

# MIND

## A QUARTERLY REVIEW

OF

## PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.



### I.—THE COMMENSURABILITY OF ALL VALUES.

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IN a previous article I have endeavoured to defend the possibility of a hedonistic calculus. I maintained that it was psychologically possible to compare different lots of pleasures and to say which, on the whole, duration and intensity being both taken into account, was the greatest. If that be admitted, the fashioning of life in such a way as to attain either for oneself or for society a greatest quantum of pleasure becomes a possible and intelligible aim of life. It is possible to aim consistently at doing what will promote the greatest pleasure on the whole. At the same time I hold that such a conception of the ethical end would be a false one. I do not propose in the present essay to argue against Hedonism. Suffice it to say that while I do regard pleasure as a good, I do not regard it as *the* good. It seems to me perfectly clear that the moral consciousness does pronounce some good to be higher, or intrinsically more valuable than others; and that at the head of these goods comes virtue, while many other things—intellectual cultivation of various kinds, æsthetic cultivation, emotion of various kinds—are also good and of more intrinsic value than mere pleasure. It is true that pleasure is an element in every state of consciousness to which we assign ultimate value. I can attach no meaning whatever to the proposition, "I find this picture supremely beautiful, and yet it gives me no pleasure to look at it: as far as pleasure is concerned, I would just as soon contemplate a blank wall for half an

hour together." Even with regard to virtue, it is difficult to answer the question whether I should judge virtue to possess value, if it gave me no sort of pleasure or satisfaction. The belief in *a priori* judgments of value must not be interpreted to mean that we can see what in detail is good for human nature apart from the actual psychical and emotional constitution of human nature. If a being could exist (the very supposition doubtless involves an absurd abstraction) capable of appreciating the idea of duty, and yet not merely actually indifferent to the doing of duty, but for ever by the very constitution of his nature incapable of deriving the smallest amount of pleasure or satisfaction from the performance of duty by himself or another, I do not know that I would attach any meaning to the assertion "Virtue is to such a being a good". Pleasure is an element in everything to which we attach value: and yet we do not attach value to consciousness in proportion to its pleasantness: pleasure differs in kind or quality; and pleasure is not the only element in consciousness which is good. As I endeavoured to show in my last article, this amounts to the assertion that something else in consciousness possesses value besides its pleasantness: there are other goods besides pleasure. On what principle then are we to choose between these different kinds of good? It is to my mind a perfectly clear deliverance of the moral consciousness, that nothing can be right or wrong except in so far as it tends to produce a good, and that when we have to choose between goods, it is always right to choose the greater good. Such a doctrine implies that goods of all kinds can be compared, that we can place goods of all kinds on a single scale, and assign to each its value relatively to the rest. The defence of this assumption is the object of the present paper.

In the first place I must begin by distinguishing between two different senses in which it may be asserted that goods of different kinds are commensurable. It may mean that a certain amount of one good can be regarded as a sufficient and satisfactory substitute for the other, so that however superior virtue may be to culture, a sufficient amount of culture could be regarded as an entirely satisfactory compensation for the absence of all virtue: that given enough sensual pleasure, the absence of either virtue or culture would cease to be an object of regret. If this were the only possible meaning of the commensurability of heterogeneous goods, I should fully sympathise with the assertion that the value of the higher goods (particularly of virtue) is incommensurable with that of anything else. But that is

not the only possible meaning of our assertion. It may mean only that when we have to choose between a higher and a lower good, *when we cannot have both*, we can compare them, and pronounce that one possesses more value than the other.

And this is the only possible interpretation of the formula which is open to those who hold that no one of the competing goods, not even virtue, is by itself *the* good. The true good of a human life does not consist either in virtue only, or in knowledge only, or in pleasure only. I altogether decline to pronounce *εὐδαιμόν*, a man who has enjoyed twenty years of unbroken virtue in a loathsome dungeon, cut off from books or human society, and afflicted by perpetual toothache or a succession of other tortures. Such a man has not attained the true end of his being. He may be much more *εὐδαιμόν* than the successful sinner, but his lot cannot be pronounced a wholly desirable one; he is "blessed" for his goodness, but he is not altogether "blessed". Equally little would any abundance and variety of sensual pleasures make me attach high value to the life of a stupid sensualist; nor will any amount of refinement or intellectual enjoyment induce me to regard as supremely desirable the life of a Borgia or even a Goethe. No amount of one kind of good can compensate for the absence of the other. But when circumstances make it impossible for me to secure for myself or for others all these kinds of good, then I can and must decide which of them I regard as best worth having; and that implies that *for the purpose of choosing between them* they are commensurable.

