STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY
AND PSYCHOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

THE order of the papers in this volume is in the main that in which they were written; the psychological papers are grouped at the beginning, and the chronological arrangement is sometimes interrupted to bring together papers with closely related subjects. I have placed the paper on Memory out of its proper order because I wanted to make clear at the outset the distinction between immediate experience and thought.

I have republished the Herbartian article because the Herbartian Psychology is at least of great historical interest, and there is no other tolerably full account of it in English.

None of the other papers is historical. Some of them, such as that on *Things and Sensations*, do not represent my present position, but they all contain views which, in my opinion, ought to be considered before they are rejected.

The treatment of *Conation and Mental Activity* is misleading in one important respect. My language seems to imply that the action of the self is or may be purely mental. As I now hold, the self of self-consciousness is primarily and throughout an embodied self; it is mind and body in one, and the nature of the unity which comprehends both is known only in self-consciousness, and is otherwise unintelligible. Hence the activity of the self, though it essentially involves mind, does not belong to mind alone abstractly considered. This correction does not affect the main drift of the paper. On the contrary it ought, if I am right, to remove a difficulty which might otherwise be felt by the reader. For the concept of a purely mental action is

very difficult, even if it is possible at all. The most abstract thinking is experienced as a strenuous bodily effort.

The essay on *Things and Sensations* belongs to an early stage in the development of my thought on the topic of which it treats. I am glad to have this opportunity of indicating the main points on which I now disagree with it. (1) I have throughout considered only the knowledge of "external objects". I now recognise that what the external object is external to is the embodied self as primarily known in self-consciousness. We cannot therefore give an account of our knowledge of external objects except by giving an account of the distinction and relation of the embodied self and the embodied not-self. (2) I now regard as untenable the distinction which I make in this paper between matter as it is in itself and as it appears to our senses. When I wrote it I was under the influence of such thinkers as Leibniz, Lotze, and W. K. Clifford, who, however widely they may differ from each other, agree that matter as it is in itself is not really material but mental. They are not subjective idealists; they hold that what appears to us as a material world really is a system of actual existences enduring, changing, and interacting. But they deny that either the primary or the secondary characters belong to the intrinsic nature of matter as it is in itself. It is we who qualify it by predicates drawn from the immediate content of our own sense experience which do not belong to it. If we ask what it is in itself we can only conceive it after the analogy of what we find in our own mental life. In this respect the monadism of Lotze and the mind-stuff theory of Clifford are at one. A doctrine of this type pervades my article on *Things and Sensations*. But I now reject it. As I now hold, matter and mind are ultimately and essentially distinct, though ultimately and essentially inseparable. (3) In § 4 I maintain that what I call sensible appearance has an existence of its own apart from that of the physical object which is seen or touched or otherwise perceived by the senses; it is not, I argue, merely this object itself appearing to the percipient. I still hold this position except that I no longer regard the sensible appearance as merely

mental and not material. It is, as I should now say, material but not physical. But I still hold that its existence is distinct from that of the physical object which we are cognisant of in sense perception. There is, however, an ambiguity in the term "sensible appearance" which may give rise to misunderstanding if it is not explained. It may be taken to mean what the physical object seems to be when it is perceived whether or not it really is such as it seems to be. For instance, the moon when we look at it seems to be a small silvery disk, and in double vision what is really a single candle flame seems to be two candle flames. Understood in this way the sensible appearance would simply be the physical object itself as it appears, rightly or wrongly, adequately or inadequately, to the percipient; it would have no distinct existence of its own; it would, I presume, be what Mr. Dawes Hicks calls a content. This is *not* what I mean by "sensible appearance" when I say that its existence is distinct from that of the physical object perceived. To avoid ambiguity I now call what the thing perceived seems to the percipient to be, its perceptual appearance. I reserve the term "sensible appearance" for the sensum actually experienced and therefore actually existing in the moment of sense-perception: the sensum is an appearance of the physical object inasmuch as it determines or contributes to determine the perceptual appearance of that object. In double vision a single flame seems to be two flames because there do not merely seem to be but really are two visual sensa. The two sensa constitute a sensible appearance, not a seeming. I do not assert that the presently experienced sensum is the only factor operative in determining perceptual seeming: there are others which become more and more important as experience advances. But present sensation is the most primitive factor and is actually indispensable. It is the ingredient which gives to sense-perception its distinctive character.

