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A STUDY IN MORAL PROBLEMS

A STUDY IN MORAL PROBLEMS

BY

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LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

PREFACE

THROUGHOUT the following chapters there runs one central problem and upon it all the arguments converge. It is the problem of the relation between human action and natural law. It is an old one and one that has been dealt with by eminent thinkers: Kant and Lotze are but two. On account of the development of science with its insistence upon the reign of universal law, it has become in modern times a very important problem because of its bearing upon moral and social effort. The freedom that is somehow implied in morality has to be reconciled with the rigidity and uniformity that characterize natural law. That problem must be and is here regarded as a fundamental one, because it lies at the basis of all the more specific moral problems like evil, social conflicts, conflicts of values, the instability and uncertainty of moral progress and moral achievement; and because its solution will point a way to a solution of these difficulties.

A discussion of the general problem of the relation between freedom and mechanism or natural law tends accordingly to take the character of studies in morality, though at the same time it becomes quite clear that metaphysical questions arise and cannot be avoided, while yet within the present limits they cannot be very adequately discussed. There arise questions about the structure of the universe and the nature of reality, as well as about the meaning of natural causality and natural conditions. Such questions demand full discussion; but at the moment that must be left aside, and only a reference can be made to certain points in these questions that are relevant to ethical studies, for they create difficulties as regards method. It has, for instance, been very generally held that the possibility of

beginning with cause and of working up to purpose is extremely doubtful. The disparateness of natural cause and moral purpose, of natural law and moral law, renders such a procedure impossible. There is an insuperable difficulty in effecting a transition from laws which describe how things and people do act to laws which prescribe how people should act. The one type of law cannot be derived from the other. Ethics, in consequence, can never be purely inductive; and there remains a fundamental distinction between ethics and the inductive sciences. This view, however, may be questioned; and, by questioning it, it becomes possible to give a very intelligible account of human action and to obtain a clear explanation of many moral difficulties.

The common assumption has been that it is the business of ethics to set up moral standards or norms; and it is this assumption that has created difficulties for ethical method. It has led to the demand that moral problems must be solved in moral terms or in terms of moral fact; and it has hampered ethical enquiry and hindered the solution of moral difficulties by prejudging how and where a solution is to be found instead of allowing the enquirer to seek a solution amongst a material that is likely to be most fruitful.

The assumption may be questioned, and in the interests of moral theory must be so. The element of control or regulative power is already present in human action; and moral theory has not to create it. What ethics has to do is to interpret that element of control and to express its nature in formulæ. Its task, accordingly, does not differ from the task of any positive science; it would do so only if it had to create a standard or control, or to impose a formula upon human action. It may be here pointed out, for instance, that one consequence of this is that, once the nature of the control is interpreted and this nature expressed in a formula, the problem becomes one of explaining the divergence of human action from the formula. The whole procedure of ethical investigation becomes inductive; and the objection to an inductive treatment of morality becomes invalid. It is only because an inductive treatment is thus possible that there can be a science of human action at all.

But when induction is spoken of, it must not be taken to mean the formulation of laws by generalizing a few instances. Generalization of the form—X_1, X_2, X_3, are each Y, therefore all Xs are Y—does not do anything more than present the problem by defining its range. The real problem is to find the ground or reason of all Xs being Y; and when this has been done, the fact expressed in, and described by, the proposition "all Xs are Y" is explained. Generalization is only a preliminary to explanation, and the objection to an inductive ethics is partly due to the belief that generalization sums up the nature of induction. The recognition, however, that induction is concerned with something else than merely a generalization of the form all Xs are Y, that it regards this as merely a fact to be explained, and that its most important task is to find the law of the fact, leads to important consequences for ethical theory; for it implies that induction leads into the structure of the real and that the element of control operating in human action may be discovered in the nature of the real.

The discussion in the following pages places full reliance upon induction and makes confident use of it; and a result is that no obligation is felt to find a solution of moral difficulties in moral terms. For purposes of explanation every positive science is continually expressing one fact in terms of a different type of fact—colours in terms of waves, things in terms of atoms, atoms in terms of electrons. In doing so it is doing something more than merely describing the qualities or properties of things; it is stating that one kind of phenomenon with certain characteristics arises or comes to be when certain factors or conditions of quite a different character are present. The word "arises" or "comes to be" is purposely used because it is somewhat colourless and raises no question about the "how" at the moment; and for these reasons is more suitable than the terms "produced by" or "emerges" because of their implications and the divergent theories which they presuppose. Now a study of morality, if it is to be scientific, must follow similar lines. It must not be content with enumerating various features of morality or moral conduct, various rights and duties. It must pass on to the discussion

of the conditions of morality. If it is said that this is to confuse a science of value with a science of fact, the only reply can be that first, the objection assumes the disputable point that value and fact are wholly disparate and the distinction between them necessitates quite different treatment, while it may be that the real distinction should be between different orders of qualities; and second, science itself shows that the presence of qualities of one order does lead to the existence of qualities of a different order. What science reveals contains as much or as little mystery as would be involved if moral theory maintained that values arose on the basis of factors different from values; for values are not existences like objects that have a definite spatial limit, but are qualities attaching to things, actions, and human beings.

An enquiry of this kind is the more needful and pressing because of the many serious problems of morality, that is, problems of human action, that are demanding solution, for it is only by such an enquiry that the lines of a solution will be found. The pressing problem of the moment is not one regarding rights and duties in the abstract, but one as to why these rights and duties are not realized in actual life, why there are so many difficulties in the way of their realization, why there are so great conflicts between rights and between duties, why there are so many claims and counterclaims. The fact that there are so great difficulties must suggest the question whether morality does not rest on conditions, and whether an enquiry into the conditions may explain how the difficulties have arisen and how they can also be removed.

Such an enquiry may quite well lead to farther consequences, for it may reveal the fact that morality and current moral theory rest on several assumptions or assume a state of things that need not be; and, if these assumptions are questioned, it may well be that much of the accepted theories of rights and duties might have to be recast, and much of the traditional ethical discussion about apparently insoluble oppositions might be seen to be fruitless because they have never come into touch with the factors that give rise to the oppositions. When one seriously reflects

upon the nature of ethical theories and upon current moral judgments and exhortations, one cannot but be struck by the assumption or belief that underlies them all; and it is that social life is a huge burden which each must help to bear. Duties of various kinds devolve on each accordingly; but a considerable amount of mutual recrimination is not thereby avoided. Conflicts and quarrels become more marked and sharper; and human life tends to manifest, as a result of conditions, neurotic symptoms.

It is remarkable that no serious effort has been made to examine this assumption, to estimate its truth, and, if it is true, to find why it is or should be so. It is somewhat strange that mankind, in spite of all the knowledge gained and the discoveries made, should be bearing upon his shoulders a burden which no other type of animate existence has to bear. It is a tragic destiny for man if progress means an inevitable bearing of such a burden. Sometimes it has been held that man cannot escape this burden; at other times it has been held that man can escape it, and an effort is made to find an explanation of it in the human will; man has proved himself unworthy of the achievements of science. Neither view need be accepted. The burden need not be regarded as inevitable, while the source of it need not be sought and will not be found in the human will. Any attempt to find a solution of moral difficulties in the will is sure to be futile, for the will is too unintelligible an entity to be a basis for theory, and has hitherto been assigned a rôle in theory beyond its capacity to bear. For this reason psychological solutions are largely illusory in connexion with all social problems; and this becomes still clearer when the relation between the so-called will, or rather human action, on the one hand, and natural processes on the other is considered.

This burden, nevertheless, which man feels weighing upon him, is closely connected with present moral problems; and if a solution is not to be found by means of the idea of will, how is a solution to be found? The solution lies in the relation between natural processes and human action, and it will be found by an examination of this relation. It must be remembered that human beings, whatever else

they may be in addition, are natural organisms, and, like other natural types, are subject to natural causation; and this has an important bearing upon moral questions. The natural causation is not merely an internal matter; it is largely conditioned by external factors; and organic activities are linked up with conditions and forces of external nature in chains of continuous causal sequences. On the other hand, there are also causal processes in nature which end in results that merely confront human beings and present to them a problem. Because of the complexity of conditions of human life, these results may bring about more complex problems than might arise under simpler conditions. But it is from the fact that natural processes do roll, and can roll, their course independently of any will that morality receives its character, and that the problems of human action take their shape. The burden which mankind at present bears is not ultimately a creation of human wills, but has its origin in the operation of causal factors. And no will, however moral it is, can influence natural processes by adhering to moral sentiments and enunciating moral dicta; all the moral resolutions passed by even the most august bodies and all the moral enthusiasm embodied in leagues and societies are powerless to affect natural chains of causation.

The adoption of such a procedure in ethical studies, because of its seeking a solution of moral problems in terms other than moral, necessitates a restatement of the nature and aims of morality, and of the relation between morality and natural processes. Morality turns upon the possibility of controlling natural processes in virtue of a knowledge of the conditions of these processes; and the problem confronting human action is to control these processes so that they are made to subserve the realization and preservation of moral values. There are difficulties involved in such a view, some of them metaphysical, such as that regarding the structure of the real; but they are not insurmountable. One implication is that values constitute one order of real qualities but not the sole order of real qualities; and for that reason it is impossible to interpret reality purely in terms of value, to apply moral predicates to the universe

as a whole, or to regard the realization of moral values as inevitable. From the standpoint of morality the task of man is to liberate these qualities from the admixture of other elements, from the complexity of the real, and to create a sphere wherein exist the conditions to sustain these qualities.

That there is a relation between morality and natural processes must not be understood to mean that natural processes are to be allowed to pursue their course in morality. That is sometimes the view taken of the relation between the two. It is held, for instance, that natural selection, being a process of nature, must be allowed to operate also unchecked in human life. The only ground on which such a view would be valid would be that natural selection led to the good or the benefit of the race; and this has quite frequently been maintained to be the case. If it were so, the operation of natural selection would not require to be interfered with; and if it were true of all natural processes, then the good would inevitably be realized. But it is not true of all natural processes, and it may not be true of natural selection; and consequently man has to control natural processes so as to evolve in spite of and out of their mutually conflicting results, the values of morality.

The idea of control, however, may also be easily subject to misunderstanding; and such misunderstandings are expressed in certain prevalent views. In one case, for instance, it is held that natural selection must be replaced in human life by a moral process involving the exercise of such qualities as sympathy, respect for life, care of the weak and defective. In another case it is held that the ruthlessness of natural selection is to be avoided by the control of parenthood and the limitation of families. In neither case is the process of natural selection controlled to any effective degree, for each line of action gives rise to fresh problems; and this is a symptom that with certainty points to imperfect control of causes. While voluntary limitation of families is being preached the decrease of population is causing alarm. While the weak and defective are preserved through careful attention, the strong and healthy are burdened with heavy charges. A natural

process can be controlled only by controlling the conditions on which it rests or the causes which set it going.[1]

To ignore the relation between morality and natural processes may render much ethical theory futile. To that may be traced much of the inability to solve moral problems like the conflicts of claims, the conflict of egoism and altruism, the conflict between the duties and rights of the individual on the one hand and the duties and right of the community or of the State on the other, the perplexing problem of evil, and various others. This might be illustrated once more by reference to natural selection. Human association gives an additional value to human life; but somehow in actuality man has been denied, or deprived of, that value. The reason is that, in spite of all moral theory about the elimination of the influence of natural selection from human life, it has not been eliminated; and it has not been eliminated because the struggle for existence is still keen within social life; and the struggle for existence is keen because of the conditions arising from the uncontrolled operation of natural processes. And this is true in spite of all the scientific and economic development of modern times. The demand for rights, the growing insistence upon rights, and even the nature of rights can be explained by reference to this struggle for existence. They are utilized as a defence in the struggle; and moral theory has dealt with rights and duties without being fully aware that its conclusions derived their significance from a condition of things which involved a struggle for existence, and that, if the struggle for existence were eliminated from human life, these conclusions might have to be revised.

In the elaboration of these ideas in a study of morality, what is always the subject of discussion are real problems of human action and the conditions under which human beings live and act and which influence their action. It is to these that a continual appeal is presupposed; and the defects of a treatment that is inevitably abstract and

[1] The control of parenthood and limitation of families has such control in view; but the assumption is that natural selection is due to excess of population over means of subsistence. As will be pointed out later, such excess, however, may rather be a consequence than a cause.

general can be to a considerable extent overcome by keeping in view real problems that demand solution. For this reason little appeal is made to what people believe, or say, since that has no more relevance for a scientific treatment of human action than what people think, believe, or say about physical phenomena has for the sciences of physics or chemistry. A clear distinction is assumed to exist between the problems of human action and questions about beliefs or views concerning human action. On the other hand, it is somewhat different with ethical theories; they claim to deal scientifically with problems of conduct; but even in connexion with them it is necessary to point out that a treatise dealing with ethical theories is not quite the same as a work dealing with actual phenomena and an analysis of them. The former involves a much closer examination and valuation of theories than the latter. The latter need not examine or estimate theories much. All that is necessary is to refer to them for purposes of aiding in the analysis of facts, of making clear the line of enquiry being pursued, or of showing how certain facts and certain difficulties of the moral life which must be recognized, which they have recognized, and with which they have attempted to deal, can be explained on the lines here suggested.

At the same time, though many important theories are not discussed, they are yet throughout kept in view, and in some cases come under criticism, especially theories of a metaphysical or dialectical type. The reason is simply that the present purpose is not to discuss theories and that it is necessary to keep the discussion within limits. Only an outline has been sketched, and even for that outline no originality or special merit is claimed. The writer, however, believes that most of the present moral problems admit of a solution along the lines implied in these pages. Criticism may necessitate a modification of the views expressed, as, in a complex subject like a study of morality, important points might easily be overlooked. But it is, nevertheless, desirable and necessary that ethical studies reach some stable basis and that they cease to be marked by that variety of individual opinion, the expression of

which is at present supposed to give distinction to the holder and to signify special merit. The following chapters are written with the hope that they may contribute to a more stable basis in ethical theory. There is much that still requires to be done; for the outline given would have to be filled in by the treatment of specific moral problems and to be supplemented by a discussion of the metaphysical questions involved. But even an outline may be a useful preliminary.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. A. P. Hunt, B.A., Librarian, Sheffield University, for his valuable help in reading the proofs.

B. M. L.

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A Study in Moral Problems

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GROUNDS FOR SCEPTICISM IN MORAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

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CHAPTER I

GROUNDS FOR SCEPTICISM IN MORAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

§ 1.

Influences Tending to Moral Scepticism.

To approach the study of morality otherwise than with a considerable amount of scepticism, even with a feeling of helplessness, is almost impossible. Such an attitude is forced upon one by the circumstances of the time; and to take up an earnest enquiry into morality demands a large degree of faith. The experiences undergone in a war waged with the most modern technique and revealing in a terrifying form the utter nothingness of human life before the forces derived from the resources of nature, do not conduce to much idle sentimentality, and a feeling has grown upon many that much of what has been called morality consists of little more than such idle sentimentality. It irritates and repels. Patriotism, duty, glory, honour, loyalty, good faith do not irresistibly attract, but are regarded with a touch of cynicism, or of contempt. So, too, are the old social virtues of sympathy, generosity, sacrifice. Minds have become more experienced, more sophisticated, and less disposed to accept unquestioningly all the emotionalism which they find within their social circle; and this is happening even though there is no clear knowledge of the grounds. It is a reaction to contemporary influences and conditions.

Besides this emotional reaction other influences of a more reflective kind are at work which render the position of morality peculiarly unstable. During the past few years such confusion and such contradiction have arisen with

regard to supposed moral values that one does not know exactly where or how matters stand. The logical position would seem to be to doubt whether there is such a thing as morality at all; and to believe that what does exist are rules temporarily improvised to meet the circumstances of the moment and to get men to do certain things. Principle which has become associated with morality and which signifies something permanent is not to be found. Instead, what is found is qualification of moral maxims to such an extent that they become useless for guidance in conduct. Conscience, which men had been taught to revere became the object of ridicule, in many cases on the part of those who had been its former high priests; justice, which had come to be regarded as the necessary foundation of society and the maintenance of which was the main duty of the State, became subject to the qualification "as far as the State can do so"; freedom and truth have been suppressed or denied in the "public interest," though it has been taught that these two could never run counter to the real public interest; human life, the sanctity of which has been taught and which has been given security in the criminal laws and the laws of property, has been poured forth as water, with the qualifying maxim that there are values higher even than life itself. In view of the qualifications to which most of these values have become subject, it is a matter of difficulty to determine what these higher values are, and men are driven back upon the question whether, in engaging in a moral war, a war for moral values, a war for civilization, they are not straining after illusions; for if moral values are absolute, it seems that in the struggle for them this absoluteness is denied and they are treated as relative; and if they are relative, it is futile to struggle for their absoluteness.

§ 2.

"Interests" and Moral Principles.

What is suggested by this dilemma is that the accepted morality is somewhere defective and that it has been unable to meet the problems that faced it. Observation of actual

human action raises the suspicion that moral considerations do not play a remarkably prominent part in the determination of human conduct. In actual life the predominant factors are "interests," and the constant demands for representation on public boards, commissions, courts of arbitration, administrative services, as well as objections to the creation of certain other boards, courts, leagues and so on, bear witness to the overwhelming part played by interests. The effect of the belief that they are so, is seen in the attitude of suspicion and distrust engendered in the mass of the workers and in the sphere of industry; it appears in the contempt into which political institutions like Parliament, executive offices like the Foreign Office, and administrative organs like the Law Courts are falling; it is seen in the feminist movement, which is based on the assumption that the interests of women have been hitherto subordinated to those of men. In all spheres of action the determining factor is found to be interests and the opposition of interests. In international affairs it takes the form of the balance of power and demands for "guarantees." In the decision of all important questions it is again interest that determines; moral claims receive but slight attention; even when they seem to be the deciding element, the real deciding factor is the interest that speaks through the moral claim. Settlements can be effected only when all the interests involved—often only those that are powerful enough to make themselves felt—are accommodated and so adjusted as to make a working compromise possible. The demand for "independent" arbiters and chairmen of courts and boards, and the difficulty of finding such, the objections to those selected, and the irritation aroused by decisions given, all bear witness to the paramount influence of interest.

In many other ways confirmation is found for the weak rôle played by moral considerations. It is not unusual for the moral man to be regarded with amusement or even contempt; he is viewed as a somewhat helpless creature. The scrupulous man, the man with a conscience has very frequently to stand aside. In the actual world of affairs there is little or no room for "sentiment," by which is meant a tendency to act in accordance with moral principles.

Such action has nothing but an abstract virtue as its reward; and many are quite ready to let others follow, and even encourage others to follow, this abstract morality, seeing that it lessens the conflict over interests and leaves them with the more solid material benefits. By many the moral law, like the law of the State, is viewed very much as a kind of public to be outwitted, and the main point is to outwit it successfully. Leaders and critics of men are constantly deploring the moral deficiencies of mankind. Morality, so far as it is strong, derives its strength not from its own nature but from its coincidence with desire and interest. The doubt arises whether morality is anything at all; at most it always seems to be something for "the other fellow," rather than for oneself.

Allowing that this may all be true, it may be said, that only shows, not that morality does not exist, but that morality is still imperfect. Yet many features of human action would be as intelligible, if not more so, on the former assumption as on the latter. The mixture of good and evil in human nature and in human action might be as explicable on the hypothesis that both, like nature, were indifferent to moral values, as on the hypothesis that they are morally imperfect. Breaches of morality are continually taking place; and what is called a collapse of morality or an outbreak of immorality is but an unusually great increase in the number of these breaches. It is thus the degree, and not so much the kind, that is abnormal and striking. That is what creates alarm; and so long as the number of breaches is kept within bounds no one troubles much about the existence of such breaches. But in these respects human action is exactly similar to natural events which lead to a mixture of good and evil and which in certain cases assume a catastrophic character. Waves of crime might be comparable to an upheaval of nature. There is a saying that there are no holidays in the moral life; but actually men do take holidays, a good many take occasional half days; and many more take occasional half-hours. Behind this there lies a belief that a certain number of breaches are inevitable and that certain situations may arise in which a breach is necessary. This belief has been more than

once openly expressed in ancient as well as in modern times. "Necessity knows no law," says a recent statesman. "A man who would be good in all circumstances must necessarily go under amidst a crowd who are not good," says a writer. A belief in this necessity of circumstances justifies moral holidays to any extent; it could be used to justify any outbreak of immorality; but it denies the real character commonly assigned to morality, namely, universal and unconditional validity. Morality, in the face of its frequent failures and the growing belief in a necessity due to the force of circumstances, must either abdicate or have its claim clearly established.

§ 3.

Variety and Conflict of Ethical Theory.

If help is sought from ethical theory, disappointment is sure to result and scepticism to be strengthened. We are at once confronted with the great number of divergent theories. For such a diversity there may be some explanation and justification in the complexity of the moral life; but if there is to be a science of morality at all, there ought not to be such a diversity. A science may admit of differences of opinion as regards points not yet clearly established; but in the case of ethics there are fundamental disagreements and they are recognized as such. There are a few outstanding theories, the supporters of which feel themselves in opposition, and subject each other to vigorous criticism. There is no doubt about the difference between an ethical theory of the type of the Kantian and a theory of the Hedonistic type. Each is so different from the other that, if they had any real bearing or influence on action, they would lead to completely different forms of life. Amidst such a variety of moral theories the man in search of help becomes helpless, and turns away sceptical not merely about moral theory but about morality. The confusion of moral theory merely serves to reflect the confusion of moral practice; and if the latter confusion leads him to the conclusion that morality is possibly a phantom, the former confusion will lead him to deny the possibility of

ethics. It is no longer sufficient to say that the variety of ethical theories points to a perennial and living interest in moral questions; no doubt it shows the existence of such an interest on the part of a few; but it does not prove the possibility of a science of morality. It is now so many centuries since morality first began to be investigated that, if a scientific treatment were really possible, some definite results would have been established. Instead of this, the present condition of ethics manifests a variety of views which can be accepted or rejected according to the mood, temperament, ethical and philosophical standpoint of the student or enquirer—an arbitrary determinant which does not belong to the generally accepted notion of a science.

The suspicion, in consequence, is aroused that, in place of a science of morality, we have had an expression of the aspirations of different individuals, and through them in a modified form an expression of the aspirations of a nation or a section of a nation. Thus we find Wundt [1] maintaining that a science is less universal and more national than is generally supposed. Individual and national characteristics and purposes emerge; and this is particularly the case in ethics. Hence also arises the instability of so-called ethical theories, their appeal to some and not to others, their temporary vogue and subsequent permanent or temporary eclipse, their lack of effective influence upon action in the face of real pressing difficulties. We see the result in that common divergence between theory and practice and in that apparent insincerity on the part of the upholders of a particular theory. Hence, too, arise that apparent impossibility of giving effect to moral claims in actual practice and the widespread belief in the force of circumstances; for what is not founded on fact cannot always be realized; and aspirations tend to be, as is well known, far removed from actuality, to be shadowy and imaginary in character. Though man feels that the "what should or ought to be" must also be the "what can be," yet there is often a gulf between the two. All these results point to some inner defect of moral theories. They serve to create distrust of theorising and scepticism towards

[1] Wundt, *Die Nationen u. ihre Philosophie*, p. 4.

a science of ethics. Something stable, permanent, and suitable for consistent action over a period of time is wanted in place of fashions, crazes, and enthusiasms. If ethics cannot meet this demand, it cannot be a science.

§ 4.

Ethical Theory and Its Relation to Practical Problems.

Now, in relation to practice and actual life ethical theories have shown themselves very barren. It may, it is true, be unwise and dangerous to emphasize unduly the practical aspect of ethics. While at one time a science may seem to be devoid of practical benefit, at another these very scientific, though apparently abstract, conclusions may become most fruitful. Ethicists themselves, however, are always ready to ward off criticism by maintaining that ethics cannot make people moral, while they can also always point to the great effect which certain theories, for instance Utilitarianism and Hegelianism, have had upon the moulding of social life in England and in Germany respectively. As regards the latter defence, it is a matter of considerable difficulty to decide how far moral theory influenced social changes and improvements, for it often happens that men's practical efforts are on examination not always reconcilable with their theory: and there is forced upon one's mind the question whether they are not influenced by actual existing conditions in the adoption of a certain line of action irrespective of their theory. The norm or standard which their theories lay down or the nature of which they formulate is useless for giving guidance in concrete action. It is too abstract or too empty of content to provide help, and this is what those, who do resort to such theories for guidance, feel. Definite lines of moral conduct cannot be deduced from them. The standards of happiness, or of pleasure, or of duty do not help the average man in any critical situation; what troubles him is what concrete action he must do or avoid in order to realize happiness or pleasure, or how he is to know the special line of action the following of which constitutes his duty. Ethicists, in so far as they have entered into practical affairs,

have for the most part acted on their own judgment regarding definite problems and in ways which are not quite deducible from any of their principles. In practice men who hold widely different ethical theories coincide largely in their actions; and such coincidence, in spite of difference of theory, suggests that their theory is largely irrelevant to their action. But if this is so, and if the average man is left to use his own judgment in action, then he can see no purpose served by ethical theory.

As regards the other view, that ethics does not claim to make a man moral, there is contained in it that half-truth which marks most aphorisms but which is very misleading. If ethics has any purpose at all it is that of understanding and making intelligible the moral life. It must make clear the nature of that authority and control which is operative in morality. An enquiry that succeeds in giving such knowledge cannot but have an influence on moral conduct. When, for instance, the Government in the name of the State says to a man that it is his duty to become a soldier and to fight for his country, while the man himself thinks otherwise, it is of vital importance for each to be sure of the validity of the opposing claims, and for men to have a common basis on which conflicting claims can be settled. An understanding of the moral life, of the causes of moral conflicts, of the conditions on which morality rests, will enable decisions to be reached. If ethics cannot give that understanding, it is a failure. The assumption underlying the view that ethics does not make a man moral is that morality is uninfluenced by knowledge, the implication being that morality is purely a matter of will, and that a man who does not possess a moral will, will never become moral through an ethical study. Without, at the present moment, questioning these implications and without maintaining the Socratic position that knowledge and morality are coincident, it is yet true that the man who is morally disposed and aims at acting morally often adopts the wrong course through ignorance; and ethics may in consequence go part way towards enabling a man to act morally. If, on the other hand, it is wholly true that ethics does not make a man moral, ethics stands self-condemned as purposeless.

§ 5.

Doubts as to Moral Progress.

These grounds of scepticism are sometimes counterbalanced by a belief in progress. The present age views with a certain degree of self-complacency the marvellous achievements which have been accomplished through human effort. On every side there is talk of the progress that has been effected. But when an effort is made to grasp exactly the nature of this progress and the nature of progress in general, an element of doubt arises. Nothing is more difficult than to decide what constitutes progress or to find a test of progress; and it is more difficult still when we come to the special question of moral progress. It is easy to assume progress in morality; but it is another matter to establish that progress is a fact or to find valid grounds for the belief in progress. The easy optimism of the nineteenth century has received through recent events a severe check. Men are less ready to accept the inevitability of progress; and thinkers find it difficult to discover any law of progress; some have even called civilization a "disease." Even though civilization is by others regarded as inherently valuable, the possibility of its collapse is yet contemplated as being in the course of things. Actual experience has contributed to all these doubts. We cannot lightly maintain that what we witness in the course of history is an evolution of higher values; it may be but a change of values and a shifting of emphasis upon values. We repeatedly undergo the experience of disillusionment regarding the values which we had accepted as higher. Parliamentary government, which once formed the goal of human effort, has ceased to be regarded with such reverence; democracy, which seemed at one time so desirable, has become clouded with suspicion; the freedom of the press seems to many not an unmixed blessing, the right to a vote crumbles in our hands; competition in industry was once accepted as unconditionally necessary, being "the life of trade," it then became the object of doubt, but opinion at present wavers on the matter; and many

more cases might be cited. We discover that the things we have discarded are not always so defective as we had supposed, and that the new values we have adopted are not quite what we imagined. Novelty often leads men astray.

Naturalness of Morality.

Though many things thus seem to throw doubt upon the existence of morality and upon the fact of moral progress, yet there are other things which point to its existence, or at least to the existence of something which goes by the name of morality. That certain demands are made upon us and certain restraints are exercised upon us, and that we are aware of this, are facts which cannot be denied, and they constitute the basis of morality. But though its existence is not denied, it is often yet subjected to criticism of a kind that produces an attitude of scepticism towards its worth and validity. The criticisms turn upon the artificiality of morality. By its artificiality it is meant that it is superimposed upon human action and does not have its roots in human nature or in the nature of things, nor does it develop out of either nature like the blossom from the tree. This was the attitude of naturalism characteristic of the eighteenth century. The consequence of such a view is that morality is regarded as a source and state of bondage. Emancipation must therefore be gained. Moral rules and maxims fetter human activity, and these fetters must be broken. Psychoanalysis tends to regard morality as a repression and has made such repression one of the factors in the explanation of the phenomena with which it deals.

Many attempts have been made to prove the naturalness of morality; the first attempt was made almost in the earliest stages of ethical theory; but however ingenious such theories are, they are felt to be unconvincing. The same moral attitude recurs in history and leads to a definite practical issue. It is seen, for instance, in the insistence upon the naturalness of impulses; the restraints which

would put limits upon their satisfaction appear artificial and unnatural. Hence we find efforts made to justify "free love" and the satisfaction of the sexual impulse outside the traditional marriage bond. And it must be confessed, too, that it is extremely difficult to refute these efforts and to find any really valid grounds for the traditional views of sex, for their strongest supports are their practical consequences, and these are now being put in doubt, and secondly, sentiments which may cease to have influence upon certain people and for which no other justification can be found than the appeal which they have for people. Arguments are not wanting, too, from the side of medicine, that the repression which civilization exercises upon these primal human impulses produces a disturbing effect upon the life of individuals and brings about nervous disorders. It is extremely difficult to understand why this should be so if morality is based upon the normal life of the individual. If such disorders arise, they would point to some incongruence between what is demanded by morality and what is required by the normally healthy body. The relief and relaxation sought in imagination and reverie from the restraints of morality, and the efforts to find in that way an indulgence of impulses which are socially taboo, seem to confirm the belief that such restraints are unnatural and oppressive, and to manifest the presence of a desire to be freed from them whenever and however possible.

Strength seems to be lent to this view by the prevalence of certain evils. These have in some cases reached such a stage that the elimination of the actual evil is felt to be impossible; and the most that can be hoped for is a prevention of the attendant evils. The most ready explanation of such immorality is usually that there is an evil element in human nature, or that men mistake wherein their real good lies. Such explanations get over the difficulty too easily, and human nature feels them to be false. The one casts a slur upon human nature; and the other makes man out to be a fool. Man cannot see why the impulses with which he has been endowed should be looked upon with suspicion, nor will he readily grant that he does not know where his good lies or that he runs counter to it.

These views have long held sway and yet have failed to lead to any better positive result. Instead of ascribing the fault to human nature, it becomes necessary to seek some other source. What at first suggests itself is morality. The thought occurs that morality itself is somehow defective. By many it is felt to be so; and they act on what they feel or believe without having any seriously and deeply thought-out theory of defence. The result is that morality falls into disrepute as artificial and narrow.

7.

Adequacy of "Morality" for the Complexity of Life.

The idea underlying this view of morality is that the latter is somehow not adequate to the complexity of life. The repressive element in morality is always much more marked than the positive. The transition from this to the idea that morality is really a hindrance to the development of life is easy. It inculcates a distrust in human nature, endeavours to crush out many of its elements, and forms a hard crust within which life is enclosed and through which it cannot burst without the possibility of danger to the individual and even to mankind in general. It lies upon human life as a burden and clogs all efforts towards a fuller realization of human possibilities. It stamps as good the man who keeps within its circle and conforms to its dictates, without giving thought to the possibility that something higher may lie beyond. The result is that men lose confidence in themselves; they dread committing a breach of the moral maxims, they become slaves to morality, and herd together. Daring and venturesomeness become rare. Only very seldom does one arise who takes his fate in his hands and endeavours to open up new vistas and strike out on new paths. History abounds with instances showing the resistance which had to be overcome before new values could be established. It shows, too, how great a danger morality may become to the vital interests of life and what a price may be exacted by it.[1]

[1] This is more or less a popular view of morality found in certain "advanced" circles. But as distinct from this it is in substance the view

Such a view leads to bitter hostility towards morality. It leads to efforts to overturn it; and these efforts have justification in that they are often directed to getting rid of all the facile tolerance of real evils which are allowed to exist in the name of morality, because of their providing a means for the exercise of moral virtue. Many of these virtues have no other justification than the existence of certain evils; and the removal of these evils would deprive such virtues of their *raison-d'être*. What is seen at present is the extraordinary spectacle of morality multiplying its own virtues and maxims, and swelling into an ever vaster system in virtue of evils which partly result from itself and which it tolerates because of its own defective nature. The reaction takes the form of a demand for something more positive and for a restriction of morality within narrower limits. The suspicion is aroused that morality itself is an "interest" that has to be pushed and made as much of as possible. It has not the disinterested welfare of human beings at heart; it is one of the tricks of the game to make it appear so. The use to which morality has often apparently been put and the connivance of the strongest supporters of morality at this use strengthen the suspicion. Morality has become suspect because of a belief engendered that it is a convenient and suitable means for keeping men pliant and submissive to authority, and for rendering them yielding and obedient instruments for the purposes of authority.[1] Induced by the doctrine that there is a universal and ultimate moral principle in the world, according to which justice will in the end be administered and each man receive a reward according to his deserts, individuals could calmly and patiently endure the injustice and the evils of their actual life and perform the moral duties of self-sacrifice, patient suffering, and humble resignation. But such an attitude, because of the lack of the necessary

of morality expressed by Nietzsche in his criticism of Schopenhauer and Christianity. The application which "advanced" circles make of their view must not, however, be in any way connected with any implications of Nietzsche's doctrine.

[1] This is the belief entertained in certain socialistic circles; and particularly in Germany it resulted in hostility to the Church because of its moral teaching and connexion with the State.

incentive, is fatal to constructive moral effort and to the creation of a better moral order through the removal of evils.

8.

Limitation of the Sphere of the "Moral."

In the earlier stages of human life the mind saw everywhere the presence and the operation of moral forces. These were not confined to the sphere of human life, but were active in the world. Nor is this belief quite extinct. It still persists in the form of a belief in a moral order of the universe. There is a tendency in the world which inevitably and necessarily leads to the maintenance of justice and which makes good the failure of human justice and of human moral judgment. It is a comforting doctrine in the face of the deficiencies of the actual world; it is decidingly soothing, however true it be, that justice is, in spite of everything, supreme in the world. It is doubtful if the truth of such a view can be established; at most it can be accepted only as a matter of faith; and it is quite probable that the appeal which it does make is due to the comfort derived from it. It is very likely that its strength is due to the vigour and the insistence with which it is taught, and to its compensatory value for human impotence. It is doubtful if, apart from these two factors, it would be believed. It provides a possible means whereby our wishes and moral claims can be satisfied, and it opens up a vista within which our imagination can revel. The very need of such a belief, however, is a convincing proof of the unsatisfying and defective character of actual morality.

The development of scientific enquiry has tended to produce disbelief in a moral order of the universe. The world is seen to proceed, or to be constituted, according to definitely ascertainable and verifiable laws; and from the standpoint of science the idea of a world moral order arises from the projection of a human factor into an extraneous system. The idea itself is also full of difficulties; and on examination it appears not quite satisfying to our moral nature. In part it savours of a spirit of revenge or of spite,

for embedded in it is a desire to get quits with those who have had the better of us in this world and to see them brought to book. For the rest it is difficult to see how suffering, sacrifice, and injustice undergone here can be made good in a hereafter. Science does not know and has not discovered any moral element in the world; and favours the conclusion that the belief is prompted by our helplessness before the phenomena of the natural world. The latter, though not irrelevant to the problems of morality, are yet themselves non-moral in that they are neither good nor bad but a mixture of both and thus morally indifferent. With increasing power over the course of natural phenomena the more will the reason or the cause of the belief disappear. The whole tendency of modern history, in consequence, has been to remove moral considerations out of the universe as a whole and to restrict them to human life.

Such a restriction rendered a scientific investigation of morality possible by seeking the roots of morality in human nature instead of in the universe. The latter effort had always been abstract and metaphysical in character, though the impossibility of considering human life apart from the world as a whole is a justification of such efforts; and efforts of a similar kind recur at intervals in consequence of this. Whether, however, this new basis for ethical enquiry made possible a fresh effective advance is doubtful. The old metaphysical ideas reappeared in a new dress and under new names; and each attempt left the problems in as unsatisfactory a position as before. The all-pervading, suffusing moral force of the Universe emerges as a universal operating in the social group and dominating the individual as of old. The mysterious working, the absolute value, and supreme power of the former become transferred to the latter; and the individual must submit and humble himself before its majesty and greatness; only it is now named the General Will, the State, the Law. These are now absolute and cannot be or do wrong. Yet practice refuted the belief; they have been, and are being, called in question; and their unconditional validity has been shaken.

§ 9.

Possibility of Replacing Moral Law by Natural Law.

The next step from this position is an easy and a natural one. It is to deny the operation of any such moral universal. The sphere of morality may be made so narrow that it can scarcely be said to exist. Several influences are arising to contribute to the taking of this step. The study of morality has been so barren of any solid results that a reaction is inevitable. A belief has arisen that a solution must be found in some other direction. Ethics itself always comes up against hard non-moral facts, while anything of a moral nature seems shadowy, and incapable of being seized. The development of other sciences, like biology and economics, have revealed how closely biological and economic factors touch and influence human action; and because of this a tendency has arisen to regard them as providing a substitute for morality and ethics. Just as the physical sciences drove out the moral element from the natural world, so now the more recent sciences of biology and economics tend to drive out the moral element from human life. More and more does it seem the case that the deciding and controlling factors in human life are biological and economic in character. More firmly is the idea becoming rooted in the mind of each individual that he is caught within strong currents which compel him irresistibly to a particular course of action, and that this compelling force and necessity are not at all of what has been called a moral nature. It is only necessary to cite the cases of business, industrial unemployment, international conflicts, where men feel themselves strangely helpless to avert disaster. Personality seems less and less a determining factor; and if personality is eliminated as an effective power, morality seems to go too. It is forced into a wholly subordinate position and crushed within the economic system with its machinery and relentless tendencies, or limited by the structure of the organism and the laws of its history and development. From one position after another morality has been driven, dethroned from its uni-

versal sway, and reduced to a crownless monarch without a domain.

Confirmation of this is given in the nature of modern social conflicts and the premises on which they are based. The first stages of a critical attitude towards the existing conditions of society were marked by features of an idealistic character and prompted by moral motives, feelings and impulses. It was man's moral nature that revolted against the conditions of social life. Under these influences an ideal world of things was outlined; there were sketched Utopias that lay away beyond the hard facts of the actual world. This early moral Utopianism has fallen into discredit; it failed because not based sufficiently upon actual fact; and it was felt to be, and has proved to be, unrealisable. Fresh solutions have been sought but with decreasing emphasis upon the rôle of the moral factor. They take their start from an analysis of economic life; their premises are economic; their means are economic; and their results are economic. Or they take their start from an analysis of the organic and the psychological structure of man, and base themselves upon tendencies inherent in the nature of man and of existing society. And because they thus start from a basis in the real nature of things, they believe themselves capable of playing an effective part in human life. It is the purpose of the following chapters to discuss whether these claims are justified, under what conditions they can be fulfilled, and whether any meaning can be still assigned to, and any place found for, morality.

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CHAPTER II

SCIENCE AND REALITY

ANALYSIS

§ 1. Morality and knowledge of nature.

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CHAPTER II

SCIENCE AND REALITY

§ 1

Morality and Knowledge of Nature.

The question of the relation between science and reality is a difficult and complex one; and because of its being largely a metaphysical one, or one belonging to the sphere of the theory of knowledge, its relevance to a study of morality is not at first sight very obvious. There are, of course, many aspects of the general question that are not quite relevant to the problem of morality, and for that reason it is not necessary to discuss the question in full. The relevance of some other aspects, however, will become clear if it is borne in mind that moral aspirations have frequently been turned to failure because of human ignorance concerning the operations of natural forces, that the realization of moral values has often been defeated because of the conflicts of interests and tendencies, that moral Utopianism and social reformation have collapsed because of their having an insufficiently real basis, and that economics and biology—to mention but two sciences—are frequently regarded as providing a much surer foundation for human action than ethical theory. These facts imply that there exists a relation between morality or human action and the nature of the real, and that a knowledge of the latter may not be irrelevant to morality. But once this is admitted, the question of the nature of science becomes important for a study of morality. Knowledge plays a part, and a not insignificant part, in human action; and as knowledge is dependent on the nature of scientific investigation, it is essential to decide whether the latter will provide the knowledge on which morality depends.

§ 2.

Science and Simplification of the Real.

Bacon, in criticizing the syllogistic procedure of the Scholastics, made the objection that it was not equal to the "subtlety of nature"; and he endeavoured to formulate a fresh method which would overcome that defect. The human intellect, instead of trying to compress nature within the outlines of the syllogism or to reduce her to its own dimensions, must submit itself to nature and conquer nature by learning her ways. This contrast made by Bacon between the "subtlety of nature" and the nature of the human intellect expresses a problem which later thinkers discussed and tried to solve. Since Bacon's day, the "subtlety of nature" has been borne in upon the minds of many, and has served to colour their views regarding the procedure of science. What relation do the results of the latter bear to that "subtlety"? J. S. Mill regarded the conclusions of inductive science as a register of past experiences in an abbreviated form, and as shorthand formulæ for deciphering present and future experiences. For Ernst Mach science is not merely a copying, but also a simplification, of numerous similar facts, and is thus at the same time a lightening of the burden to be borne by the human mind: "The problem confronting man is that of acquiring as much as possible of the eternal and infinite truth with the least possible labour, in the shortest possible time, with the fewest possible hypotheses." For another writer[1] abstraction is a process which everyone from early years almost inevitably performs, prior to science; it is a simplification of things; on it generalization is based; and without generalization science would be impossible.

These views seem to imply that the human mind in dealing with nature simplifies nature. There are many features of science which confirm this general view. Science does aim at simplicity; it prefers the more simple types of explanation to the more complex, provided they do meet the facts; it works on the maxim that nothing more is to

[1] Pierre Delbet, *La Science et la Réalité*, pp. 106ff, 190ff.

be assumed for purposes of explanation than is necessary to that end ; it is continually striving to reduce the number of laws by finding one or a few general and comprehensive formulæ ; it is endeavouring to reduce all forms of energy to one, and all elements to a fewer number. Thus both in its methods and in its aim science is governed by the idea of simplicity. So far as it seeks to unify, to find a unity in things, it is aiming at simplicity. But the question arises whether science in aiming at simplicity is bringing about a simplification of nature. If the procedure of science does mean the latter, the assumption is being made that nature can be simplified, and that the simplification is legitimate. Whether it is or not, science can decide by means within its own power, namely, by reference to nature. Nothing except nature prevents the simplification effected by science ; and that simplification will find its limits in the degree of the complexity of nature. But it must be noted that scientific laws, or the conclusions of science, have to be revised frequently in such a manner as to suggest that they are too simple and not adequate to the complexity of the real or to the " subtlety of nature," that the simplifications effected by science do not correspond to the structure of nature, and that science, so far as it is to give a true interpretation of the real, is compelled towards results that are more and more complex.

§ 3.

Problem Involved in Simplification of the Real : Bergson's View.

The simplification of nature, accordingly, comes to be itself a problem. If science does give a true interpretation of nature, the simplification represented in its results must have its basis in the simplicity that exists as a quality of the real. This, however, is disputed by some thinkers, of whom M. Bergson may be taken as a typical and keen representative. His theory raises in a very clear manner the question of the relation between science and reality, and it deals in a very definite way with the simplifying character of science. In reference to our present purpose, there are

two important features of his theory. In the first place, he maintains vigorously that the human intellect, in the form of scientific inquiry, simplifies the real. Its procedure is abstract; concepts are what is common to a number of objects, a more or less arbitrary selection of some characters of an object. The intellect generalizes and deals with abstractions; and this is a simplification designed for action. In the second place, the most distinctive aspect of his theory lies in the additional contention that this simplification is imposed on nature by the human intellect, and does not give us knowledge of the real. The intellect is moulded by practical needs, and is not necessarily based on the real structure of objects themselves. Knowledge of the real is attainable only by the special method of Intuition. M. Bergson insists upon the complex nature of the real, upon the intermingling or interpenetration of everything in reality, upon the continuity and mobility of the real. The intellect is incapable of apprehending this reality; it robs the living of its vitality and solidifies everything; it breaks up the real into isolated elements, movements into instants; and out of the real carves broad, general characters. The function of the intellect is analytic, generalizing, dissociating, disconnecting. His theory implies a distrust of the intellect; it denies to the latter speculative power and insight. But it also implies that the intellect does not give us truth regarding the real; the latter is deformed. This view he shares also with other writers. "Intelligence," says M. Le Roy, "deforms everything that it touches. Science consists only of conventions, and it is solely to this circumstance that it owes its apparent certainty; scientific facts and, a fortiori, laws are the artificial work of the savant; science then can tell us nothing of the truth."

This theory establishes a clear distinction between knowledge of the real and the knowledge that is serviceable for action. There is not merely simplification but also deformation of the real effected by the intellect; and according to both M. Bergson and M. Le Roy, they are effected in the interests of action. The object of positive science "is not to show us the essence of things, but to furnish us with

the best means of acting on them." [1] "Intelligence, in its natural state, aims at a practically useful end. When it substitutes for movement immobilities put together, it does not pretend to reconstitute the movement such as it actually is; it merely replaces it with a practical equivalent." [2] "What is the essential object of science? It is to enlarge our influence over things. . . . It is always then, in short, practical utility that science has in view." [3] These are but a few passages from M. Bergson, but they express one of the main features of his theory. The implications are, first, that the intellect does not give us a knowledge of things as they really are, but only a practical equivalent, a rule of action; second, that this practical equivalent is represented by the judgments and formulæ which constitute the system of scientific knowledge; third, that the nature of the real is not relevant to the needs of human action, that there is, and need be, no coincidence between the real and the practical equivalent.

§ 4

Scientific Generality and Human Action.

It is not proposed to enter here upon a full and technical discussion and criticism of M. Bergson's theory or of any similar theory. His theory has simply been cited because it is a well-known theory, and because it raises an important point relevant to the problem of human action, which is the problem to be kept always in view. That point which is raised is the relation between scientific knowledge, human action and the real. How far is general and abstract knowledge serviceable for action; and—this is a more special form of the problem—how far is such knowledge, as M. Bergson interprets it in relation to the real, an effective help to action? Bergson's view of the intellect and of knowledge assumes that action is most successful when we make sharp, clean-cut divisions in the real; that "solidifying things," "creating immobilities," destroying con-

[1] *Creative Evolution*, Eng. Tr., p. 98. [2] Ib., p. 164.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 348.

tinuity, making abstractions, constitute the way to most effective action; that generalities are practically useful and pre-eminently so. This, in other words, comes to mean that the nature of the real need not be taken into consideration for purposes of action, or at least that it is a wholly irrelevant factor; and that, what is most important is to treat the real on "broad general lines." The success of the intellect in action, he maintains, just lies in its abstracting and generalizing tendency, and this character belongs to it because, in its origin and development, it has been fashioned as a practical instrument. What his view of the origin of the intellect implies is, not so much that the intellect is practically useful because it is general, but that it has acquired the character of being general and abstract because it has been always employed as an instrument of practice. This means that generality and abstraction have been actually demanded of the intellect as a practical instrument; that action requires generality and abstraction; that only so far as the intellect can provide such can it be a successful instrument; and that the more general and abstract the material it can provide, the more successful will it be.

