III.—CAN THERE BE A SUM OF PLEASURES?¹

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THE doctrine that pleasures cannot be summed, that there is no meaning in the idea of a sum of pleasures and that consequently the "hedonistic calculus" is impossible and unintelligible, has long been maintained by a certain section of anti-utilitarian writers, among whom it will be enough to mention the late Prof. T. H. Green and Mr. Bradley. It must be confessed, however, that it is not very easy to extract from either of these writers the exact grounds or even the precise meaning of their contention. Prof. Mackenzie in his *Manual of Ethics* and his *Introduction to Social Philosophy* has performed a real service by putting the doctrine into a form in which it is more easy to subject it to examination and criticism. In the following pages, however, I shall not confine myself to what Prof. Mackenzie has advanced, as what appear to me the misconceptions which underlie his reasoning are widely diffused and seem often to be assumed in the language of writers who have been less explicit. My object is rather to get to the bottom of the misunderstanding than to criticise any particular writer; I do not therefore wish to be understood as holding Prof. Mackenzie responsible for every argument that I may criticise except where I expressly quote him.

It may be well at the outset to explain that I am not in the least interested in the defence either of the hedonistic Psychology or of hedonistic Utilitarianism, both of which I entirely reject on much the same grounds as those which would be assigned by the writers I am criticising—writers with some of whom I should largely agree in their general view of Ethics. This is particularly the case with regard to Prof. Mackenzie, who is entirely free from that sectarian prejudice against Casuistry and that dislike to the scientific treatment of practical problems which are characteristic of several writers by whom the incommensurability of pleasures has been maintained. It is unnecessary for my present

¹ Read before the Aristotelian Society.

purpose to indicate in any detail what in my own view is the place of a hedonistic calculus in Moral Philosophy. It is enough to say that I do not regard the promotion of the "greatest quantum of pleasure" as a true or adequate formulation of the moral criterion. I believe that many other things—most of all Goodness, and, in a lower degree, intellectual goods such as knowledge, contemplation of beauty, culture and the like—possess a value which is not dependent on the pleasure by which they are normally accompanied, and which very much exceeds the value of the pleasure considered simply as such. At the same time pleasure does appear to me to have intrinsic value. I maintain—with Plato, Aristotle, and in fact almost all ethical writers except the Stoics and their imitators of the Greenian School—that pleasure—or rather (since there are bad pleasures) *some* pleasure—is a good, though not *the* good. And this assertion seems to me to carry with it the implication that *ceteris paribus* the more pleasure the more good; *ceteris paribus* the greater amount of pleasure is to be preferred to the less. I regard it, therefore, as a part of duty, though by no means the whole, to promote as much pleasure as possible—excluding, of course, bad pleasures. The promotion of a "greatest quantum of pleasure" or of a "greatest amount of pleasure on the whole" does appear to me a possible object of human desire and human action; though this aim should be pursued in due subordination to the higher elements in of that *eὐδαιμονία* or total Well-being of Humanity which the good man will regard it as his duty to pursue. These are the propositions which I understand to be denied by the writers I have in mind. It will be well to start with a few specimens of these denials.

(1) The late Prof. Green wrote as follows: "A *Summum Bonum* consisting of a greatest possible sum of pleasure is supposed to be definite and intelligible, because every one knows what pleasure is. But in what sense does every one know it? If only in the sense that every one can imagine the renewal of some pleasure which he has enjoyed, it may be pointed out that pleasures, not being enjoyable in a sum—to say nothing of a greatest possible sum—cannot be imagined in a sum either. Though this remark, however, might be to the purpose against a Hedonist, who held that desire could only be excited by imagined pleasure, and yet that a greatest sum of pleasure was an object of desire, it is not to the purpose against those who merely look on the greatest sum of pleasures as the true criterion, without holding that desire is only excited by imagination of pleasure.

They will reply that, though we may not be able, strictly speaking, to imagine a sum of pleasures, every one knows what it is. Every one knows the difference between enjoying a longer succession of pleasures and a shorter one, a succession of more intense and a succession of less intense pleasures, a succession of pleasures less interrupted by pain and one more interrupted. In this sense every one knows the difference between enjoying a larger sum of pleasures and enjoying a smaller sum. He knows the difference also between a larger number of persons or sentient beings and a smaller one. He attaches therefore a definite meaning to the enjoyment of a greater net amount of pleasure by a greater number of beings, and has a definite criterion for distinguishing a better action from a worse, in the tendency of the one, as compared with the other, to produce a greater amount of pleasure to a greater number of persons.

"The ability, however, to compare a larger sum of pleasure with a smaller in the sense explained—as we might compare a longer time with a shorter—is quite a different thing from ability to conceive a greatest possible sum of pleasures, or to attach any meaning to that phrase. It seems, indeed, to be intrinsically as unmeaning as it would be to speak of a greatest possible quantity of time or space. The sum of pleasures plainly admits of indefinite increase, with the continued existence of sentient beings capable of pleasure. It is greater to-day than it was yesterday, and, unless it has suddenly come to pass that experiences of pain outnumber experiences of pleasure, it will be greater to-morrow than it is to-day; but it will never be complete while sentient beings exist. To say that ultimate good is a greatest possible sum of pleasures, strictly taken, is to say that it is an end which for ever recedes; which is not only unattainable but from the nature of the case can never be more nearly approached; and such an end clearly cannot serve the purpose of a criterion, by enabling us to distinguish actions which bring men nearer to it from those that do not. Are we then, since the notion of a greatest possible sum of pleasures is thus unavailable, to understand that in applying the Utilitarian criterion we merely approve one action in comparison with another, as tending to yield more pleasure to more beings capable of pleasure, without reference to a *Summum Bonum* or ideal of a perfect state of existence at all? But without such reference is there any meaning in approval or disapproval at all? It is intelligible that without such reference the larger sum of pleasures should be desired as against the less; on supposition of benevolent impulses, it is intelligible that

the larger sum should be desired by a man for others as well as for himself. But the desire is one thing, the approval of it—the judgment ‘in a calm hour’ that the desire of the action moved by it is reasonable—is quite another thing. Without some ideal—however indeterminate—of a best state of existence, with the attainment of which the approved motive or action may be deemed compatible, the approval of it would seem impossible. Utilitarians have therefore to consider whether they can employ a criterion of action, as they do employ it, without some idea of ultimate good ; and, since a greatest possible sum of pleasures is a phrase to which no idea really corresponds, what is the idea which really actuates them in the employment of their criterion” (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, §§ 358, 359).

