclusion would appear to have a more special application. Not only does it leave us with no way of settling æsthetic quarrels by a resort to some special pattern of perfection, but we equally have failed to come across any clear mark that art in general possesses such as renders it superior in intrinsic excellence to other human interests. A good deal of unprofitable snobbishness might be avoided by a recognition that æsthetic standards are primarily for the working artist; they represent the demands of a particular trade rather than a universal measuring rod. The artist or the professional critic is bound to submit to them in so far as they can be determined, just as the business man must submit to economic laws if he is to be successful in a different field. But neither has in so far ground for complaint against those who decline to join in his particular undertaking. After all, the business of the ordinary man with art—at least with the more pretentious arts—seems likely to be always of a different kind. He is concerned not with producing art but with enjoying it; and it is hardly reasonable to ask him to sacrifice enjoyment for no greater reward than the satisfaction of knowing that his æsthetic opinions are technically correct.

Nevertheless, I should still be surprised if these considerations also were to prove entirely convincing. It is true we as yet have found no reasons for recommending æsthetic or intellectual excellence that would not apply equally to other ends less impressive to our

natural feelings; the trouble may, however, be with the reasons rather than with the conclusion they are intended to support. At any rate, we probably can count on finding so-called cultivated people reluctant to shed the sense of having a duty toward the "spiritual" life which does not face them in, we will say, the field of business enterprise. A man usually will desire to get rich, but there is no intrinsic reason, though there may be secondary ones, why he should take blame for a lack of ambition here; it is more likely he will be disposed to pride himself on his indifference to a common idol. But once he has caught a glimpse of the disparity between a more and a less discriminating sensitivity to beauty or between duller and more penetrating wits—naturally if he cannot see a difference there is nothing to base a judgment on—there is ground in experience for thinking he will not in the future be quite satisfied with himself if he allows more facile pleasures to usurp his mind. I am not saying that the moral critic is warranted in imposing this on him as a duty. I only say he is likely himself to feel some empirical constraint which he naturally will interpret as an "ought."

That in the positive nature of excellence when taken by itself there is nothing to make necessary our having such a feeling of constraint I have already argued; the facts of experience seem to bear this out. Even an admitted excellence has no need to assume the form of a personal duty; if that always were the case the chances would be slim for man's peace of mind. Excellence takes on many shapes, and no one can be expected to achieve them all; to aim at this would be to lay oneself open to constant disappointment and frus-

tration. I may admire the poet or the statesman without feeling the slightest call to emulate him. And even within the field where I do find a duty meeting me, its force and range are subject to a wide and apparently unprincipled variation. Because charity is a virtue, and presumably a greater virtue in proportion to its scope, it does not follow that I as an individual should feel it my duty to give all my money to the poor; nor does any irreducible standard of generosity exist by which to measure my default. If we are not to be left at the mercy of an unattainable ideal there will need to be some further way of deciding the manner and degree of excellence to which one is under obligation to aspire. And this, by a process of exclusion, means that we are led once more to look for an explanation of the feeling of constraint, when it is present, not to the positive attraction of a higher good, but to the *dis*-satisfaction induced by something antagonistic to this good; the immediate foundation of a sense of moral duty toward excellence, as of duty generally, will lie in the reasons that lead me to condemn rather than, directly and solely, in those that lead me to approve.

And now the thesis I am intending to suggest is, that as a pure matter of experience we are warranted in saying that whenever a desired course of action leaves us thus with a feeling of disparagement, this will naturally translate itself into a sense of obligation to a "better" rather than to a merely "greater" value. It does this simply by reason of the character that condemnation bears as an emotion. Any genuine emotion possesses potentially the capacity for making it appear that a failure to share it is an indication of some measure of inferiority. It is the essence of an emotion

to be felt as consequential; and a refusal to acknowledge its importance we tend to assess therefore as a sign of imperfection. So sympathy instinctively passes censure on cruelty or callousness; the ambitious man naturally will hold in some contempt his less aspiring neighbor; romanticism looks down with condescension on matter-of-factness and utility; any act that by interfering with desire arouses personal resentment it is our first impulse to take as a violation of objective justice; and no one who feels the thrill of beauty can easily avoid harboring a doubt about the full human status of people whose failure likewise to respond puts a damper on his enthusiasm. In a word, "importance" —and an emotion in its very nature always is intrinsically important for the one who feels is—automatically imparts a negative value to whatever stands in contrast to it. And, furthermore, it does this without regard to other and possibly more rational considerations. To the extent that he is possessed by strong emotion a man is likely not to reckon consequences carefully; at the moment they seem negligible in comparison with the urgency and felt significance of his emotional impulsion. Resentment, for example, takes little account normally of the risks it runs. It is felt as a more pressing need to vent our anger than to escape future penalties; indeed, it is in general notoriously difficult to get people to use their reason at all under the influence of emotional obsessions.