The relation between generality and action implied in this theory is questionable. The objection to the theory rests upon two positions; the first is that generality, in so far as it is a quality attaching to scientific formulæ or laws, is in itself of small practical utility but may rather be a hindrance to action; or, in other words, that, if scientific formulæ or laws are practically useful, it is not merely because of their generality; the second is that generality, which has no real basis in nature and which has that relation to the real which Bergson maintains it to have, is completely useless for action. The consequences of these two positions are that if the intellect has the character which M. Bergson assigns to it, it must be regarded as useless for the purposes of action; and if it is to be serviceable for action it cannot have the character ascribed to it, but instead must have the characteristics which Bergson ascribes to Intuition. If it is once admitted that intellectual formulæ do not represent the real as it is and yet are practically useful,

then the real exercises no influence upon action, and there seems no check to the putting of the most fanciful doctrines into practice. The difficulty contained here is to find the means whereby it can be decided how far general rules or abstract theories are practically possible. On Bergson's theory it is action itself that decides for or against a rule or theory in respect of its utility; if a doctrine works successfully in practice, then the doctrine is not fanciful. But an examination of this is necessary to bring out the full implications, for it may contain a problem which admits of a further solution, and an analysis of action may lead to the disappearance of the distinction between knowledge of the real on the one hand, and the scientific knowledge that is of utility in action, and is a practical equivalent of the real on the other.

It may therefore be probable that, if action is fully analysed and its full implications unfolded, the real itself will be discovered to be the test of action and to control action. If that should be so, there would be no longer any ground for confining the rôle of intellect to the service of action and for denying its ability to reveal the nature of the real. Whether it is so is a point for the decision of which a consideration of the relation between generality and action is essential. It is necessary to decide whether facts support M. Bergson's view that the intellect is serviceable for action alone, and that it is so because of its general character and because of its abstractness. It may be said, indeed, that they do not, but confirm instead three positions opposed to Bergson's view. The first is that general rules or formulæ are not, merely because of their generality, useful in practice; the second is that general rules, in so far as they are effective in practice, are so because they do represent features of the real as it is; the third is that action is of such a nature that, if it is to be successful, it must take into account the nature of the real and even have its basis in it. It is only on such a basis as this that the question of the possibility of ideals being realized and the possibility of general formulæ being effectively used to guide action can be fruitfully discussed and solved.

§ 5.

Defects of Generality in Relation to Action.

That the human mind tends very easily to fall into vague generalities is quite a common fact of experience; and what that means is that the whole situation with its complex interweaving of causes and effects is not clearly apprehended. This is the source of the difficulty in giving effect to many demands of individuals or groups of individuals. Very frequently such demands arise from ideals of a vague and general nature or from an apprehension of a broad, general feature of a situation; and it is easy to think that, when such ideals are entertained, or when the general features of a situation have been apprehended, the problem has been solved; while instead it has been only really set. It is only when efforts are made to give effect to these demands that the inadequacy of what is general becomes evident, and those who have to act in the matter know the difficulty of bringing rules or formulæ into relation with the concrete situation. It is not an easy thing to carry out the rule or principle that States be determined in accordance with nationality; its application is limited by the complexities involved, and it may be found to cut athwart other spheres of life, such as economic life, and to establish artificial and arbitrary boundaries in new directions while trying to remove them in others. That the enemy should pay may be felt to be abstract justice; but it has to be remembered that it is an abstract and general demand; and it has not the simplicity of an act of book-keeping that involves only one or two entries. The fulfilment of the demand would set going a mass of forces which might bring about far-reaching results.

The State, again, is general in character; and the laws which it makes are also general. The execution of these laws is passed on to subordinate bodies, and ultimately to individuals who are brought into touch with the details of the situation to which the laws apply. That is the only condition of their effective execution; and the legislative body, being itself not acquainted with the details must

be kept well instructed by those who are, or else the laws when made will, because of their being general, be defective. Aristotle, when he spoke of the need of equity, saw the possible defects that might arise from a law or rule that is general in its nature. And the legislative body may have to alter a law that has been tested by detailed experience and found imperfect. The same defectiveness of what is general is further illustrated by the difficulty which the large modern State finds in the fulfilment of one of its primary functions, namely, the maintaining and securing of justice. The conditions have become so complex that it is possible to secure justice only in a rough and general way; numerous inequalities and injustices may exist, and the State cannot prevent them, and indeed may even contribute to them.[1] The difficulty of giving effect to a general conception appears also in the case of a league of nations. To lay down broad, general principles as the basis of the league may not be so difficult; the trouble arises in working out the formation, the organization and constitution in detail so as to embody these principles, and to render an effective realization of its aims possible. There is nothing in the generality of an idea or principle that will guarantee its success; the latter depends upon the adaptability of the idea to actual fact; and human beings have continually to translate the general into the concrete and particular; and that translation constitutes the difficulty of their action.

The danger of general principles is that they may give rise to rigidity and prove unworkable in experience. That is confirmed by the results of applying doctrinaire theories in practice; the latter breaks before the force of facts. Political revolutions, like the French and the Russian, have shown that the possession of general formulæ is not enough to ensure success. An abstract and general idea like that of freedom was not effective in directing the French Revolution to a successful issue; nor have general ideas about Capital and Labour and the relation of the State to industry been sufficient to turn the Russian Revolution to account.

[1] In case this may be questioned, it is only necessary to refer to the admission made during the recent war that to deal justly with the different claims put forward was impossible. State action could take only broad general lines.

What was lacking was the detailed knowledge as to how these generalities were to be given practical effect, and as to what forces would be set in motion, and what consequences would arise. It is this specific knowledge rather than knowledge of a general kind that enables action to be successful, and that enables even general knowledge to become effective. Lawrence Lowell, in *The Government of England*,[1] draws between the English and the French type of mind a contrast which turns upon the difference between general knowledge and specific or detailed knowledge. The French political mind has tended to draw logical conclusions from correct premises, but often with wrong results. The Englishman's premises are often incorrect and his conclusions from them illogical, but his results are commonly right. The reason of this is that abstract propositions in politics are at best approximations and an attempt to reason from them usually magnifies the inaccuracy. In England, on the other hand, institutions have not been based on or constructed in accordance with abstract ideas, but have been moulded empirically, that is, evolved by a gradual process of adjustment to meet certain definite detailed defects, and not to conform to some abstract principle. The success of the English system has been in large measure due to its being developed amidst concrete difficulties that require specific remedies, and to its consequent avoiding of generalities.

§ 6.

Success in Action and Knowledge of Details.

These instances which have been cited show how much difficulty for the purposes of action ideas or formulæ contain because of their generality. This, however, must not be taken to mean that general formulæ or general ideas have no utility for action, for the general conclusions or the laws of science are utilized for action, and they have played a very great part in human life. What is, nevertheless, denied is that they are practically useful merely because of their being general; and what is maintained is that their

[1] Pp 14–15, New Ed. 1918.

practical utility arises from other factors than their generality. This will become clear if we consider what is involved in the application of the general results of science to practice. They are not successfully applicable in the hands of every person. They can be so applied only by those who are acquainted with the facts to which the general principle or law relates. The successful application of anything general depends upon close acquaintance with details. The general staff of an army may issue a general order which, when worked out in increasing detail by the successive subordinate staffs, may be found impracticable; and it is only because the general staff have before them certain data sufficient to guide them in the framing of their order that they avoid such an act of stupidity; or it is because those who frame the order have at some previous time in a lower rank gained experience with details, and have learned the bearings of general orders upon actual circumstances. And the case is exactly analogous with scientific laws. These are not to be understood except through an acquaintance with the relevant facts; and the reason why very many non-scientists can understand to a certain degree a scientific law or theory is that they are acquainted with the facts relative to it; and the degree of their comprehension varies with the degree of their acquaintance with the detailed facts. Hence when scientific laws are made use of in action, their successful employment is mediated through an acquaintance with facts; and without the latter the law could not be turned to practical account. On the other hand, an acquaintance with facts and the behaviour of things may lead men to adjust themselves to them without any knowledge of laws or knowledge of a general kind. What they are aware of is that this object behaves in this way if this particular thing is done to it; and they can perceive that, if they want something to happen, they themselves must do another particular thing. Their action does not imply any general knowledge, but moves within the sphere of the individual and the detailed.

It would follow from this that the practical utility of the general and abstract is due to what is implicated of the particular and concrete in the general and abstract.

The obvious objection to the view that action is in the end determined by knowledge of the individual and of details is that such action is very subject to being wrong and unsuccessful, and that it is only a knowledge of laws or general principles that will prevent this. Here, then, appears clearly the importance of the general for action. But to have merely general principles is no guarantee of achieving successful results, as is shown in the case of the French and the Russian Revolutions and in many other cases. If general principles may quite well lead to non-success in action, so too, of course, may merely a particular acquaintance with things. But a very full acquaintance with individual things and their behaviour, though not accompanied by a generalized knowledge of them, will be far more fruitful of results than a knowledge of abstract and general principles. General principles may to a certain extent make up for a lack of full acquaintance with details, though they never can act as a complete substitute, while a very wide and deep acquaintance with details may quite successfully dispense with general principles. The defects of the average "practical man" is not that he lacks, and is opposed to, a knowledge of general principles, but that he is ignorant of a large mass of fact. Hence the conclusion may be drawn that general formulæ or laws or general principles, if they are to be fruitful for action, presuppose a wide acquaintance with detailed fact—in other words, with the complexity of the real. As, for science, general formulæ or laws can be reached and are intelligible only on the basis of a detailed acquaintance with facts, so in action the successful application of principles or laws presupposes a similar basis.

§ 7.

Limiting Factor in the Simplification of the Real.

If the value of the general for action is largely dependent on a knowledge of individual, concrete details, it follows that the mere fact that the intellect does generalize is not a ground for asserting that the intellect is only an instrument for action. It may, however, be a ground for asserting that the intellect, in so far as it is a generalizer, is not adequate

to the complexity of the real. But if it is so, and if action to be successful must take account of the complexity of the real, then the intellect would be useless for action. Now it seems that science by means of its formulæ does somehow simplify the actual, for it enables the human mind to grasp complex phenomena or things of greatly varying nature in a short and concise manner. This aspect of generalization as simplification raises a further difficulty as regards the relation of generalization to action ; for M. Bergson's theory maintains not merely that science simplifies the real, but that it does so for the purpose of rendering action more effective. If science simplifies the real, how far can it go in doing so ? This question requires to be raised because there is possible a tendency to what may be called over-simplification ; and this tendency shows itself most markedly where the complexity of phenomena is greatest.

The theories advanced in explanation of social phenomena have shown great diversity, but there is a strong tendency to explain what is complex by means of one or a very few elements—for instance by some one instinct or impulse.[1] To reduce a diversity to a single element is certainly to simplify, but it is not necessarily to understand the diversity ; it still remains essential to show how the complexity arises out of a single or a few elements. Such over-simplification may result in quite false conclusions. The fact that all people co-operated to bring about a certain end or object would not justify the conclusion that they were all prompted by the same motive. The motives may be quite diverse and yet lead to a single result. The Pan-German League was formed in 1894 with the aim of impressing upon the German people that Germany's development did not stop with 1871 or 1878, but that the Empire only then became an Empire with world significance. To this League, however, others attached themselves with special aims of their own—military, maritime, colonial, linguistic, anti-semitic, anti-catholic, and so on. A strike brought about by a trade union in one country might suit the purpose of an enemy country ; but it would be unsafe to conclude that the strike was prompted by the enemy country or by motives favour-

[1] Freud's psychoanalytic theory is but one instance.

able to it. Such conclusions would mean a simplification of actual fact, but it would be a simplification to such an extent that it would be false theoretically and dangerous if utilized for practical purposes. Psychological facts are no less real than the facts of physical science, while a simplification of the former may be even far more dangerous. To regard a company of soldiers as being all alike, ready to shirk duties at every opportunity, may be a simple method, but it is extremely doubtful if it is productive of beneficial results.

If such over-simplification is possible, what is that factor which sets a limit to that simplification which, it is said, is designed for rendering action effective? On M. Bergson's and similar views that factor is not the real itself; the argument seems to be that the intellect is called upon to meet the needs of action, that in order to meet these demands it transforms the real and it does so as far as is necessary for that purpose. But what is of primary importance for purposes of action is acquaintance with the complexities of a situation; and apart from such acquaintance, general formulæ remain empty and barren. Action is the bringing about of a result, either of a particular kind like the making of a watch or clock, or of a general kind like a general social transformation. To effect such a result, various means, materials or forces must be employed; and to employ them successfully the generalizations of science are not enough. A view or plan of the whole process is not enough, as M. Bergson maintains.[1] When we come to act, we do not merely plant on the real our design. The latter as we first envisage it in our minds can be beautifully arranged, because we can just have in it and around it what we want. When, however, we attempt to give effect to it, we cannot always arrange the forces of nature just to our wants. Our action brings us into the complexity of nature which we have in theory avoided by generalization and abstraction; and that complexity may thwart our design. The intellect, so far as it is merely simplifying and generalizing, can give no guarantee that the complexity will not do so, seeing that it has ignored the complexity. Action does not take place within the simplified situation which the intellect makes in theory;

[1] *Creative Evolution*, p. 163.

and Bergson would have to show, in defence of his view, that action involves and requires a simplified medium, and that it is the task of the intellect to supply that medium.

Experience, however, is far from showing that this is what action requires. The most common objection raised against theory is that it is too abstract in relation to the needs of action, and has not sufficiently taken account of the practical conditions. Ideals are quite frequently thrown aside or remain unadopted because they are too much "in the air." Action that is rough and general is admittedly unsatisfactory, though it may be granted that such action is often the only possible. That, however, is quite different from saying that such action is successful or the most successful. It often implies the ignoring of numerous consequences that are decidedly undesirable; and it is only because we are prepared to ignore these that we can at all regard our action as issuing successfully. It would have been regarded by us as still more successful if we could have avoided the undesirable results; and what prevented us from accomplishing that was lack of knowledge of and lack of control over the complex forces implicated in the situation within which we have had to act. That is why our action has to assume a rough and general character, and why the success attending it is qualified. In extreme cases, through inability to cope with the complexity, our action may be thwarted altogether, and may end in disappointing consequences—a result that is not a rare experience, as is evidenced by the maxim that "man proposes, God disposes." The helplessness of man, however, does not involve anything mysterious; it does not require the assumption of a Being that over-rules human purposes. It finds its explanation in the complexity of the real; and the more man can grasp that complexity, the more effective and the more certain will his action become.

§ 8.

Intellect as an Instrument of Action and as a Source of Knowledge of Reality.

A consideration of the nature of action accordingly shows that action must take place within the real; and this

fact leads to the rejection of M. Bergson's doctrine. The success of action is not proportional to the power of the intellect to generalize, to abstract from, to simplify the real. The more the intellect does do that, the more does it run the risk of being useless for action. If the intellect cannot give us the real, cannot lead us into the complexity of the real, it is doomed to be ineffective as an instrument of action. If men are to act successfully, either the intellect must not merely simplify but give at the same time the real in all its complexity, or else Intuition, which M. Bergson says leads into the heart of reality, must be an instrument of action. For purposes of effective action we must know not merely objects, static conditions; we must know processes, tendencies, the manner in which the real is interwoven, and in which things act and react on each other or promote and check each other's movements. Action itself is a movement which must "insinuate" itself into the flow which M. Bergson says constitutes reality; and for action, therefore, an apprehension of the "sinuosities" of the real is supremely important. It is essential to know the contours of reality, for otherwise we run the risk of finding the course of our action diverted, and hence of reaching a goal which we had not intended. That is the condition of the certainty of our action.

The idea of "certainty" suggests a difficulty and a possible confusion. The certainty attaching to scientific formulæ or results requires to be distinguished from the certainty attaching to the results of action. It is the confusion of the two that has led to the contention that scientific generalizations or formulæ are designed to be instruments of action. It has in consequence been supposed that in the use of scientific generalizations for purposes of action, the certainty of the former will be transferred to or attach to the latter. This supposition is not true. The certainty of a generalization or formula lies in its describing a number of facts, and in its being confirmed by an appeal to the facts or in its providing deductions of the nature of predictions which we can believe will necessarily come true. Such certainty rests upon the condition that there are certain relevant facts, and that they are known. In the case

of action, the result aimed at has the character of a prediction, but certainty does not attach to action in the same way as to scientific formulæ because there is lacking the condition that all the relevant facts are known. The certainty of action lies in the necessity of a definite result occurring provided that means of a specific character are employed; that is, provided definite forces are set in operation. These forces will act in accordance with a scientific formula that may have scientific certainty; but that scientific formula contains no guarantee, when used in action, that only these forces will operate. Others may intrude and cause a variation in their operation, thereby bringing about a result different from the one intended. Whether these others will intrude or not depends on our ability to control the situation completely and to prevent their interfering. Whether we can do this is not merely a matter of knowing scientific formulæ, even though they are certain. In relation to the concrete and complex situation within which action must take place, scientific formulæ are abstract and general because they refer to a self-contained set of conditions; and the certainty of science rests upon abstraction and generality, while the certainty of action rests upon acquaintance with the mass of concrete detail, and with much beyond the closed set of facts to which the scientific formula refers. It is the latter acquaintance and not the former knowledge that enables a merchant to be sure of his market and to be successful, a statesman to be sure of his constituents and to act with directness and decision.

§ 9.

Ideas and Action: Distinction between Intellect and Intuition Invalid.

In order to act successfully, then, an insight into the complexity of the real is necessary; and that insight, according to M. Bergson, is given by Intuition as contrasted with the intellect with its simplification, abstraction, and generalization. It would seem then that what M. Bergson regards as Intuition must be an instrument of action. But

if the intellect is the sphere of ideas and Intuition is what is most serviceable for action, a difficulty arises, for it seems to be denied that ideas play a part in action. Yet ideas do play a tremendous part in and exercise a very great influence upon action—for good as well as for ill. The importance of ideas is not always very widely recognized. That is not merely the case with the unreflective popular mind; it is so even with certain theories. The doctrine that ascribes the creation of all wealth to labour, meaning physical labour, ignores completely how little labour by itself and without ideas could produce. It is ideas that direct labour and that enable labour to put itself into the forms which both constitute wealth and help to produce wealth. The increase of ideas has led to a steady decrease in the importance of labour; and with fresh discoveries and inventions labour, as a productive agent, will increasingly become a relatively insignificant factor. If that, however, is the rôle of ideas, it would seem that the position of M. Bergson is strengthened. The intellect seems once more to be assigned a decisive place in action.

It is possible, nevertheless, to give due recognition to the importance of ideas in action without accepting M. Bergson's theory of the intellect and of Intuition. For him ideas do not and need not express the nature of the real; and a complete contrast in kind is implied between intellect and Intuition, ideas and intuitive knowledge, the latter coming closest to what is known as instinct. On the other hand, if it is recognized that action must take place within the real, it will have to be admitted that ideas, if they are to subserve action, cannot misrepresent or distort the real but express it. The content of ideas may be a selection from the real; and from the side of knowledge they are abstract, even a simplification of the real; but for purposes of action they must be placed back into the setting within the real from which they were abstracted, and form once more a part of that complexity which characterizes the real. Ideas, if they are to aid action, must thus be capable of fitting into the real.

The distinction between ideas and instinct as a distinction in kind may be also called in question. The differ-

ence is rather to be considered from the side of action, when the contrast is then between action that is instinctive and action that is based on ideas, or from the side of knowledge when the contrast is between the consciousness that characterizes the level of ideas and the consciousness that characterizes instinct. In either case the difference is one of degree. Instinct is an act in response to a stimulus that is only imperfectly apprehended. Relatively to an act based on ideas it is simple. It is at the level of ideas that complexity emerges; and M. Bergson himself states that consciousness and the intellect arise because of the growing complexity. The conclusion one would be tempted to draw is that the intellect is designed to deal with what is complex; the more it develops, the greater the complexity with which it can deal; and before it can even simplify, it must apprehend the complex.[1] If that is so, there would be no reason for denying to a powerfully developed intellect the capacity to apprehend the real itself in all its complexity.

M. Bergson's theory of the intellect and of Intuition rests upon a particular assumption regarding the process of evolution. For him the intellect looks upon the real from outside like a spectator; it is not immersed in the game which is reality. Instinct, however, is immersed in the play; it is within the real. This doctrine assumes that with the development of the intellect instinct is dropped behind and is not carried along with it. It is this assumption that enables M. Bergson to regard the intellect as outside the real, and leads him to provide a synthesis of them again in Intuition. It is not uncommon to oppose intellect and instinct, deliberative and instinctive activity; but it is a view that is being called in question by contemporary psychology. Instinct is not utterly devoid of consciousness; while deliberative action, involving ideas, must in its execution necessarily utilize instinctive mechanisms. It is only so far as ideas can call into play or set to work such mechanisms that they can become effective. The development of the higher mental processes does not, therefore, necessarily

[1] That is, the function which M. Bergson assigns to intellect even presupposes that the complex real is present to it; otherwise it would not be able, nor know how, to simplify for purposes of action.

mean that the lower are left behind, but that a new complexity arises in which instinct finds a place. The reason for a distinction between intellect and Intuition accordingly disappears; intellect continues the work begun by instinct, and no ground remains for assuming that the intellect does not and cannot place us in touch with the real as it is.

It is thus possible to reject the doctrine that creates any antithesis between intellect as a power revealing reality and intellect as an instrument of action. It is not necessary to deny that the intellect does subserve action; but that admission compels the other admission that the intellect can reveal the nature of the real. If it does not lead to the real, it cannot have practical utility assigned to it, since action to be successful must imply a recognition of the real. And, on the other hand, its usefulness for action becomes clear once it is admitted that it does give us reality. The only limit to action is the nature of reality itself; the limit to human action is the degree of knowledge which man has of this reality; the more man learns and understands of the complexity of the real, the more successful can human action become. His failure in the past has been due to his incomplete knowledge of that complexity; and one hope of success lies by way of science.[1]

[1] It is a matter of surprise that M. Bergson did not interpret intellect and instinct in this way, for it is in accordance with his general view of the nature of evolution. Evolution is a process of accumulation, a prolonging of the past into the present; but he unites with this another view that evolution involves dissociation, separation; hence, for example, intellect and instinct represent two divergent tendencies and separate off, each proceeding along its own lines. The two views are difficult to reconcile and cause considerable theoretical difficulties. The difficulty arises from the assumption that intellect and instinct are two divergent tendencies.

CHAPTER III

VALUES AND CAUSES

ANALYSIS

§ 1. Action and the complexity of the real.

§ 2. Moral forces and psychological forces.

§ 3. Importance of psychological forces.

§ 4. Moral Purpose, Causation, and Explanation.

§ 5. Importance of distinction between values and causes.

§ 6. The process of realizing values.

§ 7. Values as regulative principles.

§ 8. Significance of moral failure for theory.

CHAPTER III

VALUES AND CAUSES

§ 1.

Action and the Complexity of the Real.

In the preceding chapter it has been maintained that human action must be considered in relation to the complexity of the real within which it takes place and with which it must contend. This simply means that morality, in that it is action, is an empirical event subject to empirical limitations and implicating causal laws. It does not take place in some abstract moral sphere, not subject to natural conditions; and any moral theory which begins from such a standpoint places itself at a disadvantage from the start. When a man acts he makes use of means to produce a result or to bring about the existence of something which did not exist before; the means which he uses are materials derived from existence; the nature of the means which he will employ will depend on his knowledge of reality, upon the extent of that knowledge, upon what is within his own control, and upon their efficiency for effecting the result he desires. What is possible for a man to do depends immediately upon his knowledge of the real, and ultimately upon what the structure of reality permits. That is why it is a supremely important matter for human action that man should know the real as fully as possible, and that he should be capable of attaining such knowledge. Human action both utilizes forces of various kinds, and has often to contend with forces of a conflicting nature. It must adjust itself to the latter, or else it will run the risk of being thwarted; and hence it must be considered in relation to these forces in which it has its roots.

These forces are physical, economic, and psychological. That human action implicates physical forces is a fairly obvious matter. Man has been during his history largely concerned with getting a knowledge of the physical forces in order to gain control over them so as to utilize them as means for satisfying his needs, or else so as to adjust himself to them in order to render his own life more secure. In doing so he has to recognize the laws of such forces; these are laws to which his will has to submit and which it must obey; and that fact is sufficient to show that the will is not an omnipotent power that can perform marvels. The recognition of economic forces has been later in taking place; in the sphere of economic life there are causal relations between sets of economic facts or phenomena; and to ignore these relations may lead to disaster. This does not mean that it is necessary to accept as inevitable the economic structure as it is with whatever defects it may have, but it means that in any attempts at reconstruction or at removing the defects, heed must be paid to what economic fact renders possible and to the consequences that arise from the admission of certain facts. And such reconstruction signifies an effort on the part of man to utilize the tendencies of economic factors in support of his own ends or to adjust himself to them instead of being crushed by them. This fact again shows the supreme importance of a knowledge of the complexity of economic life if action in the economic sphere is to be successful. The recognition of psychological forces and of their rôle in human action and human life is now taking place; it is being seen that the "psychology" of individuals and of classes is a most important factor in certain problems. But in connexion with this there is a considerable amount of confusion and obscurity involved. The obscurity arises through the identification of psychological forces with "moral forces" as they are called. There has resulted from this very much misunderstanding regarding moral values and their rôle in action and in the Universe.

§ 2.

Moral Forces and Psychological Forces.

The term "moral force" is quite frequently used. People speak of the "moral forces" at work in society and in the world. It is not at all an uncommon view that the world is controlled by moral forces, that the world-process inevitably tends towards something higher and better, and that moral progress is inevitable. The assumption involved in such a view is that there is in existence a definite type of factor which is to be named a "moral factor"; and that this factor is operative in the world as a cause. It interprets moral values as forces or causes that behave in a manner analogous to natural causes or forces, and bring about effects. The problem that is involved here is that of the difference between, and the relation between, values and causes; and arising out of this is a more special question regarding ethics as a science. If there were such factors as moral forces, then ethics would have a very definite object of investigation—as definite as any natural science. Its task would be to search out moral forces or causes and discover the laws of their operation. Such an ethics, however, has not been evolved; and the main reason against its being possible is that "moral forces" are not forces analogous to natural forces, and that the forces which are believed to be moral forces are really of a psychological nature, and are being investigated by psychology. The presence of moral forces in the world is very disputable; and there is no ground for accepting as true the view that the world-process inevitably tends towards something higher and better. "The Good" is not an operative cause in the world. So far as moral progress can be detected in history the cause is not a "moral" cause; it can be explained, as well as the failure to progress can be explained, without assuming the existence of "moral forces"; and such an explanation will show that moral progress, so far from being inevitable, is very conditional, and it is conditional upon factors that are very unstable and uncertain.

The study of nature and even of history does not reveal

any moral force or cause at work. The processes of nature end in results, some of which are good or desirable, others of which are bad or undesirable. This means that nature acts without regard to value. The nature of history is similar; it is a mixture of good and evil; and if it is admitted that history is largely made by human beings, then either human action is like nature in being indifferent to values or else human action is limited by certain factors in achieving values. Yet it is in human action that the moral factor does appear most clearly; and if a study of nature and of history does not reveal any moral force at work, it is necessary to analyse human action in order to discover whether there is a factor like a moral force. So far as physical and economic forces are involved in action, they may be eliminated from present consideration. There remain psychological forces. Psychology has shown that there are psychological forces. It speaks of impulses, instincts, emotions, desires, sentiments as causes and interprets them after the manner of natural causes. It regards them as springs of action, and as bringing about effects; and it endeavours to formulate laws that describe the manner in which they operate. These psychological forces are forces which men in dealing with their fellow-men must take into consideration.

§ 3.

Importance of Psychological Forces.

It may be said quite definitely that no action can be effective or successful which ignores the "psychological factor." To ignore it may lead to a mutiny of men, to a disastrous strike, or to revolt. A policy or line of action is capable of producing an effect in the minds of men, which in turn may become the cause of another line of action. In social conflicts force may be used to beat an opposing side; but the problem at the root of the conflict is not solved by such a method; the causes of the conflict may still remain with the additional factor of the consciousness of having been beaten by superior strength; and that develops as a natural result a psychological attitude that

may be dangerous. A State, in making war upon another, may, in order to gain an initial military advantage, invade a State whose neutrality had been recognized and guaranteed; but in doing so it may produce a psychological effect upon the people of other States of such a nature that the initial military advantage is completely discounted. Professor McDougall[1] speaks of the psychological difference between the Boer and the British Armies, and says that this psychological difference "was undoubtedly a main cause of many of the surprising successes of the former. In the Russo-Japanese War the opposed armies probably differed even more widely in this respect." From such instances it is seen how psychology can explain human action. The type of explanation is similar to that adopted by natural science, namely, by means of causes and the laws expressive of the relation between causes and effects of a specific kind. It is subjecting many peculiarities of mind and of behaviour to purely causal explanation.

Psychological forces are thus to be recognized as one type of forces that must be taken into consideration for the purposes of action and for the purposes of interpreting action. They constitute one type of those numerous forces that man can utilize in his support or to which he must adjust himself, and which he must be careful not to render antagonistic to him. They are complex, subtle, and at present difficult to gauge; but they are none the less real and effective. Hence, in order to explain human action, a force or cause of a physical, economic, or a psychological character is given. If we see a man on a very steep road cycling from side to side, we explain his action as the case may be by his mental and physical condition brought about by stimulants, or by his effort to adjust himself to and to utilize a physical law in accordance with which he can reach the top of the hill with the least expenditure of energy. If a merchant reduces his prices, we explain his action by reference to economic causes or to economic laws to which he wishes to adjust himself. If a State adopts a policy of ruthlessness and barbarity towards an invaded people, we explain it by referenee to the psychological effect which it

[1] *Group Mind*, p. 58.

is designed to produce on the people and which will induce them to be quiescent and submissive[1]; or, if one side in a dispute resorts to propaganda, we explain it by reference to an attempt to produce a psychological effect upon the public and to enlist a psychological force on their own side. All such actions are based on a recognition of the reality of psychological factors and of their effectiveness as causes leading to certain effects.

§ 4.

Moral Purpose, Causation, and Explanation.

Human action can then be explained by reference to physical, economic, or psychological forces. Where, then, does the moral element come in? The moral quality attaching to human action is one of the distinctive aspects of human action; and human action accordingly has another aspect that is not allowed for in an explanation by one or other of these causes. Such explanation does not exhaust the nature of human action. But after allowing fully for these three causes, especially the psychological factor, it is difficult to find a place for the moral factor. Is the latter, then, to be identified with one of these forces, namely, the psychological? This seems frequently to be done; by moral force is meant enthusiasm, zeal, earnestness and so on; but the difficulty here is that these are psychological qualities, and psychological qualities are like nature, both good and bad, and thus indifferent to values. Or is the moral factor a distinct force or cause that may determine human action like these other forces? If it is, then human action can admit of a moral explanation, namely, by means of moral causes. It would not be true to say that human action is never spoken of as if there were moral causes; for quite frequently practical problems are declared to be due to the evil in human nature or in a section of human beings. The fact that this is done does not necessarily mean that such a procedure is valid.

[1] I.e. it is explained by reference to a psychological attitude on the part of individuals or groups of individuals. It may still be, as is maintained later, that this psychological attitude is itself to be explained by external causes or conditions.

It is questionable whether moral causes exist and permit of explanations, whether human action can ever be " explained " in such terms. The attempt to do so is due to two confusions : a confusion between psychological force or quality and the moral aspect of this psychological force ; and a confusion between explanation and justification. The first confusion leads to the second, for it provides something that has the nature both of cause and of value, and that thus renders possible an interpretation of an action that seems both to explain and to justify. It is most important to avoid such confusions and to keep a study of morality distinct from psychology, and questions of explanation distinct from questions of justification. Ethics has generally admitted that when we introduce the moral factor in connexion with human action we are no longer explaining but justifying.[1] This implies that there is some difference between causes and values ; and that there *is* some difference is confirmed in a more popular, less scientific, and less reasoned form in the antagonism felt to exist between science and religion. That a human action cannot be " explained " by means of a moral factor becomes clear when we attempt to do so. We do not " explain " by showing that an action is good or bad.

The difference between explanation and justification turns upon a distinction between causes and values. Causes or forces serve for purposes of explanation ; values for purposes of justification. And consequently the rôle played by each in the world is quite different. This is frequently obscured by a view taken of purpose in moral theory. It is that a purpose involves a kind of reversed causation ; instead of its giving an impulse from behind it acts as an attractive force and draws the individual towards it ; it is in front and acts backwards. Such a view implies that ends or purposes are causes, and that there is such a thing as moral causation, while yet that causation is distinct from natural causation. This, however, involves a misconception of

[1] This must not be taken to imply that ethics cannot be inductive like the natural sciences. That moral judgments express a matter of justification and not explanation still leaves the way clear for the inductive task of ethics, for ethics is not thereby said to be concerned with justification.

the nature of purpose and an imperfect analysis of the factors implicated; and a consideration of the nature of purpose may bring to light the causal element that is present, while it may also reveal the relation of purpose to nature. A purpose or end has two features: it is a result brought about by the use of certain factors or by getting certain forces in operation; and at the same time, apart from or in addition to this physical aspect, it has a certain quality which we call moral value, that is, it is good or bad. That it is a result in a purely natural or physical sense, in the same sense in which the motion of a train is a result of certain physical forces, must not be lost sight of; for it is in virtue of that character that the process of achieving a purpose is similar to any natural process, and that human purpose is susceptible of development from natural processes.[1] Emphasis is frequently laid upon the foresight implied in purpose as contrasted with the "blindness" of nature. But that a person foresees the result does not affect the fact that it is a result, though it may affect the particular manner in which the result is brought about. Prediction implies the foreseeing of a result arising from the operation of certain causes or forces; but such foreseeing does not mean that the result ceases to be a result and somehow becomes a cause. This is true of scientific prediction, but the case of purpose is exactly similar. The difference that exists between the two cases is that a purpose is a result issuing from a sequence of causal factors of which one or more human beings constitute one factor, and that purpose therefore has a reference to human beings. But this difference does not affect the fact that purpose is a result.

Hence a purpose, since it is a result, cannot be one of the causal factors bringing itself about. If there is accordingly any causal element in purpose, it must be found in the element of value which also characterizes purpose.

[1] For instance, Bosanquet in criticizing Ward suggests that purposiveness and spontaneity in nature may be more widespread than the belief in the principle of the Uniformity of Nature as usually interpreted would admit, and he interprets the principle to recognize and reconcile it with purpose in nature. But it may be that, instead of nature being interpreted as purposive after the analogy of human purpose, human purpose develops out of the processes of nature and Uniformity be found for this reason in human life.

If that, however, is a causal element, how does it operate? It does not appear as a member within the causal series; it is not a necessary element in the explanation of the process whereby the result was effected. An analysis of the process shows first the envisaging of an object or result by an individual; second, an attitude on the part of the individual towards this object, an attitude called desire; third, desire prompts or urges the individual to act upon things or set other forces or causes in operation; fourth, the operation of these forces brings the object into actual existence or effects the result envisaged. The value-quality does not come into the process as one of the causal factors effecting the result, but it attaches to the object envisaged and the object or result brought about. One of the causal factors, however, is the desire for the object; and without it the process would never take place. The question of a distinction between values and causes turns upon the relation of desire to the object desired. Values are closely connected with desire; and because of this close connexion a confusion may easily arise between causes and values, and values may easily come to be regarded as causes. Value may be identified with desire, or at least with certain forms of desire; and as desire is a cause or force, value has been taken to be one too. Hence moral force, moral strength, is spoken of as if it were a moral cause. But it is analysable into a causal factor which is psychological, and an element of value connected with the object towards which the psychological factor is directed. So also moral enthusiasm, moral sincerity, and moral earnestness are psychological matters, though implicating values; but values have not become more powerful factors or causes because a person is a moral enthusiast; the more powerful force is psychological and effects the realisation of values, not the values themselves. The psychological state that is more intense and concentrated may serve more effectively to overcome psychological inertia or resistance, just as increased steam is necessary to, or more certain to, overcome greater friction or heavier objects.

A purpose, accordingly, in so far as it is an end desired and possessing value, is not a cause unless it can be established that the element of value causes or rouses the activity

called desire. If value does call forth desire, then it must be regarded as a cause. Whether it does so or not can be answered only by a fuller discussion of value and its relation to desire.[1] Here it is provisionally maintained that though value and desire are closely connected, that connexion is not a causal one; value does not bring desire into play; and values are consequently not to be regarded as causes. It may be true that we come to desire something because we believe it to be valuable; but that implies a relation between desire and belief, not between desire and value; and it is difficult to establish a causal relation between the value and the belief that it is a value, and to maintain that the value causes the belief, and the belief causes the desire, and therefore value is a member of a causal series. It is necessary continually to guard against the confusion of value with the psychological factors so closely associated with it.

§ 5.

Importance of Distinction between Values and Causes.

The distinction between values and causes is not a mere abstract and unimportant matter. It is of great importance for the understanding of events, especially social phenomena. If moral values are not causes, they cannot be used to explain or account for phenomena. Yet it is quite common to find their being so used. For instance, it is maintained that the root of present social troubles, including Bolshevism, which is simply the most conspicuous aspect, is moral and spiritual; and it is urged that a great moral and spiritual "offensive" on a grand scale should be undertaken to restore the damaged moral standards of the nation and to reawaken conscience throughout the community. This may be said to be a view peculiar to a certain limited section of the community whose moral zeal outruns their understanding. But that the idea underlying the view is not uncommonly held may be confirmed by other instances of the same confusion. When a large and powerful labour federation strikes, the action is morally condemned by wide

[1] This is discussed in chaps. ix and x.

sections of the people, and it is condemned in a way that implies not that the action arises from a misunderstanding or ignorance, for a matter of knowledge may imply error, not moral turpitude, but that the action is due to or springs from a moral defect, from immoral tendencies or disposition. This means that the action is believed to have moral causes, and is to be explained by moral factors. And that is the nature of the view which holds the root of the present trouble to be moral and spiritual. It assumes there are moral and spiritual causes bringing about disorders and creating problems. The remedy, then, is no longer to be found in the economic world or in the natural world; and there is no need for the economist or for the natural scientist to investigate causes in order to control them and to organize a more efficient system.

The only remedy on such a view is a moral regeneration; but when an effort is made to give a concrete meaning to this, it is difficult to do so; and the suggested remedy is all the more anomalous in face of the fact that the labour federation is fully convinced of the moral justice of its demands and of its action. What, however, is important in the present connexion is that to attribute an event to a moral factor as its cause is to provide no explanation at all, because moral factors are values, and values are not causes. But a moral cause, it may be said, is to be found in the disposition, impulses, or desires of men. These however, are psychological causes, and to regard them as moral causes is to create confusion. Psychological causes can be utilized in explaining action. A trade union, for instance, will not permit its "labour" to be diluted; and it gives the reason that it will lessen the amount of work for each of them and shorten the period over which work will be likely to continue. No "moral explanation" is possible, nor is it necessary. There is a psychological cause behind it. Repeated experience of unemployment may have produced a psychological effect in the form of fear of unemployment and misery and a sense of insecurity; and that effect in turn acts as a cause influencing their conduct. When, however, the moral factor is introduced, we depart from explanation and raise the question of the value of the

ends or results that are being brought about by this psychological cause in conjunction with causes of other types. In relation to these ends psychological causes or forces are to be treated in exactly the same manner as physical causes or forces; that is, they are purely causes, in themselves neither moral nor immoral, good nor evil; and when we do come to ascribe good or evil qualities to them, we do so in a secondary sense: the goodness or evil is dependent upon the value of the result or end brought about by their instrumentality. When, therefore, we attribute an action to moral turpitude or moral deficiency, or to an evil disposition, we provide no solution; we are explaining nothing. We are confusing explanation and justification; and we may be quite able to explain an action without in the least justifying it. In fact, when we have ascribed an act to an evil disposition or to moral turpitude, instead of obtaining a solution we have suggested a problem, for a psychological cause is implied and that psychological factor may be an effect before it is itself a cause.

§ 6.

The Process of Realizing Values.

A question of considerable importance arises out of the distinction between values and causes. If values are not causes, how are they realized? There is nothing in a value that will bring about its own existence and bring it into relation with human experience. It will not realize itself. There is nothing inherent in nature that will inevitably lead to progress. Values have, therefore, the characteristic of being peculiarly helpless. This may be illustrated by, as well as serve to explain, Butler's view of conscience. He said that conscience at most had authority but not power. The reason is that conscience merely sets before us values; but the values are not capable of compelling acceptance; they are not causes. In relation to the actual world of affairs they remain seemingly useless and powerless, like Plato's philosopher. Like the latter, they do not force themselves upon the world; they wait to be asked. The

rôle they play depends on their being accepted by men. In order that values may be realized, causes are necessary; and these causes are psychological, physical, and economic. It is sometimes asked, generally with the view of drawing a contrast between philosophy or ethics on the one hand and religion on the other, to the detriment of the former, what philosophy has done and what it can do for mankind. Such a question is based on a misunderstanding. Philosophy is not, any more than the sciences are, a causal factor; of itself it will accomplish nothing; its fruitfulness in human life depends upon agencies outside itself. Since values cannot realize themselves nor compel their own realization, progress is either a matter of accident or else it depends on individual human beings. Since improvement is not necessitated by any moral causes in the world, men must improve themselves and their conditions. Values are what ought to be or exist; and in saying so we imply a relation between values and existence. We do not mean that they do actually exist, but we do imply that their existence should be and can be effected, that the world should be in some sense transformed by producing effects that are valuable or desirable. Such effects can be produced, values can be realized, through persons; and for this certain psychological conditions and causes are necessary. The values must in the first instance be wanted or desired. Without that psychological force there is lacking the initial condition for their realization. This does not necessarily mean that all mankind or all the members of a community must desire it before anything can be accomplished. Whether that must be so or not depends on other factors, upon the organization to be called into play or the machinery that requires to be set in motion. But that other factors must be set in motion is a further condition, and it is one which has considerable significance for practical action.

To bring about the realization of values, psychological forces must be utilized or must be set in operation; and because of this there is a need of leaders possessed of "moral earnestness" and reforming zeal. But a zeal that stops with bringing into play the psychological forces stops in the air and may bring about a crash. To effect the realiza-

tion of values psychological forces must be supplemented by other forces. A psychological force moves merely the individual or individuals; and unless the individual can in turn act upon something else constituting a member of a causal series leading to the desired value, his energy will be dissipated, or else he will become a seething spirit of revolt, a dissatisfied, cynical or rebellious person. Much modern education succeeds in generating the necessary psychological forces in favour of values, but it leaves these without the further means necessary for their operation. Appreciation of art and music, of knowledge and of goodness may be successfully developed, but the means of enjoying these values and of realizing them may not be within the power of those so educated, after they leave the educational establishments. The problem of the realization of values is not solved when the psychological attitude favourable to them has been produced; that may be a very important step, but there are additional steps which constitute also a very serious part of the problem, probably the most serious part of the problem.

That this is the case is confirmed by many facts. In spite of the frequent assertion that the present age is morally decadent, is on a moral decline, and that the present social and industrial troubles have a moral cause, never have moral goodwill, sound moral intentions, high moral aspirations been more common, more sincere, more deep-seated, more universal. The nations and their nationals engaged in the late war shrank from war in horror; they did not dread it but hated it, and entered it only from a high sense of duty. Amidst the present trouble most are keen upon doing their duty. In dread of another war, international associations are being formed with clear and beneficent purposes, with the object of promoting understanding and fellowship and cultivating a spirit of international sympathy, of creating an atmosphere of goodwill, and of helping to smooth away the differences which keep people apart. Before the war people urged the need of goodwill between Britain and Germany, as now they are urging goodwill between Britain and America. Their moral aspirations and their moral nature led them to regard war as unthinkable and impossible,

as they lead them again to think so. Yet when we turn to actual events we find how ineffective all this moral effort may become in the face of a crisis. The socialist and labour parties were fused with international sympathy and goodwill, and greeted each other as brothers; they swore lasting friendship, and declared they would remain solidly together. But at the critical moment they separated and ranged themselves on the side of their respective governments. What is the reason of this ineffectiveness?

The reason is to be found in the fact that the origin of critical problems does not lie in man's moral nature, and that their solution is not to be effected by morality in the form of goodwill and sympathy. Their solution is not to be effected by these means because in so far as they imply a moral value, values are powerless, and in so far as they imply any causality the causality is psychological. But psychological causes alone are incapable of realizing values; they merely move the individual to act; and the effectiveness of individual action depends upon other forces beyond himself and upon his knowledge and control of these forces. In this fact is to be found an explanation of the seeming futility of the Church and the seemingly small part played by morality. It is very common to insist that the necessary condition for the removal of the present industrial and social conflicts is that every one become good. Hence energy is spent in efforts to bring about a "change of heart." Not until that is effected can social evils be removed. Such a view is abstract, and ignores on how many complex factors, beside mere personal goodness, social harmony rests. It assumes that the goodness of human nature will of itself bring about good effects in the world, or that if people desire the good they will inevitably put things right. But neither is goodness a cause, nor, if it were, need it produce an effect like itself, for an effect need not be like or have the quality of its cause. A desire for the good, on the other hand, is abstract and general; and in this characteristic lies a great difficulty for action. To give effect to the desire for the good, the individual must know in concrete terms what the good is in a specific case confronting him, and he must also know and have control of the means necessary to attain it. Action

is not abstract and general, but concrete and specific, involving a definite goal and definite means.

It is important to remember that the desire for the good has to be brought down from its generality and translated into concrete terms. It must find expression in directed action; and mere moral zeal or goodness of character or of heart does not necessarily carry with it the power of directing action. And for the same reason it is futile to reiterate that people must do their duty, for the difficulty lies in deciding what is one's duty, and people's opinions may differ on this specific question, though they agree on the abstract maxim. In order to fulfil duty and to direct action a special knowledge must be added. This knowledge must take the form of a knowledge of the different forces and of their laws, which must be utilized in seeking to produce an effect, and also of a knowledge of what effects or what objects are good. Such knowledge, however, is difficult; and yet without it moral goodness of character or a change of heart remains barren of result. It is no doubt something to have developed goodness of heart so far as to have created a determination on the part of individuals and of nations to do away with social evils; for such a determination may lead to the searching out the sources of such evils, and to their removal by the removal of their causes. But a determination itself, unless backed by knowledge and the possession of effective remedies, will not accomplish anything.

§ 7.

Values as Regulative Principles.

The rôle which values fulfil seems accordingly to be a remarkably small one; and if they are not causes, that becomes intelligible. They are not themselves causes acting in a causal series of their own or along with other types of causes like physical causes, and thereby constituting co-ordinate members in a chain of natural causation. It is the individual who acts as a cause, not the value. In the light of values, however, he can select objects at which he may aim or direct his activity; from his knowledge of the

causal operation of forces he can predict what effects will arise, and from the point of view of value he can select from such effects those which are desirable and avoid those which are undesirable. Thereafter he can proceed to set in motion just those forces which will bring about the effect or end desired. Hence the rôle of values is that of rendering it possible for the individual to co-ordinate forces or causes. It is characteristic, however, of values that they do not compel their own selection, nor do they force themselves upon the individual, nor do they act causally upon other factors and forces so as to create out of them a particular grouping necessary for their own realization. If values did so act there would be a greater element of necessity in their realization; and though such a process might be complex, it might not be impossible to give an exact formulation of their interaction with natural factors and of the laws governing their realization. As it is, however, their realization, apart from that realization which sometimes happens through the "accidents" of nature, and in so far as it takes place through the agency of human beings, is contingent upon human desire for them; and this in turn depends upon obscure conditions and a complex psychology. The realization of values, moral progress and moral improvement are thus very uncertain and in no way necessary.