It is quite true, as will be indignantly protested in some quarters, that each of these "goods" taken by itself is an abstraction. No one of them can exist wholly without the other, or at least without the opposite of the other. Pleasure cannot exist—at least for a human being—without some kind or measure of knowledge or intellectual activity. Knowledge can hardly be supposed ever to be accompanied by no kind or sort of pleasure, though the pleasure may in some cases be greatly outweighed by attendant pains.

And, if you stripped off from a human being all activity of thought (even that implied in the most mechanical occupation, or the most humdrum routine of duty), and all feeling of satisfaction at one thing rather than another, it would be difficult to see wherein the virtue of such a being could consist. It is not upon each one of these things taken by itself that we pronounce our judgments of value, but upon each of them taken as an element in a whole. Our ideal of

human life is not a certain amount of the higher goods mechanically added on to a certain amount of lower goods, but a connected whole in which each is made different by its connexion with the others. It is not virtue + pleasure, or knowledge + pleasure that we desire for man, but that he may be virtuous and find pleasure in his virtuous activities, that he may study and enjoy his studies, that he may enjoy the pleasures of eating and drinking, but enjoy them in such a way and degree as may be conducive to the development of his higher nature, and consistent with the highest good of his fellows. But, when through unfavourable circumstances this ideal is not realisable, we can distinguish between the various elements in a human life and form a judgment as to which of them seems to be most important—a large amount of this, or a small amount of that? If we were not thus capable of distinguishing between various elements in human life,<sup>1</sup> all thinking or talking about the moral ideal, or indeed about practical aims or objects of any kind, would be estopped. And if, when we have distinguished them, we are not to say which of them is best and to act upon our answer, there is an end to the possibility of any ethical system that admits that the morality of an act depends upon its consequences. The latter admission is now generally made by the most anti-hedonistic writers. There is a general consensus—to use an expression which Prof. Paulsen<sup>2</sup> has introduced in this connexion—that Ethics must be ‘teleological,’ though not hedonistic. And this admission seems absolutely to carry with it the further concession that all values must be, in the sense defined, commensurable. If the morality of an act depends upon the value of all its consequences taken together, we must be able to say which of two sets of consequences possesses the most value; and, if different kinds of consequences are to have any weight assigned to them, we must be able to attribute more or less weight to each of them. To deny this seems to amount to the denial that there is any one fixed and consistent meaning in the word value or worth, or good, and

<sup>1</sup> It is true, of course, as has been admitted above, that we never get one element wholly apart from the other. The greediest *bon-rivant*, with his attention wholly concentrated on his food, is thinking of something, and the student absorbed in his books may be enjoying the carnal pleasure of sitting in a comfortable chair, but we may make abstraction of these things sufficiently to ask “Which is best—eating or study?”

<sup>2</sup> In *A System of Ethics* (English Translation by Tilly)—a work which forms the best, though avowedly a somewhat popular, exposition of the general view of Ethics which is presupposed in this article.

to make impossible any system of Ethics which is based upon this conception.

