III.—THE IDEA OF VALUE.

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AMONG the judgments which we pronounce concerning things there is a well-marked distinction of two kinds. The one kind consists of bare statements of fact—such as, “The rose is red,” or, “Balbus is building a wall”. These may refer either to external objects or to internal states of mind. The proposition “The tree is green” describes a fact of external nature; the proposition “I am cold” describes a mental fact. Some psychologists would not admit that the two propositions are comparable; but however much they may differ in character, they may be joined together in distinction from a second kind of judgment. This second class consists of moral and æsthetical judgments and of propositions which do not merely imply but assert truth or untruth. Such judgments seem to consist of two: they not only assert a matter of fact, but they go on to assert something of this matter of fact. They apply to it a certain measure or rule, called goodness, or beauty, or truth, as the case may be. They are judgments in a different or rather in a more complex sense than that in which the other kind of judgments are; for they are not merely expressed as propositions, but they imply that something has been put on its trial and judged. They contain the sentence of the judge, whereas the others contain only the report of the jury. The jury have to decide if a man has committed a fraud; the judge thereupon condemns or acquits. We cannot evade the ambiguity of the word “judgment” in English, for the word “sentence,” which describes the decision of the judge, describes also the proposition as expressed in language. The ambiguity is not without obvious reasons; for the words “judgment” and “sentence” have been taken by logicians and grammarians from their popular use in law, and applied to technical purposes. It is of far greater practical importance to have a name for the way in which we express approbation and disapprobation in all their various forms, than to have a name for bare statements of fact, and the use of judgment as equivalent to the sentence of the judge is therefore the first in time in popular language. We may call the second class of judgments “normative judgments,” because they apply a norm or standard, or “judgments of value,”

because they declare something to possess value from the point of view of truth, beauty or goodness. The German language, so well adapted for expressing reflective distinctions, hits off the difference of the two kinds of judgments by calling the first set " *Urtheile* " or judgments in general, the second " *Beurtheilungen* " ; the distinction in this form has been current in German thought from the time of Herbart.

It is in this sense of judgment that I propose to deal with the subject in this paper—to inquire what value means and upon what it is founded. For the economist value has a very definite significance—the value of a commodity is the quantity of other commodities which the first can procure. The economist is well aware that the economic value of an object is in no way identical with the value which a moralist or an artist may set upon it, though he is equally aware that the economic value of an object, being dependent partly on demand, is affected by every moral and æsthetic consideration which affects the desires of persons to possess the object. There would seem at first sight to be only a superficial connexion between value in economics and value in morals or æsthetics or in respect of truth. Of economic value there is a common measure in certain specific commodities—the precious metals, which form the standard of price. There is also a currency in which the other kinds of value are measured, and this currency is one in which three standards are legal tender. For truth, goodness and beauty all three seem closely to cohere, and attributes are transferred from one standard to the other with the utmost freedom. At one time, as in Greece, the beauty-standard is the superior, at another time, goodness. But there is this difference between economic value and what we may call philosophic value, that value in economics has degrees, whereas here it seems to have none. We do not call an ugly thing less beautiful, we declare it not to possess beauty at all ; we do not call a bad action an inferior kind of good action, we reject it as of a different character altogether, as having no community with goodness ; we do not recognise degrees of truth, but declare what is true to be utterly alien to the false. When we do make such distinctions of degree, we do so for various reasons, either to indicate that the thing in question contains elements which in themselves or out of their present surroundings have value ; or we do so in order to mitigate the severity of our censure, as when from dislike to condemn an action off-hand we declare it to be not so good as it might have been. And yet it may be doubted whether

"philosophic" value has not after all a closer relation with economic value than might be supposed. The economic value of a thing is fixed by answering a question of this kind: "Is this thing worth the money that is asked for it?" or (if we put money out of the question): "Is it worth the amount of things demanded in exchange for it?" This is tantamount to asking, "Are the desires of buyers such as to induce them to accept the object (and gratify at the same time the desires of the seller) at the price which is set upon it?" The "state of the market" means, "We will buy such and such objects at such and such a price; different objects, or these objects at different prices, we will have nothing of". Now this is precisely what the moral judgment says; the moral law says, that human beings will have only such and such actions, performed with such and such frequency and with such and such intensity; actions other than these are bad. In other words, economic value represents, and embodies in a particular form, the exchange of desires for material things: now, it may be maintained, and it will be maintained here that moral and other ideals represent equally an exchange as between many persons; though not an exchange of desires for material things, yet still an exchange of mental requirements; and the standards of truth, beauty and goodness in their different ways represent the different methods of effecting the exchange.

In what follows I shall principally speak of moral value, and of the other kinds of value, æsthetic and scientific, only incidentally and by way of illustration. The exact relations of the three are a difficult matter; but any one who has reflected on the subject knows well that all the problems which occur in one sphere occur with the necessary variations in the other. As my object is to deal with the conception of value in itself, it would be mere repetition to verify statements in all the three possible directions. I confine myself, therefore, to that with which I am most familiar.

What then is value? We began with the distinction between judgments of fact and judgments of value. Is this distinction a final one? That it is final is the belief of a large number of thinkers. "In morals," they say, "we deal not with what is, but what ought to be; not with events, but with commands which are binding upon events; not with the indicative, but with the imperative mood. We cannot step from the one region into the other. In morals we deal with ideals, but ideals hold up a standard to which facts must be made to conform, and they are not in them-

selves facts." Let us look at some of the various forms which this distinction has assumed. It is implied in the ordinary intuitionist theory that we possess a faculty of deciding the moral value of a proposed action which is independent of our other faculties and is in no way derived from them. This is combined with the belief that moral judgments have no connexion direct or indirect with contemplation of the consequences of action. From any such purely intuitionist view we have carefully to separate a seemingly intuitionist theory like that of Hume, which also asserts the existence of a moral sense, but at the same time declares this moral sense to be determined by a general view of the nature and effects of the action. No one, not the most hardened hedonist, has ever doubted the existence of a moral sense. The only question which has to be solved is the question whether this feeling is an abstract and brief chronicle of many simpler sentiments or whether it is something unique and inexplicable and is concerned with an object out of line with other objects of experience.