This aspect of values is usually expressed by the proposition that values are regulative principles. In virtue of their being so, ethics, in so far as it is an enquiry into values, cannot be a science in the same sense in which physics or chemistry is a science, though there still remains possible a kind of enquiry into the forces that determine human action and on which the realization of values depends; and this enquiry may quite well be one after the nature of the positive sciences. Apart from this point, however, the regulative character of values, when contrasted with their causal character, raises a difficulty. It would seem that in being regulative principles they do influence human action; they seem to act as conditions, and thus to give a certain character and a certain direction to action. That a man accepts a result as being desirable does lead to his acting in a way which he would not otherwise have done; and in

that sense his action is conditioned by a value; and this, after all, is what is meant by something being a cause. Hence it seems that in the end values must be admitted as causes. This difficulty arises from a confusion which has been already noted, and which lies in taking values to be psychological forces. Here this confusion appears as an identification of values with a consciousness of values.[1] It is this identification that gives values the seeming character of conditions that influence action. It is not values that influence action; but it is through his consciousness of values that a man determines his action. And thus values must still be declared not to be causes in the sense of conditions; and they must continue to be regarded so unless it is assumed or shown that they cause a consciousness of themselves, and this would be a special form of the general question regarding the origin of knowledge. To maintain that knowledge is an effect produced by things and qualities of things would be to adopt the very questionable materialistic theory of mind and knowledge.

§ 8.

Significance of Moral Failure for Theory.

The conclusion, accordingly, to be drawn is that, since there are no causes of a moral nature, the existence of evils and disorders in human and social life is not capable of an explanation in terms of value; and moral phenomena must be explained in terms of psychological, economic, or natural forces or causes or conditions. So far as any "moral explanations" hitherto have had any validity, it is because they have implicated a psychological factor—namely, desire, emotion, or impulse, or instinct. The evil in the world, it is said, is due to the fact that men will not desire and seek the good, or that their instincts and impulses drive them to wrong. Such an explanation both rests on certain assump-

[1] This distinction has been in a way discussed by Moore, *Principia Ethica*, §§ 82, 83, where he distinguishes between pleasure and consciousness of pleasure.

tions and raises questions. It assumes a defect in the instinct, impulse, or desire, and it assumes that the psychology of men is something fixed and definite. On the other hand, the defect may be not in the instinct, impulse or desire, but in the direction in which it operates; and the psychology of men may be largely conditioned and capable of explanation by reference to conditions. The psychological nature of men may be so moulded by conditions that they desire certain things and do certain things irrespective of the real ethical values involved. There is the quite common experience of men desiring things in spite of their knowing that they should not desire them but should desire something better. There is the phenomenon of men feeling themselves driven by a kind of necessity to a certain course of action, while being yet aware that their course is a morally reprehensible one. These are phenomena of moral experience, and they require explanation; they are not merely "sports" in the moral life which are to be lightly set aside. They may have deep significance for morality and ethical theory, for they may be an extreme form of what is quite common in morality; and an analysis of them may show that the realization of moral values is conditioned by natural factors and limited by natural processes.

If moral values cannot realize themselves, but are dependent on non-moral factors, it may quite well be that conditions may operate causally to destroy values or to prevent their realization. Since values are themselves powerless, causes may be operating so strongly in other directions that their whole tendency is against the realization of values: they may be even too strong for man, and may overpower him, even though his will is on the side of values.[1] This may be the case both in the moral life of the individual and in social and political action. It may be an explanation of why there is frequently a divergence between State action and the dictates of morality. If it should be so, it would mean that it is unsatisfactory to treat the State purely in moral terms, as, for instance, Professor Laski tends to do. "What the State is and what it becomes,"

[1] It is on this basis that the "Conservation of Values" requires to be considered.

he says,[1] " it then is and becomes by virtue only of its moral programme. . . . It (i.e. a pluralistic view) makes claim of the member of the State that he undertake ceaseless examination of its moral foundations." But the difficulty is that there may be causes operative in the social system, as well as in nature, which create problems for the State and which compel the State to adopt certain means in an effort to solve them. What the State is and becomes may be due to other factors than its moral programme, and these factors may operate largely in spite of any moral programme, and may even completely overturn that programme. That is the problem which faces moral theory ; and no moral theory can be sound that ignores it, or is unable to meet it.

[1] *Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty*, p. 23.

CHAPTER IV

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR IN HUMAN ACTION

ANALYSIS

§ 1. Relation between moral values and the psychological nature of man.

§ 2. Variety of psychological theories.

§ 3. Criticism of view that instincts cause human action.

§ 4. Instinct, innate tendencies, uniformity of conditions.

§ 5. Instinct, emotion, and action.

§ 6. Desire a function of stimulus: mental organization and conditions.

§ 7. Psychoanalytic complexes and conditions.

§ 8. Nature of psychological forces or causes.

CHAPTER IV

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR IN HUMAN ACTION

§ 1.

Relation between Moral Values and the Psychological Nature of Man.

The preceding chapter has raised the question of the relation between moral values and the psychological nature of the individual through the contention that psychological forces are non-moral in the sense of being ethically indifferent and that this has been obscured by the confusion of moral values with psychological forces. That question is important for several reasons. Morality is very commonly regarded as being peculiarly an individual matter, as being the possession and exercise of specific qualities—moral qualities—by the individual. At the same time, the view is frequently held that there is in human nature a strain of evil, a disposition to evil. It is often thought that the defects of human character are to be found in the instincts with which the individual is born, as when, for instance, the causes of a war are ascribed to human instincts, and war is believed to be incapable of abolition because it is rooted in human instincts. It is supposed that instinct is rigid and inflexible, and colours human nature as a whole with its rigidity and unchangeability; and for this reason certain social theories are sometimes condemned because they are "utterly opposed to the first instincts of human nature." Frequently, on the other hand, instinct—and with it impulse and desire—is regarded as being not wholly rigid; and there arises in consequence the idea—what may be called a traditional idea of morality—that morality lies in the control by reason of

instincts and impulses. This view of morality would imply suppression and repression of many tendencies ; and this again brings the question into relation with recent psychoanalytic theories, which by pointing out the dangers of such suppression and repression present a fresh moral problem. The psychological nature of man is thus very closely connected with morality and the problems of morality ; and it is important to make clear how the two are connected. The point to be considered here is more particularly the way in which man's psychological nature bears on his action ; and the general position to be maintained is that so far as action is concerned, man's psychological nature is to be interpreted in terms of reaction to conditions, and cannot be explained otherwise than by reference to conditions.

§ 2.

Variety of Psychological Theories.

From the side of action the problem of psychology becomes that of discovering the units of human nature or the primary elements of human character which determine action. This problem brings us into contact with a great variety of solutions. The basis of human character and of a social philosophy is variously found in instinct,[1] in " complexes " or wishes [2] in the Freudian sense, in mechanisms or " drives." [3] As regards instinct the theories differ upon several important points : first, regarding the nature of instinct itself ; [4] second, regarding the list of primary instincts ; [5] third, regarding the relation between instincts and more complex states like sentiments.[6] Professor McDougall holds that analysis of an instinctive act shows first, a perception ; second, a distinctive emotion and impulse ; third, the action. Each instinct, in his view, has always " some one kind of emotional excitement whose quality is

[1] McDougall, *Social Psychology* ; Shand, *Foundations of Character* ; Drever, *Instinct in Man* ; Thorndike, " The Original Nature of Man," in *Educational Psychology*, I. p. 50.
[2] Holt, *The Freudian Wish.*
[3] Professor Woodworth.
[4] E.g. between McDougall and Shand.
[5] E.g. McDougall's & Thorndike's list.
[6] Between McDougall and Shand.

specific or peculiar to it," and which does not itself change, although it may arise from new stimuli, find new channels of outlet, and may become a part of complex emotions and sentiments. Mr. Shand, on the other hand, regards an instinct as a specific response to a specific situation, while instincts may become organized in and controlled by more complex states like an "emotional system" and "sentiments." These systems act as teleological or organizing principles in the mind. Within an emotional system, for instance, several instincts may be organized: fear, for example, may lead to flight, concealment, or fighting. Sentiments, for Mr. Shand, are innate, while for Professor McDougall they are acquired; they arise through the organization of instincts and emotions about the idea of some object.

Such a difference of theory renders psychology rather unsatisfactory as a basis for ethics and social theory; but the fact that there is so much difference means that the question is still open for examination, and that an ethical theory or a study of human action is not tied by indubitable psychological conclusions. Evolution rests on the idea of interaction between organism and environment; and this implies that there is no fundamental cleavage between environment and the nature of man. The organic structure of the human type, as of other types, has been built up through interactions of an organism with an environment; the organism has been moulded by the different forces operating in the environment in such a way that it becomes partly a medium through which forces pass and repass, and partly an accumulator or reservoir of forces or various kinds of energy. This aspect of the human organism is not irrelevant to the problems of human action. It implies that it may be a source of danger to regard the organism as consisting of a nature quite different from the constitution and structure of the environment. It implies also that the organism in virtue of its structure lies open to certain forces and impressions, namely, those which have been operative in determining that structure in the course of its evolution, and that the motive power which is necessary to set the mechanism going is not elaborated from a kind of self-sufficient internal factory, but derived from the medium

in which the organism lives. It may mean also that man does not find himself in an alien world that is indifferent to his needs; his ends do not represent something that is beyond his power of attainment; the ends which he seeks are not purely arbitrary ends, conjured up out of a nature that is peculiar to him alone and that has no relation to the environment. Indeed, it may even mean that the environment suggests or provides the end of action or the incentive to action; and because of this the individual is capable of reacting effectively to those suggestions or demands coming from the environment.

§ 3.

Criticism of View that Instincts cause Human Action.

Psychological treatment of instinct tends generally to interpret it as a unitary mental force which lies at the basis of human nature. It is assumed that there are certain primary psychological forces which move the individual in a certain direction, and that these forces are ineradicable. It is doubtful, however, if such an assumption is true. It seems to be a source of error into which psychology easily falls because of its belief that it is always dealing with mental phenomena and that it must deal with these phenomena in terms of mind. In consequence it ignores how large a part external factors play in the causation of conduct, or else it tends to interpret such causation as if it were inner or mental. There is, however, nothing to prevent psychology from seeking an explanation of mental phenomena in non-mental or external factors except the belief that this somehow renders psychology impossible as a science and that the distinction between mind and external factors or forces is so great and so radical as to render such a method of explanation impossible. Yet what has been said of the method of a study in human action holds true also of the method of psychology. As science seeks an explanation of a fact in a different type of fact, so psychology can seek the explanation of a mental phenomenon in terms of a different type of phenomenon. And this is what is being constantly done

in practice. We seek the psychological explanation of a man's attitude and action, not in instincts or emotions or desires, but in the situation in which he was placed; or if we do ascribe his action to his type of character, that character is itself ultimately to be understood by the circumstances of his life.

This view of the method of psychology leads to a reinterpretation of the primary forces of mind. Instincts and impulses, including emotions, are generally spoken of as if they were so many elementary, permanent, and constant forces which inevitably determined human action or gave action its direction. They stimulate or rouse the individual to action; and the proposition that instincts and impulses are elementary mental forces is an answer given on the assumption that the question is, How is the individual roused to activity? That assumption induces an effort to seek the stimulus or cause of an action in an inner instinct or impulse. On this view instincts and impulses are spoken of as innate, and man is regarded as possessed of a few or of numerous innate tendencies. All such explanations, however, are illusory. Instinct may be regarded as a bodily mechanism capable of acting in a certain way when set in operation. So far, therefore, as instinct is regarded from the side of structure, there is no ground for asserting that the organism has certain tendencies; and all the weight is thrown upon the source of the motive power which sets the organic mechanism in operation; and the evolutionary view of organic life throws emphasis upon the correlation of structure with conditions of life. The working of the mechanism depends upon the presence of appropriate stimuli in the environment; and in virtue of the mechanism, the organism is able to react to certain conditions or situations. If instinct is thus regarded as a structure or a mechanism, it is not an ultimate force; the cause or force must be sought in the conditions in which the organism is placed. The presence of mechanisms in the body does not mean that the organism must act; action is purely conditional upon the presence of a stimulus. But instinct may also be regarded as an impulse—though one correlated with a certain structure; and such impulses are supposed to be

springs of action, to urge the individual to activity.[1] Impulses, however, are intelligible only in terms of action. An impulse is a form of activity, not a cause of activity. It is not a force urging the individual to act; but it is the organism in the process of reacting or acting, or at least the initial stage of the process. If impulse is itself only to be understood as a stage or else a form of reaction, we do not make an action more intelligible by assigning it to an impulse.

Hence it is purely illusory to assign the cause of an action to an instinct, for example acquisitiveness or pugnacity, since instinct is to be understood only as action. We have explained nothing of an action when we have assigned it to an impulse, because impulse is only intelligible as action. When we say that a child has an impulse to grasp things we have said nothing more than that the child's activity shows itself in the grasping of things. The so-called instincts and impulses are really descriptions of different types of actions. It is not denied that there is such a thing as "instinct" or "impulse"; but it is denied that they are forces which prompt the individual to activity and urge him along a certain course. It is true that the organic structure seems at times to be wound up and to crave for, or to impel to, say, exercise of some sort; and that this organic condition leads to a state of consciousness which is called an impulse. But that impulse is already incipient activity or else an activity in the course of execution. The real question of causation, therefore, in action turns upon the conditions which bring about an impulse of a certain kind or a certain form of activity. The stimulus or cause of an action is not to be sought in an instinct or impulse, but in the situation which calls forth or provokes a reaction. In so far as we refer actions to instincts or impulses, we are only describing them or distinguishing the various actions; we are not giving a causal explanation of them. And we may, therefore, also reject the view that instincts and impulses lie at the basis of all mental life; and that, being elementary forces, they help to determine the nature of that life and to give to it definite tendencies. In so far as mental life does show stability and uniformity, these

[1] Shand, *Foundations of Character*, p. 198.

qualities are not due to the presence of elementary and constant forces like instincts and impulses, but must be ascribed to some other source.

This line of interpretation is quite analogous to what is done in the physical sciences; and it implies that not much more advantage is gained from, or any more meaning attaches to, the application of the idea of "innate tendencies" in the case of mind than there would be in the case of other types of existence, for example, electricity, magnetism, radium. We do not speak of "innate tendencies" of electricity; we do speak of its qualities, its behaviour, its laws, the work it can do. When a billiard-ball is struck and behaves in a certain way, we do not find the cause of the movement in an innate tendency or some mysterious impulse in the ball; or when a magnetic needle turns as a piece of iron is moved in its neighbourhood, we do not attribute the turning to an impulse in the needle. We find the respective causes in those factors which condition the movements or reactions. So analogously the situation, or some specially marked feature of the situation, conditions the reaction or response of the organism; and that is what is to be characterized as a causal factor. It requires the full conditions to explain the unique features of the reaction or response. In the case of organisms, however, it might be maintained that they have a nature of their own which influences their reactions. In this respect organisms stand in a position exactly analogous to other bodies. The nature of any body whatever, such as a ball or needle, influences the reaction or response. What science endeavours to do is to describe the reactions to given specified conditions and to express these reactions in exact terms. The difference in the case of the organism is that its reactions are more numerous and complicated.

§ 4.

Instinct, Innate Tendencies, Uniformity of Conditions.

If instincts and impulses are not elementary and constant forces lying at the root of mental life, how are they

to be interpreted? An instinct is sometimes regarded as made up of reflexes.[1] A reflex is always invariable and fixed: it is rigid, and it is uniform in different individuals and in different species. If instinct were made up of reflexes, it must have much of the character of a reflex; and it would be a specific reaction to a specific stimulus or situation, as a reflex is. Instinct, however, differs in important respects from a reflex, and it cannot be said to be exactly a specific reaction to a specific stimulus. An instinct is not from the first perfect; the play of young animals is in many cases a gradual training and development of various instincts; a kitten may not lap milk when it comes to a certain stage, nor even when its mouth is dipped in milk, while one kitten may be much later in lapping milk than another. A chicken, again, will peck at anything until it is taught through experience what objects to peck at and what to avoid: for example, hard stones and certain caterpillars. Though nest-building of birds at certain periods of the year is regarded as instinctive, yet different individuals of the same species possess the art in different degrees of perfection, and can modify the action in many different ways to suit requirements. The materials used in constructing the nests may be varied to meet the circumstances. The carrion-fly usually deposits its eggs on malodorous meat, but it will also do so upon the carrion-plant.

These facts do not suggest the view that an instinct is similar to a reflex, and that it is a specific reaction to a specific stimulus; but they seem rather to suggest that instinct is a general form of activity in response to a general type or kind of stimulus or situation. In virtue of this instinct may not be unerring; in fact, it shows why instinct may err or prove itself imperfectly adapted to the situation, and why action may be to a certain degree[2] adjusted to meet the details of the situation. The regularity and uniformity of instinct would thus be due to the regular occurrence of uniform conditions in the environment, to the presence of uniform and unvarying stimuli, to the presence

[1] For example, Spencer, Thorndike, and others.
[2] For instance, the organic mechanisms set a limit.

of uniformities in the situations confronting organisms. Where totally new situations arise instinct remains helpless; and when, in spite of such novelty, instinctive action still remains possible, that is because there is present some general feature which acts as an invariable and sets the organic mechanisms in operation. On this view it then becomes possible to find a basis in instinct for human action, while yet leaving room for the play of individual initiative which fills such a large part of human action. Instinct is a response of the organism to certain broad, general outlines of the natural environment, or represents certain general lines of action within which action can and must become more specific if it is to become more exact and more successful; and this is a result which is to be attained not through remaining at the level of instinct nor through a return to that level, but through a mental activity which brings man into touch with the fullest details of a situation and with the complexity of the real and which enables him to adjust himself to them. For success in action, the generality of instinct must be replaced by the specific form of action based on knowledge of concrete details and of the laws of their operation. In the case of human action this specific character becomes more and more pronounced, because of man's growing acquaintance with the complex nature of the real and because of his efforts to adjust himself to that complexity. Through his interference with the conditions of his environment he has in part destroyed, and certainly very largely obscured, the uniformity of the natural environment on which the organic mechanisms were originally moulded, and depend for their being set in motion. The complexity of the situation now frequently brings conflicting stimuli into play with the result that man's responses can no longer be instinctive; they are less certain, less straight; and they may often be inhibited altogether through different mechanisms being influenced simultaneously.

On this view, therefore, there is no meaning in speaking of "innate tendencies." All that can be meant by "innate tendencies" in the case of mind is that there is a uniform mode of activity given uniform or invariable conditions.

Psychology has tended to ignore the part played by conditions, and in consequence has transformed the uniform mode of activity into a uniform or invariable tendency or character of the mind in its own nature. To understand the objection that is being made against psychology, it is necessary to keep clear three things—uniformity in external conditions, uniformity of action or activity, uniformity or invariability as a quality of mind. The view put forth here is that the uniformity of action is to be explained by uniformity in conditions. What psychology, however, has done is to ignore this uniformity and to interpret the uniformity of action as an invariable quality of mind, and then to explain the invariability of mind in terms of mind, namely, by means of the idea of permanent, constant and elementary mental forces which act as causes leading to uniform effects—in this case uniform action. The procedure of psychology in this matter would be analogous to interpreting the uniform activity, say of electricity, by reference to a force which urges the electricity from within regularly in a particular way, while an explanation is to be sought in the uniformity of the conditions within which the electrical activity takes place. Instincts, impulses, primary mental forces or units, innate tendencies would thus have to be interpreted as forms in which mind or mental life expresses itself; and the forms are uniform because the conditions within which that mental life is lived are uniform, and call for a uniform response.

§ 5.

Instinct, Emotion, and Action.

A difficulty has still to be faced in connexion with such a view of instinct and impulse. The uniformity of instinct may admit of a different explanation. There are such mental factors as emotions; and the uniformity of instinct may be accounted for by reference to "an emotional excitement whose quality is specific or peculiar to it." [1] As the essential characteristics of an emotion of fear or anger do not change, a criterion by which instincts may be considered

[1] Professor McDougall's view.

can be found in emotion. For instance, the instinct of flight has the emotion of fear accompanying it, the instinct of pugnacity has that of anger. The emotion, with its distinctive impulse, is the fundamental element in instinct, and this element remains unchanged throughout life. Here, then, it seems, a mental unit or force of a primary kind is found. But on this matter there is a great difference of opinion among psychologists. As Mr. Shand, for instance, points out, fear may lead to flight or to fighting, or to concealment or to flight and then fighting; while one instinct many enter into many different emotions; for example, pugnacity may enter into fear as well as anger. These facts would invalidate Professor McDougall's belief that each instinct has its own unique emotional accompaniment, and a classification or list of instincts based on this belief. In any case, the uniform correlation of an instinct with a specific emotion does not provide any ground for the conclusion that an emotion is a primary mental force, and is the cause of an instinctive action. Professor McDougall interprets the sequence as perception of an object, emotion with its impulse, then action. This seems to make emotion the causative factor in action. On the other hand, the James-Lange theory, in maintaining that action is a direct response to stimulus, that it sets up organic conditions which constitute the emotion, and that emotion, therefore, does not precede but follows upon action, denies that emotion is a causative factor in action. At most the correlation of an instinct with a specific emotion, even if it were true that such correlation existed, would merely show that an emotion was an accompanying factor or constituent element in the complex event of action.

It does not follow that any of the elements discovered by the analysis of a whole is a causal factor in the production of the whole. The cause of a phenomenon may be outside the phenomenon itself. The cause of thunder—thunder being a sound—is not found by analysing the sound but by having recourse to quite a different set of factors. Accordingly in the case of instinct, emotion may be an accompanying factor of instinctive action; but that does not mean the emotion is a cause of the action. It is generally admitted

by psychologists that an essential feature of emotion is its conative tendency, that it has at its core an impulse. But this would at once imply that emotion cannot be considered apart from action and the direction implied in action. Hence emotion must be considered as a reaction to a situation or stimulus; and being a reaction it is already action, and therefore not a cause or an antecedent condition of action. It is true that persons frequently have the apparent experience of being prompted by an emotion to a certain line of action, but yet of checking the emotion and refraining from action altogether. This would seem to suggest that emotion is to be interpreted as a cause or condition of action, and that the removal of that cause will lead to the non-occurrence of action as an effect. But on the other hand, a quite different explanation is possible. The prompting of an emotion to action may really be an action in its initial stages. If this is so, the crushing or suppressing of an emotion can be rendered more intelligible. The effective way of crushing emotion is to prevent it from developing into full action and from getting bodily expression. This is commonly supposed to be done by an act of will; but an element of mystery usually attaches to the exact mechanism whereby the will keeps emotion in check, while the will itself constitutes a problem. Analysis, however, shows that the "prompting" of an emotion, for example, of anger, is restrained by the "prompting" of another emotion, for example, of fear of punishment. It thus becomes a case of two actions in their initial stage counteracting each other; and of their doing so because the same mechanisms wholly or in part must be brought into use for both. The decision is effected by the strength of the respective causes; and these lie in the situation or conditions which provoke the two reactions. The superior strength of the one over the other may in the end be due to its being reinforced by numerous other stimuli in the environment, all tending to cause fear rather than anger. That the cause of action is to be sought in the situation or conditions confronting the organism and not in emotion finds confirmation in a genetic treatment of action. If emotion is a cause of action, it must have been present as an antecedent condition in the formation and development

of instinct. We would expect emotion to be as strong or as intense in the case of children and animals and undeveloped human beings as in the case of civilized adults. It is, however, extremely doubtful if this is so. It does not follow that, because the outward expression of emotion in children suggests intensity of emotion, emotion is intense, since the outward expression is greatly dependent on the nervous and physiological state of the organism. It is generally recognized that low and undeveloped human beings do not experience very intense emotions, while intellectual development, especially of imagination, leads to a greater play of emotion ; and thus the further man becomes removed from the level of instinct, and the more he approaches to intellect, the more intense does emotion tend to become. The intensity of emotions seems to be conditioned by certain factors which come to play a greater part as development takes place. It is accordingly doubtful if emotion is genetically an important factor in the formation of instinct. Any conclusion of the matter must rest on the experience of developed human beings ; and to maintain that emotion lay at the basis of instinctive action it would be necessary to show that in adult experience emotion and instinct were exactly correlated.

§ 6.

Desire a Function of Stimulus : Mental Organization and Conditions.

So far as instinct and impulse are concerned, emphasis must, it has been argued, be put upon the objective situation or conditions as causal factors. Is the same importance to be assigned to these factors when we leave instinct and consider the level of desire and ideas ? Psychology has endeavoured to show, through the idea of organization, that the higher levels of mental life do not exclude but include the lower. For instance, sentiments and desires can become effective only in so far as they can utilize instincts as channels for expressing themselves. Instincts and impulses have thus had to be brought into relation with desires and sentiments. Emotions are regarded as organizing or

teleological principles.[1] The impulse in anger, for example, is the injury or destruction of its object; and everything is made subservient to this impulse. Reasonable and kindly thoughts about this object are excluded; and only those thoughts and ideas compatible with the nature of the impulse are admitted as constituents in the emotion. Similarly, emotions become organized in a more complex state called desire; while instincts, emotions and desires in turn become still further organized in systems called sentiments. Throughout it is mental states or systems that are at work and that do the organizing. Though it may be admitted that some such process of organization as psychology attempts to describe does take place, yet its explanation of that process need not be accepted. Here again it ignores the objective or non-mental factor that is operative, and it interprets the whole process in mental terms.

What effects organization is not mental forces like emotion, desire or sentiment. The organizing factor is objective. In desire an end or object is implied, while an object forms the kernel of the sentiment; and this end or object is not mental. The food that is desired is not mental or psychological; the country that is the object of patriotism is not a psychological factor, nor is the child that is loved. Yet it is by reference to such ends or objects that the process of organization is to be understood. When a person has made me angry, anger on my part signifies a definite kind of reaction to the situation. The reason why "kindly" or "reasonable" thoughts are excluded is that no stimulus is present to call them forth, or that the stimulus calling forth anger outweighs any other stimulus tending to rouse any other emotion. It is not anger itself, but the lack of a stimulus, that excludes other emotions or thoughts; and in some cases stimuli, in the form of certain considerations or certain qualities of the person, may come into play, provoke additional reactions, and modify my anger. Thus the organizing factor is to be found in the objective situation that provides the various stimuli provoking various reactions.

[1] This idea is particularly employed by Mr. Shand in his *Foundations of Character*.

This can be illustrated by the case of the emotional variations frequently experienced when we desire an object, and at the same time provides an explanation of such a phenomenon. Mr. Shand points out that a person, desiring an object, may waver between emotions of fear, despondency, joy and so on ; and these variations may result also in the emergence of different instincts, such as self-abasement, shrinking, pugnacity, flight and so on. All these variations, however, are dependent on variations in the objective situation. The complex nature of desire is conditioned by the complex nature of the situation within which it is active, by the complex factors which come into play in the attainment of desire, which further it or hinder it, or give a sense of powerlessness or some other feeling. The close connection between desire, with its variations, and the objective situation, with its variations, justifies quite definitely the view that " desire is a junction of stimulus." The case of sentiment is similar to that of desire, only more complex. The sentiment of patriotism, for instance, is a complex mental attitude towards an object also of a very complex nature ; and that attitude involves many desires and emotions and instincts—desire for union, desire for measures of defence, emotions of fear, anger, and others, instincts of gregariousness, pugnacity, and so on.[1] The nature of such a sentiment serves to bring out clearly the character of organization involved in it. There are objectively relations of causes and effects, and in relation to desire the system of causes and effects becomes a system of ends and means. The latter system implies a corresponding system of desires and emotions. But the aspect of system which characterizes desire or an emotional system is due to and is borrowed from the objective system of means and ends ; and the dynamic character of this system with its consequent changes calls forth varying reactions on the part of individuals, and gives to the system of desire also a dynamic character. Psychology, claiming to deal only with the inner or mental, is unable to discover any other source of organization than

[1] It must still be remembered that an instinct, e.g. gregariousness, is to be understood as a type of action or reaction and not as an innate tendency or mental force.

the mental states themselves, and is driven to find some inner factor—such as emotion—that can effect the organization.

§ 7.

Psychoanalytic Complexes and Conditions.

The recent development of psychoanalysis seems to lead us into touch with psychological forces of a distinctive character. The "complexes" of psychoanalysis seem to be psychic or mental forces which, whether conscious or not, yet determine human action and therefore are causes in a strict scientific sense. They apparently enable an explanation of mental phenomena to be given in terms of mind or of mental causes. A "complex" is a group of emotionally toned ideas repressed into the unconscious, and, so repressed, it exercises a peculiar effect upon the mental life of the individual, and tends to produce actions of a very definite character. A symptom of the presence of a complex is the strong emotional effect that it arouses in consciousness when touched, and the illogical and unaccountable effect which it has on action. Most complexes are connected with certain fundamental facts of life, such as birth, death and marriage, and are, in consequence, in close touch with the primary instincts. A complex is thus to be regarded as the effective unit of mind and as a conditioning factor in action. It operates either by drawing psychic energy into and along certain channels or else by sapping up energy which is utilized in offering resistance and which would be otherwise used. The result is that there is a waste of energy due to unconscious conflict, and that neurotic states and activities arise from these conflicts. Psychoanalysis would, accordingly, discover these complexes, secure the liberation of the energy they use up, and remove the neurotic states and activities.[1]

The theory assumes that the organism has certain innate tendencies, whether the sex-tendency of Freud or the libido of Jung. It is these which form the kernel of complexes.

[1] Here only the psychological side of the problem is discussed; the ethical side will be discussed later. Vide chap. xi, 1.

In consequence conflicts are discussed purely in terms of the subjective or inner life. The disturbance of mental life is due to repression of instincts and of desires; and nervous or mental instability arises from a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious. Various considerations, however, throw doubt upon this explanation, and suggest that the primary source of the trouble is external, that the conflict is not in its origin an internal one, but external, and that this has been obscured because it has been supposed that the mind is in its own nature a unity when its unity may be quite conditional. The complex with which psychoanalysis deals is not an innate or psychic force, but it implicates an objective factor; its real nature is expressed by saying that it is a situation to which an individual reacts or has to react, but for some reason is not able to do so successfully. The fact that many of the cases recently dealt with by psychoanalysis were brought about by war conditions suggests that conditions have an important bearing upon the problems of neuroses. Psychoanalytic cures are frequently effected by discovering the actual experience which causes the trouble, and by confronting the individual with it and helping him to adjust himself effectively to it. The rôle which the objective situation plays in the cure points to the rôle which it plays in causing the malady. The interpretation of this objective factor as an inner psychic complex is but another instance of the tendency of psychology to transfer everything into terms of mind.

Mental and nervous disorder may thus be regarded as having their source in external conditions. Their connexion with primary instincts is to be explained not by the idea that instincts are elemental psychic forces which will become explosive and dangerous if repressed in the mind, but by the fact that they are primary forms of reaction to situations. The cause of disorder is to be found in the conflicting appeals which the conditions in which the individual is placed make upon him. It is probable that the disorder may be increased through the operation of forces of a physical nature [1] upon the organism and the consequent

[1] E.g. Electrical conditions of the atmosphere and of the earth may influence the organism very profoundly.

production of effects which, on account of human ignorance, make it difficult for man to adjust himself to his environment. As they are at present, conditions provoke different reactions; and an individual unable to co-ordinate these reactions becomes unstable and a "misfit." Indeed, the neurotic activity or "symptom" may be the only reaction that the individual can make to the situation. Psychoanalysis testifies to the supreme importance of conflict in the environment; repression, for instance, is brought about because certain things are taboo, because our standards, our ideas, and our beliefs lead us to reject certain things or to check certain actions. It points also to the great importance of emotions like fear, anger, love, hatred and others. But these emotions are reactions to situations. In complex modern civilization a situation may call forth many conflicting emotions. Even in the most normal cases where the conflict does not become at all acute, a line of action may be decided upon, and there may then arise a fear that that was not possibly the line to take after all; a dread of public censure or the censure of highly valued friends may emerge. In all this there are germs of mental instability, though not sufficiently pronounced to be noticed as neurotic. What psychoanalysis does, therefore, is not to provide self-knowledge in the old metaphysical idea of a self, nor to reveal the tendencies, capacities and structures of a self, but to confront the individual with the situation that has been the cause of failure and to present it in a fresh light. The fulfilment of the latter condition is essential, for otherwise the individual is merely face to face with the old situation, and remains as helpless as before. What psychoanalysis must do is to render possible a more effective reaction than the former one, or to suggest that there is no reason for allowing the situation to produce such an effect. The cure is thus brought about, not by greater self-knowledge, but by fuller knowledge of the situation, so that the individual can adjust himself and feel himself adjusted more effectively to the situation. The synthesis of the self is effected by grasping the synthesis of the situation, or by effecting a synthesis of conditions.

§ 8.

Nature of Psychological Forces or Causes.

Hence we are led to deny that the causes of human action are to be found in instincts, impulses, innate tendencies, desires, or complexes; and to disagree with such a statement as that instincts and habits which are derived from instincts are the only motive power of thought and action,[1] or such statements as: "Man is by nature acquisitive,"[2] and "A desire for scientific truth, to know things as they really are, though late in development, is also innate in human nature."[3] Instincts, emotions, desires are reactions, and are to be understood only as types of action; emotions are constituents which enable actions to be differentiated. Since they are to be interpreted in terms of action, their causes must be sought in other factors. To call them innate tendencies is no more intelligible than to call the behaviour of electricity innate; and it is possible to find an explanation in conditions for a desire like that for truth or for a tendency like acquisitiveness. On any view such as that of Professor McDougall, thought in the form of ideas may as often be a motive power to instinct and to formation of habits as instincts and habits are a motive power to thought. If, on the other hand, we start with the view that instincts, impulses, and so on are reactions, then we do not need to search for a unique inner psychological force; but on the analogy of the natural sciences we have to seek the conditions which call forth and give direction to these reactions.

This must not be taken to mean a denial of the reality of psychological forces; but it means that their nature and bearing on action must be reinterpreted. A force of any kind exists only as a mode of action or activity;[4] and psychological forces must, too, be regarded as activities, actions, or reactions of individuals. Conditions lead to

[1] McDougall, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, 2nd Ed., pp. 42–3, 44.
[2] Bradby, *Psychoanalysis*, p. 46.
[3] Ib. p. 73.
[4] A physical force is defined as the product of the mass of a body and its velocity.

reactions on the part of individuals; and these reactions in turn are causes or factors which individuals must take into account. In other words, the reactions or actions of individuals are some of the conditions that influence action. When a person is proposing to pursue a certain line of action, some of the factors which he must take into consideration are the reactions which his policy will provoke in other people and which will favour or obstruct his policy. These reactions are the psychological forces with which he must contend; and it is only activities or possible activities of individuals that he must consider. It is because of this that a man, in arranging his course of action, must take into account the interests, prejudices and beliefs of others; these imply possible reactions on the part of others; or else the action of a person leads to effects that may bear upon the interests of others, and thus provoke reactions on the part of others. Hence, when we seek to explain action by means of psychological causes or forces, what we refer to are the different forms of reaction which manifest themselves in human beings, and which can be to a certain degree calculated, and which in practical life are calculated when the conditions are known. The more fully the conditions are known, the better can the reactions be foreseen, and the more successfully can action be then adjusted to them. To understand psychological forces, to control them, and to adjust oneself to them, their causes must be known, as is the case with every other type of force; and to give that knowledge and the control implied in it is the aim of every science.

CHAPTER V

MIND AND ITS CONDITIONS

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER V

MIND AND ITS CONDITIONS

§ 1.

Problem involved in Dependence of Mind on Conditions.

The question of the nature of mind and of its relation to the non-mental is partly psychological and partly metaphysical, and at first sight does not seem to have much relevance to a study of morality. Yet it is a question that arises out of the preceding argument, that psychological forces are not innate tendencies or forces of the mind or forces that propel the mind along in a particular direction, but are activities that find their explanation in the conditions which constitute the medium of human life. The question also arises because of its close connexion with the view that is being put forward regarding the relation between morality and conditions. A discussion of the former question serves to clear the way for an interpretation of the latter relation. The argument of the preceding chapter, however, seems to imply that the mind is conditioned in most important respects by non-mental factors; in fact, it might seem that the real existence of a mind were being denied, or at least ignored. Instinct, impulse, emotion, desire, sentiment—all these do not apparently reveal the nature of a certain type of real existence, namely, the mind; the nature of instinct and the complexity, say, of desire, do not, when analysed, reveal to us the structure of mind but, instead, seem to reveal the structure of conditions. The sphere of mind seems to be emptied of its content, mind seems deprived of its qualities; and this content and these qualities apparently are transferred to the external or non-mental world. That this is the point of the argument is

partly true. It is implied that many factors which psychology tends to regard as mental and as revealing the nature and structure of mind are not mental at all, and do not reveal the structure of mind. Mind is not so much an entity, in the sense of being analogous to an object that can be analysed and examined, as a conception which is built up on the basis of certain data, certain phenomena ; and the way by which this conception is built up is by a consideration of certain kinds of organic activities, just as the scientist builds up a conception of electricity by dealing with certain activities of material things. The scientist does not try to study electricity by ignoring the material medium or material conditions in virtue of which electrical phenomena occur ; he does not try to study electricity in abstract isolation ; and, analogously, an effort to study mind apart from its conditions will be fruitless, or else lead to a misunderstanding of mind. Such a procedure would result in mind being a mere blank. Its whole nature, its complexity, its unity, its disorders, its internal conflicts, are all conditioned by a non-mental medium within which it lives.

§ 2.

Mechanism and Vitalism.

The question of the origin of life has been much debated, and considerable controversy has taken place over the respective merits of mechanism and vitalism. That there is a unique type of phenomenon which seems to justify the belief in a unique kind of energy need not be doubted. Because of this it has been held that life could not be evolved from chemical or physical factors ; and vitalism has taken its stand on this basis. That might be true if it is taken to mean that life cannot be regarded as simply a chemical or a physical substance in another form ; and that is what it has been taken to mean ; and life in consequence has been regarded as a chemical or physical phenomenon. The strongest evidence in support of such a view is provided by the analysis of organisms ; such analysis does not reveal, so far as hitherto carried out, anything to be called life, but

it has revealed how large a part chemical substances play in the constitution of the organism, and how large a part chemical processes play in organic processes, such as breathing, nutrition, blood-circulation and others. On the other hand, it has frequently been maintained that organic processes have characteristics not found in chemical processes, and are therefore to be kept distinct from the latter. "The nutritive process," says Professor Stout,[1] "is essentially selective, inasmuch as it involves the appropriation of what is fit for food and the rejection of what is not fit. Similarly with the direction of mental life." It is doubtful, however, if selectiveness provides any basis for a distinction between organic and chemical processes. Chemical processes carried out in the laboratory show just this selectiveness supposed to be characteristic of organic processes. Certain substances combine with some and not with others; and this is the basis of the selectiveness of the nutritive process, for the latter is a chemical process.

The controversy between mechanism and vitalism centres round the question whether life and matter are or are not to be regarded as identical. It is doubtful if this question is really important; and probably it turns largely upon a matter of nomenclature. What is to be called chemical, physical, or more generally natural, is more or less an arbitrary affair; and it is useless to assume distinctions and mysterious forces which do not serve to explain anything. Even though we do believe that there is a unique force or energy called life, we cannot utilize it in order to explain phenomena. The point of importance and the one with which science is concerned is the discovery of the conditions on which will supervene some phenomenon or some movement of a specific character; and whether life is to be called a natural phenomenon or a chemical phenomenon will depend on whether it can be shown scientifically to appear when certain conditions of a physical or chemical character are given. All that at present can apparently be said is that certain sets of conditions, in which a certain kind of matter is placed, give rise to movements of a specific kind in that matter, and in virtue of these movements we call

[1] *Analytic Psychology*, vol. i p. 156.

the matter living. It may be that there are still undiscovered properties about the constituents of protoplasm, such that when they are related in the distinctive way in which protoplasm is constituted and when they are connected with other constituents in the environment, a new quality or a new "level of being" emerges and is maintained; and that level of being we call life.[1] What, however, is still of importance is that though life may be shown or assumed to appear when certain conditions are present, it may yet have a unique character, or be a new type of existent, and need not be identified with its conditions. Though it may have chemical conditions, it does not follow that it is itself identical with these chemical factors. A number of factors brought together to form a complex of conditions may be such as to "liberate" or bring into activity some kind of energy; without these conditions it may continue latent, and its activity may supervene upon that particular collocation of factors.

§ 3.

Procedure of Science and the Doctrine of Emergence.

If it is recognized and admitted that the problem and aim of science is to discover the conditions upon the presence of which a new phenomenon, a new movement, or new qualities supervene, the old question of the origin of life or the cause of life requires to be considered in a new light. The search will have to be directed towards finding conditions within which vital activities appear, and not towards finding a particular cause which brought life into existence. The difficulty in dealing with this question has been due to an assumption regarding causality. It has been supposed that an effect must be like its cause, and that, to understand the process, it is necessary to trace how exactly the cause becomes transformed, or passes over into the effect. It is this supposition that provides the root of the objection to finding the origin of life in matter. Yet there is no ground for such

[1] Cf. Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity*; this work has influenced the expression of my view, but the view underlies my statement of Nietzsche's philosophy in the *Phil. Rev.*, July 1915.

a supposition in the procedure of science. Science explains colours in terms of waves of light having a certain length and a certain rate of vibration, and by experimental control of the waves of light it can show how colours arise; but the waves are not the colours we see, nor do we see the waves. Hydrogen and oxygen mixed in the proportion of two to one will, when an electric spark is passed through them, combine to form water; but hydrogen and oxygen have each its own peculiar qualities and its own laws as a gas, while water has its distinctive properties and its own laws as a liquid. Science investigates these properties and laws, and it also investigates what conditions will serve to bring about a phenomenon having quite different properties and laws. It is from this knowledge of conditions that science derives its real power, since it enables it to control the phenomenon. There is no implication in the procedure of science that it loses sight of the phenomenon, and that in discovering the conditions of a phenomenon it is confusing the two and substituting the conditions for the phenomenon. But though this is true, it is still the case that science does not show how the conditions render possible a certain event, quality or phenomenon; it cannot say why water should have its peculiar qualities from a combination of oxygen and hydrogen, or why water should supervene upon these conditions. What it does is to show that fresh properties or new phenomena can and do supervene when certain elements are brought together to form a complex of conditions.

This view raises the question of "emergence"; and "emergence" is an idea developed by Professor Alexander in his *Space, Time, and Deity*. Professor Alexander, however, seems to complicate his doctrine by an ethical factor in speaking of higher and lower qualities, in speaking of the higher qualities emerging out of a lower complex. It is necessary to dissociate such ethical factors from the doctrine of emergence; what emerges may not be higher in an ethical sense, and to speak as if that were implied would be to return to the idea that the world necessarily tended towards the higher. The idea of emergence is only confused by associating it with the idea

of value, and that association also produces a confusion in the formulation of the moral problem which will have to be considered later. Dissociated from the idea of value, the idea of emergence is applicable to every sphere of phenomena—the most familiar daily changes and the material dealt with by science. The doctrine, however, has been subjected to criticism. "Either each order of empirical qualities is produced blindly and mechanically from a lower order and is nothing but the shifting of a mechanically predetermined spacio-temporal contour, or the higher qualities were already present potentially in the Universe and then the higher qualities belong permanently to the essential constitution of reality. . . . Whatever emerges was somehow actual before its emergence or else it was non-existent before it emerged, and was caused, in the sense of being produced, by the lower complex from which it has emerged." [1]

It is true that the idea of emergence raises questions regarding the constitution of reality, but so does any other idea, such as that of production or causation. There is not much to choose between emergence with the implication of actuality before emergence on the one hand, and production with the implication of non-existence before production on the other hand. Production or causation involves the coming into being of qualities different from what produces or causes them. In chemistry gases combine to produce liquids, and liquids to produce solids; in physics electricity can be produced by chemical or by mechanical means. All that science does is to show that that does happen, and that when certain qualities or conditions are given others of a different kind supervene. Thus the idea of production or causation involves a certain mystery as to the new qualities that arise; either it is necessary to regard the new qualities as transformations of the earlier, and in this case the transformations are difficult to understand except in the sense of spacio-temporal rearrangements, and that would not account for new qualities, or else it is necessary to assume that the new qualities have somehow existed before and have emerged. Hence, for the sake of intelligibility, it seems necessary

[1] J. A. Leighton in a review of Professor Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity*, in *Phil. Rev.*, May 1921, p. 296.

to have recourse to "emergence" even in the case of production. That in turn would lead to the assumption of "potentialities." The scientist does make use of the idea of potential energy, so that the assumption of "potentialities" is not contrary to scientific ideas. But that would mean that a philosophical interpretation of reality would have to find room for the "potential" in reality. Transitions from the potential to the actual, and from the actual to the potential, would have to be recognized as features of reality. So far as human knowledge is concerned, the main question becomes one concerning the conditions which are relevant to the transitions. The potential has to be released; and until it is so released, it remains merely an X; until electricity is "generated," or released by suitable conditions, its qualities remain unknown.

On this view of emergence the opposition set up between life and matter becomes irrelevant. Matter is to be regarded as a reservoir of potentialities which, given certain suitable conditions, will emerge as actual movements of a certain type within matter. How are the suitable conditions brought about? Answers to this question generally vary with assumed distinctions and oppositions between vitalism and mechanism, freedom and mechanism or mechanical causality, intelligence and blind mechanism. It might be maintained that life could not have originated through the operation of blind mechanical forces. Yet there is no ground for such a view. Human interference with nature may lead to the production of electricity and the emergence of electrical phenomena or activities; but the same may arise through the working of the blind processes of nature herself, as is seen in electrical storms and in the electrically charged condition of the atmosphere at times. On the same analogy the complex processes of nature may quite well have led to that collocation of factors favourable to the emergence of vital activities. The origin of life, in the sense of the emergence of a specific kind of movements or activities and qualities on the basis of certain conditions, may thus have been a matter of chance or accident in the sense that such emergence was not brought about by conscious control of conditions and processes. The

continuance of life, since it rests upon the persistence of suitable or favourable conditions, may consequently be uncertain, unstable, and a matter of chance since there is not implied any conscious control of the conditions. There would be necessity attaching to its emergence and to its continuance only if all the processes of nature inevitably tended to produce and to preserve the conditions favourable to it. But many facts serve to show that life is not so favoured. If some of the processes of nature are favourable to it, others are hostile to it and threaten it. Life is a delicate growth, and may be very easily overturned. A thousand factors daily challenge its continuance by interfering with its conditions.

§ 4.

"Origin" of Mind; Mind and Matter.

This view of the origin of life is applicable also to the origin of mind, and has also an important bearing upon the problem of mind. What are recognized as mental phenomena and mental activities and qualities are found only where life is manifested. That would imply either that mind was co-extensive with "life" and to be identified with it, or else that "life" was a condition for the emergence of a new type of activity and a new type of qualities called mental. In either case the appearance of mind would rest on conditions, and would be unstable in its continuance, and to a large extent would be a lucky "sport" of nature; and that would remain the case so long as the human mind was ignorant of the conditions which sustained it. The old opposition between mind and matter would have to be rejected. Matter may be simply a reservoir of mind, and at the same time a medium for the operation and expression of mind. Just as electricity operates when matter is so arranged as to establish a circuit, so mind operates when certain arrangements and structures have been established within matter. Matter would thus be viewed rather as containing within it the potentiality of mind than as "effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws." [1]

[1] Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 74, quoting C. S. Pierce, "The Architectonic of Theories." Also Royce, *Scienc* vol. xxxix, p. 565.