(2) So Prof. Mackenzie: “*Pleasures cannot be Summed*. It follows from this that there cannot be any *calculus* of pleasures—i.e., that the values of pleasures cannot be quantitatively estimated. For there can be no quantitative estimate of things that are not homogeneous. But, indeed, even apart from this consideration, there seems to be a certain confusion in the Hedonistic idea that we ought to aim at a greatest sum of pleasures. If pleasure is the one thing that is desirable, it is clear that a sum of pleasures cannot be desirable; for a sum of pleasures is not pleasure. We are apt to think that a sum of pleasures is pleasure, just as a sum of numbers is a number. But this is evidently not the case. A sum of pleasures is not pleasure, any more than a sum of men is a man. For pleasures, like men, cannot be added to one another. Consequently, if pleasure is the only thing that is desirable, a sum of pleasures cannot possibly be desirable. If the Hedonistic view were to be adopted, we ought always to desire the greatest pleasure—i.e. we ought to aim at producing the most intense feeling of pleasure that it is possible to reach in some one’s consciousness. This would be the highest aim. A sum of smaller pleasures in a number of different people’s consciousnesses, could not be preferable to this; because a sum of pleasures is not pleasure at all. The reason why this does not appear to be the case, is that we habitually think of the desirable thing for man not as a feeling of pleasure but as a continuous state of happiness. But a continuous state of happiness is not a mere feeling of pleasure. It has a certain objective content. Now if we regard this content as the desirable thing, we do not regard the feeling of pleasure as the one thing that is desirable; i.e. we abandon Hedonism” (*Manual of Ethics*,¹ pp. 112-113).

¹ Cf. Prof. Mackenzie’s *Social Philosophy*, pp. 222-227.

For purposes of criticism it will be convenient to break up the positions of my opponents into three assertions, all of which are made by Prof. Mackenzie but of which the last might possibly be maintained without the second, or the last two without the first. I begin, that is to say, with the more extreme position and then go on to the more moderate forms of the doctrine which I am criticising. I may say at once that it is the first two which I am chiefly concerned to deny: the third seems to me to raise a more subtle and debatable question, and (while I am prepared to defend my thesis on this point) I attach little importance to it, and would particularly insist that failure to establish my position thereon should not be held in any way to invalidate my argument in relation to the other two. The three positions which I dispute are these:—

(1) That a sum of pleasures is not a possible object of desire.

(2) That while the proposition *this pleasure is greater or more pleasant than that* has a meaning, the judgment is not quantitative.

(3) That even if one pleasure or sum of pleasures can be said to be greater in amount than another, numerical values cannot, with any meaning, be assigned to two pleasures or sums of pleasure: so that there can never be any meaning in the assertion "this pleasure is twice as great as that".

I may add that for the present I am dealing with the comparison of pleasures of the same kind or quality. Afterwards I shall have something to say as to the comparison of pleasures which "differ in kind". Meanwhile, the fact that I am confining myself to pleasures of the same kind may perhaps be my excuse if I take my illustrations for the most part from pleasures of a low type, such as those of eating and drinking. I do so simply because what I contend for is most clearly seen in the case of such pleasures. I make this remark to deprecate the wrath of critics who, while apparently not averse to a good dinner, seem to wish it to be understood that the pleasantness of the meal is to them a contemptible—not to say a regrettable—accident involved in the pursuit of some higher end, the nature of which they never seem able to indicate with any precision. I need hardly say that I have no desire to emphasise the importance of the element contributed to happiness by those pleasures of eating and drinking to which the actual usages of the most refined societies give so unfortunate and indefensible a prominence.

I. Firstly then it is asserted that a sum of pleasures is not a possible object of desire.

This position would appear to be maintained upon one of two possible grounds :—

(a) It may be regarded as a corollary of the still more paradoxical doctrine that we never desire pleasure at all. This may mean that we never desire *a* pleasure, or that we never desire pleasure in general but always a particular pleasure. Prof. Mackenzie would seem to deny the possibility of desiring either *a* pleasure or pleasure in general.

What lies at the bottom of these assertions seems to be the undeniable fact that it is impossible to *enjoy* pleasure in general or a pleasure taken apart from everything else. What we enjoy is always a particular content—a pleasant sound, a pleasant sensation, a pleasant activity, a pleasant idea. A man whose consciousness was at any single minute full of nothing but pleasure would be an impossible variety of lunatic : for he would have to admit that he was pleased at just nothing at all. Pleasure apart from the pleasant something is of course a pure abstraction. When a man is said to desire pleasure, it is meant undoubtedly that he desires pleasant things, and further that he desires them simply because they are pleasant. Is not this a possible state of mind ? It would seem that there are those who would be prepared to deny even this—who would say that even a particular pleasure, *i.e.* (of course), a particular pleasant content is not a possible object of desire. Such a doctrine claims the high authority of the present Master of Balliol :—

“ Further, *when* the desire of pleasure thus arises, it is in us combined with a consciousness for which pleasure cannot be the sole or the ultimate end, a consciousness of which, as universal, pleasure is not an adequate end. This may be shown in various ways, the most obvious of which is to point out that pleasure must be had in some object for which there is a desire independently of the pleasure it brings ” (*The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, ii., p. 229).

Now I should fully admit that many—probably most—of our desires are not desires for pleasure but “ disinterested desires ” or “ desires for objects,” and that in all such cases the satisfaction of the desire gives pleasure because the object has been desired ; it is not desired, or at all events it is not desired solely, because it is calculated that the attainment of the given object will bring with it pleasure, and more pleasure than could be attained by the pursuit of any other object then within reach. As to what is commonly

known as the "hysteron-proteron of the hedonistic psychology" I have nothing to add to what has been urged by a host of writers among whom it will be enough to mention Bishop Butler, Prof. T. H. Green and Prof. Sidgwick. But the question before us is not whether other things can be desired beside pleasures, but whether pleasures are or are not capable of being desired at all. Certainly I do not believe that an angry man desires vengeance because he has calculated—from his own experience or the recorded experience of others—that the pleasures of vengeance are the sweetest. Certainly there are cases where a man gratifies his anger or his desire of vengeance with the certain knowledge that his act will entail pains which no impartial calculation of pleasures could possibly conclude to be outweighed by the pleasure of satisfied anger or revenge. (We are obliged to use the language of common life, though of course upon the assumptions of the hedonistic psychology there could not really be such a thing as anger or passion of any kind.) Unquestionably there are cases where the uplifted arm would not be stayed by the most demonstrated certainty of the greatest sum of pleasures that earth has to offer. But is all this equally true of cases where a man desires to eat or drink something which experience has shown to be pleasant? The contention we are examining would seem to involve the assertion that, when a man who is not thirsty or in quest of health drinks port, he is impelled by a desire of port—port as such, port for port's sake. The niceness of the port is, it would seem to be hinted, a quite irrelevant circumstance. What he wants is port because it is port, not port because it is nice. If that were so, it would seem that the uplifted glass would not be put down even if some fellow-reveller warns the drinker, "Don't drink this, it is beastly". If the desire of port were based upon some antecedent desire other than desire for the pleasure of port drinking, it would seem that the warning must necessarily pass unheeded. It may possibly be urged that what the man wants is both port and nice port: but that of course is to admit the opponent's case; the desire for pleasant sensation is one of his desires: he does desire pleasant sensation just because it is pleasant, whatever he desires or does not desire besides.