These are the main points on which the article on *Things and Sensations* requires positive correction. It is also inadequate where it is not wrong or misleading. My present view is expounded in the last edition of my *Manual of*

Psychology so far as the scale of the book admits. For a fuller treatment I must refer to the first instalment of my Gifford Lectures which is soon to be published.

The article on *Bradley's Theory of Relations* is supplemented and to some extent corrected by what I say on the same topic in the article entitled *Bradley on Truth and Falsity* (pp. 232-3). I agree with him that the relational way of thinking is essentially inadequate but not that it is false. Both relations and related terms have their being only within the supra-relational unity of some whole. But I do not agree that the supra-relational unity alone is real and that relations as such are unreal. On the contrary, I hold that if the supra-relational unity is real, the distinguishable terms and relations which it unites must also be real.

In *Mind*, Vol. xxxvi., 1927, Professor Kemp Smith has partly defended and partly criticised the doctrine put forward in the article on *The Nature of Universals* together with the substantially similar view of the late Professor Cook Wilson. I think that his criticism is mainly based on a misunderstanding. Where he supposes that he disagrees with me he seems only to be developing my view on a side of it which I have perhaps not sufficiently emphasised. According to him I have failed to take into account what is signified by the phrases "such as", "this-such", or "such as this". What I really hold is that there is a certain supra-relational form of unity which we may call unity of kind. But this peculiar form of unity, like every other, is the unity of a multiplicity comprehending terms in distinctly characteristic relations. Among these I agree that "such as" is fundamental and that it perhaps is the only fundamental relation, all others, such as similarity and contrast, being special cases of it.

I feel that I ought to add an explanation specially addressed to those who like myself are in sympathy with the essential drift of the Socratic or Socratic-Platonic doctrine of Forms. There are certain general concepts, including the mathematical and ethical, which cannot be clearly and distinctly understood if we consider only empirical instances. We cannot clearly and distinctly understand what

equality is without reference to instances of ideally perfect equality, which cannot be perceived or imagined; we cannot understand what justice is without reference to an ideal society in which there is no possibility of injustice. Such ideally perfect instances of a general concept are what Socrates calls "patterns" (*παραδείγματα*); the empirical instances in the world of becoming transiently "imitate" or approximate to these fixed ideals in varying degrees. It seems to me that nothing but confusion and perplexity can arise if we identify the ideal instance with the generality of the general concept and consequently identify imitation (*μίμησις*) with participation (*μέθεξις*). The general concept as such is not a part of itself; but both ideal and empirical instances are, as such, parts (*μέρη*) of it. If this were not so there would be no communication (*κοινωνία*) between them. The ideal patterns would stand aloof in isolated majesty severed from the world of our ordinary experience. It is because Socrates was not clear on this point that he laid himself open to the criticism of the theory of Forms which we find in the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*. In my article on *The Nature of Universals* I am concerned only with generality. What I say is intended to apply indifferently both to such general concepts as justice and equality, which essentially involve ideal instances, and those of hair and dirt for which we cannot assume ideal instances without plunging into what Socrates calls a "bottomless abyss of nonsense". I leave it to others more competent than myself to decide, how far, if at all, what I retain and reject in the Socratic doctrine may also have been retained and rejected by Plato. However this may be, it was mainly through the study of Plato that I reached my own position.

So far as my article on *Error* disagrees with my later treatment of the topic, more especially in the article on *Real Being and Being for Thought*, I should not endorse it. The main divergence is in the account of "appearance". I should not now say that there are any features due to the psychological process of apprehending it which are capable of being ascribed to it independently of this process. If this does not hold good for possibilities it holds for nothing else.