The only way of escaping the admission that different kinds of good are commensurable would be to assert that it is always right to choose the highest. Now (if we assume that virtue is the highest of goods) this contention involves all the difficulties of the formalistic Ethics (to use the term which Prof. Paulsen has used as the opposite of "teleological") of Kant. If nothing in the world possesses value except the good will, we cut ourselves off from the possibility of assigning a rational ground for regarding one volition as better than another. To use the stock criticism, a will that wills nothing but itself has no content. The term 'right' is meaningless except in reference to the good. The good will may possess infinitely more value than any consequence that it wills; but unless that consequence be good, the will cannot be good either. Charity is no doubt better than the feeding of the hungry, but unless the feeding of the hungry be good, there is no reason for applying the word good to the charitable act. To deny that anything possesses value but a good will (which Kant after all did not do), is to deny that such a thing as a good will is possible. The attempt may, indeed, be made to escape the force of this criticism by pleading that it is only where some lower good is incompatible with some higher good that it must be treated as possessing no value at all. Now, in the first place, it seems difficult to understand the admission that when we assign some value to the lower and a value to the higher which always overweighs any conceivable amount of the former, we are not in a sense treating them as commensurable: we do in a sense measure the value of the one against the other, even when we pronounce that their values are related as finite quantities are related to infinity. But the main question is whether we do always pronounce that the smallest quantity of the higher is worth more than the largest quantity of the lower. And here it is obvious that the appeal can only be to the actual moral judgments of mankind.

So long as I confine myself to my own virtue, it seems clear that it can never be right for me to prefer any quantity of a lower good to the doing of my own duty. And if goodness, morality, a rightly directed will, be the thing of highest value in the world (as in my view the moral consciousness unhesitatingly affirms) I shall always be choosing the greatest good for myself by doing my duty. If in any case it is right or reasonable for me to choose a lower good rather than a higher one, then *eo ipso* I shall not be violating my

duty by pursuing it, and therefore I shall not be postponing morality to anything which is not morality. The principle that all values are commensurable can never in practice bring the morality of any individual into competition with any other good, so long as his own voluntary acts alone are concerned. It can never compel us to say "For an adequate quantity of some other good it is reasonable for me to commit a sin". So much results from a mere analysis of the idea of duty.

But can we say that there are no cases in which we have in judging of the effect of our conduct upon others to institute comparisons between the intrinsic worth of goodness and the intrinsic worth of other and lower goods—knowledge, culture, bodily pleasure, immunity from pain? Can we say that it is always right to regard the very smallest amount of moral good—in that sense of moral good in which one man's moral goodness may be increased and diminished by the act of another—as preferable to the utmost conceivable quantity of any lower good? It seems to me that to maintain that such is always our duty would involve an austerity or rigorism by which few would even pretend to guide their ethical judgments outside the pages of an ethical treatise. Take the case contemplated by Cardinal Newman. Cardinal Newman in defending himself against the charge of depreciating veracity because lying is only, according to Roman Catholic Moral Theology, a venial sin, has laid it down that it would be better for millions of the human race to expire in extremest agony than for a single human soul to be guilty of the slightest venial sin. Mr. Lecky has declined to endorse this tremendous judgment.<sup>1</sup> And, I believe, few who in the least realise the meaning of the words which they are using would do so either. And what does this mean but that we judge that a little morality (so far as morality may be the result of another's conduct) possesses less value than an immense quantity of freedom from pleasure or the absence of a vast quantity of pleasure—that it is from the point of view of Reason more important that so many thousand people should not suffer torments than that one man should not commit a small sin.

It will perhaps be objected that such a case could not occur; but such a contention would, it seems to me, betray an extraordinary blindness to some of the most difficult practical problems with which we are confronted every day of our lives. I have a limited sum of money to spend on charity.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of Europe*, "Morals" (1890), i, p. 111.

I believe that spiritual good can be promoted by efficient curates, and that intellectual good can be promoted by education, and that pain can be saved by hospitals. Shall I give it to an Additional Curates' Society, or to education, or to a hospital? I have a son who wishes to get into the Indian Civil Service. Shall I send him to a "crammer's," which (in his particular case) may give him the best chance of getting in, or to a public school and university, which will be best for his moral and intellectual well-being? A problem more exactly resembling the hypothetical case propounded by Newman arises when some great material benefit can only be obtained by the bribery of an official. Few people would hesitate to bribe a Chinese Mandarin to be unfaithful to his superiors, a traitor to his country, disloyal very possibly to his own highest ideal (which may enjoin relentless hostility to foreigners) in order to set free a score or so of Europeans who would otherwise be exposed to torture and death. By such an act I should distinctly be causing a small amount of moral evil in order to produce a large amount of hedonistic good.