Intuitionism is not, however, the shape in which the contrast of "ought" and "is," of "ideal" and "fact" is most startling, nor is it the theory with which any exposition at the present time has most need to settle its account. In the theory of Kant the contrast was marked in the sharpest outlines, and from him it has been inherited by a large and influential body of thought in England. With Kant the moral law was above sense. It proceeded from man in his rational character, as member of an intelligible kingdom, subject only to the universal laws of reason. It must be obeyed by him in his empirical character, and therefore it presents itself to him as an imperative, but one which he sets to himself. It borrows nothing from the sensuous elements of his nature, which it rather humiliates than seeks to satisfy. It is not contrary to nature, but in so far as it takes up its sensuous material from human nature it has none of the marks of morality as such,—it has not the freedom, and with it the universality which belong to the moral law. Only in God is the union of sensuous perfection and rational perfection, without stress or strain, effected. In this famous theory to which no short summary can do justice, because any such summary must appear to pass over the permanent elements of value in the theory, "sollen" and "seyn" stand confronting each other. They react upon each other, but they exclude each other. And every one who has kept himself abreast of recent ethical writing in England knows how, with all its rejection of Kant's cold and

exaggerated formality, this cardinal distinction remains: how something in the mind different from its ordinary operations of sense, imagination, and the like is thought to remain which gives foundation to the ideas of a "truth" or a "goodness" (an "ought") not to be explained as the complicated result of simpler mental operations.

Before proceeding to the main argument, let us mention another theory which seems to retain the same distinction in principle, while it combines the merits of both the Kantian and the intuitionist views. Perhaps no modern philosophy is more interesting in itself or more important in its consequences than the Herbartian; and the Herbartian ethics, however untenable, are full of instruction. Herbart and his followers assert the existence of a class of feelings called "formal" feelings, the characteristic of which is that their object is some purely formal disposition of objects. Such feelings are (to take examples which are given by Professor Steinthal), the pleasure which arises from the mere metrical arrangement of a hexameter, from the mere contemplation of the so-called golden section of a line, from the arrangement of tones in a melody. These feelings are not excited by the sounds themselves or by the different parts of the line; they have nothing in common with the ordinary feelings of anger or joy. They are directed upon the relations which subsist between the lines and the tones or, more exactly, upon the pure form of this relation. As such they are not merely subjective feelings, not mere sensuous affections of the individual mind, they are objective, are directed upon something objective and have a universal value. Such are the æsthetic feelings and the feelings for truth, and such also are the moral feelings. There are certain relations between the parts of human conduct or relations of will which excite an immediate pleasure or displeasure. These relations are drawn out in the Herbartian system. They are called *Ideas* and are the standards of moral judgment. Such are, for instance, the Idea of Personality, the formula of which is that an action, which a man adopts solely on the strength of his moral *insight*, pleases; or the Idea of Harmony, according to which an individual will in agreement with the general will pleases immediately; or the Idea of Good-will; or of Right; or of Perfection. The vast superiority of this theory to that of intuitionism is apparent at a glance. But the reason for alluding to the theory here is that under the peculiar form of asserting the existence of a special kind of feeling—feelings of formal relations—it also asserts the opposition of what is ideal and ought to be, as

something universal and absolute, to other facts of mind or nature.

Such then are some of the forms which the supposed cardinal distinction of fact and value, of "ought" and "is," has assumed. That this distinction is a real one is one of the prejudices which testify how powerful is the effect of practical considerations in perverting scientific ideas. It is of the utmost importance for human welfare to insist on the sanctity of moral laws. However human institutions may change, however much our ideas of what is right may undergo modification or even revolution, to violate those standards is sacrilege. Yet their paramount importance does not imply that their authority is unique, and derived from other sources than the commonest facts of human life. But this confusion of the practically invaluable with the theoretically unique is the confusion which is committed by those who maintain that the distinction of fact and value is *ultimate*. The last words ("is ultimate") are chosen advisedly. That there is such a distinction is a truth which is as obvious as the truth that apples and roses are different plants. But as this last truth is compatible with the truth that both apples and roses share in one common type, so is the distinction of fact and value compatible with the proposition that value is only a particular kind of fact, a fact of a higher order, but essentially a thing natural, and in direct continuity with all other facts. There are two dangers to which the mind is liable in scientific and especially in philosophic inquiry. One is that which arises from what Bacon described as the too great *aequalitas* of the mind, the spirit which overlooks the patent distinctions of things, and merges their individuality in one sweeping and vague generalisation. Seeing that this gift for perceiving resemblances is the mainspring of all comprehensive thinking, those who do not avoid this danger may well be forgiven because they loved much. The opposite danger is that of hardening the flexible junctures of things, of digging ditches where nature has drawn thin lines, of painting in sharply contrasted colours when in reality one colour shades off by gradations into another. This is the spirit which loves discontinuity, which imagines that the cousinship of the more highly and less highly developed forms reduces both to the same low level of development. Paradoxically enough, this spirit often arises from an imperfect success in comprehending the whole of a subject at once, and hence it is often found combined with vague and unfruitful generalisation. Such appears to be the case with the theory that fact and value

stand upon different levels and are incommensurable. Though the chief cause of this illusion is to be found in the obfuscation of the intellect with the dust which is raised by practical interests, yet part of the blame is due to the fact that no attempt is made to discover what value itself is. That value exists is certain; that the value of an act is different from the act itself is also certain; but to assert on the ground of this that value has a place to itself as something unique is to fail in seeing the connexion of value with other facts of the world.