But the status of possibilities is inseparably one with that of universals. Holding as I do that universals belong to the objective nature of things, I am bound to say the same of possibilities. If I draw a billiard ball from a bag containing a thousand white balls and only one that is black, it is possible that I may draw the black one. This possibility is constituted not by ignorance or any mental process in me, but by the general constitution of the collection. Even after I have actually drawn a white ball, it is still true that I might have drawn the black one. Probability is of course in the same position as possibility. If I do draw the black ball, this makes no difference to the objective improbability as positively grounded in the general nature of the collection.

The distinction between the Intent and Content of thought (§ 2 of *Error*) is one which I have not named in this way in my later work. The reason is that the term "content" is commonly used with a quite different meaning.

The fullest and most accurate account of what I have been in the habit of calling "Presentations" is given in *Some Fundamental Points in the Theory of Knowledge*. This should at any rate clear up misunderstanding. The term "presentation" is taken from Ward, and I ought to explain how I came to use it in a way different from his. According to Ward's formal definition a "presentation" simply means an object so far as an experiencing individual is aware of it. It thus covers all that is covered by Locke's 'idea'.[1] I should have been glad simply to accept this use of the term if I had not found it in Ward bound up with a view of the nature of "objects" which I cannot accept. He seems to derive them all from sensation through differentiation and integration of a sensori-motor continuum. He thus ignores or seems to ignore the thought-factor which is for me fundamentally distinct from the sensa and equally original. My remedy for this was to reserve the term "presentation" for the sense factor, or more generally that element in the object which is immediately experienced. This usage, however, has caused so much difficulty and mis-

[1] Ward, *Psychological Principles*, p. 46.

understanding that in the latest edition of my *Manual of Psychology* I have fallen back on the use of the term "presentation" originally proposed by Ward, as corresponding to Locke's "idea". This does not at all imply that I have changed my own view. It only means that I have no longer a convenient term for expressing it concisely.

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The paper entitled *In what Way is Memory-Knowledge Immediate?* was delivered before the Scots Philosophical Society, and has not hitherto been published. Two articles appear under new titles. *Bradley's Theory of Relations* was originally published as *Alleged Self-Contradictions in the Concept of Relation*, and *Real Being and Being for Thought* is an emendation for *The Object of Thought and Real Being*. The papers are in the main reprinted as they originally appeared, but almost all contain some minor though not unimportant corrections.

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CONTENTS

I

THE HERBARTIAN PSYCHOLOGY

A. HERBART'S SYNTHETIC PSYCHOLOGY

THE purpose of this article is to state, with the least possible comment, the views of Herbart, as they are expounded in his two most important psychological works, the *Lehrbuch zur Psychologie*, and the *Psychologie neu gegründet auf Erfahrung, Metaphysik und Mathematik*. I shall always refer to the former as the *Lehrbuch* and to the latter as the *Psychologie*. The *Lehrbuch* was the first work in which Herbart gave a systematic account of his psychological doctrines. It is brief and easy to read. The first edition appeared in 1813; a new one, revised and enlarged by the author, was published in 1834. The *Psychologie* (from the years 1824–25) is Herbart's capital achievement. It is divided into two parts, of which the first is synthetic and the second analytic. In the synthetic part, Herbart endeavours to construct a psychological theory on the basis of certain abstract principles. In the analytic part, he describes and analyses the concrete phenomena of mind, and applies to their explanation the results of the first part. The synthetic portion of Herbart's work is much less interesting and important than the analytic, yet it must not be neglected; for, apart from it, Herbart's psychological doctrines cannot be understood in their systematic completeness.

