

CONSCIENCE & FANATICISM

AN ESSAY ON MORAL VALUES

BY
Henry Lane Fox
GEORGE PITT-RIVERS

"Æquam memento servare mentem"



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PREFACE

IN presenting this little volume to the public I am fully conscious of my presumption in introducing my personal views in a region where many hundreds of better qualified writers have devoted their best efforts. Since, however, no apology can justify a profitless task, if such it be, or add to its utility, if indeed it possesses any, I will not attempt to make one.

If I have contributed in ever so slight a degree towards an understanding of the mental state or attitude we call fanaticism, for the purpose of guarding against the catastrophes it begets, I shall have achieved my purpose. It is unfortunately inevitable that a discussion which involves current opinions and beliefs must necessarily encounter strong prejudices and opposition, but it is less on this account that this little work is likely to fail than for the reason to which Hume attributed the failure which attended the publication of his "Treatise of Human Nature," which he described as his guilt "of a very usual indiscretion, in going to the press too early." A circumstance which prevented that "unfortunate literary attempt from reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots." *

* Hume's "Autobiography."

Needless to say, I have relied for my interpretation of human notions and ideas, and the conduct which results from them, very largely upon the works of past and contemporary writers; and my indebtedness to those with whom I differ no less than those with whom I agree is but very inadequately acknowledged in my references to the works of some of them.

The earlier portions of the essay are devoted chiefly to an examination of moral ideas, the latter portions more exclusively to the facts of nature and of mind from which they derive their meaning. Throughout I have attempted to keep the argument as free as possible from the thin air of philosophical and scholastic dialectic, and as far as possible in terms of common usage and thought. With this end in view, and for the sake of brevity, the authors to whose works I have referred most frequently have been selected either because they are better known or because their opinions are more widely held than in the case of others. But in any case no claim to exhaustive or even adequate treatment can be made for so slight a review of so vast a subject.

The first problem which I have attempted to deal with is one which confronts all moralists. It consists in the difficulty of deriving ethical notions from notions which are not ethical, or of deducing the moral law from the facts of experience and of nature. The attempt to escape from this difficulty often takes the form of adopting

a theory by which the whole world is divided into two unrelated worlds, a world of values and a physical world of mechanical sequences. In order to bring these two independent and self-consistent systems within the same reality and to weld them together, God is postulated. God is necessary, it is argued, to prove the objectivity of morality. That is to say, that since moral values are eternally valid, independently of man's capacity to be conscious of them, they can only have existence in the one eternal mind.*

The purpose of this essay is to offer a different solution. As this question of the status of moral values is of great importance to the moral argument, a preliminary examination of the ground may be helpful.

The predication of value to an object which elicits moral approbation is not, as most Theistic writers stubbornly maintain, an implicit acknowledgment of the objectivity of the goodness predicated, it is merely the act of appreciating the subject or valuer's attitude in relation to the object (the relationship may be purely hypothetical), but it may, and usually does, invite a similar attitude on the part of any number of subjects.† The relation of subject to object—

* This is the position of the Idealistic schools and is adopted in Professor Sorley's recently published Gifford Lectures, "Moral Values and the Idea of God."

† This relationship may be expressed in psychological terms. Dr. McDougall expresses it thus: "Objects have value for us in proportion as they excite our conative tendencies; our consciousness of their value, positive or negative, is our consciousness of the strength of the conation they awake in us."—"Body and Mind," p. 329.

this also applies to all relations—may belong to objective reality, but not the moral worth we ascribe to the object as a result of that relationship. This distinction is important and involves, necessarily, a discrimination (not always made) between the treatment of knowledge and of value. Hume, by denying the objective character of the relations and connexions of nature equally with moral judgment, in his interpretation of individual experience, treated moral judgment and knowledge of natural science in an identical manner. In the following discussion truth, to which I have denied relativity, is accorded a position altogether distinct from value. Appreciation of truth and interest in knowing is treated as a value, but not truth itself to which subjectivity is denied. The method I have adopted of treating this fundamental point may perhaps be made clearer by a simple illustration. Let us take any particular moral judgment, for example, "A [a conscious individual] is good." The assertion implies that A is the habitual doer of desirable actions, or is benevolently disposed towards the valuer, Society at large, or God, according to the valuer's idea of goodness. In any case A's conduct or his attitude must have evoked approbation by reason of its effect (emotional or material) upon the valuer or those with whom he is in sympathy. The valuer might attempt to refute this definition by maintaining that A's habitual conduct does him the greatest injury, but that his predication of good

in respect of A is the assertion of an objective fact. In spite of such an objection, I would reply that the moral judgment may indeed be intended to imply certain definite objective qualities or properties *because* the valuer considers these desirable, and chooses arbitrarily to define "good" as containing those definite properties, or because in the community to which he addresses himself they are customarily so defined. The veracity, however, of the moral judgment, considered as a statement of fact, can only be tested after an agreement has been reached as to the content of the symbol "good." It has then been given a meaning which alone it does not possess. The validity of moral judgment, when it is not merely the expression of individual attitude, will therefore always depend upon the criterion of conduct previously adopted. In this way it is held that a moral judgment differs from a statement of fact, which is valid irrespective of the existence of any mind capable of apprehending that fact.

In the last two chapters, where an examination of psychological processes has been necessary, I have experienced no slight difficulty in finding appropriate terms by which to distinguish certain conceptions which are in some respects new. An inapt terminology and the misuse of terms is so grave a fault, and so habitually results in errors, obscurity, and confusion, that it may not be superfluous to call attention to the terms that are more liable to misinterpretation and in many

ways least satisfactory. For this purpose it will be necessary to give the briefest possible account of the use to which they are put, while their more precise definition will be left to the chapters in which they occur.

The psychic life and the mental activity of human beings is conditioned by three factors. The first, heredity, denotes the accumulation of experiences and consequent structural modifications acquired by the race during the process of its adjustment to its environment; the manifestation of the result of this experience in behaviour is called instinct. The second is the result of the habits and acquirements of the individual from the moment of conception to the end of his existence: this, together with the first, produces what we call character. The third, those external influences operating upon the individual, we refer to as environment.

If we would reflect upon the mental life of humanity we must consider the individual mind in relation to the world of mankind. In considering the individual mind I have adopted the terms *objective mind* and *subjective mind* to denote two aspects of mind. The words "objective" and "subjective" in conjunction with mind are used in a special sense which has to be defined. The world of men has been considered as the psychic environment of the individual mind, and I have introduced a term to denote the power of aggregations of human thoughts and impulses. It has been viewed as an aspect of the universal

process underlying the conative disposition and will-to-power of all living beings, and on account of the mode of its operation it has been termed "cosmic suggestion." The term is not intended to imply that the psychic forces of the human mind can be "given off" and have separate existence, like the "odyle fluid" of the early Mesmerists. The power is that of collective minds; suggestion an effect of its activity, not a derived essence. It must be understood that these three terms are provisional, and will be discarded if, in the course of time, better ones suggest themselves.

Finally, I would crave the indulgence of my readers to say a few words about the philosophy of egoism. There is a view of egoism—the principle of self-interest—as distinguished from altruism, which is seen in opposition to asceticism and mysticism, a view which prompted Lecky when he wrote: "Taking human nature with all its defects, the influence of an enlightened self-interest first of all upon the actions and afterwards upon the character of mankind, is shown to be sufficient to construct the whole edifice of civilization; and if that principle were withdrawn, all would crumble in the dust. . . . When, therefore, the ascetic, proclaiming the utter depravity of mankind, seeks to extirpate his most natural passions, to crush the expansion of his faculties, to destroy the versatility of his tastes, and to arrest the flow and impulse of his nature, he is striking at the very force and energy of

civilization." How infinitely preferable is the spirit of enlightened egoism to the blind altruism of the fanatic ! The egoism that enhances rather than dims the love of others. It is only through the realization of community of interests and aims that like thought will result in like conduct. It is a recognition of this principle of systematic integration of interests and their concomitant obligations, starting from egoism, in the sense of a realization of the relation of self to environment, and then through successive stages of widening appreciation of the full contents of environment to the identification of the self with the community, which alone leads to State or National morality, and will lead, ultimately it may be hoped, to the morality of a community of all nations—that is, a world morality. It is for this reason that we say that the end and aim of a true ethical system is to find the interests of mankind in the interests of the individual.

And now, as we stand on the threshold of a new era—a new world in search of its soul—what better precept can we have than the simple words of the great thinker who, three hundred years ago, also stood on the threshold of a new world of thought ?

“ Il suffit de bien juger pour bien faire, et de juger le mieux qu'on puisse, pour faire aussi tout son mieux, c'est-à-dire, pour acquérir toutes les vertus, et ensemble tous les autres

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biens, qu'on puisse acquérir ; et lorsqu'on est certain que cela est, on ne saurait manquer d'être content."—Descartes, "Discours de la Méthode."

G. P. R.

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CONSCIENCE AND FANATICISM

I

INTRODUCTION

IN all ages conscience has been the theme of priest, politician, philanthropist and obstructionist. So often used and so seldom analysed, beyond a bare assertion of its function, it is curious to reflect on the strange medley of uses to which this word is put.

Conscience is at once the standard and the refuge of orthodox and fanatic, patriot and anarchist—according as they are described by admirer or detractor—but, let us believe with Lecky,* least often of the genuine hypocrite.

Never was a nation so beset with “conscientious” men and women as England is to-day ; some helping, some hindering, some having little effect on the national welfare. Some flaunt the badge obtrusively, they label themselves “conscientious objectors to military service,” “conscientious objectors to vaccination,” “conscientious teetotallers” ; in some cases anti-

* “Hypocrites, who from interested motives profess opinions which they do not really believe, are probably rarer than is usually supposed.”—“Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe.”

vivisectionists,* social reformers and (formerly) suffragettes proclaim their exertions endured for "conscience" sake"; so, for the most part, do missionaries and religious functionaries, and, in fact, all and any who engage in propaganda or obstruction, "because," they say, "something higher than reason prompts our motives—'conscience'."† Others refer to conscience shyly as of something too sacred to be spoken of publicly, and again others only in moments of intense earnestness—or alcoholic remorse.

A conscience, in fact, is an invaluable asset; where it does not gain approbation, it at least gains some measure of respect.

Most people, then, admit the existence and the reality of what we popularly call "conscience," and although fewer people are agreed as to its origin and nature, it is, nevertheless, accorded a high place of importance and almost universal recognition as an arbiter in the affairs of men.

So undisputed is this claim to inviolability of conscience in twentieth-century England that the State, in framing her laws, modifies their application by the interspersing of *caveats* in the form of "conscience clauses."

The principle on which the conscience proviso is allowed to negative the universal applica-

* A few years ago the Animal Defence and Anti-Vivisection Society distributed pamphlets from their headquarters in Piccadilly, beginning "Do not ask of your doctor his opinion on this matter, ask your *conscience*," etc.

† This distinction is commonly made between conscience and the intellectual faculty of reason; thus, when a man says, "My conscience tells me," he usually means, "No *reason* will deter me."

bility of the State's demand for service or compliance with her rules appears, however, to be somewhat arbitrary and uncertain, and can hardly be said to be devised solely in deference to any possible religious sanction, since, although a man's conscience is allowed to exempt him from vaccinating his children, the plea of religious sanction, in the case of a man professing the polygamous doctrine of Brigham Young,* would not exempt him from amenability to the law concerning bigamy; or, again, the conscience of a Quaker or of a Christadelphian† is recognized as a stronger qualification for exemption from combatant service than the equally recalcitrant consciences of, e.g. an Atheist or a Member of the Church of England. Yet the standardization of "privileged" denominational consciences is strongly disavowed! In spite, however, of a certain illogical inconsistency in practice, it is virtually conceded as a right that a man should justify any conduct by the plea of "conscience," even, in many cases, when it militates directly against the good of the State.

Even more than the State and public opinion does the Protestant Church insist upon the authority and inviolability of "conscience." Driven, step by step, from the time of the Reformation, by the encroachments of science and the

* Mormon leader and preacher, died in 1877, leaving seventeen wives.

† The establishment of *bona fide* membership of either of the above-mentioned religious societies (*inter alia*) by a "conscientious objector" was recognized by Military Service Tribunals (acting under official instructions) as sufficient cause for a verdict of exemption.

progress of Rationalism, from her defence of the infallibility of Doctrine and Scripture, the Protestant Church has sought to render her position impregnable by increased insistence upon the inviolability and sanctity of revelation and conscience. Lecky, speaking of the trend of "Protestant Rationalism," says: "Its central conception is the elevation of conscience into a position of supreme authority as the religious organ, a verifying faculty discriminating between truth and error."*

The most recent stalwarts of the Church of England are equally insistent upon this point, thus the Rev. G. L. Richardson writes: "We shall appeal to and invigorate the conscience in proportion as we rely upon the Holy Spirit as the one source of spiritual power. . . . 'The fellowship of the Holy Ghost' and His grace through the Church is the master word of the twentieth century."† This passage well illustrates the supreme importance, with regard to her position, which the Church attaches to the appeal to conscience at the present day. In another passage the same author says, "the authority of conscience is . . . paramount for the individual." Dr. J. N. Figgis in his "Churches in the Modern State" says that any doctrine which would "destroy the springs of spiritual life in the individual conscience would be disastrous to civic as well as to religious life."

* "Rationalism in Europe," 1913 edition, p. 167.

† "Conscience, its Origin and Authority" (1915).

Having raised the individual conscience to a pinnacle of ethical omniscience, the ecclesiastic next proceeds to bring it into line with, or rather into synchronous subordination to, the aggregate "Church Conscience." "The Church is a Divine society, her members will feel an obligation to be loyal to her discipline. . . . The conscience of her members will respond with approval or shame when they keep, or neglect to keep, her standards." From this the resulting "code and sentiment" is the "Church Conscience." *

Mr. G. K. Chesterton throws further light on this interrelationship. "The 'Church Conscience' is rather to be conceived as a fortress to which the individual may return for shelter and strength when the attacks of temptation threaten to overwhelm him. At such times it is well to feel that we are not dependent on the 'inner light' of conscience alone, but that we can throw ourselves on a social force mightier than our own, and behold with astonishment and enthusiasm a Divine company and a Divine Captain." †

Whilst Church and State are in agreement regarding its importance and sanctity, the same unanimity is not exhibited in dealing with the origin and character of conscience. Equally divided in this respect are the philosophers and psychologists.

Priests are fond of telling us that conscience is "the voice of God within us." To some men

* "Conscience, its Origin and Authority," p. 150.

† "Orthodoxy," p. 187, quoted by G. L. Richardson.

it appears strange that the voice of the same God should frequently induce men to oppose each other with such particular bitterness. This objection is sometimes met by the explanation that although it is the voice of God speaking through the medium of our souls, we fail to recognize or interpret rightly its significance. This explanation, again, is not altogether satisfactory, since, if that were the case, the voice of God must be so uncertain a guide it were better not to rely on it.

When we look back through the pages of History and consider the actions of men and the motives to which they ascribe them, and see what an orgy of blood, of persecutions, of burnings, of torturings, of blind passions and religious frenzy, of diabolical imaginings and monstrous eschatology has been conceived at the instigation of conscience and religion, and prescribed in the name of God, we are inclined to inquire more deeply into the meaning and credentials of this watchword of all ages.

II

THE VALIDITY OF MORAL JUDGMENTS

ANY investigation of the phenomenon of moral conduct, and of its interpretation, brings us face to face with two sets of conflicting theories. These may, for convenience, be roughly divided into the two principal schools of thought which have been termed respectively the "Moral Sense" or "Intuitive" schools and the "Rationalistic schools of ethics." Certain writers in their search for the springs of moral conduct have attempted to place the issue between Naturalism or Determinism (by no means synonymous or necessarily connected) on the one side, and Theism on the other*; and, in their eagerness to discredit the former to the advantage of the latter, imagine they demolish Determinism (at any rate in the ethical sphere) by "pushing it to its logical conclusion" and by showing that it "has connected completely and indissolubly, as far as observation can carry us, mind with matter; it has established a functional relation to exist between every fact of thinking, willing or feeling, on the one side, and some molecular

* See "Conscience, its Origin and Authority," p. 25.

change in the body on the other side, and man, with all his ways and works, is simply a part of nature, and can, by no device of thought, be detached from or set above it." *

What, after all, is involved in the acceptance of such a conclusion? What is there to fear? To concede this, it is thought, would mean to relegate man to the position of a mere "automaton," freed from "accountability to God, responsibility to man, and the fears of conscience."