Some of the difficulty might have been avoided in morals if art and science had been taken into consideration as well. It is easy to maintain that the feelings which act as arbiters in moral decision are unlike all other feelings; but no one doubts that beauty at least is apprehended in the form of the pleasure which the mind takes in contemplating certain colours or sounds or other sensuous forms. But here again it may be answered, and from Plato onwards this view has been reiterated, that the beautiful is a sensuous embodiment of something ideal, or rational. Or that truth is the approximation of human knowledge to an *ideal* of knowledge, or perhaps to the ideal constitution of things. In like manner in morals our judgments have reference to ideals. When we pronounce an act to be good we mean that such and such an act accords with the ideal of action. And how can such a standard be reduced to the level of such facts as those with which the psychologist deals?

The answer to this is very simple. Ideals are nothing but the formulations of desires. The moral ideal is a very complex and highly organised system of such objects of desire. Morality consists of certain observances or conduct upon which the men called good are agreed, or on which men are agreed so far as they are good men.¹ It represents the different directions in which the energies of different members of a society must be expended in order to work smoothly in connexion one with the other. The moral order is in its essence something social and implies the co-operation of the individuals who compose a society.

¹ I may as well at once obviate any verbal objection which might be raised on the ground of the inconsistency with which I speak of the ideal sometimes as a formulation of desires, sometimes as the object of desires, sometimes as a mass of sentiments. The ideal is a kind of character, or a number of modes of conduct, and may properly be designated therefore as a mass of sentiments or desires, which make up the character and compel to the conduct. Any man who possesses the ideal makes the character or conduct so described his object.

They bring to it from their birth and from their training certain personal endowments, whether mean or excellent, gifts of body and of intellect or feeling, gifts of fortune, and gifts of opportunity. As so endowed, they enter into the social life with forces or weaknesses, which at every turn come into contact with the forces or weaknesses of other individuals. The result is a compromise, which determines not only what powers must be exercised, on what occasions, but also the extent to which they must be exercised. Each person in so far as he is a true contributory to this complex whole of conduct is a reflexion in his own person of the social order. His own functions are settled by his peculiar circumstances, and he has to see that in his conduct he shall so utilise his nature and his opportunities as to become efficient for the social good. If he is a good man he will make such actions as advance the social good the object of his desires; or, in other words, he will desire such things as are required for the social good. He is himself a complex mental organism, and his desires are not uniform but multi-form. Together they form a system or whole which is his personal ideal, the many-sided object of his desires. The moral ideal, whether it be taken as the personal ideal of each good man, or as the ideal of the whole community, is thus the object of desires.

In what sense then is an ideal raised above the ordinary range of mental facts? I put aside as irrelevant to the matter the question whether ideals are ever realisable, whether an ideal is something put forward as an end to which we strive to approximate but know that we cannot attain. It is certain that we are always projecting in front of us an improvement on those attainments which we have effected in the past. But whether we think of an ideal as something essentially unattainable, or more exactly hold that the ideal is attained in any good act, but brings forth other ideals superior to itself; in either case the ideal remains nothing more nor less than the object of desires,—an object which floats before the mind in idea before it is effected in reality. Such ideals represent sentiments—the love of country, of family, the desire to help distress, the desire to maintain unimpaired our free individuality, the desire to embody a talent in a work of art or science. To say that the moral ideal stands alone is to deprive it of its material character, to suppose it something apart from the particular duties which it imposes, something other than those exercises of human volition which by experiment or experience have settled into that adjustment or equilibrium which we style the moral order.

Only in one respect can it be urged that the ideal stands by itself—that it is no mere congeries of desires but a systematic whole, and can be held before the mind on occasion as such a single whole of objects of desire. And the same may be said of the standards of truth and beauty. They too imply many elements of knowledge or sensuous form, but these elements constitute one whole or system. How is such a system possible? Does it not by its systematic character not only differ from any desire or perception, but imply the existence of something which can alone be the author of systems? There is much force in this contention, and the questions which it raises cannot be easily disposed of without attempting a whole philosophy. Nevertheless the contention is ill-grounded. It is true that the systematic character of ideals separates them from single desires, but to allow this is to do nothing more than assert the claim of ideals to be recognised as real and distinctive mental existences. But their systematic character arises from the systematic character of society itself, and of the individuals who compose society. Other systems can be found in the world than in the region of ideals of value. These ideals are nothing but organic forms of which the constituents are human individuals. There is nothing in a system as such which is not illustrated by any animal or plant. But no animal, or plant, it will be urged, can think of its system, its organised form of life, *as such*: no animal has a consciousness which can contemplate its end *as a unity*. This is true. But the ability of a creature to present its end at once to its consciousness is something which follows from the ability to present any single object to consciousness at all. It is with a true strategic instinct that those who find in human intelligence something unique and inexplicable begin by finding the presence of this principle in the very beginnings of human intelligence, in perceptions. Their position is indeed undermined by every advance which is made in psychology, by all the proofs which accumulate to show that ideas, which as distinguished from sensations become the central position of such philosophies, are but impressions recurring in modified form; by every step which is discovered in the genesis of the idea of an object as such. It may be that the gaps have not yet been satisfactorily filled in the sequence which connects human consciousness proper with the purely sensitive consciousness. Yet even if we grant to these thinkers this temporary advantage it remains certain that the idea of a system *as a unity* is explicable by association or other complication of ideas,

when once it is possible to form an idea of an object at all. An ideal, as an object of desires, presents therefore no element which is not presupposed in the whole of human intelligence. And once again, even if we grant the existence of something peculiar in human consciousness, no reason exists for elevating ideals, whether of goodness, truth, or beauty, into a class by themselves as things which exist outside the range of facts, in the proper sense. Value is, once again, one kind of mental fact, in whatever sense mental fact is understood, and, to repeat the assertion with which this discussion began, ideals are the formulations of desires.