Such an admission could only be escaped if we were to adopt the extravagant position sometimes taken up by extreme libertarians—the position that moral evil in one can never be made better or worse by the action of another. The admission that in some cases it is right to prefer a larger amount of lower good to a smaller amount of a higher in no way involves, be it observed, the principle "to do a great right do a little wrong". The individual must himself always do right: the moral evil that he causes is not even a little wrong in him, if (as the view I am defending maintains) it is right for him to cause in another this little moral evil rather than be the cause of an immense amount of undeserved physical suffering. And I fail to see how moral judgments which could in practice be assented to and acted upon by the holiest of mankind can be explained or justified upon any other view.

There are, I must freely admit, very many more cases in which I am certain that the accepted morality of our time and country implies some such preference of much lower to a little higher good than there are cases in which I am certain that such a preference is really justifiable. We compel large masses of young men to remain unmarried, well knowing the moral consequences which are likely to ensue from such a state of things, because we hold that the country must be defended and that it would be too expensive to allow all soldiers to marry. We allow the children of the working classes to be withdrawn from school at the age of twelve or

thirteen, though no one doubts that they would benefit morally and intellectually by staying till sixteen, because we think it would be too great a strain upon the resources of the country and of the individual parents (here, now, for the moment, under existing social and economic conditions) to compel them to keep the children at school so long. In other words, we think that the enjoyment of luxuries by rich taxpayers, of culture by the educated, of comforts by poor taxpayers, of the necessities of life by poor parents is of more intrinsic importance than the higher moral and intellectual advancement of the children. I need not pursue such illustrations further. There is, in fact, no single expenditure of money—public or private—upon material enjoyment which goes beyond the bare necessities of life when we might spend it upon some higher object which can justify itself upon the theory that it is never right to promote lower good when we could promote ever so little of some higher good.

It is quite true, and it is important to remember, that the opposition between higher and lower good is seldom so absolute as has been here assumed. It is seldom, in such practical problems, that all the higher good is on one side and all the lower good on the other. When we insist that, given certain circumstances, the claims of national defence must take precedence of education, and even of certain branches of personal morality, in so far as morality can be promoted or hindered by external influences, we may plead that we attach importance to national defence, not only in the interests of commerce and material well-being, but in the interests of national independence, national character, and international morality. When we refuse to burden poor parents beyond a certain point for the education of their children, it may be suggested that further pressure would involve the semi-starvation of the children, which would not be ultimately in the interests of their moral and intellectual well-being. And, more generally, we may contend that a certain indulgence of the lower appetites and desires of human nature—an indulgence going considerably beyond the paramount requirements of health—is in average men more conducive to moral well-being than a semi-compulsory asceticism with the inevitable reaction which such asceticism ultimately provokes. All this is very true; but still we cannot, as it seems to me, avoid the admission that in some cases the balance of moral good is on one side, and of the lower on the other. Give that bribe and the moral character of your Mandarin will have taken a downward turn: withhold it and twenty European men, women and children will die in

torture and dishonour. It is only a fanatic to whom the small deterioration of our Mandarin, *ex hypothesi* not a character of the highest order, will seem a more valuable end than the saving of twenty European lives with all their possibilities of happiness. It may be said that there are possibilities of goodness also. Then let us suppose that death is unavoidable, and that it is only a question of torture. No doubt the prevention of injustice may have good moral effects. But these are vague possibilities as contrasted with the certain moral evil of our corrupting the Mandarin with all the incidental moral evil which that corruption carries with it. Our moral judgment is not really determined by these vague possibilities. We really think it more important to spare so much suffering than to avoid the slight deterioration of one Mandarin's character.