So far from ridding man of responsibility, the clear recognition by him of the true nature of his environment and antecedents, the laws by which they influence him, and his inherent capacity of resistance—in other words, the two processes observable in the world, action contrary to, and action along, the line of least resistance †—does, on the contrary, greatly increase his responsibility of action and his power to know himself.

Is not mind and matter subject to the same law? Do they not react to the same God? What matter, then, if we adopt the formula of Pampsychism and assert that "all individual things are animated albeit in divers degrees"? or endorse the conclusion of Professor James Ward, who "finds no ground for separating organic life from psychical life"? and continues: "All life is experience. We cannot therefore assume that experience has no part in the build-

* W. H. Mallock, quoted by Richardson.

† Professor James Ward uses the terms "anabolic" and "catabolic" processes in this connexion, also in a sense analogous to the distinction between doing and suffering.

ing up of the organism, and only begins when viable organism is already there."*

The belief that there can be no life without mind does not necessarily imply that there can be no mind without body. As John Stuart Mill pointed out, Determinism does not imply Materialism, a man may be a spiritual being but yet subject to the law of causation. Neither does it deny the dynamic character of will, but allows that not only our conduct but our character is in part amenable to our will. The causality involved in human actions would, however, enable any one who knew perfectly our character and our circumstances to predict our actions.

Such considerations, however, although contributory, do not, of themselves, decide the question with which we are here concerned, namely, What is the real meaning and what the authority of "conscience," or of that mental act which takes place in our minds when we call certain conduct "right" and certain conduct "wrong" ?

Apart from the question of the ultimate sanction of moral conduct, there have always been two explanations of the mental act variously known as "ethical judgment," "moral faculty," "moral sense" or conscience. On the one side there have been those who considered that moral judgment was an emotion, an intuition, or instinctive recognition of right or wrong, which implied no rational or intellectual process beyond

* J. Ward, "Heredity and Memory," 1918.

that which is involved in registering or perceiving the fact. And on the other side there have been those who treat moral approbation as essentially an act of judgment—the result of the reasoning and intellectual function of the mind.

The earliest exponents of a morality that in no way depended upon the work of Reason were the ancient Epicureans and Cyrenaics; since for them good was pleasure and evil was pain, the sources and tests of all ethical truth were necessarily, in consequence, the feelings and emotions.

In the eighteenth century there arose a school, associated with the names of the third Lord Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson, the Scotch philosopher, which became known as the “moral sense” school, widely different from the old hedonistic philosophers, since they were the first to assert the existence of a distinctively ethical, as opposed to a merely pleasurable, feeling.

The philosophers of the “moral sense” school attempted to prove that there existed a distinct moral “faculty” which differed from all other perceptions or ideas, in that it was a separate medium by which men could recognize ethical truth, which was rather a matter of the heart than of the head.

As a result of the attacks of the various rationalist schools this idea of a “moral faculty” has been for the most part abandoned by those who approach ethics from the Religious or Theistic standpoint, for they are far more concerned to establish the “Divine authority” and

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sacrosanct character of conscience than influenced by psychological or metaphysical distinctions. For the most part such writers are content to assume that "conscience" is the knowledge of one's own soul with regard to questions of right and wrong, but insist on that element of Divine Guidance which alone, they think, can give it the necessary authority and sanctity.

The Rev. G. H. Richardson* defines conscience as "the whole personality acting ethically; or, more precisely, conscience is the reaction, pleasurable or painful, of the whole personality in response to a human or Divine standard."

It is neither wholly emotional nor wholly rational, but "is sensitive to motives of which the pure reason would take no account; it is more akin to instinct than intelligence." Yet "without reason, conscience would be blind impulse, though it might feel the consciousness of obligation."†

Clearly, then, conscience can derive little validity from intelligence; the concession to the Rationalists does not amount to much; it might almost get on without reason altogether. It is the Divine authority of conscience which, for the Theistic writer, is the factor of prime importance.

"As we are bound to trust reason in the intellectual sphere, so we are bound to trust conscience in the moral sphere. To deny the authority of the one or the other is to distrust the Power

* "Conscience, its Origin and Authority," p. 69.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 67 and 68.

in whom physical and moral law have their source. The authority of conscience is thus paramount for the individual; it will be better for me to do what is objectively wrong, but what I conscientiously believe to be right, than do what is in fact right, but what my conscience disapproves.* ”

Here the writer appears to abandon his Rationalistic friends altogether; the fanatic is given free rein, his ravings are sacred.

Dr. H. Rashdall, who by many is considered representative of rationalistic ethics, insists on the “objectivity of moral judgment. Feelings or emotions possess no objectivity; and ‘without objectivity,’ in the words of Eduard von Hartmann, ‘ethic has no meaning’.”†

The all-important task for the Theistic writer is to establish the factor of Divine impulse. “Therefore we say that conscience is a fundamental form of man’s personal consciousness of eternity; that ineffaceable certainty that the relation of Duty, with Responsibility and Judgment, is not a relation which stands and falls with our relations to the world and to men, but in its essence is a relation to the holy and Almighty God. . . . Additional force seems to be given to this way of regarding the Authority of conscience if we consider that its activity is set in motion by an impulse from the Divine Personality.” ‡

* “Conscience, its Origin and Authority,” p. 96.

† Hastings Rashdall: “Is Conscience an Emotion?”

‡ “Conscience, its Origin and Authority,” p. 99.

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Bishop Butler refers to conscience as the "voice of God," and as "supreme among human faculties"; and this is endorsed by Richardson, who finds that Theism is essential to any doctrine of conscience," because the alternative is "destructive of its authority."

Let us now summarize the Theistic conscience, variously described in different passages, in the author's own words: "Its activity is set in motion by an impulse from the Divine Personality, and does not originate in the individual nor the world," yet it "reacts to public opinion," is "often unreasonable and inconsistent," is "subject to evolutionary growth" and is "not infallible," is "capable of *infinite* variety of interpretation" and "reacts to a human standard," which, however, "trails some clouds of glory from its Divine original"; and in conclusion, "If we regard conscience not as a phosphorescent gleam playing upon the surface of consciousness, but as a vital impulse, partly rational, partly instinctive, welling up from the depths of Personality, we shall not run the risk of denying its authority."* It would be well, however, not to underestimate the risk, although it undoubtedly caters for a great variety of tastes.

Allied to the Emotional school for the purpose of proving conscience are those Rationalists, of whom we have taken Dr. Rashdall as an example, who have for an object the establishment of the

* "Conscience, its Origin and Authority," pp. 99, 95, 96, 70, 72 and 78.

"objective" validity of moral judgment. The real contention becomes clearer; the chief point at issue is the question of authority.

We see, then, that there are two points to be decided: (1) the ultimate validity, with which is connected the question of the Divine Authority, of moral judgments; and (2) the mode of recognition, with which is connected the cause or propellent which induces moral action.

Rashdall summarily dismisses the dual character of the problem in a phrase. "The question at issue between Rationalists and Emotionalists is not what impels me to do a virtuous act, but how I know it to be virtuous."* The connexion between motive and judgment is too closely related to be thus calmly ignored. It is agreed that the motive does not affect the intrinsic character or "rightness" of an action, but at the same time it most certainly does affect a man's *estimation* of his action; and this, in order to arrive at the value of moral judgments, is most obviously relevant.

For Dr. Rashdall the distinction between how I know my action to be right or virtuous, and how it is virtuous, does not exist. Both imply recognition or statement of indisputable fact; for him there can be no ultimate doubt as to the character of moral "good," which can in no way be a matter of opinion, for good is *sui generis*: it is good and nothing else; happiness may be good, honesty may be good, but good is good for

* "Is Conscience an Emotion?" p. 118.

no other reason than because such an abstraction is supposed to exist as a transcendental fact. "Therefore good can be recognized just as any axiomatic truth can be recognized; as, for instance, the fact that $2 + 2 = 4$, or two straight lines cannot enclose a space." How is it then that people even of the highest intelligence do not invariably agree about what *is* good or morally right?

There are no two opinions about whether $2 + 2$ does, or does not, equal 4, yet there is no such general agreement about what is right. If asked why a thing is right or good most people would reply either by giving a reason to show that it is *desirable* or else by quoting the authority of some one else's *ipse dixit* (in which case it is inferred that the authority quoted had some reason for supposing it desirable). The reason that $2 + 2 = 4$ is, on the other hand, that there can be *no* possible alternative. Yet is it true to say that there can be no possible alternative to what the consensus of opinion in any one country considers morally right? Some things that are considered immoral in England are considered moral in Japan, and *vice versa*.

Dr. Rashdall, however, conceives of but two alternatives in estimating moral values, the first of which he dismisses, because on this view "our moral judgments could possess no objective validity." He says: ". . . I examined the question whether our moral judgments are in ultimate analysis merely statements asserting the existence

of a particular kind of feeling in particular minds, or whether they are intellectual judgments of universal validity—judgments, of course, of a very peculiar and distinctive kind, but just as much intellectual and universal judgments about the nature of Reality as the judgments $2 + 2 = 4$, or ‘this is a good inference and that is a bad one’.”*

It is difficult to know whether this arbitrary elimination of the subjective element from ethical judgments, and the attempt to translate moral values into terms of mathematical formulæ, is intended to denote the infusion of a mystic factor into the “exact sciences,” or an attempt to reduce metaphysics and morality to rule of thumb! The following thesis, however, which will be elaborated in the course of this discussion, is based on a synchronous realization of rational principles and psychological processes.

Thus, what an individual conceives to be morally right and good, when he is conscious of having acted so according to his own standard, may be either :

(1) Wholly irrational, illogical, anti-social and undesirable (from every point of view except his own), even though arrived at solely by an intellectual and reasoning process ; or

(2) An entirely instinctive, blindly impulsive or emotional action, afterwards endorsed by the intellect (i.e. subsequently rationalized) ; or

(3) The result of thoughtful deliberation, carefully and logically designed to bring about certain

* “Is Conscience an Emotion ?” p. 52.

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preconceived "moral" ends such as social happiness, justice, fulfilment of duty; all of which are artificial and conventional standards, and good *only* because they are *desirable*, not because they are universally valid—irrespective of time, locality and circumstances; or

(4) Any combination of these three.

The foregoing applies as much to the aggregate moral consciousness of a community in different stages of civilization, or in varying states of emotional abnormality, as to the individual conscience.

It can also be shown that the "communal conscience" reacts upon the "individual conscience" in inverse ratio to the latter's emotional or intellectual capacity for resistance; and that the "communal conscience" (identified at a later stage of this inquiry with "Cosmic Suggestion") is the integral product of the numerical and dynamic strength of the convictions of the members of the community, and operates upon the "individual conscience," either consciously or subconsciously, in the same way that "Suggestion," according to the law discovered by Liébeault and employed by the Nancy School, operates in hypnotic phenomena.

It will then (if this view can be established) be shown that the factors of conscience are: (1) emotional, (2) intellectual, (3) internal (including hereditary and organic elements), and (4) external (environment—material and psychic); and that its validity, in ultimate analysis,

can but rest on codes, which may be not only Conventional and Artificial, but also Rational or Intellectual, Social and Utilitarian ; and in any case variable, in the same way that the soundest and most logical policies must, to a certain extent, be variable, or capable of adjustment as circumstances change ; the only elements which should be constant and invariable in any policy (which is not a misnomer) being logic and truth. So it is with rules of conduct.

As regards the purely internal sanction of our actions and thoughts, that is to say, our relationship with Ultimate Reality, which is God or the Law of Existence, there is only one conception of the latter which seems to comprehend the infinite with the finite, and that is Force, because it is the continuity of Existence, or after the manner of Leibnitz : " Substance, the ultimate reality, can only be conceived as force." Any moral law which may be said to be fundamental in itself and independent of circumstances will be in relation to force. But such " laws " will also be independent of the moral imperatives and written codes, for they are independent of volition—of the will to obey them. Can a man be possessed of love, greatness, nobility, courage, honour, at a word of command ? Therefore if it can be truly said that " love is the greatest thing in the world," it is because it is the most powerful force. Hate is disruptive, disintegrating and annihilating ; love is integrating and strengthening.

But there is yet one " good," one fundamental

imperative which needs no proof, and that is Truth—ultimate truth, because it is the statement of what Is; without which logic, or, indeed, intelligible language, would be impossible. But truth is not opinion, or assertion, or hope, or faith, or in the words of Huxley “those idols built up of books and traditions and fine-spun ecclesiastical cobwebs.” Truth and all its derivatives—honesty, integrity, truthfulness and sincerity—have an intrinsic value of their own, for their negation implies the negation of the principles of Existence.

But men require more than this, they require a “moral code” or standard to give coherence to their relationships; this code, then, is that which is desired, or imposed, and this want is most efficiently supplied by the principle of “Utility.”

III

THE MEANING OF MORAL OBLIGATION

THE author of "Conscience, its Origin and Authority," attempts, after the manner of priests, to demolish the Utilitarian principle of morality by stating that the Utilitarian must, to be logical, justify any means if the end is desirable. As though the Utilitarian and not the Theist was for ever trying to show that the intrinsic character or value of an action depended upon the motive (which must be distinguished from the *intention*; a man who saved another from drowning in order to put him to death afterwards would be influenced by an intention to murder, but the motives were: first, desire to rescue, and, for the subsequent action, desire to kill). Mr. Richardson writes: "The Good and the Right possess their authority to the Utilitarian because they tend to the greatest possible happiness of the greatest number of sentient beings. Now suppose a case which I do not think actually happened, but which may easily be conceived as happening. Suppose that Cecil Rhodes deliberately caused the South African War, as many people believed at the time. This would be characterized (and

was, in fact, characterized) as an immoral act of unscrupulous aggression. But he might defend his action thus: "Granted that so many thousands of soldiers and citizens will be slain, and the land cleared of its inhabitants. In a few years the land so cleared will produce increased harvests of gold and grain. More food will mean an increase of human productiveness and an increase of population; thriving townships and farmsteads will support a people more numerous and richer in the comforts which make life desirable than could have existed without my action. Therefore on the Utilitarian hypothesis my action was right and good, and deserved, not reprobation, but approval."

Not only is this position not admitted by Utilitarians, but John Stuart Mill long ago pointed out that such a hypothesis "is to mistake the very meaning of a standard of morals, and to confound the rule of action with the *motive* of it. It is the business of Ethics to tell us what are our duties, or by what test we may know them; but no system of ethics requires that the sole motive of all we do shall be a feeling of duty. . . . The great majority of good actions are intended, not for the benefit of the world, but for that of individuals, of which the good of the world is made up; and the thoughts of the most virtuous man need not on these occasions travel beyond the particular persons concerned, except so far as is necessary to assure himself that in benefiting them he is not violating the

rights—that is, the legitimate and authorized expectations—of any one else.” *

This is sufficient refutation of such objections to Utilitarianism as the one brought forward by Richardson, and clearly founded on a misconception.

Mill, in what is still the best defence of this system, continues: “Utilitarians . . . are . . . of opinion that in the long run the best proof of a good character is good actions; and resolutely refuse to consider any mental disposition as good, of which the predominant tendency is to produce bad conduct.” †

“The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.” ‡

The Theistic writer says “the essence of morality is sacrifice.” §

The utilitarian morality does recognize in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others. It only refuses to admit that sacrifice is itself a good. A sacrifice that does not increase, or tend to increase, the sum total of happiness, it considers as wasted.

As regards “conscience”: the Utilitarian, when he attempts an analysis, realizes that “in that complex phenomenon as it actually exists,

* “Utilitarianism,” 15th edition, p. 27.

