BOOK II.

REALITY
CHAPTER XIII.

THE GENERAL NATURE OF REALITY.

The result of our First Book has been mainly negative. We have taken up a number of ways of regarding reality, and we have found that they all are vitiated by self-discrepancy. The reality can accept not one of these predicates, at least in the character in which so far they have come. We certainly ended with a reflection which promised something positive. Whatever is rejected as appearance is, for that very reason, no mere nonentity. It cannot bodily be shelved and merely got rid of, and, therefore, since it must fall somewhere, it must belong to reality. To take it as existing somehow and somewhere in the unreal, would surely be quite meaningless. For reality must own and cannot be less than appearance, and that is the one positive result which, so far, we have reached. But as to the character which, otherwise, the real possesses, we at present know nothing; and a further knowledge is what we must aim at through the remainder of our search. The present Book, to some extent, falls into two divisions. The first of these deals mainly with the general character of reality, and with the defence of this against a number of objections. Then from this basis, in the second place, I shall go on to consider mainly some special features. But I must admit that I have kept to no strict principle of division. I have really observed no rule of progress, except to get forward in the best way that I can.
At the beginning of our inquiry into the nature of the real we encounter, of course, a general doubt or denial. To know the truth, we shall be told, is impossible, or is, at all events, wholly impracticable. We cannot have positive knowledge about first principles; and, if we could possess it, we should not know when actually we had got it. What is denied is, in short, the existence of a criterion. I shall, later on, in Chapter xxvii., have to deal more fully with the objections of a thorough-going scepticism, and I will here confine myself to what seems requisite for the present.

Is there an absolute criterion? This question, to my mind, is answered by a second question: How otherwise should we be able to say anything at all about appearance? For through the last Book, the reader will remember, we were for the most part criticising. We were judging phenomena and were condemning them, and throughout we proceeded as if the self-contradictory could not be real. But this was surely to have and to apply an absolute criterion. For consider: you can scarcely propose to be quite passive when presented with statements about reality. You can hardly take the position of admitting any and every nonsense to be truth, truth absolute and entire, at least so far as you know. For, if you think at all so as to discriminate between truth and falsehood, you will find that you cannot accept open self-contradiction. Hence to think is to judge, and to judge is to criticise, and to criticise is to use a criterion of reality. And surely to doubt this would be mere blindness or confused self-deception. But, if so, it is clear that, in rejecting the inconsistent as appearance, we are applying a positive knowledge of the ultimate nature of things. Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion. And it is proved absolute by the

---

1 See the Introduction, p. 2.
fact that, either in endeavouring to deny it, or even in attempting to doubt it, we tacitly assume its validity.

One of these essays in delusion may be noticed briefly in passing. We may be told that our criterion has been developed by experience, and that therefore at least it may not be absolute. But why anything should be weaker for having been developed is, in the first place, not obvious. And, in the second place, the whole doubt, when understood, destroys itself. For the alleged origin of our criterion is delivered to us by knowledge which rests throughout on its application as an absolute test. And what can be more irrational than to try to prove that a principle is doubtful, when the proof through every step rests on its unconditional truth? It would, of course, not be irrational to take one’s stand on this criterion, to use it to produce a conclusion hostile to itself, and to urge that therefore our whole knowledge is self-destructive, since it essentially drives us to what we cannot accept. But this is not the result which our supposed objector has in view, or would welcome. He makes no attempt to show in general that a psychological growth is in any way hostile to metaphysical validity. And he is not prepared to give up his own psychological knowledge, which knowledge plainly is ruined if the criterion is not absolute. The doubt is seen, when we reflect, to be founded on that which it endeavours to question. And it has but blindly borne witness to the absolute certainty of our knowledge about reality.

Thus we possess a criterion, and our criterion is supreme. I do not mean to deny that we might have several standards, giving us sundry pieces of information about the nature of things. But, be that as it may, we still have an over-ruling test of truth, and the various standards (if they exist) are certainly subordinate. This at once becomes evid-
ent, for we cannot refuse to bring such standards together, and to ask if they agree. Or, at least, if a doubt is suggested as to their consistency, each with itself and with the rest, we are compelled, so to speak, to assume jurisdiction. And if they were guilty of self-contradiction, when examined or compared, we should condemn them as appearance. But we could not do that if they were not subject all to one tribunal. And hence, as we find nothing not subordinate to the test of self-consistency, we are forced to set that down as supreme and absolute.

But it may be said that this supplies us with no real information. If we think, then certainly we are not allowed to be inconsistent, and it is admitted that this test is unconditional and absolute. But it will be urged that, for knowledge about any matter, we require something more than a bare negation. The ultimate reality (we are agreed) does not permit self-contradiction, but a prohibition or an absence (we shall be told) by itself does not amount to positive knowledge. The denial of inconsistency, therefore, does not predicate any positive quality. But such an objection is untenable. It may go so far as to assert that a bare denial is possible, that we may reject a predicate though we stand on no positive basis, and though there is nothing special which serves to reject. This error has been refuted in my Principles of Logic (Book I., Chapter iii.), and I do not propose to discuss it here. I will pass to another sense in which the objection may seem more plausible. The criterion, it may be urged, in itself is doubtless positive; but, for our knowledge and in effect, is merely negative. And it gives us therefore no information at all about reality, for, although knowledge is there, it cannot be brought out. The criterion is a basis, which serves as the

1 The word "not" here, on p. 120, line 12, is an error, and should be struck out.
foundation of denial; but, since this basis cannot be exposed, we are but able to stand on it and unable to see it. And it hence, in effect, tells us nothing; though there are assertions which it does not allow us to venture on. This objection, when stated in such a form, may seem plausible, and there is a sense in which I am prepared to admit that it is valid. If by the nature of reality we understand its full nature, I am not contending that this in a complete form is knowable. But that is very far from being the point here at issue. For the objection denies that we have a standard which gives any positive knowledge, any information, complete or incomplete, about the genuine reality. And this denial assuredly is mistaken.

The objection admits that we know what reality does, but it refuses to allow us any understanding of what reality is. The standard (it is agreed) both exists and possesses a positive character, and it is agreed that this character rejects inconsistency. It is admitted that we know this, and the point at issue is whether such knowledge supplies any positive information. And to my mind this question seems not hard to answer. For I cannot see how, when I observe a thing at work, I am to stand there and to insist that I know nothing of its nature. I fail to perceive how a function is nothing at all, or how it does not positively qualify that to which I attribute it. To know only so much, I admit, may very possibly be useless; it may leave us without the information which we desire most to obtain; but, for all that, it is not total ignorance.

Our standard denies inconsistency, and therefore asserts consistency. If we can be sure that the inconsistent is unreal, we must, logically, be just as sure that the reality is consistent. The question is solely as to the meaning to be given to consistency. We have now seen that it is not the bare exclusion of discord, for that is merely our abstrac-
tion, and is otherwise nothing. And our result, so far, is this. Reality is known to possess a positive character, but this character is at present determined only as that which excludes contradiction.

But we may make a further advance. We saw (in the preceding chapter) that all appearance must belong to reality. For what appears is, and whatever is cannot fall outside the real. And we may now combine this result with the conclusion just reached. We may say that everything, which appears, is somehow real in such a way as to be self-consistent. The character of the real is to possess everything phenomenal in a harmonious form.

I will repeat the same truth in other words. Reality is one in this sense that it has a positive nature exclusive of discord, a nature which must hold throughout everything that is to be real. Its diversity can be diverse only so far as not to clash, and what seems otherwise anywhere cannot be real. And, from the other side, everything which appears must be real. Appearance must belong to reality, and it must therefore be concordant and other than it seems. The bewildering mass of phenomenal diversity must hence somehow be at unity and self-consistent; for it cannot be elsewhere than in reality, and reality excludes discord. Or again we may put it so: the real is individual. It is one in the sense that its positive character embraces all differences in an inclusive harmony. And this knowledge, poor as it may be, is certainly more than bare negation or simple ignorance. So far as it goes, it gives us positive news about absolute reality.

Let us try to carry this conclusion a step farther on. We know that the real is one; but its oneness, so far, is ambiguous. Is it one system, possessing diversity as an adjective; or is its consistency, on the other hand, an attribute of independent realities?
We have to ask, in short, if a plurality of reals is possible, and if these can merely co-exist so as not to be discrepant? Such a plurality would mean a number of beings not dependent on each other. On the one hand they would possess somehow the phenomenal diversity, for that possession, we have seen, is essential. And, on the other hand, they would be free from external disturbance and from inner discrepancy. After the enquiries of our First Book the possibility of such reals hardly calls for discussion. For the internal states of each give rise to hopeless difficulties. And, in the second place, the plurality of the reals cannot be reconciled with their independence. I will briefly resume the arguments which force us to this latter result.

If the Many are supposed to be without internal quality, each would forthwith become nothing, and we must therefore take each as being internally somewhat. And, if they are to be plural, they must be a diversity somehow co-existing together. Any attempt again to take their togetherness as unessential seems to end in the unmeaning. We have no knowledge of a plural diversity, nor can we attach any sense to it, if we do not have it somehow as one. And, if we abstract from this unity, we have also therewith abstracted from the plurality, and are left with mere being.

Can we then have a plurality of independent reals which merely co-exist? No, for absolute independence and co-existence are incompatible. Absolute independence is an idea which consists merely in one-sided abstraction. It is made by an attempted division of the aspect of several existence from the aspect of relatedness; and these aspects, whether in fact or thought, are really indivisible.

If we take the diversity of our reals to be such as we discover in feeling and at a stage where relations do not exist, that diversity is never found except as one integral character of an undivided
whole. And if we forcibly abstract from that unity, then together with feeling we have destroyed the diversity of feeling. We are left not with plurality, but with mere being, or, if you prefer it, with nothing. Co-existence in feeling is hence an instance and a proof not of self-sufficiency, but of dependence, and beside this it would add a further difficulty. If the nature of our reals is the diversity found at a stage below relations, how are we to dispose of the mass of relational appearance? For that exists, and existing it must somehow qualify the world, a world the reality of which is discovered only at a level other than its own. Such a position would seem not easy to justify.