There is another way of meeting the case. The position in question when turned from a negative into a positive form would seem to amount to this: pleasure is always the result of the satisfaction of some desire or some want other than the desire of the pleasure. That most of our highest desires and some of our worst ones are of this character has already

been admitted, though I believe that the "disinterestedness" of the so-called "disinterested desires" is a question of degree: in many cases a really disinterested desire is greatly stimulated by the experienced pleasure of satisfaction. But, however this may be, I fully admit that most of our pleasures are conditioned by the presence of some desire which cannot be described as a desire for pleasure, or by some want or appetite of a kind which it is better perhaps to distinguish from the more rational class of "disinterested desires". There is a pleasure in getting warm when I am cold, in eating when I am hungry and so on. But are all pleasures of sensation of this kind? Such a contention seems to be opposed to the most familiar experience. I certainly often rise from my chair and stand before the fire, though I am not in the least cold, simply because experience has shown me that the practice is attended with pleasure. The continental stove may more than satisfy our desire of warmth, but Englishmen persist nevertheless in preferring their uneconomical open fires. The medical profession would be ruined if there were no pleasure in eating after hunger is satisfied or if such pleasure could not become the object of desire. Moreover, the pleasure is in many cases quite independent of any previous desire at all—whether for that pleasure or for anything else. Where the pleasure arises from the satisfaction of desire, the pleasure cannot be felt when the desire is absent. If knowledge is forced on those who have no desire for knowledge, its attainment is often found by no means conducive to pleasure. But the fanatical teetotaler's appreciation of champagne might be by no means lessened by the fact that he had drunk it under the impression that it was the lemonade for which he had craved. That the pleasures of smell are independent of previous desire attracted the especial notice of Plato. And while this independence of previous desire is characteristic of certain kinds of mere sensation, it is not limited to sensual pleasures. It is especially, I think, characteristic of the æsthetic pleasures. My appreciation of a landscape or a picture is in no way diminished because it comes in my way at a moment when I am thinking of something quite different. And if it be said that it appeals to me only because it satisfies a permanent desire for the beautiful which is capable of being aroused by the presentation of that which will satisfy it, one may ask, "How in the first instance is the desire of beauty aroused?" Is it normally the case that people are led to the search for beauty by a craving for what they have never experienced—as many both of the highest desires and of the lowest appetites do

undoubtedly exist before they have received any satisfaction at all? Is it not rather some new, some unsought for, some wholly unanticipated experience of the pleasantness of beholding beautiful things which first rouses the desire to see more beautiful things?

I cannot help thinking that few even of those who deny the possibility of a "sum of pleasures" will agree with Prof. Mackenzie and Dr. Caird in holding that even particular pleasures cannot be the object of desire. But then it may be said: "Yes, a pleasure may be desired, but not pleasure—a particular pleasure but not pleasure in general". I have already admitted that we can never desire to enjoy pleasure alone; the pleasure must always come from some feeling, thought, or volition. So obvious a truism has, so far as I am aware, never been denied. But need we always set our heart upon the enjoyment of some particular pleasant thing? There is something in common between all the things which give us pleasure: and that something is surely capable of being made the object of pursuit. When a boy begins to smoke, he is certainly not influenced by the desire of the characteristic smoker's pleasure, which he has never enjoyed and will not enjoy, very probably, for some time to come. There can be no image before his mind of a definite pleasant content; he does not know what the smoker's pleasure is, but he knows what pleasure is in general, and he knows that he likes all kinds of it which he has ever experienced. And, when he has gathered from the relation of credible witnesses that smoking is a source of pleasure, that is enough to set him in pursuit of it. If a booth were set up in a fair with the announcement "Pleasure here, 6d.," it is possible that it would not attract a large number of sixpences because there might be doubts as to the probabilities of the promised article being really supplied; but it does seem to me a strange position to deny the psychological possibility of some one individual paying his sixpence, not (as it is very likely some would do) for the pleasure of satisfying curiosity but with the definite expectation of getting a fair sixpennyworth of enjoyment, and a broad-minded indifference as to the particular species supplied—so long of course as it was a pleasure to him.

I feel some diffidence in attempting a solemn argument in defence of a thesis which (with all respect for the eminent persons who deny it) seems to me so obviously true; and I confess I find it difficult to understand what exactly it is that it is really meant to be denied when it is said that pleasure cannot be an object of desire. Is it the obvious fact that what we each care about is not all pleasure equally, but

the particular pleasures which appeal to us? That is quite true, but then of course that which gives *me* no pleasure will not satisfy *my* desire of pleasure; nor shall I be much influenced by a desire for the pleasures which, though they *are* pleasant I care little about or which cannot be attained without sacrificing objects about which I care more than for such pleasures—perhaps more than for any pleasure small or great. Or is it implied that, though I do desire all pleasant things which really are pleasant to me, I do not desire them in proportion to their pleasantness? I agree, but that is only to say that I desire other things besides pleasure, and moreover that (speaking generally) the pleasures best worth having spring from the satisfaction of desires other than the desire for pleasure. All that has been admitted. What I contend for is that it is possible for a man to desire—and that all or almost all men do desire—pleasant things simply because they are pleasant, and that, *ceteris paribus* (where no difference of quality enters into the consideration and where no other desire would be thwarted) they desire the pleasanter things more than those that are less pleasant. That is what I understand to be meant by the assertion that pleasure (and not merely particular pleasures) is a possible object of desire.