† *Ibid.*, p. 30.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

§ Richardson’s “Conscience,” p. 151.

the simple fact is in general all encrusted over with collateral associations derived from sympathy, from love, and still more from fear; from all forms of religious feeling; from recollections of childhood and of all our past life; from self-esteem, desire of the esteem of others, and occasionally even self-abasement." *

For the priest "ethics cannot be built securely upon anything less than religious sanctions, and it is for the sake of conscience that ethics have a practical value." †

Can an honest and unbiased thinker doubt that the first is the truer statement?

Let us now return to a further statement of the position of Utilitarianism as dealt with by J. S. Mill. From Professor Sidgwick and those Utilitarians who attempt to claim for the atheistic moralist a conscience of mathematical accuracy we are unlikely to derive much assistance.

"According to the Greatest Happiness Principle, the ultimate end, with reference to, and for the sake of which, all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people), is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality; the test of quality, and the rule for measuring it against quantity, being the preference felt by those who, in their opportunities of experience, to which must be added their habits of self-

* "Utilitarianism," p. 42.

† Richardson's "Conscience," p. 211.

consciousness and self-observation, are best furnished with the means of comparison." *

This, according to Utilitarians, is also the standard of morality.

In conformance with this principle of moral obligation, we choose the greater before the lesser good. Between General Morality and the obligation of Duty, with which he associates justice, Mill draws what appears to be a somewhat unnecessarily hard line of distinction, inasmuch as the difference may be seen to consist more of degree than of kind. Other ethical writers make the same distinction when they divide moral duties into the two classes of perfect and imperfect obligation, "the latter being those in which, though the act is obligatory, the particular occasions of performing it are left to our choice, as in the case of charity or beneficence."

If, in assessing the "amount" of good, we take into consideration, besides the categories of quantity and quality, a third category of "proximity," it would, I think, prove a useful qualification by enabling the Utilitarian Good to embrace all moral obligation, including legal Duty, which is considered by Mill apart from general morality. By "proximity" it is intended to imply that the nearer good is more binding than the further good, which may in some measure counteract the value of "quantity and quality" where these are involved, and when a decision between conflicting moral obligations has to be made.

* J. S. Mill, "Utilitarianism."

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Though this additional category of Good may not altogether abolish the distinction which Mill makes between general morality and justice or duty which may be obligatory by law, it appears to amplify and extend the scope of the principle of Utility.

"Duty," in the words of J. S. Mill, "is a thing which may be exacted from a person as one exacts a debt. Unless we think that it might be exacted from him we do not call it his duty."

From this it might be assumed that there could never be any doubt about what is a person's duty, since when any one owes another or the community a debt, he is clearly conscious of it, even to the amount. In the case of right conduct which implies Duty, this, however, is not always so clearly recognized, especially when Duty implies Allegiance or Responsibility.

In this connexion we may say that the good we do for our own country is a nearer good than the good we do for an alien country, therefore if doing the good involves a choice we should choose our own country ; for the debt we owe to our own country is greater than the debt we owe to humanity at large. Equally the good we owe to our own family is nearer than, and therefore comes before, the good we owe to society. To this most people will accede, and, in fact, the realization of this is at the base of all sense of Responsibility ; thus every man, in whatsoever capacity he is acting, whether as statesman, county councillor, soldier or head of a family,

should put the considerations of the body he represents or belongs to before all others; and finally he owes it to himself—or God*—to be true to himself, even before he can be true to another, in the sense that keeping faith with a friend will not excuse a man acting dishonestly or untruthfully towards himself. And this for the reason that Truth is independent of Utilitarian valuation, since Truth alone is an *a priori* and self-evident “good”; by its very meaning it is a statement of “what is,” temporally as well as ultimately; as such it must be a statement of indisputable fact, not opinion or faith which rests on assertion. Since more things are capable of being proved untrue than ultimately true, it follows that as a criterion of conduct its value is chiefly negative. It can thus be shown that lying, deception, breach of contract are wrong *per se*, for truth is the basic principle upon which all others depend, and the necessary postulate of the idea of God, whilst the value of our positive acts must for the most part depend upon some such standard as the Greatest Happiness or Utility principle.

As an illustration of the “nearer is the greater good” principle may be cited the line taken up by Disraeli when the controversy over the opium trade between India and China first came to the fore. Disraeli firmly refused to ruin our export

* The idea of God personified is often used as standing for a symbol or norm of ideal conduct, bearing an affinity to the ideal self or ego. The theory of conduct maintained here is therefore equally applicable to Theist or Atheist.

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trade in opium for any quixotic considerations involving the moral effect upon the Chinaman, whilst it in no way implied a breach of faith with him.

Less clear is the question of precedence when two primary obligations are conflicting ; primary obligations are here intended to mean those obligatory duties which may rightly be exacted from a person by reason of his indebtedness to the corporate body to which he belongs, or which he represents, and which is entitled to a preference in the good he does.

For instance, it may sometimes be said that a man's duty to his country as a soldier conflicts with his duty to his family as its sole support ; both are primary obligations ; as long, then, as allegiance to one does not involve a betrayal of the other, which could only be if their interests were fundamentally opposed and directed against each other, both obligations must be equally acknowledged, and a *via media* discovered to satisfy the claims of both to an equal extent.

Should, however, this confliction of interests be so direct and antagonistic as necessarily to involve an overt repudiation of the claims of one or the other, as in the hypothetical case of a soldier being ordered to execute the members of his own family, his conduct, supposing him to be actuated by a desire to act solely in conformance with ethical considerations, would be determined by his judgment as to which course would promote the greater good or Utility, having regard to the

categories: quantity, quality and proximity; the "nearer" in this case undoubtedly being his family, though this fact alone would not necessarily outweigh the other values of quantity and quality. In certain Eastern countries it would possibly appeal to a man's sense of appropriateness to be the agent by which the crime or dishonour of his relative would be expiated.

A man is often heard to claim that his moral duty towards himself, in other words "his conscience," absolves him from the fulfilment of another primary duty or obligation. As I have attempted to show, the only real or *a priori* duty which a man can prove he owes to himself, and therefore has a right to place before any other clear duty derived from the fact of his membership of any community or corporate body, is his obligation not to violate Truth, which is a statement of reality, *not of opinion*. Thus no other duty can rightly oblige a man to perjure himself.

If this maxim is accepted, it will be seen that a deadlock of this sort between a man's duty to his country as a citizen and his duty to himself or his "conscience," could rarely occur in a civilized or rational community. Against this a man might argue that he had solemnly vowed not to shed human blood, either as a soldier or otherwise, and that he is right to resist any attempt to conscript him for the army, since he would thereby be required to perjure himself. The answer is simple, for the man clearly violated his duty to his country in the first place by vowing he

would deprive his country of his services should they be required, a right which no country has ever forsworn and which is considered the natural return due for free citizenship and state protection; these conditions are presumed to be accepted with the benefits of citizenship and protection of person and property; his first violation of duty towards his country will therefore not absolve him of a second.

Neither can it be shown according to this principle that a man is entitled to take an oath of this nature, regardless of potential conflicting obligations, on the score that such an oath is merely in conformance with the postulates of Truth, since the question of the Rightness or Wrongness of shedding blood under all circumstances is not susceptible of ultimate proof, but must remain finally on the authority of an *ipse dixit*, or of Utility.

Thus far we have examined to some extent the purely ethical basis on which the idea of priority of duty, as evinced by conscience or reason, rests: the sanction of conscience which rests on religious authority is dealt with elsewhere.

To further illustrate the "nearer good" principle with which we have been dealing, it may be profitable to refer to a passage from an account of the life of General Robert E. Lee, Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate troops during the American Civil War, a devoutly religious man, and a life-long member of the Protestant Episcopal Church.*

* N. B. Webster in "Chambers's Encyclopædia."

“Colonel Lee was in command of the department of Texas in 1860, but was recalled to Washington early in 1861, when the ‘irrepressible conflict’ between the free and the slave states seemed imminent. When Lee reached the capital in March 1861, seven states had passed ordinances of secession from the Union, and had formed the Southern Confederacy. Virginia seceded from the Union on April 17, and Colonel Lee, believing that his supreme political allegiance was due to his state rather than to the Union, felt compelled to send his resignation to General Scott, which he did on April 20. The bitter struggle between his personal preferences and his high sense of duty is shown in the words of his wife written to a friend at the time: “My husband has wept tears of blood over this terrible war; but he must as a man and a Virginian share the destiny of his state, which has solemnly pronounced for independence.”

Lee’s action in choosing the “nearer” duty to his own state in preference to the duty he owed to the Union as a soldier and a citizen, even against his personal preferences and, as far as one can discern them, his religious opinions, affords a striking example of the principle I have been attempting to illustrate.

Whether his decision was arrived at spontaneously and impulsively, or as the result of deliberation, is immaterial as affecting the “rightness” of his action. Equally immaterial is the possibility that he might have arrived at an

opposite conclusion whilst still employing the same principles, by judging that the categories of "quantity" and "quality" outweighed that of "proximity." Whenever clear duties are mutually annihilating, which fortunately is very rarely the case, the problem will always have to be solved, if it is solved with scrupulous honesty, by a careful balance of values, whilst the result at best cannot be infallible.

What stands out, however, in this case, is the triumph of clearly recognized duty founded on "nearer" indebtedness, and so of responsibility, over lesser indebtedness, even though the latter was reinforced by personal predilection and religious sentiment.

IV

RELIGION AND MORALITY

As long as morality is regarded as a Divinely implanted principle, subject to no laws beyond the caprice and changing mood of a personal Deity, the essentials which underlie our conduct are lost sight of. Morality, that is to say those moral codes which are observed and recognized, consists of the imposition of values; but the meaning and the virtue of those values lie in the policy which will produce desired results. Moral values are subject to constant revision as world influences affect our outlook. Our endeavour should always be to probe the essentials. As long as morality is thought to depend on "Revelation" and religious superstition, the essentials are lost sight of. The connexion between Religion and Morality is arbitrary, and since Religions owe their power to the fear of the Unknown, and the virtue of Morality depends upon the necessity of conforming to that mode of conduct which will produce known results, Religions tend to mask the essentials in Morality and make it unreal.

Morality is held to include two distinct principles; moral obligation, or conduct towards

others, and conduct towards, or the debt we owe, ourselves. We are here concerned chiefly with the first; the second—those rules of conduct which concern only ourselves, are bound up with the purpose of existence, with the ultimate end. Moral obligation has arisen out of the necessity for co-ordination and system in our mutual relationships. Without a moral code, social life would become chaotic and impossible, comparable only to the state of Russia under mob rule in the year of grace 1918—a state immeasurably more degraded than that of Britain in the era B.C.; the early Briton like the modern Kafir, at any rate, gave vent to his predatory and murderous instincts, for the most part, outside his own little tribe. The imposition of some recognized rules of conduct, safeguarding the security of life and property, is as necessary to the community as the existence of a coinage for the negotiation of commercial bargains; in fact it is more so. The two are analogous: the moral code must give effect to that first and universal principle of ethics expressed thus, “Do unto others as you would they should do unto you,” which is only another way of saying, “You may expect others to treat you as you intend to treat them in similar circumstances.” Hence the standardization of rules of conduct becomes a principle of Utility. Altruism has nothing whatsoever to do with it. Even indignation at the spectacle of acute suffering needlessly inflicted on animals, where considerations of reciprocal treatment on

the part of the animal do not apply, is correctly based on the offence such a "discordance" causes to the æsthetic sensibility of the cultivated, or the induced sympathetic discomfort of the many. In many natures the pain-suggesting spectacle, or even the mere thought of it, spontaneously evokes anger, which seeks satisfaction in the punishment of the author of its occurrence. The only rational or intellectual process involved in the resulting "moral judgment" is, as a rule, confined to a realization of the pain-suggesting idea, and the direction of vengeful impulses against the offender, while the consequences or ends of conduct in no way determine the judgment. The particular idiocy of the anti-vivisection agitation is obvious. We are here, of course, purposely considering, *not* actual and arbitrary morality, but the essentials upon which all moralities are based. We shall deal more fully as we proceed with those psychic and emotional factors which do, in fact, colour and distort all moral values. To return to our analogy—we may say then, that a conventional moral rule stands for the credit of national morality, much as a five-pound note stands for the credit of national wealth.


However wise a code of morality may be, it is necessarily artificial. It has grown up to suit the peculiar circumstances and demands of race, climate and time. The basic reason for its existence is too often encrusted and disguised by fears, superstitions and illusions, perpetual

creatures of the human mind ; the essentials are often lost sight of or forgotten, and Truth is parodied as the principle that gave birth to the ecclesiastical chimera which forms the edifice of modern cults. Is it surprising, then, that morality is garbed in the changing coat of a chameleon ? That what is held moral to-day is immoral to-morrow, and that what is held immoral here is moral elsewhere ?

The second and deeper morality concerns ourselves only. It demands an answer to the eternal question : What is the Ultimate Good ? One great imperative stands out pre-eminent : we must be true to ourselves. He who would seek the truth must himself be true. Without truth there is no creation, no progress. But before we can be true to ourselves, we must know ourselves ; that is the problem we are considering—knowledge of the ego.

Some men are content to supply synonyms for the Ideal—for Perfection, the goal of endeavour—imagining they are thereby showing the way. Others realize the first task must be to cleanse the way of the inadequacies and perversions which masquerade as the whole Truth, as the “ word of God.”

The Ultimate Good cannot be translated into the petty codes of human convenience, neither can it be deduced from the wanton phantoms of man’s wild fancy, called religion, which, by attempting to expound everything, explains nothing.



What is religion? Is it the search for truth? Is it not an attempt to clothe our conception of the Infinite in terms finite?—the result being grotesque, bearing no relation to existence, a lawless chimera, born of man's dread of the unknown, an amorphous fantasy fashioned out of the distorted visions of man's hopes and fears, modelled, amended and shaped in course of time in accordance with the postulate of man's nature—man the religious animal!

Science cannot give us the whole truth and admits it! "Absolute beginnings or origins are beyond the pale of science."* But religion professes to know and is disproved at every step. It is when Religion refuses to learn that she is harmful; because her values are false and her thought retrospective that she is inadequate. It is not because the religions of the past and their legacies to-day cannot prove the Transcendent that they should be discarded, but because they attempt to prove it and turn the world into chaos in so doing. It is not only because, in the words of Huxley, "everywhere priests have broken the spirit of wisdom and tried to stop human progress by quotations from their Bibles or books of their Saints," that the old religion is outgrown, but because it is daily growing more and more impotent.

Whether for good or evil the influence of religion on the conduct of men daily grows less. Religious fanaticism is gradually giving place to

* Professor J. Ward.

secular and political fanaticism, whose votaries shriek in the name of Democracy, Socialism or other watchword of Utopia, ever attempting to impose new moral values bearing as little correspondence to reality as the old values. Neither can recent attempts to express the old religion in terms of modern thought revive that which is perishing of inanition. Huxley wrote thus of the attempt : " If the religion of the present differs from that of the past, it is because the theology of the present has become more scientific than that of the past, not because it has renounced idols of wood and idols of stone, but begins to see the necessity of breaking in pieces the idols built up of *books* and traditions, and fine-spun ecclesiastical cobwebs, and of cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions by worship, ' for the most part of the Silent Sort,' at the altar of the *unknown and unknowable*. . . ."

We have no desire to follow in the wake of an unprovoked attack on the churches, our concern is the defence of a rational, against the imposition of an irrational, code of morality.

But ethical systems are still built upon the fantastical dogmas of religious or political visionaries. " Ethics," say the former, " cannot be built securely upon anything less than the Religious Sanctions." The rules which govern the practical conduct of life must conform to " divine laws " which in their interpretation have passed through a metamorphosis as varied and dissimilar as the habits and customs which dis-

tinguish the twentieth century from the second ! Was it a sign of the security and infallibility of ethics founded on religious beliefs that Christian England as late as the beginning of the Eighteenth Century * sanctioned the execution and torture of harmless old women for the imaginary crime of witchcraft ? It must be remembered that the moral code of the period, enforced by the laws of the land, reflected contemporary religious thought. Lecky, referring to the causes upon which witchcraft depended, says : † “ It resulted, not from accidental circumstances, individual eccentricities, or even scientific ignorance, but from a general predisposition to see Satanic agency in life. It grew from, and it reflected, the prevailing modes of religious thought ; and it declined only when those modes were weakened or destroyed.”

