

II.—THE NATURALISM OF HUME (II.).

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IN the previous article I have considered Hume's theory of knowledge and may now proceed to his treatment of morals. My chief aim will be to show how Hume finds in the facts of the moral life convincing confirmation of his naturalistic view of reason, and so is enabled to develop an ethical theory in complete harmony with his general philosophy. Up to a certain point Green states very fairly the connexion between Hume's view of reason in his theory of knowledge and his account of its function in his ethics. "Reason, constituting no objects, affords no motives. 'It is only the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.' . . . It is the clearness with which Hume points out that, as it cannot move, so neither can it restrain action, that in this regard chiefly distinguishes him from Locke. The check to any passion, he points out, can only proceed from some counter-motive, and such a motive reason, 'having no original influence,' cannot give."¹ But since Green has ignored Hume's doctrine of natural belief, and therefore has interpreted him as a thorough-going associationist, he very naturally treats as an inconsistency Hume's theory of the disinterested passions. Hume, he asserts, is constrained by his principles to explain all action as due to pleasure and pain. "Hume's system has the merit of relative consistency. He sees that the two sides of Locke's doctrine—one that thought originates nothing, but takes its objects as given in feeling, the other that the good which is the object of desire is pleasant feeling—are inseparable. Hence he decisively rejects every notion of rational or unselfish affections, which would imply that they are other than desires for pleasure. . . . But here his consistency stops. The principle which forbade him to admit any object of desire but pleasure is practically forgotten in his account of the sources of pleasure, and its being so forgotten is the condition

¹ Introduction to the moral part of the *Treatise*, p. 48.

of the desire for pleasure being made plausibly to serve as a foundation for morals."¹ Now so far as I understand Hume's philosophy, it contains no fundamental principle which forbids him to recognise disinterested passions. The mind through natural belief transcends itself in knowledge, and it may similarly through love, sympathy, and benevolence, forget private interests in unselfish affection. If it can be shown that Hume nowhere asserts the object of all action to be pleasure and pain, and that, on the contrary, he constantly maintains that there are many disinterested propensities in our complex human nature, we may conclude that there is no such inconsistency in his ethical philosophy nor any lack of agreement between it and his theory of knowledge.

This part of my task is rendered easy by Prof. McGilvary's very convincing article on "Altruism in Hume's *Treatise*" in the *Philosophical Review*;² and I shall make full use of his conclusions, referring the reader to his thorough and detailed examination of the relevant passages. Two points would seem to be established by Prof. McGilvary: first, that Hume recognises passions which are not founded on pleasure and pain; and, secondly, that even in those passions which are founded on pleasure and pain the object of the desire is not pleasure.³ As to the first, though pleasure and pain are 'the chief spring or actuating principle of the human mind,' passions "frequently arise from a natural impulse or instinct which is perfectly unaccountable. Of this kind is the desire of punishment to our enemies, and of happiness to our friends; hunger, lust, and a few other bodily appetites. These passions, properly speaking, produce good and evil, and proceed not from them, like the other affections."⁴ These same passions may be artificially roused by ideas of

¹ Introduction to the moral part of the *Treatise*, pp. 31-32.

² May, 1903, vol. xii., No. 3.

³ As Prof. McGilvary points out, Lechartier, Jodl, Pfeiderer and Albee all more or less agree with Green in their interpretation of the *Treatise*. Jodl, Pfeiderer and Albee admit, however, that in the *Enquiry* Hume represents human nature as largely moved by unselfish considerations. Gisyoki seems to be the only commentator, previous to Prof. McGilvary, who regards Hume as maintaining the disinterestedness of sympathy and benevolence in the *Treatise* as well as in the *Enquiry*. Prof. McGilvary does not attempt to show the bearing of Hume's ethics on his theory of knowledge; and it is with that alone that I am here directly concerned. It is undoubtedly the usual purely associationist interpretation of Hume's theory of knowledge that has led commentators to expect from him an egoistic theory of morals.