It is here, accordingly, that I should be disposed to look for what in the last analysis constitutes the psychological nature of qualitative excellence. The emotional object is "higher," and not merely different, because of the significance which emotion lends it; and

it is qualitatively higher rather than quantitatively greater because considerations of quantity play a secondary rôle in comparison with emotional impressiveness. This would appear to be the reason why "preference" and "admiration" were seen to lend themselves to a qualitative ranking; both are feelings of importance, and as such they carry an immediate sense of higher value. And now the moral feelings, likewise, will have the same potentiality. Anything we "ought" to do *ipso facto* involves a judgment of quality rather than of quantity; like any other emotion the moral emotion has the property, temporarily at any rate, of putting its own verdict ahead of a sober calculation of results. Even in case we try to strike a balance it often will be difficult to assure ourselves that "worse" is equivalent to "less"; it very easily may happen that the enjoyment we condemn seems to us as a pleasure really greater, without its acquiring on that account the right to override opposition. And since obligation already is implicit in the moral feeling, excellence here will make that moral claim upon our choice which it has no need to make on a naturalistic level.

And the rational excuse for this is that a satisfying life does not call for positive elements of pleasure simply; there is equally the need of an escape from reflective regret and disillusionment. I do not know that there is any way of measuring the relative significance, for contentment, of these reflective distastes as compared with active satisfactions; differences of natural temper are bound to complicate the judgment. The man of action, aggressive and full-blooded, will have less time and inclination for looking backward,

and will be disposed to regard reflective moralizings as mawkish and unreal; and the common judgment goes along with him in deprecating an excess of introspection, whether in the form of the moral agonizings prized by religion in the past, or of that preoccupation with personal shortcomings which a milder generation knows as an inferiority complex. Still, the sick soul is not alone in failing to measure up to rational requirements. No man can afford to shed the past and its mistakes too lightly for an unreflective and carefree enjoyment of new scenes and new adventures. Happiness in the existing world is not a spontaneous product; and since one cannot, when he stops to think, avoid recognizing many things that fail to satisfy a sober sense of what he owes himself, a reckoning with these sources of possible dissatisfaction must enter into the planning of his future life under penalty of his forfeiting the right to be regarded as a rational creature.

I assume that it normally belongs to human nature, then, for men to find themselves on contemplation feeling an immediate distaste for some of the ends and motives on which they nevertheless are disposed to act, and that in such a case we are justified in speaking of a "qualitative" as against a "quantitative" valuation. But while the experience is a real one for the man himself, and may in proportion to his self-awareness have an important part to play in the conduct of his life, it still is left to ask whether it lends itself to the special task of setting up a *common* standard that will bear rational inspection. The feeling of moral repugnance is often a subtle one, and when we undertake to make it universal we are peculiarly liable to the charge of dogmatism; before accepting its claim to a rational

authority its nature and conditions will need further scrutiny.

That some of the motives which lend themselves to a qualitative repugnance are not easy to adjudicate through reason seems apparent. A number of moral or quasi-moral judgments, for example, depend on a dislike of what is æsthetically unpleasing; the "ugliness" of vice has a good deal to do with our disapproval of it. In so far it will be felt as "lower"; and to the extent that for a given man it thus calls forth aversion he will be justified in excluding it from the content of the good. But the sense of ugliness is primarily an emotional rather than a rational experience, which as such is not readily constrained by argument. Sympathy, to take another instance, is an important source of moral antipathy; but sympathy also is a feeling which cannot be argued into existence when it does not arise spontaneously. We may claim, and very possibly be justified in claiming, that a man ought to open his mind to sympathy or to a sense of beauty even though actually they do not influence him. But here we are shifting ground. We are now by implication saying something, not about the object of antipathy, but about the *virtue* of human kindliness; we are not disapproving the ugliness of a vicious action but a quality in the agent who fails to be revolted by it. We are dealing, that is, with the sort of thing that in an earlier chapter was identified with a moral value in the distinctive sense—with certain traits of human character, namely, which have a specially close connection with the possibilities of human good.

And we can go a step farther. Human sympathy is for us a good if we are sympathetically disposed toward

it, view it with natural liking or approval. But to argue with another man that he *ought* to cultivate sympathetic feeling is another matter. Merely to presuppose the value of sympathy will help us only in case he already admits its claim, in which case no argument will be needed. But it is possible, as I have pointed out, to draw upon more rational considerations; and in doing this we again are brought into contact with one virtue in particular as of very special importance for the ethicist. Self-respect is not the only virtue, and it may not be the highest one. But it *is* the virtue most relevant to moral argument as opposed to moral exhortation, and most relevant to any attempt, accordingly, to justify a general standard that can be reasoned about in terms of common principles.