There is one more line of argument which I would briefly suggest. Will those who deny that we desire pleasure, maintain that we have no aversion to pain? Here it can be hardly contended that it is merely certain particular psychical states—which merely happen to be painful—which inspire aversion, or that it is not the pain as such that we try to avoid, but merely the frustration of some other desire, of which pain is a mere accidental accompaniment. It is, of course, often the case that pain is the symptom of something organically wrong, and again that mental pains do largely result from the frustration of some desire. But there are many conditions of body to which we should have no objection for any other reason than that they happen to be painful. Who would care about being told by a physiologist that certain thrills are coursing down his nerves if they did not reveal themselves in painful sensation: or that there was caries in his tooth if he could be sure that the tooth would never become either painful or less useful? If you will insist on abstracting the content of pain from the pain itself, it is surely the pain that we avoid, not the content. We avoid pains, the content of which we know nothing about. We do not think it necessary to try new pains which we cannot without experience even picture to the imagination, under

the expectation that, though other pains are to be avoided, it might turn out that this pain was rather desirable than otherwise. If we know that the psychical state produced by such and such a bodily affection is painful, that is quite enough for us. Unless they suppose the pain to be a means to something other than itself or an inseparable element in some other good, all rational men avoid it: and it will hardly be denied that they avoid the severer pains more than the less severe. All pains are to them an object of aversion, and objects of aversion in proportion to their painfulness. That is what is meant by saying that pain as such is an object of aversion. I do not know that any one who admits that pain is an object of aversion but still denies that pleasure is a possible object of desire can be convicted of any actual logical inconsistency: but the position is, to say the least of it, a singular one.

(b) But as I have already indicated, there are writers whose denial that pleasures can be summed or that a sum of pleasures can be desired does not carry with it the assertion either that pleasures are not possible objects of desire or even that pleasure in general may not become the object of pursuit. Their objection to a summation of pleasures rests upon other grounds; and seems for the most part (so far as I can gather) to be based upon the very simple fact that we cannot enjoy a sum of pleasures all at once—that a sum of pleasures is not capable of existing altogether at a given moment of time. Perhaps the best way of dealing with this objection will be to point out that the contention is as fatal to the existence of a desire for pleasure or even for one single definite pleasure as to the desire for a sum of pleasures. The briefest pleasure occupies a sensible time: and there is no time that cannot conceivably be subdivided into two halves. If, therefore, I cannot desire anything which I cannot have all at once, I could not desire either pleasant consciousness in general or any particular state of consciousness which is pleasant. The argument in fact goes further than this: it would prove not merely that pleasure cannot be desired, but that there can be no such thing as pleasure, since an indivisible point of pleasure could not be felt at all and therefore would not be pleasure. If so, of course, *cadit questio*. But I must ask to be excused from attempting the task of proving to the sceptic that the word pleasure signifies something which has real existence.¹

¹The reader may possibly demand at this point a definition, but to discuss definitions of pleasure would require a separate article. Most of the attempts at definitions fail so grotesquely that I feel little inclination to add to the number.

Assuming that there is such a thing as pleasure, it must be in time: and the time or the temporal state that is incapable of division is not time or in time at all. We have heard, of course, of the timeless self and its aspirations after a good which, though it is not in time is, it seems, to have a beginning and to be capable of being brought about by human acts which take place within the time series: but I am not aware that the supporters of the timeless self have ever assigned to it a timeless pleasure. At all events, if any such thing there be, it must be something quite different from what I—and, I am persuaded, the majority of my readers—understand by the word. As I understand a sum of pleasures, every pleasure is really a sum of pleasures: it is impossible to desire pleasure at all without desiring a sum of pleasures. What I understand by the assertion that I desire a sum of pleasures is, that I desire to enjoy pleasure as intense as possible and for as long as possible—that I regard two minutes' pleasure as more valuable than one minute of the same pleasure, and further that I regard the intensity of one pleasant moment as something which can be compared with the duration of another pleasant state, so that on comparing the duration and intensity of pleasure which will be secured by one course of conduct with the duration and intensity of pleasure which I may win by another, I can pronounce which on the whole appears to me to possess the greatest pleasure-value, and that (in so far as I am in pursuit of pleasure to the disregard of other considerations) I shall determine my action by that judgment. I do not see how I can put the matter more clearly, and therefore I proceed to the examination of the second of the theses which I have undertaken to deny.¹

¹ Prof. Green's argument against the idea that something which cannot be enjoyed all at once can be the *summum bonum* does not directly concern us here, but it seems to me open to much the same objections as have been made against the denial that a sum of pleasures is a possible object of desire. His argument seems to amount to the assertion that a sum of pleasures cannot be made the object of pursuit because you can never reach it, while a greatest possible sum of pleasures is a contradiction in terms, because when you have enjoyed any given amount of pleasure, it is always still possible to desire more. I should myself be prepared to contend that any other view of the ethical end is liable to the same objection, since any good for man must be in time, and can never be summed once for all as a *κρίμα ἐς αἰ*; but I am not arguing that a sum of pleasures is the true ethical end, but only that it is an intelligible object of pursuit. A greatest possible sum of pleasures means that as much pleasure should be got into a given time as possible and that the time in which we are enjoying pleasure should be as long as possible. Nobody, I take it, has ever maintained the possibility of arriving at a sum of

II. It is asserted that whereas the proposition "this pleasure is greater than that" has a meaning, the judgment is not quantitative.

The idea that degree involves quantity is pronounced by Prof. Mackenzie a crude notion;¹ but it is a crude notion which has commended itself (unless I greatly misunderstand them) to Kant, to Mr. Bosanquet (*Logic*, i., p. 118), and on the whole to Mr. Bradley. I do not propose to discuss the matter more in detail as a matter of pure Logic, but will simply refer to Mr. Bradley's very subtle paper on the question: "What do we mean by the intensity of psychical states?" in *MIND*, January, 1895. I do not underrate the difficulty, insisted upon by Mr. Bradley with his usual penetration, of saying exactly what it is that there is more of in one psychical state—a state of pleasure or a state of heat—than in another. But Mr. Bradley, though his discussion is mainly aporetic, seems to be indisposed to deny that, however this question be answered, the judgment is quantitative (*cf. Ethical Studies*, p. 107). And I find it difficult to treat seriously the assertion to the contrary. We certainly say: "This is *more* pleasant than that". The position that the word *more* does not involve the idea of quantity is so startling that I must excuse myself from further discussion of it until it be developed in more detail than has been the case.

Whatever be thought of the logical doctrine that degree does not involve quantity, it is enough for my present purpose if it be admitted that one whole state of consciousness of a certain character is pronounced more pleasant than another, provided it be conceded also: (a) that the total pleasure in each case is made up of a number of successive moments; (b) that a certain degree of intensity is actually judged to be the equivalent of—and may influence desire as the equivalent of—a certain degree of duration: in other words, that a man in pursuit of pleasure may choose a less pleasure for a longer time rather than an intenser pleasure for a shorter time; (c) that a whole pleasant state may be analysed into various distinguishable elements.