For the agent himself it can never, we have admitted, be right to prefer his own lower to his higher good, for the simple reason that to do right is always his own highest good. And yet, even in considering one's own moral good, there may be cases in which it may be right, just in order to do our duty, to adopt a course of action which may be likely on the whole to have an injurious effect on one's own character, in that sense of character in which a man is made better or worse by influences not under the immediate control of his own will. It may sometimes be right for a man to adopt a profession which in the long run may have a lowering effect upon his ideals and upon his conduct, in preference to one which would be likely to have a more elevating influence: or in innumerable other ways to face temptations which he does not know that he will always be able to resist rather than to purchase his own moral purity at the cost of other people's well-being. Our own future well-being, in so far as it lies beyond our own immediate control, is in the same position as other people's moral well-being—to be weighed against the other kinds of good, and assigned a value which, though enormously transcending that of lower goods, cannot be held to be absolutely incommensurable with them. But still, this admission does not involve any abandonment of our previous contention—that it can never be right for a man to do an immediately wrong act for the sake of any other advantage to himself or others. By choosing the greater good, he has done his duty (even in choosing a course which may in the long run react in some ways unfavourably upon his own character), and by doing his duty he has chosen the greatest good for himself. He would have become a worse man by taking the opposite course.

So far, we have been comparing the value of morality or character with that of all other goods. When we come to the weighing of higher goods other than the highest—of intellectual and æsthetic goods for instance—against the lower, there will be perhaps less objection to admit that a small amount of the higher may sometimes have to give way to a large amount of the lower. At all events the task of showing that that is the principle upon which ordinary good men act is here an easy one. Some of the instances already given will serve to illustrate this case also—the sacrifice of education to health and comfort, the spending of national money upon armies and guns instead of universities, libraries, and scientific expeditions, the cutting down of the British Museum grant in the interest of the South African War. However much we may regret and condemn the indifference which Parliaments and Governments in this country (more than in any other in the world) show to such intellectual objects, few of us would be prepared to push the expenditure of public moneys upon them to a point which would on the material side lower the standard of comfort to the level of bare health and subsistence. And here few of us will scruple to admit that it is not only in conduct affecting others, but in conduct affecting primarily only ourselves that we act, and feel that we do right in acting, upon the principle that the quantity as well as the quality of various heterogeneous goods must be taken into account in choosing between them. We feel that art is higher than comfort and good eating, but we do not feel bound to lower our standard of comfort below a certain point in order to buy books and pictures. We recognise that study is intrinsically more valuable than ordinary conversation, but we feel justified in spending on the enjoyment of society a considerable amount of time which might be spent upon study. We acknowledge the claim of culture, but we do not feel bound to pursue culture when it would interfere beyond a certain point with health and comfort and the ordinary enjoyment of life—an enjoyment consisting in the following out of natural tastes, and inclinations which, however harmless, we cannot upon reflexion pronounce to have a high intrinsic value. We may admit on reflexion that we do not care for and pursue our own intellectual improvement as much as we ought to do, but in our most serious moments of self-examination we hold that it is sometimes lawful to spend half an hour upon some lower amusement without proving that the giving up of that amusement would injuriously affect our health or cause some other evil than the mere loss

of that amusement. In such cases there is indeed no great disproportion between the amount of the higher and lower goods. If we think of cases where the disproportion would be very great, the verdict of the practical reason will be still more unhesitating. If we had to weigh the sufferings of some thousand tortured rabbits against the purely intellectual gain of some theoretically unimportant and practically unfruitful piece of scientific knowledge, or a woman's heart broken and her life wrecked against the scientific or æsthetic advantage to a philosopher or a novelist in being enabled the better to analyse the passion of love—in cases like these there will be little doubt what the verdict will be on the part of any person of common humanity not sophisticated by the gospel of self-realisation.<sup>1</sup>

All these judgments then imply that we do actually weigh very heterogeneous goods against one another, and decide which possesses most value, and in making that estimate we do take into consideration the amount of the two kinds of good as well as the quality. We do hold that a little of some higher good is too dearly bought by the sacrifice of a lower one, and, on the other hand, that a very small quantity of one good is worth a great deal of another. If a facetious opponent forthwith challenges us to produce a graduated table of goods, a tariff by reference to which we may at once say how much toothache ought to outweigh the culture implied in the reading of a play of Shakespeare, the answer is the one which the opponent will probably urge against the whole scheme—that there are no means of measuring with exactitude such things as culture or charity, and, again, that the value of a 'good' is relative to many circumstances. The reading of a play of Shakespeare may be an intellectual revolution—the beginning of a new intellectual (and it may be) moral life to one man, while to another it will be of no more value than the same number of pages of Marie Corelli. But, as I have so often had occasion to point out, the impossibility of reducing to numerical precision judgments of this kind does not imply that the judgments are not made or that they are not quantitative. It is only in quite recent times that mechanical methods were invented for instituting exact comparisons between lights of different strength: yet, long before such methods were invented, men judged that one light was stronger—much stronger, moderately stronger or a little stronger—than another light, and acted on their judgments.