Thus a mode of togetherness such as we can verify in feeling destroys the independence of our reals. And they will fare no better if we seek to find their co-existence elsewhere. For any other verifiable way of togetherness must involve relations, and they are fatal to self-sufficiency. Relations, we saw, are a development of and from the felt totality. They inadequately express, and they still imply in the background that unity apart from which the diversity is nothing. Relations are unmeaning except within and on the basis of a substantial whole, and related terms, if made absolute, are forthwith destroyed. Plurality and relatedness are but features and aspects of a unity.

If the relations in which the reals somehow stand are viewed as essential, that, as soon as we understand it, involves at once the internal relativity of the reals. And any attempt to maintain the relations as merely external must fail. For if, wrongly and for argument's sake, we admit processes and arrangements which do not qualify their terms, yet such arrangements, if admitted, are at any rate not ultimate. The terms would be prior and independent only with regard to these arrangements, and they would remain relative otherwise, and vitally
THE GENERAL NATURE OF REALITY. 143

dependent on some whole. And severed from this unity, the terms perish by the very stroke which aims to set them up as absolute.

The reals therefore cannot be self-existent, and, if self-existent, yet taken as the world they would end in inconsistency. For the relations, because they exist, must somehow qualify the world. The relations then must externally qualify the sole and self-contained reality, and that seems self-contradictory or meaningless.¹ And if it is urged that a plurality of independent beings may be unintelligible, but that after all some unintelligible facts must be affirmed—the answer is obvious. An unintelligible fact may be admitted so far as, first, it is a fact, and so far as, secondly, it has a meaning which does not contradict itself internally or make self-discrepant our view of the world. But the alleged independence of the reals is no fact, but a theoretical construction;³ and, so far as it has a meaning, that meaning contradicts itself, and issues in chaos. A reality of this kind may safely be taken as unreal.

We cannot therefore maintain a plurality save as dependent on the relations in which it stands. Or if desiring to avoid relations we fall back on the diversity given in feeling, the result is the same. The plurality then sinks to become merely an integral aspect in a single substantial unity, and the reals have vanished.

¹ To this brief statement we might add other fatal objections. There is the question of the reals' interaction and of the general order of the world. Here, whether we affirm or deny, we turn in a maze. The fact of knowledge plunges us again in a dilemma. If we do not know that the Many are, we cannot affirm them. But the knowledge of the Many seems compatible with the self-existence neither of what knows nor of what is known. Finally, if the relations are admitted to an existence somehow alongside of the reals, the sole reality of the reals is given up. The relations themselves have now become a second kind of real thing. But the connection between these new reals and the old thing, whether we deny or affirm it, leads to insoluble problems.
CHAPTER XIV.

THE GENERAL NATURE OF REALITY (continued).

Our result so far is this. Everything phenomenal is somehow real; and the absolute must at least be as rich as the relative. And, further, the Absolute is not many; there are no independent reals. The universe is one in this sense that its differences exist harmoniously within one whole, beyond which there is nothing. Hence the Absolute is, so far, an individual and a system, but, if we stop here, it remains but formal and abstract. Can we then, the question is, say anything about the concrete nature of the system?

Certainly, I think, this is possible. When we ask as to the matter which fills up the empty outline, we can reply in one word, that this matter is experience. And experience means something much the same as given and present fact. We perceive, on reflection, that to be real, or even barely to exist, must be to fall within sentience. Sentient experience, in short, is reality, and what is not this is not real. We may say, in other words, that there is no being or fact outside of that which is commonly called psychical existence. Feeling, thought, and volition (any groups under which we class psychical phenomena) are all the material of existence, and there is no other material, actual or even possible. This result in its general form seems evident at once; and, however serious a step we now seem to have taken, there would be no advantage at this point in discussing it at length. For the test in the main lies ready to our hand, and the decision rests
on the manner in which it is applied. I will state
the case briefly thus. Find any piece of existence,
take up anything that any one could possibly call a
fact, or could in any sense assert to have being, and
then judge if it does not consist in sentient ex-
perience. Try to discover any sense in which you
can still continue to speak of it, when all perception
and feeling have been removed; or point out any
fragment of its matter, any aspect of its being, which
is not derived from and is not still relative to this
source. When the experiment is made strictly, I
can myself conceive of nothing else than the ex-
perienced. Anything, in no sense felt or perceived,
becomes to me quite unmeaning. And as I cannot
try to think of it without realizing either that I am
not thinking at all, or that I am thinking of it against
my will as being experienced, I am driven to the
conclusion, that for me experience is the same as
reality. The fact that falls elsewhere seems, in my
mind, to be a mere word and a failure, or else an
attempt at self-contradiction. It is a vicious ab-
straction whose existence is meaningless nonsense,
and is therefore not possible.

This conclusion is open, of course, to grave ob-
jection, and must in its consequences give rise to
serious difficulties. I will not attempt to anticipate
the discussion of these, but before passing on, will
try to obviate a dangerous mistake. For, in asserting
that the real is nothing but experience, I may be
understood to endorse a common error. I may be
taken first to divide the percipient subject from the
universe; and then, resting on that subject, as on a
thing actual by itself, I may be supposed to urge
that it cannot transcend its own states.\(^1\) Such an
argument would lead to impossible results, and
would stand on a foundation of vicious abstraction.
To set up the subject as real independently of the
whole, and to make the whole into experience in

\(^1\) This matter is discussed in Chapter xxi.
the sense of an adjective of that subject, seems to me indefensible. And when I contend that reality must be sentient, my conclusion almost consists in the denial of this fundamental error. For if, seeking for reality, we go to experience, what we certainly do not find is a subject or an object, or indeed any other thing whatever, standing separate and on its own bottom. What we discover rather is a whole in which distinctions can be made, but in which divisions do not exist. And this is the point on which I insist, and it is the very ground on which I stand, when I urge that reality is sentient experience. I mean that to be real is to be indissolubly one thing with sentience. It is to be something which comes as a feature and aspect within one whole of feeling, something which, except as an integral element of such sentience, has no meaning at all. And what I repudiate is the separation of feeling from the felt, or of the desired from desire, or of what is thought from thinking, or the division—I might add—of anything from anything else. Nothing is ever so presented as real by itself, or can be argued so to exist without demonstrable fallacy. And in asserting that the reality is experience, I rest throughout on this foundation. You cannot find fact unless in unity with sentience, and one cannot in the end be divided from the other, either actually or in idea. But to be utterly indivisible from feeling or perception, to be an integral element in a whole which is experienced, this surely is itself to be experience. Being and reality are, in brief, one thing with sentience; they can neither be opposed to, nor even in the end, distinguished from it.

I am well aware that this statement stands in need of explanation and defence. This will, I hope, be supplied by succeeding chapters, and I think it better for the present to attempt to go forward. Our conclusion, so far, will be this, that the Absolute is one system, and that its contents are nothing but
sentient experience. It will hence be a single and all-inclusive experience, which embraces every partial diversity in concord. For it cannot be less than appearance, and hence no feeling or thought, of any kind, can fall outside its limits. And if it is more than any feeling or thought which we know, it must still remain more of the same nature. It cannot pass into another region beyond what falls under the general head of sentience. For to assert that possibility would be in the end to use words without a meaning. We can entertain no such suggestion except as self-contradictory, and as therefore impossible.

This conclusion will, I trust, at the end of my work bring more conviction to the reader; for we shall find that it is the one view which will harmonize all facts. And the objections brought against it, when it and they are once properly defined, will prove untenable. But our general result is at present seriously defective; and we must now attempt to indicate and remedy its failure in principle.

What we have secured, up to this point, may be called mere theoretical consistency. The Absolute holds all possible content in an individual experience where no contradiction can exist. And it seems, at first sight, as if this theoretical perfection could exist together with practical defect and misery. For apparently, so far as we have gone, an experience might be harmonious, in such a way at least as not to contradict itself, and yet might result on the whole in a balance of suffering. Now no one can genuinely believe that sheer misery, however self-consistent, is good and desirable. And the question is whether in this way our conclusion is wrecked.

There may be those possibly who here would join issue at once. They might perhaps wish to contend that the objection is irrelevant, since pain is no evil.
I shall discuss the general question of good and evil in a subsequent chapter, and will merely say here that for myself I cannot stand upon the ground that pain is no evil. I admit, or rather I would assert, that a result, if it fails to satisfy our whole nature, comes short of perfection. And I could not rest tranquilly in a truth if I were compelled to regard it as hateful. While unable, that is, to deny it, I should, rightly or wrongly, insist that the enquiry was not yet closed, and that the result was but partial. And if metaphysics is to stand, it must, I think, take account of all sides of our being. I do not mean that every one of our desires must be met by a promise of particular satisfaction; for that would be absurd and utterly impossible. But if the main tendencies of our nature do not reach consummation in the Absolute, we cannot believe that we have attained to perfection and truth. And we shall have to consider later on what desires must be taken as radical and fundamental. But here we have seen that our conclusion, so far, has a serious defect, and the question is whether this defect can be directly remedied. We have been resting on the theoretical standard which guarantees that Reality is a self-consistent system. Have we a practical standard which now can assure us that this system will satisfy our desire for perfect good? An affirmative answer seems plausible, but I do not think it would be true. Without any doubt we possess a practical standard; but that does not seem to me to yield a conclusion about reality, or it will not give us at least directly the result we are seeking. I will attempt briefly to explain in what way it comes short.