§ 1. *Faculty-Psychology due to Involuntary Abstraction.* —The most striking negative feature of the Herbartian Psychology is its uncompromising polemic against innate faculties, activities, and predispositions. In this respect Herbart

is to a great extent in agreement with the English Associationists. He saw, however, more distinctly than they did, the exact nature and origin of the older methods, which he so resolutely discarded. He attempts to show, at the outset, that the faculty-psychology had its root in the very nature of the introspective process, and that it was therefore unavoidable so long as inner perception was regarded as the sole and sufficient basis of mental science. In physical science generalisation is voluntary; the individual phenomena wait to be examined and compared in detail, so that in forming a classification those resemblances and differences may be emphasised which best conduce to scientific purposes; in purely introspective psychology the case is otherwise. The individual phenomena do not wait for deliberate examination and detailed comparison (*Lehrb.*, § 3). "Self-observation mutilates the facts of consciousness in the very act of apprehending them, tears them from their necessary context, and hands them over to a disorderly abstraction, which finds no resting-place till it has arrived at the highest genera." It is impossible for introspection to catch anything beyond transient glimpses of mental phenomena in their broad outlines. The very endeavour to be exact occasions inexactness; for it leads to disregard of what is obscure, and it is precisely the specialising details of the particular case which are obscurest. The result is that in the older psychology we are everywhere confronted with vague generalities which contribute nothing to scientific explanation because they are incapable of being definitely applied to specific instances.

Nor does the evil end here. The human mind has always been prone to mistake abstractions for realities, even when the corresponding concretes stand out in clear and definite detail. This propensity becomes almost irresistible in a case in which concrete details are shadowy and evasive. Hence we find that the faculty-psychologists, unable to make legitimate use of their generalisations in the explanation of particular phenomena, treated them as if they were real forces producing these phenomena. Thus in their hands Psychology became transformed into a kind of mythology, which

was none the less mischievous because scarcely anyone overtly and explicitly professed to believe in it.

§ 2. *Proposed Substitute for purely Introspective Method.* —Are we then to conclude that the results of introspection are useless? If this is so, need we on that account despair of Psychology, or shall we be able to discover some more secure foundation on which to build it? Herbart maintains that, in spite of past failure, it is yet possible to construct a mental science worthy of the name. Introspection, properly used, yields a valuable and even indispensable point of departure (*Psych.*, §§ 11, 13). Certain facts most clearly revealed to inner observation display, when they are logically analysed, a problematic and, in some cases, a self-contradictory character, due to their detachment from the connexions which alone make them intelligible. Now if, without doing violence to the clear evidence of introspection, we can so supplement and modify these problematic facts by means of hypotheses that the implied contradictions and incoherencies disappear, then the explanatory force of our assumptions will be some guarantee of their correctness. If, moreover, these hypotheses can be successfully applied to the explanation of particular phenomena, the evidence in their favour will be greatly strengthened. Finally, if the lines on which they are framed can be determined with certainty and precision on grounds independent of Psychology, the proposed method will be justified at every point. All these conditions Herbart attempts to satisfy.

§ 3. *Problems contained in the Results of Introspection.* —The whole scope and aim of Psychology is to show how given facts, otherwise unintelligible, may be understood by assumption of hidden facts with which they are connected according to definite laws. In this way we are bound, for psychological purposes, to transcend experience in order to explain experience. Wherever inner observation encounters phenomena which need to be hypothetically supplemented before they can be understood, we have a starting-point for psychological investigation. Among the problems furnished by introspection, some excite inquiry merely because of the indeterminateness of the relations involved, others appear to

imply inner contradictions. As an example of the former class we may take Desire. Desire implies always some presented content of consciousness which is desired. Now, so soon as we begin to examine this relation closely, it gives rise to a series of questions. Under what conditions does the presented content become an object of desire? What must be the nature of the presentation involved, and of the presentative activity, in order that such a phenomenon as conation may arise in consciousness? If we can find an adequate answer, by going back from desire as a given conditionate to hitherto unknown conditions adequate to account for it, then in the fact that we feel desire we have a point of departure for psychological inquiry.

The chief instance of a datum of introspection involving an inner contradiction is found in the fact of Self-consciousness, as implying identity of subject and object. It seems to lie in the very nature of the Ego that it should be at the same time and in the same sense one and dual: one, because the Self which knows is identified with the Self which is known; dual, because they are separated by this very antithesis of knower and known. Nor is this the only difficulty; if we inquire what it is that the Ego is aware of when it is aware of itself, we find ourselves confronted by another puzzle. The Self is not to be identified with any particular act of thinking, feeling, willing, etc., seeing that it is contradistinguished from each and all of these as the common centre to which they are referred. And yet apart from these states the Ego is nothing; it possesses no mark by which it can be distinguished except its own Self-awareness, which involves an inner contradiction.