The first two of these propositions can hardly, as it seems

pleasures in any other sense. The greater durability of some other sources of satisfaction than others is no doubt an important reason for the higher value we attribute to them, but the consciousness enjoying even the most spiritual good must be in time; the enjoyment of it can never be so far exhausted that we can say that an addition to it would be no addition to the good hitherto enjoyed.

¹ *Social Philosophy*, p. 215.

to me, be denied without going the length of saying that the duration of a pleasure, if it only be intense enough, is a matter of absolute indifference to us. And Prof. Mackenzie, in a moment of metaphysical exaltation, really does seem prepared to go to this amazing length. "A moment of blessedness," he tells us, "would be as good as an eternity, because the eternity would only go on repeating the blessedness and not increasing it."¹ I can only say that most of us would attach considerable value to what Prof. Mackenzie dismisses with a contemptuous "only". If we could attain this moment of blessedness, that is exactly what we should want—that it should be repeated as often as possible. There is no arguing about these matters of psychological experience and ethical judgment. I can only say that as a matter of fact I would not take the trouble to walk across the street to get a moment of blessedness if I were assured that the blessedness would occupy my consciousness only for $\frac{1}{100}$ of a second. I will add once more a reminder—too often forgotten in the polemics of anti-hedonists—of the parallel case of pain. Prof. James has said (I quote from memory) that the utmost degree of torture of which human consciousness is capable would be a matter of supreme indifference to him if he could be assured that it would last only $\frac{1}{100}$ of a second. Would Prof. Mackenzie be prepared to say that if condemned to such a torture it would be a matter of indifference to him how long it went on?

If then duration of pleasure is desired as well as intensity of pleasure, will it be denied that, in choosing between two pleasures (i.e., between the psychical consequences of alternative acts of choice) we do balance duration against intensity, and choose that which promises most pleasure on the whole—the discomforts of a four hours' passage on a good boat against the horrors of two hours on a bad one, or (if income be limited) the three hours of fierce delight (*plus* a certain amount of retrospective pleasure afterwards) which five shillings will buy at a theatre against the calmer but more prolonged enjoyment of a five-shilling book? This is all at bottom that is meant by the much-decried idea of a hedonistic calculus—all perhaps that it is absolutely necessary to contend for. But there is, as I have suggested, one point more—not perhaps absolutely essential to the idea, but usually implied in it, and it is this perhaps which is most apt to be denied by the more moderate of those who object to the expression "sum of pleasures"—and that is the

¹ *Social Philosophy*, p. 208.

notion that the total whole of pleasant consciousness is made up of distinguishable elements. I say distinguishable, i.e., logically distinguishable, not capable of actual separation. My consciousness at any given moment is no doubt a whole which cannot be separated into parts like a material object, but it is possible to distinguish in this total psychosis many different elements. Sometimes the elements are capable of being distinguished even to the extent of retaining approximately when in combination the pleasurable or painfulness which they have when separate. Thus I may be conscious at one and the same time of a pain in my toe, another in my head, and a pleasant interest in the story that I am reading. At other times, and this is generally the case, no doubt, where no definite local pain enters into consciousness, the elements seem so far fused together that it is only by a considerable effort of reflexion (aided by memories which enable me to apply the method of difference or of concomitant variations) that I can distinguish how much of my total pleasant state is due to the different elements. That is the case, for instance, when I ask myself how much of the general sense of exhilaration which I have experienced at a pleasant party was due to the dinner, how much to the champagne, how much to the company; or when I attempt to say how much of my depression is due to biliousness and how much to the disappointment or annoyance on which at such seasons I am apt to brood.

And yet, in spite of all the difficulties of such discrimination, we do make such distinctions in reflecting upon past pleasures, and we use the result of such experiences in guiding our choice in the future. We have two invitations for the same night. We say to ourselves: "True A's dinner will be less apolaustic than B's, but I like B's indifferent champagne better than A's superior port and claret, and the conversation will be much better. Therefore to B's I will go, and A's invitation I will decline." It is true of course—and this seems to be the only serious difficulty in treating such cases as a summation of pleasures—that the hedonistic value of a pleasure in combination with others may be something quite different from its value when taken by itself (or rather, since we never do enjoy an assignable pleasure absolutely "by itself") when experienced in a different psychical setting or context. The dinner which helps us to enjoy the evening in pleasant company would simply bore the man who is not a gourmand, if consumed in solitude or in the company of dull persons. The values that we sum are altered by the summing or rather by the combination

And this objection may be treated as fatal to the whole idea of a "sum of pleasures". But I reply that it is not the values that they have in separation but the values that they have as elements in the whole that we are summing; though our experience of them in separation or in other surroundings may be more or less of a help in estimating how much they will contribute to our enjoyment of the total consciousness into which they enter. It is true that my enjoyment of a certain man's company may be either greater or less when I meet him in a Swiss hotel than when I meet him in a college common room: but that does not prevent my experience of his society in Oxford leading me to think that his presence will be a material addition to my enjoyment at such and such a Swiss hotel and determining me to go there in preference to one which I should otherwise have decidedly preferred. It is then undeniable (as it seems to me) that we can distinguish elements in a whole of pleasant consciousness. The society of my friend and the enjoyment of Alpine scenery may give me a combination of pleasure both greater and different in kind than I should derive from the two taken separately. But that does not prevent my putting together in my mind the probable enjoyment which I shall derive from the scenery and the probable enjoyment which I shall derive from the company of my friend, and recognising that the two elements go to form a whole of pleasure which is greater than either. If on comparing any two whole psychoses I find that one would be preferable to the other but would become less desirable when a certain assignable element is taken away, there is (as it appears to me) a real meaning in saying that such a whole of pleasure is a sum of pleasures. No doubt, as the logicians remind us, the whole is something more than the sum of its parts; but the expression "whole" and "part" have a real meaning for all that: the whole is the sum of its parts, though it is something more. Or to take a more concrete and material parallel, I may judge how many pailfuls of water it will take to fill a cistern by adding together the capacity of each pail, though I must not forget to allow for the considerable quantity of water which will be lost in the process of adding them together, or the quantity that will be added if it is raining.

- III. There remains for discussion our third and last thesis: that, though one pleasure may be greater than another, it can never be described as twice as great—that degrees of pleasure cannot be numerically expressed.