That a practical end and criterion exists I shall assume, and I will deal with its nature more fully hereafter (Chapter xxv.). I may say for the present that, taken in the abstract, the practical standard seems to be the same as what is used for
theory. It is individuality, the harmonious or consistent existence of our contents; an existence, further, which cannot be limited because, if so, it would contradict itself internally (Chapters xx. and xxiv.). Nor need I separate myself at this stage from the intelligent Hedonist, since, in my judgment, practical perfection will carry a balance of pleasure. These points I shall have to discuss, and for the present am content to assume them provisionally and vaguely. Now taking the practical end as individuality, or as clear pleasure, or rather as both in one, the question is whether this end is known to be realized in the Absolute, and, if so, upon what foundation such knowledge can rest. It apparently cannot be drawn directly from the theoretical criterion, and the question is whether the practical standard can supply it. I will explain why I believe that this cannot be the case.

I will first deal briefly with the "ontological" argument. The essential nature of this will, I hope, be more clear to us hereafter (Chapter xxiv.), and I will here merely point out why it fails to give us help. This argument might be stated in several forms, but the main point is very simple. We have the idea of perfection—there is no doubt as to that—and the question is whether perfection also actually exists. Now the ontological view urges that the fact of the idea proves the fact of the reality; or, to put it otherwise, it argues that, unless perfection existed, you could not have it in idea, which is agreed to be the case. I shall not discuss at present the general validity of this argument, but will confine myself to denying its applicability. For, if an idea has been manufactured and is composed of elements taken up from more than one source, then the result of manufacture need not as a whole exist out of my thought, however much that is the case with its separate elements. Thus we might admit that, in one sense, perfection or completeness would not be present in
idea unless also it were real. We might admit this, and yet we might deny the same conclusion with respect to practical perfection. For the perfection that is real might simply be theoretical. It might mean system so far as system is mere theoretical harmony and does not imply pleasure. And the element of pleasure, taken up from elsewhere, may then have been added in our minds to this valid idea. But, if so, the addition may be incongruous, incompatible, and really, if we knew it, contradictory. Pleasure and system perhaps are in truth a false compound, an appearance which exists, as such, only in our heads; just as would be the case if we thought, for example, of a perfect finite being. Hence the ontological argument cannot prove the existence of practical perfection;¹ and let us go on to enquire if any other proof exists.

It is in some ways natural to suppose that the practical end somehow postulates its existence as a fact. But a more careful examination tends to dissipate this idea. The moral end, it is clear, is not pronounced by morality to have actual existence. This is quite plain, and it would be easier to contend that morality even postulates the opposite (Chapter xxv.). Certainly, as we shall perceive hereafter, the religious consciousness does imply the reality of that object, which also is its goal. But a religion, whose object is perfect, will be founded on inconsistency, even more than is the case with mere morality. For such a religion, if it implies the existence of its ideal, implies at the same time a feature which is quite incompatible. This we shall discuss in a later chapter, and all that I will urge here is that the religious consciousness cannot prove that perfection really exists. For it is not true that in all religions the object is perfection; nor, where it is so, does

¹ The objection that, after all, the compound is there, will be met in Chapter xxiv. Notice also that I do not distinguish as yet between "existence" and "reality." But see p. 317.
religion possess any right to dictate to or to dominate over thought. It does not follow that a belief must be admitted to be true, because, given a certain influence, it is practically irresistible. There is a tendency in religion to take the ideal as existing; and this tendency sways our minds and, under certain conditions, may amount to compulsion. But it does not, therefore, and merely for this reason, give us truth, and we may recall other experience which forces us to doubt. A man, for instance, may love a woman whom, when he soberly considers, he cannot think true, and yet, in the intoxication of her presence, may give up his whole mind to the suggestions of blind passion. But in all cases, that alone is really valid for the intellect, which in a calm moment the mere intellect is incapable of doubting. It is only that which for thought is compulsory and irresistible—only that which thought must assert in attempting to deny it—which is a valid foundation for metaphysical truth.

"But how," I may be asked, "can you justify this superiority of the intellect, this predominance of thought? On what foundation, if on any, does such a despotism rest? For there seems no special force in the intellectual axiom if you regard it impartially. Nay, if you consider the question without bias, and if you reflect on the nature of axioms in general, you may be brought to a wholly different conclusion. For all axioms, as a matter of fact, are practical. They all depend upon the will. They none of them in the end can amount to more than the impulse to behave in a certain way. And they cannot express more than this impulse, together with the impossibility of satisfaction unless it is complied with. And hence, the intellect, far from possessing a right to predominate, is simply one instance and one symptom of practical compulsion. Or (to put the case more psychologically) the intellect is merely one result of the general working of pleasure and pain.
It is even subordinate, and therefore its attempt at despotism is founded on baseless pretensions."

Now, apart from its dubious psychological setting, I can admit the general truth contained in this objection. The theoretical axiom is the statement of an impulse to act in a certain manner. When that impulse is not satisfied there ensues disquiet and movement in a certain direction, until such a character is given to the result as contents the impulse and produces rest. And the expression of this fundamental principle of action is what we call an axiom. Take, for example, the law of avoiding contradiction. When two elements will not remain quietly together but collide and struggle, we cannot rest satisfied with that state. Our impulse is to alter it, and, on the theoretical side, to bring the content to a shape where without collision the variety is thought as one. And this inability to rest otherwise, and this tendency to alter in a certain way and direction, is, when reflected on and made explicit, our axiom and our intellectual standard.

"But is not this," I may be asked further, "a surrender of your position? Does not this admit that the criterion used for theory is merely a practical impulse, a tendency to movement from one side of our being? And, if so, how can the intellectual standard be predominant?" But it is necessary here to distinguish. The whole question turns on the difference between the several impulses of our being.¹ You may call the intellect, if you like, a mere tendency to movement, but you must remember that it is a movement of a very special kind. I shall enter more fully into the nature of thinking hereafter, but the crucial point may be stated at once. In thought the standard, you may say, amounts merely to "act so"; but then "act so" means "think so," and "think so" means "it is." And the psychological origin and base of this movement, and of this inability

¹ Compare here Chapter xxvi.
to act otherwise, may be anything you please; for that is all utterly irrelevant to the metaphysical issue. Thinking is the attempt to satisfy a special impulse, and the attempt implies an assumption about reality. You may avoid the assumption so far as you decline to think, but, if you sit down to the game, there is only one way of playing. In order to think at all you must subject yourself to a standard, a standard which implies an absolute knowledge of reality; and while you doubt this, you accept it, and obey while you rebel. You may urge that thought, after all, is inconsistent, because appearance is not got rid of but merely shelved. That is another question which will engage us in a future chapter, and here may be dismissed. For in any case thinking means the acceptance of a certain standard and that standard, in any case, is an assumption as to the character of reality.

"But why," it may be objected, "is this assumption better than what holds for practice? Why is the theoretical to be superior to the practical end?" I have never said that this is so. Only here, that is in metaphysics, I must be allowed to reply, we are acting theoretically. We are occupied specially, and are therefore subject to special conditions; and the theoretical standard within theory must surely be absolute. We have no right to listen to morality when it rushes in blindly. "Act so," urges morality, that is "be so or be dissatisfied." But if I am dissatisfied, still apparently I may be none the less real. "Act so," replies speculation, that is, "think so or be dissatisfied; and if you do not think so, what you think is certainly not real." And these two commands do not seem to be directly connected. If I am theoretically not satisfied, then what appears must in reality be otherwise; but, if I am dissatisfied practically, the same conclusion does not hold. Thus the two satisfactions are not the same, nor does there appear to be a straight way from the one to the
other. Or consider again the same question from a different side. Morality seemed anxious to dictate to metaphysics, but is it prepared to accept a corresponding dictation? If it were to hear that the real world is quite other than its ideal, and, if it were unable theoretically to shake this result, would morality acquiesce? Would it not, on the other hand, regardless of this, still maintain its own ground? Facts may be as you say, but none the less they should not be so, and something else ought to be. Morality, I think, would take this line, and, if so, it should accept a like attitude in theory. It must not dictate as to what facts are, while it refuses to admit dictation as to what they should be.

Certainly, to any one who believes in the unity of our nature, a one-sided satisfaction will remain incredible. And such a consideration to my mind carries very great weight. But to stand on one side of our nature, and to argue from that directly to the other side, seems illegitimate. I will not here ask how far morality is consistent with itself in demanding complete harmony (Chapter xxv.). What seems clear is that, in wishing to dictate to mere theory, it is abandoning its own position and is courting foreign occupation. And it is misled mainly by a failure to observe essential distinctions. "Be so" does not mean always "think so," and "think so," in its main signification, certainly does not mean "be so." Their difference is the difference between "you ought" and "it is"—and I can see no direct road from the one to the other. If a theory could be made by the will, that would have to satisfy the will, and, if it did not, it would be false. But since metaphysics is mere theory, and since theory from its nature must be made by the intellect, it is here the intellect alone which has to be satisfied. Doubtless a conclusion which fails to content all the sides of my nature leaves me dissatisfied. But I see no direct way of passing from "this does not satisfy my
nature" to "therefore it is false." For false is the same as theoretically untenable, and we are supposing a case where mere theory has been satisfied, and where the result has in consequence been taken as true. And, so far as I see, we must admit that, if the intellect is contented, the question is settled. For we may feel as we please about the intellectual conclusion, but we cannot, on such external ground, protest that it is false.

Hence if we understand by perfection a state of harmony with pleasure, there is no direct way of showing that reality is perfect. For, so far as the intellectual standard at present seems to go, we might have harmony with pain and with partial dissatisfaction. But I think the case is much altered when we consider it otherwise, and when we ask if on another ground such harmony is possible. The intellect is not to be dictated to; that conclusion is irrefragable. But is it certain, on the other hand, that the mere intellect can be self-satisfied, if other elements of our nature remain not contented? Or must we not think rather that indirectly any partial discontent will bring unrest and imperfection into the intellect itself? If this is so, then to suppose any imperfection in the Absolute is inadmissible. To fail in any way would introduce a discord into perception itself. And hence, since we have found that, taken perceptively, reality is harmonious, it must be harmonious altogether, and must satisfy our whole nature. Let us see if on this line we can make an advance.