For the peculiarity of self-respect as a motive lies in its rational or intellectual content; any attempt to paraphrase the term will point, I think, to this conclusion. Thus when a man suffers in his self-respect he naturally speaks of himself as feeling small, or cheap, or petty; and all such words have a quantitative connotation which implies the possibility of rational comparison. I should want again to guard against seeming to claim too much. On any showing there remains a large chance of variation among the component goods that may enter into the comparison, and we need to go slow in assigning to such a judgment a necessary character. Also, once more, the perception of inferiority will not constitute a motive by itself in the absence of distaste or condemnation, and this last is a factual datum which, as sentiment or feeling, cannot be commandeered by argument alone. But once grant its existence as a human motive and it admits of being reasoned about; we may

always expect to discover something in experience in terms of more or less from which the judgment of inferiority arises. If among the various things that may prevent the sentiment from being felt the cause should chance to be some ultimate grain of a man's natural constitution, then, to be sure, argument is useless. But there are less fundamental causes that militate against its presence which conceivably may prove less stubborn —ignorance, muddled thinking, prejudice; and these are all things that come within the scope of reason. We may try therefore to remove them; and in so far as we succeed in uncovering an effective motive we have arrived at the sort of common premise which a standard presupposes.

The advantage which we thus secure I may once more illustrate by a comparison with the sympathetic motive. The defect of sympathy is not any inherent weakness pertaining to it as a natural emotion; it is a strong feeling on the whole, which normally is an influence in keeping men from being too easily satisfied with restricted ends. But it is not a feeling directly open to debate. To the conditions of my own happiness it is a psychological impossibility that I should be indifferent when they are pointed out; but no such inherent necessity attaches to my feeling about another person's good. Most people seem to have in point of fact no deep conviction that man as such, human life or happiness in the large, possesses an intrinsic worth, any more than they take seriously the claim of animals to have their interests respected; active sympathy extends at best only to a group of selected individuals, and when it fails to arise spontaneously there is no obvious way of going to work by

argument to coerce it. But if one feels no duty toward mankind it may still be that reason will point out to him a duty toward himself. Callousness is a refusal to make allowance in our judgments for certain kinds of perfectly authentic fact, and argues in consequence an intellectual defect; and it is within the range of possibility that a man should be brought to feel that he is degrading himself by this refusal even though he does not find himself stirred emotionally by a good that is not his own. As a matter of fact it is not uncommon to find a strong sense of justice existing in people who are markedly lacking in a sentimental interest in their fellow men.

My thesis is, accordingly, threefold. What we call a moral sense of qualitative difference—quality as felt to be a source of moral duty—arises when we recognize an act or motive as "inferior"; its essential constituent is a distaste for the lower of two contrasted terms rather than a positive attraction toward the higher, though in order to become a part of the conspicuous virtues quality likewise will imply a degree of active admiration for some commanding form of good. It is here that technically the difference lies between the present doctrine and that which earlier I found occasion to reject. Moral quality is comparative, not absolute; it stands not for any simple and intrinsic character but for "better than." If moral excellence attached to some single object it would have its being on a plane along with the factual or naturalistic qualities of sense or feeling; as such it might equally excite desire, but in itself it would possess no claim to ideal authority. In the second place, inferiority as a *rational* concept must be taken in its natural and quantitative sense. And,

finally, what enables us to distinguish this from a perception of quantity in the non-moral acceptation is not some ultimate and indefinable mark, but a difference of experimental motivation. When I merely choose a larger good my reason is that I want it more, and that is not enough to cast reproach upon its rival; I often should be glad to add this to my repertory if I could see my way to it. Nor is the presence of distaste sufficient in the form merely of a positive disinclination for the rejected claimant; this would constitute a source of negative value but not of moral value, since it still would leave choice under the influence directly of desire. To give rise to a sense of moral duty that is deserving to be called "rational," the thing that ultimately I dislike will have to be, not the lesser good, but the idea of myself as the sort of person that in spite of its inferiority this good attracts. In other words, my sense of intellectual self-respect now enters as a motive; if I feel that I "ought" not to be cruel, it is because by yielding to such a motive I should be led to despise myself as an inferior sort of man incapable of being guided by real differences of worth.

Such a sentiment of intellectual self-respect, I have admitted or, rather, have insisted, *is* a feeling, and merely *as* a feeling it possesses no superiority to any other. But actually, for the business of moral reason at any rate, it has a certain ultimateness; all other virtues in the last resort, when they are reasoned about, lead up to it. If I ask why I should be honest or just or temperate, I may in practice be content to stop with the immediate credentials which honesty or temperance present. But when these credentials are questioned I shall find myself, if I am intellectually sensi-

tive, taking a further step; I demand sincerity or self-restraint if I am to be able to maintain my own sense of dignity as a human being. And there I have to stop. Of other emotions I may ask the question: Are they really appropriate to the conditions which excite them? Indignation may, for example, easily be too extreme for the occasion; any enthusiasm may be overwrought. But this means precisely that I have failed to exercise that power of disinterested quantitative valuation on which the one residual virtue of self-respect depends.