The fact is, as most impartial students of psychology admit, that both religious and political ethics owe far more of their character to the “ emotional cravings ” combined with the interested propaganda current in the age, than to any real value they may possess from a utilitarian or, assuming the Divinity to be rational, from a Divine point of view. Ibsen has truly said that moral values are dependent on power-conditions ; morals, politics and law are to a great extent shaped and propelled by might-conditions, by the fancied needs and interests of dominant classes ;

* The last execution for witchcraft is believed to have taken place in Scotland in 1722. See Lecky’s “ Rationalism,” 15th edition, p. 185.

† *Op. cit.*, p. 82.

but the greatest factor in power-condition is psychic; the greatest world-propellant, the *ultima vires*, is more mind than muscle; it is this great world force which I have spoken of as Cosmic Suggestion.* Too little may yet be known of this force to trace its means of transmission, but the reality of its existence can no longer be doubted. It has been described in the following way: there exists an effluence or force generated by, or resulting from, the molecular activity of each individual brain. These forces are constantly influencing the souls of men, encountering, overcoming, and repelling opposition, and reacting upon the conscious intelligence of the authors of their generation; or they may unite themselves into groups and operate collectively, forming a psychic stream of power.†

The fact of this power must be received into the monistic system as part of the one great law. A purely materialistic monism cannot contain it. Though we postulate a single law with a dual aspect or duality within unity, whatever hypothesis we assume will be of less importance than the discovery and co-ordination of the invariable laws of its operation. We accept the principle of "monism" not, I fancy, because we are compelled to do so by the logic of Haeckel, the great exponent of modern monism, or of his fellow-scientists, but because we are driven to do so without their help. The principle of oneness

* See definition in Preface.

† This description with a slight variation is taken from "Ibsen's Quintessence."

and unity, alone, is capable of satisfying our intellect, our sense of order and logic. There cannot be conflicting truths ; there cannot exist true systems which disprove each other ; all knowledge is complementary ; there cannot be true objective facts and equally true subjective ideals which contradict them ; otherwise the world is chaos and there is no reality. But if we know anything we know that matter is real and thought is real, and the law of their inter-relationship is within the same reality. No commonplace of science is more widely known or more firmly established than the law of the conservation of energy or of the persistence of force and of matter, which Haeckel calls the law of substance. Can we be content to believe that no force exists that is not susceptible to physical analysis ? Or does the first step towards the elucidation of the ultimate and unsolved riddle of existence, that is, the real character of substance or the cosmos, lie (as we believe) in the direction of reconciling the metaphysical with the monistic system ?

We seek no escape from the underlying principle of one universal law which determines all matter, life and energy ; but our monism must comprise the psychic factor. For us this cannot be stated in physiological terms. Force cannot be regarded as a pure attribute of matter. Recent advances in psychological research appear to endorse this view. It is, in any case, less important to insist upon one particular hypothesis, when much, at the present stage of knowledge,

is insoluble, than to appreciate by observation and introspection the laws that appear to evolve from it.

Haeckel cannot conceive mind apart from matter or, conversely, protoplasm without mind (for him they develop concurrently); yet why should the fact that both are subject to the same cosmic law invalidate the idea of the persistency of an immaterial force, which may even under certain conditions, or metamorphoses, break the partnership with matter; provided that the unit of psychic force is in itself immaterial?*

This psychic unit Haeckel terms *psychoplasm*, that is, the materialistic basis of mind in protoplasm. The laws of psychic phenomena, however, only appear intelligible when we concede that the *psychoplasm* possesses an immaterial aspect which, at a certain stage of development, may persist as "force," even after the disintegration of matter into its chemical components. On the other hand, it may, below a certain stage of development or intensity, lose cohesion and dissipate; organic matter, however, is never

* It may be objected that the idea of the conservation of the psyche is only intelligible on the assumption of a pre-somatic, as well as a post-somatic existence, or that it necessarily involves some form of transmigration. In place of any theory of the soul's preformation, I would prefer to view the origin of the soul as bearing relation to the epigenesis of the organic germ, bearing in mind that the organism is but the medium of the soul's activity and avoiding all dogmatism on the question of its ultimate destination. We should, however, remember, as Professor Ward points out, before we apply the formulæ of physical science to the realm of spiritual ends, of this fundamental difference: "Individuality is inseparable from mind and altogether foreign to matter, which loses nothing by disintegration and gains nothing by integration." ("Realm of Ends," p. 279.)

without it. The wonderful discoveries of recent psychological research, especially in the department of hypnotism, in the facts of memory and above all in the evidence lately forthcoming of the existence of telepathy, should encourage us to adopt a hypothesis which, to the materialistic philosopher, appears chimerical.* A final decision of the ultimate problem remains at present unattainable, its discussion is therefore of necessity speculative in character. But the need for recognizing the existence of a psychic factor, whose phenomena cannot be reconciled on a materialistic basis, makes its inclusion in the cosmic system imperative. This need is the greater in view of the tendency amongst an ever-increasing class to relegate all psychic phenomena to the chaotic realms of emotional thought, resulting in the propagation of the wildest fanaticism under such titles as Spiritualism, Christian Science or Theosophism.

There are two modes of thought and they lead in opposite directions: emotional assumption and analytical investigation; the two systems are illustrated by the world phenomenon of religious beliefs arising from a common source, and in their development splitting up, breaking away and varying, whilst all scientific knowledge unifies and becomes reconciled during its progress, all laws eventually resolving themselves into one. It is often said, and it is well to remember, that no system of human belief is without some

* See McDougall's "Body and Mind," 2nd edition, p. 349.

fact to sustain it. But when the great variety of antagonistic beliefs that have sprung from different conceptions of the same facts are taken into account, one must realize, as too few educationalists do, that the value of human opinions and beliefs depends far more on habits of mind and methods of assimilation than on the ultimate facts on which they are based, or the conviction with which they are held.

There are many people so ignorant of human nature and psychological fact that they imagine the truth of a statement may be demonstrated by the credulity with which it has been received, forgetting that faith fills the void of ignorance where scepticism is reserved for new ideas.

So long as education comprises the inculcation of beliefs founded on emotional assumption (it should be clear to any one who thinks on the subject that few beliefs outside the analytical and exact sciences are logically reasoned out from fundamental principles) and the facile repetition of archaisms is appraised as intellectual thought ; in short, so long as our methods are retrospective rather than critical, emotion and fanaticism will triumph over reason.

V

THE LAWS OF SUGGESTION AND "SUBJECTIVE MIND"

It has long been recognized that ideas rule the world, and that Power is the translation of ideas into material force, but the real nature of world forces and the elementary laws of their operation have been obscured by superstition and prejudice, and little attempt has been made to recognize their true significance.

The great world war has indeed emphasized the immense power of ideas. We hear much of propaganda and ideals. In medicine we hear more of "psychotherapy," or the treatment of disease by persuasive and hypnotic methods. We are aware, too, that our merchants have long known the practical and tangible value of advertisement, that is, the insistent repetition of a coloured statement until it is believed to be true, and that our priests, teachers and politicians have for centuries relied on this method alone. But for the most part these people have little real knowledge or understanding of the power they are using, and of which they are themselves the mere puppets. A supreme illustration is the real impotence of the various belligerent governments

to direct or cope with the immeasurable psychic forces now pursuing their cataclysmic course, and their inability to foretell the direction in which they are leading a bewildered world. Nowhere is this more graphically apparent than in Russia, whose kaleidoscopic upheavals have baffled all prophets.

I do not suggest that the causal origin of the European War is purely psychic in character, it may with greater certainty be found years before its disastrous developments, in the steadily increasing pressure of population, assisted by the gradual elimination of the natural checks* among the indigent and unfit† and the proportionate increase in the burdens of the fit, due chiefly to the growth of democratic ideas and trend of religious influences; this pressure found expression in policies of expansion among the more prolific nations, and in the case of Germany, where relief could not adequately be found in colonization, as a natural consequence engendered assiduous military and bellicose propaganda, which was bound eventually to culminate in a world war.

In order to facilitate a brief analysis of mob-psychology and public opinion, and to examine their rightful place in the science of psycho-

* The principal checks to population enumerated by Malthus were normally: vice, misery and celibacy or moral restraint, and such occasional resorts of nature to repress a too redundant population (an evil aggravated considerably in countries where population is forced to the limits of its means of subsistence by poor-laws and grants in aid of families), as wars and famine.

† The "unfit" denotes the diseased, criminals, paupers and lunatics. See "The Fertility of the Unfit," by W. A. Chapple, for an able exposition of the economic causes underlying the alarming increase in the unfit population.

dynamics and their relation to the hypnotic "law of suggestion," I have introduced the term Cosmic Suggestion. There are few thinkers who would attempt to deny that the same factors, processes and influences are observable in the formation of all classes of opinion, whether they are called religious, moral, political or artistic. It is, unfortunately, equally evident that reason, except in the case of scientific opinion, usually plays the smaller and emotion and desire the greater part in their formation. We say that this is unfortunate because emotion never brings us nearer the truth. Poets and ecstatic visionaries have sung the praises of emotion because to them emotion alone was real and the normal medium of truth. On the other hand the investigator is bound to arrive at a different conclusion. "Emotion" has nothing whatever to do with the attainment of truth. That which we prize under the name of "emotion" is an elaborate activity of the brain, which consists of feelings of like and dislike, motions of assent and dissent, impulses of desire and aversion. It may be influenced by the most diverse activities of the organism, by the cravings of the senses and the muscles, the stomach, the sexual organs, etc. The interests of truth are far from promoted by these conditions and vacillations of emotion; on the contrary, such circumstances often disturb that reason which alone is adapted to the pursuit of truth, and frequently mar its perceptive power. No cosmic problem is solved, or even

advanced, by the cerebral function we call emotion.”*

From the earliest times shrewd observers have commented on the ease with which the passions of men are inflamed and united, often by the least worthy of objects. Dr. Samuel Johnson, describing the progress of an agitator bidding for adherence, tersely remarks, “ale and clamour unite their powers, the crowd, condensed and heated, begins to ferment with the leaven of sedition.”†

Before proceeding further, it may be well to make a brief examination of the hypothesis most in accord with the results of recent psychological research and ascertainable fact.

It has gradually come to be recognized in scientific circles that recent advances in psychology have made it impossible to pursue that science any longer entirely on a physiological, anatomical and histological basis. It is now also hardly likely to be disputed that not only is consciousness not the sum total of man's psychic activities but that the greater part of them are subconscious or unconscious. Thus, according to Professor James Ward, “our threshold of consciousness must be compared to the surface of a lake, and subconsciousness to the depths beneath it, and all the current terminology of presentations rising and sinking implies this or some similar figure.”

* E. Haeckel, “Riddle of the Universe.”

† “The False Alarm,” a pamphlet on the Middlesex election of 1770.

Another writer in a recent publication makes use of an analogous illustration by describing human personality as an iceberg, the great bulk of which is always invisible and submerged.*

The matter is further complicated by the fact that within the domain of the subconscious there exists a vitality which cannot be traced to a cerebral or somatic source. Stated in broad terms it may be said that mind, or the sum total of Personality, must be viewed in two interactionary aspects: the primary consciousness and secondary consciousness, or the conscious and the subconscious or subliminal or (in a special sense) subjective, according to the various terms used by different writers to express the same thing.

For the purpose of greater lucidity, it has usually been found that this dual aspect of mind can be best expressed by treating the whole mental organization as consisting of two minds, each endowed with separate and distinct attributes and powers; each capable, under certain conditions, of independent action. It may be that a truer idea would be conveyed if the mind-whole was described as possessing certain attributes and powers under some conditions, and certain other attributes and powers under other conditions. As my object, here, is to enter no further into psychological questions than is necessary for the elucidation of those ethical

* "The Purpose of Education" (1915), by St. George Lane Fox-Pitt.

considerations which are dependent upon them, I shall give a short account of those theories which, in the light of present knowledge, appear best founded and afford most assistance in connexion with the subject of morality.

Thomas J. Hudson, whose hypothesis I shall make use of to illustrate my meaning, assumed for practical purposes that man has two minds. In making use to some extent of Hudson's theory, I do so not because it is necessarily correct, for his hypothesis was, admittedly, to a certain extent provisional; but because it was the first practical working hypothesis on which all psychic and hypnotic phenomena could be based, and because it has largely been used as a basis for subsequent elaborations.

In 1892, Hudson, in his "Law of Psychic Phenomena," said: "In more recent years the doctrine of duality of mind is beginning to be more clearly defined, and it may now be said to constitute a cardinal principle in the philosophy of many of the ablest exponents of the new psychology." To-day when psychotherapeutics have claimed the attention of students of pathology, and when at last the medical profession has almost throughout enlisted the co-operation and help of hypnotism, there are far fewer people who would deny the existence of that substratum of consciousness, distinct from the manifestation of the normal waking mind, which is so profitably studied in the phenomena of somnambulism, hypnotism and lunacy.

The briefest statement of the salient features of Hudson's hypothesis will suffice to enable me to suggest the irresistible conclusion that the prime factor in the formation of all opinion, collective and individual, the chief determinant of conduct, and the greatest motive force in the world, is analogous and co-relative to hypnotic suggestion.

Hudson was the first to attempt a clear definition of the rôle and nature of the two elements which constitute the dual mind. For the sake of greater clearness he speaks of these two aspects of mind as though they were two minds, possessing distinctive characteristics and a line of demarcation between the two, clearly defined. To continue in his own words: "Their functions are essentially unlike; each is endowed with separate and distinct attributes and powers; and each is capable, under certain conditions and limitations, of independent action." The author then distinguishes the two by designating the one *objective* and the other *subjective*. It is unfortunate that he makes use of a nomenclature in which these terms are slightly perverted from their legitimate meaning, or perhaps, as he expresses it, modified and extended, but since he prefers to use them rather than attempt to coin new ones, it will be necessary to employ them with reference to his law; in every case in which these designations are employed in conjunction with the word mind, or printed in italics, they will be used in this sense.

They are defined thus : " The objective mind takes cognizance of the objective world. Its media of observation are the five physical senses. It is the outgrowth of man's physical necessities. . . . Its highest function is that of reasoning."* In other words, the objective mind functionates from the brain and is susceptible of anatomical localization, whilst " the subjective mind takes cognizance of its environment by means independent of the physical senses. It perceives by intuition. . . . It performs its highest functions when the *objective* senses are in obedience. In a word, it is that intelligence which makes itself manifest in a hypnotic subject when he is in a state of somnambulism."†

Whether we call it soul or subjective mind matters not ; what matters is the fact that in all psychic phenomena there is sufficient evidence to show that the two aspects of mind interact according to certain observable principles. The main principle affecting man's mental organization on which Hudson builds his hypothesis is the Law of Suggestion, first discovered by Liébeault, the founder of the Nancy School of hypnotism, during his researches in 1866. It is this : that hypnotic subjects are constantly amenable to the power of suggestion. This proposition may be said to have been demonstrated as true beyond all possibility of doubt.

Starting with this discovery, Hudson, after

* " Psychic Phenomena," by I. J. Hudson, p. 29.

† *Ibid.*

defining the dual character of mind, introduces two propositions, namely : that the subjective mind is constantly amenable to control by suggestion, and that the subjective mind is incapable of inductive reasoning. Man in hypnotic state has invariably given sufficient evidence to show that the subjective mind accepts, without hesitation or doubt, every statement that is made to it.

With regard to this Law of Suggestion it is well to remember that, while the subjective mind is invariably and constantly swayed by suggestion, and is capable of offering no resistance except that which has been communicated to it by the objective mind, or which is inherent in its nature, the objective mind, on the other hand, is perpetually assailed by extrinsic suggestion, its capacity for resistance being in proportion to the dominant quality and development of the mind-whole.

The objective mind, it will therefore be seen, is potentially selective, that is to say, the measure of its quality is its capacity to select at will intellectual nourishment from the whole range of humanity and nature, free from the oppression of its psychic environment. The rare combination of this intellectual fastidiousness with a super-sensibility is the mark of true genius.