If the Absolute is to be theoretically harmonious, its elements must not collide. Idea must not disagree with sensation, nor must sensations clash. In every case, that is, the struggle must not be a mere struggle. There must be a unity which it subserves, and a whole, taken in which, it is a struggle no longer. How this resolution is possible we may be
able to see partly in our subsequent chapters, but for the present I would insist merely that somehow it must exist. Since reality is harmonious, the struggle of diverse elements, sensations or ideas, barely to qualify the self-same point must be precluded. But, if idea must not clash with sensation, then there cannot in the Absolute be unsatisfied desire or any practical unrest. For in these there is clearly an ideal element not concordant with presentation but struggling against it, and, if you remove this discordance, then with it all unsatisfied desire is gone. In order for such a desire, in even its lowest form, to persist, there must (so far as I can see) be an idea qualifying diversely a sensation and fixed for the moment in discord. And any such state is not compatible with theoretical harmony.

But this result perhaps has ignored an outstanding possibility. Unsatisfied desires might, as such, not exist in the Absolute, and yet seemingly there might remain a clear balance of pain. For, in the first place, it is not proved that all pain must arise from an unresolved struggle; and, it may be contended, in the second place, that possibly the discord might be resolved, and yet, so far as we know, the pain might remain. In a painful struggle it may be urged that the pain can be real, though the struggle is apparent. For we shall see, when we discuss error (Chapter xvi.), how discordant elements may be neutralized in a wider complex. We shall find how, in that system, they can take on a different arrangement, and so result in harmony. And the question here as to unsatisfied desires will be this. Can they not be merged in a whole, so as to lose their character of discordance, and thus cease to be desires, while their pain none the less survives in reality? If so, that whole, after all, would be imperfect. For, while possessor of harmony, it still might be sunk in misery, or might suffer at least with a balance of pain. This objection is serious, and it calls for
some discussion here. I shall have to deal with it once more in our concluding chapter.

I feel at this point our want of knowledge with regard to the conditions of pleasure and pain.\(^1\) It is a tenable view, one at least which can hardly be refuted, that pain is caused, or conditioned, by an unresolved collision. Now, if this really is the case, then, given harmony, a balance of pain is impossible. Pain, of course, is a fact, and no fact can be conjured away from the universe; but the question here is entirely as to a balance of pain. Now it is common experience that in mixed states pain may be neutralized by pleasure in such a way that the balance is decidedly pleasant. And hence it is possible that in the universe as a whole we may have a balance of pleasure, and in the total result no residue of pain. This is possible, and if an unresolved conflict and discord is essential to pain, it is much more than possible. Since the reality is harmonious, and since harmony excludes the conditions which are requisite for a balance of pain, that balance is impossible. I will urge this so far as to raise a very grave doubt. I question our right even to suppose a state of pain in the Absolute.

And this doubt becomes more grave when we consider another point. When we pass from the conditions to the effects of painful feeling, we are on surer ground. For in our experience the result of pain is disquietude and unrest. Its main action is to set up change, and to prevent stability. There is authority, I am aware, for a different view, but, so far as I see, that view cannot be reconciled with facts. This effect of pain has here a most important bearing. Assume that in the Absolute there is a balance of pleasure, and all is consistent. For the pains can condition those processes which, as processes, disappear in the life of the whole; and these pains can be neutralized by an overplus of

\(^1\) Cf. Mind, xiii. pp. 3-14.
pleasure. But if you suppose, on the other hand, a balance of pain, the difficulty becomes at once insuperable. We have postulated a state of harmony, and, together with that, the very condition of instability and discord. We have in the Absolute, on one side, a state of things where the elements cannot jar, and where in particular idea does not conflict with presentation. But with pain on the other side we have introduced a main-spring of change and unrest, and we thus produce necessarily an idea not in harmony with existence. And this idea of a better and of a non-existing condition of things must directly destroy theoretical rest. But, if so, such an idea must be called impossible. There is no pain on the whole, and in the Absolute our whole nature must find satisfaction. For otherwise there is no theoretical harmony, and that harmony we saw must certainly exist. I shall ask in our last chapter if there is a way of avoiding this conclusion, but for the present we seem bound to accept it as true. We must not admit the possibility of an Absolute perfect in apprehension yet resting tranquilly in pain. The question as to actual evidence of defect in the universe will be discussed in Chapter xvii.; and our position so far is this. We cannot argue directly that all sides of our nature must be satisfied, but indirectly we are led to the same result. For we are forced to assume theoretical satisfaction; and to suppose that existing one-sidedly, and together with practical discomfort, appears inadmissible. Such a state is a possibility which seems to contradict itself. It is a supposition to which, if we cannot find any ground in its favour, we have no right. For the present at least it is better to set it down as inconceivable.\(^1\)

And hence, for the present at least, we must be-

\(^1\) In our last chapter this conclusion will be slightly modified. The supposition will appear there to be barely possible.
lieve that reality satisfies our whole being. Our main wants—for truth and life, and for beauty and goodness—must all find satisfaction. And we have seen that this consummation must somehow be experience, and be individual. Every element of the universe, sensation, feeling, thought and will, must be included within one comprehensive sentence. And the question which now occurs is whether really we have a positive idea of such sentence. Do we at all know what we mean when we say that it is actual?

Fully to realize the existence of the Absolute is for finite beings impossible. In order thus to know we should have to be, and then we should not exist. This result is certain, and all attempts to avoid it are illusory. But then the whole question turns on the sense in which we are to understand "knowing." What is impossible is to construct absolute life in its detail, to have the specific experience in which it consists. But to gain an idea of its main features—an idea true so far as it goes, though abstract and incomplete—is a different endeavour. And it is a task, so far as I see, in which we may succeed. For these main features, to some extent, are within our own experience; and again the idea of their combination is, in the abstract, quite intelligible. And surely no more than this is wanted for a knowledge of the Absolute. It is a knowledge which of course differs enormously from the fact. But it is true, for all that, while it respects its own limits; and it seems fully attainable by the finite intellect.

I will end this chapter by briefly mentioning the sources of such knowledge. First, in mere feeling, or immediate presentation, we have the experience of a whole (Chapters ix., xix., xxvi., xxvii.). This whole contains diversity, and, on the other hand, is not parted by relations. Such an experience, we must admit, is most imperfect and un-
stable, and its inconsistencies lead us at once to transcend it. Indeed, we hardly possess it as more than that which we are in the act of losing. But it serves to suggest to us the general idea of a total experience, where will and thought and feeling may all once more be one. Further, this same unity, felt below distinctions, shows itself later in a kind of hostility against them. We find it in the efforts made both by theory and practice, each to complete itself and so to pass into the other. And, again, the relational form, as we saw, pointed everywhere to an unity. It implies a substantial totality beyond relations and above them, a whole endeavouring without success to realize itself in their detail. Further, the ideas of goodness, and of the beautiful, suggest in different ways the same result. They more or less involve the experience of a whole beyond relations though full of diversity. Now, if we gather (as we can) such considerations into one, they will assuredly supply us with a positive idea. We gain from them the knowledge of a unity which transcends and yet contains every manifold appearance. They supply not an experience but an abstract idea, an idea which we make by uniting given elements. And the mode of union, once more in the abstract, is actually given. Thus we know what is meant by an experience, which embraces all divisions, and yet somehow possesses the direct nature of feeling. We can form the general idea of an absolute experience in which phenomenal distinctions are merged, a whole become immediate at a higher stage without losing any richness. Our complete inability to understand this concrete unity in detail is no good ground for our declining to entertain it. Such a ground would be irrational, and its principle could hardly everywhere be adhered to. But if we can realize at all the general features of the Absolute, if we can see that somehow they come together in a way known vaguely
and in the abstract, our result is certain. Our conclusion, so far as it goes, is real knowledge of the Absolute, positive knowledge built on experience, and inevitable when we try to think consistently. We shall realize its nature more clearly when we have confronted it with a series of objections and difficulties. If our result will hold against them all, we shall be able to urge that in reason we are bound to think it true.
CHAPTER XV.

THOUGHT AND REALITY.

There is a natural objection which the reader will raise against our account of the Absolute. The difficulty lies, he may urge, not in making a statement, which by itself seems defensible, but rather in reconciling any view with obvious inconsistencies. The real problem is to show how appearance and evil, and in general finite existence, are compatible with the Absolute. These questions, however, he will object, have been so far neglected. And it is these which in the next chapter must begin to engage our serious attention. Still it is better not to proceed at once; and before we deal with error we must gain some notion of what we mean by truth. In the present chapter I will try to state briefly the main essence of thought, and to justify its distinction from actual existence. It is only by misunderstanding that we find difficulty in taking thought to be something less than reality.

If we take up anything considered real, no matter what it is, we find in it two aspects. There are always two things we can say about it; and, if we cannot say both, we have not got reality. There is a "what" and a "that," an existence and a content, and the two are inseparable. That anything should be, and should yet be nothing in particular, or that a quality should not qualify and give a character to anything, are obviously impossible. If we try to get the "that" by itself, we do not get it, for either we have it qualified, or else we fail
utterly. If we try to get the "what" by itself, we find at once that it is not all. It points to something beyond, and cannot exist by itself and as a bare adjective. Neither of these aspects, if you isolate it, can be taken as real, or indeed in that case is itself any longer. They are distinguishable only and are not divisible.