"Sollen" is thus one kind of "Seyn". That which "ought to be" represents the sentiments of good men, and these sentiments are as much facts as hunger or love, and more powerful. Yet it will be answered that after all this evades the real issue. "It is true that the moral ideal is but a mass of sentiments. But still the sentiments which are formulated in the ideal are sentiments as to what kind of action *ought* to take place." This must be emphatically denied. The sentiment which prompts a man to do an act of benevolence may indeed be accompanied by the feeling that such an act ought to be done, but in itself it is nothing but a sentiment which drives the person who feels it into the particular action. The whole standard of what ought to be done operates upon the minds of good men with this impelling force, and there is no new quality of duty or "oughtness" which is contained in the object of all their desires. What the objection must be taken to mean is that the "oughtness" of the moral ideal does not lie in the ideal itself, as such, but in the power or authority of the ideal over those who are to obey it, and that this "oughtness" which attaches to any moral object is something unique or, if the term be preferred, transcendental. In other words, when we say that in morality we are dealing not with what is, but with what ought to be, we do not mean that there is anything unique or transcendental in the moral law itself, but in its obligatoriness, and this obligatoriness is either itself something which has value, or it gives value to the moral law, and that which has value is no longer simple fact. But even in this form the distinction of value and fact breaks down. For what is this obligation, this authority which attaches to morality? Take the case of the ordinary moralised person, and note what happens when he feels himself bound to do a particular action, say an act of benevolence. Let us suppose that he has some dislike to performing the act, would rather keep his money for some

project nearer his own heart, but duty compels him to do the act. What happens in his mind is something of the following kind. The sight of the object requiring relief suggests to him the idea of benevolence, but before this idea becomes powerful enough to pass into action, conflicting ideas suggested by the idea of the money necessary for the act enter the field of view. But, at the same time, the idea of the benevolent act awakes by association all the ethical ideas—that is, all the moral sentiments which education has tuned into such sympathy that they vibrate whenever any one of them is touched. The whole force of these moral sentiments supports the idea of the good act, and repels the idea of the self-indulgence; and in so far as their compulsive force restrains the evil sentiment, the good idea is felt to be invested with the character of duty. Supposing there were no inclinations which impel against the moral requirement, the force behind the particular duty would be felt in the milder form of authority. What then is the obligation which we attach to any moral ordinance? We have seen that the moral ideal itself is nothing but a name for certain sentiments. The upholders of a unique “oughtness” or “obligation” which severs “value” from “fact” evade the force of this truth by seeking refuge in the original character of “obligation”. But this obligation is itself nothing but a sentiment. It is the sentiment of approval in the good man’s mind which follows upon his presenting to himself the idea of the good act, or the sentiment of disapproval which he feels upon presenting to himself the idea of the bad act. The pleasure which arises in the one case and the pain in the other indicate that the ungenerous course is not compatible with the whole mass of sentiments which are the effective force in determining his action. These sentiments are, to use the language of Herbart’s school, the apperceiving mass which is employed in all the good man’s conduct.

Something must be added or reiterated to qualify the naked assertion that that which gives the characteristic flavour to an act as moral, its obligation, or its goodness, consists in nothing but a sentiment. The sentiment is a sentiment on the part of the good man. With the bad man we are no farther concerned. For him duty has no meaning, in so far as he is bad: he is accessible only to the compulsion of rewards or punishments. The authority which he recognises is but the seduction of favours to be won, or the terrors of displeasure to be endured. His apperceiving masses are different from those which impel to right behaviour; he

sees the world with other eyes. He, too, has his ideals ; they are with him too the formulation of his desires ; he has too his apparent approvals and disapprovals, but that which pleases him displeases the good man. His sentiments have their place as facts in the world of human feelings. But since they are not the same as the sentiments of the good man, they are declared by the good man to have no value. A bad man means, therefore, in the first instance, nothing more nor less than a person whose sentiments and consequent approbations differ from those of the good man. The whole fabric of morality reposes upon a difference of tastes.

A certain dislike is felt to accepting the notion that the goodness of a good act is nothing but the approval of it by the good man. The doctrine is not indeed in substance a new one : it is practically equivalent to the doctrine as understood by Hume that the moral sense decides immediately upon the goodness of conduct.¹ For the moral sense is nothing but the mass of moral or, let me say (to use a neutral term), "active" sentiments operating in the way of approval or disapproval. In effect it is a mistaken apprehension of this doctrine which lies at the basis of intuitionism in morals under all its forms, whether in the naïve and unreflective form of the English intuitionists or the stimulating and suggestive form which it assumes in the already-mentioned Herbartian ethics. It is because goodness is nothing but the approval of the good man that there is plausibility in declaring that certain feelings within us are the absolute judges of what is right and wrong. The mistake of English intuitionism lay in breaking off all inquiry into the origin of these feelings by declaring them to be original and inexplicable ; the mistake of the Herbartian doctrine lay in attributing to these feelings a character and an object which they do not possess. Still the identity of goodness with the feeling of approval conflicts with the feeling that there is something external or objective in right or wrong, something which can be apprehended in feeling, but is itself not feeling. Yet if we ask where is this objective morality of which our moral sentiments are but the apprehension, we receive an answer which is either intangible or implies the truth of our assertion. If we are told that morality is some ideal principle, we ask our informants the meaning of such principle dissociated from moral habits

¹ "We do not infer a character to be virtuous because it pleases ; but in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner we in effect feel that it is virtuous." (Hume's *Treatise*, bk. iii. pt. i. § 2.)