Every one is conscious that at times we become aware of impulses, inclinations and concepts which seem to form no part of our thinking or waking minds; they seem to come from the

depths of our souls in response to some vital need of our existence. When the tendency appears to be hereditary we call these promptings instincts* and consider it right to suppress them or hold them in check. We do not resign ourselves wholesale to unbridled licentiousness or anger because the reproductive instinct and pugnacity are inherent in our nature; on the contrary, we realize that our best interests lie in self-control. If, on the other hand, the impulse is less easily accounted for, if, maybe, the message of our souls runs counter to our normal instincts, our interests or reason, we are apt to assume that the impulse emanates from outside our nature and must have, many of us think, a supernatural or Divine origin.

It may be said then that most people distinguish "good" and "bad" impulses, or impulses which must be inhibited and impulses which should be followed at all costs.

Theology, as taught in the Sunday School, treats the subject somewhat after this fashion: "All mortals are assailed by the powers of Good and Evil; the vehicle of the Divine Will is 'Conscience,' the voice of conscience is the voice of God within us. Beware of the World, the Flesh and the Devil; the Devil calls to his

* Instinct in its more technical use denotes any inherited tendency to perform a specific action in a specific way when the appropriate situation occurs. In this use instinct should be discriminated from impulse, which may be (1) the sensation or feeling which prompts an instinctive action, (2) a similar prompting to an action which is not instinctive in the narrower sense, or which is characteristic of an individual only and not of a group.—Webster's Dictionary.

victims in the guise of the flesh." This idea is exploited for all it is worth in conjunction with the doctrine of original sin: the stock device of priestcraft to enhance the value of its own ministrations and sacraments. The spiritual teacher will usually "bring the lesson home" by a vivid description of the habits and idiosyncrasies of a Mephistophelian Devil with a particular liability to appropriate the "laws of our lower nature" for the sole purpose of baulking his equally anthropomorphic antagonist, the God of Jews and Christians, whose voice may be recognized in the pangs of remorse and self-debasement. A child subjected to this form of instruction during the most impressionable period of its existence is usually left for the remainder of its life with a vague distrust of nature, a proportionate reverence for the *super*-natural, and an impression that asceticism is the highest attainable virtue, together with a totally false appreciation of mental phenomena and the real value of self-control.

Every man should learn to know himself and seek the origin of his impulses. History is full of examples of men and women who believed themselves attended by guardian angels or familiar spirits who prompted their actions and gave them advice; Socrates was constantly attended by his *daimones*, and Joan of Arc used to hear "spirit voices." These and similar cases were evidence of the predominance of the subjective over the objective mind. In a normally balanced

mind the *objective* is in control; in the reverse process the objective mind is dormant and the subjective dominates the throne of reason. This is the case in dreams, trance, hypnosis and cerebral diseases. It is also the case, in greater or lesser degree, whenever the brain is stunned or is said to be "unbalanced" as the result of great emotional excitement or shock. It is then that impulse and instinct take the place of, or inhibit, rational thought. Impulses emanate from the subjective mind, and may result from the inherent nature and real character of the individual; or they may reflect the autosuggestions of the individual, or his bodily desires (this may be termed reflex-suggestion), or the suggestions of others; or, again, the latter, acting upon the subjective mind, may awaken related tendencies or inclinations and result in new complex impulses. Extreme cases of subjective control result in madness; the false premises conveyed by the disordered cerebral organs must result in deductions by the subjective mind of equal abnormality. Control by the subjective mind nearly always produces in the subject either a feeling of dual personality, in which two egos are realized, each distinct from the other—the old *me* and the new *me*—or else the subjective mind is identified with a totally distinct, extrinsic and usually superior individual; delusions of dual personality or demoniacal control are among the first recognized symptoms of Cerebral disease. The greatest and maddest

fanatics in history have usually attributed their powers to spirit control. Poets and artists have sometimes confessed that their most brilliant work was produced under conditions akin to trance; in some cases—Coleridge and Edgar Allan Poe are well-known examples—the state was artificially induced. Many have felt as though they were possessed by a mightier spirit than their own, which dictated while they merely obeyed.

Professor William James, after describing delusions of dual, alternating and superimposed personality, which are common symptoms of insanity, continues: "The literature of insanity is filled with narratives of such illusions as these... . One patient has another self that repeats all his thoughts for him. Others, among whom are some of the first characters in history, have familiar demons who speak with them, and are replied to. In another, some one 'makes' his thoughts for him. Another has two bodies, lying in different beds. Or the cries of the patient himself are assigned to another person with whom the patient expresses sympathy."*

If Macaulay is right in the following passage, "subjective control" would appear to be the essential condition for the production of poetry: "Perhaps no man can be a poet, or can even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind—if anything which gives so much pleasure ought to be called unsoundness. . . . Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry, but it is the truth

* "Principles of Psychology," vol. i, p. 377.

of madness. The reasonings are just, but the premises are false."*

Another often quoted passage, from Cæsar Lombroso's "Man of Genius," bears out the same thing: "Many men of genius who have studied themselves, and who have spoken of their inspiration, have described it as a sweet and seductive fever, during which their thought had become rapidly and involuntarily fruitful, and has burst forth like the flame of a lighted torch." "Kuh's most beautiful poems," wrote Bauer, "were dictated in a state between sanity and reason; at the moment when his sublime thoughts came to him he was incapable of simple reasoning."

Not the least remarkable of the powers of the subjective mind is its apparently absolute memory; not only are those experiences of which we have *objective* cognizance indelibly recorded, but innumerable occurrences in our environment, which pass unnoticed or of which we are even consciously unaware, seem to be registered by the subjective mind. Although it cannot be included in the term memory, implying conscious memory, we have good reason for believing that in common with all living organisms the subjective mind of men records not only the result of its own experience, but also is impregnated by those experiences of its ancestors which have been transformed into habits and have become innate, and that by this means only progress

* *Ex* "Essay on Milton."

and evolution are capable of explanation. This unconscious register of ancestral experience, about which we shall have more to say in another chapter, is here adduced as being an additional factor which must have considerable bearing on the nature of *subjective* impulses. The theories of unconscious and of "organic" memories* throw a great deal of light on the transmission of hereditary characters and of instincts. The very fact of the appearance of hereditary characteristics in, for example, young ducks hatched out by a hen, who persist in showing their ancestry by making for the first pond they see in spite of the astonished remonstrances of their foster-mother, points to race memory as the only solution.

Telepathy is again another factor in connexion with the subjective mind which must be taken into account. It has been described as the normal means of communication between subjective minds *en rapport*; the possibilities of its influence cannot be ignored. Is it surprising, when we realize the range, scope and complexity of the subconscious intelligence within ourselves, that its emanations are sometimes mistaken for messages from another world?

This brief reference to some of the more

* The theory was developed by Professor R. Semon of Munich, in 1908, who used the word "engrams" for "organic memories"; quoted by Professor J. Ward in a lecture on the *mnemic theory*, entitled "Heredity and Memory," delivered at Cambridge in 1912 and subsequently published. Professor Ward considers that greater emphasis should be laid upon the psychic than upon the physical impressions recorded by the "mind-stuff."

noticeable influences which affect the inherent character of the subjective mind may help to indicate the importance of the Law of Suggestion with regard to the theory of conscience (literally self-knowledge—but in practice more often lack of self-knowledge). This law can be most profitably studied in the phenomena of hypnotism, for the reason that “the objective mind, or let us say man in his normal condition, is not controllable, against reason, positive knowledge, or the evidence of his senses, by the suggestions of another.” (We have discussed his *potential* capacity for resistance.) “The subjective mind, or man in the hypnotic state,” on the other hand, “is unqualifiedly and constantly amenable to the power of suggestion.”* In this condition the subjective mind accepts unhesitatingly every statement that is made to it, no matter how absurd or incongruous or contrary to the objective experience of the individual. If the subject is told that he is a dog, he will instantly accept the suggestion, and to the limit of physical possibility act the part suggested. If he is told he is Napoleon, he will again act the part with wonderful fidelity to life. The suggestion of pursuing devils will send him into a lively terror. He will become intoxicated by drinking a glass of water under the impression that it is brandy. If told he is suffering from a high fever, his pulse will become rapid, his face flushed and his temperature will rise. “In short, he can be

* Hudson's “Psychic Phenomena,” p. 80.

made to see, smell, hear, or feel anything in obedience to suggestion." These are fundamental facts known not only to students of hypnotism but also very extensively to the general public.

Equal and complementary to the Law of Suggestion is the Law of Autosuggestion. Having accepted for purposes of clarity Hudson's view of the independent powers and functions of the two aspects of mind, it naturally follows that the subjective mind of an individual is as amenable to the control of his own objective mind as to the objective mind of another; in fact we have sufficient reason to know that it is more so. For instance, it is well known that a normal person cannot be hypnotized against his will, for the contrary autosuggestion of the subject negatives the suggestion of the operator. Even after a subject has consented to be hypnotized the settled habits of his life are sufficiently strong autosuggestions to defend him against the violation of his most tenacious principles. If, for instance, a hypnotic subject is conscientiously opposed to the use of alcohol, he cannot be persuaded to drink water under the impression that it is whisky. This fact is of the greatest importance in relation to criminology.

In this connexion the following passage from Moll's "Hypnotism" is of interest: "The more an action is repulsive to the disposition [of an individual], the stronger is his resistance. Habit and education play a large part here; it is

generally very difficult to suggest anything opposed to the confirmed habits of the subject.

“For instance, suggestions are made with success to a devout Catholic, but directly the suggestion conflicts with his creed it will not be accepted. The surroundings play a part also. A subject will frequently decline a suggestion that will make him appear ridiculous. A woman whom I easily put into cateleptic postures, and who made suggested movements, could not be persuaded to put out her tongue at the spectators.

“It is interesting to observe the way in which resistance is expressed, both in hypnotic and post-hypnotic suggestion. I, myself, have observed the interesting phenomenon that subjects have asked to be awakened when a suggestion displeased them.”*

It is a fundamental law of hypnotism that it cannot be used as an agent for the commission of a crime, that is, unless the subject is criminally disposed. It is obvious that the same rule applies to sexual crimes; Hudson lays it down as an unassailable fact that no virtuous woman ever was, or ever can be, successfully assaulted while in a hypnotic condition.

It will now be realized that autosuggestion embraces not only the assertions of the objective mind of an individual, addressed to his own subjective mind, but also his habits of thought and the settled principles and convictions of his whole life. The more intense these principles

* *Op. cit.*, p. 129.

and convictions are, the stronger the auto-suggestion will be, and relatively harder to be overcome by the contrary suggestions of another. It is a law of universal applicability that the strongest suggestion must prevail.

So far we have alluded only to suggestion applied during hypnosis ; it should be remembered, however, that it is now a settled principle of psychotherapeutics that suggestion also operates, and from a therapeutic point of view is sometimes more efficacious, in the normal waking or sleeping condition ; though in the latter case, without complete amenability, the results are seldom so striking. The condition in normal waking life which produces phenomena most closely resembling those of hypnosis is that of strong emotional excitement. We find, also, that in normal life suggestions of the greatest potency and having the most far-reaching effects are conveyed by means of emotional states. Although a close resemblance exists between the result of suggestion in hypnosis and the result of suggestion in normal and emotion states, similarity of result does not, as Dr. Bramwell points out in this connexion, necessarily imply identity of cause. In fact there are some important differences between the two conditions which produce the phenomena, as well as some distinctions between the phenomena themselves : whereas fear, hope, faith, religious excitement and kindred emotions are almost invariably present in cases which are cited as analogous to hypnotic ones, some of

these, such as fear and other violent emotions, effectually preclude the production of hypnosis, and further, subjects who are most amenable to emotional suggestions are often those whom it is most difficult to hypnotize.*

The principle of psychotherapeutics depends, as is well known, upon the close dependence of the organs and normal bodily functions upon the behests of the mind. Hudson expresses this in the form of a proposition, namely: "The subjective mind has absolute control of the functions, conditions and sensations of the body." Although this statement contains a very important principle we should not allow it to obscure the fact of the reverse process. As James, Bain and others have shown, antecedent bodily conditions often react directly upon the mind. The general truth, however, of the proposition may be readily preceived when we remember that perfect anæsthesia can be produced at the will of the operator by suggestion. The effect of mental stimuli upon functional conditions is also commonly observed under normal conditions in such phenomena as blushing, turning pale, the quickening of the pulse, fainting, etc., all of which should be sufficient to convince any one who gives the subject a moment's consideration of the very direct and instant way the mind affects the body.

Several typical examples of the influence of autosuggestion, or imagination, over intestinal action during sleep are quoted by Bernheim from

* *Vide* Bramwell's "Hypnotism," 3rd edition, p. 334.

the "Bibliothèque choisie de Médecine." They consist for the most part of recorded cases where, for instance, the subjects, having registered an intention to use a purgative the following day, have dreamt during the night with particular vividness that the dose had already been taken, with the result that, influenced by the imaginary aperient, they had awakened to yield to nature's demands, with the same result as if the dose had already been taken.

It may not be out of place to refer to another example from my personal experience of the potency of suggestion in affecting functional disturbances during sleep. During my first week at a public school, the dampness of the new climate brought on a bad attack of bronchial asthma, which I had not been troubled with for some time previously. The first bad attack occurred at night, when some noise had caused me to wake up. When I had recovered sufficiently to look at the time, I noticed it was 2 a.m. and at the same time heard the school clock faintly striking that hour. Fearing and half expecting another attack the next night; I asked that asthma powder and the usual remedies might be made available in case they were needed. That night, as I had feared, and for the next ten nights in succession, I woke struggling for breath, precisely on the first stroke of the school clock striking two, and experienced the worst attacks I ever had. They were undoubtedly induced at that exact time by the autosuggestion which

connected the symptom with the hour and by the conviction or fear, after the first experience, that the attack would recur at the same hour.

As we have already shown, one of the chief factors in autosuggestion is faith. This is, in fact, a fundamental principle recognized by all Faith-healers from Jesus of Nazareth onwards.

The cases during the present war where nervous aphonia and paralysis, popularly diagnosed with co-related cases of neurasthenia under the comprehensive title "Shell Shock," have completely yielded to simple suggestion by affirmation on the part of the physician and confidence on the part of the patient, must number hundreds of recorded cases. Excellent results are often obtained in cases of aphonia and paralysis by the suggestive influence of electricity applied to the vocal cords and the nerve centres. Bernheim * records several cures of this description. Smith and Pear † quote a striking but somewhat erratic case in which suggestion was conveyed purely by the faradic current. The case is recorded by Bläsing ‡ of a sailor on the German battle cruiser *Derfflinger*. "A seaman from the *Derfflinger* was brought into a naval hospital with loss of voice on December 22, 1914, and could only speak in a whisper. He stated that his voice had always been clear and well under control. At the beginning of December he had a slight cold, which

* "Suggestive Therapeutics."

† *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

‡ *Münchener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, June 15, 1915.

he attributed to sentry duty on deck in very stormy and wet weather. While in the ammunition chamber of the big guns, he was greatly upset during the firing and suddenly lost his voice. After fourteen days he recovered his speech. On February 12, 1915, he returned to hospital with complete loss of voice, immediately after the naval engagement in the North Sea. On February 15 he was treated with electricity, directly applied to the vocal cords, and on March 20 he was discharged with complete recovery of his speech. But on returning to duty, as soon as he went on board his ship, his voice was suddenly lost for the third time and he remained aphonic."

More spectacular, but not more wonderful than the cures of the professional psychiatrist, are some of the so-called miracles that fill the pages of religious history ; and they are less easy to explain, according to the invariable laws of suggestion, only in proportion to their lack of authenticity. There is no reason for doubting that thousands of remarkable and absolutely authenticated cures have taken place at the healing waters of Lourdes, or that many of the recorded cases of the cure of epileptics, blind, deaf and dumb and sick at the hands of Saints and others are substantially true. Many of these stories are, of course, embellished and exaggerated, while others are wholly fictitious, but the majority are based upon more than a foundation of fact. The one essential in all these cases is faith

in healer and patient. The truth of the hypothesis upon which that faith is founded has not the slightest effect on the efficacy of the cure. Hudson quotes the following passage from Bernheim: "Among all the moral causes which, appealing to the imagination, set the cerebral mechanism of possible causes at work, none is so efficacious as religious faith. Numbers of authentic cures have certainly been due to it." On this fact are based the numerous theories propounded by the different sects and schools of faith- and prayer-healers that exist to-day.