<sup>1</sup> I have nothing to say about vivisection, duly regulated, in the interests of Humanity.

A little ingenuity might perhaps find cases in which we could with some meaning say that one higher good possessed twice the intrinsic value possessed by another. But I admitted that even in comparing pleasures, and pleasures of the same order, such exact measurements were rarely possible and never of use. It is a characteristic of these higher goods that their value, or rather the value of their objective source or cause, varies with circumstances more even than is the case with simple physical pleasures and pains. And therefore here the attempt to find cases in which such a mensuration might have a meaning is too far removed from anything which actually takes place in our practical life to be worth attempting, even by way of playfully illustrating the quantitative character of these judgments.

There is one really formidable objection to the position taken up in this and my former article which I must attempt briefly to meet. Some of those who strongly hold that all goods can be compared, that 'value' must always have the same meaning, and that the moral way of deciding between two alternative courses of action is to ask "By doing which shall I produce good of most value?" will object to the distinction which has here been drawn between pleasure-value and value of a higher kind. It has been assumed that we sometimes say "This course will produce the most pleasure, but the pleasure is not sufficient to outweigh the evil of another kind which is involved in it: the course which produces least pleasure will produce most good". But it may be urged that if we are really to be faithful to our doctrine that all values are comparable, we must refuse to recognise any but one kind of value: and that if we reject the doctrine that pleasure is the only thing that has value, we cannot really compare states of consciousness as pleasures, and then override that judgment by a second valuation as goods. "The ideal or rational standard of comparison," it may be said, "is the only one. Whether it is pleasure or culture or morality that we are comparing, all that we can do is to say which appears to us to be worth most." I have some sympathy with the spirit in which this objection is made. For I freely confess that I find it impossible to get hold either of a satisfactory definition of pleasure or to distinguish in any sharp or scientific way between pleasure and that higher kind of value which, though doubtless normally accompanied by more or less of pleasure, is not (for the developed moral consciousness) measured in terms of pleasure. It is easy to show how wildly wide of the mark are most of the definitions of pleasure which have been put forth by eminent

authorities. After each of them one exclaims, "Well, whatever I mean by pleasure, it is certainly not that". And yet I cannot easily bring myself to believe that pleasure is simply a *vox nihili*, for nothing less than that would be the logical consequence of saying "Pleasure does not = value: we can compare values but we cannot compare pleasures". It has been fully and frankly admitted that pleasure is an abstraction, that it is one particular aspect of consciousness, but it is not the only one. Now I do not think that it is possible to define what this aspect is sufficiently to mark it off with absolute precision from those other aspects which we have in view in pronouncing upon the absolute or ultimate value of some state of a conscious being. And yet it is certain that it does represent one of the aspects under which we are practically in the habit of considering and valuing such states.

I tremble at the thought of putting forth a new definition of pleasure and protest that what follows is not intended as a definition: but I venture to suggest that, when we try to estimate the value of a state of a consciousness as pleasure, we are thinking of its value simply as immediate feeling, abstracting as much as possible from all reference to the higher parts of our nature. Our appreciation of the value of duty depends not merely upon the immediate feeling that accompanies the doing of duty: that is the "moral sense" view of the matter which (as Hume has shown once for all), when fully thought out, ends in Hedonism. It depends upon our appreciation of the relation between this present consciousness of ours and our own past and our own future, upon our consciousness of our relation as persons with other persons, upon the presence of all sorts of desires and aspirations which go beyond the moment—beyond even our own consciousness at all. The same may be applied in a modified degree to our estimate of the value of intellectual or æsthetic cultivation. All these things are put aside when we estimate our consciousness simply as present feeling. This is most clearly seen in the case of those conscious states which have no value except what they have simply as so much pleasant feeling. If we found that the drinking of a certain liquid not required for purposes of health was not satisfactory simply in and for itself, we should pronounce it to have no value at all. It would be easy and tempting to essay a definition of pleasure by making it consist in the satisfaction of our lower as distinct from the satisfaction of our higher desires. But this will not express what we really mean by pleasure. It is something which