The question raised by this assertion is to my mind much more difficult and debatable than any that we have so far discussed, and the assertion that pleasures do admit of arithmetical measurement is in no way necessary to justify us in talking about a sum of pleasure or a hedonistic calculus. I hasten to add that as a general rule our judgments about pleasure are expressed in the form of "more" or "less," not of so many times more or less. It is only in the simplest cases that we can attempt to compare pleasures with so much nicety; and, as such judgments are of no practical use, we do not commonly make them. Still, I am prepared to maintain that the judgment "this pleasure is twice as great as that" is not absolutely without meaning. In the first place, it appears to me self-evident that the value of a pleasure is dependent upon its duration, and that two minutes of a given pleasure may be fairly said to be twice as pleasant as one minute of it—if it is really the same pleasure and is not diminished by satiety. Further, believing that we are in the habit of equating the intensity of pleasure with a certain duration of it, I hold that it is possible to indicate our sense of the comparative intensity of two pleasures by expressing them (so to speak) in terms of duration. If it is a matter of indifference to me whether I enjoy one minute of one pleasure or two minutes of another, I may reasonably be said to regard the one pleasure as twice as pleasant as the other. Even in far more complicated cases—even in estimating the extent to which various elements contribute to a total state of continuous pleasure—it does not seem to be meaningless to express one's sense of the comparative value of the different elements by assigning to them numerical values. In comparing one friend's dinners with another's there would be nothing unmeaning—though for many practical reasons we rather avoid such exact mensuration of pleasures—in assigning so many marks to the dinner, so many to the wine, so many to the conversation with (if you like) a few plus or minus marks for the arrangement of the table, the post-prandial music and so on. We might express our sense of the comparative enjoyment afforded by the two entertainments and the extent to which each element contributes to the total, by assigning marks to each such element and then adding them together. I admit that such numerical expressions would in general be wholly useless, but it would correctly express the sort of way in which we do make up our minds between alternative courses by a mental or ideal summation of the pleasure which we expect to derive from them. When we have

decided on which side the balance lies, we usually stop, because when we have determined that we are going to prefer A's entertainment to B's, no purpose is served by attempting to estimate or to express the degree of our preference. As a general rule there would be no use in such an attempt, but it is possible with a little ingenuity to imagine circumstances in which it *would* be of use. If a prize were offered to the host who would give us most pleasure in the course of six entertainments with or without a certain limit to the expense, the judges in such a competition would, I imagine, have to record their impressions of each entertainment in some such way—very much as a man who is judging prize poems might quite intelligibly (though I do not recommend the method) arrive at his decision by assigning so many marks for language, so many for ideas, so many for rhythm, and so on. To avoid an irrelevant objection I admit at once that it is very rarely—and only in regard to the choice of mere amusements and not always then—that we do make our conduct depend upon such purely hedonistic calculations, unmodified by other considerations. I may add that, if there seems to be something rather tasteless and repellent about the analysis of these hedonistic calculations for ourselves, we have constantly to make them for others. A man who has determined to provide a school treat for a number of children, and to devote thereto a definite sum of money, aims, I suppose, at producing a maximum of pleasure; though I have heard a Moral Philosopher of some repute gravely express a doubt as to whether the good-will could ever express itself by giving pleasure to others. The giver of such a treat knows that, if he provides fireworks, he must cut down the prizes for races, that if he gives the children a better class of cake he will not be able to give them sweets too, and so on. If it helped him (and it is quite possible that it would help an old schoolmaster) to express the value of the pleasure which each shilling expended in different ways would buy by assigning marks to each item and then totting them up, I do not see that there would be anything essentially unmeaning or irrational about his procedure. No doubt in such cases our estimates are exceedingly rough, but that does not make it actually impossible to express our judgment in numbers. It is far easier to say that one flock of sheep is bigger than another than to say by how many it is bigger, but that does not alter the fact that if one flock is bigger than another, it is because it contains more sheep.

Our estimate is none the less quantitative because it is vague.¹

But I have not yet done justice to Prof. Mackenzie's strongest argument. He tells us that the proposition "this is twice as pleasant as that," is as unmeaning as the judgment "this is twice as hot as that". Now I admit fully that in the case of sensible heat or of any other sensations which admit of being arranged in a scale, quantitative measurement is essentially impossible. But I contend that pleasure does not belong to this category at all, and I will try to show why. The reason why it is impossible to express degrees of sensible heat quantitatively is that there is no equivalence between the difference between any two degrees of sensible heat and the difference between any two other degrees. Let the line A Z represent the various

A B C D E F Z.
possible degrees of sensible heat ranging from a coldest A to a hottest Z (of course I do not attempt to answer the physiological question whether there is a minimum or maximum of possible sensible heat). The reason why I cannot mark off this line into degrees to which I might assign numbers like the numbers which express the degrees of physical heat on a thermometer is that I cannot say that D is as much hotter than C as Y is hotter than X. But in comparing pleasures I have no difficulty in doing this. If I would as soon have pleasure X raised to Y as pleasure C (lower down on the scale) raised to D, then I can intelligibly say that the difference between X and Y is equivalent to the difference between C and D. To take a concrete case: if a bank clerk is offered an addition of £50 a year to his salary or a diminution of his day's work by half an hour, and were, after consideration, conducted wholly on hedonistic grounds, to say "I really don't care," we should be entitled to say that the pleasures which he would obtain by the expenditure of £50—made up of course by an addition of the pleasure derived from so much better eating and drinking, so many more nights at the theatre, or from so many more books and a more enjoyable summer holiday—was the equivalent of the enjoyment which he would derive from 280 half-hours' leisure. It may be said that after all we have here only quantitative equality, not numerically defined inequality. But then I should proceed to argue that the enjoyment of

¹ Mr. Bosanquet has attempted to show that such judgment *may* be only qualitative, but he is thinking of the unreflecting and unanalysed judgments of savages, and even so he is not convincing.

say 280 half-hours' leisure is made up of the pleasure derivable from the repetition 280 times of the enjoyment derivable from one half-hour's leisure. The amount of pleasure derived from an extra half-hour would of course in fact vary on different days; but he would expect a certain average of enjoyment on each day: and it would therefore be quite intelligible to say that the pleasure derived from £50 of additional income would be exactly 280 times the pleasure derivable on an average from half an hour's additional leisure. Once again I must admit that I feel there is something rather childish in such calculations which are never made in practice—any more than we attempt to say by how many grains one heap of sand is bigger than another. Nevertheless, I maintain that in such cases the judgment is quantitative and might (so long as we confine ourselves to such simple cases) intelligibly be reduced to numbers. The fact that we can have a very decided and well-grounded opinion that one total is larger than the other total, while any attempt to express our comparative estimate by numbers would be the wildest and most unprofitable guess-work, does not affect the question. The difficulties in the way of any exact mensuration of pleasures seems to me to be practical rather than theoretical. Some of these difficulties are too obvious to mention, but there is one which it may be well to notice, because it is, I believe, at the bottom of many people's objection to the whole idea of a sum of pleasures.