⁴ *Treatise*, ii., iii., ix.; G., p. 215; S-B., p. 439. By the phrase 'produce good and evil' Hume means, it must be noted, 'produce *pleasure* and *pain*'.

pleasure and pain, but unless they were primarily instinctive, the pleasure and pain would have no existence at all. Hume gives as a list of the instinctive passions—in addition, of course, to such bodily desires as hunger and lust—“benevolence and resentment, the love of life, and kindness to children”.¹ Apparently, therefore, by ‘the desire of happiness to our friends’ Hume means private benevolence, or as he names it in the *Enquiry* ‘humanity and friendship,’ and by ‘the desire of punishment to our enemies’ resentment or love of vengeance. In the *Enquiry* Hume adds to the above list, love of fame or power. “Nature must, by the internal frame and constitution of the mind, give an original propensity to fame, ere we can reap any pleasure from that acquisition, or pursue it from motives of self-love, and desire of happiness.”² Hume nowhere states his position in a more forcible manner than in the following passage: “Who sees not that vengeance, from the force alone of passion, may be so eagerly pursued, as to make us knowingly neglect every consideration of ease, interest, or safety; and, like some vindictive animals, infuse our very souls into the wounds we give an enemy; and what a malignant philosophy must it be, that will not allow to humanity and friendship the same privileges which are indisputably granted to the darker passions of enmity and resentment”.³

As regards the direct and indirect passions which are ‘founded on pleasure and pain,’ Green was obviously misled by this ambiguous phrase. It does not mean that these passions have pleasure and pain as their object but only as their efficient cause. “The mind by an *original* instinct tends to unite itself with the good, and to avoid the evil, tho’ they be conceiv’d merely in idea, and be consider’d as to exist in any future period of time.”⁴ Hence any pleasant idea, however objective the content of that idea may be, at once inclines the mind to desire it. Feeling is thus the chief moving principle, but anything whatsoever to which it is attached by nature, the happiness of a fellow-creature as immediately as one’s own good, may be the end of action.

¹ *Treatise*, ii., iii., iii.; G., pp. 196-197; S-B., p. 417. Cf. McGilvary, p. 277, note.

² *Enquiry*, Appendix ii.; G., p. 271; S-B., p. 301.

³ *Ibid.*; G., p. 272; S-B., p. 302. I may quote Prof. McGilvary’s remark on Hume’s treatment of love of life: “Contrary to the usage of Hobbes, Hume does not include the self-preservative instinct in self-love. In this he showed fine psychological discernment. The instinct which prompts us to cling to life has no conscious end in view, any more than hunger has” (p. 277, note).

⁴ *Treatise*, ii., iii., ix.; G., pp. 214-215; S-B., p. 438.

Hume does not, of course, deny that pleasure and pain may themselves be the ends sought, but even in such cases we can distinguish between the pleasure sought as end and the pleasantness of the idea of that pleasure which is the efficient cause.¹

Now nature both through the instinctive and through the indirect passions has connected feeling with very definite objective ends. And though a double process of association is required to bring the indirect passions into play—and upon this associationist mechanism Hume dwells at great length in the *Treatise*—the associations do not explain the disinterestedness of their action, but from the start presuppose it. As the detail of Hume's associationist explanation of the mechanism of the passions does not specially concern us, I may simply quote the following passage in which Prof. McGilvary sums up the results of his examination of it. "There is nothing said of past experience, nothing about the previously ascertained conduciveness of the loved object to my pleasure, for the sake of the re-enjoyment of which I am now doing anything. Association does not begin with self-love and change it into a love for another, neither does it introduce the very least element of self-love into the nature of my love for another. On the contrary, it is the *original* qualities of love which make it possible for the double association to work. And one of these original qualities is the fact that love is 'always directed to some sensible being external to us,' that is, the original and invariable altruism of love is *presupposed* by Hume's associational explanation; the associations do not produce the altruism. . . . To put it succinctly, we love others because for some reason they please us; but we do not love them in order to get pleasure either from them or from our love for them."² Thus nature, by establishing a connexion between our feelings and certain objective ends, determines us to actions that completely transcend self-love. The distinction between the direct and the indirect passions is not fundamental, and we may apply to both what Hume says of the instinctive passions, that, properly speaking, they "produce good and evil, and proceed not from them".³ Indeed no philosophical writer has ever stated more forcibly than Hume the important ethical principle that pleasure is conditioned by desire and not *vice versa*. "Whatever contradiction may vulgarly be supposed between the *selfish* and *social*

¹ Cf. McGilvary, p. 281.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 290-291.