According to Herbart's own statement, the chief starting-point of his psychology lay in the clear formulation of these puzzling deliverances of introspection concerning the nature of the Ego, and its goal was found in their solution. I shall try to explain the way in which he performed this task, keeping other topics in relative subordination.

§ 4. *Metaphysical Basis of Ultimate Psychological Assumptions.*—The lines on which he proceeded he found prescribed for him by his general metaphysical doctrine,

according to which the soul is intrinsically a simple, unchanging being, originally without any plurality of states, activities, or powers. The variety of mental phenomena, as they actually exist, is ultimately referred by him to the reactions of the soul, whereby it resists a diversity of disturbances *ab extra* due to its relations with other simple beings. As a metaphysical speculation, this doctrine in no way concerns us. But its psychological import is of the greatest consequence.

In the first place it implies that psychological phenomena are to be explained as due to the combination and interaction of certain ultimate mental states initiated *ab extra*, to the exclusion of everything of the nature of innate ideas, faculties, or activities. These ultimate states are called by him presentations (*Vorstellungen*). So far Herbart takes up a position similar to that of the English Associationists. Like them he bases his explanations on the doctrine of a psychological mechanism. He differed from them partly in the mode in which he conceived and formulated his ultimate laws of combination and interaction, partly in the more thoroughgoing and systematic nature of his mechanical explanations. The latter point is most strikingly illustrated by his attempt to obtain quantitative exactness in his results through the application of mathematics to psychology. The doctrine of the simplicity of the soul had a marked effect on his psychological views: it saved him from the atomistic standpoint, on account of which the English Associationists have been so severely criticised. Since the soul is one and simple, its resistance to outward disturbance must be one simple act, which can be considered as multiple only in so far as due to a multiplicity of disturbing conditions. Hence, the presentation of plurality and distinction within the content of consciousness is something which requires explanation instead of being regarded as ultimate. Thus the form which the problem of mental development assumed for Herbart was *not*—How do isolated sensation-atoms combine to form a mind? but rather—How does demarcation and partition grow up within an original distinctionless unity? The soul is not only simple, but unchanging; it possesses

no inner tendency to pass from one condition into another; hence, when it is once in a given state there seems no reason why, apart from interference *ab extra*, this state should cease or change. In view of this doctrine, the lapse of a presentation into unconsciousness, after it has once been presented in consciousness, constitutes a problem. For Herbart the primary question is not—How do presentations come to be reinstated in consciousness after disappearance? but rather—How is it possible for them to disappear? The key both to this problem and to that of the origin of plurality within the content of consciousness is found by Herbart in the mutual conflict of presentations which are opposed in quality. Presentations may be entirely alike—as, for instance, my sensation of green yesterday and my sensation of green to-day; or they may be entirely disparate —*e.g.* the presentation of sweetness and that of redness: in both these cases they, *ceteris paribus*, merge indistinguishably in one total presentation when they are co-presented in consciousness. If, on the other hand, they are not disparate, but contrary, as are, for example, the presentations of red and of green, they resist co-presentation; in other words, they tend to exclude each other from consciousness. In virtue of this mutual interference presentations become transformed into forces, which oppose or support each other. From this point of view the original unity of co-presented and compatible contents of consciousness acquires a new significance. It becomes a mechanical union of presentations constituting a total force, which resists the arrest of any one of its components. In order, however, to bring out the full meaning of this mechanical interaction of presentations, we must explain the distinction between presentation, presentative activity, and presented content.

§ 5. *Presentation, Presentative Activity, and Presented Content.*—Presentations of contrary quality exclude each other from consciousness. So far as this exclusion takes place, an act of the soul which was originally conscious ceases to be so: it is not, however, annihilated; on the contrary, in ceasing to be an actual presentation it *ipso facto* becomes transformed into a latent tendency to be presented;