This does not mean that mind is to be regarded as a transformation of matter as if it were matter in another form. What is implied is that the origin of mind need not be sought in anything else than mind ; that, so far as it can be said to originate from matter, it is because matter has the potentiality of mind within it. In other words, what is called matter may be a condition of mind but not a cause of mind in the sense of creating a wholly new type of existent ; and it is a condition of mind in the sense that certain arrangements of matter may sustain mental activities and qualities, and must be established before these activities and qualities appear. It is thus implied that nothing is created, for that would signify an addition to reality ; that mental qualities and activities constitute an aspect of reality ; but that reality is such that qualities and activities are liberated and are sustained by conditions.

The question of how mind " originates " is a metaphysical question. Psychology is not concerned with it, but starts from the position that there is a unique type of existent called mind. Yet the metaphysical question is not irrelevant to the psychological point of view, and the task which psychology has to accomplish. The discussion of instincts, impulses and emotions has served to make clear that psychology has tended to regard mind as an entity that has to be set in motion, and that this is accomplished through certain elementary forces like instincts, impulses and emotions. It is true that some psychologists have insisted upon the conative tendency of mind ; but it is doubtful if the full consequences of this have been drawn. The metaphysical view suggested above would imply that, so far as psychology is concerned, the question is not what rouses an inert mind or an inert individual to activity, since mind is to be regarded analogously to a force like electricity, which is, when released, known only in the form of activity. It is possible, of course, that psychology may extend its enquiry and endeavour to discover the conditions upon the basis of which mental phenomena appear or mind emerges. That, however, would be a different task from finding the primary forces of mind in instinct or impulse. In the meantime, the important point is that, once mind is assumed as an existent, what

psychology has to describe are the tendencies or directions which mental activity takes, the factors which favour it or retard it, the conditions which tend to increase or diminish it. If that is the form of the psychological problem, it becomes clear that to consider mind apart from conditions and as an entity by itself is certain to end in failure or else in a misunderstanding of mind. It would be to deal with a mere abstract or pure activity; and such a mind would have no "structure." The structure and the complexity of mind are due to its being an activity within a complex medium, and to having its direction set by the conditions within this medium.

§ 5.

Criticism of Doctrine of Innate Tendencies.

If both life and mind, considered apart from conditions, become mere abstract activities, then the complexity and structure both of life and mind must be due to conditions. This raises a question as to what is then meant by the "nature of organisms," by "the nature of mind," by "human nature." So much and so frequent emphasis is put upon "human nature" that a consideration of it in particular becomes important. It is generally believed that there is a distinctive nature attaching to human beings in themselves and apart from any reference to conditions. There are "innate tendencies," "innate capacities," and "innate dispositions." Professor McDougall in his latest book, *The Group Mind*, seems to leave the question in a somewhat unsatisfactory position; he seems to admit the great influence of conditions, though he continues unfortunately to make use of such ideas as "capacities," "tendencies," "dispositions." He seems to maintain that human nature has become more or less a stable factor after being fashioned in the race-making period, and that it has not changed later in its innate qualities to any considerable degree. The question here implied is of importance for ethical theory and moral training; it makes a considerable difference whether human nature is composed of invariable qualities, or whether it can be modified; for in the former case

it becomes doubtful whether anything can be accomplished except by way of repression and of prevention; and even then innate qualities may at any time break through the defensive lines of society.[1]

The question of innate tendencies can be discussed most satisfactorily in the first place from the biological side, which is historically and analytically prior to the psychological. In this connexion two distinct aspects of the question have to be kept in view: first, the existence of facts which point to heredity—physical and mental traits in the offspring which resemble traits in the parents or ancestors; second, the mode of transmission of such characters, the attempted solution of this aspect of the question giving rise to the various theories of inheritance and of environmental influences. The supporters of heredity have to devote themselves to the investigation and the discovery of the units which act in the organism as the bearers of qualities from one organism to another or of the mechanism of transmission. The supporters of the environment have to investigate the factors in the environment which exert an influence upon the organism, and to show how so-called hereditary qualities can be produced by bringing certain conditions to bear upon the organism. Many facts support the view that the environment plays a very important part: facts like protective mimicry, adjustment to temperature, retardation of development and production of dwarf broods through lack of room, influence of food-supply upon colours and mode of reproduction, and so on. On the other hand, a serious difficulty attaching to the theory of heredity is that, on the theory of evolution, either all qualities must be ultimately innate in the simple and primitive protoplasm or rudimentary organism, or else so-called hereditary qualities must have at some period of evolution been acquired. In the latter case the theory of heredity must admit the influence of conditions at some point; and since innate qualities have been originally acquired, there would be no reason for denying the possibility of acquiring new qualities and transmitting them. In the former case, if all qualities are innate in the original protoplasmic cell or organism, there arises the

[1] As psychoanalysis seems to suggest.

question how some of the qualities have become specific to certain organisms. It would seem that the environment has exerted selection, that conditions have called into play particular qualities, brought them to the front and driven others into the background, causing them to lie latent.[1]

It is obvious that when the theory of evolution is kept in view, and the question of innate qualities is considered in relation to the whole line of evolution, the theory of hereditary qualities contains difficulties. These difficulties are frequently evaded, because the question is considered purely from the point of view of species of organisms. When the question is thus narrowed, the view that there are innate qualities, capacities and dispositions seems to be on firmer ground. This is because the organism is a complex structure involving numerous different mechanisms and the presence of many forces, giving rise to many varied organic processes. The mechanisms act as channels, bearers and specializers of activity; they render certain forms of activity stable and permanent; and in virtue of this the organism seems to possess certain permanent qualities or tendencies, and these seem to be in the organism even when the conditions originally calling them into play are not present. It is in this way that we come to speak of the "nature of an organism," of "animal nature," of "human nature," and so on. But arising out of the fact that an organism has a "nature" in the sense of a complex structure with numerous forces, there are two questions to be kept distinct. First, there is the question whether these mechanisms have been elaborated as channels for various activities in virtue of the primary relation between the organism and conditions. Second, there is the question whether the complex mechanism so elaborated itself gives rise to certain activities, gives a certain direction to activities of the organism. In the second case, there might be qualities or tendencies innate in the sense that they are due to or arise from the complex structure of the organism. Such qualities or tendencies would, in comparison with those that would be innate in the first case, be derivative. This

[1] This is something like the view of Nietzsche and the biologists whom he followed.

distinction is not always kept in view; and when it is maintained that an organism has certain innate tendencies, it is the tendencies arising in virtue of the complexity of structure that are in view. If, however, the distinction is kept in mind, the complex organisms might show many seemingly innate qualities that did not belong to rudimentary or simple organisms, and that, therefore, are not to be regarded as innate qualities of "life."

§ 6.

Self-preservation and Sexual Impulse as Innate Tendencies.

That organisms may have a "nature" composed of innate qualities and tendencies due to their being complexes of mechanisms and forces is possible. Certain conditions at one stage may so arrange themselves within the organism that they give an impulse in a particular direction to the organism. Thus new needs may arise and urge the organism to fresh activities. The nature of the process might be illustrated by reference to the development of society, which might be considered an analogous process. The nomadic stage of life was developing conditions within it—such as increase of property and increase in flocks and herds—which meant either that such growth must stop or else that some change must be effected in the form of a settled life and more secure supply of fodder. It was thus giving rise to an impulse towards the development of a new type of life, namely, the settled agricultural life. The rise of the agricultural type of life in turn contained within it conditions which gave an impulse to the development of fresh activities and fresh modes of life—military and industrial. Thus, in general, conditions at one stage may be so arranging themselves as to give rise to new conditions, or may be such as to contain within them a problem which can be solved only by new conditions. Analogously, the organism may be such as to be accumulating factors within it which lead to the emergence of new qualities and activities; and if so, there would be quite a clear meaning to be attached to the view that organisms had innate qualities or tendencies.

That, however, would be a different thing from asserting that "life" had certain tendencies; the latter view would imply that "life" had innate qualities, and that they were hereditary; and these qualities one would expect to be present throughout the organic series. On the other hand, the view that qualities are innate only in the sense of being specific to kinds of organisms would suggest that these qualities have their basis in conditions; but even in this case there would still remain a difference between conditions internal to the organism and conditions external to it. The one would imply that an organism has a "nature" which prompted it to react in certain ways—and this is what is commonly understood by "human nature"; the other would imply that there was no fixed internal "nature," but that the "nature" was to be understood through the operation of external forces.

Many more innate tendencies have been discovered in complex organisms than in simple and undeveloped ones; and that makes it doubtful whether there are any tendencies to be considered innate to "life" in general. Commonly, two tendencies have been regarded as primary to "life"—self-preservation, and preservation of the species or type. It is questionable, however, whether even these two are to be recognized as fundamental to "life," to every living form. As regards the supposed tendency to preserve the species, the tendency may take the form of multiplication or the form of sex-reproduction. Asexual multiplication which takes place in the lower organisms, however, may be explicable on purely natural lines; it may be conditioned by the food supply and the operation upon it of external forces, these influences leading to growth and subdivision. Such a process may therefore have no reference whatever to the preservation of the species, although we human beings watching the process may see that it tends to do so; but the preservation of the species may be, like so many other aspects of natural processes, a purely incidental or collateral aspect. Hence it may have nothing of an impulse behind it similar to that in sex. The sex-tendency would, accordingly, be characteristic only of certain types of organisms, and would not be a primary tendency of "life."

In relation to the organic series as a whole, sex-reproduction may have to be considered as a secondary phenomenon because connected with a particular kind of organization. But sex-reproduction itself may be a purely natural process conditioned by various natural factors, and have no preservation of the species in view; while so far as it does secure the preservation of the species that result may too be purely incidental. We must guard against assuming that the ends served by natural processes are ends aimed at in natural processes. There is no ground for assuming that the sex-tendency is due to any innate "nature" of the organisms; but it is probably due to external forces and conditions operating upon and through the organism.

As regards self-preservation, the same criticism can be applied. It is doubtful, for instance, if the tendency appears in plants or in the lower organisms of the animal series. The movements of the latter require no assumption of a self-preserving tendency, but can be explained on natural lines, and present no more difficulty than the movements of a magnetic needle when placed near steel or iron bodies that are in motion. In the case of the needle, we may assume a mysterious power or force in it, but that does not help us to explain the movements of the needle, for so far as such a force is known at all, it is known only in virtue of the specific movements of the needle under certain conditions. All that science can say is that, given certain conditions, things act in a particular way or movements of a specific character arise. The tendency to seek and absorb food materials from the environment, upon which so much emphasis has been sometimes laid as a unique feature of organisms, is not incapable of a naturalistic explanation. Such emphasis has been due to the assumption that the organism is set in motion only by internal forces and that it is a unique source of power. Yet the organism is dependent for its power and energy upon external forces; its "nature" is not radically different from the nature of the environment; and its relation to these external forces is capable of explanation in terms of the laws governing them. The "tendency" to absorb food is a step in a process of natural causation within which the organism falls,

just as the inhaling of oxygen in the organism of man is a natural process. What we call the "life" of an organism cannot be understood apart from its movements. There is no need to assume an innate self-preserving tendency as a primary feature of life. There are organisms—the diatoms—which seem to lie inert for ages and to show no sign of movement, but which do so when the conditions are altered. They do not show any tendency to preserve themselves. Nor can plants be said to do so. Plants and many types of animal organisms are dependent on conditions for their life, and are also destroyed by conditions.

§ 7.

Process of Desire and Natural Processes.

Tendencies like self-preservation and preservation of the species are accordingly not to be regarded as characteristic of all organisms or of life in general. In many cases these supposed tendencies are purely natural processes which may to observers seem to secure these ends; they are reactions of a natural kind to conditions, and these reactions in turn may be thwarted by other natural processes. A tendency to self-preservation, however, implies more than this; and for this reason the tendency must strictly be characteristic of certain organisms. An organism may search for food and absorb it, but that does not necessarily imply a tendency to self-preservation. That tendency presupposes not merely that natural processes may operate to the detriment as well as to the favour of organisms, not merely that conditions may constitute a challenge to their existence, but it presupposes that the organisms are dimly aware of this threat or challenge, and that they do not accept their position as a mere step in the process of natural causation. It is necessary to distinguish between the behaviour of organisms that can be interpreted purely in terms of action and reaction, and that may involve their destruction as well as their preservation and growth; and on the other hand, the action of organisms that implies a resistance to destruction or to destructive forces, and that endeavours

to overmaster these forces.[1] This latter type of action is something fresh and additional; but it is clearly based on conditions. It presupposes the emergence of a new quality in the organism—namely, mind or consciousness; and in self-preserving tendencies we see the operation of this mind or consciousness. At the same time, such operation cannot be considered abstractly and apart from the conditions which give a *raison d'être* to the operation, namely, the presence of factors in the environment that threaten the existence of the organism. This may be even one of the factors which condition the emergence of mind or consciousness as a new existent; it is certainly one which has conditioned the further evolution of mind; and, as M. Bergson constantly points out, consciousness becomes more marked and intense the more the automatic processes of the organism are interrupted and the more checks and hindrances to activity arise.

It is important to bear in mind that a distinction is suggested to exist between movements that may incidentally seem to result in preservation and movements directed definitely towards self-preservation. The latter arise out of the former, and therefore still rest on natural processes; but they are conditioned by the additional factor of consciousness, though no doubt in many cases of a rudimentary form. They supervene upon a consciousness, however rudimentary, of what is possible; and they may take the form of opposing strength to strength or of utilizing knowledge of natural processes in one's support. That the tendency to self-preservation is closely connected with such a consciousness appears from the strength which the tendency gathers from increasing knowledge of what is possible, and from the opposite fact that the tendency may gradually disappear, as in pessimism, despondency, fatalism, and in suicide, under the belief that conditions or the nature of things are such as to place man in an inexorable chain of natural causation, and that his existence is not a matter under his control. If this is so, the tendency to self-preservation is conditioned by suggestions coming from environmental

[1] Whether the higher animals strive after self-preservation or not, it is difficult to say; probably they do.

factors, and is limited by what natural conditions and processes render possible and by human knowledge of these conditions. It rests upon an awareness of a cleavage between organism and environment, and of two general features of the environment—one friendly and one hostile to the organism. It is conditioned by the lack of continuity between organism and environment; and this lack of continuity appears at the level of consciousness in the form of emotion, desire and motive.

The organism is partly a medium through which natural forces of various kinds operate and partly a reservoir where such forces are concentrated. Conflicts of tendencies and of forces within the environment lead to the interruption of the continuous movement between organism and environment; and in the case of the conscious organism this break constitutes the state of desire. The nature of desire is dependent upon a situation which is so complex and conflicting that automatic reactions are no longer possible; and the break in the process is mediated temporarily by ideas or by images. Desire arises through an interruption in a causal process taking place in the organism, but being at the same time conditioned by factors beyond the organism; and through this interruption, the natural result of the process—the end of desire—is delayed. Desire thus presupposes more primitive processes, and it does not create the end desired; that end is a result in a natural sense, and is determined for the organism in virtue of its foundation in natural forces and processes. That desire presupposes some more primitive mechanism is clear from the fact that before we could desire anything—say an apple or sugar—we must have tasted an apple or sugar or something so similar to these as to suggest to us the qualities of an apple or sugar. Desire, as it appears in human beings, involves an association between certain objects and certain satisfactions; and before such an association could be effected some other process must have taken place. A natural process must have terminated in certain objects. It is a matter of common experience that a desire may find satisfaction within a range of objects; and an explanation of this may be found in the hypothesis that the end of desire is not necessarily the

object apparently directly sought, but is the natural result of a more primitive or fundamental natural process, and that natural result depends upon something derived from the apparent object. Desire thus rests upon causal processes and upon objective properties of objects and upon qualities of effects.

§ 8.

Limitations of Mind.

The rôle of the mind within the process of desire is to envisage the end of the process and to search for the means whereby the interruption can be removed. This rôle serves to bring out the limitations of mind. It is set a definite problem by conditions beyond itself, and is tied to the terms within which a solution must be sought. In desire, we are moving within the complex of reality, and are endeavouring to utilize elements within the real in order to bring about a result that is delayed because of conflicting forces. In no sense can the mind create anything except in the sense of utilizing non-mental factors, forces or materials so as to bring about something else different from the material employed. Without materials given to it, it could accomplish nothing ; nor could it accomplish anything unless the nature of the materials permitted it. The creativeness of the mind depends upon the discovery of the nature of things. In this sense the mind is not the unique creative power. The forces of nature—even inanimate nature—may themselves so operate as to bring new existents of a valuable character into being ; they may create æsthetic values, like a beautiful rainbow or sunset, or an autumn or spring scene. What the mind does is to bring conditions or forces into relation, and so to cause them to operate in ways in which they do not or might not when left to themselves. This feature of mind is what is called the " selectiveness " of mind. It is supposed that life, and in a higher degree mind, are the sole selective forces. That has already been questioned in the case of life, and it may also be questioned in the case of mind. The selectiveness of mind, like that of life, rests upon the selectiveness

of natural forces like chemical and mechanical ones. Selectiveness, says Professor Stout,[1] means the appropriation of what is fit and the rejection of what is not fit. In the case of mind, the need of selectiveness has its origin in the nature of desire, and it shows itself in appropriating the means suitable for setting the process going, the interruption of which constitutes desire, and in rejecting those factors which favour the interruption. The selectiveness of mind is thus conditioned by relevance of means to an end, and rests upon an objective series of causes and effects. The teleological aspect of mind has its basis in natural processes which involve causes and effects; and it is on this basis that purpose arises. There could be no such thing as purpose unless there were causal processes leading to results. Purpose is, in the first instance, an effect or result of a causal process; and the fact that it is also a value and that it is foreseen does not affect its being a result. In virtue of consciousness in the form of foresight, the various avenues can be explored in order to find whither they lead; that is possible through knowledge of the nature of things and processes; but such exploration is exactly analogous to what an actual exploration would involve, because attention is directed to a "situation" in both cases, and in both cases certain paths are rejected because certain factors block the way.

Hence, if the teleological, purposive and selective character of mind, which is commonly asserted to be its distinguishing feature from nature and anything natural, is based upon an objective series of causes and effects, mind in its activities and qualities is conditioned by natural processes. Its harmony, its unity, or its discordance will be conditioned by the harmony and the conflicts of its medium or environment. That is what is suggested by psychoanalysis; and it is suggested by other writers. "It is possible that insanity, or a part of insanity, will prove to be less dependent upon intrinsic defects of the individual than on the conditions in which he has to live, and the future may determine that it is not the individual who must be eliminated, but the conditions which must be modified."[2] The failure of the

[1] *Analytic Psychology*, vol. i, p. 156.
[2] Hart, *Psychology of Insanity*.

individual to adjust himself to conditions may be explicable not by some mental defect or moral defect but by the complex conditions to which he must adjust himself. The split in human nature, upon which so much theory has been built, may be explicable in terms of conflicting tendencies and forces in external conditions, which prevent the continuous operation of natural forces through the organism and check the issue of the natural result of natural processes. In virtue of the constitution of the organism and of the relation between it and natural forces, there may be " ends " which are set for the organism in the sense that they are effects of causal processes. On this view, moral theory would require reconstruction. The doctrine of the rationalization of instincts, impulses and desires as being the goal of morality would have to be discarded, and the rôle assigned to " will " would have to be deprived of its importance.

CHAPTER VI

THE UNITY OF THE GOOD

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER VI

THE UNITY OF THE GOOD

§ 1.

Difficulties and Defects of Monism.

The idea of unity has played a very great part in philosophical theory; and in one case it has been assigned such an important rôle that it has determined the whole nature of the theory. A monistic philosophical theory implies that the Universe, in spite of all its differences and conflicts, is yet a unity, a self-consistent whole. It admits that there are differences, that there are conflicts and oppositions; but it cannot admit that they are fundamental; and it implies that they are removable. The important point, however, is to show how they are removable. Monism utilizes the distinction between appearance and reality, and declares the conflicts an appearance while the unity is reality. It shows us no mechanism whereby the conflicts are removed; it throws us back upon a mysterious process of dialectical alchemy; and that consists in little more than a constant reiteration of a faith in unity as the sole reality, and of a belief in the conflicts as only appearances. Reiteration of a faith will not overcome conflicts. Thinking may imply a striving after unity; unity may be a demand of our nature; but the demands of our nature may have no deeper basis in reality than our own beliefs about things or than our own practical difficulties; and we must guard against making our own limitations a test or criterion of the nature of reality. Our thought might have its basis in our practical difficulties; and our striving after unity might merely mean that for practical purposes, in order to live, we strove to carve out a small sphere from reality and to

make it consistent. To interpret reality as a unity, or to extend this unity which we make to all reality, might be to fall into the danger of over-simplification ; and it might thus quite well be that the mind finds itself in nature or " creates nature," but in quite a different sense from that understood by Kant and his followers. If, as has been maintained in previous chapters, in action we come into touch with the real and must take cognizance of its structure, there are strong grounds for doubting the truth of monism and for believing conflicts and oppositions do constitute an aspect of the real. Other theories have opposed monism on this ground and have questioned the existence of unity.

The difficulties of a monistic theory become more pronounced when we come to a consideration of the moral life. Ethical monism maintains that there is a real unity in the moral life, that the good is a real whole, that the world of values is a real existent, and that this unity or totality of good is not a mere ideal with no counterpart in actual existence. The classical expression of such an idea is that found in the " Republic " of Plato, where the good is set forth as being one and the source of all knowledge and all existence. That theory is metaphysical ; but ethical monism is a consequence of it ; and it is expressed in the idea that society is a whole of which justice is the bond. The implication of such an ethical monism is that there can be no moral conflicts, or else that, if there are, they cannot be regarded as final ; that morality cannot involve contradictory claims or that, if such claims are made, they can have no real validity. Ethical theories have tended to stop with this simple faith ; but in doing so they have left the most vital problem unsolved. It is very unsatisfactory to be left, in the face of a conflict of duties, with the assurance that such a conflict is only an appearance and that the world of moral values involves no real conflict. After all men must come to a decision one way or the other ; they want to know what they must do in the face of such a conflict ; and even if it were only an appearance, they want to know how conflicts do arise if the moral life is, as it is supposed to be, a unity.

It has been assumed by certain types of ethical theory that the various discordant features of moral and social

experience are all aspects of the good, or else that evil is a necessary condition for the realization of the good or for the moral life. Such an assumption is a symptom of a failure to deal with the moral life and the basis of that life ; it implies an effort to avoid the real difficulty and to get round it by a piece of dialectic. To maintain that the good is realized through the discordances and conflicts of morality is a purely illusory solution of the problem of evil and of moral conflict. It assumes that moral conflicts are necessary ; it never questions the necessity of their existence ; and hence never raises any question whether such conflicts have causes and can thus be removed. It ignores the fact that moral and social conflicts may, and do very frequently, involve real losses to the side that yields. The solutions of moral problems have been reached by ignoring the major part of the issues at stake and by the adoption of an airy attitude towards vital issues. There may be detected in these solutions provided by theory an unquestioned assumption that the whole which is moral experience, and also the Universe itself as a whole, inevitably tends towards the good ; that the good will be realized in spite of, or else because of, evil and conflict ; and that man plays a relatively unimportant part in bringing about the existence of the good. This assumption requires to be questioned. To have recourse to an absolute or some whole which mysteriously transmutes evil into good, or which brings about good out of all the sacrifices that are demanded of human beings, may be characterized by some as religious or mystical ; but it may have unfortunate results for practical life. It is only a form of the barbarous belief in a moloch that continually demands human victims but yet for ever remains insatiable. And morality has been interpreted as if it were a moloch, as if the moral life for ever demanded sacrifices from human beings and the sacrifice of some values for others. Morality has hitherto had this character, but ethical theory has never questioned whether it need have this character or why it does have this character. The result has been that ethics has done little more than endeavour to give a reasoned justification of what the average person's moral beliefs and aspirations are ; and in doing so it has accepted all the

unquestioned assumptions of the ordinary moral consciousness. Its attitude is analogous to what the attitude of natural science would be if the latter accepted all the popular beliefs regarding natural phenomena, and tried merely to make them systematic.

§ 2.

Moral Conflicts and their Nature.

That there are moral conflicts is generally admitted both in practice and in theory. "I shall find again and again," says Professor Laski,[1] "that my allegiance is divided between the different groups to which I belong." "One can hardly doubt that cases may occur when the duty of the individual to refuse and the duty of the State to compel are both absolute. And in the face of that tragic situation theory has no solution to offer."[2] "Where, therefore, a conflict arises between the claim of conscience speaking in the name of an absolute human perfection, and the claims of the State as the representative of the relative degree of perfection already reached, we are on the horns of a dilemma. . . . In the difficulty thus stated we recognize what is rightly regarded as the central problem of social philosophy."[3] There are conflicts between the ideals of nationalism and internationalism; between political ideals and moral ideals; between commercial or trade ideals and national ideals; between scientific ideals and religious ideals. There is the conflict evidenced by the long continued discussion in ethics regarding egoism and altruism, between the good of oneself and the good of others. Professor McDougall,[4] maintains that there is a distinction between the good of all and the good of the whole, that the distinction is real, and that it is one of importance. A society or a nation is not merely the sum of its existing units because it has an indefinitely long future and a part to play through indefinitely long periods of time, as a factor in the general welfare and progress of mankind.

[1] *Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty*, p. 15.
[2] Hetherington and Muirhead, *Social Purpose*, p. 273.
[3] Ib. p. 91.
[4] *Group Mind*, p. 171.

Professor McDougall considers that it might be right to sacrifice the welfare and happiness of one or two or more generations, and even the lives of the majority of the citizens, if necessary, for the preservation and future welfare of the whole nation as such. For him, therefore, there is a conflict between the good of all and the good of the whole; and he interprets the position of Belgium in 1914 as being that of making a choice between the two.

It is important, however, to note that this conflict of values may be interpreted in two ways. The one form of conflict is supposed to turn upon the choice of values. Human beings on account of their capacity and their limited time are compelled to select from among values; a man cannot be everything and do everything; he cannot very easily devote himself to his own special vocation whereby he earns his living, and at the same time pursue the values represented by music, painting, sculpture, literature, and knowledge in general. He has to limit himself; and in doing so he has to select values. There is no doubt that this necessity of making a choice involves a difficulty; and probably ethics has on the whole tended to busy itself mostly with this difficulty and to regard the need of selection as a conflict of values. On this basis it has formulated the rule that the greater good is to be pursued, and it has interpreted the end as the fullest realization of individuality. The other form of conflict, though having a certain resemblance to this, is yet different and is much more vital. It may seem at first to turn upon a question of choice between two values—a greater and a less; but it involves more than that. It is one in which opposing sides claim to be right and to be equally right, or in which values are actually treated as if they were not values, in which what have been recognized and accepted as values are turned into means and destroyed in order to attain other values. There is involved here a matter of choice between values; but it is not merely a matter of choice. When I make a choice between art and literature I do not destroy art in selecting literature. So far as I am concerned, my choice implies that I do not enjoy the values represented by art; but though I do not enjoy them they are not destroyed. But if I am asked to fight in war,

I have to choose between the value of human life and the value of that which is to be attained by fighting; and at the same time I must be prepared to destroy human life. The conflict is such that certain values are attainable only through utilizing others as means and destroying them in the process. It is such that all values are not conserved. A war may be waged for the sake of honour and freedom; but it may result in the destruction not merely of so-called material values like property but of the higher values of art.

A conflict of values in this second sense raises a much more serious problem than the problem of choice. The latter does not exactly imply a conflict between values, while the former does so by implying that some values can only exist if others are destroyed. Now if the destruction of values is an evil, the conclusion would be that evil is a necessary feature of human action and some values are only possible on the basis of evil. On the basis of such a conflict there arises the problem of the conservation of values; and the doctrine of the unity of the good seems to collapse. Apparently the conflicts which we see in the world of natural things are present also in the world of values. Apparently the world of values is subject also to the struggle for existence. At any rate it is clear that there is confusion as regards values. The common plea that the State must sacrifice life and property to uphold truthfulness, fidelity to promises, honour and so on has to face the difficulty arising from the internal procedure of the State itself, for it does not secure these moral values in social life except in a very qualified form, and then only on the ground of material injury arising from their non-observance. The plea that the State must be preserved in order that values may be conserved is met by the difficulty that the State itself does not conserve them in struggling for them, for it resorts to misrepresentation, untruthfulness, and commits many injustices. No doubt many of the small injustices arising from the action of the State are due to the general and uniform methods which the State must use; but their existence is difficult to reconcile with the principle: Let justice be done, though the heavens fall; for that would imply the inclusion of State and social life in the general destruction. Their existence is difficult

to reconcile with the view that the realization of justice is the function of the State. It is not as if this confusion were a matter of no importance, for out of it arise many serious consequences. It leads to conflicts between individuals, between individuals and the State. The failure of the State to act justly, when individuals have been taught to look to the State as the embodiment of justice, may lead to the State being suspected or thrown into contempt. The individual, because of the value he has been taught to put upon life by moral training, ethical and religious teaching, and by the laws of the State itself, may refuse to take life when ordered by the State or refuse to develop the brutal side of his nature. Honour is taught and praised; but in war things are done by the State through individuals which imply a denial of the value of honour. The suppression of our baser nature is taught; but in war every means is adopted to stimulate it. Loyalty to the State is praised; but loyalty to an association may be called in question and disloyalty may be encouraged.[1]

§ 3.

Solubility of these Conflicts: Some Attempted Solutions.

Ethical theory must face the fact that social and moral conflicts exist; that there are conflicts of values which result in human beings becoming quite confused about values; and that this confusion leads to fresh conflicts between individuals and between groups. Liberty and equality, for instance, may very easily come into conflict, and so too may liberty and order. Liberty, though it is accepted as a value, may yet have to be sacrificed for something else, as for instance, success in war. What then is to be done with such a conflict of values; and how is all this confusion of values to be explained? Professor Muirhead and Principal Hetherington in *Social Purpose* admit that the problem stated is the central problem of social philosophy, but declare

[1] It may be said that the encouragement of disloyalty is justified because in a conflict the State stands for the higher and greater good. Whether this is so or not does not affect the point at issue. It simply seems to make all "values" relative to ends; and raises the question of ends.

that no solution is possible on the basis of theory. They admit that there may be two duties both absolute and yet conflicting. The absolute is thus torn asunder and can provide no solution. That may be a tragedy, but it is not comforting. Need man submit to such a destiny? On their view the good has failed to be a coherent and harmonious whole. That particular theory, therefore, has ended in failure; but that is quite a different thing from saying that theory has no solution to offer. If such were to be the case, there would cease to be social and moral theory. What could be said of any one of the special sciences that had to admit its complete helplessness to deal with its central problem? The practical result of such a theoretical failure is that a decision in a case of conflict can be reached only by resort to force. Strangely enough it leaves the way open for the use of force, and yet at the same time provides neither side with a justification for using force against the other, since both sides are right. The doctrine fails to provide a solution by way of ideas, and leaves a solution to be found either by force or by the course of events; and the latter generally means the crushing of one side by the other. The belief in the unification or in the reconciliation of differences is abandoned; the possibility of bringing individual and particular goods into harmony in a totality of good is denied; the privileged status assigned to mind in the structure of reality is cancelled. The doctrine is thus true neither to its monism nor to its idealism; and that result is probably due to a failure to grasp fully the nature of the problem.

An effort to explain the confusion and the conflict of values might be made on the ground that all values may be ends as well as means. The distinction between ends and means has sometimes been insisted upon,[1] and it has been held that the distinction is important in a discussion of value. On the other hand, it has been held that the distinction does not carry ethical theory very far, since what is an end at one time or to some people may be a means at another time or to other people.[2] If the distinction is denied, it seems that a confusion as regards values and a conflict in moral

[1] E.g. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, ch. i, C.
[2] Vid. Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, ch. ii, pp 36 ff.

practice are inevitable. There seems to arise the difficulty of justifying or condemning anything. It would become impossible to decide when something taken as a value should be treated as an end or as a means. It is to imply that values have a causal character and may be employed as causal agencies in order to effect a result. That is to confuse distinct aspects of a complex object; one of these aspects may be that of value, others may be physical qualities including causality; but the aspect of value must not be confused with the aspect of causality, even though both do pertain to the same object. That a particular sport or game may be pursued because of its own intrinsic interest or because of its being a means to health may be true; but this does not support the view that values may be means as well as ends. A game has an aspect of value as well as an aspect of causality; the element of value remains ultimate in the sense that it is not a causal factor capable of leading to some other result. If this distinction is not kept clear, then confusion of values will result. But the illustration of a game [1] does not serve to bring out the full confusion and conflict that would arise if the distinction between values as ends and as means were denied. Such a denial would destroy the absoluteness and unconditional nature of values, would make values relative, and would introduce the possibility of conflict amongst them as being involved in their own nature. Such a conflict in their own nature must arise if it is admitted that values may be means and therefore have a causal character. There is not merely a contrast of greater and less, of higher and lower; but there is introduced the possibility of a conflict in the sense that one value may act causally to counteract another. The conflicts and oppositions of natural forces are found to exist also between values. If that is the nature of the conflict, then the unity of the good, the unity of the world of values is not even an ideal capable of realization. That is the consequence of confusing values and causes; and that confusion arises once it is admitted that values may be means as well as ends.

[1] The case of treating life as an end and life as a means helps to bring out the difficulty more clearly.

Another type of solution that has been put forward is one maintaining that the self-consciousness, initiative, and volition of individuals, personality in short, is to be developed to the highest degree; that the minds and wills of the community are to work harmoniously together under the guidance and pressure of certain moral ideas. The real difficulty in human action has not been touched by such a view; and that is the defect of much recent social theory based on psychology. It indulges in vague generalities which give expression merely to high aspirations without touching the main problem. It is of little help to be told that the social process is that of bringing out differences and of unifying them or integrating them in a larger whole.[1] It is really of little use to insist upon the importance of organization. The real difficulty is to discover how harmony is to be achieved, how organization or integration is to be effected. It is necessary to find the means to secure that or to set the process going, for harmony or integration will not result merely from insisting upon the need of it or showing what is the pyschology of the process. The general tendency has been to accept the fact of opposition and conflict as the primary fact and the necessary nature of things; and then to propound for their mitigation or removal a moral remedy in the form of moral formulæ like co-operation and goodwill. But the assumption underlying this procedure must be questioned. The primary fact is not conflict and opposition; that is a consequence of certain causal factors; and co-operation of wills and goodwill are not so much a preliminary condition for the mitigation or removal of conflicts as a result of their removal. Hence first we must know how the differences have arisen, why there are conflicts, what causes have brought them about, why there is such a crying need for integration. If human beings do not co-operate, there must be grounds for that lack of co-operation. If there are factors operating to create conflicts between individuals and to keep them apart, human beings will not co-operate so long as these factors continue in operation; and the first step must be to remove them; for all moral remedies will remain fruitless so long as these factors remain, and until they are removed.

[1] Follett, *The New State*, pp. 33, 34, and *passim*.

§ 4.

Examination of the Idea of a Common Good.

In the face of theoretical and practical difficulties much emphasis has been put upon a common good. It is maintained that there is a common good which can animate individuals and which can provide them with a motive for co-operation and common action. People are quite frequently asked and expected to act with a view to the common good; and much moral and social theory has been constructed on the basis of a common good. It is important, however, to be quite clear regarding the rôle to be fulfilled by a common good in relation to moral and social conflicts. We must be clear whether the common good is something on the basis of which moral and social conflicts can be solved or removed; or whether the solution or removal of these conflicts is a condition for the existence of a common good; since the presence of conflicts may mean that there is no common good, and the existence of a common good must imply that no conflicts exist. We must also be careful to distinguish between what presuppositions lie at the basis of an ideal society and what conditions exist in actual society. An analytical treatment of social life may show that a common good is an essential condition for social life, but that is because it is assumed that social life in an ideal sense is taken to mean harmony and co-operation, and to exclude conflict. In this ideal sense a common good is the preliminary condition which renders harmony and co-operation possible. We cannot, however, conclude from this that a common good does actually exist in present society; and if there is this divergence between the two, there arises a problem, for the divergence requires explanation, and the possibility of creating a common good and the means to be adopted thereto require to be considered.[1]

An appeal to the facts of social experience does not provide any grounds for believing that a common good exists in fact. We see a limited degree of co-operation;

[1] Just as Fichte in his *Self-contained Economic State* discussed the steps to be taken to give actual embodiment to his abstract system of Rights.

we see groups of persons uniting for a common object; but we see also a clash of private and class interests, of private and public good. To say that the individual must and ought to sacrifice his private good or the good of his family for the public good, common good, or the good of the whole, ignores one of the central difficulties. The assertion requires to be defended by a reason why in such a conflict the one good should be sacrificed for the other; and that reason is contained in the assumption that there is a common good in which the individual shares through his own sacrifice. Unless, however, it can be shown that the actual constitution of society contains a common good, the view that the sacrifice of private and individual goods does not involve any real sacrifice for the individual may be quite untrue; and in the end it is difficult to see why the sacrifice of the good of one individual should on moral grounds be made or should be asked for the sake of the good of others. The ultimate defence is that the good of others or the good of the whole does include the good of the individual, and that by his sacrifice he attains something higher and better. The argument thus rests on the assumption that there is a common good which includes the good, even the apparently conflicting good, of individuals; and that is the point at issue. The fact that individuals believe they are aiming at or desiring the common good in no way justifies the view that a common good exists, or that social life as it is at present does not mean a mere strife of private and class interests.[1] In the complex modern social conditions it is extremely doubtful if any one could say what the common good is; and if it is, and also is to be, the goal of human effort people must know what it is. In virtue of the needs of action the vague and general idea of the common good must be reduced to concrete terms; and it is here where differences of opinion and conflicts of interest appear. A person may quite sincerely have the good of the whole in view; but in order to act he must interpret the good of the whole in terms of some

[1] Professor McDougall, *Group Mind*, p. 181, seems to say that the view that public life is a mere strife of private and class interests runs counter to psychological facts. It may be answered that psychological facts show nothing in favour of either view.

specific end. So far as he endeavours to realize the common good, he does so through a quite definite object and through a quite specific action; and it is a mere belief on his part that that action, achieving a specific end, will contribute to the common good. Each person tends to interpret the good of the whole in terms of the interests closest to himself; while when we turn to political life, we find that the public good is generally interpreted in terms of the large and powerful interests in the State, many minor and comparatively powerless interests being ignored or sacrificed.[1] That this should be so no doubt outrages moral sentiment; but the fact that it does so demands explanation; and ethical theory must explain it, and must not avoid the difficulty by denying the facts found in social conditions or by merely condemning them because they outrage moral sentiment.

Certain types of ethical theory[2] have endeavoured to show that a common good is presupposed in the nature of the individual and in the nature of society, in virtue of the manner in which society has moulded the individual and in virtue of the vital interdependence of individuals and of individuals and institutions. It has tried by means of these facts to show that "the common good has a claim upon the individual because it corresponds to his own deepest need to be an individual."[3] It has drawn the conclusion that there ought to be no conflicts, that "there ought to be no antagonism between the satisfaction of the reasonable needs of the body or of the higher tastes and the moral well-being of one's neighbour."[4] The defect of this type of ethical theory has its source in the weight thrown upon the common good. The difficulty which must be faced is that if the common good has the claim upon the individual asserted of it, why does not the individual seek it and why do conflicts arise? This difficulty may not be properly met when it is assumed that conflicts are only apparent and due to temporary circumstances or maladjustments.[5]

[1] As seen during war-time; due largely to the general and uniform character of State-action.
[2] E.g. Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*, Bk. IV, ch. i and ii.
[3] Ib. § 74.
[4] Ib. § 78.
[5] Ib. §§ 77 and 79.

Conflicts constitute a serious moral problem and cannot be treated so lightly; they are treated lightly by theory because a common good is assumed as being a fact. The circumstances or maladjustments may not be temporary; they may be a symptom of a fundamental defect of society upon which the common good may be shattered, and which may remain permanent unless man learns how to deal with it. The matters of circumstances or maladjustments which are lightly referred to might thus turn out to be of supreme importance for a doctrine of a common good, and might have great significance for human action.

A common good, if it existed, would provide a common basis for human endeavour and would bring about effective co-operation. But effective co-operation depends not merely upon a common object; it depends also to a very great degree upon whether other objects or ends conflict with that common object and make their influence felt. These other objects or ends may be such as to prevent or to break up co-operation for the common object. A man may because of his religious beliefs have a certain object in view, and he may co-operate with a political party which makes that object one of its aims; but if the political party adopts other aims which conflict with his other objects, he may withdraw his co-operation. Whether persons will or will not co-operate depends on how far they consider their common ends vital or important relatively to the ends concerning which they disagree. Hence a common good will secure effective co-operation only provided that it includes all the vital or important purposes or ends of the members of society, and that none of these are such as to involve conflicts between themselves, or that, if it does not include all the vital ends of each individual, those ends not included do not and are not likely to conflict with the ends that are held in common. Though it may be admitted that social institutions, social tradition, and social environment play a great part in moulding the life of the individual; that the individual life may lose in consequence all its significance if it cuts itself adrift from these influences; and that if it tramples upon these institutions and ideals, it may, as it were, be tearing out what is part and

parcel of itself; it may yet be doubtful whether this admission guarantees the harmony of the vital ends of different individuals. This harmony depends upon the tendencies within social organization and upon the tendencies of natural forces or conditions. These may be such as to lead to effects that throw men into opposition and that can sufficiently account for the conflicts of values and the continual danger that threatens values. A person or group of persons thrown out of employment and faced with starvation may tend to appreciate very lightly social institutions, social ideals, the values of knowledge and art. Employers faced with a trade depression and threatened with economic ruin may tend to show the same scanty appreciation; and so too may a country as a whole, when faced with a gigantic economic problem of unemployment or with a desperate struggle for existence. What will come in for consideration in such a situation is not the ethical values of the respective objects but their necessity, their dispensability. This may seem to run counter to the course demanded by morality and may seem therefore open to condemnation. But instead of ascribing a moral deficiency to those concerned it may be necessary to consider more fully the basis of human action and to make moral demands fit in with the structure of things.

§ 5.

Unity of the Good something to be Created.

The fact that there are conflicts actually taking place between persons and groups of persons regarding vital ends and that in these conflicts the "higher" values are quite commonly ignored or "sabotaged" requires explanation. Moral condemnation is not enough; nor is it sufficient to assume the existence of a common good or the unity of the good and to declare all these conflicts to be illusory, or apparent, or of no importance; for the fact of conflict suggests that no common good exists. But if that is so, we are then faced with the difficulty expressed by Green when he says:[1] "Where there is no recognition of a common good, there

[1] *Works*, vol. II., p. 370.

can be no right in any other sense than power." That view of Green is the consequence of the absence of a common good. Where a conflict of claims and of values arises, action is paralysed until some solution is found; and the simplest way of getting out of such a situation is to resort to force; and where such situations become frequent and where no other solution is discovered, the ground is prepared to a certain extent for a theory that rights do rest on might. The latter doctrine, however, is felt to be revolting to man's moral nature; and ethical theories have endeavoured to circumvent the difficulty. Idealistic monism has tended to treat the conflict lightly or to find its source in man's heedlessness of the common good; and has insisted upon the need of striving for the common good. That is the solution of idealistic monism. On the other hand, pluralism,[1] both ethical and political, has refused to accept this solution and in virtue of the conflict between moral claims in practice has maintained the doctrine of a plurality of goods. This would lead to the need of tolerance and compromise in practice. There is on this theory always the possibility of dispute, and there are no means described for the settlement of it. Resort to force seems the ultimate means. The way seems opened for the grouping of individuals and the formation of alliances between groups so that there is created a balance of forces; and unless one side is superior to the other, or unless there is a power above the groups to hold them in check, the conflict, far from being removed, will not even remain in abeyance.

A solution along other lines, however, is possible. It is necessary to admit the existence of conflicts; and the doctrine of the unity of the good must be based on a recognition of such conflict. There may be a unity of the good in the sense that there is an order of values which do not in their nature conflict, an order analogous to the series of colours which do not in their nature conflict. This, however, does not necessarily imply that no conflicts of values exist in actual life. There may be a unity of the good in the first sense without there being unity in actual

[1] Laski, *Problem of Sovereignty*; Lamprecht, *Journal of Philosophy*, xvii, 21; and xviii, 9.

life. It is just this that gives rise to one of the most serious moral problems; and that problem can be attacked only by keeping in view the realistic basis of the ideal. The unity of the good is not an existent fact; it may be potential; but for its realization it requires certain conditions and in the absence of these conditions it will not become a fact. By this line of argument it is possible to avoid falling into a circle of reasoning or begging the question.[1] The unity of the good, the order of moral values, is something to be achieved or to be brought about. It is something that will supervene when certain conditions have been created or made. Its nature is such, however, that it is incapable of bringing about its own realization. The unity of the good will not of itself inevitably lead to the removal of moral conflicts. Even to believe in a unity of the good will not avail to remove conflicts and to produce harmony. The clear and undoubted existence of a unity of the good is conditional upon efforts to that end, upon control of causes and manipulation of forces. The lack of co-operation and the presence of conflicts are due to opposing tendencies within natural conditions which place men in conflict, to the operation of causal factors preventing the realization of unity.

§ 6.

Conditions of the Creation of a Unity of the Good.

Unity in the first instance emerges as a need of action. The absence of unity or the presence of conflicts paralyses action and renders man for the time helpless. Where claims and counter-claims are made, and where opposing forces come into play, man is placed in a dilemma. It is out of this mass of opposition and conflict that a unity must be achieved. This unity can be achieved only if two conditions are satisfied. First, there must be nothing inherent in the nature of values that implies a conflict between them. If values inherently conflict, individuals are doomed from the start to confusion and conflict. They will be able to act

[1] Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*, §§ 77 and 78; he admits his argument has the appearance of a circle, but claims that it has value in spite of that.

only by concentrating on one or two values and by disregarding or sacrificing the others unscrupulously for these. Second, the various forces or factors necessary for the realization of values must be capable of being so related that they will co-operate effectively to bring about desirable ends or that they will not oppose or counteract each other and defeat the attainment of desirable ends. Hence the unity requisite for action presupposes a unity or at least a certain degree of unity in reality. If the forces with which man must deal in action represent opposing tendencies, he will feel himself impotent to realize values except in so far as he can control these forces, and select from them those which will co-operate to bring about the unity of the good in fact. Science enables man more and more to control natural factors and gives the hope that the nature of things is such as to permit of the unity of the good being achieved in increasing degree. There need be no tragedy arising through conflicts of duties or moral claims, provided human knowledge can lead to the control and direction of the numerous psychological, economic and natural forces, which in the absence of such control on account of ignorance may so operate as to bring civilization to ruin. There is no reason to believe that science must stop helpless at a particular point in its causal investigation through coming up against some inscrutable, unsearchable, and uncontrollable causes. The problem may be one of great complexity, but that does not mean insolubility. There is no need to assume two radically opposing principles in the moral life—a principle of good and a principle of evil, a good will and an evil will, provided an hypothesis more simple and more capable of verification can be formulated. That hypothesis does not require the assumption of any mystic evil will; it does not assume that evil is necessary to the living of the moral life; what it suggests is that evil is a phenomenon, an effect, the causes of which can be discovered, controlled or removed; that the same applies to moral conflicts; and that therefore the remedy lies with men themselves.