³ *Treatise*, ii., iii., ix.; G., p. 215; S-B., p. 439.

sentiments or dispositions, they are really no more opposite than selfish and ambitious, selfish and revengeful, selfish and vain. It is requisite that there be an original propensity of some kind, in order to be a basis to self-love, by giving a relish to the objects of its pursuit; and none more fit for this purpose than benevolence or humanity. The goods of fortune are spent in one gratification or another: the miser who accumulates his annual income, and lends it out at interest, has really spent it in the gratification of his avarice. And it would be difficult to show why a man is more a loser by a generous action, than by any other method of expense; since *the utmost which he can attain by the most elaborate selfishness, is the indulgence of some affection.*"¹ "So far from thinking, that men have no affection for any thing beyond themselves, I am of opinion, that tho' it be rare to meet with one, who loves any single person better than himself; yet 'tis as rare to meet with one in whom all the kind affections, taken together, do not over-balance all the selfish."²

But to return to our central point—the dependence of reason on feeling and instinct—Hume derives from the facts of moral experience the most convincing proof of the truth of his naturalistic point of view. There is complete analogy between the dependence of reason on natural belief and its relation to the natural passions. The passions determine our moral sense and the standard of conduct, just as the natural beliefs constitute the only possible ground of empirical inference.

It has already been shown that reason does not produce the passions; and from this it follows that it is equally incapable of governing them. A passion can only be opposed by a counter-passion, and as no passion is produced by reason, none is controlled by it. "We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason. Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."³ This conclusion is so vital for my purpose that I may state Hume's argument at length. "A passion is an original existence, or, if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or

¹ *Enquiry*, ix, ii.; G., pp. 255-256; S-B., p. 281. Italics in last sentence are mine.

² *Treatise*, iii., ii., ii.; G., p. 260; S-B., p. 487.

³ *Ibid.*, ii., iii., iii.; G., p. 195; S-B., p. 415. Cf. *Treatise*, iii., i., i.; G., pp. 235-236; S-B., pp. 457-458.

modification.¹ When I am angry, I am actually possess'd with the passion, and in that emotion have no more a reference to any other object, than when I am thirsty, or sick, or more than five foot high. 'Tis impossible, therefore, that this passion can be oppos'd by, or be contradictory to truth and reason; since this contradiction consists in the disagreement of ideas, consider'd as copies, with those objects, which they represent. . . . It must follow, that passions can be contrary to reason only so far as they are *accompany'd* with some judgment or opinion."² Now only in two senses can an affection, when accompanied by judgment, be called unreasonable: "First, When a passion, such as hope or fear . . . is founded on the supposition of the existence of objects, which really do not exist. Secondly, When in exerting any passion in action, we chuse means insufficient for the design'd end, and deceive ourselves in our judgment of causes and effects. When a passion is neither founded on false suppositions, nor chuses means insufficient for the end, the understanding can neither justify nor condemn it. 'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. 'Tis not contrary to reason for me to chuse my total ruin, to prevent the least uneasiness of an *Indian* or person wholly unknown to me. 'Tis as little contrary to reason to prefer even my own acknowledg'd lesser good to my greater, and have a more ardent affection for the former than the latter."³ Thus though a passion may be described as unreasonable when accompanied by a false judgment, even then it is not the passion that is unreasonable but the judgment. And on this account also, reason and passion can never oppose one another. For immediately we discover the falsity of the judgment, passion at once yields to reason. The actions, being recognised as based on false calculations, cease to be the required means for the satisfaction of our desire, and are no longer willed. The restraint which is exercised by the calm emotions, such as sympathy and benevolence, over the violent and transitory passions constitutes strength of will; but owing to the former being more known by their effects than by immediate feeling they have been mistaken for the determinations of reason.

In the section of the *Treatise* entitled, 'Moral Distinctions

¹ According to Hume all the passions, both direct and indirect, are ultimate and unanalysable. No passion can through association or any other means be developed out of, or transformed into, any other passion.

² *Treatise*, ii., iii., iii.; G., p. 195; S-B., pp. 415-416.

³ *Loc. cit.*; cf. iii., i., i.; G., p. 236; S-B., p. 458.

not deriv'd from Reason,'¹ and also in Appendix I. of the *Enquiry*, Hume repeats and reinforces this argument against the attempt to rationalise morals. Reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood; and truth or falsehood "consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the *real* relations of ideas, or to *real* existence and matter of fact".² As we have just seen, however, each passion is a unique modification of mind, an original fact complete in itself, and therefore reveals no relations either between itself and other passions or between itself and reality, that can be pronounced either true or false, either contrary or conformable to reason. Each passion imperiously demands the satisfaction of its instinct, and carries no reference to any reality beyond. But though the yielding to passion is never in any single instance contrary to reason, we still judge such satisfaction to be either good or bad, meritorious or the reverse, and in accordance with these judgments control our propensities. Does not that imply the activity of reason?