And in terms of such a motive, to go back a little, we may find an explanation of the duty which the "best" imposes without having to accept the extremer corollaries that follow from the claims of intrinsic excellence. While clearly it is so that the best does put moral constraint upon us, it does this in a way that cannot be separated from the demands of self-respect; only through a disparagement of ourselves as creatures content to put up with a lesser good does it get its emotional hold on our allegiance. But with this it loses something of its ultimateness as a rule of conduct. As a large principle of action it will naturally take on that absolute character to which all abstract principles pretend; but concretely any judgment of obligation will be bound to take account of a variety of special circumstances. These will have no power to qualify the nature of excellence as such. But they may very easily affect the force of the distaste we are led to feel toward ourselves; and to that extent they will modify the sense of duty.

And if it is so that moral quality, as rational, leads us back to a difference in quantity, we may in logic see our way once more to the possibility of a standard.

The judgment here will be more beset with difficulties than prudential judgments are. It will not permit us to stop with the obvious things that everyone admits are values, but will invite us to sharpen and refine our sensitivity of mind and feeling beyond the point of their ordinary cultivation. In this way it gives me the right to say that I "ought" to be sensitive to values which I do not actually feel, provided I only mean by this that empirical grounds exist for suspecting potential powers of appreciation which I cannot, when or if I come to recognize their presence, ignore without loss to my self-respect. And the same sort of judgment which we pass upon ourselves experience does not forbid our passing on other men as well if we exercise due caution. There is an almost universal disposition to refuse to accept at its face value a plea for moral indulgence when it rests, however honestly, on an estimate of merely personal good unenlightened by a more objective standard. If a man says that he is forced by necessity to be brutal or dishonest because otherwise he would be imperiling his chance for life or for enjoyment, popular opinion may be counted on to balk at acknowledging his premise; why is it indispensable, he will be asked, that you should enjoy yourself, or even go on living, if this means a sacrifice of human values which to any disinterested mind are plainly greater? And apart from active censure, what it may be is a still more fundamental weakness is exposed in the common judgment of indifference. An egoist is, *qua* egoist, not interesting; there is nothing to claim our attention or esteem in his meager and contracted ends, and the more exciting they appear to him the less we are able to respect his understanding. It is not only, there-

fore, that the claim to make a limited good supreme is to render social life impossible; it carries a rational stigma also, which no one would welcome if his eyes were open to what it really signified. A given man conceivably may have no power of seeing facts except as they affect his own desires; if this is so we shall have to put up with it and treat him as we should the brute who lays no claim to reason. But if he is not willing to accept this status—and few men really are—then he must be prepared to show his rationality by his deeds; and he cannot complain if others judge him in terms of the objective standard which potentially is open to him even though at the moment he fails to recognize its implications.

It is here we may find the warrant for a motive to which I have already several times referred. Moral indignation may, like other feelings, lend itself to the vice of intolerance; but it will not need to do this if we define it with sufficient care and keep it apart from other feelings that may be confused with it. Indignation is not hatred, for example. Hate is a self-centered feeling; it arises from an interference with our private interests, and usually gives little heed to the comparative importance of the various goods at stake. Indignation, on the other hand, does imply a judgment of comparison. The source of my indignation may lie in acts which do violence to rights I lay claim to for myself. But because it has to do with "rights" there is an intellectual element involved, and this tends to universalize what might otherwise have been a purely emotional reaction, so as to make it irrelevant what particular persons are concerned. And by reason of this divorce there belongs to indignation a power of

detachment that gives it a standing of its own among the motives that enter into moral condemnation; since it has to do in the first instance with the intellectual quality of the deed rather than with the moral iniquity of the doer, when handled judiciously it not only may be free from animosity toward individuals but may even presume a genuine interest in their good. Irritation at conduct which we feel is falling short of a due human standard may really mean a higher estimate of human dignity, and be more complimentary to the offender, than indifference or an amused condescension such as we display toward children.

Also we may turn this, no doubt, against the man himself, and within limits may be justified in doing so. But to be on the safe side morally it is not the sinner's abstract guilt, but his unreason, that will need to be the primary object of resentment—a resentment that has no reason for persisting, therefore, after its purpose once has been accomplished. This in essence is the Christian doctrine of repentance. The more earnest modern critic has been disposed to repudiate this doctrine; that a life of evil-doing should be wiped out by a simple shift of mind is, he will often tell us, an immoral creed. And so it is if retribution is the final word of justice. But for a rational resentment it is not the deed that is most to be abhorred—were this the case much of our time might need to be engaged in abhorring Nature—but the sort of mind and character which, with reason latent in it, in spite of this rejoices in abhorrent things. Even in the more innocuous domain of beauty much the same thing holds; our annoyance at expressions of bad taste is called forth less by the falsity of the judgment—why after all should we ob-

ject if a man finds pleasure in a chromo provided the pleasure is a real one?—than by the temper of mind which makes a merit of its low estate and turns a deaf ear to any suggestion of improvement. And the case is still plainer when we have to do with moral faults. We may, even to the point of rancor, desire to see shattered the self-complacency which ignores the true nature of the evil act. But once this is broken through and we have ground for believing the evil-doer does honestly realize and detest his deed our feeling is disarmed, and we may find it in us to pity the man who must continue to endure the spectacle of his own depravity. If a harmless gaucherie or blunder may follow us through life and make us blush with shame whenever we are reminded of it, then a moral fault —which is nothing but a still more glaring revelation of our folly—may be a penalty so severe that a man sometimes will prefer assuaging it by welcoming external penalties.