It is assumed that we cannot sum pleasure unless we suppose pleasure to be made up of a number of isolated pleasures, as though quantity were necessarily discrete. But space and time and everything that occupies space and everything that occupies time, possess quantity, and yet space is not made up of points or time of moments. Pleasure, like time and space, is a continuum. In measuring things in space and time we have recourse to arbitrarily chosen units. And in so far as we are taking account of the duration of pleasures merely, the units of time are applicable also to the case of pleasures; there is nothing essentially unmeaning in applying these units to the measurement of pleasures, and saying that a pleasure that lasts an hour is four times as great as one that lasts only for fifteen minutes. But such calculations are of little use to us, because as a rule we cannot assume that the same feelings, emotions, occupations or what not will continue to produce pleasure at the same rate for long periods which they produce for short periods. What interests us for five minutes would bore us in an hour; and conversely things which would interest us

if we had an hour to give to them would awaken no interest in five minutes. There are books which we do not care to read for less than an hour and others which we should not care to read for so long. Duration, therefore, though an important element in the mensuration of pleasures, does not often practically help us much to an accurate measurement, even where we are dealing with the same external source of enjoyment: and, when we turn to the intensity of pleasures, the want of any satisfactory unit of pleasure is still more obvious. But the difficulty of saying how many units of pleasure there are in a given lot or sum of pleasure does not prevent our arriving to a mental estimate of its quantity and comparing it with the quantity of other pleasures—just as an ignorant savage choosing burdens to carry across the Sahara may have very clear ideas of magnitude and weight without any knowledge of inches or pounds.

That we make such comparisons and pronounce which of two stretches of consciousness is the most pleasant on the whole, seems to be admitted by some who still object to the term "sum of pleasures". Such persons seem to mean that our estimate of the total pleasure that we shall get from one course of action as compared with what we shall get from another is arrived at without any previous mental addition or summing of pleasures. That we do not, as a rule, consciously divide up our prospective pleasure into units, and thus do a sum in arithmetic, I have already admitted. But how we can arrive at an estimate of the amount of a whole without putting together a number of parts is to me unintelligible. When I am deciding in which of two ways I shall spend a day or a month devoted to recreation, I certainly do go over in imagination the various hours of the day or the probable occupations of the various days in a month, as it will be spent in each way, and make a rapid estimate (picturable in imagination though not actually reduced to terms of any pleasure-unit) of the amount of pleasure which I shall get into each portion of it (though I admit that the portions are not necessarily marked off from each other by exact time-measurements), and then think which comes to the most. If any one tells me he is not conscious of doing so, I should be quite prepared to admit that he really makes such calculations in a less conscious and deliberate way than I am at times conscious of doing myself. Indeed, I believe that the disputes which have arisen on this subject are very largely traceable to differences between the mental habit of individuals; but the idea of a quantity—a quantity occupying time—which does not consist of parts and is not made up of the

addition of parts remains to me an unintelligible paradox. If it consists of parts, the parts must surely all be looked at before we can pronounce upon the pleasurable-ness of the whole. Whether we can take in the whole quantity of pleasure by (as it were) a single mental glance, or whether we mentally run over the parts in succession, is a mere accidental difference of psychological habit. I am no less summing the number of sheep in a flock when (as may be done by an experienced shepherd) I pronounce how many they are by a look at the whole flock together than when I have laboriously to count them. Further, I am directly conscious that in estimating the total of pleasure I take into account the intensity of successive time-reaches as well as their duration; and this process can hardly be performed without thinking of the successive portions of time. If the whole time is likely to be equally pleasant, I may no doubt proceed at once to multiply (so to speak) intensity by duration: if the successive portions are likely to be very variable, I must surely think how much pleasure or pain there will be in each before I can say how much there will be in the whole. If such a process of estimating a total quantity after estimating the constituent quantities is not to be called addition and subtraction, I should be grateful to any logician who will tell me more precisely what mental operation it is. At all events that is what I mean by summing pleasures. If anybody means the same thing but objects to the word, I can only say that I see no objection to it except the fact that it has been used by Hedonists, and that some people consider it necessary to object to everything which has been said by Hedonists: but the question of the word is of comparatively small importance. And if in the view of some of my readers I have not succeeded in hitting the exact point of their objection to the idea of a "sum of pleasures," I may be allowed to add that I have never yet met two persons who are exactly agreed as to the grounds of their anathema.

One more of these objections may, however, demand a moment's notice. To some the objection to the notion of a sum of pleasures seems based upon the alleged impossibility of adding one man's pleasure to another's. It appears to be denied that two people's pleasure is *more* than the like pleasure of one person. Of course it may be possible to find senses in which this might be the case. In the mind of those who make the objection, the summing of the pleasure of different persons seems to carry with it some suggestion that pleasure is a thing that can be actually separated from the consciousness of the person enjoying it, divided into lots,

and handed about from one person to another. If any one has fallen into such a confusion, I venture to submit that it is the people who object to the mental addition of different people's pleasure, and not the people who contend for its possibility. The objection seems, in fact, to be little more than a question of words. The question whether two people's pleasure is not twice the like pleasure in one person's consciousness must depend on the purpose for which the addition is to be used. The meaning which I attach to the assertion is that I regard a certain amount of pleasure in two persons as twice as important as the same amount in one; and *ceteris paribus* I regard it as a duty to promote more pleasure than less pleasure. If this last proposition is to be denied, we have arrived at an ultimate difference of ethical ideal: if it is admitted, I do not see how duty is to be fulfilled without mentally adding together, multiplying, the amount of pleasure by the number of persons enjoying that pleasure or (to avoid cavil) enjoying a like amount of pleasure. If this is admitted, where is the objection to the convenient phrase "a sum of pleasure"?