CHAPTER VII

VALUES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

ANALYSIS

§ 1. The problem of value in relation to moral conflicts.

§ 2. Struggle for existence, natural selection, and their implication.

§ 3. Relation between morality and natural selection.

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CHAPTER VII

VALUES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

§ 1.

The Problem of Value in relation to Moral Conflicts.

The weakness of the type of ethical theory that throws the solution of moral conflicts upon a common good lies in its assumption that these conflicts are due to an ignoring of the common good, when their real significance is that there is no common good. The fact, however, that there is no common good must be explained; and it is to be explained on the hypothesis that there exists within social life, in spite of all scientific developments, and, it may be said, even because of them, a struggle of a fundamental nature, namely, a struggle for existence. The struggle is of a fundamental nature because its presence influences the whole of human action, gives rise to large numbers of the demands for rights, leads to confusion and conflict of values; and because, so long as it continues, the realization of a complete order of values will be impossible and the existence of any values that are realized will always be uncertain and unstable. A consideration of the nature and consequences of this struggle is accordingly not irrelevant but actually of supreme importance in any study of morality. The part which this struggle plays may easily be misunderstood. What is suggested here is not that values themselves are subject to the struggle for existence, but that the realization or existence of values rests upon conditions; and that if men are engaged in a struggle for existence, the conditions on which the realization and preservation of values depend are correspondingly affected and may be considerably weakened or even entirely absent. In this way the con-

servation of values becomes a problem; and the solution is to be found by creating the conditions favourable to them. A discussion of the struggle for existence raises the question of the relation between morality and natural processes.

§ 2.

Struggle for Existence, Natural Selection, and their Implication.

It has already been pointed out [1] that the tendency to self-preservation must not be regarded as a fundamental feature of "life" in general, but that it is characteristic of certain organisms only. It is a unique kind of reaction to conditions, it is one that implies consciousness and is quite different from chemical reactions like the clotting of blood on a wound, or the formation of a scar on a plant or tree to prevent "bleeding." In the strict sense, the tendency to self-preservation implies a capacity on the part of the organism to take itself out of a natural causal series and to put itself within a causal series. In its first emergence it is conditioned by the presence of threatening factors and a consciousness that these factors can be crushed; and it thus presupposes a capacity to utilize means to produce effects. It presupposes a "motive." The wide application which has been given in biological and social writings to the term "struggle for existence" obscures this. It has to be remembered that Darwin expressly states [2] that he uses the term in a large and metaphorical sense, and that his use of it is based upon Malthus's theory of population. This means that the struggle for existence is found primarily within human life, and that if it is supposed to take place within the whole biological sphere, it is so only because of a presumed analogy. According to Malthus the numbers of population tended to increase in geometrical progression, while the means of subsistence increased only in arithmetical progression. The result is that a struggle for existence arises, whereby the numbers are kept within the limits set by the means

[1] Vid. chap. v, "Mind and its Conditions," §§ 6 and 7.
[2] *Origin of Species*, chap. iii.

of subsistence. Lighten any check to population or mitigate the severity of the struggle ever so little, and the number of the species will almost instantaneously increase. Hence the struggle for existence once more arises; and the conclusion to be drawn is that any attempt to ameliorate conditions or lessen the severity of the struggle is futile, and the struggle for existence is permanent and inevitable.

It is by means of the idea of a struggle for existence, combined with a supposed tendency on the part of organisms to vary, that Darwin explains the process of biological evolution. He put forward the hypothesis that all existing species are results of the modification of pre-existing species of organisms, and that these results are brought about by agencies which are operative at the present day in the production of varieties and races or by agencies which are analogous to those operating at the present day. New species are only strongly marked and permanent varieties, "naturally selected" or preserved on account of the favourable or useful character of the variations. Natural selection, which Darwin postulated on the analogy of human selection, almost unconsciously carried out in the case of domesticated animals, is the preservation of those modifications which are favourable to the individual in its struggle for existence, and the rigid destruction of those individuals in which injurious variations occur. The term "natural selection" is used in a somewhat metaphorical sense, just as chemists speak of elective affinities, but Darwin means by it the aggregate action and product of many natural laws, and laws are to be understood as the sequences of events as ascertained by us.[1] The term selection, as already argued,[2] is not fundamentally inapplicable to nature, provided the idea of a foreseen end or of purpose is eliminated. Natural processes may run their course as if they implied selection, and it is because human action arises out of natural processes that it involves selection. The "selection" of nature, however, is indifferent to values; it may involve both the desirable and the undesirable; and for this reason natural

[1] *Origin of Species*, chap. iv.
[2] Vid. chap. v, "Mind and its Conditions."

selection can never be a moral principle or a principle adopted to control human action.

So much has been made of the idea of natural selection in social and moral theory that it is necessary to be quite clear as to its implications. It is not inconsistent with the idea of emergence, since Darwin assumes the fact of variation. He suggested the influence of external factors upon the reproductive system as a possible explanation; but that simply reduces itself to the idea of emergence underlying all scientific explanation, namely, if certain conditions are present, there will emerge or supervene a new phenomenon distinct from the constituent conditions. Without variation natural selection can do nothing, so that the qualities which constitute the material of the process must come from some other source. The variations requisite for the operation of natural selection, however, seem to be largely a matter of chance, in the sense that there exists no series of causes in nature which tend inevitably to bring about variations in a single direction. For this reason natural selection implies no necessary and universal law of advancement or development. There has been a tendency to interpret the Darwinian theory of evolution as if it did imply a necessary tendency towards the higher and better.[1] An ethical meaning has been given to a natural process. This may have been due to the fact that evolution may easily be taken to mean development, that the theory speaks of "improvement" in relation to the conditions of life and of "advance" in organization, that there may be read into the term "selection" the idea of directing things to something better as is implied in human purpose. Whatever be the source of the belief, it has led to the contention that natural selection is a law of life and must be allowed to operate within human life, that the moral qualities of sympathy and respect for life are running counter to a law of nature which left to itself secures the benefit or good of the race. On this basis much of the optimism of the nineteenth century rested. It was felt that the theory of evolution in accordance with natural selection provided a sure foundation for progress.

[1] E.g. the writings of Benjamin Kidd, particularly *Social Evolution*, chap. ii.

§ 3.

Relation between Morality and Natural Selection.

The problem of the relation of natural selection, based on a struggle for existence, to morality is a particular aspect of the more general problem of the relation of natural processes to morality. If the process of natural selection is one that inevitably tends to realize what is higher and better, then no serious problem arises regarding the relation between the process and morality. All that is required is to let the process run its course.[1] If the process has led to progress in the past, there is no reason to suppose that it will not continue to operate similarly in the future. Man need merely accept the results of the process. But that attitude suggests the question whether the natural process is simply to be submitted to because it is a process that inevitably tends to result in what is higher and better, or because it is a natural process with which man cannot and must not interfere. The particular form of the question arises if it should be shown that the process of natural selection does not necessarily lead to what is ethically better; for then it is necessary to consider what is to be done with the process from the standpoint of morality. The general form of the question arises because all natural processes may be alike indifferent to values; and it is then necessary to consider what is to be done with natural processes from the ethical point of view.

Now the process of natural selection is, like every natural process, indifferent to values. It may lead to the survival of qualities that are quite undesirable as well as to qualities that are desirable. This was admitted by a thinker like Huxley who, in his *Evolution and Ethics*, maintained that the qualities evolved in the struggle for existence and preserved by natural selection might not be morally and socially desirable qualities. Evolution in the biological sphere takes place regardless of values; and this aspect

[1] The policy of *Laissez-faire*, the doctrine of Adam Smith and of Spencer in his *Social Statics*, all imply that processes allowed to run their natural course lead to the best result.

of life so struck Schopenhauer that he was led to deny any values in the Universe. Evolution implies nothing as to ethical value in the process of adaptation to circumstances or of " the survival of the fittest," as the Spencerian formula puts it ; for superior strength, cunning, trickery, are qualities as consistent with such a formula as are moral qualities. This indifference to values and mixture of desirable and undesirable effects are characteristic of all natural processes. The reference to greater complexity of structure and organization is quite irrelevant to the question of ethical advance except in so far as that complexity is a basis for moral qualities ; but otherwise complexity of structure or organization does not necessarily mean the ethically higher. The more complex machine is not necessarily a higher or better machine, even on the mere basis of mechanical efficiency, than a simpler one. In fact simplicity is quite frequently a recommendation, provided the simple machine can accomplish as efficiently the same work as the more complex. How far man's structure or organization is more complex than that of certain other organisms is doubtful ; at any rate it does not possess greater efficiency on the physical side in the form of bodily skill or strength, for many animals excel man in these respects. Apart from the factor of intelligence which is ethically neutral, since it may be used for evil as well as good, and which seems to be the most distinctive feature of man, the qualities of man are very similar to the qualities of several other animals. Regard for offspring and for fellow-creatures, and co-operation and many other qualities are not peculiar to man, but they characterize other existents as well. The inner or psychological aspects of these qualities may be more complex in man ; but this psychological complexity is itself ethically neutral.[1]

If natural selection is ethically neutral, a problem arises for morality. It requires to be controlled in the interests of morality so that the undesirable effects of the process are eliminated. Views differ, however, as to how this is to be done. A common view is that the law of natural selection is a purely natural law, and therefore holds only

[1] Vid. chaps. iii and iv.

within the sphere of biology and cannot be held valid within the sphere of morality. The moral process takes the place of the natural process. The ruthlessness of natural selection must give place to the moral qualities of sympathy, co-operation, respect for life, regard for the weak and defective. This view has to meet a serious difficulty. If the law of natural selection is a biological law at all—and the view under discussion accepts it as such—it still applies to man, since he remains an organism. It is thus not a case of the law being confined to a particular sphere, and its operation stopping at a certain point in the organic series to be replaced by a different process. So far as it is an organic law, it will govern human life; so that there must arise a conflict between it and morality within the sphere of human life. Hence there come into play two conflicting processes, each of which tends to defeat the result of the other, or each of which counteracts the tendency or course of the other. This will certainly be the consequence if the moral process is envisaged as merely the exercise of moral qualities like sympathy, goodwill, friendship and so on.[1] Such a moral process contains no guarantee that it will abrogate the process of natural selection though it may introduce more chaotic results. On this view, however, the aim of the moral process is to crush out the natural process; and for this purpose it would be about as effective as it would be in trying to check the operation of the law of gravitation. Either the moral process will be impossible or else it will be continually defeated of its goal. So long as the law of natural selection is true or is in operation, no other qualities need be looked for than those which are consistent with it.

§ 4.

Intensity of Struggle for Existence within Social Life.

The question of the relation between natural selection and the moral life has generally been discussed on the assumption that it was a process applicable primarily to the sphere of biology, and that therefore it was not applicable

[1] Vid. chap. iii "Values and Causes."

to the moral life. Because of this assumption the problem has not been properly stated; and because it has not been properly stated, the line along which a solution is to be found has on the whole not been found. It may be said that natural selection is not primarily a process in the biological sphere exclusive of the human species. Natural selection as a theory rests on the assumption of a struggle for existence; where there is no struggle for existence, there will be no natural selection; and hence any effort to deal with natural selection or to eliminate its operation will be futile unless its basis, namely a struggle for existence, is removed. Now a struggle for existence is far keener within human and social life than perhaps anywhere else. Perhaps in a strict sense it is only there that such a struggle is found; and, as has already been pointed out, the idea of a struggle for existence is borrowed from human life in the first instance and extended in its application to nature. If, however, a struggle for existence is present within human life, the whole question of values and of morality must be reconsidered, for such a fact may have important consequences both for moral theory and moral practice. It may colour the theory and practice of rights and duties; and it may require a restatement of the attitude of morality towards natural selection.

That a struggle for existence is very acute within human life appears from many circumstances and events. There are continually arising situations or circumstances which contain a challenge to the means of subsistence or to existence, for these two cannot be separated. These situations act as stimuli upon individuals or groups of individuals and call forth certain fundamental reactions or "instincts." In fact, it is situations which strike at existence that rouse the whole nature of the individual most powerfully. That individuals, as well as associations of individuals, frequently find themselves in such situations is a matter of fact; and it is equally a matter of fact that their being in these situations is not of their own seeking. They are in them, as experience testifies, against their will. The situations and problems which confront men are only partially the result of human volition; in many cases volition contributes nothing to the result. Physical or economic causes or both combined may operate

in a series of their own, and produce a result which simply confronts a man or an association of men as a " fait accompli," just as much so as if human volition had designedly brought it about. But the same may be the case even where human beings are themselves active participants in movements, for men are often surprised at the occurrence of results quite different from those at which they are aiming. The ignoring of the rôle played by physical, economic, and psychological forces may render invalid many conclusions of moral theory. Nations are surprised to find themselves in a state of war with other nations, even though they did not seek to bring it about ; and, in fact, even though they protested against its possibility or endeavoured to prevent it. Great numbers of people find themselves thrown out of employment in spite of their desire to work and in spite of a general need of goods. Workers and employers in spite of goodwill and friendliness find themselves suddenly thrown into mutual conflict or unable to reach a working agreement. A great mass of people live a life of continual insecurity ; and at any moment that life or its basis may be threatened.

That matters relating to existence or to means of subsistence are the source of the most bitter disputes between individuals or groups, and that they lead to the most serious enmity or hostility between them, is confirmed by daily observation. And the more an individual or group is subject to a threat to existence or the longer such a threat continues, the more neurotic becomes the state of the individual or the group ; and that state will continue so long as the individual or group cannot meet the danger by a thought-out solution. In spite of modern scientific development, this threat to the existence both of individuals and of States has not been lessened ; it has become even greater. The well-being of individuals, as well as of the State, rests on employment and economic prosperity. But as regards the individual, each fresh invention, each development of scientific ideas renders human labour less essential ; and as the economic system gives a return to the individual only for work done, scientific development of industry undermines individual existence. The same development leads to the dependence of economic prosperity on control of the sources of raw materials and on

the control of markets for the sale of products. In virtue of the competitive nature of modern industry, one country cannot allow itself to be dependent for its supplies or for any of its communications on any of its competitors. Under existing conditions every industrial country is a competitor against the other for the world's markets, since it is only by the absorption of industrial products in a world market that industry can be kept going and can meet the enormous charges involved in the plant of modern industry. The State in order to secure its existence, because of its dependence upon economic life for a large part of its sustenance, is drawn into the conflict. The whole nature of industry compels to a contest with rivals, for failure means a collapse of industry; and a permanent collapse of industry means the ultimate decay of the State. The collapse of industry presents the State with the problem of unemployment; and that problem, intensified by the displacement of human labour by machinery and by the enormous productive power of modern machinery, raises a problem of population. From the point of view of the needs of industry, of what industry can employ, the population seems too large; the competition for work and for "posts" becomes keen; the conditions of life become severe; and these conditions intensify the problem of population.[1] Emigration provides an avenue of escape for a State; but this leads it into a contest for colonies; or else confronts it with the danger of under-population and with a threat from a more populous country. The State is faced with the twin spectre of over-population and under-population.

§ 5.

Need of Distinction between Primary and Secondary Ends.

The fact that this struggle for existence is present in human life has an important bearing on human action. Ethical theory has gone on the assumption that human action ought always to be directed to the highest or to the

[1] It is assumed here for the moment that numbers of population tend to vary according to the severity of conditions of life, as opposed to the Malthusian assumption.

higher values ; it has distinguished between higher and lower values, higher and lower desires, higher and lower nature of man, material and spiritual needs ; and on these distinctions it has formulated many propositions about what ought to be done. Hence the frequent disregard of values has presented a kind of mystery to ethical theory ; the latter has been able to solve the mystery only by assuming an evil will in man or an evil tendency in things, and such an assumption raises more problems than it solves ; moral teachers and preachers have so frequently found all their efforts ending in failure that it is a matter of surprise that their experiences have not induced them and others to enquire into the causes of failure and to discover some more satisfactory explanation than the weak one of an evil tendency or moral indifference or moral decay. It may be that moral indifference, moral decay, and evil are phenomena that require to be explained ; and the weakness of using them as means of explanation is that it leaves nothing tangible or definite wherewith to effect a change. We are compelled to await a mysterious " change of heart." Mankind has waited so long for such a change, that it is questionable if it provides a fruitful way of solution. It is a solution not based on a recognition of the forces which serve to harden the heart of man. It rests upon an attitude which implies that the higher values are supreme in power as well as in authority ; that psychological, economic, and physical forces must conform to values ; and that no question need be raised as to how far values should be based upon the forces that operate in human action and upon their mode of operation. Schopenhauer, viewing the way in which the forces of nature and psychological forces operated, was led to deny the existence of values at all ; there was for him only the interplay of forces everywhere that were regardless of values. It is true that he could not altogether eliminate the element of value, for he reintroduces it in a surreptitious form in his theory ; but his philosophy does serve to destroy the easy belief that values are supreme and must be supreme in the world, and that the forces in the world operate in accordance with values, always ultimately realizing the higher values.

An explanation must be found for the apparent moral

failure which consists in the pursuit of lower values instead of the higher; and this explanation may also throw light upon evil and moral defects generally. It is essential to recognize the close dependence of moral values upon various forces and conditions; only if these forces operate in certain ways and only if certain conditions are present will values be realized; only if certain other conditions are fulfilled will the higher values be realized. Situations may arise where the necessary basis of values is destroyed, where the conditions of their realization are lacking. Such situations are by no means rare in experience; and the maxim that operates with regard to them is "first things first." This is the situation where a person or group of persons is compelled to struggle for existence. Forced into such a struggle, a person or a group of persons will, if need be, disregard all the higher values; and the more bitter and intense the struggle the more surely will the higher values be discarded. The significance of this is that for any theory of human action the distinction of higher and lower values is no longer satisfactory. It is necessary to distinguish between ends of human action as primary, and secondary, and even tertiary. The two distinctions do not in any way coincide. Ends that are primary may be the lowest in the scale of value; and they are often spoken of in a disparaging manner as "material ends." Primary ends are those for which most vigorous action is taken; they are those which most powerfully rouse men to action, while secondary and tertiary ends do so with lessening degrees of influence. Primary ends are existence and the material means of existence; and it is questionable whether the higher values would of themselves, if threatened, rouse men to face tremendous risks of life and wealth. It is almost certain that men would not be so roused on behalf of æsthetic values—art, literature, the drama, music, and so on; they would stop short with an expression of severe indignation. And where great risks are taken on behalf of moral values, it will be found by analysis that the powerful reaction on the part of men is due to primary ends being implicated. A breach of moral rules strikes a blow at the security of existence, and creates a fear that the means of existence and existence itself have been threatened.

The most serious and bitter conflicts are due to the emergence of situations that place individuals in a position of hostility to each other's primary ends, in a position in which each seems to threaten the primary ends of the other. This is seen in conflicts between States, between rival businesses, between employers and employed, between competing industries, between the sexes. These conflicts give rise to claims, to insistance upon rights, to demands for admission and recognition of rights, to demands for "guarantees." Between the contending parties there exists an attitude of fear that leads each to exact from the other some form of security. These situations giving rise to such conflicts are not the seeking of any party—the latter simply find themselves in them—and, if that is so, they are not due to any moral defect in the will of man. We may say that, owing to the operation of natural forces and of economic factors, a consciousness of opposition arises between individuals and groups. Each is, to use a common phrase, placed by circumstances in "a false position" in relation to the other. Once so placed, either side, if it tries to enforce its claims on the other, will make the issue more false still and will create greater moral confusion. The characteristic feature of such a "false position" is that each side feels its claims justified. When for instance the individual comes into conflict with the State on what he feels to be moral grounds, and the State in its turn feels itself also morally justified in its claims upon the individual, both sides are placed in a false position. Professor Muirhead admits that both sides are right in their attitude. That is the peculiarity of the moral aspect of the situation. The same appears in other cases. Workers cannot and will not accept wage reductions because that means an undermining of their existence; employers cannot and will not pay more in wages because that would endanger their existence.

§ 6.

Explanation of Moral Chaos on Basis of this Distinction.

In such situations it is difficult to see what help can be derived from morality or even from ethics. Professor Muirhead

has admitted that theory has no solution to offer. It cannot be said that one side is right and the other wrong, though that is what is done in practice. Each side charges the other with wrong conduct and immoral motives; and does all it can to vilify the other side. Since the conflict is over primary ends, what can be said to justify one side is also a clear justification of the other at the same time. Since each side is equally justified, the use of force to compel the submission of one side or the other cannot be justified; and the submission of one side, whether by compulsion or voluntarily, involves a real sacrifice or a real loss which no conception of a common good can justify or ignore. In fact, where such conflicts arise and when such sacrifices are required, there is no common good to which appeal can be made in order to obtain a decision. And indeed in actual practice the final plea is made not on any ground of morality but on the ground of necessity, of complete inability to do otherwise.

Discussion on this subject has suffered from a failure to keep primary and secondary phenomena distinct. The real difficulty involved has been avoided both in current morality and in ethical theory by confusing the question of means employed with the question of the ends involved; and a consequence of this is that the conflict is interpreted as one between higher and lower values or between moral values and no values at all. An important aspect of the question of values is secondary in the sense that it arises only out of a more primary difficulty. If the conflict regarding primary ends had not arisen in the first instance or did not exist, the motive for sacrificing the higher values would have been lacking; and thus one feature of the moral problem turns upon the existence of primary ends and conflicts connected with them. Questions concerning the morality of breaking promises and treaties or agreements, of honour, of loyalty and so on, arise because of methods employed or steps taken to meet a situation where some primary end has been threatened. Questions centering round the distinction of higher and lower values are thus secondary questions, that emerge after a more fundamental problem has been set and means taken to solve it; but judgments passed regarding these means on the basis of higher and lower

values do not meet the more fundamental problem. The initial cause of the conflict is not a dispute about higher and lower values; and this initial cause must not be lost sight of in the confusion of moral issues that supervenes on the conflict. In the struggle for primary ends individuals as well as states have constantly inducements to disregard the higher values; and where primary ends are not at stake, they are slow in making any very strenuous defence of moral principles. History can provide quite a number of instances of bad faith on the part of States, of the failure of States to act in support of moral principles. Such instances have been regarded as cases of State-interest. The reason, however, why the State has failed in such cases is that a primary end has not been challenged. It may be said that such lapses on the part of the State are unfortunate and point to the incomplete moralization of the State, but that individual action is quite different. Yet State-action is still the action of individuals or of human beings; it follows the same lines as individual action; and it must be interpreted in exactly the same way. At most, the difference between the two is that State-action has to face much more complex issues than individual action. The problem involved in State-action is the problem involved in individual action, though in a greater and more intensive form; and that problem is connected with the question as to what is implied in incomplete moralization and as to what sets a limit to the degree of moralization. Incomplete moralization turns upon a failure to realize all values, especially the higher values; and this failure is due to the difficulty in attaining primary ends and to the struggle for primary ends. This failure in its turn is due to man's imperfect knowledge of, and control over, the forces of nature and economic and psychological factors. Situations are continually arising which bring about a struggle that is initially one, not for the higher values, but for primary ends; and in this struggle the higher values may be scrapped, and if it becomes intense they will be scrapped.

§ 7.

Realization of Values dependent on Conditions.

It may be urged against this view that it is materialistic and that it denies the nobility of human nature. The main concern is not with materialism or idealism, but with questions of fact and with the interpretation of fact. Nor is it a question of defending or denying the nobility of human nature. Human nature has been declared ignoble frequently enough before now, even sometimes by those who at the same time object to its being so regarded. Those who demand a change of heart as the prior condition of all improvement, do not show much belief in the nobility of mankind; nor do those who see, as an operative cause, in the present social conditions a moral and spiritual decline. An analysis of human action with all its implications has not as its aim the exhortation of man nor his spiritual uplifting; it is not its business to imbue mankind with moral enthusiasm by painting human nature either in glowing or in drab colours, although a considerable amount of moral and social theory has tended to indulge in emotionalism. In any case, to say that the present theory is materialistic and denies the nobility of human nature would be a misunderstanding of the theory. It does not attempt to reduce the "higher" to the "lower," and it does not attempt to deny the uniqueness of each order of existents. It has endeavoured to interpret science in a way which will save the uniqueness, while yet showing that the uniqueness "comes to be" on the basis of conditions. It has thereby left the way open for the realization of the "higher values" and for more complete moralization; and it has tried to show that the difficulty barring the way does not arise from man's "nature," but from the complexity of forces with which man has to contend.

What, however, is important to recognize is that the realization of values rests on conditions. To insist upon values without paying heed to conditions through which they can be realized will result in failure. Moral zeal must be guided by wisdom; and it is impossible to rear a firm structure without having first laid a solid foundation. If the foundation

of moral values or values generally begins to shake or crack, the whole world of values will rock or come tumbling down. That world of values is very insecure; and unfortunately its stability does not depend upon the inherent nature of values themselves. One of the fundamental conditions for the realization of the higher values is that the lower values or primary ends be first attained. This is sometimes expressed in the view that the higher values constituting civilization rest on a material basis. The present theory does not imply an identification of the higher values with material prosperity. It is also admitted that *particular* individuals may pursue the higher values without much of a material basis. What, however, is maintained is that in a community the higher values will not be *generally* and constantly pursued, as distinct from a mere occasional individual pursuit, and that the realization will never be sure and permanent, unless primary ends have been achieved and can be with continued certainty maintained, or unless the material basis is permanently assured and free from attack both as regards individuals and as regards the community itself. The material basis sustains the higher values. If men are morally indifferent, as moral teachers are always insisting, in the sense that they do not adopt and pursue the values set before them but pursue instead material ends, an explanation is to be found in the fact that such material ends are primary and are felt, however dimly, to be primary. If this primary basis is insecure or requires the absorption of the major portion of men's time and energy, a psychological attitude is produced which constitutes an obstacle to a response to higher values or secondary ends.

If situations, then, partly physical, partly psychological, may arise which lead to moral indifference, to moral decay, to a failure to respond to and realize the higher values, to a collapse of the world of higher values or to a collapse of civilization, there remains only one line of solution; and that is to analyse the whole situation in order to discover the factors—physical, economic, and psychological—which have brought about the situation. Unless causes are discovered and controlled, no permanent solution is possible. Sacrifices on either side remain as fruitless as sacrifices

of human victims to the gods. They will never lead to a permanent elimination of conflicts; but there will arise a need for successive sacrifices; and morality will assume the character of a huge burden, of a never-ending sacrifice. The sacrifices demanded and made in war will never prevent wars, though they may bring a war to a successful conclusion, for they do not touch the causes which lead to wars. Wars will recur so long as the conditions productive of them continue to operate; they will not disappear in consequence of moral zeal in the cause of peace nor in consequence of material and moral sacrifices in time of war. There must be a knowledge, and a consequent control, of the factors which create a situation where different persons or groups of persons feel their primary ends challenged by others. It is such a type of situation that provides a stimulus to a course of action in which the higher values may, if necessary, be disregarded or even sacrificed or destroyed. Such situations must therefore be prevented from arising. The essential thing is thus knowledge of a scientific kind. No " moral reformation " is demanded. The way of escape from moral problems is through control of non-moral causes or forces.

§ 8.

Need of Elimination of Conflict: this not to be Effected by Voluntary Restriction of Population.

In order to save morality and to preserve the higher values the problem thus becomes one of eliminating conflicts regarding primary ends. Such conflicts mean a struggle for existence; and a struggle for existence merely implies that those engaged in it will survive if they have the qualities necessary to beat down their opponents; for it is characteristic of the struggle for existence within human life that one individual or group of individuals seems to threaten the other. Such a conflict exists in present society; and it is therefore useless to expect that the law of natural selection will not operate. If natural selection is undesirable, and if its operation leads indifferently to desirable and undesirable effects, then its operation must be controlled or else eliminated altogether.

In order to accomplish either object the only means is to control the conditions which lead to natural selection; and this implies the elimination of the struggle for existence. The latter can be eliminated only if the factors which give rise to it are known and dealt with. The exercise of moral qualities like sympathy and goodwill does not imply any control over these factors and is irrelevant to the elimination of conflicts over primary ends. Accordingly it is of importance for the solution of moral problems to discover the causes of conflict; but it is just here where the essential knowledge is lacking and where much difference of opinion exists.

A struggle for existence seems to imply that the population is too large for the means of subsistence. The difficulty has been supposed to lie in excess of population over the means of subsistence. On this diagnosis of the trouble, the obvious remedy is to lessen population through self-control on the part of individuals or through various preventive measures; or to mitigate the severity of natural selection and the waste of life involved, by encouraging the strong to have offspring and by discouraging the propagation of the unfit. This solution rests on Malthusian assumptions, such as that the population tends always to outstrip the means of subsistence; that population tends to increase according to an increase in the means of subsistence; or, that the better the conditions of life become, and the more prosperous a people becomes, the greater becomes the population. It thus tends to regard the solution of the problem as a matter of the exercise of will, of self-control, foresight and prudence. The solution is one which emphasizes human will versus natural law, and assumes that all that is needful is an act of will leading to the repression of a certain type of desire.

The difficulty of this solution is that it demands greater restraint and foresight on the part of a very large section of the people than are likely to be attainable. The analysis which has been given of the process of desire[1] shows that these will not be attainable in such a way, since desire is not a process which can be stopped merely by a mysterious act of a mysterious will, but is a process resting on conditions and to

[1] Vid. chaps. iii and iv.

be controlled only through its conditions. Hence simply to crush desire without regard to its conditions may be highly injurious; and psychoanalysis has cited numerous cases of neurosis which show how dangerous repression and suppression may become. The solution itself again is such that if applied in practice it would create a fresh problem. It would be applicable in the first instance in the highly civilized and highly intelligent communities, and would thereby lead to a reduction in their population. They would thus be threatened by the lower and more prolific communities. The dread arising from a decrease of population is quite acute in certain countries. Under-population is itself a problem;[1] and movements are in progress, while others are being suggested, for increasing the population. The danger lies not merely in the greater population of the lower civilizations, but in the greater populations of certain highly civilized countries over the population of other civilized countries. The country with a larger population is always felt to be a danger to a country with a smaller population. To apply the doctrine of restricting population, even though carried out simultaneously in all countries, will not solve the problem connected with under-population, but will intensify it. The reason is that the problem of under-population is connected with other factors than the mere increase or decrease of population; and a decrease of population may intensify the action of these other factors. The struggle over primary ends between States is due not to the lack of the means of subsistence in these States, but to the need of finding fresh populations to absorb these means of subsistence; and unless fresh markets and fresh consumers are found, the respective States will suffer internally. A mere restriction of population will thus only serve to reduce the numbers of consumers. Hence the diagnosis of the cause of the struggle for existence as being an excess of population over the means of subsistence is not adequate. It is characteristic of that struggle that it is due to superabundance of the means of existence and a superabundance of the means of producing them, and not to the lack of both. The productivity of

[1] Witness the Terms of Reference of the National Birth-rate Commission, 1918–1920.

modern industry is a new environmental factor to which man must adapt himself, but to which he has not yet succeeded in adapting himself.

The solution of the problem due to a struggle for existence does not lie, therefore, merely by way of a restriction of population. That will not remove the need for economic expansion but will intensify it; and so long as each State has the need of economic expansion, there will be a danger of under-population in each country. At the basis of the struggle for existence lies an economic factor as well as the factor of population, though the two factors are very closely connected. Modern industry is of such a nature that it makes the element of human labour, to an ever-increasing degree, of minor importance, and by doing so it is shutting out a great mass of the population from any claim upon the productivity of industry. Yet it can be kept going only if its products are consumed; and as the population within one country can, in virtue of the conditions prevailing, consume only a comparatively small portion, there arises the need of expansion abroad in the form of fresh markets. Each country is in much the same position. The way of solution for the difficulty would thus be to enable the mass of the population within a country to enjoy the full benefits of the productivity of industry carried on in its own country in the first instance.[1] That, however, would result in a great increase in the material comfort of the population. The Malthusian would say that this improvement will result in a huge increase of population; and on this assumption the consequence might be that the country would be incapable of containing the population. Hence the surplus populations would overflow the boundaries of the respective States and conflicts would result. This assumption and its consequences, however, may be questioned. Obviously the size of population must be determined by the productivity of industry; the limits of the latter must be the limits of the former; and population accordingly must be kept under

[1] I am not concerned at present with the mechanism by which this could be done. I can only refer to the able work performed in this connexion by C. H. Douglas in *Economic Democracy* and *Credit Power and Democracy* and to the Social Credit Movement based on his theory.

control. That control of population, however, need not be of the nature of voluntary restriction. It may be as desirable to increase population as to decrease it; and the question thus arises as to whether population can be controlled, so that it may be increased or decreased, and as to what is the nature of such control.

§ 9.

Population Dependent on Natural Laws, not on Will.

Modern thought has become so accustomed to the Darwinian conception of natural selection that it has tended to ignore the basis on which it rests, and has forgotten that its presuppositions were at one time questioned. The truth of the Malthusian doctrine has been and may be doubted. It has regarded the struggle for existence as a consequence of increase of population or as a consequence of numerous offspring. But this may be a reversal of the real cause and effect. Numerous offspring may be a consequence of a struggle for existence. The number of offspring may vary with the chances of survival; and this is a view which Schopenhauer maintained. Many facts support the view that conditions unfavourable to survival lead to increased offspring. These conditions include economic conditions, as well as others—such as climatic and atmospheric conditions, which affect the nervous state of the organism. The question of population would thus turn upon the conditions affecting fertility. These conditions affect all organisms and operate in a purely natural manner. The law of their operation holds true of animals as well as of man; and it will serve to explain the variations of fertility in animals as well as in man. This would imply that the tendency of the population of a country to decrease, or the tendency of the families of the better classes to become very small, need not be regarded as due to will or voluntary restriction, for the same phenomenon is found in animal life where will cannot be said to operate. Even assuming that voluntary restriction is practised, as is frequently maintained, it may yet be quite irrelevant to an increase or decrease of population.

Here we see the tendency to over-emphasize the part

played by the will; and at the same time we see what part can be played by the will. The part played by the will is not that of simply thrusting itself in the way of a natural process with the hope of stopping it or slowing it down. That is a dangerous procedure, and is certain to be futile. The part must be that of discovering the conditions on which fertility depends and of controlling the conditions so that fertility may be increased or decreased as desired. Natural tendencies must not be merely crushed but utilised in the production of desirable results. The neo-Malthusian conception of a control of population through an act of will involving a non-satisfaction of sex or a prevention of the natural result of the sex-act must thus be rejected; and it will be either dangerous or futile because it ignores the facts that fertility may depend on conditions, and that the organism is affected by these conditions so long as they are left untouched. The conditions thus left free to operate will lead to effects or processes in the organism which remain untouched by a mere act of will. The essential problem therefore is to control the conditions so that they become more favourable to life, so that the chances of survival become immeasurably greater, and so that the degree of insecurity is reduced to a minimum. This is a problem to be dealt with by economic and biological studies.[1]

[1] See C. E. Pell, *The Law of Births and Deaths*, where it is argued that the birth-rate and the death-rate are connected because the conditions which affect the one affect the other, and that fertility has a maximum point within two extremes—highly favourable and highly unfavourable conditions of life—beyond which fertility ceases.

CHAPTER VIII

MORALITY AND CONDITIONS

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER VIII

MORALITY AND CONDITIONS

§ 1.

Continuity of Morality with Natural Processes.

The preceding discussion on psychological forces, on mind and its conditions, and on the struggle for existence, has prepared the way for a discussion of the relation between morality and conditions. It has shown that the problem of morality has not its source primarily in human nature, as understood psychologically, but in non-moral factors or conditions. Such a view, however, runs counter to many prevalent moral conceptions which tend to suggest that conditions are irrelevant to morality, that men can be moral irrespective of circumstances, that morality is an affair of will, and that man cannot be made moral by Act of Parliament.[1] Such a doctrine would certainly make it difficult to start any movement for effecting moral progress. One of the main objections to it is that it creates a peculiar hiatus between the moral process and natural processes. The divergence between the two may be supposed to be so great that, as Huxley maintained, the moral process may mean a reversal of the natural process. The same view of the moral process is taken by those theories which throw emphasis upon man's higher nature in contrast to his lower, upon man's higher self versus his lower, upon the rational nature against the animal nature of man, upon reason versus the instincts. Their inadequacy is due to their failure to

[1] It may be admitted that man cannot in most cases be made moral by Act of Parliament; but that does not mean that morality is not dependent on conditions, but that an Act of Parliament rarely touches the conditions on which morality depends.

lay stress upon the rôle of conditions in the moral life. Hence instead of securing continuity between the moral processes and natural processes, they either ignore the latter altogether or are induced to crush them out from morality. If, however, stress is laid upon conditions, continuity between natural processes and the moral process can be secured. Natural processes can be shown to be the material by means of which moral ends are to be achieved, just as they may prevent such achievement. It is from this fact that the moral problem gets its distinctive character. The solution lies in human control of natural processes. From this point of view an explanation of the facts upon which many prevailing moral doctrines insist is possible, and that explanation shows that these facts are not ultimate enough to be accepted as a basis for the interpretation of the moral process. At the same time there can be no question of the utility of a view that insists upon the importance of conditions, for it opens a way for moral improvement through control of conditions.

§ 2.

Criticism of the Materialistic Interpretation of History.

Certain misunderstandings may arise concerning a theory which maintains that morality rests on conditions. These misunderstandings may be avoided by distinguishing it from certain other theories. One such theory is the "Materialistic Interpretation of History," which according to Engels is a "fundamental thesis" of Marx. According to this interpretation, at any period of history the dominant mode of economic production and exchange, as well as the social organization which necessarily arises from it, constitute the basis on which is established, and by which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that period. All the political, juridical, religious, philosophical, literary, and artistic processes rest upon the economic life. The latter is the determining factor; all ideas, the whole mental life are but a reflex of it. But it is not only for the explanation of the past that the mode of production and exchange must be considered; these modes determine and

will continue to determine, all our mental conceptions and all complex social relations. They have decided our past and they will ordain all our future. "The methods of material production condition the social, the political, and the spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness (that is, ideas)." In general the materialistic view of history maintains that all culture, all civilization is a product of economic conditions, and that the economic process involves an inevitability towards a certain result, namely, the destruction of the capitalistic form of society.

We are not concerned here with all the aspects of the theory, for instance with the proletarization of the peasantry and of the small independent tradesman, with class-struggles, with the increasing pauperization of the proletariat, nor with the question how far these points are confirmed by history. The first relevant point is the doctrine of the inevitability of the economic process in bringing about the collapse of capitalism. The doctrine claims to be essentially scientific and to interpret social life in strictly causal terms. This scientific attitude necessitates the elimination of all ideas, ideals, or values as factors in the social process; and in this respect the Marxian theory contrasts itself with preceding social and socialistic theories which criticized prevailing social conditions in the light of ideals. Yet in spite of this the theory is a disguised form of a belief in absolute values which will inevitably realize themselves. The Marxian doctrine assumes that the destruction of capitalism is desirable because it is the source of certain effects that are evil; and it implies that this desirable result will be with strict necessity brought about by the inherent nature or tendency of the system. That is to believe that there is an inevitability attending the realization of values.[1] Such a belief, as has already been pointed out, is untenable theoretically and unconfirmed by fact.

The second relevant point is that the doctrine maintains

[1] How far this is from being true is shown by the Russian (Bolshevist) Revolution. The destruction of capitalism did not effect a State that was desirable.

that ideas, ideals, or values have played no part in the social process, that man has not in virtue of ideas and ideals endeavoured to control conditions. It represents man as adrift on the river of fate and as being cast up finally at a comfortable billet. No effort is required from man in order to direct events towards that desirable consummation. There is an unadmitted belief that all things finally work together for good. Even on those interpretations [1] of the doctrine in which human action is said to be requisite, the action or interference is not regarded as action under the direction of ideas; it is merely an exercise of force which helps the collapse of the structure; and there is only a hope or belief that the inner tendency of things will lead to the growth of something better on the ruins. Ideas are effects or products, not causes or antecedents; and hence all that man can do to the process is to add physical force and hasten it. The doctrine does interpret existing conditions as being at any particular moment due to causes, but these causes are past and thus beyond the control of man at the moment. Since they are so, the effects are also beyond his control; and hence their operation as causes leads at a later moment to other effects which too are uncontrolled and uncontrollable. The process is viewed as a rigid and closed causal sequence; and it is held that there is no point at which man can break into the process and control the sequence of causes and effects. The doctrine must thus deny the usefulness of ideas, the possibility of controlling causes, and hence any reason for searching for causes; for if things are inevitable, why should man seek to discover their causes?

Such a theory, however, is false in fact, and misinterprets the nature of science. The economic conditions at any moment are to a certain extent, though not necessarily wholly, due to human motive and to ideas. Accident, in the form of accidental discoveries, may no doubt have played a part in economic life; but man must have been able to make use of them to his own advantage; while the modes of production and exchange at any period, and especially at the time of Marx and Engels, were themselves brought about by means of ideas, by means of human know-

[1] Lenin, *State and Revolution.*

ledge regarding the forces of nature.[1] Without ideas the complex modern economic system would not have been brought into existence; and man would still have been at a quite primitive level of life. A place must therefore be found in any theory for ideas in relation to human action. At the same time it is just because ideas are important for human action that there is no inevitability attaching to the realization of values. The realization of values is only inevitable if there are present and in operation only those conditions on which the realization of values depends. The more ideas man attains, the more knowledge he gets concerning natural processes in general and concerning these conditions in especial, the greater may become the degree of inevitability in the realization of values. But this implies the possibility of controlling causes or conditions. This possibility is implied in the nature of science; and that is because science shows that natural processes, causal sequences, are only necessary or inevitable when certain conditions are present, and that these conditions, on the basis of knowledge, can be interfered with. It is this possibility which leaves the way open for responsibility.[2] The materialistic theory denies responsibility and maintains that conditions compel man to act in a particular manner. This view places man back within the causal processes of nature as merely one step or link in these processes; and assumes that the conditions remain constant, and thereby that man is involved in an unceasing chain of necessary causation. The relation between morality and conditions must thus be differently interpreted from that interpretation given by the materialistic theory.

§ 3.

Criticism of Spencer's Method and Theory.

It is also necessary to distinguish between Spencer's theory and the view being set forth regarding the relation

[1] The ignoring of this may partly explain the emphasis put by the doctrine upon labour as the sole source of value.

[2] I.e. responsibility as a general idea applicable to human action, and not individual responsibility; for, under present conditions, circumstances may threaten an individual's primary ends.

between morality and conditions. Spencer held that a moral science must start with the laws of life and the conditions of existence, deduce from these what modes of conduct produce happiness or unhappiness, and formulate these deductions as laws of conduct to be obeyed as such irrespective of happiness or misery. This view compels him to go beyond the sphere of human life, since the latter is only a limited area of animate existence. The result of his method is that he formulates certain propositions about the nature of conduct in general; about the differences between conduct at different levels of life, differences consisting mainly in the degree of co-ordination of acts to ends; about increasing heterogeneity of conduct; and about the greater play of activities. His method, however, does not provide him with a means of discovering what ends should be sought and what should be avoided in the case of human beings; nor does it provide him with the conclusion that happiness is the aim in the form of a complete life, or that pleasure-giving acts are life-preserving acts. This conclusion is an assumption based purely upon human life; and he ignores the possibility that acts that give pleasure may be relative to the nature of the organism and its distinctive conditions, or that the increasing heterogeneity of conduct and ends, and the greater play of activities, may be explicable solely by the presence of more complex conditions to which man in particular has to adjust himself. The idea of conditions of life in general leads to no important consequences for his ethical conclusions. He has merely made use of the idea of the organism adjusting itself to conditions and effecting an equilibrium between itself and them; and that idea is supplemented by ideas derived from the ordinary moral experience of men, and from a theory regarding the cumulative effect of racial experience. It is the ideas of ordinary moral experience that are important.

There is no valid ground for the view that a study of morality must take into account the whole range of organic life. Each type of life must be interpreted in relation to its own complex conditions. The only set of conditions that can be said to be at all common to every type of life throughout the organic scale is composed of those—largely

unknown—factors which lead to the emergence of life, serve to give a certain type of matter, namely protoplasm, its living character, and serve to sustain life. But for each successive type there supervene upon this set additional sets of conditions with consequent additional or even quite different activities or tendencies. Any attempt, accordingly, to utilize the lower organisms and their activities in order to explain or interpret the higher, especially the activities of man, is fruitless. The activities of man can be interpreted in relation to his conditions as easily as the activities of the lower organisms can be interpreted in relation to their conditions; and in large measure the activities of the lower organisms are primarily interpreted on an analogy with human activities. Spencer's treatment of morality has at most only the value of a comparative study showing how action grows in complexity and difficulty. Such a treatment always contains the danger that the more complex type of quality or activity may be reduced to the lower type, and the uniqueness of the higher and more complex be lost sight of. What a science of morality must do is to discover the conditions of the complexity of human activities and to explain the uniqueness of human qualities and human activities. It is not an explanation to be referred to a simpler type of action found in a simpler type of organism. Human conduct must be taken as a number of distinctive events; and it must be analysed to discover the factors determining these events, to discover the conditions limiting human action and influencing the realization of values. It is not enough that conduct be merely described as a co-ordination of acts to ends. Human action implies control of, and manipulation of, causes or forces to bring about results; and hence it presupposes knowledge of causes in detail as well as knowledge of the laws which these causes obey.

§ 4.

Relation of Morality to Conditions Analogous to Relation of Mind or of Life to Conditions.

The relation between morality and conditions is to be interpreted in a manner exactly analogous to that in which

the relation of life to conditions, and of mind to its conditions, has been interpreted; and the interpretation given of scientific procedure has rendered this possible. That interpretation has shown that the objection to regarding morality as subject to conditions, on the ground that moral qualities and activities are so unique that they can never be derived from natural factors, is not valid. It is possible to maintain that moral qualities depend on conditions without thereby implying that moral qualities are natural factors. As mind need not be identified with its conditions, so morality must not be identified with its conditions. It is not necessary to fall into Spencer's error, when he thought he had given a scientific treatment of human conduct by reducing it to terms of four sciences—physics, biology, pyschology, sociology. Factors belonging to each of these sciences may be implicated in human action; but what is still necessary is to bring them into relation with the unique character of morality. At the same time we must avoid the materialistic view which would regard human action as simply a stage in, or a continuation of, processes of natural causation; for that would annul any distinction between natural processes and the moral process. This materialistic view and the objections raised against it, however, are largely due to the assumption that conditions produce effects in the sense that the effect somehow has the quality of the conditions. On this view human action is to be regarded wholly as an effect of certain causes; and the objection urged against it is that it would mean that the worth or value of the action also arises out of the causes, and must somehow be present in them. This assumption has already been questioned; and the way is opened for bringing morality into relation with conditions.

By "morality" is to be understood here that type of action to which a certain moral quality, in the form of worth or value, attaches, and in performing which individuals are conscious of pursuing ends. Generally it signifies human action and human qualities; and these may have an immoral or moral element attaching to them. They may be good or bad. When, therefore, it is said that morality rests on conditions, what is meant is that the quality of goodness or badness attaching to an action, an activity, or an attitude

of human beings, is dependent on the conditions which call forth the reaction on the part of human beings. It is not meant that the conditions make the quality of goodness or badness. The action of an individual is a new phenomenon that arises when certain conditions are present, just as water appears when certain conditions have been fulfilled; and goodness or badness, or generally a moral element, attaches to such actions, just as various qualities attach to water. Hence it may be said that morality supervenes upon or is sustained by conditions. This would imply that an explanation both of goodness and of evil is to be sought in conditions, and that, accordingly, if we want to improve morality and to make morality strictly a system of actions and human qualities which are good, without any admixture of evil, we must turn to conditions and to control of conditions as the way to our end. This relation between morality and conditions can be brought out more clearly by an analysis of motive. Such an analysis will show that the nature of conditions suggests or calls into play motives and reactions on the part of man, while at the same time the direction of the action or reaction is determined or prescribed by the nature of conditions.