It has been in general the outcome of this analysis that, since potential sources of an inner self-respect based on a judgment of more or less exist in normal human beings which a growth in intelligence may reveal, there is a chance that qualitative values likewise may be subjected to a standard. The justification has been in terms of principle rather than of detail; and it will not always be a simple matter, as I have confessed, to give an authoritative content to the standard so long as the particular elements of value that a nice discrimination opens up continue to be subject to dispute. Even when a man is passing judgment on himself he will need, before an intellectual estimate of value quality gets the right to lay down for him his

duty, to make allowances for which a principled warrant may be hard to formulate. Take the virtue of strenuosity again. Whatever the nature of the good to which a man commits himself, its outcome in accomplishment will naturally be dependent on the degree of industry or effort that he brings to it. The amount of such effort may be approximately measured, and so we shall find thoughtful men disposed to blame themselves for a lack of energy and diligence that contracts the quantity of possible good. But also it is clear that this cannot straightway be turned into a hard-and-fast criterion. By nature people differ in their powers of exertion; efforts that one man might carry off easily and triumphantly will to another mean an excessive drain on a limited vitality, such as will turn work into drudgery and nullify the joy of living. If his conscience is a sensitive one he will still feel a little troubled when he compares himself with busier men; but his reason tells him, nevertheless, that while the limit may not be easy to determine, the state of his circumstances and his constitution may properly excuse him from the maximum of effort he might conceivably exert. And what is true of a personal duty applies with still more force when he sets out to lay down duties for his neighbors.

Except, at any rate, on one condition—that the man with whom I propose to argue does not himself inadvertently supply me with the premises I need. Since the chief practical objection to a standard is the difficulty in making others grant it, here is a consideration that has a good deal of importance for the business of moral discussion, and it may often go a long way toward relieving the embarrassment that arises

from a conflict of opinion. In so far as self-respect has an intellectual foundation it will need to measure up to intellectual demands; and this means, as a minimum requirement, the demand for self-consistency which any honest exercise of mind presupposes. If a man denies in words a value which in another compartment of his mind he grants and acts upon, this is a matter of fact, not of opinion or of feeling; and in case therefore he refuses to get rid of the discrepancy it is reason itself that passes judgment on him. When we find people bitter in condemning class legislation in the interest of farmers at the same time that they urge as a patriotic duty a tariff for manufacturers or a subsidy for shipowners, or protesting against a limitation of output by workingmen to protect their jobs while applauding it as a piece of sound business policy when it is used by corporations to protect their profits, or expecting from the wage-earner a disinterested loyalty to his employer's interests while insisting that the hope for private gain is the sole motive that will prevent captains of industry from throwing up their hands, or, in general, arguing that what is sauce for the goose is never sauce for the gander, it takes no more than average penetration to perceive that their standards of value on one side or the other need amending.

Chapter XI

CONCLUSION

As I turn to the task of gathering up the threads of this discussion I am well aware how unlikely it will be to satisfy the ordinary moral temper. If a man wants clear-cut rules of action—and it is only natural he should—or if he wants to feel justified in indulging without restraint those militant convictions in which morality comes closest home to him, I have done little toward meeting either need. The only excuse I can offer lies in the possibility that the human quest for good is not in fact the unambiguous undertaking that moralists often have supposed. It may be that the ethical experience, when it leaves the plane of convention and of everyday utility, is unavoidably complex and subtle, calling for the exercise of at least as much refinement of intelligence as we have become accustomed to demand of science or technology; and indeed were this not so we might be at a loss to account for the moral turmoil of the present day, except on the not very credible hypothesis that the modern age is arbitrarily creating difficulties where none exist. Probably the average man will find it the part of wisdom not to pay too much attention to these difficulties, and to go his way trusting still to the relatively simple maxims and insights that have the most weight of experience behind them. But if there are niceties of discrimination

that leave average experience behind—and there is no age in which this has not been implicitly assumed by thoughtful men—moral discussion that is adequate to present needs cannot expect to duplicate the simplicity and directness which belong to it when it conceives its task as one of exhortation rather than of critical understanding. The best I can do will be to make one last attempt to summarize my main conclusions.

That standards of a sort are in some degree attainable when they undertake merely to describe empirical conditions attending a human being's search for happiness I see no ground or motive for refusing to allow; conscience with its condemnatory rulings is a part of everyday experience, justified by its usefulness in practice, and capable of an indefinite degree of rational enlightenment. Chiefly, however, my argument has been concerned with asking whether also it permits us to exercise our cherished right of passing moral judgment where overt agreement ceases—whether, to put the problem more precisely, the emotions that condition conscience can properly be converted from instinctive reactions into something that has a standing in the courts of a universal reason. Here the case is not so clear. It is always possible we may be dealing with natural endowments not identical with our own; and that it is one of man's prerogatives that he should be privileged to censure Nature we may well hesitate before allowing.