and aspirations. If we are told that objective morality consists of the settled modes of behaviour required by a society of its members, we do but receive corroboration of the suspected theory. For the institutions of society are not parliaments and churches, town-halls and law-courts, schools and universities: they are not temples built with hands: they are the habits of actions which centre round these "institutions," which find in buildings or written ordinances their point of attachment; they exist solely in the feelings or sentiments of men, or what is the same thing, in the conduct or volitions which represent the muscular discharge of those sentiments. In morals we are in a purely mental region: we are dealing with the wishes of men and women, suggested and modified by all manner of physical circumstances, but not identical with these. Goodness in ethics is a purely human invention; it implies a relation between one kind of human volition and a number of others. In like manner beauty and truth are purely human inventions: they move in the sphere of human sensation, or of knowledge, and it is a mistaken view of beauty or truth which seeks a criticism of them outside the different elements of æsthetic perception or of intellectual apprehension. But the questions raised by the nature of beauty and truth are too intricate to be discussed further here. For truth, though it means a cohesion between the parts of our knowledge, yet has reference to a world which does not vanish with our knowledge; and beauty, though it means a harmony between our sensuous impressions, is embodied in external and permanent forms. But in morals we never step outside the sphere of human sentiments. The moral order indeed abides though I disobey it: but it abides only in the sentiments of those who support it and enforce it against me. Destroy the good man, and the moral order perishes too. Where then should authority be found but in the relation between the wills or the sentiments of those in whom morality is incarnate? and this relation, being necessarily a mental relation, is experienced as a mental state, and is that approval or disapproval the more exact psychological character of which has been described. Nor is it difficult to see how, the whole having no existence outside the sentiments of good men, morality has yet an objective existence. It is objective in two ways. In the first place, as against any one particular good man, it is a totality or complex of good men, of which totality the particular goodness is a contributory factor. Its objectivity is not the external existence of the physical object, but the inclusiveness of the social

organisation. And, in the second place, as against the bad man, morality is objective as a truly external force which excludes him, so long as bad, from participation, and more than that, proves its own claim to continued existence by extirpating his bad action.

Goodness or obligation or authority (all of which may for the present purpose be regarded as identical, for they are but different shapes of one and the same thing, the relation of any one part of the moral order to the whole) are thus equivalent to the approbation which is felt by good men for the action in question; the "oughtness" of the moral ideal is resolved into a feeling. It is so far from being a unique or transcendental phenomenon, that it is but a psychological fact like others. We can observe these approbations at different times, and note the different characters of the objects upon which they are directed. And we have but to observe their existence in the same way as we note in the realm of organic nature the actual existence as facts of different varieties of plants. But in thus handling the subject we are brought a further step in unfolding the idea of value—an advance which we may best begin by considering a further objection. For it will be said that, convincing as this reasoning may be, it yet rests upon an assumption. "In all your arguments you assume the existence of the good man. You deny the special character of the moral ideal, because it is but the formulation of desires. But these desires are the desires of the good man. You deny that obligation is anything but a sentiment, but that, sentiment is the approval felt by the good man. But if you assume the existence of the good man, have you not already assumed the very element which you are endeavouring to explain? You are able to resolve the value of morality into a sentiment because the possessor of the sentiment contains already the quality which gives the sentiment value. Whether the peculiar essence of morality be described as "oughtness" or as "goodness" matters nothing: in the good man "oughtness" is already existent. Your argument is, therefore, worthless."

This objection seems at first sight a serious one. But it really depends upon failure to apprehend the conditions which determine the existence of morality. The same objection has been urged against the proposition asserted in an earlier page, that the goodness of any particular course of conduct depended on whether such conduct would harmonise with all the other portions of conduct which are required by society, and depended upon nothing but the possibility

of such equilibration. It is asked, "is not this to declare that the goodness of any particular conduct is determined by the social order, and at the same time that the rest of the social order is determined by the goodness of this particular conduct?" Or, to state the same objection in another form, how can we tell whether any particular conduct will conduce to the social equilibrium unless we know first in what that equilibrium consists? In reality, however, there is no circularity in the argument which is impugned, but perhaps a want of power on the part of the impugners to visualise the scene. The various concordant or discordant forces which clamour for settlement adjust themselves one against the other, and the whole order or equilibrium is fixed at the very same moment as it is also fixed what particular elements can enter into this order, and what elements are excluded. There is no pre-existing whole to which the parts need to be adjusted—the whole comes into existence with the adjustment of its parts. Suppose that a number of bodies are endeavouring to form themselves into a compact whole. They are of different shapes and they can contract or expand by altering their height. But their capacity for change is not unlimited but restricted. When they have formed a compact mass each body will have a particular shape and height, but some, through inability to alter their shapes, will not be able to fall into any place at all where they can remain fitted to the other bodies, and they will be excluded. This is a coarse picture of how wishes and sentiments are adjusted to each other in the social equilibrium, and how the individual element is determined at the same time as the whole order, and at the same time as the unsuitable elements are rejected. Here is the necessary justification of seeking for an internal criterion of right and wrong as against any external criterion.

The same reasoning is valid against the objection that in treating what ought to be as merely the sentiments of a good man, and therefore as a mere human psychical fact, we are assuming covertly the elements we have resolved away. The class of good men is created at the same time as it is determined what the moral law and its ordinances are. Those who fall into the social equilibrium are the good, those who fall outside it are the bad. Good and bad, it must be insisted, are only names: names which are applied to certain persons who possess certain sentiments, and to the things which those persons approve. The words are used in the argument to designate the actual concrete men and women and their concrete actions; they imply no

covert conception of value. The argument describes a fact—that in the endeavour to satisfy the claims of one another, it is discovered experimentally that a certain arrangement of observances, or of sentiments, allows a certain number of persons to live together without disintegration from without, and without friction from within, while other persons or other courses of action can neither be got to fit into this arrangement, nor into any stable arrangement. The first set of persons are good, their approval stamps with the character of goodness the actions which they themselves practise; while they stamp with disapproval the actions which are practised by those who are not of their number, and these are the bad. Good men and the moral ideal which formulates their desires are determined together, and the objection which overlooks this process falls to the ground.