And yet thought seems essentially to consist in their division. For thought is clearly, to some extent at least, ideal. Without an idea there is no thinking, and an idea implies the separation of content from existence. It is a "what" which, so far as it is a mere idea, clearly is not, and if it also were, could, so far, not be called ideal. For ideality lies in the disjoining of quality from being. Hence the common view, which identifies image and idea, is fundamentally in error. For an image is a fact, just as real as any sensation; it is merely a fact of another kind and it is not one whit more ideal. But an idea is any part of the content of a fact so far as that works out of immediate unity with its existence. And an idea's factual existence may consist in a sensation or perception, just as well as in an image. The main point and the essence is that some feature in the "what" of a given fact should be alienated from its "that" so far as to work beyond it, or at all events loose from it. Such a movement is ideality, and, where it is absent, there is nothing ideal.

We can understand this most clearly if we consider the nature of judgment, for there we find thought in its completed form. In judgment an idea is predicated of a reality. Now, in the first place, what is predicated is not a mental image. It is not a fact inside my head which the judgment wishes to attach to another fact outside. The predicate is a mere "what," a mere feature of content, which is used to qualify further the "that" of the subject. And this predicate is divorced from its psychical existence in my head, and is used without any
regard to its being there. When I say “this horse is a mammal,” it is surely absurd to suppose that I am harnessing my mental state to the beast between the shafts. Judgment adds an adjective to reality, and this adjective is an idea, because it is a quality made loose from its own existence, and is working free from its implication with that. And, even when a fact is merely analysed,—when the predicate appears not to go beyond its own subject, or to have been imported divorced from another fact outside—our account still holds good. For here obviously our synthesis is a re-union of the distinguished, and it implies a separation, which, though it is over-ridden, is never unmade. The predicate is a content which has been made loose from its own immediate existence and is used in divorce from that first unity. And, again, as predicated, it is applied without regard to its own being as abstracted and in my head. If this were not so, there would be no judgment; for neither distinction nor predication would have taken place. But again, if it is so, then once more here we discover an idea.

And in the second place, when we turn to the subject of the judgment, we clearly find the other aspect, in other words, the “that.” Just as in “this horse is a mammal” the predicate was not a fact, so most assuredly the subject is an actual existence. And the same thing holds good with every judgment. No one ever means to assert about anything but reality, or to do anything but qualify a “that” by a “what.” And, without dwelling on a point which I have worked out elsewhere,1 I will notice a source of possible mistake. “The subject, at all events,” I may be told, “is in no case a mere ‘that.’ It is never bare reality, or existence without character.” And to this I fully assent. I agree that the subject which we mean—even before the judgment is com-

1 Principles of Logic, Book I.
plete, and while still we are holding its elements apart—is more than a mere "that." But then this is not the point. The point is whether with every judgment we do not find an aspect of existence, absent from the predicate but present in the subject, and whether in the synthesis of these aspects we have not got the essence of judgment. And for myself I see no way of avoiding this conclusion. Judgment is essentially the re-union of two sides, "what" and "that," provisionally estranged. But it is the alienation of these aspects in which thought’s ideality consists.

Truth is the object of thinking, and the aim of truth is to qualify existence ideally. Its end, that is, is to give a character to reality in which it can rest. Truth is the predication of such content as, when predicated, is harmonious, and removes inconsistency and with it unrest. And because the given reality is never consistent, thought is compelled to take the road of indefinite expansion. If thought were successful, it would have a predicate consistent in itself and agreeing entirely with the subject. But, on the other hand, the predicate must be always ideal. It must, that is, be a "what" not in unity with its own "that," and therefore, in and by itself, devoid of existence. Hence, so far as in thought this alienation is not made good, thought can never be more than merely ideal.

I shall very soon proceed to dwell on this last consideration, but will first of all call attention to a most important point. There exists a notion that ideality is something outside of facts, something imported into them, or imposed as a sort of layer above them; and we talk as if facts, when let alone, were in no sense ideal. But any such notion is illusory. For facts which are not ideal, and which show no looseness of content from existence, seem hardly actual. They would be found, if anywhere, in feelings without internal lapse, and with a content wholly single.
But if we keep to fact which is given, this changes in our hands, and it compels us to perceive inconsistency of content. And then this content cannot be referred merely to its given "that," but is forced beyond it, and is made to qualify something outside. But, if so, in the simplest change we have at once ideality—the use of content in separation from its actual existence. Indeed, in Chapters ix. and x. we have already seen how this is necessary. For the content of the given is for ever relative to something not given, and the nature of its "what" is hence essentially to transcend its "that." This we may call the ideality of the given finite. It is not manufactured by thought, but thought itself is its development and product. The essential nature of the finite is that everywhere, as it presents itself, its character should slide beyond the limits of its existence.

And truth, as we have seen, is the effort to heal this disease, as it were, homoeopathically. Thought has to accept, without reserve, the ideality of the "given," its want of consistency and its self-transcendence. And by pushing this self-transcendence to the uttermost point, thought attempts to find there consummation and rest. The subject, on the one hand, is expanded until it is no longer what is given. It becomes the whole universe which presents itself and which appears in each given moment with but part of its reality. It grows into an all-inclusive whole, existing somewhere and somehow, if we only could perceive it. But on the other hand, in qualifying this reality, thought consents to a partial abnegation. It has to recognise the division of the "what" from the "that," and it cannot so join these aspects as to get rid of mere ideas and arrive at actual reality. For it is in and by ideas only that thought moves and has life. The content it applies to the reality has, as applied, no genuine existence. It is an adjective divorced from its "that," and never in judgment, even when the judgment is complete,
restored to solid unity. Thus the truth belongs to existence, but it does not as such exist. It is a character which indeed reality possesses, but a character which, as truth and as ideal, has been set loose from existence; and it is never rejoined to it in such a way as to come together singly and make fact. Hence, truth shows a dissection and never an actual life. Its predicate can never be equivalent to its subject. And if it became so, and if its adjectives could be at once self-consistent and re-welded to existence, it would not be truth any longer. It would have then passed into another and a higher reality.

And I will now deal with the misapprehension to which I referred, and the consideration of which may, I trust, help us forward.¹

There is an erroneous idea that, if reality is more than thought, thought itself is, at least, quite unable to say so. To assert the existence of anything in any sense beyond thought suggests, to some minds, the doctrine of the Thing-in-itself. And of the Thing-in-itself we know (Chapter xii.) that if it existed we could not know of it; and, again, so far as we know of it, we know that it does not exist. The attempt to apprehend this Other in succeeding would be suicide, and in suicide could not reach anything beyond total failure. Now, though I have urged this result, I wish to keep it within rational limits, and I dissent wholly from the corollary that nothing more than thought exists. But to think of anything which can exist quite outside of thought I agree is impossible. If thought is one element in a whole, you cannot argue from this ground that the remainder of such a whole must stand apart and independent. From this ground, in short, you can make no inference to a Thing-in-itself. And there is no impossibility in thought's existing as an element, and no

¹ The remainder of this chapter has been reprinted, with some alterations and omissions, from Mind, No. 51.
self-contradiction in its own judgment that it is less than the universe.

We have seen that anything real has two aspects, existence and character, and that thought always must work within this distinction. Thought, in its actual processes and results, cannot transcend the dualism of the “that” and the “what.” I do not mean that in no sense is thought beyond this dualism, or that thought is satisfied with it and has no desire for something better. But taking judgment to be completed thought, I mean that in no judgment are the subject and predicate the same. In every judgment the genuine subject is reality, which goes beyond the predicate and of which the predicate is an adjective. And I would urge first that, in desiring to transcend this distinction, thought is aiming at suicide. We have seen that in judgment we find always the distinction of fact and truth, of idea and reality. Truth and thought are not the thing itself, but are of it and about it. Thought predicates an ideal content of a subject, which idea is not the same as fact, for in it existence and meaning are necessarily divorced. And the subject, again, is neither the mere “what” of the predicate, nor is it any other mere “what.” Nor, even if it is proposed to take up a whole with both its aspects, and to predicate the ideal character of its own proper subject, will that proposal assist us. For if the subject is the same as the predicate, why trouble oneself to judge? But if it is not the same, then what is it, and how is it different? Either then there is no judgment at all, and but a pretence of thinking without thought, or there is a judgment, but its subject is more than the predicate, and is a “that” beyond a mere “what.” The subject, I would repeat, is never mere reality, or bare existence without character. The subject, doubtless, has unspecified content which is not stated in the predicate. For judgment is the differentiation of a complex whole, and hence always is analysis and
synthesis in one. It separates an element from, and restores it to, the concrete basis; and this basis of necessity is richer than the mere element by itself. But then this is not the question which concerns us here. That question is whether, in any judgment which really says anything, there is not in the subject an aspect of existence which is absent from the bare predicate. And it seems clear that this question must be answered in the affirmative. And if it is urged that the subject itself, being in thought, can therefore not fall beyond, I must ask for more accuracy; for "partly beyond" appears compatible with "partly within." And, leaving prepositions to themselves, I must recall the real issue. For I do not deny that reality is an object of thought; I deny that it is barely and merely so. If you rest here on a distinction between thought and its object, that opens a further question to which I shall return (p. 174). But if you admit that in asserting reality to fall within thought, you meant that in reality there is nothing beyond what is made thought's object, your position is untenable. Reflect upon any judgment as long as you please, operate upon the subject of it to any extent which you desire, but then (when you have finished) make an actual judgment. And when that is made, see if you do not discover, beyond the content of your thought, a subject of which it is true, and which it does not comprehend. You will find that the object of thought in the end must be ideal, and that there is no idea which, as such, contains its own existence. The "that" of the actual subject will for ever give a something which is not a mere idea, something which is different from any truth, something which makes such a difference to your thinking, that without it you have not even thought completely.