One preliminary point calls for no serious debate; to have any chance of effective moral argument at all we must presuppose on both sides intelligence and an open mind. There is no possible way of coming to terms with another man so long as he refuses to face facts,

sticks stubbornly to unexamined prejudices, and in general is hazy and muddle-headed in his thinking; if instead of trying to see my point and test it honestly he is interested only in wriggling out of difficulties for his own position, there is neither pleasure nor profit in trying to persuade him. On the other hand, once a man has let the light of day into his purposes and motives he becomes an antagonist who at least deserves my intellectual respect; I know now where he stands, and if we still cannot agree, I know *why* we disagree and where the issue lies. This is very much to be preferred to talking at cross purposes. Nevertheless a query still is left. When we come up against such an apparent difference in conscious valuations have we arrived at a moral dead wall? or may there still be a rational excuse for taking our own moral preferences as a standard?

For practical purposes there are two alternative possibilities. It may be that in fact our way is blocked; the emotional scruples which we ourselves feel our fellow may be debarred by nature from sharing with us. In that case I see no ground on which to make him the object of a moral judgment. I may continue to dislike his conduct, and may feel free to interfere with it; but I cannot censure him for moral turpitude any more than I am warranted in censuring the madman for his distorted fancies or the beast of prey for its lack of consideration for its victims. Nature made him what he is, and nature lies outside the province of ethical antipathies; at best our duty is confined to calling in the surgeon or physician in case we see reason to believe that his heterodoxy may be due to some physical fault that science can correct. If we

are still to have the right to indulge our moral feelings it can only be on one supposition—that a man's present judgment does not exhaust his potential capacities of insight, and that in proportion as this genuine nature comes to light his ways of judging and of feeling may be expected to approximate to ours.

That such a presumption will need cautious handling when it is applied to judgments in particular is unquestionably true; but that it is an unlikely presumption in itself I do not think we have any good reason to suppose. It is, at any rate, the premise of that scientifically respectable philosophy which holds that crime is a disease; here it is tacitly assumed that the biological process has a natural form from which any violent deviation represents an abnormality, and that when by proper treatment the physical defect is overcome we may look to see the patient's conduct turned into more customary channels. And while this may still be thought to involve an exercise of philosophic faith with which science has hardly as yet caught up experimentally, it is nevertheless a faith too well-grounded in experience to be easily discouraged by an abstract scepticism. Logically we might entertain such a scepticism even toward the purely intellectual exercise of mind; there is nothing against the chance that the intellectual distinctions we come progressively to recognize are personal idiosyncrasies which possess no general validity. But no thinker really credits this; each new perception he attributes spontaneously to the nature of mind itself, and he expects others as they grow in intellectual enlightenment to ratify his findings. If, then, my opponent in debate fails to perceive a point of logical consistency, or uses terms in a way

that overlooks distinctions which a greater intellectual precision would reveal, I am not called on to display intolerance, indeed; but neither am I forced to abandon rational standards and to take as something ultimate our difference of opinion. I ought no doubt in general to cultivate the habit of granting the possibility that I may be wrong. But where the disagreement rests on some clear consideration which I perceive and which my opponent disregards, I feel that in so far I am the spokesman of objective truth..

And in the same way a heightened sensibility that keeps pace with the refining of perception I will find I have trouble in refusing to look upon as a property of human nature rather than of my own private nature simply; its absence in another will lead me naturally, not to disown it, but to question whether those who dissent really can be seeing the facts as I believe them to exist—a failure which normal minds have it in their power to repair by giving intelligence a freer rein. Thus I may think it a shocking exhibition of bad taste, and an affront to a proper sense of human dignity, when men and women with some reputation to protect lend their names to the advertising of this or that brand of tobacco or toilet preparation, while at the same time I am ready to allow that the honorarium or the publicity may seem to them a consideration that outweighs any loss of self-respect. But I find it less easy to believe that no capacity exists in them potentially for self-judgment if only they will view their conduct disinterestedly in the light of all that it implies, or even, it may be, with the degree of disinterestedness that they bring to their judgments about other people. They may say, perhaps, that they are

only showing practical good sense when they refuse to sacrifice substantial benefits to sentimental and hyper-critical scruples. But when a man brushes scruples too easily aside the chances are rather good that he is laying himself open to the charge of obtuseness and poverty of insight. And if his rejoinder means that he thus is being blind, through incompetence or prejudice, to real considerations which I can locate and point out, he is revealing a defective quality of mind, and the feeling of disapproval which this evokes shares in the rational standing of its source. If injustice shows that it does not understand what justice means to a more sensitive mind, if it is able to maintain its ground only as it persists in closing its eyes to things it does not wish to see and so in preventing them from making their natural appeal, it has lost its defence against a more inclusive and discriminating judgment.