It is evident then that the sharp separation which is made between fact and value is made by thinkers who have failed to ask themselves how value itself came to exist, how such a thing as a standard comes to take its place in the world of facts. They have been impressed by the patent difference between the application of a standard to an action, and the action itself, and they have therefore supposed some new and peculiar factor, whereas the moral judgment is nothing but a sentiment which arises when an action comes into friendly or hostile contact with a mass of sentiments. But the business of ethics is to verify the growth of masses of sentiments corresponding to certain social needs. These are the standards of moral judgment; according to them value is allowed to individual actions or persons; the pronouncement of sentence follows inevitably from the existence of these standards. A particular action becomes a point of attachment for the sentiments which compose the standard; they embrace it or repel it, in the same way as an animal assimilates the food which it can utilise, and rejects that which is distasteful, or as it resists all influences which tend to impair its vitality. The growth of standards and the application of these standards is a purely natural process, and the existence of value depends upon this process.

This will become still clearer by considering briefly in what way these standards are formed. The standard itself has been represented as a system of sentiments which have been determined by equilibration, by a process of give and take between all the forces which contend for satisfaction in society. But though the equilibrium is attained experimentally it is not to be imagined that for the formation of each standard of value all the elements of society are ad-

justed to each other by innumerable trials. This would be to disregard the historical growth of ideals. In the course of time new ideals arise by the imposition of modifications upon old ideals. Each ideal as it is formed makes an equilibration of the claims of human nature at any one stage of society. As new claims are evolved, this equilibrium is disturbed, and a new one has to be discovered. This is effected by a process which passes under our eyes every time that a reform is carried. Some individual, or group of individuals, proposes a change, which means some addition to the existing energies of society and some reconstitution of its habits of action and judgment upon actions. This new ideal of social life obtains adherents among the other members of society, and at last it wins its way into acceptance. It is found to create a new equilibrium of social sentiments, and this implies that certain individuals whose sentiments cannot bend into compliance with the new order will be excluded from the circle of good men. The new order is established at the cost of a new demarcation of good from bad. This is the result of a veritable trial of strength between the new order and the old. The new order, which on the course of its way to acceptance has become variously modified through contact with many minds and their effective desires, has by virtue, of its own inherent suitability to the needs of its society driven out of the field all rival claimants. Its victory is the separation of actions which accord with itself, under the name of good actions, from actions which do not accord with itself, under the name of bad actions. The power of forecasting the needs of his society is the genius of the successful reformer. This success may not be enjoyed by himself, but when it at last arrives it has introduced a new form of social organisation which has expelled the older form. Something of what was once good has now become excluded, and therefore bad.

The experiment by which social equilibrium is attained is therefore a process in which many guesses are made at the future ideal, and some one of these enlists on its side all the force of public sentiment as the result of a struggle with all the rest and with existing standards. By perpetual repetition of this process, as human nature enlarges and refines, the moral ideal moves on from age to age. At each step a new standard of value is created by the struggle between conflicting ideals of social good. It is evident that this process by which morality changes its standards resembles the process by which in lower forms of life than

ours new organisms are developed, new forms of healthy and possible life. Moral ideals are but forms of healthy social life. But this is not the place either to draw out the identity at length, or to exhibit those characteristics which give human history the appearance of utter unlikeness to the growth of lower forms. That this dissimilarity is only apparent it would not be difficult to show were this the proper occasion. One thing only needs special remark : that the gradual disappearance of brute struggle between individual men, and its supersession by united action, is not only not in conflict with the theory of the growth of morality by perpetual conflict between good and bad, but is in completest accordance with that theory. For it means that an order of things which is based on individual competition is replaced by a new order of things which is based on co-operation. Love, benevolence, toleration, humanity, a common science, a common culture—all these are new forces which arise in the growth of human nature, which can only take effect through a society more closely bound together, more careful of the single life. It is this more highly organised form of society which conflicts with one which allows freer play to the brute struggles of individuals. The very result of the struggle between different ideals of social life is to diminish the struggle between individual lives.

But these verifications of the central fact are unnecessary for our purpose. The central fact remains that moral standards represent a victory gained by persons with one ideal of social life, one set of desires, over persons with different sentiments. This is an induction from the facts of moral life, no twisting of moral data into conformity with ideas derived from other sources. But from this exposition of the natural growth of standards of value we see more closely than before, that fact and value do not stand opposed to each other, that the valuable, or what ought to be, as opposed to what is valueless, or what ought not to be, is the mere expression of the fact that a solution has been attained of the problem how to reconcile certain sentiments into one organised whole ; is an effect due to the creation of a new body of sentiments, which has authority over any of its members and has power to crush by its condemnation all sentiments which resist.

We are thus brought appreciably nearer the object of our inquiry. For we see, in the first place, that value is something capable of explanation, that it is a particular phenomenon which arises in the ordinary course of development.

The mystery which hedges round the names of duty and right and ideal disappears when we have ceased to confound practical inviolability with scientific uniqueness. These sacred names are names which attach to sentiments which have acquired for themselves a position of superiority in the conflict with other sentiments. And, in the second place, we are able to give a more precise account of what constitutes value now that we have seen how it arises. For the standard of value is the social equilibrium, or, if we prefer to use biological language, the conditions which make up social vitality or social health. The value of any particular action or of any individual is the efficiency of the action or the individual for the social equilibrium, and depends upon whether the action is of such a kind as to be adapted to this equilibrium or, in looser language, to promote it. Morality is at any one time an organic whole, all the parts of which have value as contributory elements. The different things which have value for morality, have value in the same way as the parts of a steam engine or of an animal. The object of the steam engine is to perform a certain work of traction, the different parts are designed to work smoothly on each other with a view to this end. Instead of material or merely vital elements, suppose the elements to be conscious, as they are in the moral organism, and the efficiency of each part for the work of the whole takes the particular shape which we know under the name of value. Value is the efficiency of an organ which is conscious of its own functions, and on occasion can be conscious of the functions of the whole organism which it subserves. It will be understood that in speaking of an action as a conscious part of the moral organism I am using a shorthand expression for the agent as performing the action.