So far I have been dealing with the comparison of pleasures which are the same in kind—that is, as I understand it, in which the greater or less pleasurable-ness of the two pleasures is the only ground upon which we base our judgment as to their comparative preferability. Is the case altered when one pleasure is higher than another? It is impossible to answer the question without attempting to define what we mean by saying that one pleasure is higher than another. And here I must be allowed to be dogmatic, because I must be brief. I hold that, when we pronounce one pleasure higher than another, we mean that though both of them are pleasant—it may be equally pleasant—the one is more valuable than the other for some other reason than its pleasantness. What I prefer is really the superior moral or intellectual quality of the pleasant psychical state, not its superior pleasantness. If I compare them simply as pleasures, I make abstraction of all qualities in them except their pleasantness. And pleasure in the strict sense of the word—the abstract quality of pleasantness—can differ from pleasure only in quantity, extensive or intensive. Hence it appears that strictly speaking there is no difference in quality between pleasures considered simply as such, though there may be between pleasures in the popular sense of the word, *i.e.*, there may be difference in intrinsic value between two states of consciousness equally pleasant. The distinction would be conveniently expressed by saying: "Pleasure can be estimated only quantitatively,

but pleasures may differ in kind"; or, "Pleasures differ in kind, but not *qua* pleasures". Some philosophers who are not Hedonists may be prepared to deny that any distinction can be made between the value which things have as pleasure and the value which they have on other grounds, and to contend that an ethical judgment always refers simply to the ultimate value of a certain state of consciousness. Such a contention (which cannot be adequately discussed here) would seem either (1) to bring back Hedonism under another name, or (2) to get rid of the idea of pleasure altogether. I am quite clear that in my own mind I make a distinction between the pleasantness of things and their value. As I understand the word 'pleasure,' the less pleasant of two states of consciousness sometimes presents itself to me as the more valuable.

When it is said (as it is by some, though I cannot point to any published expression of that view) that pleasures differ in kind *qua* pleasures, I do not know what can be meant by the doctrine unless it be the undoubted and important fact that the pleasurable-ness of a total state of mind is inseparably bound up with the value that it has on other grounds. It is not a mere accident that various states of mind to which we attribute higher value than other states of mind on account of their intrinsic worth do happen to be also pleasant. When I say that the contemplation of beauty seems to be good as well as pleasant, while the sensation derived from eating turtle soup seems to me pleasant, but to possess a very low degree of goodness or ultimate value, I do not first form an estimate of the value which looking at the beautiful picture would have if it were not pleasant, and then add to it the additional value which it derives from being also pleasant. The pleasantness of the æsthetic gratification is an essential part of my conception of it. I do not know what beauty would be like if it were not a source of pleasure, or whether I should attribute any value to it at all if it were not essentially pleasant; and yet I am conscious that the pleasantness is not the sole source or measure of the value that I attach to it. All this seems to be perfectly true; and it goes to show that every comparison between very heterogeneous pleasures simply in respect of their pleasantness is a very difficult and delicate proceeding. Fortunately it is for the most part useless and unnecessary, but not wholly so. It is often exceedingly difficult to say how much of the value we attribute to some occupation springs from its pleasantness, and how much from our sense of the value which it has on other grounds; and yet that is what we must do when we

compare a higher and a lower pleasure simply as pleasures. And such comparisons, though difficult, can be made. I may say to myself in a certain mood: "I should get more pleasure from going to this farce than I should from going to that tragedy"; and yet I may say to myself: "The tragedy is the nobler and higher pleasure; therefore to the tragedy I will go". On the other hand, if I were thinking only of amusement, and felt that under the circumstances it was right that I should think of pure amusement rather than of culture and æsthetic gratification, I might say: "Though it is the lower pleasure, I will choose it". I do not think it can be denied that we do not unfrequently go through such a process—sometimes for ourselves, more often in choosing pleasures for others. We should prefer to take a child to this elevating and æsthetic performance rather than to that rather vulgar pantomime, provided he will get a fair amount, though it may be a less amount, of pure amusement out of the former. But will he? We want to satisfy ourselves of this before we decide against the pantomime. Life is full of such problems, and however much we may insist on the difficulties of such comparisons, they have to be made and are made.

It is thus possible, though it is difficult, to compare heterogeneous pleasures simply in point of pleasantness. It is unnecessary to insist further on the difficulty or to analyse its causes more elaborately. But one very important practical consideration may be pointed out. It is difficult and frequently undesirable to compare very heterogeneous alternative pleasures simply from the point of view of their quantitative intensity, because to do so is to put oneself into a state of mind unfavourable to a due appreciation of the higher kind of pleasure even as a pleasure. I may enjoy (say) a sermon by a great preacher and a light but amusing novel. The pleasure is a very different pleasure; but as both are pleasures, it must, I should contend, be possible to say which is the greater pleasure when there is any very considerable difference in the pleasantness. I am certainly conscious that I have derived more pleasure from some sermons than from some novelists. But if I propose to make the question whether I will go to church and hear the preacher or stay at home and read such and such a novel turn wholly on the question which will be most pleasant, if I deliberately put out of sight all the considerations other than love of pleasure which may draw me to the preacher's feet, I should be putting myself into a state of mind in which I should be very likely greatly to underestimate the amount of pleasure which I really should get, were I to throw aside the book and go to

church. Nay, more, supposing me to decide for church on these grounds, and supposing this voluntarily adopted mood to continue, I should be very likely to miss the pleasure, for the pleasure in this case consists largely in the gratification of other desires than the desire for pleasure or for such sources of pleasure as are common to the preacher and the novelist. These desires will *ex hypothesi* be in a state of repression, whereas I shall have stimulated my appetite for those pleasures which the novel would supply in greater abundance than the sermon. Considerations like these may show the inadvisability of frequently permitting ourselves to make these purely hedonistic comparisons between very heterogeneous sources of enjoyment, but they do not disprove the fact that the comparison can be, and in some cases must be, made.

The higher pleasure is, I have suggested, a pleasure to which we attribute value on other grounds than its mere pleasantness. The problem of the commensurability of pleasures has led us up to the more difficult and, ethically speaking, more important problem of the commensurability of goods. I have tried to show that it is possible to compare pleasures—no matter how heterogeneous—and to say which is pleasantest. But is it possible to compare heterogeneous goods—say, Virtue, Culture and Pleasure—and say which is *best*. It is possible, though it is not always right, to aim at a greatest attainable quantum of pleasure: is it possible to aim at the production of a greatest quantum of good? That such is a possible aim certainly seems to be implied by those who make the greatest good of society the criterion of conduct (and there are few Moralists of any school who have not used some such language), and yet refuse to interpret "good" in the hedonistic sense. Upon this larger problem I hope to offer some remarks in a future article; and till then, I must adjourn the question "What is the true place of the hedonistic calculus in a rational system of Ethics?"