"But," it may be answered, "the thought you speak of is thought that is not perfect. Where thought is perfect there is no discrepancy between
subject and predicate. A harmonious system of content predicking itself, a subject self-conscious in that system of content, this is what thought should mean. And here the division of existence and character is quite healed up. If such completion is not actual, it is possible, and the possibility is enough.” But it is not even possible, I must persist, if it really is unmeaning. And once more I must urge the former dilemma. If there is no judgment, there is no thought; and if there is no difference, there is no judgment, or any self-consciousness. But if, on the other hand, there is a difference, then the subject is beyond the predicated content.

Still a mere denial, I admit, is not quite satisfactory. Let us then suppose that the dualism inherent in thought has been transcended. Let us assume that existence is no longer different from truth, and let us see where this takes us. It takes us straight to thought’s suicide. A system of content is going to swallow up our reality; but in our reality we have the fact of sensible experience, immediate presentation with its colouring of pleasure and pain. Now I presume there is no question of conjuring this fact away; but how it is to be exhibited as an element in a system of thought-content, is a problem not soluble. Thought is relational and discursive, and, if it ceases to be this, it commits suicide; and yet, if it remains thus, how does it contain immediate presentation? Let us suppose the impossible accomplished; let us imagine a harmonious system of ideal contents united by relations, and reflecting itself in self-conscious harmony. This is to be reality, all reality; and there is nothing outside it. The delights and pains of the flesh, the agonies and raptures of the soul, these are fragmentary meteors fallen from thought’s harmonious system. But these burning experiences—how in any sense can they be mere pieces of thought’s heaven? For, if the fall
is real, there is a world outside thought's region, and, if the fall is apparent, then human error itself is not included there. Heaven, in brief, must either not be heaven, or else not all reality. Without a metaphor, feeling belongs to perfect thought, or it does not. If it does not, there is at once a side of existence beyond thought. But if it does belong, then thought is different from thought discursive and relational. To make it include immediate experience, its character must be transformed. It must cease to predicate, it must get beyond mere relations, it must reach something other than truth. Thought, in a word, must have been absorbed into a fuller experience. Now such an experience may be called thought, if you choose to use that word. But if any one else prefers another term, such as feeling or will, he would be equally justified. For the result is a whole state which both includes and goes beyond each element; and to speak of it as simply one of them seems playing with phrases. For (I must repeat it) when thought begins to be more than relational, it ceases to be mere thinking. A basis, from which the relation is thrown out and into which it returns, is something not exhausted by that relation. It will, in short, be an existence which is not mere truth. Thus, in reaching a whole which can contain every aspect within it, thought must absorb what divides it from feeling and will. But when these all have come together, then, since none of them can perish, they must be merged in a whole in which they are harmonious. But that whole assuredly is not simply one of its aspects. And the question is not whether the universe is in any sense intelligible. The question is whether, if you thought it and understood it, there would be no difference left between your thought and the thing. And, supposing that to have happened, the question is then whether thought has not changed its nature.

Let us try to realize more distinctly what this
supposed consummation would involve. Since both truth and fact are to be there, nothing must be lost, and in the Absolute we must keep every item of our experience. We cannot have less, but, on the other hand, we may have much more; and this more may so supplement the elements of our actual experience that in the whole they may become transformed. But to reach a mode of apprehension, which is quite identical with reality, surely predicate and subject, and subject and object, and in short the whole relational form, must be merged. The Absolute does not want, I presume, to make eyes at itself in a mirror, or, like a squirrel in a cage, to revolve the circle of its perfections. Such processes must be dissolved in something not poorer but richer than themselves. And feeling and will must also be transmuted in this whole, into which thought has entered. Such a whole state would possess in a superior form that immediacy which we find (more or less) in feeling; and in this whole all divisions would be healed up. It would be experience entire, containing all elements in harmony. Thought would be present as a higher intuition; will would be there where the ideal had become reality; and beauty and pleasure and feeling would live on in this total fulfillment. Every flame of passion, chaste or carnal, would still burn in the Absolute unquenched and unabridged, a note absorbed in the harmony of its higher bliss. We cannot imagine, I admit, how in detail this can be. But if truth and fact are to be one, then in some such way thought must reach its consummation. But in that consummation thought has certainly been so transformed, that to go on calling it thought seems indefensible.

I have tried to show first that, in the proper sense of thought, thought and fact are not the same. I have urged, in the second place, that, if their identity is worked out, thought ends in a reality which
swallows up its character. I will ask next whether thought's advocates can find a barrier to their client's happy suicide.

They might urge, first, that our consummation is the Thing-in-itself, and that it makes thought know what essentially is not knowable. But this objection forgets that our whole is not anything but sentient experience. And it forgets that, even when we understand by "thought" its strict discursive form, our reality does not exist apart from this. Emphatically the Absolute is nothing if taken apart from any single one of its elements. But the Thing-in-itself, on the other hand, must exist apart.

Let us pass to another objection against our view. We may be told that the End, because it is that which thought aims at, is therefore itself (mere) thought. This assumes that thought cannot desire a consummation in which it is lost. But does not the river run into the sea, and the self lose itself in love? And further, as good a claim for predominance might be made on behalf of will, and again on behalf of beauty and sensation and pleasure. Where all elements reach their end in the Absolute, that end can belong to no one severally. We may illustrate this principle by the case of morality. That essentially desires an end which is not merely moral because it is super-moral. Nay, even personality itself, our whole individual life and striving, tends to something beyond mere personality. Of course, the Absolute has personality, but it fortunately possesses so much more, that to call it personal would be as absurd as to ask if it is moral. 1

But in self-consciousness, I may be told, we actually experience a state where truth and being are identical; and here, at all events, thinking is not different from reality. But in our tenth chapter we have seen that no such state exists. There is no

1 See further, Chapters xxv. and xxvii.
self-consciousness in which the object is the same as the subject, none in which what is perceived exhausts the whole self. In self-consciousness a part or element, or again a general aspect or character, becomes distinct from the whole mass and stands over against the felt background. But the background is never exhausted by this object, and it never could be so. An experiment should convince any man that in self-consciousness what he feels cannot wholly come before him. It can be exhausted, if at all, only by a long series of observations, and the summed result of these observations cannot be experienced as a fact. Such a result cannot ever be verified as quite true at any particular given moment. In short consciousness implies discrimination of an element from the felt mass, and a consciousness that should discriminate every element at once is psychologically impossible. And this impossibility, if it became actual, would still leave us held in a dilemma. For there is either no difference, and therefore no distinction, and no consciousness; or there is a distinction, and therefore a difference between object and reality. But surely, if self-consciousness is appealed to, it is evident that at any moment I am more than the self which I can think of. How far everything in feeling may be called intelligible, is not the question here. But what is felt cannot be understood so that its truth and its existence become the same. And, if that were possible, yet such a process would certainly not be thinking.

In thinking the subject which thinks is more than thought. And that is why we can imagine that in thinking we find all reality. But in the same way the whole reality can as well be found in feeling or in volition. Each is one element in the whole, or the whole in one of its aspects; and hence, when you get an aspect or element, you have the whole with it. But because, given one aspect (whichever it may be), we find the whole universe, to conclude
that in the universe there is nothing beyond this single aspect, seems quite irrational.

But the reader may agree that no one really can believe that mere thought includes everything. The difficulty lies, he may urge, in maintaining the opposite. Since in philosophy we must think, how is it possible to transcend thought without a self-contradiction? For theory can reflect on, and pronounce about, all things, and in reflecting on them it therefore includes them. So that to maintain in thought an Other is by the same act to destroy its otherness, and to persist is to contradict oneself. While admitting that thought cannot satisfy us as to reality's falling wholly within its limits, we may be told that, so long as we think, we must ignore this admission. And the question is, therefore, whether philosophy does not end in sheer scepticism—in the necessity, that is, of asserting what it is no less induced to deny. The problem is serious, and I will now attempt to exhibit its solution.

We maintain an Other than mere thought. Now in what sense do we hold this? Thought being a judgment, we say that the predicate is never the same as the subject; for the subject is reality presented as "this" (we must not say as mere "this"). You can certainly abstract from presentation its character of "thisness," or its confused relatedness; and you can also abstract the feature of presentation. Of these you can make ideas,¹ for there is nothing which you cannot think of. But you find that these ideas are not the same as the subject of which you must predicate them. You can think of the subject, but you cannot get rid of it, or substitute mere thought-content for it. In other words, in practice thought always is found with, and appears to demand, an Other.

¹ Principles of Logic, pp. 64–69
Now the question is whether this leads to self-contradiction. If thought asserted the existence of any content which was not an actual or possible object of thought—certainly that assertion in my judgment would contradict itself. But the Other, which I maintain, is not any such content, nor is it another separated "what," nor in any case do I suggest that it lies outside intelligence. Everything, all will and feeling, is an object for thought, and must be called intelligible.\(^1\) This is certain; but, if so, what becomes of the Other? If we fall back on the mere "that," thatness itself seems a distinction made by thought. And we have to face this difficulty: If the Other exists, it must be something; and if it is nothing, it certainly does not exist.

Let us take an actual judgment and examine the subject there with a view to find our Other. In this we at once meet with a complication. We always have more content in the presented subject than in the predicate, and it is hence harder to realize what, beside this overplus of content, the subject possesses. However, passing this by, we can find in the subject two special characters. There is first (\(a\)) sensuous infinitude, and (\(b\)) in the second place there is immediacy.

\((a)\) The presented subject has a detail which is unlimited. By this I do not mean that the actual plurality of its features exceeds a finite number. I mean that its detail always goes beyond itself, and is indefinitely relative to something outside.\(^2\) In its given content it has relations which do not terminate within that content; and its existence therefore is not exhausted by itself, as we ever can have it. If I may use the metaphor, it has always edges which are ragged in such a way as to imply another existence from which it has been torn, and without which

---

1. On this point see below, Chapters xix. and xxvi.
2. This sensible "infinite" is the same as the finite, which we just saw was in its essence "ideal."
it really does not exist. Thus the content of the subject strives, we may say, unsuccessfully towards an all-inclusive whole. Now the predicate, on its side, is itself not free from endlessness. For its content, abstracted and finite, necessarily depends on relation to what is beyond. But it lacks the sensible and compulsory detail of the subject. It is not given as one thing with an actual but indefinite context. And thus, at least ostensibly, the predicate is hostile to endlessness.