The affinity of value in moral judgments to value in economics, an affinity which must not, however, be pressed very far, becomes apparent. Exchange value is the amount of commodities for which a given commodity will exchange. A given kind of goods, A, is exchanged in a certain proportion for certain quantities of other kinds of goods, C, D, and the like. A is worth having and worth exchanging at a certain price. The moral ideal implies a similar exchange. There are many individuals who compose a certain society. Each contributes to the common stock a certain class of actions determined by his peculiar character and position, on condition that his fellow-citizens contribute other actions from their side. Good conduct is an exchange of services. And just as economical exchange is in principle an attempt

to secure to each person the maximum gain, under the limitations which social life imposes, so also does the moral ideal represent the maximum advantage both of the good individual and of the society as a whole to which he belongs.

The argument has attempted to define the value of individual actions or persons. Nothing has been said of the value of the ideal or standard itself. In fact, though we sometimes speak loosely of moral ideals as possessing value, as being precious or priceless, the ideal itself does not possess value; it constitutes or is value. It is the measure by which value is determined, but it is itself, as a whole, not subject to measurement by an external standard. A value, a certain standard of estimation, is determined by each step in the history of morality through which good is distinguished from bad. As the successful organisms in the battle of life are the fit, the successful ideals in human history are the valuable. But by this we mean that only that has value which is comprehended under the moral law; we cannot go beyond the record and ask whether there is any value in morality, or of what use is it to be moral. We cannot do so because it is morality itself which gives us our idea of what is useful. In declaring certain actions to be good, or certain types of character, we exhaust all our knowledge of what usefulness or worth in human life implies. To ask of what use is it to be moral is the same thing as to ask of what use is the process which creates the distinction of usefulness and worthlessness—it is to confuse the process with its products. This remark is not so obvious but that it has escaped the notice of those who with the pessimists cry out, what is the use of living? If you can show me where living competes with non-living, and on which side the question is decided, I will allow that life itself can be tried by the standard of use or value. Till you do so I can attach no meaning to the question. The question to which I can attach a meaning is the question, what form of life has use or worth? This question is answered by the history of morality. Under given circumstances, the life which has worth is the good life—the bad life is worthless. But this will seem a cold and comfortless answer to those faithful ones who choose to labour loyally in spite of suffering; and there is indeed more behind, which is already contained in the answer just given. For the sufferings endured under any social system may be removable, and may clamour to be removed. Where such a sentiment exists demanding the mitigation of certain pains, a new moral standard is in the making. And it is to this new standard that the complaints

of life appeal. This appeal corroborates the truth of the theory which is here explained. Morality is no settled thing fixed once and for ever, but is for ever changing as new sentiments arise, between which and those already in existence an equilibrium has to be found. Where certain institutions are felt as intolerable, the new standard says that this form of life is so far without value: that which has value is a new form which shall do justice to the later growths of human nature. But this form of life is still a form of *life*. It neither believes nor disbelieves that life itself has value—but it creates a new standard of value.

Pessimism is based on the belief that the worth of life or of any part of life is measured by the pleasure it produces; and the mention of pessimism is a natural transition to this general doctrine, which is, at anyrate in this country, perhaps the most widely entertained of all ethical doctrines. Pleasure is always with us in ethics, and many persons will regard with dismay the prospect of a discussion of pleasure at the end of a paper which has already reached a considerable length. But some discussion is unavoidable, and I will endeavour to be as short as is possible consistently with not being dogmatic. I have maintained that the value of a good act or a good man is measured by its efficiency towards maintaining the social equilibrium. But this theory would pretend to go further and to explain the value of an act by its capacity of producing excess of pleasure over pain, and therefore adding to the sum of pleasures which is held to be the end of moral activities. Pleasure has been so long and so unhesitatingly maintained to be both the aim of moral action and the criterion of moral value that it is no wonder if criticism has inclined to the other extreme, and denied to pleasure any place whatever in these functions. With the particular shape which this criticism has taken in the writings of T. H. Green and his followers it is impossible to agree, if only because in their anxiety to point out errors in the theories of hedonistic writers they have altogether perverted the true proportions of the thing pleasure as we know it in real life. Yet, if I do not mistake the drift of these criticisms, they have value so far as they tend to make us see that the true position of pleasure in determining moral standards must be sought not so much in the sum of pleasures as in their distribution. But this needs further explanation.

Let us begin by making the largest admissions on behalf of pleasure. It is true that any valuable act produces in the end an excess of pleasure over pain, and it is true that the

moral order produces the greatest possible sum of pleasures, in the only sense which can be attached to that phrase. It is true that the most successful form of social life is that which produces most pleasure. And it is rightly urged that this is secured by the machinery of nature, which provides that lives which produce more pain than pleasure are exterminated. It is true also that our desires are directed towards securing pleasure in so far as that we do not desire any object without presenting it to ourselves as desirable. All these truths seem to support the belief that value and pleasure are identical. But it is one thing to lay down these propositions which do but represent definite facts, and another thing to conclude from them that therefore pleasure is the primary element to which value has reference. It is possible to measure value by pleasure, while at the same time value may be founded not upon pleasure but upon something else of which pleasure is also a necessary attendant. That this latter alternative is the true one may be seen most simply from the following consideration. Given the character of a man or of the society of which he forms a part, the activities which are most suitable to this character necessarily produce the greatest amount of pleasure. But the choice of the activities depends upon the character of the man and not upon the pleasure which results from gratifying them. Different men take pleasure in different things; the good man in different things from the bad man. But the good man acts as he does because he must, because his sentiments are directed to goodness, and he does not do so directly because of the pleasure which either accrues to him from the act or is suggested to him by the idea of the act. To hold that he does so is to confuse an effect with a cause. Pleasure follows from his act, but his act is of a kind determined by his character; pleasure is suggested to him by the idea of the action, but this pleasure attaches to an action of a certain kind which is suggested to him by his character. In every case the character of the man, and consequently the quality of his actions, is the primary element; pleasure arises from the fact that such an action accords with his character, and it is always experienced in connexion with the action and has no separate existence apart from the action or apart from the character to which the action makes appeal.