The conclusion is irresistible and obvious to any one not blinded by religious prejudice that whether the object of faith is real or false the result attained will be the same in either case. Faith will produce "miracles" irrespective of the premises on which it is founded. This accounts for the quite considerable success (apart from financial considerations) attained by "Christian Scientists" in spite of the self-evident absurdity of their tenets, and the fact that they are without the remotest conception of the real principles which underlie their so-called "science."

One of the most important and striking facts discovered by students of hypnotism is the complete recollection by the subject in the hypnotic condition of all he may have learned or forgotten in the normal state, and, in fact, of all he may consciously or unconsciously have experienced, and this recollection can be induced

at the will of the operator. The subjective mind is said to have a perfect memory, that is to say, it is capable of registering with unfailing accuracy every experience of the individual; for this reason hypnotic subjects have a range and wealth of knowledge quite beyond their waking abilities. It is self-evident that any forgotten fact that is recalled by an effort or at random, when an associationist explanation would be wholly inadequate, must have lain stored all the while below the level of consciousness.

As the factors of memory and heredity together have an important bearing on the growth of moral ideas, we may deal with the subject a little more fully. According to James, "The Stream of Thought flows on: but most of its segments fall into the bottomless abyss of oblivion."* "Retention means *liability* [the italics are the author's] to recall, and it means nothing more than such liability. The only proof of there being retention is that recall actually takes place."† His position is slightly modified some pages later, where he says, after recording a few cases of hypnotic memory: "All these pathological facts are showing us that the sphere of possible recollection may be wider than we think, and that in certain matters apparently oblivion is no proof against possible recall under other conditions." But adds: "They give no countenance, however, to the extravagant opinion that nothing we experience

* "Principles of Psychology," p. 648.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 654.

can be absolutely forgotten.”* The only reason he gives, however, for discountenancing this possibility is that he cannot find sufficient explanation for it. On the other hand, we believe that there is now ample evidence to show that all experience is retained in some portion of the psychic whole, and that although it may not have been consciously realized at all, it will still have been subconsciously registered. One of the cases most often quoted in illustration of this appears in Coleridge’s “*Biographia Literaria*”† and is here repeated since it is given by James and also at greater length by Hudson.‡ According to the author it occurred a year or two before his arrival at Göttingen.

“In a Roman Catholic town in Germany, a young woman, who could neither read nor write, was seized with a fever, and was said by the priests to be possessed of a devil, because she was heard talking Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Whole sheets of her ravings were written out and found to consist of sentences intelligible in themselves but having slight connexion with each other. Of her Hebrew sayings, only a few could be traced to the Bible and most seemed to be in the Rabbinical dialect. Many eminent physiologists and psychologists visited the town and cross-

* “*Principles of Psychology*,” vol. i, p. 682.

† Ed. 1847, vol. i, p. 117; also quoted in Carpenter’s “*Mental Physiology*,” chap. x, in illustration of his theory of “unconscious cerebrations.”

‡ Hudson’s “*Psychic Phenomena*,” p. 44, and James’s “*Principles of Psychology*,” vol. i, p. 681.

examined the case on the spot. All trick was out of the question; the woman was a simple creature: there was no doubt as to the fever. It was long before any explanation, save that of demoniacal possession, could be obtained. At last the mystery was unveiled by a physician, who determined to trace back the girl's history, and who, after much trouble, discovered that at the age of nine she had been charitably taken by an old Protestant pastor, a great Hebrew scholar, in whose house she lived till his death. On further inquiry, it appeared to have been the old man's custom for years to walk up and down a passage of his house into which the kitchen opened, and to read to himself with a loud voice out of his books. The books were ransacked, and among them were found several Greek and Latin Fathers, together with a collection of Rabbinical writings. In these works so many of the passages taken down at the young woman's bedside were identical that there could be no reasonable doubt as to their source."

James, who considered that phenomenal memories were accounted for by the exceptional persistence or permanence of the "paths" of thought, a purely physiological property of the brain-tissue of the individual, quotes a case within his own experience which, if we accept Hudson's theory, affords a typical illustration of the facility possessed by some men of drawing upon the knowledge of their own subjective minds.

"What these cases show is that the mere

organic retentiveness of a man need bear no definite relation to his other mental powers. Men of the highest general powers will often forget nothing, however insignificant. One of the most generally accomplished men I know has a memory of this sort. He never keeps written note of anything, yet is never at a loss for a fact which he has once heard. As an instance of his desultory memory, he was introduced to a certain colonel at a club. The conversation fell upon the signs of age in man. The colonel challenged him to estimate his age. He looked at him, and gave the exact day of his birth, to the wonder of all. But the secret of this accuracy was that, having picked up some days previously an army register, he had idly turned over its list of names with the dates of birth, graduation, promotion, etc., attached, and when the colonel's name was mentioned to him at the club, these figures, on which he had not bestowed a moment's thought, involuntarily surged up in his mind."

It is hoped that the foregoing has made it clear that a distinction exists between the normal or *objective* memory, or recollection, which is capable of cerebral localization, and the *subjective* memory, which appears to be absolute and without anatomical basis. The very fact that the normal memory is most efficient when the brain is healthy, and the remarkable powers of the *subjective* memory are seen to the best advantage when the brain is diseased or dormant, serves to emphasize the distinction. This, too, explains

the otherwise unaccountable fact that quite abnormal memories are sometimes possessed by imbeciles equally with men of genius, especially that type of ecstatic mind often mistaken for genius by the world. Mr. Bernard Shaw, laying great emphasis on the distinction, proclaims the domination of will, not reason, as the mark of genius in art.* But the distinction is superfluous and misleading: it is just that type of "genius" (?), fruitful when the *will* is anæsthetized and the range and wealth of the subjective mind given free play, whose works degenerate into decadent mysticism; it is when *reason* ceases to direct the course of genius that the *subjective* stratum dominates the throne; and the mind, fed and nourished by the deep-seated lusts of the body, grows mad with the exuberance of its own descriptive powers.

* "The Sanity of Art," by George Bernard Shaw.

VI

VALUER AND VALUATION

VALUE implies a valuer ; however universal or established a value may be, the term is meaningless unless it bears relation to people who value. No definition of value is possible, or at any rate satisfactory, that does not imply the judgment, choice, or assertion of a valuer in the act of valuing. The universality of a value does not make it objective or independent of valuers, but merely widens the applicability of that value with regard to any imaginable valuer. If this can be admitted, it follows that value cannot be made independent of the factors that determine or have determined the mental attitude of the valuer. For this reason I will attempt to give an account of some of the factors which bear directly upon man, the valuer, and less directly upon values in general and moral values in particular. The discussion will be under four headings : (1) Instinct and Heredity ; (2) Emotion ; (3) Judgment of Ends ; (4) Environment and Cosmic Suggestion.

(1) INSTINCT AND HEREDITY

We have already alluded to the part played by instinct in determining the initial character of

the ego. Instincts are here distinguished from the emotions to which they give rise. Without unduly stretching the meaning of the word "suggestion," in the sense of a prompting to action not specifically in hypnotism, instinct may perhaps be looked upon as the innate suggestion of heredity. The two primary factors held to be fundamental in shaping and influencing the character of the individual are environment and heredity. The question of the predominance of the one influence or the other is the subject of keen controversy, and coincides with the contingent problem of the relative importance of inherent and acquired characters.

It is now becoming increasingly evident that the problem of heredity is nearer a solution if viewed rather from the psychical than from the purely biological or material aspect. So we seek the solution of the secret in psychology. The vital factor in organism is psychic from protozoan to man, whether we identify it with "psychoplasm," soul, ego, or "subjective mind."

Those who put forward memory as the basis of heredity show that evolution implies the retention by organisms of their experiences in accommodating themselves to their gradually changing environment. Constant and reiterated striving in certain directions in this process of accommodation, until actions become automatic—free of effort—produces habit. In the words of Professor Ward: "This law of habit we may reasonably regard as exemplified in the life of every individual

in the long line of genealogical ascent that connects us with our humblest ancestors, in so far as every permanent advance in the scale of life implies a basis of habit embodied in a structure which has been perfected by practice." * Laborious observations have been recorded of minute unicellular creatures to show that they "succeed as we do, only by way of trial and error." Thus we are led to the conclusion that the acquisition of habits by the individual during his efforts to adapt himself to his environment, and transmitted down a long line of genealogical descent, is the method of heredity; and further, that man, in common with other animals, inherits all these racial and individual acquirements from his parents. Instinct, we have said, may be termed the "Suggestion of Heredity," which again is "race memory," or the evolutionary product of habits acquired during the process of man's adaptability to his environment. This, then, is the primary and fundamental determinant of the character and quality of personality. It is the quality which is inherent in a man from the moment he begins his individual existence, that is, from the moment the sexual cells of both parents coalesce in the process of conception and form a new stem-cell. Haeckel divides the instincts into two chief classes: the primary, which can be traced to the commencement of organic life—the common lower impulses inherent in the psychoplasm. The

* "Heredity and Memory," p. 15.

chief are impulses to self-preservation (by defence and maintenance) and the preservation of the species (by generation and the care of the young). These two, hunger and reproduction, are universally recognized as fundamental. The secondary were due to intelligent adaption; translated into habit, they gradually become automatic and "innate" in subsequent generations. The earlier these habits are acquired and ingrained in the life history of the race, the more invariable and immutable will be their transmission; the habits of a few generations are easily modified or effaced by conflicting tendencies or conditions. The life history of every new individual, in its initial stages, is a (more or less complete*) recapitulation of the life history of the race. The *earlier* ancestral acquisitions have been transformed into habit and have become secondarily automatic, the less are they liable to variation, and the more inexorable and unfailing will be their transmission. Thus Darwin showed the greater immutability of generic characters over later acquired specific characters. This applies to psychic as well as to physical characters. In the same way the earlier, during the course of his life, a man assimilates a strong suggestion, the greater will be its effect and the longer its influence will last.

Let us now consider instinct in relation to moral conceptions. Dr. McDougall gives promi-

* Processes known technically as palingenesis and cenogenesis, the former term denoting the more complete epitomized development.

nence in his "Social Psychology" to the following instincts, which, together with the emotional excitements which accompany them, play the foremost part in the evolution of moral ideas: (1) The reproductive, parental and erotic instincts, responsible for the earliest form of social feeling; (2) the instinct of pugnacity, with which are connected the emotions of resentment and revenge, which give rise, when complicated with other instincts, to indignation at anti-social conduct; (3) the gregarious instinct, which inclines animals to gather together in aggregations of their own species—this impulse has an important bearing upon the sympathetic emotions and is at the root of tribal loyalty; (4) the instincts of acquisition and construction, which have been developed with the idea of property, and the moral judgments connected therewith; (5) the instincts of self-abasement (or subjection) and of self-assertion (or self-display), with which are connected the emotions of "depression" and "elation"—the former instinct gives rise to feelings of respect towards superiors, divine or human, and the latter is the basis of self-respect.*

Other writers lay greater emphasis on a distinct instinct of Imitation. It is undoubted that imitation, both when it is spontaneous and when it is deliberate—the distinction between the two forms should be carefully observed—plays a great

* Dean Rashdall, who thus summarizes his position, is candid enough to admit the strength of McDougall's psychological analysis, which, however, he fails to see undermines his own position.

part in the formation of moral judgments. Theological and ethical writers are fond of saying that the sense of moral obligation arises from the consciousness of approval, and consequent imitation, of an ideal or a standard which is submitted to our judgment; this implies deliberate imitation. The imitative tendency (purely spontaneous) is strongly marked in every child in its first efforts at vocalization, which are pure "Echolalia," i.e. incessant repetition of the sounds it hears; in fact, imitation marks every step of a child's growing consciousness. Practically all phenomena, however, attributed to the imitative instinct is in reality a manifestation of response to extrinsic suggestion. James speaks of "the imitative tendency which shows itself in large masses of men, and produces panics, and orgies and frenzies of violence, and which only the rarest individuals can actively withstand. . . . Certain mesmerized subjects must automatically imitate whatever motion their operator makes before their eyes."*

To ascribe this tendency to a special instinct would be to disclose a faulty appreciation of mob psychology and the Laws of Suggestion. These panics, orgies and frenzies of violence, and similar vindictive or enthusiastic mob tendencies, are simply the natural response to mass or cosmic suggestion, as we shall see later.

The final and precipitate cause of these outbreaks is frequently the personal magnetism, or

* "Principles of Psychology," vol. ii, p. 408.

more correctly the suggestion, of one man. The qualities necessary for the exercise of this power—the secret of successful demagoguery—are not, as might be supposed, the possession of a dominant will and a constructive, purposive or tenacious intellect. It may be, indeed, that a great man of action, a Napoleon or Cæsar, arises, and by these sterling qualities dominates the masses and their attendant sycophants and demagogues ; but more usually the essentials are a gift for facile and frenzied oratory and the power of evoking emotional presentations, qualities possessed, *par excellence*, by madmen and fanatics, the Kerenskys, Lenins and visionaries of all times. Their powers are the more irresistible, it is true, if combined with a shrewd knowledge of correct methods of propaganda and lavish adulation, for the obvious reason that, as we have seen, the strongest suggestion is the one that is most acceptable to the subject and most in accord with his predilections. Nothing would be truer than to say that only the rarest individuals can actively withstand the onslaught of cosmic suggestion. It is significant that the greatest human type, the true genius, who appears most often in the great philosopher, less often in the great artist, and who possesses a superabundance of dominant will-power and constructiveness, is far less powerful than the great conqueror or politician ; for he commands intellect rather than emotion, and the world is governed by emotion.

It is not sufficiently realized that many so-called geniuses, imaginative, histrionic and poetical, can never deserve the highest place, for they are the sounding-boards of the world; their superlative quality is receptivity; they are instruments, not players; they voice the great masses, and they share with publicists and politicians a desire to be incriminated in the movement of their surroundings. Wieninger, in his "Sex and Character," emphasizes the dependence of publicists and tribunes of the people upon the masses they would lead. The politician, like the prostitute, has to court the populace; she is a woman of the streets—he is a man of the streets. For this reason he denies to the great politician and the man of action the quality of true greatness. "The man of action shares with the epileptic the desire to be in criminal relation to everything around him, to make them appanages of his petty self. The great man feels himself defined and separate from the world, a nomad amongst nomads, and as a true microcosm he feels the world already within him."

The really great men, the Kants, the Descartes, Leibnizs or Spencers, and the greatest artists are wholly creative, purposive, dynamic; they owe no allegiance to the masses, for they are greater than the masses; they realize all without reflecting all; they seek nourishment where they will, and they spew out what they will; this perfect freedom is necessary for the attainment of truth. Truthfulness is a necessary attribute of

genius, but not of statecraft or government, or of poetical effusions of the imagination.

While we are dealing with the subject of instincts it may not seem out of place to refer to the widely held belief that maternal impressions during pregnancy have a direct influence on the temperament of the child, and are often responsible for inducing definite tendencies of aversion and attraction and even physical resemblances. Although such acquired tendencies, admitting their existence, cannot strictly be classed with the instincts or tendencies inherited from former generations, since they are acquired after the inception of, and by, the new individual; yet they have a resemblance in that they are both pre-natal acquirements, and are manifested in the same way. Writers on heredity and biology are apt to dismiss the subject as unworthy of serious consideration, and to account for any instances of the sort attributed to this cause as based on pure coincidence. It is, however, significant that the great majority of mothers who have given the matter any thought are, as a rule, firmly convinced of the reality of pre-natal influences. When the principles of suggestion are applied to the case, it will be seen that the conditions of pre-natal existence are favourable for the reception by an unborn child of strong telepathic suggestions from its mother. The embryo mind is entirely receptive; any violent psychic disturbance in the mother must react upon the child. Most people know of some

instance which points to the "impression" theory, and which it would be impossible to account for in any other way.