the lower sources of satisfaction have in common with the higher. When we compare the glow of self-satisfaction which *sometimes* attends a conquest over temptation, we feel at once that the resulting feeling has something in common with the state of mind into which we are put on other occasions by a glass of port wine. It is this something which we seek to indicate by the term pleasure. And yet I do not feel that the value of that good will of ours is dependent upon the satisfactoriness of the present feeling, or of any future succession of such feelings. Apart from that we judge that it has value, and indeed it is this recognition of its value which is the cause, or at least one condition of the pleasure—quite otherwise than in the case of the port; *there* we could not say what value it has till we taste it, and if we do not like the taste, it has no value at all. To the man who desires goodness, or cares about doing his duty, the doing of it must bring some pleasure, for there is pleasure in the satisfaction of all desire; and it would be (as I have admitted), meaningless to ask whether we should attach value to morality for a being who was for ever incapable of feeling, or being brought to feel, any such satisfaction in good conduct. But we can equally little assert that the value of the good act depends upon the amount of the resulting pleasure. For while a good act must bring pleasure to him who has any sense of its value, the amount of the pleasure is dependent upon very many other things than the amount of the good will—upon health, temperament, spirits, surrounding circumstances of all kinds. But these variations in the actual pleasantness of the good exercises no influence upon our judgment of the higher value which goodness possesses, as compared with the drinking of good wine. We judge that goodness has a pleasure-value which may be compared with the pleasure-value of champagne, which may sometimes exceed, and sometimes fall short of that value, but that it possesses beside a value of its own which it does not share with the champagne. We are brought back at last to the simple fact of consciousness. The only way of defending the possibility of a judgment, or the existence of a category, is to show that we do actually think in that way; and it is clear to me that either (1) the attempt to analyse all value into pleasure-value, or (2) to analyse pleasure-value into value in general, or (3) to deny that sometimes we are driven to compare pleasure-value with some higher kind of value fails to represent the actual deliverance of our moral consciousness.

If the view which we have taken of the relation of the

idea of pleasure to the idea of value be well founded, it will be obvious why, from the nature of the case, no sharp distinction can be drawn between them. Among the things to which we attach no value some appeal so entirely to the higher or rational part of our nature that, except for the bare fact that they do satisfy desire, they seem to have nothing in common with the lower. When a man does his duty at the cost of toil and suffering, it is so exclusively the higher part of his nature that impels him to the sacrifice that we should feel it unnatural to say that it is merely the pleasure to which he attaches value. This higher nature of his is, indeed, so closely connected with his lower that it is impossible that the satisfaction of that higher impulse can fail to excite some pleasant feeling, but it is not valued simply as feeling. On the other hand, the mere 'prick of sense' ceases to have value when it ceases to give pleasure. The vast majority of those states of consciousness to which we attach value are intermediate between the two cases. They appeal to our higher and to our lower nature at the same time. The performance of duty, even at the sacrifice of much that under other circumstances would be valued, the activity of our intellect in an interesting profession or an interesting study, social intercourse with those whom we really care for—all these under favourable circumstances are accompanied by feeling of a kind which has much in common with the feeling that one gets from bathing or basking in the sunshine. They appeal to the higher and to the lower part of our nature at one and the same time. It would be ridiculous to talk as if we valued them simply as pleasures; for we feel that, when through unfavourable circumstances, or interfering unpleasantness, they practically cease to appeal to the lower nature at all, we value them still. It would be equally impossible to pronounce that our judgment of their value is wholly independent of that which they have in common with the merely animal satisfactions. In these cases it is practically impossible to say how much of the value is due to one source and how much to the other. If we supposed the lower side of this satisfactoriness progressively diminished, it would be virtually impossible to say exactly when we have reached the point at which we have ceased to prefer them as pleasant states of mind, and now prefer them only as states of mind which we value apart from their pleasurable nature. It is only when we attempt by a violent effort of analysis to compare the higher and the lower simply from the same point of view that we do actually distinguish between the value of our mental condition on the whole