The only difficulty which can be raised against this statement arises from the fact that we do learn by experience of pleasures and pains to modify our conduct, repeating what produces an excess of pleasure over pain, and avoiding what

produces an excess of pain over pleasure. But the difficulty vanishes on considering that pleasure and pain are nothing but synonyms for the successful or unsuccessful, suitable or unsuitable, exercise of our powers, or at least arise from these sources. The reason why we avoid what is painful is not the pain, which is merely the fact that the action is painful, but our temperament or character, which seeks expression in modes which are suitable and therefore cause pleasure. When we suffer pain on the whole, that is, when our pleasure is outweighed by our pain, either something has happened which is in disaccord with our character, or our character is itself in the process of change. We have an instance of the first whenever any bad act is committed. The pain which the action causes indicates that the action has on the whole impeded the energies of the society, has disturbed the equilibrium of society, and this is the reason why it causes pain. We have an instance of the second kind when some recognised institution of society begins to pinch and cause suffering. We avoid the suffering by creating a fresh institution, and therefore by altering so far the elements which go to make up the standard of good character in the society. But the reason why the change takes place is the development of these new elements in persons; the pain which is caused by the old institutions is the revelation of this new development. Thus the pain which leads to change of ideals, and the pleasure which leads to persistence in the old, testify in the one case to the growth of character, in the other case to its persistence. The point is worth further consideration, for the belief that pleasure and pain are the foundation of our moral ideals and therefore of our standards of value is exactly analogous to the belief that natural selection in the animal world is the *cause* of the growth of new forms of life. As has often been pointed out, the struggle for survival represents not the cause of growth but its method. The causes which produce the origin of new forms are, if we put aside the birth of variations, the constitution of the contending organisms. These struggle with each other, the result of the struggle being determined by the combined action of the combatants' qualities under the conditions which are supplied by the environment. The incidents of this struggle are the gratifications which follow any victory, and the pains which follow any defeat. These are the indications that the successful organism is fit to live. But its fitness consists in the qualities which give it this superiority over other forms. Now we have seen how the growth of standards of value repeats

this process. The pains which lead to a new standard mean that the old standard is being vanquished in the struggle, but the valuelessness of the old in comparison with the new depends, as in the case of animal development, on the absence from the old of those qualities which give the new standard its utility. Moral ideals conquer, and value, therefore, arises in virtue of the qualities of the ideal, that is, of the men who give the ideal its living expression.

Now since it is the constitution of the organism, no matter whether that organism be the mental organism of the individual man or the organism of the whole society, which determines its actions, it is plain that the value of conduct must depend on the balance between the exercise of the different parts of its constitution. Undoubtedly the most healthy exercise produces the greatest possible pleasure, but that result can only be obtained by the exercise in proper order and in proper frequency of the various organic factors. The reason why a factory whose hands are well-paid, well-fed, and kept in healthy rooms is of greater value than a factory where hands are overworked, and ill-fed and put to work in stifling rooms, is not that the output of the first is greater, but on the contrary the output is greater because of the excellence of the arrangement. In like manner the greatest possible pleasure is a measure of value only because the sum is made up of the pleasures belonging to the different elements of human nature exercised in proper proportion and frequency. Given this distribution of the elements, we have a corresponding distribution of pleasures, and the sum total of pleasure is a maximum. But this maximum can serve as a test of value only because of the real cause of value, the law of distribution.

To investigate more fully the position of pleasure would require another paper. I have put the matter in the simplest way which occurred to me as possible without entering into vexed questions. One such question is the question whether pleasure can be truly said to be of the same kind everywhere, and not rather different in kind according to the different exercise of the human character which it accompanies. I leave such questions untouched, and found the case entirely on the secondary position of pleasure. Pleasure is a vital element of the whole moral life, but it exists only in combination with other elements. It is a function of character : character is not a function of pleasure. Character is the determining cause of our ideals, and on it, the determining cause, the idea of value is founded.

Not therefore the sum of pleasures is the essential feature

of morality if we regard morality from the point of view of pleasure, but the particular way in which this sum is arrived at by obtaining pleasures from exercising the various elements of character—in a word, what I described above as the distribution of pleasures. The distribution of pleasures corresponds with the distribution of energies in the moral organism. Now it is this very idea of distribution of energies which is covered by the idea of efficiency. In declaring value to be the efficiency of an act towards furthering or producing the social equilibrium, we are in effect declaring that value depends on the distribution of work, the division of labour required for this equilibrium. A man is valuable according as he is efficient to promote the work of society, and on the other hand society, being itself the standard of value, has the title to be such because it promotes the efficiency of each individual—these two results, the equilibrium of the whole society and the efficiency of each person in it, being effected at the same moment.

To conclude, I have endeavoured to state and demonstrate two main principles. The first is that value is nothing but the efficiency of a conscious agent to promote the efficiency of society, to maintain the equilibrium of forces which that society represents. This appeared at first directly from inquiring into what the moral standard was and how it arose. And it was maintained indirectly in opposition to the view that value was determined by pleasure. Recognising that pleasure was truly a measure of value, we saw that it was such only because it itself depended on a true distribution of portions of pleasure, which distribution was itself the cause of the prosperity of the moral standard. The other result at which we arrived was that value is itself not something separable from other mental facts by a wide gulf, but was itself a fact of a purely natural order. The standard of value or ideal we saw to be but the formulation of desires, and the value of each separate part of the standard to be in return nothing but a sentiment of approval of certain actions or certain characters. In this way the idea of value becomes something which we can describe and discuss and put into relation with all other facts of organic life, and the exposition has served to verify that view of the method of ethics (and with it of æsthetics and the science of truth) which removes these sciences from the domain of metaphysics, and classes them as the last or psychical class of the natural sciences.