And this is why "culture" gets the authority which we found it difficult entirely to explain away. Whether intellectual pleasures are higher than other sorts is a question which, were it worth the while, we might argue almost without end; but that "intelligent" pleasures are higher than unintelligent ones we can safely take for granted. Once added discrimination, therefore, has laid bare the crudeness of earlier tastes or judgments, I cannot ignore thereafter the perception without being conscious that I am stultifying myself through a failure to exercise in their full degree my powers of mind; and in proportion as the new insight rests on intellectually clear and assured distinctions I am justified in holding that another man's taste must at least have taken cognizance of these before it can claim

equal authority with mine. At the same time it will need to be repeated that we are still not giving cultural aims a privileged position in the field of values. Beauty is better than ugliness, not better than pleasure or other rival goods. Only when a given pleasure exposes itself to the judgment of æsthetic condemnation does it assume rationally a lower ranking; apart from this æsthetic and non-æsthetic pleasures alike exist alongside one another without calling for critical comparison. My only general moral duty is, not to prefer beauty to other things, but to exercise intelligently my powers of æsthetic discrimination if I am to escape an emotional self-disparagement.

Before in practice we are safe in trusting our personal convictions we shall need, I repeat again, to take precautions. We must be sure that to the best of our ability we have cleared our own minds of prejudice; and we must be prepared to extend a sympathetic interest to other opinions than our own until at any rate we understand how they seem plausible to those who hold them, even though we are persuaded that a more inclusive view will alter their perspective. Also we must concede once more the possibility that here may be one of those residual cases where an ultimate difference in men's moral make-up precludes their ever meeting on a common ground. But after all, in the moral life as elsewhere, it is with probabilities rather than possibilities that we are most concerned; and if the process of discerning probabilities cannot be carried out by rule or strict principle but has to depend on an empirical acquaintance with human nature guided by good sense, it is none the less reliable on that account. As such it will not hesitate to admit that stand-

ards have changed and probably will go on changing. But that is a merit rather than a liability; why should we want a standard which leaves no place for growing insight? All we have a right to ask is that change should not be fortuitous, but that progressively it should take account of the realities of life and of the world as experience comes to know them better.

Meanwhile we must always bear in mind that the moral judgment is not as such a form of conduct but an intellectual valuation; and the perception of it as "true" has a relative independence, consequently, of the working force of the motives that result in action. If the presence of moral disapproval does not prevent motives from existing strong enough to override it, so equally the fact that these motives weigh more heavily in practice does not prevent moral sentiments from continuing to be felt; and it is with justifying the authority of standards in terms of conscious appraisal rather than with their acceptance or non-acceptance in action that ethical argument will be most concerned. That the good of many is greater than the good of a single man, a permanent good greater than a temporary one, a good that can be looked back upon with satisfaction greater than one from which regrets will spring—these are objective judgments that are not falsified by the intrusion of personal motives which prevent them from controlling conduct; and if I can show the presence of such a balance of objective good it will be calculated in so far to have some influence with a rational being and, if he disregards it, to leave a touch of uncertainty and uneasiness behind such as will constitute an implicit source of conscious valuation. For in case a man values his intellectual in-

tegrity at all he cannot see, or feel, that a thing is really so, and still respect himself without reservation when he acts as if it were not so.

And if ultimate authority still is lacking to my personal interpretation of what a generic human nature calls for, this only directs attention once again to the unavoidable abatement to the claims of any moral standard in terms of the greater good. A standard is not a fixed and absolute criterion; in the end it is only an "ideal." It sets a somewhat indeterminate and plastic goal which exercises an emotional compulsion; and because empirically human nature has so much in common it gives us a tool for moral argument which within limits we can use effectively. But it never dispenses with the need for an intellectual caution when dealing with opinions we dislike, and for a moral tolerance, or at least a human sympathy, toward those who hold them. It represents a principle, not a rigid rule of judgment or of conduct; if we try to apply it as a rule we are headed toward moral dogmatism and its inevitable risks.

And one more word about tolerance in conclusion. The indisputable thing about the claims of tolerance is the plain fact that the human mind has, at its best, unavoidable limitations that leave its judgments always open to a possible doubt. The world is too big and human nature too complex for any human verdict to be final; we may be mistaken alike in our understanding of the factual evidence, and about the ranking of the things we personally most esteem. If this had to mean that we are debarred from putting any confidence in our rational valuations and from endeavoring to make the world conform to them it would, indeed, be

most unfortunate. But it need mean nothing of the sort; we are not called on by the necessary limitations of our knowledge to refuse to act on the best insight that we have or to fall back on an indiscriminate tolerance toward all things alike. We are not forbidden to indulge within reason in the emotional condemnation of those human acts and qualities which arouse our disgust or indignation; we could hardly do this if we tried, and it is not clear how the world could get along without such natural reactions. Nor is a practical confidence in the authority of our personal sentiments in itself necessarily irrational; provided it submits to the best of its ability to all the available possibilites of enlightenment it has a massive backing from our concrete and comprehensive human nature to which "pure" reason can make no honest pretension.