Numerous facts of experience serve to confirm the view that morality and conditions are closely connected. The main difficulty is to interpret the relation. In saying that motives are suggested or brought into play by conditions, we are simply maintaining that human action is always something concrete and specific, and that motives do not live within some abstract moral sphere. It is a view that arises out of the preceding discussion of instincts, impulses, and emotions, and that makes the life of motive continuous with the lower forms of life. It expresses the attitude adopted in practice—in the law-courts in trying to discover motive to a crime, in ordinary life in trying to estimate human character, to understand a man's views and actions, to mould opinion, to forecast a man's behaviour. That that is continually being done, and done with a considerable degree of success, shows that motive is not a purely inner, subjective or personal affair, and that if there is difficulty attaching to the gauging of motive that difficulty has another source

than its inner or personal nature. We continually explain motive by the circumstances of a man's life, and we continually seek to discover motives by an investigation of conditions.

Other factors support the same point. Nothing is a more common fact of experience than that a change of social position leads to a change of view and of action, the reason being that the circumstances attending the new position bring fresh motives into play and call forth new reactions. It is conditions that provide a motive to revolt. The virtue of philanthropy, at one time a religious duty, is only possible on a basis of poverty and the consequences of poverty, and if poverty ceased to exist the conditions providing a motive to philanthropy would also disappear. Nations do not proceed to war with each other because people have an instinct of pugnacity, but because they have a motive for doing so; and the motive is found in the nature of conditions, particularly of modern economic conditions. Hospitality was in early times and in primitive communities a sacred duty; with increased travel and the consequent rise of hotels to deal with conditions no longer capable of being met by hospitality, there ceased to be a motive for it and as a duty it disappeared. "Let us imagine," says Professor McDougall,[1] "an Englishman who, in a Congo forest, finds a white man sick or in difficulties. To succour the sick man may be to incur grave risks and he is tempted to pass on, but the thought comes to him that in so doing he will lower the prestige of the white man in the eyes of the natives, and this idea, evoking the motives of the group-spirit which unites all men in such a land, brings victory to his sense of duty in its struggle with selfish fear." Such an illustration shows how motives are dependent on conditions or on the actual circumstances in which a man is placed. "The group-spirit," says the same writer,[2] "is inevitably developed in the mind of the savage child by the material circumstances of his life." That conditions call motives into play is thus clear. The motive is relative to a situation. Hence the question of motives may become a very complicated matter. For instance, a man may perform a certain action for which he has a motive. But suppose he is asked why he

[1] *Group Mind*, p. 7. [2] Ib., p. 69.

did it. This question creates a new factor and it may influence his answer. He may feel he is now put on his defence, and fresh motives may accordingly come into play. He will endeavour to find reasons that will justify his action or that will convince his interrogators.[1] The issue now is not merely that of explaining his action, but that of justifying it or of convincing others regarding it.

§ 5.

Motive Objective, not Subjective, in Character.

In general, a situation presents a problem to the individual which he has to solve, or a challenge which he must meet, or a position to which he must adapt himself. It may represent a standard of life which he regards as possible of attainment by him; and thus, for instance, the contrast of wealth and comfort with indigence and misery in social life may provide the motive that leads to industrial unrest. The situation at the same time suggests to the individual the line along which to direct his activity. Hence motive would seem to be objective, as objective as a truth of science. As the truth of a scientific proposition is not subjective because it is apprehended by any human being, so a motive is not subjective because entertained by an individual. The entertaining of it, like the apprehending in the case of knowledge, may be subjective; but what is entertained or what is apprehended is not. Motive is an element in, or a feature of, an objective situation; and that feature or element acts as a stimulus upon individuals. It is as objective as the lion that causes one to run; and it operates upon the organic mechanism in a manner exactly analogous to that in which the perception of the lion does. The difference between the two is that in the case of motive there may be greater complexity. It is true that motive may seem to be ideal and is not always a perceptible object; but the fact that it is ideal does not mean that it is subjective, any more than the ideal nature of scientific truths means that they are subjective. A motive

[1] Vid. R. B. Perry, "The Appeal to Reason," in *Phil. Rev.*, March 1921.

usually takes the form of a "reason," but that reason is based in the nature of an objective situation.

Hence a motive is not an inner thing, springing out of an inner personal nature, but a stimulus which comes from conditions. It is also not an effect produced on the mind by external conditions, like an impression produced on wax by a stamp. It is not mental; it is not a tendency of mind; it is in one sense a tendency of an action, a feature characterizing a reaction to a situation; and action is a phenomenon of the external world—as much so as the behaviour of physical bodies. But that feature of action has its primary source and its explanation in the situation calling forth the action. We cannot grasp the tendency of action apart from the situation; and in this sense motive is ultimately a feature of a situation confronting the individual. It is in virtue of this that motives can be inferred from action, since action is interpreted by reference to the circumstances under which it takes place. The reason why such inference is not always successful is not that motive belongs to an inner subjective world, but that human action involves many complex factors and that the conditions within which it takes place are very complex. The complexity of the real is such that innumerable situations arise and confront individuals, and each situation may itself be so complex that it is capable of suggesting many different motives. We are unable to estimate motives accurately because the real is still too complex for us,[1] and for the same reason we are unable to control motives. Our inability in this respect is due not to the inner and personal source of motives, but to our incomplete knowledge and control of the different situations that may arise. But the fact that motives are objective renders an ultimate control of motives possible. That can be effected by controlling the factors constituting a situation or comprising a complex of conditions. As a matter of fact, much of human action is designed so as to influence motive. When we want a man to do something, we present or represent to him a situation of such a kind,

[1] A classification of motives is an attempt to estimate motives; but such classification is a classification of types of action and hence of types of stimuli, and thus of types of situations.

and in such a way, as to provoke the reaction we want. We are endeavouring to control motive by making it ; and we make it through an objective situation. When a trade union wants nationalization, it may act in such a way as to create a situation which contains within it a reason for nationalization. That reason is the motive, and the motive thus lies within the situation and provokes a reaction. Motives can be made to arise on the basis of certain factors, and thus made to play upon individuals. What takes place is not so much a play upon individual motives as a bringing of motives to play upon or to bear upon the individual.

§ 6.

Explanation of Human Action to be found in Conditions.

The consequence of this view of motive is that an explanation of human action, even at the level of mind represented by motives, is to be found in conditions ; and that is the type of explanation even when the explanation is in terms of motive. Hence when people act morally or immorally, the basis of such action in either case is alike in the nature of conditions. When a man tells a lie or breaks a promise, the motive to it lies in conditions. He does it presumably because of some end or objective which can be attained by doing so. The presence of an " end " seems, however, to upset the preceding argument ; for it may be said that the end is the motive ; and it is sometimes supposed that an action has been explained and its motive assigned when the end has been stated. Whether this is so or not may be discovered by considering a particular case. A man desires to make money, and in order to do so he tells a lie. The lie, in fact, helps him considerably in doing so. What is the motive in telling the lie ? It may be said that the motive is the desire to make money ; but that would be only a partial explanation, for it will not of itself account for the lie ; it only states the general nature of the action ; it does not explain the action in detail ; it would not enable us to understand why one man tells a lie while another man does not. It is the possibilities of the case, the means open to

a man, the obstacles in his path that provide motives. The motive is to be sought in the nature of the whole situation or circumstances in which a man is placed. These circumstances suggest the line of action to be adopted in order to attain an end. The problem of motive is capable of a solution in no way fundamentally different from the problem of lower forms of action. An animal when threatened with danger may first take to flight, then hide, then fight; the change in the action follows upon a change in the situation or conditions; the nature of the conditions provides the stimulus; and with a change of conditions there occurs a change of stimulus. Motive is exactly analogous. In solving a practical difficulty, in meeting a situation, in pursuing an end, the steadily changing nature of the conditions continually brings new or additional stimuli to bear upon the individual, and thus brings continually fresh motives into play.

If this is the case, the incidence of moral emphasis requires to be shifted. The "morality" of motive is no longer to be regarded as an inner personal quality, but is an objective quality of conditions. Conflicts of motives are objective conflicts of stimuli, conflicts within a complex situation. The moral quality of a human action is dependent on how far the conditions themselves tend to bring values into existence and to support them or conserve them. If it should be said that it is just the duty of human beings through their action to realize values, we have to remember that human beings can with certainty do so only if they know how to do so and can control causal processes in order to do so. Without that full and detailed knowledge and control, conditions largely change of themselves and also change through the effects arising from human action—effects which are generally incidental or collateral to the result directly aimed at. Economic conditions, for instance, have been to a considerable extent created by man, but there are also many economic conditions which man did not bring about directly, which he did not foresee, but which have arisen from the course he has taken. He did not will the squalor and poverty of life, he did not will the periodical economic crises, he did not will the unequal distribution of wealth, he did not will the mechanizing effect of industry and its insecurity

for the worker, he did not will the conflicts that arise in modern industry between labour and capital. But these phenomena have arisen out of what man has tried to accomplish; and they constitute conditions which influence human action and which bring fresh motives into operation.

It would follow from this that, wherever or whenever conditions change in such a way as to lessen the struggle for primary ends or be otherwise more favourable to values, morality should improve. It would be expected that crime would tend to diminish. Periods of unemployment, for instance, are recognized as tending to increased crime, while employment and prosperity tend to decreased crime. The economic conditions, the material comfort of the large mass of the population prevailing during the war show how material conditions can influence crime. It is true that the criminal statistics of war-time may be vitiated by many complicating factors; but that is probably true of most statistics. They do serve, however, to support the view that morality is dependent on conditions. But it is also necessary to bear in mind that these conditions are not merely material prosperity or material poverty. There are also the factors of the intensity of the struggle for prosperity and of the security or insecurity of the prosperity; there are climatic and atmospheric conditions, and so on. Unless all these factors are co-ordinated and made to operate in favour of what is desirable, the operation of one or more may counteract the beneficial results derived from an improvement in another direction, such as material prosperity.

§ 7.

Relativity of Morality and a Relative Ethics.

The close relation between morality and conditions leads to important consequences as regards practical and theoretical moral judgments and as regards moral rules or maxims. In virtue of that relation moral rules may be only relative and not absolutely binding. There may thus be possible a distinction between a relative and an absolute morality, and between a relative and an absolute ethics. What should

be and can be done under one set of conditions may not necessarily be what can be, will be, or should be done under other conditions. Human action will be qualified by the conditions under which it takes place, and by the degree of control exercised over conditions and the processes whereby conditions are created. If conditions change or can be altered, human action too may alter. Hence ethical theory, ignoring the connexion between morality and conditions, may easily fall into error. It may assume that certain phenomena and conditions are permanent and fundamental features of human life ; and then elaborate a system of moral rights and duties, as if that system were also permanent and fundamental. Or else it may assume that a system of moral rights and duties is valid irrespective of all conditions, or is valid for any conditions that may exist. On this ground it is held that moral rules are absolutely binding and to be complied with regardless of circumstances ; and because it is assumed that man ought to and can comply with them, it is maintained that a man can be good no matter what may be the circumstances under which he lives or what may be the character of those with whom he must associate. If, on the other hand, man has to contend with numerous forces of a conflicting nature, all of which he cannot control, but some of which may thwart his action and defeat his end, it may become difficult to assert what is right and what is wrong and to assert that we can achieve something absolutely good. In place of an absolute good it would be possible to achieve only as much good as possible, a " best possible " ; and there might be need of compromise, mutual sacrifices, mutual give and take.[1]

The relativity of morality has its source in the causal implications of human action.[2] A man in acting may utilize certain forces or factors ; but what he can never do completely is to ensure the operation of these alone. In the absence of complete knowledge of the complex forces

[1] This is emphasized by Sterling P. Lamprecht in " Some Political Implications of Ethical Pluralism " in the *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. xviii, No. 9; also vol. xvii, No. 21. He however assumes that discord and antagonism are recurrent and certain ; and he bases his conclusions on this assumption. The present writer questions this assumption.

[2] As will appear later, not in the difference of ends pursued. Vid. chap. ix, 2.

and their operation, we can never be certain that other causes may not interfere with the operation of those which we have set in motion. This fact makes it difficult to lay down any general rule of action, for any such rule always implies a causal element. If we do follow the rule and attain the result desired, that success is due as much to the non-interference of other factors as to the following of the rule. The result may also be reached by employing other causal factors; and a rule may be formulated expressing this causality. The one rule may thus have no more binding a character than the other, and may be observed as well as the other. In these respects moral rules are relative. This relativity appears in another form. The means or forces which we employ to bring about a result may, by the very fact of their being set in motion, lead to effects or results additional or collateral to the result primarily in view. Hence we cannot proceed to secure an end as if it could with certainty be secured by itself alone. In deciding as to the value of an action we must consider total results—incidental results as well as the primary result. The absoluteness attributed to an end and to moral rules is often due to ignoring such collateral effects, or to assuming that none arise; and it would only exist if we could confine action to a closed system of conditions and thereby prevent collateral effects. This totality of results introduces a complicating factor in action. In view of the complex conditions under which human action takes place, in view of the conflicting interests and forces that come into play and that require to be taken into account, and in view of the different effects that may arise from an action, it seems that the only justification for an action is that it realizes the greatest possible good. Any situation with which an individual may be confronted permits of a greatest possible good; and it is obligatory upon him in such a situation to pursue that line of action which will secure a total result that constitutes the greatest possible good.

Consequently in our moral judgments we must bear in mind what is the situation in which an individual is called upon to act; and the point that has to be considered is whether he has taken that course leading to the greatest possible good. If he has not, his action has fallen short of

what it should have been. It is no doubt very difficult from this point of view to be sure whether our moral judgments are sound; for we cannot be always certain whether the greatest possible good has or has not been achieved. But it is the case that in actual life we tend to estimate actions in such a way. It is recognized that misjudgments are possible and that judgments may be recast in future years. Contemporary judgment is apt to be wrong; and a later judgment may reverse an earlier decision. The reason is that a later age can see the total result more clearly than the contemporary age can do. That the difficulty which men feel is one of making the best decision under the circumstances is abundantly shown by experience. It is seen in the consciousness which men have of being in the grip of some kind of necessity; and that consciousness arises from the interplay of conflicting forces which admit not of an "absolute best" but only of a "best possible" line of action. Given a certain situation, there may be various alternative means open; and it is obligatory for a person to employ those means open to him in the circumstances that will bring about the greatest possible good, or a good greater than would have existed if he did not act at all. If by not acting at all the total good, even though very small, would still be greater than what it would be if he did pursue a positive line of action, then it is obligatory for a person to refrain from acting under the circumstances. Such a problem, whether to act or not to act, can be solved in any adequate manner only by a very full and careful analysis of the circumstances, and by a probable, yet judicious, estimate of the influences that might come into play on the adoption of the various possible courses. The more exhaustive and extensive a person's knowledge becomes, the more likely is he to strike upon the best line of action.

§ 8.

Causal Element in Moral Rules: a Best Possible and an Absolute Good.

It has been assumed in the preceding argument that moral rules imply a causal element. A law or rule is a rule

of action, and action effects something; and there could be no compliance with a law or rule unless something were being effected. In spite of the Kantian doctrine and its influence, compliance with a law, in order to give meaning to the moral life, must achieve something distinct from and in addition to the mere compliance. It is this something along with all the other incidental effects of the action that must be considered in connexion with the question of the relation between goodness and circumstances. Considered concretely, the goodness of the good man must be admitted to lie in the production of a greater amount of good in the world than he finds in it to begin with, or at least in the maintenance of as much good as there was to begin with. Hence a man's goodness will depend on whether he has achieved as much good as possible under the circumstances; and the greatest good under the circumstances is expressible not merely in a consciousness of moral purity or rectitude, but in some definite state of objective existence. In this sense of goodness as the realizing of the greatest possible good under the circumstances, a man can be always good no matter what the circumstances may be; but he cannot be so in the sense of realizing an absolute good. In this sense of goodness a man can be good without necessarily "going under"; but in the sense that a man can be good only if he realizes an absolute good a man cannot be good, for the probability of realizing an absolute good is largely against him.

It is in the nature of the conditions under which human action has to take place that there is to be found the factor that limits the degree of the good realized or realizable. It is the limitations and the consequent necessity imposed by conditions that enable man to achieve only a greatest possible good; and it is because it is possible to realize only a greatest possible good under the circumstances that man is induced to make the plea that necessity knows no law. The source of the necessity is objective.[1] But from the point

[1] This is true even where much of the necessity seems to be due to human desire. We may want to achieve a result in a particular manner, e.g. to travel to a place as cheaply as possible. But such a desire has a reason due to circumstances.

of view of value the plea of necessity, though it is capable of explanation, provides no justification for an action. The real significance of the plea is that some end—generally a primary end—is threatened and that means must be employed to secure it; but the necessity may become still more pronounced in that a certain means may be, within the limits of human knowledge, the only means, and circumstances may tie men down to one particular means. The implied truth of the plea is that conditions set limits to the amount of good that can be realized and that an absolute good is not attainable; and the plea may, and from the standpoint of value must, give place to the defence that the line of action adopted brings about the greatest possible good under the circumstances. In this sense the plea is not false, except on the assumption that an absolute good must always be realized and is always, irrespective of conditions, realizable. If objective conditions can be controlled, and if man learns to control them, much of the necessity under which man labours may disappear; for it may then become possible to pursue not a greatest possible good but a result that is good without qualification.

Hence so far as human action is concerned, it is impossible to maintain that a certain means will always lead to a certain result; and thus no rules of action can be both universal and necessary. We can assert only a probable proposition that a certain means, under given conditions of a general character, may be likely to lead to a particular result. Rules of conduct cannot be universally and unconditionally binding. We can assert further that a total result constitutes not an absolute good but only a greatest possible good. We cannot, however, very easily maintain that a particular means, without regard to the actual circumstances, will always produce the greatest possible amount of good; for under a particular set of circumstances there might be open to us alternative means that would lead to a still greater amount of good. The denial of these propositions either ignores the connexion between morality and conditions, and assumes a perfect morality to be possible irrespective of imperfect conditions; assumes that all moral rules must be observed irrespective of conditions, on the ground that no result

could be achieved by the breaking of any rule to compensate for its breach ; or assumes that the situations which different persons have to face are on the whole similar, that there are normal types of situations in virtue of normal and uniform conditions, and that normally, therefore, rigid observance of moral rules will lead to the best result. All these alternatives ignore the complexity of the conditions under which human action takes place, the extent to which conditions of themselves change and create new situations, and the fact that the certainty and universality of moral rules which they imply are possible only under ideal conditions where the complexity of the real is known and controlled.

§ 9.

Possibility of Universalizing Maxim of Conduct : Kant's Theory.

If under what has been termed Relative Morality the universality and unconditional validity of moral rules is denied, the way seems opened for moral laxity and moral arbitrariness. This, however, is not the case. Arbitrary action and moral laxity, in the sense of rejecting moral rules and refusing to observe them, may take place and does take place even though these rules are regarded as absolutely binding. Such arbitrary action has its source in conditions and can be explained ; and so far as it is morally defective, the defectiveness can be accounted for by the nature of conditions. It is not the denial of the universality and absoluteness of moral rules by theory that induces moral laxity and arbitrariness ; but these latter arise because moral rules are found not to have the certainty, the universality, and the absoluteness attributed to them ; and theory has merely to explain and interpret this aspect of moral practice. The claims made on behalf of moral rules fail before the complex facts of reality ; for these provide motives for ignoring the rules. Nor must the failure of the rules to justify their claims be understood to mean the disappearance of moral obligation. In their place there still remains the obligation to effect the greatest possible good under the circumstances. "Employ out of the different factors at

command that factor or complex of factors which will effect the greatest possible good," is itself a moral rule or law, expressing moral obligation ; and though not saying definitely what should be done in any given case it is none the less binding. It is the most general rule of a universally binding nature that can be formulated within a relative morality. Hence the line of action to be followed must be a matter of individual judgment based on the actual situation ; and the reason of the particular line of action adopted may not be capable of universalization. What are right means at one time, and under certain circumstances, may not be the right means at another time and under other conditions, since they may lead to a quite different result. The action of each individual must be judged relatively to the situation in which he is placed and to what is possible to him in that situation. The individual thus cannot lean upon the props of moral rules.

The difficulty that arises is one due to the tendency to imitate. If one individual, under certain conditions, ignores certain moral rules in order to secure a greater good than he would by observing them, other individuals might copy his example, ignoring the important qualifications arising from the nature of the situation. The fact of possible imitation regardless of the difference of cases is no doubt one reason why strict observance of rules has been demanded. Example is very powerful ; and some device must be employed to check its possible moral consequences. The device of universalization is particularly employed in the administration of law where the necessity of uniformity is very great for the purposes of State-control. The device is adapted to the general and uniform character of State-action ; and the latter is peculiarly unfitted to meet the complexity and the differences of individual cases. Hence, in the administration of law, stress is laid upon the consequences that would arise if all were to do such and such a thing ; and that is simply to accept as the test of action the possibility of universalizing the maxim of action. There are many features in Kant's theory [1] which suggest that in his interpretation of

[1] E.g. Moral Law as a command, a categorical imperative, which requires unconditional obedience in spite of contrary inclinations (cf. the sovereignty of the law of the State) ; self-legislation in a kingdom of ends, etc.

morality he was under the influence of the political analogy. In consequence, he transferred to moral law the universality attached to a political law, without making allowance for the differences between morality and political action. The fact that he makes universality of the maxim of action turn upon the principle of contradiction does not invalidate this criticism. He treats morality as a matter of abstract reason, eliminating all elements from morality except reason; and the factors thus eliminated might just lead to a complete change of theory if their rôle in human action were interpreted in concrete terms. Instead of emphasizing the possibility of universalizing maxims of conduct, it is much more important to point out the consequences that would arise from a particular line of action.[1] Universalization rests on the assumption that every one would be likely to act in that way; but this is highly improbable. Tests of moral action cannot be formulated on improbabilities. People imitate each other because they have a motive for doing so. They do so because that line of action will secure certain benefits not otherwise obtainable. But the fact of all pursuing that line of action may be just a condition which will prevent the attainment of the advantages it is expected to bring. Hence actions may contain within themselves factors which will provide a motive against wide-spread similarity of action; and there is accordingly no utility in basing arguments upon the universalizing of action.

These difficulties of relative morality are due to the connexion of morality with conditions. The imperfect control exercised over conditions renders it impossible to formulate general rules of morality. Greater control over conditions will enable these difficulties to be removed; and an absolute morality may then be evolved. From the obligation to employ those factors which in any situation will effect the greatest possible good, there issues the obligation to devote one's self to increasing human knowledge and human control over the conditions of life, so that an absolute good may be achieved. On this basis it may be possible to formulate moral rules that will be binding, because containing the guarantee of leading to the result they imply; and they

[1] Vid. Venn, *Empirical Logic*, pp. 570 ff. Ed. 1889.

will contain this guarantee because based on laws of nature and on the control of the conditions under which such laws of nature are valid. It is only if this is so that universality will attach to moral rules. Their universality will rest on the fact that they fit into the nature of the real. Moral rules will imply physical uniformities, and their relation to human action becomes analogous to the relation of physical laws to mechanical action. In this way it becomes possible to ground morality in the nature of reality, and thus to save the objectivity and bindingness of morality.[1]

[1] Reference may here be made to Kant's effort to save the *a priori* character and synthetic nature of the moral law. The validity of his attempt to explain the *a priori* and synthetic character of scientific judgments is not for the moment raised; but assuming that to be explained, it becomes easy to show how the moral law, on the above theory, can be *a priori* and synthetic if scientific laws are so. Moral laws derive their character from scientific laws; and are additional causal judgments expressing the means to a particular result of a certain kind, viz. a good result.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROBLEM OF VALUE

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER IX

THE PROBLEM OF VALUE

§ 1.

Nature of Problem: Ethical Norms.

The problem of value is the central problem of ethical theory and it is the most difficult. It is the central problem, since human action involves mechanisms which can be investigated exactly in the manner adopted by the natural sciences, and which may be utilized for either good or evil ends. Thus, for instance, the psychological nature of man —emotionally or intellectually—may be enlisted in the service of good or of evil. The discoveries of modern science may be employed for destruction and death as well as for furthering human welfare. Hence, given the existence of various mechanisms capable of producing various ends, indifferently good or bad, the question that arises is what are the ends for which the mechanisms are to be employed or for which they should constitute a basis. What are the qualities which natural phenomena and conditions should be made to support, how are the qualities to be selected from the mass of qualities that exist or may exist, and how are decisions between them to be reached? The problem of value is at the same time the most difficult; and it has led to many diverse theories which seem to cancel each other. So unsatisfactory is ethical theory in this respect that doubts have been expressed whether the problem is soluble at all, or whether any solution can be anything more than a personal matter; and the consequence would be that there could be no science of ethics.

The problem of value is generally regarded as turning upon the discovery of an ethical norm or standard. The

idea of an ethical norm or standard may, however, be a source of confusion; and unless the problem is clearly formulated, there will not be much hope of a true solution. The idea of value appears in economics; but it is necessary to guard against attempting to interpret moral value on the same lines. "All determination of value presupposes a standard of valuation which may be objective or subjective. It is objective when what is valued is compared with something else that is given equally objectively. For example, the value of money is measured by the goods which can be obtained by means of it, or a unit of value is arbitrarily adopted and all values are determined by reference to it. Just as any particular length can be represented as a multiple of a metre, so also any value can be represented as a multiple of such a unit of value." [1] Though the standard of value in morality must be in some sense objective, such a view of the standard does not meet in any adequate manner the problem of value as it appears in morality, and is apt to be misleading. A unit of length is itself a length; and hence different lengths admit of comparison. In the case of economic values a common basis for comparing money and goods is found in the idea of utility; it is respective utilities that admit of comparison; or if the idea of utility is not admitted because of the desire to reduce economics to wholly quantitative terms, money and goods can be expressed as ratios of each other, and a unit of value can be found on this basis.[2] The problem of moral value, however, is more complicated. It involves not merely the question of comparing different values, as is the case when we have to make a choice; but it involves also the question of deciding what value *is* and what value does attach to any particular end or course of action. Before we can compare different values, we must have the different values, just as before we can compare different yellows we must have the various yellows before us. Herein lies the source of one of the greatest difficulties in moral practice and theory; for there

[1] Külpe, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, p. 277.

[2] This must not be taken to mean an acceptance of this idea of a standard. The interpretation of a moral standard given in the following pages would, in the author's opinion, necessitate a reconsideration of the idea of a standard in economics.

is considerable difference of opinion as to what is and what is not valuable, and what is the degree of value of that which is admitted to be a value, while there seems no means of deciding between the respective claims of each.

Difference of opinion seems to drive us back upon the view that moral values, like economic utilities, are merely a matter of individual preferences. "Social purposes," says Mr. Cole,[1] "are the raw material of social functions, and social functions are social purposes selected and placed in a coherent relationship. This selection cannot have a purely scientific basis; for it is a matter of ends as well as of means, and depends upon individual standards and the kind of social life which the individual desires. Thus at this, as at every other fundamental point of social theory, we are driven back upon the individual consciousness and judgment as the basis of all social values. Mr. Colvin, of the *Morning Post*, regards one kind of social life as finally desirable and I another. There is a sense in which I believe most firmly that I am right and he is wrong; but social theory cannot reconcile that fundamental difference between us which is a difference of ends, though it may clear away misunderstandings." Whereas in economic life individual differences as regards preferences do not cause a vital deadlock, but only make the mechanism of economic life more complicated, yet capable of adjustment at the same time, in morality the need of agreement is much more important. Differences of opinion as regards values tend to bring about conflicts and to create serious disturbances in the moral life.

§ 2.

Nature of "Ought" and its Relation to Existence.

Efforts have been made to formulate a single standard of value which is always binding upon man, and by reference to which particular values may be determined. These efforts have not been for practical purposes very successful. Pleasure, happiness, well-being, duty, self-realization, have all been put forward as the value which is to determine human action; but they have been marked by failure. To seize

[1] Cole, *Social Theory*, p. 54.

upon one thing as desirable, and to make it the centre of a party programme or of a practical policy, may be a condition of achieving success; but it does not follow that the result achieved is on the whole the best, nor does it mean that such an end is the standard of value. The nature of conditions is such that the achieving of a certain end cannot be considered merely from the point of view of that end, for it implicates many other factors.[1] There is a danger that such will be attempted, and it is indeed attempted; and the assumption is that the nature of the conditions of human life, or the structure of society, is such as inevitably ensures the production of the one result or the supreme desirability of achieving that result. Reality is so complex as to implicate many different ends, a large number of which may be desirable; and most of the so-called standards of value and most of the so-called ideals by which men measure the worth of the actual are each only one desirable thing out of many desirable things. These many desirable things may be of the most varied nature and structure, but they all agree in being good or desirable. They all agree in being things or qualities of things or existences that are brought about, or are capable of being brought about, through the instrumentality of various factors or causes. It is in consequence a fallacy—an over-simplification of the real—to select one desirable thing from among many, to make it the standard of value, and to make reality subservient to its production alone. The problem of value is not that of finding an end or object which should become the sole object of man's activity, and which has supreme value over everything else; but it is that of finding some basis in experience for value, of enumerating a list of values, of arranging them in a class, of showing how values are dependent on conditions for their realization and how that realization may be promoted or checked.

Two aspects of the problem of value arise out of this. The first is concerned with what may be called the "technique" of morality, or with the relation of values to the mechanism on which their realization depends.

[1] The Christianizing of non-Christian peoples may be held by some as the end to work for, but serious evils may arise. So, too, with temperance reform.

Whenever a judgment of the nature " such and such ought to be done " is made, there is implied the belief that certain causes are present and will lead to an effect of a particular kind. It is here where the source of so much difference of moral opinion and belief is to be found. It may be questioned whether the difficulty which for Mr. Cole lies at the basis of social theory is due to differences of ends, or whether the ends which individuals ultimately desire and regard as desirable are so different as to create difficulty. The difficulty rather turns upon the means which are to bring about the ends desired. It is one of organization, one of devising means to attain certain results, and ultimately of devising a system of means and ends within which all desirable ends can be attained without conflict, and without some having to be sacrificed or without some being realized at the expense of others. It is this difficulty that gives rise to difference of opinion. There may be difference of opinion as to the steps to be taken to attain certain ends, because of the causal implications of these steps. There may be difference of opinion as to whether all desirable ends can be achieved and hence as to which are to be achieved. This assumes a necessity of selection ; and that again is either to assume that conditions are and must remain such as to necessitate a selection, or to ignore that the necessity may arise from conditions that are changeable, and may disappear when they are changed. Under certain conditions, for instance, the most desirable social organization might be one which makes every citizen an efficient soldier ; the same conditions might lead others to regard as the most desirable social organization one in which there was self-government of the workers in industry. Under certain conditions the most desirable social organization might be regarded as one in which everyone could find work ; under different conditions it might be regarded as one in which only the most skilled should be given the honour of working. These differences of opinion do not touch the question of what is ultimately desirable nor the question whether the choice must be made or whether it is dependent on conditions. The desirability of making every citizen a soldier refers only to a means ; and it may disappear if the means

were no longer necessary. The desirability of being provided with work rests upon the fact that work, under the present social organization, is a condition of the distribution of the means of livelihood The complexity of conditions makes it difficult to decide as to what means should be employed to bring about certain results, and it makes it also uncertain what results particular means will effect. Hence there is room for a great variety of opinion in connexion with moral and social action, and for a considerable amount of conflict and bitterness.

The second aspect is concerned with the relation between values and existence. Morality does imply a contrast between what is and what is not but should be.[1] Values are what " ought to be." This implies that values are capable of existence ; but if they do not exist but can exist and should exist, they must be a potentiality of what exists. They can emerge from what exists or supervene upon conditions brought into existence, just as electricity can be " made " from what exists. And just as electricity may come into existence through the ordinary processes of nature operating under natural conditions, as well as through the deliberate efforts of man, so too may values be realized through the processes of nature working without human interference, as well as be realized through the deliberate efforts of man. The material things and forces of nature can be manipulated by man so as to bring about values ; the latter emerge from what exists as results of factors or causes operating naturally or according to natural laws ; and hence so far as man deliberately tries to bring about values, his success will depend on his knowledge and control of material things and forces, and hence will be limited ultimately by the structure of the real. This is seen in the case of the ideals which influence human action. Ideals are sometimes declared impracticable, and frequently end in disappointment to those who entertain them. The reason is that they are not based on a recognition of the causes or conditions that are operative ; and such recognition is necessary if they are to be achieved. We may

[1] This must not be taken to mean that " what ought to be " can never fully " be," as if there must be an impassable gulf between the two. Morality does not cease though the " what ought to be " becomes " what is."

envisage an ideal world in which only the desired and the desirable exist, and we may picture people living in this world and seeking the good; but unless this world is brought into relation with the real forces at work in human life, it will remain "in the air." Unless we know how forces operate and what conditions to create, we will never be able to cross over into our ideal world. Given this knowledge and the requisite control of causes and conditions, the ideal may be realized in actual life; and there is no reason to think that the ideal must somehow cease to be ideal when it becomes actual, except the assumption that the ideal always belongs to the future, never to the present, that it is something to be but never is. That assumption is due to a confusion of the distinction between the actual and the ideal with the distinction between what is and what is not. Hence the element of time is introduced, and the ideal is identified with the future or, as with some, with the past; or else the conclusion is drawn that the ideal can never be actual or that its realization is some "far-off divine event." The nature of the ideal, however, turns upon the distinction between the desirable and the undesirable; and the desirable does not cease to be desirable because it has been attained.

§ 3.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value.

It has been said that ethical theories have tended to oversimplify the problem of value by making one desirable thing the sole value. Hedonism, for instance, maintains not merely that pleasure is a value but that it is the sole value, and is the standard by which action must be regulated. Hedonism fails by reason of the fact that there are other desirable things besides pleasure; and this applies to all theories that would insist upon one single object. To this extent Pluralism is justified against Monism. The moral life involves first, various things or objects that are desired and that may be desirable; second, things that are means to the former and are desired because of their being such means, and that may be desirable because of this. This distinction is the basis

of the distinction between Intrinsic and Extrinsic values. The latter derive their value from their being instruments to the attainment of the former. It is sometimes maintained that this distinction is not very helpful and not quite valid, since any so-called intrinsic value may at any time be treated as an instrumental value. The difficulties of this view have been already discussed ;[1] and it is not denied that in present human action the distinction is not easily observable; but it is maintained that the failure to preserve in practice the distinction which is essential to give meaning to human life is capable of explanation. Conditions may lead to the turning of values into means. The production and creation of values has become a specialized affair ; men can enjoy these values only by making exchanges with each other; everything induces men to keep in view the exchange-ability of what they create or produce. The enjoyment of values is conditioned by the offering of something in exchange, and by the amount that can be offered. Values like those involved in art, music, literature are made subservient to the attainment of primary ends like food, clothing, and shelter. The whole difficulty turns upon the fact that primary ends must be attained as a prior condition of the attainment of other, even though higher, ends. If the primary ends or values were assured to all, as the progress of scientific invention during the last century or so suggests to be possible, man's creative activity would be released from the necessity of producing values for exchange, and would be directed to realizing values for their own sake.

The distinction between Intrinsic and Extrinsic Values leads to certain things being placed in one group as those which are desirable for themselves ; and to others being placed in a second group as desirable, because of their efficiency in bringing about what are in themselves desirable. The first group constitutes " the good," and comprises all ultimately desirable things which thus form a class, the property that enables them to be formed into a class and that is characteristic of the class being the property of desirability in themselves. The question may now be raised and answered, whether

[1] Vid. chap. vi, 3.

"the good" is a consistent whole. "The good" does not consist of things that are causes; it is a class of things that are good. These things may have causal qualities in addition to their quality of goodness; and they may on that basis be otherwise classified; but these causal qualities must not be confused with the value-quality or value-aspect of things. Hence things, in so far as they are values or are good, do not conflict with or stand in opposition to one another. "The good" is a consistent whole in a sense analogous to that in which a class of coloured things is a class and a consistent whole. Hence the conflict or opposition that is apparently found in experience in connexion with values must be otherwise explained. Values have to be realized; and they depend for their realization upon conditions and causal factors. It is here where the source of the seeming conflict between values is to be found. Hence the unity of the good is to be effected; and it can be so through control of the mechanisms on which the realization of values depends. Opposing and conflicting forces may prevent the realization of some values and bring about a seeming struggle between values for realization, or a struggle between the desirable and the undesirable for realization. So long as such sources of conflict continue to exist, the unity of the good will not be effected. What is desirable may have to be sacrificed for something else that is desirable, though the one may have no greater claim than the other. Many things desirable in themselves are not attainable by people, because they are driven to pursue the means to such a degree that no time is left for achieving the ultimately desirable, while the means that are obtained with so much exertion prove insufficient for achieving much of what is ultimately desirable. There is thus introduced the necessity of selecting values that are to be pursued; and along with a selection there comes the idea of a scale of values and of an order of preferences. This idea serves to complicate and to confuse the problem of value. The necessity of selection, due to limitations in the conditions of human life and to imperfect control over conditions, is a disturbing factor in desire; for many factors which have no bearing upon the question of value come into play to determine action in a particular manner

or direction.[1] These factors may determine selection; but the reasons for selecting values are not reasons for their being values; and the order of preference as well as the fact of preference are not relevant to deciding degrees of value. If selection were not necessitated the seeming preferences would disappear; and the factors that influence the selection would cease to be of significance.

The second group are the Instrumental Values; and they consist of the various means which may be employed to achieve the good. Within this group come many of the values that have most commonly been insisted upon as the supreme moral values, such as duty, self-sacrifice, moral laws. Duty and self-sacrifice are included in this group because they are actions, and action is designed to secure an end. Self-sacrifice has been regarded as a duty both by ethics and by current moral opinion. That would suggest that it was of the essence of morality. This is to ignore the fact that the need of self-sacrifice has its source in conditions, and that these conditions may be alterable. Self-sacrifice, far from being essential to morality, is due to the fact that morality is only imperfectly realized; it means that the good is not realizable in its completeness, and that for some people at least the good is limited. The justification of self-sacrifice lies in the fact that it realizes under given conditions the greatest possible good; and thus self-sacrifice is only a means within relative morality. Self-sacrifice like other moral duties derives its value from what it achieves. The duty of obeying moral laws or rules is of the same nature; it is justified on the ground that it leads to the greatest possible good. The reason is that moral laws themselves belong to the group of instrumental values. Moral laws or rules are based upon beliefs regarding causes and effects; and they have in view certain existing conditions.[2] Their value lies in their being instrumental to the attainment of what is desirable and what is desired; and it is for this reason that they are desired and that there is a desire to secure their observance. They thus imply causality. Their

[1] E.g. the fact that one's friend or one's acquaintance does a certain thing influences one's decision in the same direction.

[2] Physical conditions, biological conditions, industrial conditions.

value rests on their validity; and their validity depends upon their expressing always real causality; and hence they rest to a very large extent on scientific knowledge. Moral laws or rules are not values in themselves, although they are frequently spoken of as if they were. There is a reason, however, for their being regarded as of very great importance; and it is that they are believed to be essential conditions for the preservation of corporate life, which is itself more desirable than a life of isolation and is also a source of additional values. Different persons are themselves individual agents; and their actions affect other persons and hence their attainment of what is desirable. A large number of moral rules or laws have in view this interdependence of persons, and they express conditions which persons, as a consequence of this interdependence, must observe. They all imply that certain factors lead to certain effects or that their observance will bring about on the whole the most desirable result.

§ 4.

Examination of Views that Source of Value is Reason, Will, or Desire.

The view that "the good" is a class of desirable things removes the problem of value from an inner subjective sphere to the objective world; and it is thus opposed to any view that finds value in reason, in will, or in desire (as a subjective process). It has been already argued that mind in all its phases is a mere blank and is unintelligible unless it is considered in relation to the medium within which it displays itself; and for that reason it would be hopeless to treat morality on the basis of a reason or will which prescribes rules and ends of conduct, or on the basis of a mental phenomenon like desire, apart from its relation to conditions beyond itself. Reason does no doubt play a part in moral action, but the part hitherto assigned it remains mysterious. Instead of its rôle being that of a legislative and prescriptive agent, uttering its oracular precepts and carrying out its task in a divinely mystic manner, its function

is that of discovering the tendencies of things with which human beings have to contend and of formulating rules of action on the basis of the conditions of human life. Its rules and precepts are not evolved from its own pure abstract essence but from a material with which human beings are confronted.

The rôle assigned to the reason in most ethical theories has been based on the assumption of a split in human nature. Reason has been represented as holding desire and the emotional nature of man in check and as the arbiter of value. It is assumed that the reason is a value and is infallible in its pronouncements. Its own mystic value attaches to its utterances. It is only because of this assumption that the difficulty involved in the belief that there is a cleavage in human nature can be got over. Though man has reason, yet values are not inevitably realized or pursued by man; and to meet this fact the blame is laid upon desire or man's lower nature. Man, it is argued, is not composed wholly of reason; and a defect lies in desire. Desire does sometimes, however, achieve the good; and when it does so, it is said to be because desire acts in accordance with reason. The theory is probably simple, but that it solves anything is not so obvious. It accepts the cleavage in human nature as a fundamental fact, and raises no question as to whether such a fact can be explained or is inevitable. It assumes that this split in human nature is a struggle between man's higher and lower nature, an inner psychological struggle having a moral significance; and yet it admits that desire does sometimes seek the good, so that desire seems of a double nature. The view which is taken of reason reminds one of a once-prevalent use made of God; He was a convenient means whereby seemingly insoluble problems could be solved or shelved.

The will has frequently been treated in a manner exactly similar to reason. The function of the will is to control instincts and desires; and from it there issues a law or command or categorical imperative. Here the will becomes the mystic source of value. Its imperative is unconditionally binding. This whole conception of will is difficult to understand and to defend. The doctrine seems to assume that

will is something distinct from desire. Yet we cannot "will" unless we desire; will in fact is a stage in the process of desire; and it is thus difficult to conceive of will as controlling or eliminating desire; to understand what is meant by saying that the will can determine what shall or shall not be pursued. It is quite generally recognized that the will itself may be bad as well as good, and is therefore itself on a level with desire. The control of desire by will would be very much a case of the blind leading the blind or of Beelzebub casting out devils. This difficulty is only avoided because the will is idealized and regarded as a source of inevitably sound moral judgments, as a source of values. The motive for such a view is clear. Amidst the uncertainty and the conflict of values it is very important to have some lamp by which to guide our feet, to have something upon which to fall back, otherwise man will be left in the dark without any hope of pursuing the good. But in spite of that the doctrine does not meet the difficulty. Since the will is only a stage in the process of desire, the so-called control of desire by the will is reducible to one desire checking or reinforcing another. As Spinoza maintained, one desire can be eliminated only by another desire.

If this is the case, then the problem of value is thrown back into desire; and a solution would have to be sought there. This is what is done by Hedonism, which bases itself upon the fact that human beings desire a particular thing, namely pleasure. But any such theory has to face the difficulties, first, that many other things are desired besides pleasure, and that they too would have to be regarded as good alongside pleasure; second, that desires and hence pleasures may be good or bad and that some basis must exist for distinguishing between them. Desire, accordingly, cannot provide a solution to the problem; it is much on the same level as reason or will; there is seemingly nothing in their nature that guarantees their goodness. This conclusion is in accordance with the view previously expressed that psychological factors are ethically neutral. Psychological factors are to be explained by reference to factors beyond themselves; and this implies that the problem of value is removed from an inner mental sphere to the

medium within which mental activity takes place. Ethical theory, for instance, has tended to lay stress upon the desiring and to seek value in the desiring; and for that reason it has tended to regard value as having its source in mind, and to regard desire as an expression of a mental character. Assuming that desire has a mental cause, since it is a mental phenomenon, ethical theory has been led to maintain that the individual could help desiring and could therefore control his desires. On the other hand, if one desire can be controlled only by another, and if desire is a function of stimulus, the ultimate control lies through stimuli; and what value attaches to desire is dependent on conditions.

§ 5.

Distinction between Question of Source and Question of Nature of Value.

In the attempts to find value in reason, will, or desire, there is involved a misunderstanding of the problem of value. They have confused the question of the nature of value with the question of the origin or source of value. In saying that reason or will controls desire they imply that the reason or the will is a source of value. A theory that says there is nothing good but the goodwill, or a theory that maintains that reason prescribes ends to be pursued, or one that maintains that duty is obedience to a law of reason or will, has not answered the question what value is but has merely stated that what the reason or the will prescribes is good. It has thereby assumed that whatever the reason or the will prescribes is good; and that in some way it is good because prescribed by the reason or the will. This seems to make values depend upon their issuing from a particular source; an answer has thus been given to the problem of value by assigning value to a certain source. There still remains the question whether the nature of value can be expressed in some other terms. The confusion of the two questions underlies the objection to a purely inductive ethics. The ground of the objection is that the element of value cannot be derived from matters of fact or from purely natural

factors. This is the objection raised against all ethical theories worked out on naturalistic lines. It is the rock on which are wrecked most theories that would pursue the course of natural science. The whole difficulty involved in this objection rests upon the question of origin. It is assumed that the nature of value will somehow be affected if it is supposed to have one source rather than another.

As a matter of fact the question of origin or source does not affect the question of the nature of value. The belief that it does is due to the assumption that a thing or phenomenon is to be identified with the conditions out of which it arises. And the nature of science, as has frequently been remarked already, does not give any justification for such a belief. Thus, though value may be shown to emerge on the basis of certain conditions or factors, that value must not be supposed to be the conditions or any one of the conditions. Hence to find the source of value in reason or will meets the problem of value no more effectively than to find its source in natural conditions, since in either case it still remains true that value is something distinctive and unique, and is not to be considered as being a transformation of some natural quality. The motive behind the efforts to ground values in reason or in will is to save the uniqueness of values; and their uniqueness is saved by assuming that reason or will is the bearer of values, and that therefore values do not arise from anything but the bearer of value. This uniqueness of value can be saved, however, also on naturalistic lines by the view that, though values rest for their emergence upon natural conditions, yet they are not transformed natural qualities. In other words values are unique and do not spring from anything other than themselves; and any ethical theory must recognize and admit this.

This might be brought out more clearly by a consideration of two distinct questions. The one is, What should be? The other is, What should be done? The first refers to the ends towards which activity should be directed; and it is implied that such ends have a certain ethical quality, namely goodness. The second refers to action, and concerns the means which are to be used for attaining ends that are good. Now any theory that brings back the problem of value to

reason or the will must be prepared to maintain that the reason or the will can show, not merely what should be done, but also what ends are desirable. But, as a matter of fact, the reason or the will is not even a sure guide to what shall be done, much less to what ends are desirable. It may come to give more and more effective help as regards what should be done; but it is doubtful if it can make much of the element of desirability or goodness of ends. The element of desirability is simply presented to it. When it endeavours to show why certain ends are desirable, it tends to do so by reference to consequences; but in this it still assumes the desirability or undesirability of consequences. Desirability is thus a factor beyond the reason or the will; and at most a factor which has simply to be recognized and accepted by the reason or the will. Because of this, if desirability depended on the reason or will, mistakes or errors might occur as much as they do in connexion with the interpretation of natural phenomena. The "ought" of morality has a two-fold meaning—a derivative and an ultimate. The derivative meaning refers to the means involved in an action; and reason may be able to prescribe this "ought." It is this "ought" which is signified in doctrines of the "categorical imperative." The ultimate meaning refers to ends, and reason cannot prescribe an "ought" in this sense. Such an "ought" is ultimate and must simply be accepted by reason. If it exists, it may be prescribed by something else than reason.