There appear to be no reasonable grounds for denying that maternal impressions may sometimes be held accountable for temperamental tendencies, not easily attributable to heredity, although it would, of course, be absurd to attempt to account for all abnormalities in the same way. The naturally greater receptivity and suggestibility of women, shown by their quick response to emotional suggestion, their credulousness, and the fact that women are the best mediums,* becomes very much more marked during pregnancy. At such times some women, normally distinguished by their vigour and initiative, become conspicuously impressionable; they become, in fact, ready "conductors" of suggestion. It follows that the influences that bear strongest upon them also bear upon the child.

Greater importance should not be attached to the psychic environment of a child than to its inherent hereditary qualities, which irrevocably determine its native tendencies and the limits

* Many authorities deny that women are more easily hypnotized than men. It should, however, be remembered that emotional suggestibility does not correspond with susceptibility to hypnotic influence. The neurotic, weak-brained and hysterical, who are usually most susceptible to emotional suggestions in normal life, are invariably the most difficult to hypnotize, and on the other hand, as Dr. Bramwell points out, "Subjects who readily respond to suggestions when hypnotized are frequently the very ones who have for years resisted suggestion in the waking condition, even when this has been associated with emotional states." It is not, therefore, in hypnotic phenomena that evidence of the greater suggestibility of women is found.

of its ultimate possibilities. Environment may modify or enhance a child's inherent characteristics in an infinite variety of ways, but cannot nullify them or transcend by one iota the limit of its potential development.

In a previous chapter we discussed the view of those who regard moral judgment as an emotion or intuition of the "good" and the "right," and who find justification for our rules of conduct by referring them to the Divine Will, which is supposed to inspire them by means of the "moral organ" or conscience. We believe that a correct appreciation of psychology makes it abundantly clear that although there are many impulsive, instinctive and emotional factors totally unconnected with any rational or intellectual process which do, indeed, affect our moral judgments and give rise to ethical conventions, these factors can give no *validity* to moral codes; and that, stripped of the sentiments and emotions with which they are obscured, moral systems must be judged by principles of utility, while they are enforceable according to the universality with which they are desired. It is, moreover, equally absurd to look upon moral values as ultimate and irreducible categories of good and evil, irrevocably codified by an omniscient Deity for the conduct of humanity for all time, and supposedly accessible to the intelligence of all who consult their conscience. This latter position, which is maintained by Theistic "Rationalists," leads to precisely the same "conclusion" as the argu-

ments of the "Intuitionists," the only difference between them being that the conscience of the "Rationalists" is a thinking and intellectual organ, while the conscience of the Intuitionists is an emotional and instinctive organ. But this amicable convergence is not accidental but a *sine qua non*, since in either case the object aimed at is identically the same, that object being the establishment of conscience, dependent on morality, on a pinnacle of ethical omniscience and infallibility, where its authority shall be unquestionable and absolute. They may well be left to their quarrel, which in reality amounts to little more than verbal quibbling.

Instinct, as we have seen, must inevitably play a very large part in the evolution of public morality and the moral impulse of every individual. Careful statistics have shown that criminal tendencies make their appearance with unfailing persistency in selected degenerate families. The genealogical record of one family may show a murderer in every generation; pauperism, prostitution and drunkenness are characteristics of another, and so on. Heredity will primarily determine a man's inherent characteristics—his instincts, temperament, disposition and, *eo facto*, his "conscience." Other factors, above all his immediate psychic environment, may, indeed, modify these tendencies for better or worse, but under the most favourable conditions Cosmic Suggestion, in its aspect of

"public conscience," can never altogether supplant strong inherent tendencies. Those who believe in the conscience myth sometimes object that the voice of conscience always calls in the right direction, but that a man may, throughout a long life of crime, stifle and inhibit that "still small voice," yet in the end (perhaps when faced with the extreme penalty of the law) the wretched sinner will exhibit the symptoms of the most genuine and heartfelt remorse and express the greatest horror of his evil deeds. This type of explanation shows a total failure to interpret psychological processes. It may, indeed, be a common occurrence for a condemned criminal, brought suddenly face to face with the prospect of plenary punishment, to experience real sorrow and shame at his conduct. The emotion will probably be perfectly genuine. The prisoner, with little hope of enjoying the fruits of his felony and removed from the direct counter-influence of a criminal environment, will be in the best possible frame of mind to respond to the right cosmic suggestion—universal horror and detestation of his deed. Such a suggestion, reacting upon the instinct of self-preservation, will readily kindle emotions of remorse, self-horror and sorrow. Penitence need have nothing to do with any true ethical appreciation of the action of which it is supposed to be the object. Many cases have been recorded of miserable old women accused of witchcraft, who, learning for

the first time at their trial of the crimes they were supposed to have committed, have become convinced of their guilt, and suffering the keenest pangs of remorse have died with penitence and resignation.

Fear is the chief element of remorse : fear of our fellow-men, vague fears for the future, or in the most literal sense the fear of Divine retribution or God. Racine dramatizes this emotion in the famous confession of *Athalie* : filled with dread at the words of warning uttered by the ghost of her mother Jezebel, she recalls her vision :

Tremble, m'a-t-elle dit,
fille digne de moi ;
Le cruel Dieu des Juifs
l'emporte aussi sur toi.
Je te plains de tomber
dans ses mains redoutables,
Ma fille.

(2) THE FACTOR OF EMOTION

Unfortunately for the attainment of truth, nothing has a greater influence on the formation of human opinion and character, and is therefore more inextricably bound up with all questions of politics, religion, morality and art, than the complex mental state we call emotion. Nothing affects the well-being, health and happiness of mankind more directly.

Emotion may perhaps be defined as a continuity of complex presentations manifested in organic sensation. In a sense, emotion is feeling, which is the wider term ; it is an effect, which

therefore cannot exist without its cause, though the same cause under different circumstances may produce many varied emotions, both in quality and degree.

The visible manifestation of emotional disturbance need bear no relation to its intensity. People of the greatest nervous sensibility, in whom emotional excitements are most deeply and acutely felt, often keep their emotions best under control. They are not, of course, able to inhibit the involuntary or visceral processes which are affected by emotion: heart, pulse, salivary glands and respiratory system may indeed tell the tale; but the will may prevent the contagion spreading further: the intellect may remain calm, thought and action slow and deliberate, demeanour outwardly cool and collected.* The lower the level of will-power and intellectual development, the more closely dependent will all cerebral processes be upon emotional states and reactions; at the same time, the emotions become cruder, less complex and subtle and even less deeply felt. Children and savages are almost entirely emotional, in the sense that they think

* Cf. the following passage by Elliot Smith and Pear: "It must be understood that this suppression of the external manifestations of an emotion such as fear is but a partial dominance of the bodily concomitants of that emotion. The only changes which can usually be controlled by the will are those of the voluntary or skeletal muscular system, not those of the involuntary or visceral mechanism. . . . Men may feel intense emotions, obviously not of fear alone, for a long time without displaying any signs of them. But suppression of emotion is a very exhausting process. As Bacon says: 'We know diseases of stoppings and suffocations are the most dangerous in the body: and it is not otherwise in the mind.'"

emotionally and have no power of intellectual detachment.

Professor Ward describes the effect of emotion on thought very clearly as follows : " Emotional excitement—and at the outset the natural man does not think much in cold blood—quickens the flow of ideas. . . . Familiar associations hurry attention away from the proper topic, and thought becomes not only discursive but wandering; in place of concepts of fixed and crystalline completeness, such as logic describes, we may find a congeries of ideas but imperfectly compacted into one generic idea, subject to continual transformation, and implicating much that is irrelevant and confusing." *

There are few people indeed whose views on religion, politics, art, and the rights and relations of the sexes are not chiefly emotional values. We may think that our convictions are based on logical reasonings, but the force of childish impressions and associations, and the unresisted bias of passions and interests, are the processes by which they have been cultivated, and rational thought has been devoted to the task of finding reasons for the convictions that are ready made.

Emotion, as we have said, is a continuity of complex presentations whose elements are manifold ; it is a state of feeling subject to constant modification and expansion while experience develops. First among the causal factors which influence emotion are the instincts, others may be intellectual concepts, many more come from the

* Article on Psychology, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 10th edition.

substrata of consciousness, and of these many are strictly physiological in character ; for instance, there may be disturbances of the genital, vasomotor or digestive systems, cerebellar disturbances or latent molecular or biochemical nervous conditions, during which the mind responds to stimuli ignored under other or healthier circumstances ; but over all it is the inherent disposition of the immaterial psychic or subjective mind which gives the whole its tone and tendency. We must, indeed, admit with James that "a disembodied human emotion is a sheer nonentity."

With the psycho-physical problem as to whether sensory excitation is antecedent to emotional expression, or emotion gives rise to bodily expression, we are not here directly concerned. Since emotion is a continuous condition of experience, it may reasonably be supposed that organic disturbance is both a contributory cause and the reactionary result of emotion.* Most people admit that "each emotion is a resultant of a sum of elements," and that some of those elements are functional and organic, without admitting the contention of Professor James and

* For example, ereutophobia (fear of blushing) and tremophobia (fear of tremor) are abnormal psychoneurotic conditions which illustrate the reaction and interaction between psychical state and physical manifestation. Blushing and spontaneous tremor are reflex manifestations of the emotional condition, which in these cases increase in proportion to the fear of blushing or of tremor respectively. The physical phenomenon produces the obsession which, in its turn, increases the somatic reaction ; the exaggeration of the latter again reacts on the mental disorder. Such psycho-physical reactions operate in varying degree in all states of emotional excitement. (Roussy and Lhermitte.)

those who insist with him that emotion is but a sum of organic sensations.*

Emotional disturbances lead directly to the overthrow of the mental balance, which divides the normal man from the madman and the neurasthenic. Modern psychiatrists lay stress on the emotional character of the latter affection. The underlying features of "functional neurosis" reveal themselves in symptoms denoting the clash of emotional elements within, together with a corresponding lack of adaptability to outer environment, and are characterized by instability and exaggeration of emotion rather than impaired intellect.†

The cultivation of the æsthetic, pleasurable and benevolent emotions on the one hand, and the elimination of violent emotional excitements or discordant and morbid emotions on the other, are conditions as essential for the physical health as for the happiness of the individual. Emotional sensibility is a condition necessary for the full appreciation and enjoyment of art, and of all that is pleasurable and beautiful, but when emotion is allowed to colour reason, the mind is closed to truth, knowledge and logic.

Art gratifies the emotions as truth should gratify the intellect. It is not always fully realized how large a part emotional elements, which may embrace every form of sensory and

* "Principles of Psychology," vol. ii, chap. xxv.

† "Conflict" and "repression" are the terms in current usage by psychiatrists of the Freudian school to explain the mechanism of psychoneurotic disturbance.

erotic excitement, as well as the whole tone of the subjective mind, play in the most intellectual criticism of an artistic achievement. Of these elements some may be irrelevant as well as irrational, and by no means realized by the critic at the time of writing his appreciation. Elliot Smith and Pear illustrate this point in a way few people would want to dispute. "Let us suppose that a musical critic, after hearing a new symphony by an unconventional composer, immediately writes a lengthy appreciation of the performance. It is clear that nobody would expect him to be able to give off-hand an account of his reasons for every sentence of the criticism. But it is obvious that a single phrase in this account may be but the apex of a whole pyramid of memories emanating from the critic's technical training, his attitude towards the new departure, experiences highly coloured with emotion which a few notes of music may have evoked, and his mental condition at the time he heard the performance. Nobody denies that these may have shaped or even determined his criticism. But who believes either that they were all conscious at the time of writing the article, or that he could resuscitate them without much time and trouble and perhaps the help of a cross-examiner?"

In addition to the causal, largely emotional, elements might be added a prime determinant in artistic appreciation, namely, cosmic suggestion. In the case of a leading critic, overwhelmingly self-confident and secure of his position, the mere knowledge of the consensus of informed and un-

informed opinion being favourable or otherwise might conceivably arouse an equally illogical desire to be esoteric and different at all costs. An antagonistic autosuggestion of this sort unconsciously underlying a critic's attitude would more than negative any body of opinion in one direction.* But if such artificial and diverse influences can affect the most highly trained and most honest critic, how much more will they affect the credulous and untrained? Far greater will be the power of authoritative opinion in influencing those whose emotional sensibility is blunt and untrained, who gape in unresponsive perplexity at some artist's canvas, waiting to have the emotions they do not feel suggested to them, and who, when given the lead, infuse by the power of association into the meaningless daub or the subtlest motif alike the same spirit of satisfaction they derive from the garish crudities which alone, unaided, find a responsive echo in their breasts. It is well known that the less tutored the intellect the more real, as a rule, are the creatures of the imagination. Children and savages have a wonderful faculty for believing in the reality of their illusions. Does not this account for the fact that

* It should be noted that this is an inverted form of cosmic suggestion which exerts a considerable influence over certain dispositions; very often this bias is confined to one or two subjects only in which an individual is particularly interested, and in connexion with which a permanently repellent autosuggestion is developed. Some writers have spoken of this as *contra-suggestion*. On these subjects any suggestion conveyed by word or sign provokes an immediate and unthinking contradiction or an unreasoning hostile attitude or tendency.

the less clearly a thing is understood the greater is the power of the imagination in supplying a meaning. A certain dimness and mystery or quality of incomprehensibility invariably adds to the respect and awe paid to works of art and their creators, officially labelled as "great." Sometimes mere age or distance produces the requisite dimness. Racine considered this atmosphere of distance a necessary device of stagecraft for the proper presentation of a hero. "On peut dire que le respect que l'on a pour les héros augmente à mesure qu'ils s'éloignent de nous."* In the same way the intensity of horror bestowed upon the arch-villain of the piece is increased in proportion to the distance away from which he is regarded; in other words, the less you know about him. But this does not hold good for the heroes of the histrionic stage more truly than for the heroes and arch-villains of the wider stage of the world. The principle can be applied equally to the heroes of art, religion, politics or war. It is not, of course, the dimness or distance *per se* which magnifies the object of appreciation; unaided that would merely have the opposite effect. The factor of dimness, by placing the object further from the grasp of *reason*, enables the playwright, politician, or critic, as the case may be, to play with greater ease and certainty upon the emotions of his audience, and by force of suggestion to endue his puppet more completely with the symbolic quality

* Préface à "Bajazet."

he wishes to present. In spite of Medici prints, oleographic processes and the extension of culture which renders any one liable to receive choice samples of the Italian Masters free with a packet of cigarettes, what William Hazlitt said with reference to Michael Angelo is still literally true. "We know," he writes, "nothing of him but his name. It is an abstraction of fame and greatness. Our admiration of him supports itself, and our idea of his superiority seems self-evident, because it is attached to his name only."

Convention is a very real and wellnigh irresistible power. Not a few of our most cherished valuations—artistic, religious, political and social—are conventional fetishes which have been slowly evolved in the course of a great number of years as the result of determining factors, for the most part accidental and forgotten, and probably called into existence for totally different and unconnected reasons. Yet the appropriate emotional reaction, evoked by the association of an object with such a conventional valuation or sentiment, may be just as keenly and genuinely felt as though it resulted from the awakening of some instinctive or innate law of our nature. Impressionability is not a quality to be despised, but on the contrary to be carefully guarded from contamination. It is by means of emotion that all pleasure and pain, all aversion and attraction, and all sense of the æsthetic is recorded by the senses. Emotional sensibility may be compared to an instrument that may be so finely made

that it is capable of registering the most delicate and exact vibrations so that any harsh sound will injure it, while, on the other hand, it may be made of a texture so coarse that it will respond instantly and indiscriminately to any loud and crude noise. This instrument has an inherent quality of excellence with a potentiality of exactness that may be developed in a great variety of directions.