In treating of this problem Hume states what he regards as being the fundamental distinction between the use of reason in knowledge and in morals. What greatly strengthens, and partly causes, belief in the rationalistic theory of morals is the fact that before deciding upon the merit of any particular action we have to consider all the separate relations, all the circumstances and situations of the persons concerned. Our procedure thus seems to be identical with the process by which we determine the proportion of lines in any triangle by examination of the relations of its parts. The analogy, however, is quite misleading. For whereas the mathematician from the known relations of the parts of the figure infers some unknown relation, in moral inquiries *all* the relations and circumstances must be submitted to us before we can pass sentence of blame or approbation. "While we are ignorant whether a man were aggressor or not, how can we determine whether the person who killed him be criminal or innocent? But after every circumstance, every relation is known, the understanding has no further room to operate, nor any object on which to employ itself."³ When the whole set of circumstances is laid before the mind, we instinctively feel a new impression, such as exists nowhere outside the mind and therefore can never be discovered in the external circumstances of an action, in its consequences to ourselves or to others, namely, a new and original impres-

¹ *Treatise*, iii., i., i; cf. *Enquiry Concerning Morals*, Appendix I.

² *Treatise*, iii., i., i; G., p. 236; S-B., p. 458.

³ *Enquiry Concerning Morals*, Appendix I.; G., p. 262; S-B., p. 290.

sion of affection or disgust, esteem or contempt, approbation or blame. "Here is a matter of fact; but 'tis the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object. So that when you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame upon the contemplation of it."¹ "Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood: the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution: the other has a productive faculty, and gilding or staining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, raises in a manner a new creation. . . . From circumstances and relations, known or supposed, the former leads us to the discovery of the concealed and unknown: after all circumstances and relations are laid before us, the latter makes us feel from the whole a new sentiment of blame or approbation."² In the sentences which follow the above quotation, Hume speaks of reason as an ultimate faculty which attains to truth and reality. And in so far as reason is analytic, discovering necessary relations between ideas; it is undoubtedly

¹ *Treatise*, iii, i, i; G., p. 245; S-B., p. 469. On the eve of the publication of this third volume of the *Treatise* (16th March, 1740), Hume wrote as follows to Francis Hutcheson: "I must consult you in a point of prudence. I have concluded a reasoning with the following sentences: 'When you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing but that, from the particular constitution of your nature, you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colours, heat, and cold, which, according to modern philosophy are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind. And this discovery in morals, like that other in physics, is to be regarded as a mighty advancement of speculative sciences, though like that too it has little or no influence on practice.' Is not this a little too strong? I desire your opinion of it, though I cannot entirely promise to conform myself to it. I wish from my heart I could avoid concluding, that since morality, according to your opinion, as well as mine, is determined merely by sentiment, it regards only human nature and human life. . . . If morality were determined by reason, that is the same to all rational beings; but nothing but experience can assure us that the sentiments are the same. What experience have we with regard to superior beings? How can we ascribe to them any sentiments at all? They have implanted those sentiments in us for the conduct of life like our bodily sensations, which they possess not themselves." Burton in quoting this letter (*Life of Hume*, vol. i., pp. 117-120) points out that the above passage appears in the *Treatise* with no other variation than the substitution of the word 'considerable' for 'mighty'.

² *Enquiry Concerning Morals*, Appendix I.; G., p. 265; S-B., p. 294.

so. We have learned, however, in the *Treatise* that reason in its more important function as synthetic is exactly on a level with taste and equally incapable of supplying an absolute standard: the judgments to which both give rise are alike relative to "the particular fabric and constitution of the human species". Both also are creative faculties. For while the one produces the moral sentiments which condition all action, the other, as imagination, generates those synthetic principles which make human knowledge possible.