(6) This is one difference, and the second consists in immediacy. The subject claims the character of a single self-subsistent being. In it the aspects of "what" and "that" are not taken as divorced, but it is given with its content as forming one integral whole. The "what" is not sundered from the "that," and turned from fact into truth. It is not predicated as the adjective of another "that," or even of its own. And this character of immediacy is plainly not consistent with endlessness. They are, in truth, each an imperfect appearance of individuality. But the subject clearly possesses both these discrepant features, while the predicate no less clearly should be without them. For the predicate seeks also for individuality but by a different road.

Now, if we take the subject to have these two characters which are absent from the predicate, and if the desire of thought implies removal of that which makes predicate and subject differ—we begin to perceive the nature of our Other. And we may see at once what is required in order to extinguish its otherness. Subject and predicate alike must accept reformation. The ideal content of the predicate must be made consistent with immediate individuality; and, on its side, the subject must be changed so as to become consistent with itself. It must become a self-subsistent, and that means an

1 Compare here the doctrine of Chapters xix. and xxiv.
A.R.
all-inclusive, individual. But these reforms are impossible. The subject must pass into the judgment, and it becomes infected with the relational form. The self-dependence and immediacy, which it claims, are not possessed by its content. Hence in the attempted self-assertion this content drives the subject beyond actual limits, and so begets a process which is infinite and cannot be exhausted. Thus thought's attempt wholly to absorb the subject must fail. It fails because it cannot reform the subject so as to include and exhaust its content. And, in the second place, thought fails because it cannot reform itself. For, if per impossibile the exhausted content were comprised within a predicate, that predicate still could not bear the character of immediacy. I will dwell for a little on both points.

Let us consider first the subject that is presented. It is a confused whole that, so far as we make it an object, passes into a congeries of qualities and relations. And thought desires to transform this congeries into a system. But, to understand the subject, we have at once to pass outside it in time, and again also in space. On the other hand these external relations do not end, and from their own nature they cannot end. Exhaustion is not merely impracticable, it is essentially impossible. And this obstacle would be enough; but this is not all. Inside the qualities, which we took first as solid endpoints of the relations, an infinite process breaks out. In order to understand, we are forced to distinguish to the end, and we never get to that which is itself apart from distinction. Or we may put the difficulty otherwise thus. We can neither take the terms with their relations as a whole that is self-evident, that stands by itself, and that calls for no further account; nor, on the other side, when we distinguish, can we avoid the endless search for the relation between the relation and its terms.¹

¹ For this see above, Chapter iii.
Thus thought cannot get the content into a harmonious system. And in the next place, even if it did so, that system would not be the subject. It would either be a maze of relations, a maze with a plan, of which for ever we made the circuit; or otherwise it would wholly lose the relational form. Our impossible process, in the first place, would assuredly have truth distinguished from its reality. For it could avoid this only by coming to us bodily and all at once, and, further, by suppressing entirely any distinction between subject and predicate. But, if in this way thought became immediate, it would lose its own character. It would be a system of relations no longer, but would have become an individual experience. And the Other would certainly have been absorbed, but thought itself no less would have been swallowed up and resolved into an Other.

Thought's relational content can never be the same as the subject, either as that subject appears or as it really is. The reality that is presented is taken up by thought in a form not adequate to its nature, and beyond which its nature must appear as an Other. But, to come at last in full view of the solution of our problem, this nature also is the nature which thought wants for itself. It is the character which even mere thinking desires to possess, and which in all its aspects exists within thought already, though in an incomplete form. And our main result is briefly this. The end, which would satisfy mere truth-seeking, would do so just because it had the features possessed by reality. It would have to be an immediate, self-dependent, all-inclusive individual. But, in reaching this perfection, and in the act of reaching it, thought would lose its own character. Thought does desire such individuality, that is precisely what it aims at. But individuality, on the other hand, cannot be gained while we are confined to relations.
Still we may be told that we are far from the solution of our problem. The fact of thought's desiring a foreign perfection, we may hear, is precisely the old difficulty. If thought desires this, then it is no Other, for we desire only what we know. The object of thought's desire cannot, hence, be a foreign object; for what is an object is, therefore, not foreign. But we reply that we have penetrated below the surface of any such dilemma. Thought desires for its content the character which makes reality. These features, if realized, would destroy mere thought; and hence they are an Other beyond thought. But thought, nevertheless, can desire them, because its content has them already in an incomplete form. And in desire for the completion of what one has there is no contradiction. Here is the solution of our difficulty.

The relational form is a compromise on which thought stands, and which it develops. It is an attempt to unite differences which have broken out of the felt totality.\(^1\) Differences forced together by an underlying identity, and a compromise between the plurality and the unity—this is the essence of relation. But the differences remain independent, for they cannot be made to resolve themselves into their own relation. For, if so, they would perish, and their relation would perish with them. Or, otherwise, their outstanding plurality would still remain unreconciled with their unity, and so within the relation would beget the infinite process. The relation, on the other side, does not exist beyond the terms; for, in that case, itself would be a new term which would aggravate the distraction. But again, it cannot lose itself within the terms; for, if so, where is their common unity and their relation? They would in this case not be related, but would fall apart. Thus the whole relational perception

\(^1\) On this point see Chapter iii.
joins various characters. It has the feature of immediacy and self-dependence; for the terms are given to it and not constituted by it. It possesses again the character of plurality. And as representing the primitive felt whole, it has once more the character of a comprehending unity—a unity, however, not constituted by the differences, but added from without. And, even against its wish, it has further a restless infinitude; for such infinitude is the very result of its practical compromise. And thought desires, retaining these features, to reduce them to harmony. It aims at an all-inclusive whole, not in conflict with its elements, and at elements subordinate to a self-dependent whole. Hence neither the aspect of unity, nor of plurality, nor of both these features in one, is really foreign to thought. There is nothing foreign that thought wants in desiring to be a whole, to comprehend everything, and yet to include and be superior to discord. But, on the other hand, such a completion, as we have seen, would prove destructive; such an end would emphatically make an end of mere thought. It would bring the ideal content into a form which would be reality itself, and where mere truth and mere thought would certainly perish. Thought seeks to possess in its object that whole character of which it already owns the separate features. These features it cannot combine satisfactorily, though it has the idea, and even the partial experience, of their complete combination. And, if the object were made perfect, it would forthwith become reality, but would cease forthwith to be an object. It is this completion of thought beyond thought which remains for ever an Other. Thought can form the idea of an apprehension, something like feeling in directness, which contains all the character sought by its relational efforts. Thought can understand that, to reach its goal, it must get beyond relations. Yet in its nature it can
find no other working means of progress. Hence it perceives that somehow this relational side of its nature must be merged and must include somehow the other side. Such a fusion would compel thought to lose and to transcend its proper self. And the nature of this fusion thought can apprehend in vague generality, but not in detail; and it can see the reason why a detailed apprehension is impossible. Such anticipated self-transcendence is an Other; but to assert that Other is not a self-contradiction.

Hence in our Absolute thought can find its Other without inconsistency. The entire reality will be merely the object thought out, but thought out in such a way that mere thinking is absorbed. This same reality will be feeling that is satisfied completely. In its direct experience we get restored with interest every feature lost by the disruption of our primitive felt whole. We possess the immediacy and the strength of simple apprehension, no longer forced by its own inconsistencies to pass into the infinite process. And again volition, if willed out, becomes our Absolute. For we reach there the identity of idea and reality, not too poor but too rich for division of its elements. Feeling, thought, and volition have all defects which suggest something higher. But in that higher unity no fraction of anything is lost. For each one-sided aspect, to gain itself, blends with that which seemed opposite, and the product of this fusion keeps the riches of all. The one reality, we may say from our human point of view, was present in each aspect in a form which does not satisfy. To work out its full nature it has sunk itself into these differences. But in each it longs for that absolute self-fruition which comes only when the self bursts its limits and blends with another finite self. This desire of each element for a perfection which implies fusion with others, is not self-contradictory. It is rather an effort to remove
THOUGHT AND REALITY.

a present state of inconsistency, to remain in which would indeed be fixed self-contradiction.

Now, if it is objected that such an Absolute is the Thing-in-itself, I must doubt if the objector can understand. How a whole which comprehends everything can deserve that title is past my conjecture. And, if I am told that the differences are lost in this whole, and yet the differences are, and must therefore be left outside—I must reply to this charge by a counter-charge of thoughtless confusion. For the differences are not lost, but are all contained in the whole. The fact that more is included there than these several, isolated, differences hardly proves that these differences are not there at all. When an element is joined to another in a whole of experience, then, on the whole, and for the whole, their mere specialities need not exist; but, none the less, each element in its own partial experience may retain its own speciality. "Yes; but these partial experiences," I may be told, "will at all events fall outside the whole." Surely no such consequence follows. The self-consciousness of the part, its consciousness of itself even in opposition to the whole—all will be contained within the one absorbing experience. For this will embrace all self-consciousness harmonized, though, as such, transmuted and suppressed. We cannot possibly construe, I admit, such an experience to ourselves. We cannot imagine how in detail its outline is filled up. But to say that it is real, and that it unites certain general characters within the living system of one undivided apprehension, is within our power. The assertion of this Absolute's reality I hope in the sequel to justify. Here (if I have not failed) I have shown that, at least from the point of view of thinking, it is free from self-contradiction. The justification for thought of an Other may help both to explain and to bury the Thing-in-itself.
CHAPTER XVI.