§ 6.

Definability of Good and of the Good.

The question discussed in this section turns more particularly upon the definability of the good. Efforts have frequently been directed to defining the good. This has been done in terms of pleasure, happiness, well-being, duty, or self-realization. A certain amount of confusion has entered into this discussion, and such efforts have in consequence been rendered futile.[1] Hedonism, for instance, has

[1] Vid. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, chap. i, A and B.

maintained that the good is pleasure or that pleasure is the good ; but this proposition is not the same as " pleasure is good." The latter proposition may be true, though the former is not ; the one is consistent with the fact that other things are good besides pleasure, the other is not. For this reason it is necessary to draw a clear distinction between " the good " and " good." " The good " is a class of things (not necessarily pleasure alone) which are good or to which we can attribute the predicate good. That is, " the good " is definable, and it is so by means of a quality " good." What is a good is the bearer of value. In this sense it might be said that the world is a good in so far as it has value. But though we have thus got " a good," there still remains a difficulty regarding " good " or " value." Moore[1] maintains that " good " (or value) is indefinable just as yellow is indefinable. The main object of ethics would then become that of arranging things in a class called " the good," and of giving reasons why this or that thing is thought to be good, why it is put into such a class and assigned a certain position relatively to other things within that class.

This view suggests two points. In the first place, if good is an ultimate and indefinable quality like yellow, can reasons be given for regarding a thing as good ? We cannot give reasons for regarding a thing as yellow ; we can only see it ; and if a person is blind to a certain colour, there is no means of making him acquainted with that colour. It is true that there is the spectrum, and that colours are arranged in a series ; but this fact does not exactly meet the difficulty. No doubt we could point to a certain part of the spectrum and say to the colour-blind person that that is the position of yellow. But the position of a thing is not the thing itself ; and to be acquainted with the position of a thing is not to be acquainted with the thing itself. By means of positions alone within the spectrum no idea of a colour could be conveyed to a person who did not see that colour. Though a person could see orange (assuming he was sensible to the yellow in the orange although he was not sensible to yellow itself) and could also see green, yet he could not

[1] Moore, *Principia Ethica*, chap. i.

from these become acquainted with yellow, if he were blind to yellow. It might be true, however, that if the series were a series of yellows, and if a person were blind to one of the yellows, such a person could from its position within the series have an idea of what that yellow was.

In the second place, science is not satisfied with merely accepting yellow as something about which nothing more can be said or need be said. It proceeds to relate different colours by expressing them in a common denominator—namely, magnitude and rate of vibrations; and in virtue of this it can explain the position of a particular colour in the series of the spectrum. It is thus possible to have a scientific treatment of colour, although science can never show why a colour—say yellow—is just what it is; for light-vibrations are not the colour. The question might thus be raised whether, in spite of good being a simple ultimate quality, a scientific treatment of "good" may not be possible after the analogy of colour. This, however, suggests a difficulty. Is "good" to be regarded as a quality after the analogy of colour with varying colours and shades of colour, or is it to be regarded after the analogy of yellow with varying shades of yellow? This would depend upon what colour was taken to be—whether it was taken to be a class of colours or a quality common to different particular colours. In either case some common feature is implied, and it is somewhat difficult to say what that quality is. In order that colours may be classified they must have some common quality in virtue of which they are classified, while on the other hand colour itself may signify that common quality. The analogy of this question with the question of value shows how it may be difficult to discover what value is. If colour is taken to mean a class of colours, then it would have its counterpart in "the good," which is the class of particular goods; and the quality "good" in virtue of which these particular things are grouped in a class corresponds to the common quality underlying individual colours. If colour is taken to mean that common quality itself, then it would have its counterpart in the quality "good" or "value." It is true that colour as a class of colours, rather than any particular colour, would be an analogy more con-

sistent with the fact that " the good " comprises many things that are good but that are otherwise disparate, since colour would comprise many different colours that are quite different and are not merely shades or degrees of one colour.

In the case of colour, science explains the various colours by the idea of light-waves of different lengths vibrating at different rates. But there is the additional fact that all the colours have a common mode of being experienced; for light is a phenomenon perceived by a particular sense-organ. This common mode of being experienced provides one basis for classifying different qualities; and the further explanation in the common term of light-vibrations rests on this common mode of experience. At the same time it must be noticed that such explanation presupposes acquaintance with colours; does not " explain away " colours; and will not of itself enable one, who has not seen a colour, to know what that colour is. Is it then possible to give an analogous treatment of " the good " and of " good "? Such a treatment would not deny the uniqueness of value as a quality and therefore its indefinability; but it would rest on the fact that no definition could convey to any one the nature of value, and that, apart from experiencing values, the nature of value could not be understood. The task would then be that of finding in human life some factor with which value was always correlated, some mode of experience common to all values; and of linking up this common mode of experience with objective conditions.

§ 7.

Possibility of Relating Desire and Value.

It has already been argued that it is necessary to give up the idea that a standard of value in the ethical sense is to be understood after the analogy of a unit of measurement.[1] We cannot very well hope to reduce ethics to such a position as that of saying that one line of action has six units of value, while another has five. Morality, being a matter of action,

[1] Vid. § 1 of this chapter.

is too complex to be simplified to such a degree; it moves within the complex real, and takes place with reference to complex situations, implicating a host of different factors. The scientific treatment of colour does not regard one yellow as being twice as yellow as another, or as containing two units of yellow while the other has three. No unit is in such a case taken; and it may be so too in the case of moral value. Yet we do speak of an object being more yellow than another; we speak of brighter and darker yellows; but throughout yellow is taken as something given; and what is measured and is measurable is not yellow or any other colour but a different type of phenomenon that forms the basis of colour. Similarly, the value-quality in morality may be regarded as something given; we may speak of one value being greater or higher than another, without in any way implying that the values are measurable in terms of any unit of value or in terms of each other; while if anything is measurable at all, it may be a different type of phenomenon or factor that is implicated in value. A standard of value does not help us to decide what value is or whether anything is a value; and there is no standard of value except the value-quality itself. But the way is thereby left open for a consideration of the factors which lie at the basis of value.

One factor which lies at the basis of value is desire. In finding a place for desire we are not maintaining that desire is a unit of value, in terms of which values are to be measured; nor must it be supposed that we are maintaining that value depends on desire or that something becomes a value because it is desired. But it may be maintained that desire constitutes a factor in experience that is connected with all values; and if, as has been already argued,[1] desire is conditioned by objective factors, a treatment of value somewhat analogous to the treatment of colour becomes possible. As regards the utility of such an interpretation a good deal could be said; it reduces ethics to a simple basis capable of being easily understood; it brings "the good" and the theory of the good into relation with the matter of experience, and it is probably this fact

[1] Vid. chap. iv.

which has constituted the strength of hedonism. Such an interpretation, however, is at first sight open to the objections that are urged against a naturalistic ethics, especially of the type of Utilitarianism. Ethical theory must recognize that morality is at once an imperative and an ideal "having binding force only when it is conceived, not as a subjective human illusion, but as issuing from a supersensible reality."[1] It is the necessity of recognizing this that has led to objections against basing an ethics on the mere fact of desire, that has led to emphasis upon the objectivity of value, that has led many to give morality a theological colouring, by insisting upon its basis in the Divine Will; and that led Kant to find the source of the Moral Law in a noumenal will or reason.

The fact that ethical theory is called upon to fulfil such a condition makes it difficult to assign a place to desire in any account of the good or of the desirable. Any attempts made hitherto to do so have had to meet fatal objections; and it is thus necessary for any new attempt to follow a fresh trail in order to discover a place for desire. And such a trail is found by way of the idea that desire is not the subjective and arbitrary phenomenon that it is frequently assumed to be. Its arbitrariness is capable of an explanation by reference to objective conditions. At the same time it is not implied that desire makes values or that things are values because they are desired. That is what hedonism has generally implied. Values, however, have been maintained to be ultimate qualities not reducible to anything else; and to be derived from natural phenomena in no other sense than that in which one phenomenon supervenes upon others that are in relation to one another. As has been pointed out, ethical theory does not differ in this respect from the natural sciences. The nature of science provides no reason for supposing that, on the basis of certain conditions, there may not arise a new type of phenomenon involving a unique feature like an "ought." Given objective values and an objective interpretation of desire, the problem of morality or human action becomes an objective problem. From

[1] Quoted from "Review of Oxford Congress of Philosophy," by Professor Hoernle, in *Phil. Rev.*, Jan. 1921, p. 64.

the point of view of morality or human action, desire is the causal factor in virtue of which values are realized through the medium of human beings. It links or connects values with natural processes ; and that connexion is effected by desire within human beings. Natural factors and forces operate through, and are concentrated in, the human organism ; and desire is a continuation of these processes and culminates in the realization of values. The failure of desire always to realize values must be explained in a manner analogous to the explanations given by science of the divergence between its theoretical conclusions and the facts. Science makes deductions from its standards or its formulæ (which are of the nature of standards), and frequently says that the facts ought, in accordance with the scientific formulæ, to be so and so. When it finds they are not so and so, it proceeds to find within its material an explanation of the divergence. Similarly, if it is maintained that there is a connexion between values and desire, an explanation of any apparent divergence between the two must be sought within the material relevant to human action.

CHAPTER X

DESIRE AND DESIRABILITY

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER X

DESIRE AND DESIRABILITY

§ 1.

Relation between Desire and Value.

The problem that issues from the preceding discussion is to formulate clearly the connexion between desire and value. The connexion that is implied is that desire is a process which will issue in the attainment of values, and that where it actually does not do so, an explanation must be sought in factors which thwart the process of desire and divert it towards results that are not values. Desire always seeks values, in the sense that desire is a process which issues in a result that is a value, and that its failure to do so is due to the operation of other processes, at the basis of which lie various natural forces. That desire is always directed towards values may thus be considered a proposition within morality analogous to the physical law of motion, that a body in motion will continue in uniform motion in a straight line unless interfered with by other bodies. If that is so, it provides an ideal principle or a standard that is operative within human action, and that, if not actually realized, is at any rate an ideal towards which human action is to be directed and which is to be realized.[1] It also provides a basis on which values can be considered; it gives a clue to what are the values. What is desired is a value; and values are what are desired. These are the propositions

[1] The problem of the morality of desire is thus made an objective problem, and value is linked up with reality. A way is opened for admitting the regulative and imperative character of morality. Only it is necessary to guard against assuming that this character can issue solely from a mind or will.

which require to be established; and any facts which seem to disprove them must be considered and reconciled with them.

§ 2.

Analysis of Desire and Consequences for Ethics.

It has been already maintained that the mental, apart from its conditions, is so bare and empty that it becomes an unintelligible blank. The same is true of the particular phenomenon called desire. The only mental factor is the desiring; and that, divorced from what is desired and from what rouses or stimulates desire, becomes nothing intelligible. Desire may be a very complex process; but all its variations, its emotional features, its checks and successes, can be understood only in reference to the conditions which constitute the medium within which the process takes place. But such a relation between desire and conditions or stimuli removes the arbitrariness that is supposed to characterize desire in virtue of its subjectivity. The calculability of desire may be difficult; but that may be explicable on the ground, not of its subjectivity and arbitrariness, but of the complexity of the conditions on which it depends. Desire is no more arbitrary than are the rise and fall of the mercury in the thermometer, or than are its rapid and unexpected variations. The scientist does not find the explanation of the variations of the mercury in the nature of the mercury but in a set of conditions quite different from the mercury itself, in objective changes in the physical environment, in changes in the conditions of the atmosphere. The question of the morality of desire thus becomes an objective one; it turns upon conditions and natural processes, not upon some inner or subjective force or tendency.

It has also been argued that the process of desire rests upon a more primitive process, and upon an interruption of this more primitive process. This process is of a natural kind involving the operation of natural forces and conditions and issuing in natural effects. The interruption of this process brings the phenomenon of desire into play; and the interval is filled up by an association between certain

objects and certain satisfactions, by an envisaging of the result or end, and by an effort to link up the result with certain means or causes. Desire and purpose both rest upon an objective system of causes and effects. Unless such an objective system were first in operation, the phenomenon of desire and purpose could not arise.[1] Such a view has several important implications. The connexion between desire and value is not a mere arbitrary one. Values are not made values by their being desired, and are therefore not a mere subjective creation or illusion. They no doubt satisfy desire; but they do so as much because they are values as because they are desired. It is not true that something is a value because of its being desired, as if the value were a consequence of its being desired, or were superadded to a thing when the thing was desired and did not exist or disappeared when the thing was not desired. This would be to interpret the relation between value and desire on the basis of a subjective theory of desire. Desire emerges from or supervenes on processes in which certain things or qualities have already come to have or to be values; and desire does not create that value but presupposes it. An individual in desiring simply recognizes a value that is already existent or that is possible of realization on the basis of certain factors. The connexion between desire and value has its basis in a process prior to the process of desire itself; and is not first established only when the phenomenon arises.

A second implication of such a view is that values are not dependent on will any more than on desire. The human will rests on a mechanism which does not itself involve the operation of will, but which marks out the general lines of voluntary action. Hence action that is willed has limitations set to it by the natural medium within which the will operates, and which is determined in accordance with natural law. The ends or purposes that are implicated in human action do not depend on the will; the will does not make them; they are presented to the will as an object to be pursued; and they are "willed" only in the sense that the individual starts a causal sequence which issues in these ends. These ends are embedded in processes of

[1] Vid. chap. v, § 7.

human life that are more fundamental than will. The objection that this is to make value an effect of natural causes, or to put value on a level with natural phenomena, rests on the assumption that value can have its origin only in mind or in what is mental. Æsthetic values, however, may be produced by nature as well as by conscious individuals; and the ends towards which moral action is directed may be brought about by natural processes as well as by the agency of human beings. In both cases conscious individuals utilize natural factors to achieve values; but the consciousness or mind of the agent is only one factor which operates in bringing about the existence of the value; it is not the sole factor; nor must that be supposed to mean that the value is mental or has its origin in mind. So far from will being a primary existent, in terms of which the operations of nature are to be interpreted, will presupposes the causal processes of nature, man's acquaintance with them, and man's imitation of these processes.

From a simple rudimentary basis a development of desire is possible. It appears fundamentally in respect of certain primary ends centering round self-preservation; and presupposes a certain degree of apprehension of the nature of means to ends and of the possibility of utilizing means to ends. The principle implied here is that experiencing a thing is not always in the first instance the result of desiring it; but that desiring it is the result of experiencing it. On the basis of what has been already experienced, things are desired; on the basis of what has been desired and experienced, new things become desired. This extension and growth of desire takes place through the influence of similarity and analogy. Things come to be desired because they resemble things previously desired and experienced. They suggest the same satisfactions. With man's increasing acquaintance with the complexity of nature, and with a greater variety of qualities in which the process of desire can find its natural termination, desire becomes directed towards a greater variety of objects. The struggle with nature to bring about the attainment of desire requires the accumulation of energy which has to be expended in effort to accomplish primary ends. Man becomes a reservoir of

energy which is utilized in mastering nature. That mastery at the same time increasingly tends to lessen the struggle ;[1] and where that happens the energy is liberated for fresh forms of activity. The latter find their material and goal in a rudimentary form within the activities directed to primary ends ; but in course of time, through various influences, these activities diverge more and more from their origin and become unique. Knowledge becomes a pursuit for its own sake as distinct from the aim of mastering nature for the attainment of primary ends. Art and literature, music and the dance, become unique forms of creative activity.[2]

§ 3.

Desires for Ultimate Things and Desires for Means.

Hence so far as desire for ultimate things is concerned it is not true that desires can be controlled or that they can be suppressed without possible danger. The truth of this has been obscured through a failure to distinguish between desires for ultimate things and desires for things as means. In a very large number of instances of desire there are reasons for desiring certain things ; and these reasons have their basis in the objective structure of reality in the form of means and ends. Human beings desire many things because the latter are necessary means to certain ends. If it were not for their possessing this character, they would not be desired at all. A thing is desired because of its causal efficiency ; its value does not lie in its being desired ; but it is desired because of its utility or efficiency as a means. Its value in this sense, its utility or instrumentality, attaches to it irrespective of desire and stimulates desire. Desire here rests on knowledge or a belief in the causal efficiency of things. Without some knowledge of or belief in their causal character we should not desire them. The means which in any particular instance will be desired will depend upon what means or causal factors are open for selection,

[1] In some cases it may be completely exhausted in the struggle ; and groups of human beings may never get beyond the struggle or die out in the struggle.

[2] Though, on account of the struggle for existence due to conditions these are quite frequently turned into a means to attain primary ends.

and upon the factors with which a person has most practical acquaintance or to which he has become most habituated.

Desire for ultimate things is quite distinct from the preceding form of desire. The nature of the latter, however, serves to show how intrinsic value can be, just like instrumental value, quite objective and not dependent upon being desired. But otherwise the value of the thing does not lie in its causal efficiency. There seems no reason discoverable why it is desired; it is simply desired; and an individual can say no more than that he desires it. Hence Mill, in defending his hedonistic position, appealed to this fact, and maintained it was impossible to get any farther than the fact that human beings desired pleasure. This implies that desiring is an ultimate fact. For the average individual this may be sufficient; but for theory it is unsatisfactory. The average person does not trouble about the idea of value; but theory must raise the question; and a theory which simply accepts desire as an ultimate fact, and declares that no farther justification is needed for maintaining that pleasure is and ought to be the goal of action, than that it is desired, seems to identify value with the desiring. Difficulties, however, arise on such a theory, and to avoid them it is necessary to carry the analysis of desire farther and to ground it in the objective world of nature. This provides the element of regulation and necessity which is requisite for and characteristic of human desire. On this basis value, though connected with desire, does not arise from desire. Nor does value primarily rouse desire, as instrumental values and causal efficiency in respect of ends rouse desire. Ultimate values are qualities of a result that issues from the process of desire and do not therefore cause the process of desire or stimulate desire. It is true that in developed experience we believe a thing to be a value or worth being striven for; but that does not necessarily imply that the value calls forth the desire. What it does mean is that a desire, otherwise roused, is given a particular direction. Through more primitive experiences we come consciously to associate certain objects and qualities of things with factors implicated in desiring—such factors as feelings and emotions; and we learn to mark out various

objects as the goals of desire and action. Because of the similarity of other objects and qualities to these, we regard them too as possible goals of desire and action, but all this does not mean the values stimulate desire. Our beliefs regarding, or knowledge of, things and their qualities direct action, the assumption being that desire will find its natural termination in these things as it did in the others.

Hence desire and value are closely connected; but the relation between them is such that the aim of morality is not that of crushing, suppressing, or controlling desire. It may, however, be a case of directing the process of desire. The idea of controlling or suppressing desire rests on the assumption that there is something defective in desire, that there is a possible element of evil in desire. The conclusion so far reached, however, is that desire and value are always correlated. They are not related in a causal way in the sense that desire is the source or cause of value or in the sense that value rouses desire. But what is desired is the desirable; and the desirable is what is desired. This relation is due to the fact that desire is an aspect of a process that terminates in a value. Desire and value are continuous. Hence desire provides a clue to values; and values can be arranged on the basis of what is desired, and classified accordingly. This implies an identification of the desired and the desirable. A thing is desired because it is good and it is good because it is desired. Can such reciprocity be established? It seems to be at once contradicted by the most obvious facts of moral experience; for that shows so very frequently a divergence between the desired and the desirable. It is possible, however, to reconcile this divergence with the conclusion based upon an analysis of desire and value; and thereby to confirm the truth of that conclusion.

§ 4.

Divergence between the Desired and the Desirable due to Complexity of Things and of Causal Series.

Things have naturally a considerable degree of complexity; and conditions of life have also become more complex through man's manipulation of things. This complexity

is a disturbing factor in the process of desire; and provides one explanation of much of the divergence between the desired and the desirable. The simpler the conditions of life, the less marked is the tendency of the desired to diverge from the desirable; and the more complex they become, the greater is the possibility of divergence. This divergence may take several forms. For instance, desire may be for one quality of a complex object or for one object in a complex situation. The other qualities of factors, however, implicated in the attainment of what is desired may have an important bearing upon the attainment of the desired quality or object. The desired quality or object cannot always be attained alone; and, hence, though it may be desirable, its attainment may implicate undesirable elements and elements that are not desired. This description covers a very large number of instances where the desired and the desirable seem to diverge. What is desired and the attainment of what is desired implicate elements which are not desired and are not desirable. The desired and the undesired, the desirable and the undesirable are involved together because of the complexity of things; and no means have so far been discovered of disconnecting the two in order that the desired and the desirable may be attained without the disturbing effect of undesired and undesirable elements. The problem would thus become a practical one, of giving effect to the identity of the desired and the desirable by acquiring greater knowledge of the properties of things and greater control of chains of causation. If this identity between the desired and the desirable could be secured in such a manner, a considerable part of the difficulty connected with the morality of desire would disappear.

It is owing to man's inability to isolate the undesirable and undesired qualities of an object from the desired and desirable qualities that desire has to be directed seemingly to the whole object; and because of this, desire seems to be directed towards evil. The drunkard, in desiring alcohol, does not desire all the results that arise from taking alcohol to excess. There are certain aspects connected with the taking of alcohol which he does desire and which, in the form of pleasure and exhilaration, are in themselves desirable;

but these aspects can be attained only along with others which no man would desire or regard as desirable. It is this fact which provides the basis for the controversy whether an action is to be judged by motive or by consequences. A reference to consequences is continually intruding itself into our ethical views and decisions and cannot be eliminated; but it is the ethical quality—the desirability or undesirability—of consequences that comes in for consideration and not consequences as merely natural results. We estimate the ethical quality of the totality of results. We condemn, for instance, the drunkard because of the misery and suffering that result, the assumption being that misery and suffering are undesirable as well as something that is undesired. What our ethical judgment, to be true, should imply is that these desirable qualities cannot be, so far, attained in that way and should not be sought in that way. Desire, as has been said, arises out of a more primitive mode of experience; and in consequence a particular quality may come to be singled out as the object of desire. The food that is sought and absorbed, in virtue of processes taking place within and operating through the medium of the organism, may have a pleasure-quality connected with it; and on the level of desire this pleasure-quality may become an object of desire for itself, and efforts may consequently be made to heighten or increase the pleasure in every way. An analogous instance is found in connexion with the function of sex. The sexual act is, in the first instance, a natural act determined by natural conditions. In human life the natural result of the sex-act—namely offspring—may, on account of certain circumstances in which individuals find themselves, be undesirable; but there may also be connected with the act features that are desired and are, considered by themselves, desirable. Hence means may be adopted to attain these desirable features while avoiding the undesirable natural results of the satisfaction of sex.[1] There is thus in such cases no

[1] There is implied here no justification of these means, for they may result in farther undesirable consequences. It has already been suggested that these means do not constitute the form of control of natural processes that is most effective for any permanent solution, though individuals, on account of their special circumstances and the limitations of existing knowledge, may have reasons for adopting them.

radical divergence between the desired and the desirable. The seeming divergence arises from the fact that the attainment of the desired and the desirable necessitates other effects which are undesirable, and which cannot with existing human knowledge be eliminated. The difficulty is that which is found in all relative morality; desirabilities have to be balanced against undesirabilities; and what must be sought is the maximum of desirability or the greatest good possible.

This feature of desire and the desirable characterizes almost every end that may be an object of human endeavour. It appears on a large scale in the case of a nation at war. Here an end that is desirable and is desired is pursued; but its pursuit involves many things and brings about many different effects that are not desired and are not desirable. The pursuit cannot be carried on without these things being implicated, since they are logically or causally linked up with the end directly sought and with the means to its attainment. The complexity of the real thus creates a serious difficulty for human action, and constitutes a condition in the attainment and realization of values. It necessitates the consideration of the problem of moral value from the point of view of complex wholes, and not from the point of view of atomic qualities or single ends that are in themselves desirable and that are by themselves alone attainable. A complex whole may implicate elements some of which are in themselves desirable and some of which are not so; and hence such a whole may have a value that is different from that of its individual constituents. The value of the whole may be lessened or the whole may be less desired because some of its constituents are undesirable. On the other hand, a whole, just because its constituents are all desirable, may be more desirable than one of these elements alone would be. An association or conjunction of qualities or of resultant effects may be a source of either added or diminished value, just as an association of individual human beings may be a source of increased or of decreased value, according as the individuals effectively co-operate or conflict with each other.

A possible means is thus presented whereby individuals are enabled to come to a decision as regards a line of action.

The complex whole has to be considered; and the desirable and the undesirable factors brought under review. Desire is always for the good or desirable; and the existence of complex wholes, which become more numerous and marked with the development of human life, comes to present a difficulty accordingly for desire and for human action. A desire, to refer to Spinoza's view once more, can be checked only by another desire; and so too one desire may reinforce another. It is the existence of complex wholes that brings about a conflict of desires. The latter apparently subjective conflict has its basis in an objective opposition between the desirable and the undesirable. Where a complex whole has only desirable elements, or has a very large number of such, desires reinforce each other; while the presence of undesirable elements means that there come into play desires to avoid these undesirable elements; and these desires tend to check those desires for the complex whole which arise because of the desirable elements in it. The conflict of desires is thus due to the mixture of desirable and undesirable elements in a complex whole. This mixture is ultimately due to man's incomplete control over natural processes, so that he is unable to isolate the desirable from the undesirable. There is, in consequence of this, a certain amount of difficulty in estimating the desirability of a complex whole; and individual differences of opinion may arise. This difference of opinion is not with regard to ultimate ends, but with regard to what is the most desirable under the circumstances. The complexity of things gives rise to a relative morality with considerable divergence of opinion.

§ 5.

Case of Deliberate Evil and Maliciousness.

Though it may be admitted that the complex nature of things explains to a very great degree the apparent divergence between the desired and the desirable, it may yet be maintained that there is a considerable number of cases which cannot be explained on that basis. There are cases of criminals who deliberately pursue a career of crime; and

there are cases of persons who deliberately endeavour to do injury to others even though they know it is wrong to do so. These seem to be obvious cases where evil is deliberately done. Persons see the better course but choose the worse. Hence once more we seem driven back upon an evil element or some defect in human nature. A consideration of such cases, however, may not justify the conclusion, for they may be capable of another explanation. In the case of a person who deliberately seeks to injure another it is necessary to bear in mind that such an attempt is not unmotived. It presupposes a certain amount of hostility or antagonism between the two individuals; and that antagonism has an explanation that is to be found in conditions. The effort to do injury to another is a reaction to some injury or wrong previously received or believed to have been received. There may also be pleasure in inflicting the injury and in seeing the suffering of the injured person. These facts seem to suggest a maliciousness or an evil disposition on the part of individuals. This, however, is largely explicable on the basis of conditions which render the life and means of livelihood of such individuals insecure, which tend to develop in them neurotic symptoms, which render them easily roused and unstable, and which throw them into opposition over primary ends. The consequence is that an act on the part of one individual, which contains the least suggestion of a threat to a primary end of another individual, is met with the strongest resentment. A secondary phenomenon that arises from this is that such individuals are continually on their guard against each other, and that comparatively minor matters of offence, even those which are purely accidental, are looked upon as serious and rouse bitter enmity. A doubt cast upon their physical prowess, an unfavourable comparison in any respect between them and others, and so on, is regarded as a vital threat. Conditions of this kind, when allowed to continue over a period of time, lead to these neurotic reactions becoming stereotyped and fixed.

It may be said that, though this may be an explanation, yet these reactions ought not to take place. But that is to ignore the extent to which human action rests upon

conditions. There arises once more the question how these reactions can be controlled, since such control is implied in the view that they ought not to take place. Control, it has already frequently been argued, can be effected only by influencing the conditions and so bringing fresh motives into play. It is necessary to remove the factors creating such neuroses. Morality is relative to conditions; and given certain conditions, human action of only a certain ethical quality is possible. Thus, in the case of deliberate infliction of injury upon a person, the most frequent motive is "to get even"; and the pleasure felt is not merely, if at all, over the injury and suffering; but it arises from the thought of "getting even." Now, the desire "to get even" is not necessarily evil; it lies at the basis of all civilized justice which is fundamentally the maintenance of a balance or of equal scales. The deliberate infliction of injury because of some hurt received is closely akin to primitive resentment and retaliation. Within that there is an ethical value, since it realizes a desired and desirable end; but the way in which it is realized is dependent on conditions. In view of contemporary conditions such a method is no longer desirable; on account of the greater complexity of conditions such a method is accompanied by additional consequences which are not desirable, and which when fully considered far outweigh the ethical value achieved. It is because of this fact that a deliberate attempt to inflict injury on one assumes an evil character. Hence this form of evil is also explicable on the basis of the growing complexity of the conditions of human life. As has already been argued, in even the highest forms of modern civilization there are still factors which persist and call forth reactions of a primitive or so-called instinctive type. These reactions, however, must be adapted as far as possible to meet the growing complexity of conditions and to realize the maximum of value. What was suitable in simple conditions may no longer be suitable in complex conditions; and because of this the attempt to "get even" may lead to other results of an undesirable kind. The evil element therefore lies in the means adopted to "get even"; and in considering this evil element we have to keep in view the extent to which

other means are open to an individual to find redress for an injury—such as processes of ordinary justice.[1]

Hence the apparent willing of evil is explicable on grounds which still preserve the identity between the desired and the desirable. The disturbing factor is the complexity of conditions through which the desired has to be attained. This complexity may lead to collateral results the ethical quality of which may diminish the desirability of a certain end. The totality of results must be considered. The difficulty that arises on this view is that there are two desirabilities: the end primarily sought, and the totality of results including the primary end. It is with regard to the first that the desired and the desirable coincide. It is in respect of the second that the desired and the desirable seemingly diverge. If the pursuit of an end involves features that are undesirable, it becomes the duty of a person to take this into consideration, and to act so as to realize the greatest good possible. It is seemingly here where our apparently deliberate wrong-doer fails. He does not endeavour to realize the maximum of desirability; and hence there seems to be a divergence between what he desires and what is most desirable. To fail in realizing the maximum of desirability, however, is not the same as a deliberate effort to do evil. That failure is due to conditions which impose limitations on what can be achieved. In striving to attain a desirable end conditions may provide motives for using certain means, but a person may not desire all the results that arise from the means employed; and in this case there would be no need to show the coincidence of the desired and the desirable. Or again, in desiring an end a person is under the necessity of accepting certain means and hence under the necessity of accepting the results that will arise from these means; but that is a different matter from desiring these results and employing means to bring them about. Thus the non-coincidence of the desired and the desirable is ultimately due to the disturbing effects of conditions; conditions make it difficult to attain the desirable wholly by itself, and they

[1] The argument has in view what is being achieved by the reaction on the part of the individual. We might go farther and maintain that the initial defect lies in the conditions which provoke such a reaction at all.

also bring into play various motives which diminish the amount of good attained.

§ 6.

Case of the Criminal.

The same conclusion will hold good in the case of the criminal, only the fact will be much more clearly seen. A distinction is to be drawn between the occasional and the habitual criminal. The case of the former is that of a man who employs some illegal means to attain an end which he desires—for example, food, clothing, shelter, sex-satisfaction. All these ends are desirable as well as desired; and the immoral element must somehow be connected with the means employed. The occasional criminal does not desire the means except as a means, so that his desire is ultimately not for what is evil but for what is in itself desirable. It is conditions that force him into the adoption of illegal means by closing all the legal avenues against him. The case thus becomes one of a struggle for means to primary ends; and in that struggle the higher values may be sacrificed. The primary character of many ends, conjoined with great difficulty in attaining them on account of conditions, is always providing motives to utilize other than the acknowledged right means to attain primary ends; and this fact accounts for many temporary lapses into crime.

The case of the habitual criminal is at first sight more difficult; but it turns upon the central problem as to how a criminal class has arisen and continues in existence. If a criminal class is once granted to exist in a community, it is easy to explain the making of habitual criminals. Persons are born and reared under the influence of criminal ideas and criminal examples; persons make use of the means with which they have most practical acquaintance or to which they have become most habituated. This explains why a person adopts stealing as a means to a livelihood or seems to prefer a career of theft even when a chance of work is offered him. What, then, has given rise to a criminal class? A criminal class has an origin and a growth; and, like everything else that has a growth, it comes in course of time to have a more definite or marked nature

than it at first possesses. Its origin is to be found in the fact that, as the conditions of life gradually became more complex, men were cut off from the means of obtaining the primary ends of life; and at the same time the conditions suggested a new method of attaining these ends, namely, by preying upon those who have the means to the primary ends of life. Herein lies the "malignancy" of the criminal class. The source of the trouble lies in a breach in the continuity of conditions whereby the activities of life and mind can be carried on. The channels within the medium through which vital and mental phenomena take place become stopped; and criminal activities are the pathological symptoms of the disorder. So long as such conditions continue, these activities continue; with the persistence of the conditions, the activities become more or less permanent; and they become identified with a special class of persons. The social reaction to this class or type serves to differentiate the class more clearly and to increase more effectively its solidarity; it helps the development of the class along lines of its own; and the formation by the class of its own modes of action, its own ideas, its own tradition, and so on. What began in an occasional and rare breach of accepted modes of action becomes intensified through conditions, and develops into "a way of life." Without implying that there is a full and exact analogy between the criminal class and a cancerous growth in the organism, the two are yet similar in certain ways. Just as the cancer has at its basis the same forces that operate in and through the organism, and just as it grows by means of the same forces, so what animates the criminal class is a desire for the same ultimate things which the moral individual desires. As the cancer grows with the continued obstruction of the forces within the organism at a particular point, so the continuance and intensification of certain conditions in social life help to swell the criminal class. Within a modern complex community there are always conditions providing motives of an immoral or criminal kind; and a criminal class, once in existence, tends to spread its influence and so to gain new recruits. The criminal class diverges primarily from the rest of the community in respect of the means which its members adopt to attain primary ends,

and which they are driven to adopt in the first instance by the nature of circumstances, though secondarily by example, habituation, and tradition.

§ 7.

Source of Evil in Objective Conditions.

Hence, in spite of apparent divergences between the desired and the desirable, the coincidence of the two can yet be maintained. The difficulty connected with the morality of desire does not, accordingly, require the assumption of a tendency to evil on the part of individual human beings. It can be solved on the basis of the complexity of the real and the imperfect control over this complexity on the part of man. Man need not thus be oppressed by the belief that he is endowed with desires that lead him to evil, or be depressed by the question why he should seek evil and what is contrary to his own welfare. It is this complexity, too, that provides an explanation for the common experience of disappointment on the seeming attainment of what was desired. This failure has given rise to the theory of a distinction between man's real good and his apparent good. If this means that a man may desire something that is not a real good, the distinction is not tenable ; since desire is always for the desirable. On this basis there can be no distinction between a real good and an apparent good. The true ground of the distinction is the fact that a man may be mistaken as to the thing wherein his good lies or is to be found or as to the means whereby it is to be attained. He may, for instance, desire pleasure and seek it in a certain object resembling one in which he has already experienced pleasure. But the resemblance may have misled him, and the object may fail to give the pleasure anticipated. In such a case a man is not desiring an apparent good nor is he mistaken as to his good ; but he is mistaken as to the nature of an object and hence as to the means whereby he seeks to attain his good ; and that mistake leads to his being thwarted in the attainment of his good.

The distinction, therefore, between things desired as means and things desired for themselves is important.

The difficulty arises from the fact that the process of desire, because of its implicating causal factors, control over which is incomplete, cannot be kept within a closed set of conditions so that the desirable and the desired can be made coincident. As it is, the process of desire falls within a great mass of factors which both tend to check desire and also to suggest the possibility of attaining desire more effectively and securely. Nature interferes to a certain extent with the coincidence of the desired and the desirable; and man himself, through the new mechanisms which he has evolved to attain the desired and the desirable, has also to a considerable degree unwittingly brought into play factors which tend to defeat his aim. It is in this complexity of factors with the conflicts involved in it that evil emerges. Evil has primarily its source in objective factors or conditions, and only secondarily does it appear to be a quality of desire. It originates in the struggle for means to desired and desirable ends; and this struggle itself originates in the fact that the conditions of life in part created by human activity set men in opposition to each other. The conditions favour some in the attainment of their desires and prevent others from attaining theirs. In so far as this is so, the conditions are themselves undesirable. The consequence is that the moral life assumes a competitive character; the desirable seems attainable by some only at the expense of others. Those who have attained what they desire fear their being deprived of it by those who have not; and the latter view the former with bitterness as the causes of their failure. Yet every reason which the successful can give for attaining their desires and the desirable is at the same time a reason equally applicable to the unsuccessful; and in contemporary arguments and disputes appeal is finally made not to the position that all have not an equitable claim to what is desired and desirable, but to the position that to give effect to that claim is not practicable or possible with the existing mechanism. Such a view implies that the value that can be realized in the world is limited and that therefore man must limit his desires. In other words, the implication is that there exists a gulf between human desire and the desirable on the one hand and the nature of reality on the other.

§ 8.

Realization of the Good and the Nature of the Real.

The question that therefore arises is, Is the real such that it will permit of an arrangement of conditions and natural factors that will eliminate conflict, the struggle for existence, and so secure the fulfilment of desire and the realization of values? It is quite common to hear the view expressed that the ills from which man suffers must be borne and that there is no royal road of escape. The assumption is either that a situation may some day be mysteriously provided, or else that the nature of the real presents a permanent obstacle to the realization of desire and the desirable. Men, therefore, in demanding the fulfilment of desire and the realization of the desirable are demanding the impossible. This belief is the basis of pessimism; and the opinion that a solution may some day be obtained is only a less extreme form of it. If there are any serious grounds for believing that human desires and what man regards as desirable are incapable of fulfilment because of the nature of reality, then there can be no escape from pessimism. The *raison d'être* of man's activity, and hence the goal of his life, disappear. In virtue of the nature of the present conditions of human life single individuals or even groups of individuals may have justification for pessimism; but that would not justify a universal pessimism based on the structure of reality. On the other hand, if universal pessimism is not justified, a control of conditions is admitted to be possible; and there may then cease to be any reason for particular instances of pessimism.

Against universal pessimism there is, in the first place, the fact that man enquires hopefully into the causes of things and that such enquiry has already met with considerable success. Man has learned by investigation that to a very great extent things and events can be controlled through their causes or conditions; and if things were necessitated or bound to happen there would be no motive for seeking out causes. Scientific experience thus far does not justify the conclusion that man's power of discovering and controlling

causes stops at a particular point, or lies only in certain directions and not in others. Pessimism would accordingly have to take its stand upon a negative basis like ignorance, rather than upon any positive basis of actual knowledge. But in the second place an analysis of desire provides a more definite refutation of pessimism. Pessimism assumes a discontinuity between the process of desire and chains of natural causation. If, however, desire arises out of a more primitive process of a natural kind, and still retains features of this natural process, desire in its origin is continuous with processes of nature and still remains continuous. The natural causation involved in the natural process still remains in desire. However different and remote from their natural origin certain desires may seem to be in virtue of intellectual development, the natural origin implies that desire is yet one with the general structure of reality, and any obstacles that have arisen to the fulfilment of desire are due to the increasing complexity of the conditions of life, arising from human interference with nature and from imperfect control over all the factors brought into play.

§ 9.

Explanation of Resistance to Improvement.

There still remains one difficulty to be considered. It has been maintained that the failure to realize the desired and the desirable is not due to the ultimate structure of reality, but to man's inability to control the complexity of things so as to make them subservient to the attainment of the desired and the desirable. It has also been maintained that desire is always directed to the good or desirable ; and this fact would explain how progress is at all possible. There is present in human life a force leading towards the good ; and any view which holds that there is an evil element in human nature must always have difficulty in showing how moral improvement is to be effected ; for on such a view improvement is dependent on a desire for the good being aroused. If an evil element is present in human nature, it will always be a check to the creation of such a desire.

But now the proposition that men desire what is desirable seems to be at once contradicted by facts. Why do we see such determined efforts against improvement? Why do we not see a more determined effort towards improvement?

In the first place, one of the main difficulties is the devising of means to the desirable. Here the absence of accurate and full knowledge leaves room for difference of opinion and for much belief regarding causes and effects. Much of this opinion and of this belief may be false, but this falsity does not mean a moral defect of will. It does, however, give direction to human action; and men's actions may in consequence seem to imply an element of evil, particularly if they serve the self-interest of a limited number of people. The evil element is supposed to lie in the serving of self-interest. This view, however, arises solely because conditions have created an opposition between self-interest and the interest of others; and so long as this opposition is accepted as inevitable and unquestionable, no reconciliation between self-interests and interests of others is possible. The distinction of good and bad, moral and immoral does not turn upon the distinction between these two sets of interests. The one set of interests is no more desirable than the other. In the second place, this opposition between interests and the mutual suspicion it engenders create a very serious obstacle to improvement. Those to whom has been assigned the lot of doing without the desirable things have not been altogether ready to resign themselves to their fate; and those who have been urged to give up some of the good things of life for the sake of others have not always been willing to do so. Those who have and those who have not become suspicious of each other; the one side suspects the other of seeking to destroy what is valuable and of demanding what they are not justified in demanding; the other side, in turn, suspects the first of seeking to perpetuate an evil state of things and to keep them in misery for their own advantage. The conflict wages fundamentally round primary ends. The opposition offered to improvement or change by "vested interests" arises from the fact that their existence is threatened. The course of civilization has brought into

play various kinds of activity which have called for specialization, and to which in consequence groups of persons have devoted themselves—such as professional soldiering, the making of armaments, the manufacture of alcoholic liquors. All these may be undesirable and involve a check on progress ; but to scrap them means a threat to the existence of those engaged in them. Their resistance is a psychological reaction to a threatening danger ; and this means that civilization has itself been forging chains to bind it within imperfect conditions, has itself been evolving conditions militating against the complete realization of values.

CHAPTER XI

THE NATURE OF MORALITY

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER XI

THE NATURE OF MORALITY

§ 1.

Morality not a Suppression of Instincts or Desires.

In any discussion of morality there is always present the danger that morality may disappear as a distinct phenomenon, and we be left with something quite different in our hands. Without our noticing it our discussion may be turned from morality and be directed to this something. This is a danger, as we have already seen, that characterizes all scientific investigations and that is not peculiar to moral theory. Thus, though an investigation into the nature of morality may seem to express moral phenomena in terms of something quite different, yet the uniqueness of moral qualities must not be lost sight of. One of the main points always to be kept in view is whether such a procedure helps a better understanding of the various features of morality, and whether it enables us to bring about with greater certainty those results that are held to be desirable. It has been argued that human action is limited by the complex forces of nature and by the laws of these forces, and that morality is closely dependent on what seem to be non-moral factors. It is accordingly necessary to reinterpret the nature of morality on the basis of what analysis has shown.

This is all the more essential, since the traditional view of morality as a control of the instincts and desires by reason or by the will has been rejected. That rejection arises out of the view taken of the nature of instincts and desires. The ethical doctrine that moralization is the rationalization of the instincts, impulses and desires of man, and that what has to be aimed at is rationalization, really states a problem and

does not solve one; for it is too vague in its terms, and the central difficulty is to know how the rationalization or organization of the instincts and desires is to be effected. The doctrine is also unsound on the basis of an analysis which shows that there is no radical defect with desire, since desire is always for the desirable; and the problem has been in consequence shown to resolve itself into a rationalization of conditions. In virtue of the relation between the desired and the desirable, it is necessary to give up the idea of the need of crushing or rooting out desires; for that is impossible and is attended with the greatest dangers. And psychoanalysis has made this abundantly clear.

At the same time psychoanalysis has brought to light a problem, the ethical importance of which has not been very clearly recognized. Students of psychoanalysis must have felt puzzled to know what is to be done with desire and the so-called instincts; for their suppression has been due to their supposed evil nature; and, if they are not to be curbed, it seems evil is to be allowed free scope. Solutions of the difficulty have been suggested in psychological terms, namely along the lines of "sublimation." "Sublimation" is itself, however, largely a pathological phenomenon and is a sign of disorder; it is on a par with giving a person a stone when he asks for bread. It does not touch the cause of the disorder; and it becomes merely an attempt to circumvent certain symptoms of disorder by substituting other symptoms. The analysis of desire, which has shown how closely the process of desire is connected with the organism and with the natural forces beyond the organism, justifies the conclusion that any "sublimation" is futile and dangerous, since a process of desire must run its course or run out in a result of a definite kind or be directed toward an object of a certain type or class.

A second type of solution suggested is that of a psychosynthesis; but the difficulty here is the method whereby the synthesis is to be effected. Emphasis tends to be thrown upon a psychological reorganization of the individual mind. But our discussion has led to the conclusion that a psychological reorganization can be effected only through a reorganization of conditions objective in character; and

instances of cures effected by psychoanalysis confirm this. Psychoanalytic literature abounds in examples of cases where the cause of nervous disorders has been some fear or other emotion, and where the cure has been brought about by confronting the patient with the cause and by showing him the groundlessness of the emotion. The problem is thus that of enabling the individual to adjust himself more effectively to his environment on the basis of more accurate knowledge. The problem, however, is more difficult when the disorder is general and when the cause is presumably general, as for instance the moral chaos consequent on the war, especially in matters of sex.[1] Moral indifference does not provide an explanation, for it itself requires explanation. Such a general disorder cannot be explained on lines similar to those of some individual neuroses, which have at their root an emotional reaction based on a false apprehension of things or an inability on the part of the individual to adjust himself to circumstances. The general character of a disorder points to some general cause ; and the view of desire put forward in the preceding chapters suggests an answer. Desire rests on more primitive natural processes ; and natural forces operate through the organism as a medium. Processes are thus set up in the organism ; but they find also a natural continuation beyond the organism. It is accordingly not enough to check the continuation of the process beyond the organism, for that merely leads to a disturbance within the organism. If the organism is not to be thrown into disorder, the natural forces must be controlled before they influence the organism, so that the organism may be able to carry on the process and allow it to be continued beyond itself, in a manner which will fit into social conditions and into what is desirable.[2] Many individual cases of neuroses as well as cases of moral disorder in social life find here a possible explanation. Natural factors, as well as social conditions, operating through the

[1] See *Criminal Statistics : England and Wales*, 1919. Offences of bigamy in 1913 were 133 ; in 1919, 917. Petitions for dissolution of marriage, 1913, 998 ; 1919, 5,085.

[2] The difference between the two attitudes is that between, say, in sex, the practice of self-control or the use of contraceptives to check fertility, and the control of conditions in such a manner as to influence causally the degree of fertility and possibly also the desires of sex.

organism lead to effects which yet do not fit into social organization; and the actions of the individual seem in consequence abnormal or pathological. There is an inability to integrate activities and effects because the conditions lying at the basis of the activities are uncontrolled. The control of conditions therefore will render a psychosynthesis possible.

§ 2.

Defects of Theories of a "Dialectical" Type: Bradley, Sorley.