So far Hume's theory would seem to assign so minor a rôle to reason, as practically to eliminate it from the specifically moral sphere. For though it is required to pave the way for sentiment and give a proper discernment of its object, it would seem to play no part at all in determining any one of these objects or their relative value. When we pass, however, to Hume's treatment of the 'artificial' virtues and of the principle of utility upon which they rest, the other side of the truth comes into view, and is quite fairly emphasised. To the question why justice is approved, the only possible answer consists in a reference to its utility. Justice with all the machinery of law and government is necessary for the existence and advancement of society. Justice is indispensable, and therefore is approved. "Reflections on the beneficial consequences of this virtue are the *sole* foundation of its merit."¹ Utility "is the sole source of the moral approbation paid to fidelity, justice, veracity, integrity, and those other estimable and useful qualities and principles".² "The boundaries of justice still grow larger, in proportion to the largeness of men's views, and the force of their mutual connexions. History, experience, reason sufficiently instruct us in the natural progress of human sentiments, and in the gradual enlargement of our regards to justice, in proportion as we become acquainted with the extensive utility of that virtue."³

But why does justice receive *moral* approbation? If it is entirely based on utilitarian grounds, the approval must be due to reason, and that is contrary to Hume's fundamental thesis. To answer this question we must raise the further problem: Why does utility please? What is good for society as a whole does not necessarily in any particular case coincide with the good of the individual. That he should esteem justice is not therefore self-evident; and his approval really rests on the sympathetic instinct which

¹ *Enquiry Concerning Morals*, iii., i.; G., p. 179; S-B., p. 188.

² *Ibid.*, iii., ii.; G., p. 196; S-B., p. 204.

³ *Ibid.*, iii., i.; G., p. 187; S-B., p. 192.

makes the good of society appeal to him. "The ultimate ends of human actions can never, in any case, be accounted for by *reason*, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependence on the intellectual faculties."¹ "Utility is only a tendency to a certain end; and were the end totally indifferent to us, we should feel the same indifference towards the means. It is requisite a *sentiment* should here display itself, in order to give a preference to the useful above the pernicious tendencies. . . . Here therefore *reason* instructs us in the several tendencies of actions, and *humanity* makes a distinction in favour of those which are useful and beneficial."² Or as Hume states the same position in the *Treatise*: "Self-interest is the original motive to the establishment of justice: but a sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation, which attends that virtue."³ Even the artificial virtues, therefore, rest on feeling and instinct, and save through them can acquire no moral sanction. Indeed only for convenience in distinguishing them from the more direct virtues can we name them artificial. They are influenced by the reflective activities of reason; but, as Hume remarks, "in so sagacious an animal [as man], what necessarily arises from the exertion of his intellectual faculties may justly be esteemed natural".⁴

Hume considers, and rejects, the purely instinctive explanation of justice. That justice does not arise directly, like hunger, love of life, or attachment to offspring, from a simple original instinct, is obvious if we consider how intricate and often conventional are the laws, such as those of property, through which justice is realised. There would be required for that purpose "ten thousand different instincts, and these employed about objects of the greatest intricacy and nicest discernment. For when a definition of *property* is required, that relation is found to resolve itself into any possession acquired by occupation, by industry, by prescription, by inheritance, by contract, etc. Can we think that nature, by an original instinct, instructs us in all these methods of acquisition?"⁵ In any case, as Hume very justly adds,⁶ we cannot believe that nature creates a rational

¹ *Enquiry Concerning Morals*, Appendix I.; G., p. 264; S-B., p. 298.

² *Ibid.*, G., p. 259; S-B., p. 286.

³ *Treatise*, iii., ii., ii.; G., p. 271; S-B., pp. 499-500.

⁴ *Enquiry Concerning Morals*, Appendix III.; G., p. 275; S-B., p. 307.

⁵ *Ibid.*, iii., ii.; G., pp. 194-195; S-B., pp. 201-202. Cf. *Treatise*, iii., i., ii.; G., p. 249; S-B., p. 473.

⁶ *Enquiry*, *loc. cit.*

creature and yet does not trust anything to the operation of his reason. Through the instinctive activities of reason nature adapts the other instincts of man to the complex requirements of social existence.