At the same time there are qualifications to be noted before we are safe in taking moral feeling as our guide. For one thing, we need to recognize that judgments of condemnation do not in themselves constitute the goal of morality; what gives them consequence is the service they may perform in ameliorating human life. The man who indulges indiscriminately in moral indignation and who hugs his moral antipathies to his bosom as a proof of his finer sensibilities is on the road to developing qualities of doubtful social merit; the hatred of injustice—a thing quite indispensable in morality—is likely to turn sour and become an animosity toward human beings who outrage our sensibilities or flout our prejudices. Like any other natural feeling indignation must be disciplined before it can become a virtue, and a part of this discipline will con-

sist in shunting it from our human fellow to the obnoxious qualities which, though they may fill our eye for the moment, are certainly not the whole of him. It is particularly hard to achieve this relative serenity when confronted by the arrogance of power. But even toward our super-criminals, who by virtue of money or political authority are enabled to thwart human aspirations on a grand scale, our fundamental purposes will best be served not by a hatred of individuals but by devising if we can new social arrangements where the qualities such men usually can show may be turned into channels more advantageous not alone to others but to themselves as well. It may be found necessary to execute our tyrants or put our financiers in jail; but it might have been still better had we found for them some useful work where their opportunities for doing harm were held in check.

And for the reflective mind there are two other considerations calculated to suggest that, whatever the immediate need, the direction of a true moral education is toward limiting progressively the field of the distinctive moral judgment of censoriousness. On the one hand there is the faith—the bare hope at any rate —that in the degree that mankind is prepared to give less of its attention to the moralistic practice of dividing the sheep from the goats, and more to the experimental endeavor to create new conditions that shall encourage the sort of human quality we prefer, the apparent obduracy of human nature may be found no longer so unavoidable as it seems at first to be. When we regard the brutality, the callousness, the apparent insensibility to motives other than self-centered ones, most of all the incredible stupidity displayed in

human conduct, it may be hard to persuade ourselves that there is much to be hoped for from so unsatisfactory a race of beings, and the temptation is strong to take refuge either in the thought of a future race of supermen of which the few choice souls we now are able to discover are an augury, or, more plausibly perhaps, in a universal cynicism. The claim of religion, the Christian religion in particular, that every man potentially is a subject of redemption has most of the obvious evidence against it. But still there are enough other facts to warn us not to dismiss the possibility too lightly. It may be only now and then that men are genuinely "converted," as we say, to a fundamentally different plane of living. But the thing does sometimes happen, and in the most improbable of cases; and what its limits are we cannot possibly determine until at any rate we have given human nature a real chance. So long as the average man from childhood up is met at every turn by influences that actively discourage him from exercising a fresh and independent vision, so long as the very imperfect society in which he lives takes the utmost pains to put obstacles in the way of tampering with its dominant ideals, there is no method of telling to what extent he might have been a very different person in different surroundings. It is too much to ask of men that they should question seriously the valuations which they hear every day from their companions, read in the newspapers, and have pounded into them by their official teachers and leaders. Only in a mind which possesses considerable native originality—and few men are original—can it be expected that under such conditions innate capacities for moral insight will get free

play; indeed, everything points to the likelihood that potential capacity will exceed performance. Men may and do respond in some measure to a faith reposed in them which refuses to be deterred by their present levels of attainment. At any rate, we are not likely to discover to what extent this may be the case unless we are ready to concede its possibility; and it is to our social advantage, therefore, to exercise such a faith until at least it has been shown by experience to be unfounded.

Finally, whatever one may judge about the possibilities of human nature in general or of this or that individual human being in particular, there is one further limit to the finality of the more militant moral emotions which is less equivocal, because it rests not so much on factual evidence as on the immediate personal response called forth by the spectacle which human life presents. Whether the world is of a sort that most merits our applause, our indignation, our derision or our pity is a question which each man will need to answer for himself, or which is answered for him by the dominant emotions that arise in him as he views his fellow men and, possibly, himself. Perhaps it will be found that all four attitudes serve a purpose in their own degree, and pity not least of all; nor are reasons absent for thinking it might be a gain were pity progressively to encroach on indignation as the motive most appropriate to a genuinely moral intelligence. It may be I shall have no practical success in persuading others they are judging foolishly; wrapped up in their own concerns they may persist in thinking that these stand for their proper good. And they may be right. Nevertheless, there plainly is something more

than dogmatism in the common judgment that men systematically deceive themselves about the very thing they have most at heart—their own happiness. That success leaves us still discontented, that the pleasures we reach out for are in reality, though we may not be willing to confess it even to ourselves, tasteless or insipid when we get them, that even while we stubbornly pursue our ends it many times is with a depressing sense of their futility—such judgments may not be open to demonstration when they are passed on others, but they are the judgments of realism none the less. And the fact that men still go on trying to find their good where it does not reside ought to go some way toward chastening our irritation. He who overrides his fellow man in the pursuit of unsubstantial goals may need to suffer punishment. But since pity equally with indignation, and without some of its attendant drawbacks, can be enlisted in the cause of moral emendation, we can afford to temper our hostility with compassion for his self-delusion.