The many factors which play a part in æsthetic appreciation have been abundantly explored by psychological writers.* They have traced the great variety of ways in which art can be the means of evoking sympathetic emotions by connecting its subject with the inexhaustible interest in personality. They have cited the part played in inducing pleasurable sensations in music by the association of range, depth of tone and pitch with the expression of human passions ; and in pictorial art, the appeal to muscular sensibility by suggested associations with movement and form, or the effect of straight lines and rounded forms in inducing sensations of vigour and repose. More obvious are the appeals to the sexual instincts. There are also associations that give beauty to colours, pleasurable to those tints that suggest youth, health, vigour and feminine charm.

It is easy to understand the agreeableness of symbols of strength and solidity ; the restfulness of economy in presentation, the pleasing effect of

* The æsthetic emotions are dealt with at length by Dr. Bain in "The Emotions and the Will," chap. xiv.

contrast and symmetry, variety and unity, of balance and the laws of proportion and musical ratios, or of harmony and regularity. The laws of relativity or comparison and of familiarity and strangeness are factors which play a part in all appreciation. Finally, there is a more exclusively intellectual pleasure in the process of analytical valuation of artistic production.

We cannot acquire truth by means of the emotions, which can but be the means of informing us of our personal relation towards our environment. They may reveal us to ourselves, or may register the reflection of our environment within us; but the consequences of emotion cannot be regarded as ephemeral, for all emotional excitation must have a permanent residual effect upon the tone of the subjective mind.

(3) JUDGMENT OF ENDS

Without attempting to catalogue or enumerate the various intellectual and mental processes, consigning them to interminable classes and subdivisions of volitional, cognitive, affective and cogitative states or acts, labelled like so many distinct specimens in a collector's museum, it may yet be possible to detach certain features involved in the process of moral judgment which are distinguishable from the essentially instinctive, emotional and suggested elements we have been considering. The danger involved in reducing psychological processes to their constituent elements and treating of each element as though

it were static and dissociated, is that it is apt to obscure a true appreciation of the actual manifestations of personality which result from complex and interactionary elements in continuous motion, forming one integral whole in constant process of influencing and being influenced by its environment. The whole is always more and something different from the sum of its parts. The factors here specially referred to which may determine in greater or lesser degree the nature and direction of moral valuation are deliberative, critical and analytic. These are essentially the intellectual and *objective** processes exercised to the best advantage when freed to the greatest possible extent from instinctive and emotional complications. Judgments formed under such conditions involve the realization of the ends and effects of conduct, and an assignment of "desirableness" to those ends. It is clear that an intellectual judgment of this nature, assigning value to the ends of conduct, must take into account those inherent characteristics and instincts which underlie all motives and interests. Thus, we recognize the fact of the instinct of self-preservation, and are right in assigning the qualification "good" to life as denoting its desirableness; similarly the instinct of acquisition is general and fundamental in the human species,† we accordingly assign the quali-

* I.e. processes of the conscious or objective mind.

† There are a few notable exceptions where this instinct appears to be deficient among primitive and nomadic tribes. McDougall instances the Punaris of Borneo.

fication "good" to property and wealth, and to its destruction, "evil"; the abstract value of the end of this instinct is intensified and held in greater respect the more it is realized to have been the means by which the surplus energy of mankind has been utilized to accumulate the capital essential to the development of civilization. The desirableness of both life and wealth is also considerably increased or modified by collateral associations, by the pleasures they enable us to experience.

There is in all judgment of the morality of an action a perception of the end or consequence of that action. The clearness or dimness of the perception will depend upon the habits of thought and the organization of motives—or lack of it—which result from the native tendencies and development of the subjective mind. The norm of valuation which we apply to moral conduct is conditioned by many conscious and unconscious factors which determine our idea of "desirableness," and the standard will approximate to the conventional and common standard of the community in so far as we are influenced by our environment—or in proportion to our amenability to cosmic suggestion. It is on account of the obvious desire for pleasure and for avoidance of pain that Utilitarians are justified in making use of that general fact as a standard of utility. This in no way implies that the motives of all conduct are efforts to obtain pleasurable sensation or to avoid pain. The mistake of this dis-

credited doctrine of psychological hedonism lay in confusing the motive or impulse to action with the valuation of conduct. It is an unfortunate but undeniable fact that conduct is least often determined by valuation. Realization or anticipation of the end of action is not the necessary stimulus of action, neither does it conform to volition or striving; but realization of consequences frequently inhibits the fulfilment of volition. Both conduct and volition are determined by the relation of subject to object, and by the constitution of the ego, conditioned, as it is, by the innumerable factors of heredity and environment.

(4) COSMIC SUGGESTION

Public opinion is often spoken of as something mysterious and powerful, to be recognized and submitted to, but not to be explained. Napoleon is credited with having said: "Public opinion is a power invisible, mysterious, and irresistible." Some writers, failing to appreciate the true significance and nature of this dynamic factor in the formation of public sentiment, are content to fall back on the convenient subterfuge of Divine agency as full and sufficient explanation. Thus they speak of a "common consciousness" which is the arbiter of the morals and faiths of men, a consciousness which is subject to evolutionary progress, and yet owes its existence to Divine revelation.

However inadequately, the attempt has never-



theless been made in these pages to present a wider and, at the same time, a more precise definition of those psychic and vital forces, included in the term environment, which play so great a part in the formation and growth of human beliefs, opinions and sentiments, in binding together nations, communities and groups, and no less a part in setting them against one another. For lack of a better, the designation "cosmic suggestion" has been used as a generic term to describe the force resulting from the accumulative suggestions or impulsions of aggregations of individual agents, between whom and the subjects or recipients a state of *rapport* is more or less established. It is an aspect, or perhaps more accurately a product, of the vital energy of the cosmos. In a community or a mass of men moved by common emotions and ideas, each individual plays the double rôle of operator and affected object or recipient.

The communication of a proposition by suggestion is distinguished from, though often accompanied by, other means by which ideas are communicated through the senses, involving rational processes which produce conviction. Emotional suggestions are either rejected or accepted unquestioningly in the absence of any logical reason. The supreme importance and general applicability in normal waking life of this wider aspect of hypnotic suggestion is seldom adequately appreciated by students of social development. That the faiths and con-

victions of men do not depend upon their appeal to "man's reasoning faculties" is, however, usually admitted. Lecky frequently dwells on this fact, as in the following passage: "In most men the love of truth is so languid, and their reluctance to encounter mental prejudices is so great, that they yield their judgments without an effort to the current, withdraw their minds from all opinions or arguments opposed to their own, and thus speedily convince themselves of the truth of what they wish to believe."

Dr. McDougall recognizes, as do most modern psychologists, the great social importance of this "current" of which Lecky speaks; he terms it mass-suggestion. "Children," he says, "largely in virtue of their suggestibility, rapidly absorb the knowledge, beliefs, and especially the sentiments of their social environment. But most adults also remain suggestible, especially towards mass-suggestion, and towards the propositions which they know to be supported by the whole weight of society, or by long tradition."* This also he calls prestige suggestion. Individual suggestibility, he considers, is conditioned by native disposition and character, and dependent upon the relative strengths of the two instincts of self-assertion and subjection. He does not, however, appear to assign to this factor of suggestion any conspicuous part in the excitation of such emotions as, for instance, anger, moral indignation, shame and remorse. But the simultaneous ex-

* "Social Psychology," p. 100.

citation of the same emotion in crowds is attributed to the action of the gregarious instinct which is accountable for the sympathetic induction of emotion. The explanation given of the fact that the instinctive behaviour of one animal directly excites similar behaviour on the part of his fellows, consists in the assumption that among gregarious animals each of the principal instincts has a special perceptual inlet that is adapted to receive the sense-impressions made by the expressions of the same instinct in other animals of the same species: thus, for example, the fear instinct, *inter alia*, has a special perceptual inlet that renders it excitable by the sound of the cry of fear; the instinct of pugnacity is similarly excited through a perceptual inlet by the sound of the roar of anger, and so on. Whatever the value of this assumption it is clear that the emotional excitement of an aggregation of individuals reacts with cumulative intensity upon each member of it. It is sufficient, however, to say that there exists in the human species a fundamental impulse of gregarious attraction, analogous in the physical world to the law of gravitation, which tends to produce aggregations of men and to intensify their suggestibility in relation to sheer weight of numbers and proximity. If we accept the view that the subjective mind is liable to be directly influenced by other subjective minds with which it is *en rapport*, the hypothesis of special perceptual inlets, designed for each instinct to receive only the corresponding

sense-impressions derived from the efferent action of the same instinct in other individuals, becomes of secondary importance. Any cause which simultaneously provokes emotional excitement in a large body of people tends to bring them into *rapport*, thence onwards a community of feeling has been established, like elements coalesce, foreign elements are dissipated or repulsed, the mass will think, feel and act as a collective whole, the impulse or emotion of one will re-echo in all, as when a certain note is struck all the chords in the instrument which are attuned to it are set vibrating. A skilful orator who can once succeed in evoking strong emotional response in his audience is in the most favourable position for transmitting any proposition by suggestion ; any assertion is then likely to be received unquestioningly and with the strength of conviction, any suggestion to be resolved into action.

An orator of the ecstatic and fanatical type will endeavour, by working himself into a frenzy of excitement, to throw himself into the *subjective* state, for thus he is in closest *rapport* with his environment. This is the secret of the power of demagogues and of other worthless and otherwise insignificant individuals. It is said to have been the method of one of the most extraordinary characters of modern times—Rasputin, or Grigori Yefimovitsch, a gross, illiterate, debauched and fanatical Siberian monk, who, up to the time of his murder in December 1916, had the reputation of being the most powerful

man in Russia. According to the few reliable accounts of him that are obtainable, the influence of this man's personality and the religio-erotic frenzies which characterized his ministrations were such that women of the highest culture and refinement would prostitute themselves, body and soul, in obedience to his suggestion, ministers and high state officials habitually sought his favours, and among the masses he was a constant object of idolatry.

Does any one suppose that if Mark Antony could have circulated his famous speech on the death of Cæsar in pamphlet form, or could have published his appeal in a leading daily, he would have chosen that method? Or if he had done so that he would have attained as striking a result as by the fire of his oratory? This brings us to a consideration of the difference between written propaganda and that which is spoken or acted and accompanied by emotional suggestion.

The mere written or printed proposition is assimilated by autosuggestion; its aim is to awaken what is already in the reader's mind, whether of fear or courage, love or hate, admiration or contempt, to make articulate what before was vague and undefined, to associate these qualities in the reader to certain objects or symbols, in this way gradually building up sentiments and ideals. But cosmic suggestion or psychic environment is a vital influence, capable of overcoming resistance and of kindling human passions

and emotions. It is often asserted that the Press accurately voices public opinion ; this, however, as all pressmen know, is not true. The Press to a certain extent approximates certain sections of public opinion, or more accurately adapts itself to it, but all it can truthfully be said to represent is the newspaper proprietors, and in a lesser degree the host of hired scribblers whom they employ. At the same time it would be foolish to minimize the enormous and ever-increasing power it wields—a power that increases *pari passu* with the growing power of the masses and corresponding decrease in responsibility and intelligence of their chosen rulers. The Press, no longer confining itself to its legitimate rôle of conveying news, tends more and more to present the appearance of organized concerns for the dissemination of lies and counter-lies, and the propagation of hate, envy and humbug, each organ shouting its particular claptrap and catchwords with the frenzied persistence of bucket-shop touts. Mr. Hilaire Belloc draws a subtle distinction between what he calls the “Capitalist Press,” or those organs run for mere profit, and a “Free Press,” or organs produced for the sole motive of influencing public opinion, i.e. for propaganda.* The former is vicious and untruthful, the latter is virtuous and bears witness to the truth. Having once consigned all the existing press organs to their respective categories as “Capitalist” or “Free” by this simple test of motive, the vice

* “The Free Press,” 1918.

of the one and the virtue of the other are at once apparent: anything meriting the label "Capitalist" is naturally bad and depraved, while sufficient guarantee of the integrity and virtue of the "Free" Press may be found in the fact that Mr. Belloc himself writes for the "Free" Press, and testifies to the fact that it does not pay. While so arbitrary a distinction must necessarily appear captious and fanciful, and absurd when applied as a test of veracity, we may yet perhaps roughly distinguish between those organs which are designed primarily to sell at a maximum profit and those which are sold primarily to propagate a "cause," even at a loss. At the risk of appearing cynical, we might say that the chief difference between the two lies in the fact that the former is designed to pander to the foibles of its readers, and the latter is the expression of the fanaticism of its writers. As a matter of fact, such a hard and fast distinction can seldom be made between the two, since both motives are usually operative in the same enterprise, though in varying proportions. But surely it is absurd to claim for either an inherent predisposition to speak the truth. The failure of the "Free Press"—the carping rags that imagine themselves independent—would appear to lie in the very fact of their eagerness to convert. The natural resentment of the man who discerns an attempt to convert him was well expressed in a witty speech in the House of Commons during a debate on the relations between Press and

Government. What had always attracted him most about Lord Northcliffe, said the Hon. Member for Stockport, was that he had never pretended to be a philanthropist. He was not one of those pestilent people who pretended to run newspapers in order that they might leave the world a little better than they found it.*

Tradition and the building up of sentiments and ideals, together with the symbols by which they are known and familiarized, are very largely, if not exclusively, the work of the written word. But Literature and the Press are themselves governed by their past history, and by traditions and conventions that have been gradually built up from a few fundamental ideas, however diversified they may eventually have become; and these ideas, in their turn, owe their origin to the passions and sentiments of the race as a whole. Even the work of genius has its roots in the ideas of the past. "Are we sure," asks a French author, "that the ideas which flow from great men of genius are exclusively their own work? No doubt they always spring from the wealth of individual souls, but the myriads of grains of dust which form the alluvion where those ideas have generated are surely formed by the soul of the nation?"†

We have seen that it is a fundamental principle that the strongest suggestion must prevail; mass tells against single individuals, overwhelming quantity against quality, when the strength of

* Mr. Hughes, March 11, 1918.

† Gustave Le Bon.

either is measured against the resistance to be overcome. Cosmic suggestion is conditioned by various circumstances which affect its influence. It is a commonplace to say that like attracts like ; this fact is but another attribute of gregarious attraction and tends towards establishing the homogeneity of aggregations, and slightly modifies the attraction of mere numbers. It results in a diversity of centres of attraction ; but these centres of attraction are apt to converge and coalesce if for any reason they are simultaneously affected by related or identical sentiments. Frequency and persistency, as is well known, also modify the force of mere numbers. The loudest and most frequently repeated affirmations carry the most weight. In this way small bands of fanatics, by dint of reiteration, have had their catchwords and shibboleths accepted unquestioningly.

So far from weakening the respect and awe with which mere symbols are regarded, their very obscurity and lack of meaning will ensure their position and inviolability. The vogue for mysticism in poetry, art, and religion reflects this love of symbolism. Men, from the very indolence of their minds, love to set up symbols and to worship them, without verifying the truths they are supposed to represent, for symbols are easily acquired and easily perceived, and dispense with the arduous necessity of probing reality and the mental discipline without which truth cannot be reached.

The power of words and symbols is entirely independent of their real meaning. As we have already shown, the most meaningless and the most obscure phrases are, as a rule, for that very reason the most potent. Such terms as liberty, equality, democracy, socialism, etc., whose meanings are so vague that whole libraries do not exhaust their possible interpretations, are solemnly uttered as though they were magic spells, at the very sound of which all problems disappear. Symbolism and mysticism form the fanatic's charter of licence. They revel in the dim obscurity which intensifies the false brightness of their symbols. They welcome the emotional domination of their minds that they may abandon themselves to passions and feelings, and by developing their *subjective* * powers, infect the masses with their madness. A true metaphysics, it is well to remember, is the very antithesis of mysticism, for it aims at the elimination of symbols ; its method is to co-ordinate and synthesize, and by means of the systematization of materia to penetrate through and beyond, towards a realization of direction and of value ; it tests the highest powers of the intellect.

Bergson defines metaphysics as the science which claims to dispense with symbols. A symbol, at best, can only stand for an aspect of the truth, a mere sign-post pointing somewhere in its direction. Symbols have no part in intuition, yet linguistic symbols are necessary for conveying

* I.e. powers of the subjective mind.