The remaining problem, how if virtue is just this feeling of approbation, and every passion carries with it the approval of its own particular end, the control of one passion by another, or the condemnation of any particular passion in its opposition to another, is to be accounted for, lies to a great extent beyond the province of this article, but may be briefly indicated. Hume regards the social passions upon which the artificial virtues rest as the specifically moral sentiments. "These principles, we must remark, are social and universal; they form, in a manner, the *party* of humankind against vice or disorder, its common enemy."¹ "Avarice, ambition, vanity, and all passions vulgarly, though improperly, comprised under the denomination of *self-love*, are here excluded from our theory concerning the origin of morals, not because they are too weak, but because they have not a proper direction for that purpose."² They produce different sentiments in different minds, and the same object will not satisfy more than one individual; whereas the social sentiments are identical in all men, and the same object rouses them in all human creatures. Language is moulded upon this obvious distinction, and invents a peculiar set of terms to express those judgments of censure and approbation which arise from the social sentiments and which are developed in the artificial virtues through considerations of general utility. "Virtue and Vice become then known; morals are recognised; certain general ideas are framed of human conduct and behaviour. . . . And by such universal principles are the particular sentiments of self-love frequently controlled and limited."³ Hume might well have named the artificial virtues the rational virtues, and so without giving up the primacy of feeling, have more completely recognised the regulating power of reason. Each and every passion is in itself, taken generally, perfectly legitimate. Reason can neither justify nor condemn it. But since life, especially social life, demands organisation, we learn to govern our various passions in the light of those general utilitarian considerations which constitute the rules of personal prudence and of social justice. The controlling force in such cases is the universal social sentiments upon which the appeal to utility rests.⁴ These sentiments are originally

¹ *Enquiry Concerning Morals*, ix., i.; G., p. 251; S-B., p. 275.

² *Ibid.*, G., p. 248; S-B., p. 271. ³ *Ibid.*, G., p. 250; S-B., p. 274.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vi., i.; G., p. 222; S-B., p. 239.

weaker than the selfish passions, but are so strengthened both by private affections, such as the love of fame or reputation, and by various social influences, as finally to overpower them. Thus, as Hume explicitly states both in the *Treatise* and in the *Enquiry*, reason and sentiment concur in almost all moral action. "Both these causes are intermix'd in our judgments of morals; after the same manner as they are in our decisions concerning most kinds of external beauty: Tho' I am also of opinion, that reflections on the tendencies of actions have by far the greatest influence, and determine all the great lines of our duty."¹ Feeling determines all our ends: reason decides when and how these can best be attained. Though reason is 'only the slave of the passions,' it is in this subordinate function as indispensable as feeling. Without displacing the instincts, it enables them to fulfil their human function.

Hume's theory of reason and instinct thus runs throughout his whole philosophy; and the unity to which it enables us to reduce his system seems to me to justify the importance which I have ascribed to it. His sensationalist principle, that all the ultimate data of knowledge are detached impressions, is equally fundamental, but is consistent with the most divergent views of the constitution of our complex experience. Only when we have recognised the important functions which Hume ascribes to feeling and instinct, and the highly complex emotions and propensities which he is willing to regard as ultimate and unanalysable, are we in a position to do justice to his new, and very original, conception of the nature and conditions of experience. Hume may, indeed, be regarded, even more truly than Kant, as the father of all those subsequent philosophies that are based on an opposition between thought and feeling, truth and validity, actuality and worth. Though his real position is positivism or naturalism, it is not of that familiar type which seeks to limit knowledge to material phenomena, but rather is akin to the broader, more humanistic, philosophy which was developed by Comte in his later days, and which rests the hopes of the future on those sciences which more immediately concern our human nature. For Hume's disbelief in speculative physics and in metaphysics is more than counter-

¹ *Treatise*, iii., iii., i.; G., p. 347; S-B., p. 590. Cf. *Enquiry Concerning Morals*, i.; G., p. 172; S-B., pp. 172-173. Reason is here used in its broadest sense as including both its analytic and its synthetic form. But as the estimation of the consequences of an action involves reasoning about matters of fact according to the principle of causality, the latter is, even in moral inquiry, the more important.

balanced by a belief in the possibility of a philosophical science of human nature, and of the special sciences of ethics, æsthetics, politics and political economy. These, he believes, are sciences which have a sure foundation in human experience. "So great is the force of laws, and of particular forms of government, and so little dependence have they on the humours and tempers of men, that consequences almost as general and certain may sometimes be deduced from them, as any which the mathematical sciences afford us."¹ Undoubtedly it is the other, and purely negative, side of his philosophy that has exercised most influence in the past; but more and more attention is being bestowed upon his constructive views, and these are certainly capable of independent development. Even if we reject the dogmatic sensationalism which he shares in common with Kant, this positive side of his teaching may still retain its value. At the same time we must regard it as doubtful whether the attempts that are being made to divorce this teaching from the metaphysical scepticism which serves as its foundation, and to use it in developing an idealistic conception of the universe, are likely to be successful. The *Treatise on Human Nature* may perhaps be regarded as still remaining the best commentary on such theories.

¹ *Essays*, iii., "That Politics may be reduced to a Science"; G., p. 99. Compare also the essay "Of the Standard of Taste," and those on political economy.