The view of morality that underlies this, and that follows from this, is opposed to all theories of a dialectical type. Many of the moral paradoxes expressed in the doctrines of Bradley are no doubt subtle but they are purely dialectical, and have little ethical significance when the actual factors operative in human action are considered. "It is a moral demand then that every human excellence should genuinely be good, while at the same time a high rank should be reserved for the inner life. And it is a moral demand also that the good should be victorious throughout. The defects and the contradictions in every self must be removed, and must be succeeded by perfect harmony. And, of course, all evil must be over-ruled and so turned into goodness. But the demand of morality has a different side. For, if goodness as such is to remain, the contradiction cannot quite cease, since a discord we saw was essential to goodness. Thus if there is to be morality, there cannot altogether be an end of evil. And so again, the two aspects of self-assertion and self-sacrifice will remain. They must be subordinated, and yet they must not have entirely lost their distinctive character. Morality in brief calls for an unattainable unity of its aspects, and in its search for this it naturally is led beyond itself into a higher form of goodness." [1]

A similar idea is expressed by Professor Sorley. "Suppose all values realized," he says,[2] "what would become of

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 438, 2nd ed. (revised 1906).
[2] *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 518.

morality? There would be no further good to which to reach forward; attainment would put an end to endeavour; and the moral ideal thus reached would seem to destroy the moral life in the act of perfecting it. Suppose the moral purpose of the world to be achieved, and the time process still to go on. What is there for the fully moralized man to do in the perfected environment?" "An imperfect world is necessary for the growth and training of moral beings. If there were no possibility of missing the mark there would be no value in taking a true aim. A world of completely unerring finite beings, created and maintained so by the conditions of their life, would be a world of marionettes. . . . They would have neither goodness nor the consciousness of goodness."[1]

What is implied in these views is that morality involves an ideal; that this ideal arises on the basis of imperfections and contradictions; that the moral life is an effort after the attainment of this ideal; but that such an attainment can never at any particular moment be effected, for that would mean the disappearance of morality. There is thus something peculiarly contradictory about morality. Either morality ceases if the moral effort is successful and if all values are realized; or else it continually just misses its goal, and becomes a striving after something which never is, can be, nor must be attained but which ought to be attained. One of the fundamental beliefs on which morality rests, namely that "ought" implies "can" is rejected; and there is imposed upon man an obligatory task that is yet impossible of fulfilment. The real itself is so interpreted that morality becomes something impossible. The problems which confront individuals are not solved by pointing to the contradictions in the moral life nor by a theoretical appeal to the Absolute. The existence of contradictions constitutes the moral problems of individuals; but the assertion that they are solved in the Absolute is a mere matter of faith so long as human beings lack the very important knowledge of, or insight into, the mechanism whereby the solutions or transformations are effected. Without that knowledge moral problems remain; they are not removed by affirma-

[1] Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 347.

tions or denials or by the discovery of a "formula."[1] With such knowledge there might be no need to have recourse to an Absolute; but man himself might be capable of dealing with the problems. In fact, it may be said that morality means the solution of moral problems and that if they are insoluble by man there is no morality.

The difficulties which arise on such theories can be met only by deserting completely the dialectical method and dialectical type of solution, and by recognizing the great difference between finding formulæ and finding and controlling causes. It is a step of great ethical importance and significance to recognize that the actual problems of morality have their origin, not in dialectical argument, but in real factors, causes, or conditions which may have features quite different from those of the situation which presents the problem; and that, as is the case in the natural sciences, a solution is to be sought through the discovery of the causes or conditions which bring about the situation. The many curious features of theories, like those of Bradley and Professor Sorley, compel a reconsideration of the basis of these theories; and these curious features will disappear, and most of their puzzles or dilemmas will be seen to be groundless, if human action is examined in relation to the forces which are implicated in it. Allowance can then be made for the dynamic aspect of morality. That means that moral values, when realized, are not like things that continue to exist or be actual when they are once made; but that they become real and continue real, or have a continued existence, only through a continuous process of realization effected by man, and that realization takes place on the basis of conditions which man must steadily preserve from destruction by other causal processes of nature. If man's activity or effort ceases and the process of realization comes to an end or a halt, then moral values will cease to be actual

[1] During recent industrial and political struggles those engaged have devoted themselves to finding a "formula," on the basis of which discussion might take place and agreement be reached. Such a procedure does not give a solution of the problems at issue; it is an attempt to circumvent causes by words due to the fallacious belief that finding formulæ is the same as dealing with causes. The result is that people move in an unreal world, where the solutions reached are repeatedly upset by the operation of real causes that continue to act.

and become only an "ought to be." From this point of view, the question what would become of morality if all values were realized, becomes an unreal question based on a misinterpretation of the nature and conditions of the moral process. The complete moralization of man in a perfected environment does not, as Professor Sorley's view seems to suggest, necessarily imply a static state. The difference between a complete morality in a perfected environment and an incomplete morality in an imperfect environment does not turn upon the presence or absence of endeavour; but upon the presence or absence of any intermixture of undesirable elements with the desirable, and upon the presence or absence of conditions that will enable the desirable to be realized as free as possible from any such intermixture.

§ 3.

Physical Aspect and Value Aspect of Morality.

Values never exist on their own account but only through the medium of factors different from themselves. They may sometimes be brought about by nature; but morality is essentially a matter of human activity; and from the moral standpoint moral values are a result of human effort, though the latter implicates natural factors. In general terms morality is the utilization of natural factors on the part of man to bring about what is desired and what is desirable. The nature of desire sets the ends for morality. The moral process differs from purely natural processes in having its basis in desire and thus in conscious individuals; and, secondly, in being directed solely towards the desirable. Natural processes operate through desire but they also operate regardless of desire and of the desirable; and may prevent the attainment of desire. Morality thus necessitates a control of natural processes so that they may not interfere with the process of desire, that they may serve in the attainment of desire, and that only the desirable may be attained. Morality has thus a physical aspect as well as a value-aspect. As regards the physical aspect, morality turns upon increased

knowledge. It is in this aspect that the possibility of "missing the mark" lies. The complexity of the real is a factor against which man must be always on his guard; and the possibility of "missing the mark" will remain even in a perfected morality and a perfected environment, since a moral end is always a result to be achieved through the instrumentality of certain factors.

The possibility of missing the mark, however, is not the same as actual evil or as actually missing the mark. It does not imply imperfection, but merely implies that moral values are realized through conditions. It can thus be denied that evil is necessary to morality. The production of undesirable or bad results is not essential to morality. This is confirmed by the prevalent human desire and effort to remove evil and to lessen the possibility of evil. If evil were necessary to morality, men would have no motive for such effort, since it is futile to try to remove what is necessary or must be. All such effort rests on the assumption that evil should be and can be removed. The question, therefore, turns upon whether the possibility of evil will become actual. Whether this will be so or not depends on two factors; first, whether mankind has sufficient knowledge of reality to prevent the undesirable from becoming actual; second, whether men will have a motive for pursuing a line of action that is bad; and this turns upon the nature of the environment and of social organization. It is in connexion with this second factor that the moral element is generally supposed to come into prominence.

From the view taken of desire and of the relation of morality to conditions, defects in moral action and in motive are due to defects in conditions, not to defects in an inner will. It may be said that social conditions are a creation of will, and that any defects are due to defects of will. But the environment is only partly a creation of human beings, and even then it depends on human knowledge and belief. It is also largely a result of forces operating independently of the human will. Created in this way it contains numerous defects, providing various motives to different people and to the same people, and leading to a sharp opposition of interests and hence to an apparent

evil will. Where, then, a will seems evil, the defect lies in conditions which induce a man to act in a certain way; just as imperfect conduction or insulation will lead to a mishap in the case of the electric current. Defects in the environment, allowed to continue over a long period of time, will produce a cumulative effect until morality may become apparently artificial, conventional, wholly alien to things; and may gradually disappear.

§ 4.

Relation between Knowledge and Morality.

Knowledge, accordingly, comes to be a very important factor in the solution of moral difficulties. It has been assigned a rôle before now in morality; and, at the present time, much stress is laid by educationists upon knowledge and the spread of education as a solution of existing moral problems. Such emphasis may arise from various motives. For one thing, under present conditions there is great conflict of means to ends, and this leads to a struggle even as regards ends. This puts every man both on the offensive and the defensive. In the tangled skein of conditions which constitute his environment, knowledge is an indispensable factor in attaining his ends at all and in a manner consistent with moral rules in particular. For another thing, it may be assumed that knowledge gives an added value to moral action. Hence, for instance, reflective morality has been supposed to be of higher value than customary or unreflective morality. The morality of a man who can give reasons for his actions and who knows all the factors in virtue of which the end he aims at can be brought about, is higher than that of the man who cannot give reasons or who simply imitates the customary routine of social life. It is assumed that there attaches to an enlightened or at least an educated will a moral value which does not attach to the uneducated will. For this reason it is held that to create mechanisms whereby individuals may realize the good more certainly is to reduce them to marionettes, to eliminate the play of knowledge, and to destroy morality. For this reason,

too, it might be held that a perfect morality resting upon perfect conditions would be attainable by a very few; such a morality lies beyond the power of most human beings because of the great knowledge presupposed.

The rôle assigned to knowledge in morality on either of these grounds may be called in question. They transform a merely accidental association between knowledge and morality into an essential feature of morality. The need of knowledge at present is no doubt very great; but that need arises from conditions which can be altered. If the conflicts were to be solved through the discovery of their causes, it might be possible to create new conditions wherein the need for knowledge was less pressing. The difficulty in acting morally is due to the great conflict of interests that exists; and we must not assume that such difficulty must for ever attach to morality and in fact be an inherent feature of morality. The difficult character of duty is a derivative phenomenon; it is due to the complex and conflicting nature of conditions. There is no reason why morality may not become a comparatively easy affair; and man need not crucify himself in the belief that he is not moral unless he finds morality a difficult task. That task, from the side of inner conflict, will become easier if the incitements from external conditions become less conflicting and lead more directly to the desirable. Control of conditions can lead to the elimination of motives that lead to undesirable actions and results. If this were done, one of the reasons for emphasis on knowledge would disappear.

As regards the second ground for putting emphasis upon knowledge, it is again a purely accidental feature of morality. Under complex conditions knowledge is an important factor in acting morally; but because that is so, it cannot be concluded that only that action which is guided by knowledge is moral, or that it has a higher moral value or quality than an action carried out under the influence of custom or social suggestion. Reflective morality is higher only in the sense that it tends to realize values more effectively than customary morality, because it contains the possibility of finer adjustment to conditions and more accurate utiliza-

tion of means. It is on that account more important where conditions are so complex that mere customary modes of action may fail to realize the highest good. The essential thing is that values be realized; and in this respect knowledge may have no more value than some other means, such as the control of conditions whereby individuals may react regularly in ways that are the most desirable. One of the main difficulties in getting rid of this supposed essential connexion of knowledge and morality is the belief that morality is purely an affair of an inner will, purely an individual thing, and that it is because of this that an individual becomes the subject of moral responsibility and the subject of moral judgments. In virtue of that, knowledge is essential; and it is supposed that a higher moral quality attaches to the individual who knows what he is doing than to one who does not. It is true that allowance is made where ignorance existed and where means were not within the power of a person to remove that ignorance This, however, does not in any way imply that an intelligent morality has in itself a higher ultimate value than a customary morality. It merely implies that knowledge is a means to the realization of values, that such realization rests on control of causal factors, and that an individual who does not endeavour to acquire that control is failing in his duty. And all this presupposes that conditions cannot once for all be controlled, so that he can act directly or put his hands straight away upon the factors necessary to realize values. If it is recognized, as has been previously argued, that morality is not primarily an affair of an inner will but that the morality of the individual is dependent on conditions, the reason for assigning a higher value to action based on knowledge disappears.

§ 5.

Criticism of certain Views of this Relation.

The rejection of the view that knowledge is essential to morality, or that it gives an added value to a moral action, removes one of the stumbling blocks to moral improve-

ment, and also leads to the discarding of certain recent educational doctrines. It has for instance been maintained that the solution of present moral conflicts and difficulties lies in more extensive education, in bringing education within the reach of an ever greater number of individuals; and the implication is that universal or at least very general knowledge is necessary as a prior condition of any really significant moral change. It is assumed that individuals can act morally only if and when they know how various institutions are worked, how various social activities are carried on, and in general how the mechanism of their existing environment or the mechanism of a perfected environment operates. Such knowledge, however, is almost beyond the power of the greater portion of mankind; and the spreading of such knowledge would involve an exceedingly great period of time. Any really significant moral change would thus lie in a distant future. There is no need, however, to be so pessimistic; for the assumptions are questionable. Though knowledge does constitute an essential condition for moral improvement and for the realization of values, that is not the rôle to be assigned to knowledge. The mass of mankind might be educated up to the highest level at present reached by the educated classes; and yet moral chaos might remain or become even greater.[1] Individuals might receive ethical or moral education; and yet the general level of morality might remain where it was. And the reason is that morality is not a correlate of individual knowledge but a correlate of the kind of knowledge so far attained.

If the causes of moral failure are individual and specific, then each individual must be dealt with; and only then will it be possible to secure a general improvement. This has been assumed to be the cause by certain contemporary educational views, which have insisted upon the spreading of education and knowledge, and which aim at the general education of mankind to such a level that they will all make one co-operative effort to improve morality. If, however,

[1] Even though Plato laid stress upon education for his ideal State, the latter rests on the elimination of prior causes of social conflict and disorder.

the causes of moral failure are general or lie in conditions, then a general improvement can be secured by dealing with the causes; and they may be discovered and dealt with by a few persons. It is only in this sense that knowledge is an essential condition of morality. Such knowledge is necessary for the construction and maintenance of a system of conditions which will enable moral values to be realized more and more completely. That system can be created only by human beings; and thus some human beings must attain to and apply the necessary knowledge. The structure thus created might work automatically; in such an ideal system men would tend as a matter of course to act in the most desirable manner, since every factor would determine their action towards the most desirable result and since all counteracting influences or motives would be eliminated. That they did not know in detail how the system was constructed and how it operated would be irrelevant to their morality. How widespread is the knowledge of the system is a matter of indifference from the moral standpoint. The complex mechanism of a perfected environment need be known only to a few, though the mass of mankind might seek such knowledge out of intellectual interest, not however as a prior condition of their morality. The only condition that has to be in the first place fulfilled is the discovery of the causes of moral failure. It is unnecessary to await the general education of mankind to a certain level. Hence the fact that morality or the realization of moral values rests upon complex conditions does not preclude the mass of people from acting morally, or from taking part in the realization of values because of their lack of complete knowledge of such conditions.

§ 6.

Freedom and Mechanism, Moral Law and Natural Law.

The view that morality does not disappear, though the individual is placed within a system which enables him to realize values with certainty and without having to struggle with inner conflicting tendencies, is open to the seeming

objection that it does destroy morality, because it destroys all freedom by reducing men to marionettes. They are led to act unerringly by the conditions of their environment. It is difficult to see why objection should be taken to the theory on this ground, since it seems a most desirable thing to aim at, and since something of the same nature underlies, and is aimed at in, the development of habit, the moral importance of which is emphasized by ethical teachers. The objection, however, does raise the question of freedom. Man seems to be merely one causal factor among other natural factors. The problem of freedom in morality has always been difficult of treatment because it has not been at all clear what meaning was to be attached to freedom, or what exactly was being demanded when freedom was demanded. Any freedom in the sense that human action has not a reason, a motive, or a cause has been already implicitly denied. Any attempt that, in order to defend freedom in the form of indeterminism, bases itself upon the experience of persons reputed to have acted from no motive whatever and in a purely unaccountable manner, is worthless without a complete analysis of such alleged action. It may merely signify that the individuals are unaware of the causes of or reasons for their action ; and this may quite well be admitted ; for it is not at all necessary that individuals, in order that their action may have causes, be in every instance aware of these causes. The causation of their conduct may quite well be natural and lie beyond their knowledge.

The hesitation in admitting this is due to an obsession with will. It is supposed that individual action is determined by a will and cannot be determined by natural causes or conditions. It is supposed that the will itself cannot be influenced by conditions. Such a belief prevents an understanding of those cases where men " know the better but desire the worse." Thus, for instance, people in very poor circumstances and unable to support a large family, are most frequently just those people who have large families ; and as a consequence their foolishness, their lack of foresight, and lack of self-control are the subject of criticism. These people may even know that it would be better not to have

many children; and yet they continue to have them. Hence the problem here is usually regarded as a moral one. This is one of the numerous instances where an explanation is sought in moral terms—in lack of will-power, lack of self-control, disregard of the highest good; when the great probability is that the explanation is to be found in purely natural terms and is to be sought in a law expressing the relation between fertility and conditions. This law may operate without the individual being aware of it; but he is confronted with a result that he regards as not altogether desirable and that he does not altogether desire. Any explanation in moral terms is worthless. What is implied is that natural processes have operated and do operate apart from man's will; and they simply confront the individual with a result that may be desirable or that may be undesirable. In the latter case a problem is presented for solution; and a solution lies in a discovery of the conditions of the natural process, and in controlling the conditions so as to lead to a desirable result. The so-called power of will is the power of controlling causes or conditions. Mere will of itself can effect nothing. Natural conditions are controlled not by a will but only by other conditions or causes. Hence it is futile to appeal to the will to exercise control over conditions if the individual does not know the causes nor the means to employ in order to control conditions.

Any interpretation of freedom must take into consideration the part played by natural conditions in determining human action. The question of freedom is not to be solved by reference to a will. The only intelligible solution turns upon the control of causes by man. If, as on Spinoza's view,[1] everything in the Universe happens with necessity, such control is impossible. Its possibility lies in the fact that causal factors can be grouped and regrouped so as to produce a desired effect; and that presupposes a minute acquaintance with the complexity of the real if the control is to be effective. Man is not free if his acts are but steps in a single continuous series of causes. The man who in poor circumstances continues to have an increasing family, in spite of his desiring the contrary, is not free but subject

[1] *Ethics*, Bk. I, prop. xxix. Bk. II, prop. xliv.

to purely natural law. Freedom exists where man in the fulfilment of desire, and in the attainment of the desirable, controls conditions so that they are made subservient to the desired and the desirable alone. The operation of natural factors in accordance with natural law may lead to effects, situations, or conditions that are bad as well as good; natural processes are indifferent to moral values. Yet moral values can be realized only through the operation of natural factors in accordance with natural law. And this must mean that the operation of natural factors can be controlled by man in such a way that they do not check but further the attainment of the desired and the desirable. Human action, therefore, stands under the influence of natural law; and it is only by observing such law and acting in accordance with it that desire can be fulfilled. Human freedom is accordingly quite reconcilable with law in the natural sense. No matter what laws must be complied with, the fact that the desired and the desirable are thereby being attained constitutes freedom.

Hence the objection that a perfected environment would destroy freedom, and would lead to the disappearance of morality by reducing men to marionettes ignores the part played by human agency even in a perfected environment and in a perfected morality. It rests largely on the assumption that morality must necessarily have all the characteristics which have become associated with it under imperfect conditions; and that is to confuse accidental features with its essence. Human activity is rooted in desire; and desire even in a perfected environment and in a perfected morality must still lead to effort after attainment. It is through desire that values will be consistently realized. Environmental factors will not of themselves lead to the realization of values. A perfected environment, and a perfected morality, will just mean that the realization of values depends more and more upon human agency and less and less on purely natural factors. All natural factors are brought into relation with desire and made to serve the attainment of the thing desired. So long as desire is not eliminated—and so long as individuals are alive and conscious there will be desire—morality will not disappear.

§ 7.

Meaning of Perfection.

It is now possible to give some definite interpretation of the idea of perfection which has occurred throughout the preceding argument. It is commonly used in a vague way as some undefined goal towards which human beings strive or aspire; but it is always left in a state of mist, as if clearness were not a matter of importance for human endeavour. The moral perfection of man depends upon the perfection of the environment; and the perfection of the environment rests upon acquaintance with all the factors affecting human action. Morality rests upon various processes of a natural kind, and can be perfected only when these processes are controlled and made subservient to what is desirable. A perfect environment is one which will render possible for man a perfectly moral life or good life. The perfect or ideal life is one in which all desirable things are realized or can be continually realized. This no doubt implies that moral rules are observed; but it also implies that their observance will lead only to what is desirable, and not to a mixture of the desirable and the undesirable. Only if this is so are moral rules unconditionally binding; but they are unconditionally binding, not because they are valid irrespective of all conditions, but because the conditions are such as to guarantee through their observance the realization only of what is desirable. It implies also that the good life is not exhausted in one desirable thing but requires a plurality of desirable things. One desirable thing must be possible of attainment without some other desirable thing having necessarily to be sacrificed for it, or without some fresh evil being created. Where that is not possible, the good or perfect life is not being attained. In a perfect morality the unity of the good becomes a fact. It implies further that no man has any motive or inducement for doing anything undesirable; and that means that what he desires and what is desirable is within his power to attain; for it is the lack of means to the attainment of the desired and the desirable that leads to evil. From the side of the environment, what is implied

is that social organization is such that it enables the desirable to be attained, that it offers no inducement to any one to act contrary to what is desirable, that the various forces are controlled and everything undesirable avoided or eliminated, and that the struggle for existence is brought to an end. Thus, to make the good life actual, it is not necessary to await an inner change of will on the part of mankind, but to discover the conditions on which the realization of values depends, and on the basis of such knowledge to construct a mechanism which will render the realization of moral values certain.

To construct such a mechanism does not imply any destruction of morality. That it would do so is an objection based upon an incomplete analysis of the moral life in the first instance. The moral life rests upon mechanisms and natural processes even in its imperfect forms; and theory must simply recognize the fact, and formulate its doctrines in accordance with the fact, instead of assuming that morality takes place in a rarefied atmosphere of value and apart from all mechanisms. If morality rests on mechanisms and natural processes, the question is whether they operate efficiently to promote morality. If they do not, there is nothing in the nature of morality that should prevent man from making the mechanisms and natural processes more serviceable for morality. It is not a matter of destroying morality but of perfecting it, by perfecting the mechanisms and processes which underlie it. There is no virtue in intensifying one's misery and piling up one's burdens by refusing to improve an imperfect or inefficient machine, or to understand properly its operation. In the absence of such understanding and control of the mechanisms and processes underlying morality, human action will continue to be marked by imperfection, and man's difficulties will multiply. Hence there can be drawn a distinction between an imperfect morality and a perfect or ideal morality; and on that basis there can be drawn a distinction between a relative and an absolute ethics.[1] This distinction, however, is not analogous to that between applied mechanical science and abstract or ideal mechanics. The latter is hypothetical

[1] A distinction drawn by Spencer.

and deals with situations that are simpler than actual situations, while applied mechanical science has to deal with many factors not allowed for by abstract mechanics. An ideal morality and an absolute ethics do not, on the other hand, assume simplified conditions, but presuppose an acquaintance with the complexity of the real, while existing or relative morality and a relative ethics owe their characteristics to assuming simplified conditions or to a lack of acquaintance with the complex nature of things.

CHAPTER XII

MORAL PROGRESS

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER XII

MORAL PROGRESS

§ 1.

Difficulty of Finding a Test of Progress.

It is not altogether true to say that the idea of progress is a comparatively recent idea and that it was not one of the ideas amongst those constituting the views of the ancients. The ideas of moral degeneration and of moral improvement are present in a considerable amount of ancient speculation. What, however, is true is that the idea of inevitable progress is a comparatively modern idea. And the fact that the idea of a retrogression has been as common and as widespread as the idea of inevitable progress, or the fact that there has been a belief in the recurrence of phenomena in periods or cycles, should serve to temper the self-complacency that tends to arise on the too easily assumed progress of mankind and on the belief in its inevitability. Thinkers too have found it very difficult to discover any valid grounds for believing in progress. Men are not ready at the present day to accept the doctrine that all things tend towards the good or that nature is wholly beneficent. The Marxian belief that a better state of things will, as a matter of course, arise out of the class-war and on the ruins of a crushed capitalism has not been quite confirmed by experience. The lesson which man should be taught by events is that they take place regardless of human welfare, and that, if they are to be directed to the benefit of men, they must be guided by man himself. Progress is dependent upon human beings, and, if they are lacking in any respect, progress will be either accidental or occasional or absent altogether.

In the case of morality the difficulty is to find anything by which progress can be tested. This would be easier if there were a generally accepted standard or norm; but so many different standards are put forward; and each person tends to adopt some standard of his own, such as happiness, pleasure, possibilities of enjoyment, refined manners, courtesy, conscientiousness, industriousness, and so on, which appeals to him probably because of some quite incidental circumstance of his life-history; and decides the question of moral progress accordingly. This is obviously arbitrary, unreliable in its results, and inadequate in its application. Happiness or pleasure, for instance, are such relative and variable things that they are difficult to gauge; and to decide whether the present age is more happy than that of three or four centuries ago is on this basis almost if not wholly impossible. Any of the other tests can be employed only within comparatively limited circles, and cannot give results of very certain validity beyond these. No one would be bold enough to maintain that men have a greater sense of duty, are more conscientious, or are more self-sacrificing to-day than they were in Homeric times. No one would be ready to assert that the present age shows more refined manners or greater courtesy than did the Middle Ages, however fanciful and overdone the chivalry of the latter was or seems to have been. No one would be prepared to maintain, in the face of present-day statistics and medical reports to the gravity of which the public consciousness seems to be gradually awakening, that strictness of sexual morality is any greater than it has been in the past.

§ 2.

Theory of Natural Selection unable to justify Belief in Progress.

The more modern belief in the inevitability of progress has been to a very large extent based on the doctrine of evolution in accordance with the principle of natural selection. It has been supposed that evolution effected by natural selection, and the struggle for existence it implies, rested upon a force

which irresistibly propelled the Universe towards something higher and better. The discussion [1] of the struggle for existence and of its relation to values has thrown doubt upon this belief. It is due to reading into evolution an ethical significance which Darwin did not originally intend and which it is incapable of bearing. The struggle for existence contains no guarantee that the qualities it calls forth will be higher qualities in an ethical sense. There is no guarantee that if the ethically better qualities do emerge they will survive. The only condition on which they will survive is that the conditions of the environment favour their survival; and hence the conditions of moral progress lie in the environment or through the medium of the environment. A struggle for existence presupposes continuously unfavourable conditions; and, where the conditions are continuously unfavourable, it is somewhat difficult to speak of progress; for at least one element in progress must be a mitigation of the severity of conditions.

This mitigation of the severity of conditions may appear in one form as the better adaptation of an organism to its environment, for such adaptation implies that its chances of survival are greater, and hence that conditions are less severe and less menacing to its existence. This idea of better adaptation has been emphasized by the theory of evolution. This idea, however, is fatal to any belief that the theory of evolution justifies the conclusion that progress is inevitable. Evolution rests upon the struggle for existence; better adaptation means a corresponding lessening of the struggle for existence; and the agency in effecting further evolution thus steadily becomes weaker, and may ultimately lose its power. Evolution on the basis of natural selection may accordingly contain within itself factors leading to its own stoppage. It can continue only if conditions remain unfavourable and if natural selection remains operative. Organisms, if progress is to continue, must never, therefore, become completely adapted to conditions; and the theory of evolution accordingly involves a pessimistic element which is at variance with the idea of progress.

[1] Vid. chap. vii, 2.

The consequence of this, from the standpoint of human life, is that, in the interests of evolution or progress, human beings ought not to interfere with conditions and to try to make them more favourable; if anything, they ought to make them more unfavourable. This, however, is contrary to morality and tends to destroy it; for morality depends on the fact that man does and can interfere with conditions and that he moulds them so as to make them more favourable. Hence, either the theory of evolution based on natural selection leaves no room for morality, or else that theory must be discarded or re-interpreted so as to save morality and secure its continuity with the biological process. It is necessary to recognize that from the moral standpoint human beings must play an active part in the realization of values, and that, because they do so through the medium of natural processes, including biological processes, natural processes cannot be wholly opposed to the moral process. The difference between the two turns upon the fact that natural processes lead to undesirable results as well as to desirable ones, while the moral process involves the control of natural processes so as to lead to desirable results only. Evolution being itself a natural process dependent on many natural forces and processes beyond the organisms themselves, though taking place through them, is not in this sense a moral process. It has involved desirable and undesirable results. It has been dependent upon the play and interplay of many forces and processes which, through their mutual conflict and interaction, bring into existence sets of conditions favourable to the emergence and preservation of new qualities in organisms. Fresh processes may, however, come into play and undermine or destroy these conditions. In this respect evolution has been largely a process of chance, in contrast to a process controlled through a period of time so as to lead to a definite result. There has been no necessity about evolution; it does not represent a 'continuously straight line; there has been much wavering; and if man is to be taken as the highest of the series, then those higher qualities for which he stands have emerged largely in an accidental manner. It is a matter

of chance that they have appeared at all. It is upon this process that morality supervenes. Progress will only become assured if the implications of morality are satisfied —namely knowledge of and control over all factors necessary to effect what is desirable.

§ 3.

Emergence of New Values not a test of Progress.

The belief in progress may be defended by an appeal to the fact that fresh values do emerge and are publicly acknowledged and adopted. The growing emphasis put upon freedom, the abolition of slavery, the greater respect for human life and property, the desire for more stable conditions of life, the recognition of personality and of the need of providing opportunities for its development, the growing sense of brotherhood among men and amongst peoples, and the efforts to secure all these by the enforcement of public law—these are fresh values which point to moral progress. To this it might be answered in the first place that many of these fresh values—freedom, respect for human life, and so on—are values upon which great emphasis was laid in the primitive tribal communities, and that they are not values freshly created but values revived after being obscured during a period of social chaos and latterly of economic individualism. In the second place, moral progress means something more than the consciousness and even acknowledgment of abstract values; it means a new and concrete condition of human life; and even the embodiment of these abstract values in legal form may not be sufficient to secure this. This constitutes one of the grounds of the criticism which the Labour-class levels against the present social organization. Freedom, the abolition of slavery, respect for human life, and so on are largely illusory; they remain but ideas and are not constituent features of actual social life; the old conditions exist under new forms, for instead of military and political bondage and open traffic in slaves, there is economic bondage. The existing industrial conditions

deprive the worker of any freedom; and they create as great a danger to health and life as ever existed in less civilized times; and it is difficult to admit that property has become more recognized as a value, when the result and the tendency of modern economic development is to render the great mass of the people propertyless and to keep them so. What can be thought of modern progress when periodically it threatens the very security of life for millions by throwing them into unemployment and by thus depriving them of the means of existence? The same criticism may be applied to other values. The development of personality, for instance, is an ideal rendered unrealizable because of the housing conditions and the economic conditions under which great masses of the people live. These conditions show how far such an ideal is from being realized.

The belief in progress, so far as it rests on the supposed emergence of new values, is due to certain confusions. For one thing, there may be an increase in the absolute total of people whose conditions of life have improved through the improvement of industry, and through the application of science to industry, and to conditions of life generally. But such an increase may in no way confirm the belief in progress; it may be a result merely of an increase in the total population; but the total of those whose conditions have not improved has also increased. In spite of industrial development, the struggle for existence instead of lessening is becoming keener, and it is engulfing an ever-growing number of the population. In the second place, progress may be easily confused with the attainment of some particular end desired. Thus if a man regards the abolition of strong drink as desirable, he will tend to think that the world has progressed a great step if the drinking of alcoholic liquors is abolished or prohibited. But progress cannot be interpreted by reference to any particular end in this way. Progress must be general and must imply the attainment of all or most desirable ends, and not the attainment of one or a few, and especially not the attainment of one at the expense of another. In the third place, it is not enough to insist upon progress as depending upon the

emergence of new qualities or new values. It is necessary that the new qualities be higher or better than the old; or that the new values be higher than those discarded; or, if they are not, that they do not displace previous values. Ethical doctrines based on the theory of evolution have tended to overlook this. We cannot assume that the later organisms or the later qualities are necessarily higher than the earlier, unless we assume that the process of change is inevitably towards higher qualities; but then that inevitability is difficult to establish unless we assume that the later qualities are the higher, or have strong grounds for regarding them as such. If we avoid any such assumption all we can say is that evolution is a series of transformations wherein new forms and new qualities appear. The question of value and of progress must then be considered on another basis

§ 4.

Economic Development and Progress.

When men speak of modern progress or of the progress of modern civilization, they have generally in mind economic development in particular, the development of industry and of means of transport and communication through scientific discoveries and inventions, through increasing knowledge of and power over nature. Progress can be thus formulated in comparatively definite terms as increasing power and control over the physical world, whereby human needs can be satisfied to a greater degree, in a greater variety of ways, and in a more refined manner. It is expressed in greater comforts and enjoyments. Such an interpretation gives certainty and concreteness of meaning to the idea of modern progress. This interpretation may seem to smack of materialism but that would not constitute a vital objection to it. It is to this interpretation of progress that the theory of evolution as commonly understood also leads. Man is taken to be the highest member of the evolutionary series; and his qualities must also be the highest qualities. But when we consider wherein man's qualities differ from those of other members of the series, we find

it is in the degree of control over nature, in the power of manipulating natural materials and of adapting natural conditions to himself by utilizing natural processes in his service. If complexity of structure, too, is to have a significance for progress, it must be interpreted as a basis or condition of a power which enables man to deal with things as if he had greater physical skill or strength and which becomes a substitute for such. This power in man resides in or takes the form of intelligence.

To interpret progress simply in terms of intellectual progress permits of a solution that is clear and that can be historically verified. But dissatisfaction is felt with such a view because there is lacking in it any reference to a moral element, any implication that human life has become better in an ethical sense. There is the obvious fact that a great mass of mankind not merely do not share in the intellectual progress on its theoretical side, but they do not even share in the benefits or in the enjoyments that result from intellectual progress and control over nature. Mere intellectual progress does not apparently therefore mean progress in every respect; and in fact, as has been already noted, intellectual achievements may be utilized for evil as well as for good. More particularly, that economic or industrial development does not necessarily imply or lead to moral improvement is generally acknowledged and is confirmed by facts. It seems to be a common opinion that previous to the war morality was becoming lax; and there seem to be recurring periods of immorality, or at least of periods when morality becomes more loose. The state of morality seems to waver. If we turn from the general question to the case of individuals, we find that improvement in the economic situation does not necessarily mean moral improvement but often the reverse. It is generally admitted that the wealthy are not any more moral than the poor; often they are much less so; and wealth tends to become associated with coarse luxury, licentiousness, debauchery, gambling and its attendant vices, while along with poverty are often found industry, perseverance, generosity, sacrifice, co-operation, honour, integrity, chastity, and so on. This fact has provided a basis for the argument

that we need not look to a change in economic conditions for effecting a moral improvement in man. If there is any difference between the poor and the rich as regards morality, it might be said at most to be one in respect of the kind of moral delinquency most frequent in the two classes.

All this is possibly very much a matter of opinion but it represents a general impression which, though unreliable, is about all that bears upon the matter. The only other means is to have recourse to criminal statistics; but in a question of general morality these are admittedly unsatisfactory. They refer only to a number of special kinds of acts which are branded as criminal and are far from exhausting morality. It is always difficult to handle statistics and draw sound conclusions from them. Besides, the lack of statistics for a large period of civilization renders it difficult to institute comparisons; and the huge increase of population complicates the question. Nevertheless, the introduction of the idea of constant averages—an average of averages—and the effort to base on these a forecast of the number of crimes of a particular kind, in a given period or year, point to a comparatively steady state of crime; and hence possibly of morality. It is thus extremely questionable whether the use of statistics in reference to social life will support the belief in progress; for statistics tend to develop the idea of social uniformities; and uniformities are not quite compatible with progress. There are thus no grounds for holding that economic progress necessarily means moral progress in general, nor that improvement in the economic position of the individual either permanently or temporarily, as at a period of trade prosperity, means a moral improvement in that individual.[1]

§ 5.

Progress Primarily an Idea Applicable to Human Life.

Progress differs from mere change. Both imply process; but, while the one implies a process towards a result that is ethically neutral or may be good or bad, the other implies

[1] It may lead to a decrease of certain types of acts, e.g. larceny, dishonesty, etc.; but it may lead to an increase in others.

a process towards what is valuable and always more valuable. Progress implies value. The question, therefore, turns upon the nature of value, and the meaning of perfection. Value has been in the preceding discussion correlated with desire. The desired and the desirable have been identified; and the good has been interpreted not as one thing but as a class of desirable things. Perfection has been defined as a type of life the conditions of which are so controlled, through a knowledge of nature, that what is desired and desirable can be attained free from any admixture of undesirable elements and that such a type of life can be at the same time preserved and made secure. In this idea of the desirable and of perfection a means is provided of interpreting progress. The question of progress will turn upon the degree to which the totality of desirable things has been or is being realized both in respect of themselves as a class and in respect of the number of individuals within whose reach they come.

One consequence of this is that the problem of value arises primarily within human life, and it does so because of the peculiar nature of desire and the conditions under which it emerges. Hence the meaning of progress is to be found in the first instance in human life; it refers to the attainment of what is ultimately desirable; and if it is applied beyond human life it is used in quite a secondary sense. As a result of the discussion on "Mind and its Conditions," the moral problem was seen to take the form, not of eliminating the material as if it were hostile to morality, but of gaining knowledge of it so as to make it an effective medium for the activity of mind and for the realization of values. In more concrete form the problem becomes that of discovering the factors which favour or hinder the attainment of the desirable. It is implied that values are potentially in the nature of things; but there is no implication that values exhaust the nature of things; and for that reason we cannot attempt to apply the category of value to the Universe as a whole; and for the same reason, too, we cannot regard the Universe as progressing.[1] But

[1] It may undergo changes or transformations, but that does not mean progress.

within the Universe certain spheres may be delimited within which the category of value is applicable, and within which progress may take place. One such sphere within which progress is frequently said to have taken place is the biological, particularly the animal series. But progress in the animal series is to be admitted only in a secondary or the very special sense that the complex forces of nature have, in an increasing degree, brought about the conditions which render possible in human life what we call progress, and progress of the only kind that has meaning. It is not necessary to assume that the complex forces of nature had in view human life and that the series of transformations were deliberately and specially effected for such a purpose. So far as there was no such purpose in view, the whole organic process whereby the conditions of a unique human life were gradually approached was accidental, uncertain, and unstable. So far as each step or stage reached was preserved, it was due to the persistance of the conditions which led to its appearance; but that persistance was due to the non-interference of other factors, and it will remain only if none interferes.

A second consequence is that knowledge of the real, knowledge of the processes of nature, and the control over these processes that thereby results, constitute an essential condition of moral progress. Progress in scientific knowledge makes moral progress possible; it is a condition of the effective and coherent realization of values or desirable things; but scientific progress does not mean moral progress. This has been already pointed out in connexion with economic development; that development is a result of scientific knowledge; but it has not effected to any large extent moral progress. There has been, however, a tendency to confuse progress with the development of knowledge; that is, as we have seen, what the attempt to estimate progress in terms of economic development led to; it is what the theory of evolution, based on the principle of natural selection, leads to, for the quality of intelligence confers an advantage and favours survival accordingly. For general progress and moral progress in particular scientific knowledge must be applied so as to become embodied in a concrete

type of life. But scientific knowledge in itself lacks the necessary force to effect this; it must thus become an instrument to something beyond itself. This something is desire; but because of the nature of knowledge and because of the nature of desire difficulties arise in the path of progress.

§ 6.

Progress not Inevitable but Conditional.

Progress in human life takes place or is possible in virtue of the presence of desire; and it gets its meaning from the nature of desire. Desire is a process which though operating through the individual yet has its conditions outside the individual, and finds its termination in factors outside the individual. The conditions of the process are one thing; the result of the process is another. To the result there attaches an element which is one of value. Hence, as was maintained previously, values do not constitute the conditions or any of the conditions or causes of desire. Desire is a process which ends in the realization of values, provided it is not interfered with by other processes; for the process of desire is not the only process and it is conditioned by other processes. It is in virtue of this fact that, though desire is towards values and though there is a tendency to progress in human life, progress is not inevitable, it is not definite and continuous, its path is tortuous and uncertain.

For one thing progress is conditioned by knowledge; but progress in knowledge is largely accidental. Progress in the past has rested upon a comparatively few epoch-making discoveries such as that of fire, of working iron, of agriculture, of steam, and a few others. The part played by resemblances, analogies, and associations in the intellectual life of man points to the contingent or accidental nature of intellectual progress. Some of the modern discoveries have been made accidentally while another problem altogether was being investigated. Investigators may stumble unwittingly upon an important fact that emerges as a collateral feature in the course of enquiry into another

phenomenon. There is no necessity attaching to the discovery of fresh information concerning the processes of nature. It is conditioned by intellectual power, by the emergence of problems which man does not create but which confront him, by the ability or opportunities of men to devote themselves to the solution of problems.

For another thing moral progress, besides being dependent upon an accidental or incidental phenomenon like the discovery of fresh knowledge, is also dependent on the fact that human knowledge is limited. This limitation of human knowledge modifies the tendency towards the good because of the inability it implies of providing an effective medium whereby that tendency can be realized. The knowledge man has attained has been applied to the attainment of desires. In doing so man has elaborated mechanisms which have often had unforeseen results, and not always desirable. Thus the attainment of desires has often been qualified in important ways. There have been brought into play desires of a secondary character, that is, desires for the means of attaining the ends of the primary desires. The knowledge which man has so far attained, though in one respect providing a greater means of attaining desire and a possible means of rendering that attainment more secure, has at the same time led to greater complexity in the conditions of human life. This resultant complexity may itself come to constitute a problem; and it may be said that historically it has done so. The complexity, for instance, to which economic development based on knowledge has led, itself presents a problem to mankind; and if the problem is not solved mankind may be crushed by the conditions which he has partly helped to bring about. As has been already emphasized, the danger lies in the presence of a struggle for existence and in the steady intensification of that struggle through conditions between individuals and between states. That struggle, far from being an aid to moral progress, checks the realization of moral values. The prevailing conditions, because of their complexity, give rise to complex motives; and the conflicting nature of the conditions gives rise to conflicting motives. These conflicts of motives either lead to nervous collapses or

neurotic conditions or else they lead to the development of conflicting "ways of life," on the basis of which classes of individuals sometimes in conflict with each other are formed. An individual becomes identified with "a way of life"; he develops secondary desires towards particular means; and becomes habituated to these, his emotional life centering in certain methods and objects. His "interests" become identified with this way of life; and because of this a serious obstacle is presented to progress. The whole conditions of an individual's life may create motives which lead the individual to oppose any change and they may thus act as a check on progress.[1]

§ 7.

Relation between Moral Progress and Knowledge.

Since there exists in human life a tendency towards the good in the form of desire, the burden of progress falls upon knowledge as its condition. The rôle of knowledge assumes two forms. In one knowledge leads to man's manipulation of nature and a consequent creation of new conditions. This change in turn brings into play new motives; and where the conditions become less severe and mitigate the struggle for existence, the motives lead to more desirable forms of action and the presence of more desirable human qualities. Harshness and cruelty decrease; respect for life increases, and in general the bonds of sympathy, co-operation, and community become stronger. Professor McDougall, on the other hand, maintains that imaginative sympathy overcomes social barriers, that the struggle for existence is thereby intensified, and that this severe struggle leads to progress. "It is," he says,[2] "the progressive extension of the sphere of imaginative sympathy which, more than anything else, has broken down all the social barriers that confined the energies of man and has set free their various faculties in that competition of ever-growing severity which is the principal cause underlying the modern

[1] Vid. chap. x, "Desire and Desirability."
[2] *Group Mind*, p. 294.

progress of peoples." Sympathy, however, is impotent to overcome social barriers where the struggle for existence is keen. It is that struggle which creates social barriers and crushes out sympathy; and the latter will extend at all only if the barriers are already decaying from other causes, and if they now have no strength to resist, or if there is seen to be no reason for maintaining them. The struggle for existence may lead to progress in knowledge, but not to progress in morality nor to a general spread of knowledge, for those who have it will hold it in their own hands along with the power it brings.[1] Social sympathy will extend only when social barriers are removed or are losing their power of resistance; and that will happen only when the struggle for existence lessens. Until this happens social sympathy may be entertained by some as an idea or an ideal; but it will not be a fact of social life; and in the face of social obstructions it will remain powerless. The disappearance of obstructions to it will be secured only by knowledge and control of conditions, so that a real identity of men's interests can be established; and that disappearance will lead to the liberation and the play of those human qualities which are ethically valuable.

The second form in which knowledge plays its rôle in progress is in connexion with moral beliefs and moral rules. Human action is directed by beliefs. Men act in certain ways, in the sense that they utilize particular means or causal factors to reach the end desired, because they believe particular things concerning objects and natural processes. But beliefs may be false as well as true; they may be founded more or less on accurate knowledge; knowledge can thus play a part in morality through beliefs; and morality, so far as it means and rests on moral rules and beliefs, can be advanced through making beliefs conform to knowledge and the real nature of things. A system of morality that involves beliefs founded on the nature of the real is higher than a system founded on falsities, untruths,

[1] It is noteworthy that knowledge has spread, in the first instance, because those who made the discoveries have not entered into the intense struggle for existence but have remained aloof, content with a minimum and often precarious existence.

or superstitions. It fits into the real more effectively; and it contains within it in virtue of that a guarantee that the good will be attained with greater certainty. Hence systems of morality, because they involve beliefs and rules, may be more or less true. But we have to remember that a person who acts according to the accepted moral rules, however false they may be in virtue of the falsity of the beliefs on which they rest, is held to be morally right and morally justified. The Roman setting out on any project was influenced in his actions by the behaviour of birds, because of certain beliefs of a causal nature entertained concerning the flight of birds; and the Roman considered it his duty to act according to these beliefs or the rules of conduct founded on them. Hence a further feature of moral progress appears, which furnishes a means whereby moral progress can be in certain respects tested. The test is whether the moral rules and beliefs on which action is founded are theoretically true. Hence, first, as was previously maintained,[1] there is no ground for opposing knowledge of the real and scientific knowledge that is of use only for action; and, second, as man's knowledge of causes and effects, man's knowledge of the real, increases, moral rules and beliefs and thus duties may change,[2] as well as multiply.

§ 8.

Progress and Innate Qualities: McDougall's View.

The conclusion which is accordingly to be drawn is that progress does not turn upon innate qualities. Progress is not to be explained by means of innate qualities, nor does it lead to the development of innate qualities. The preceding discussion has led to the rejection of innate qualities, in any sense that these can be observed and discovered apart from the conditions in which the organism is placed. Any attempt to estimate progress on the basis of innate qualities will be fruitless. Professor McDougall, though he retains

[1] Vid. chap. ii.

[2] A fact which shows the relativity of moral rules so long as they are not based on scientific knowledge.

the idea of innate qualities, still admits that human progress has not consisted in any great change of innate qualities.[1] "There have been no considerable changes of innate qualities; and what changes have occurred have probably been of the nature of retrogression, rather than of advance or improvement; and this is true of both intellectual and moral qualities. The improvements of civilized peoples are wholly improvements of the intellectual and moral traditions." "The mental development of peoples in the historic period has, therefore, not consisted in, nor been caused by—nor in all probability has it been accompanied by—any appreciable evolution of innate intellectual or moral capacities beyond the degrees achieved in the race-making period, before the modern nations began to take shape. There is no reason to think that we are intellectually or morally superior by nature to our savage ancestors. Such superiority of morals and intellectual power as we enjoy has resulted from the improvement and extension of the intellectual and moral traditions, and the accompanying evolution of social organization." What the discussion throughout the preceding chapters has endeavoured to establish is that intellectual and moral progress refers to objective situations or conditions; and that the qualities which manifest themselves in human beings depend upon conditions and beliefs concerning these conditions. Any retrogression that has been noticeable is attributable to motives brought into play by conditions which man has not been hitherto able to master and direct to what is desirable; and the control of conditions in particular, based on scientific knowledge, will liberate the higher qualities of man. Considered apart from conditions, the system of moral beliefs, and the system of knowledge, man from the moral point of view simply becomes an undetermined X, a reservoir of all potential qualities.

[1] *Group Mind*, pp. 267 and 269.

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED
PRINTERS, LONDON AND WOKING