and its value as pleasure. And such efforts, being seldom useful, are seldom made. It is only when the higher and the lower elements of interest get violently separated—when the value which some object of desire has for us as rational and reflecting beings gets very far removed from the value which it has for us as merely sensitive beings,<sup>1</sup> that it becomes natural to say “We prefer this to that, but we do not prefer it simply as pleasure”. And it is probable that in practice different people use this term ‘pleasure’ with considerable differences of meaning. Some people, even among philosophers, seem to be unable to dissociate the term pleasure from bodily indulgences : the existence of high-minded Hedonists seems to show that some people really use it almost or entirely in the sense of ‘intrinsically valuable consciousness’. On the whole, then, it is clear to me that we cannot do without this distinction between value and pleasure. To merge the idea of value in that of pleasure practically involves all the fallacies of Hedonism ; to merge the idea of pleasure in that of value involves the refusal to distinguish different elements in the supremely valuable kind of conscious life which the moral consciousness undoubtedly does distinguish. Practically we cannot get on without both the ideas of value and that of pleasure. Yet it may be admitted that the idea of value belongs to the language of strict philosophical thought : the idea of pleasure rather to the region of the popular conceptions, which the philosopher must take account of, which he is bound to use but which are from their very nature incapable of exact definition, and which, therefore, must necessarily be used without exact scientific precision. We want a term to express that in value which is common to the higher and the lower states of consciousness, in which we recognise value : but, just because higher and lower shade off into one another, pleasure must needs shade off into something that is not pleasure. We may speak of pleasure as the value which feeling possesses simply as feeling ; but just because feeling does not exist apart from the other elements in consciousness, but is one aspect of an indivisible reality—the thinking, feeling, willing self—it is impossible sharply to distinguish the value which we attach to consciousness simply as feeling from the value which we attach to it because it satisfies our rational nature : for the lover kind of satisfaction often depends upon and arises from our consciousness of the highest kind of value. Enthusiasm for an idea—religious or other—may

<sup>1</sup> Of course we are never in reality *merely* sensitive.

produce some of the emotional and some of the physical effects of the keenest sensual enjoyment. It will no doubt be urged that Philosophy has nothing to do with such a vague and indefinable conception; but a Philosophy which fails to take account of the vague and inadequate language in which alone it is possible to express our moral experience must be a Philosophy which deliberately refuses to deal with one side—and that the most important and fundamental side—of that spiritual experience in which Reality consists. It is all very well to protest against abstractions, but without abstractions there is no thought. A Philosophy that would avoid abstractions must be speechless, and the moral Philosophy of some of my friends would seem to be practically speechless except in so far as it indulges in occasional outbursts of abuse or contempt for those who humbly endeavour to put their moral convictions into intelligible words. It is right no doubt to protest against “one-sided abstractions”; but every abstraction must be one-sided while it is actually being made. The only way to neutralise the abstraction involved in looking at one side of a thing apart from the other side is to look at the other side also at another time. I trust that in insisting on the indispensability of the distinction between the pleasure-aspect and other aspects of consciousness, and in contending that both have value, though one has a higher value than the other, I have not violated this doubtless important principle.

To develop further, and to defend, the view of Ethics which finds the moral criterion of our action in its tendency to promote for society at large an ideal which includes an ascending scale of goods<sup>1</sup> ranging from mere sensual gratification up to the good-will itself, would lead us beyond the scope of the present article. My object has been merely to defend it from one particular line of preliminary objection.

<sup>1</sup> I take this expression from the theologian Ritschl whose view of Ethics also includes all these goods, as well as the effort to promote them, in his conception of the Kingdom of God: “The task of the Kingdom of God includes likewise all labour in which our lordship over nature is exercised for the maintenance, ordering, and furtherance even of the bodily side of human life. For unless activities such as these are ultimately to end in antisocial egoism, or in materialistic overestimate of their immediate results, they must be judged in the light of those ends which, in ascending series, represent the social, spiritual and moral ideal of man” (*The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, Eng. Trans., 1900, p. 612).