ERROR.

We have so far sketched in outline the Absolute which we have been forced to accept, and we have pointed out the general way in which thought may fall within it. We must address ourselves now to a series of formidable objections. If our Absolute is possible in itself, it seems hardly possible as things are. For there are undeniable facts with which it does not seem compatible. Error and evil, space, time, chance and mutability, and the unique particularity of the "this" and the "mine"—all these appear to fall outside an individual experience. To explain them away or to explain them, one of these courses seems necessary, and yet both seem impossible. And this is a point on which I am anxious to be clearly understood. I reject the offered dilemma, and deny the necessity of a choice between these two courses. I fully recognise the facts, I do not make the smallest attempt to explain their origin, and I emphatically deny the need for such an explanation. In the first place to show how and why the universe is so that finite existence belongs to it, is utterly impossible. That would imply an understanding of the whole not practicable for a mere part. It would mean a view by the finite from the Absolute's point of view, and in that consummation the finite would have been transmuted and destroyed. But, in the second place, such an understanding is wholly unnecessary. We have not to choose between accounting for everything
on one side and on the other side admitting it as a disproof of our doctrine of the Absolute. Such an alternative is not logical. If you wish to refute a wide theory based on general grounds, it is idle merely to produce facts which upon it are not explained. For the inability to explain these may be simply our failure in particular information, and it need imply nothing worse than confirmation lacking to the theory. The facts become an objection to the doctrine when they are incompatible with some part of it; while, if they merely remain outside, that points to incompleteness in detail and not falsity in principle. A general doctrine is not destroyed by what we fail to understand. It is destroyed only by that which we actually do understand, and can show to be inconsistent and discrepant with the theory adopted.

And this is the real issue here. Error and evil are no disproof of our absolute experience so long as we merely fail to see how in detail it comprehends them. They are a disproof when their nature is understood in such a way as to collide with the Absolute. And the question is whether this understanding of them is correct. It is here that I confidently join issue. If on this subject there exists a false persuasion of knowledge, I urge that it lies on the side of the objector. I maintain that we know nothing of these various forms of the finite which shows them incompatible with that Absolute, for the accepting of which we have general ground. And I meet the denial of this position by pointing out assumed knowledge where really there is ignorance. It is the objector who, if any one, asserts omniscience. It is he who claims to understand both the infinite and the finite, so as to be aware and to be assured of their incompatibility. And I think that he much overestimates the extent of human power. We cannot know that the finite is in collision with the Absolute. And if
we cannot, and if, for all we understand, the two are at one and harmonious—then our conclusion is proved fully. For we have a general assurance that reality has a certain nature, and, on the other side, against that assurance we have to set nothing, nothing other than our ignorance. But an assurance, against which there is nothing to be set, must surely be accepted. And I will begin first with Error.

Error is without any question a dangerous subject, and the chief difficulty is as follows. We cannot, on the one hand, accept anything between non-existence and reality, while, on the other hand, error obstinately refuses to be either. It persistently attempts to maintain a third position, which appears nowhere to exist, and yet somehow is occupied. In false appearance there is something attributed to the real which does not belong to it. But if the appearance is not real, then it is not false appearance, because it is nothing. On the other hand, if it is false, it must therefore be true reality, for it is something which is. And this dilemma at first sight seems insoluble. Or, to put it otherwise, an appearance, which is, must fall somewhere. But error, because it is false, cannot belong to the Absolute; and, again, it cannot appertain to the finite subject, because that, with all its contents, cannot fall outside the Absolute; at least, if it did, it would be nothing. And so error has no home, it has no place in existence; and yet, for all that, it exists. And for this reason it has occasioned much doubt and difficulty.

For Psychology and for Logic the problem is much easier. Error can be identified with wrong inference, and can be compared on one side with a typical model; while, on the other side, we can show by what steps it originates. But these enquiries, however interesting, would not much assist us, and we must endeavour here to face the problem
more directly. We must take our stand on the distinction between idea and reality.

Error is the same as false appearance, or (if the reader objects to this) it is at any rate one kind of false appearance. Now appearance is content not at one with its existence, a "what" loosened from its "that." And in this sense we have seen that every truth is appearance, since in it we have divorce of quality from being (p. 163). The idea, which is true, is the adjective of reality so far as its content goes. It, so far, is restored, and belongs, to existence. But an idea has also another side, its own private being as something which is and happens. And an idea, as content, is alienated from this its own existence as an event. Even where you take a presented whole, and predicate one or more features, our account still holds good. For the content predicated has now become alien to its existence. On the one side it has not been left in simple unity with the whole, nor again is it predicated so far as changed from a mere feature into another and separate fact. In "sugar is sweet" the sweetness asserted of the sugar is not the sweetness so far as divided from it and turned into a second thing in our minds. This thing has its own being there, and to predicate it, as such, of the sugar would clearly be absurd. In respect of its own existence the idea is therefore always a mere appearance. But this character of divorce from its private reality becomes usually still more patent, where the idea is not taken from presentation but supplied by reproduction. Wherever the predicate is seen to be supplied from an image, the existence of that image can be seen at once not to be the predicate. It is something clearly left outside of the judgment and quite disregarded.

Appearance then will be the looseness of char-

1 See more, Chapter xxvi.
2 Compare p. 164.
acter from being, the distinction of immediate oneness into two sides, a "that" and a "what." And this looseness tends further to harden into fracture and into the separation of two sundered existences. Appearance will be truth when a content, made alien to its own being, is related to some fact which accepts its qualification. The true idea is appearance in respect of its own being as fact and event, but is reality in connection with other being which it qualifies. Error, on the other hand, is content made loose from its own reality, and related to a reality with which it is discrepant. It is the rejection of an idea by existence which is not the existence of the idea as made loose. It is the repulse by a substantive of a liberated adjective.\(^1\) Thus it is an appearance which not only appears, but is false. It is in other words the collision of a mere idea with reality.

There are serious problems with regard both to error and truth, and the distinction between them, which challenge our scrutiny. I think it better however to defer these to later chapters. I will therefore limit here the enquiry, so far as is possible, and will consider two main questions. Error is content neither at one with its own being, nor otherwise allowed to be an adjective of the real. If so, we must ask (1) why it cannot be accepted by reality, and (2) how it still actually can belong to reality; for we have seen that this last conclusion is necessary.

1. Error is rejected by reality because that is harmonious, and is taken necessarily to be so, while error, on the other hand, is self-contradictory. I do not mean that it is a content merely not at one (if that were possible) with its own mere being."\(^2\) I

\(^1\) Whether the adjective has been liberated from this substantive or from another makes no difference.

\(^2\) "In the end no finite predicate or subject can possibly be harmonious.
mean that its inner character, as ideal, is itself discordant and self-discrepant. But I should prefer not to call error a predicate which contradicts itself. For that might be taken as a statement that the contradiction already is present in the mere predicate, before judgment is attempted; and this, if defensible, would be misleading. Error is the qualification of a reality in such a way that in the result it has an inconsistent content, which for that reason is rejected. Where existence has a "what" colliding within itself, there the predication of this "what" is an erroneous judgment. If a reality is self-consistent, and its further determination has introduced discord, there the addition is the mistake, and the reality is unaffected. It is unaffected, however, solely on the assumption that its own nature in no way suggested and called in the discordant. For otherwise the whole result is infected with falseness, and the reality could never have been pure from discrepancy.¹

It will perhaps tend to make clearer this general view of error if I defend it against some possible objections. Error is supposed by some persons to be a departure from experience, or from what is given merely. It is again taken sometimes as the confusion of internal image with outward sensation. But any such views are of course most superficial. Quite apart from the difficulty of finding anything merely given, and the impossibility of always using actual present sensation as a test of truth—without noticing the strange prejudice that outward sensations are never false, and the dull blindness which fails to realize that the "inward" is a fact just as solid as the "outward"—we may dismiss the whole objection. For, if the given has a content which is not harmonious, then, no matter in what sense we

¹ The doctrine here is stated subject to correction in Chapter xxiv. No finite predicate or subject can really be self-consistent.
like to take "given," that content is not real. And any attempt, either to deny this, or to maintain that in the given there is never discrepancy, may be left to itself. But I will go on to consider the same view as it wears a more plausible form. "We do not," I may be told, "add or take away predicates simply at our pleasure. We do not, so long as this arbitrary result does not visibly contradict itself, consider it true." And I have not said that we should do this.

Outside known truth and error we may, of course, have simple ignorance.\textsuperscript{1} An assertion, that is, must in every case be right or be wrong; but, for us and for the present, it may not yet be either. Still, on the other hand, we do know that, \textit{if} the statement is an error, it will be so because its content collides internally. "But, no," I may hear the reply, "this is really not the case. Take the statement that at a certain time an event did or did not happen. This would be erroneous because of disagreement with fact, and not always because it is inconsistent with itself." Still I must insist that we have some further reason for condemning this want of correspondence with fact. For why, apart from such a reason, should either we or the fact make an objection to this defect? Suppose that when William has been hung, I assert that it was John. My assertion will then be false, because the reality does not admit of both events, and because William is certain. And if so, then after all my error surely will consist in giving to the real a self-discrepant content. For otherwise, when John is suggested, I could not reject the idea. I could only say that certainly it was William, and might also, for all that I knew, be John too. But in our actual practice we proceed thus: since "both John and William" forms a discordant content, that statement is in

\textsuperscript{1} For further explanation, see Chapter xxvii.
error—here to the extent of John.\(^1\) In the same way, if where no man is you insist on John's presence, then, without discussing here the nature of the privative judgment,\(^2\) we can understand the mistake. You are trying to force on the reality something which would make it inconsistent, and which therefore is erroneous. But it would be alike easy and idle to pursue the subject further; and I must trust that, to the reader who reflects, our main conclusion is already made good. Error is qualification by the self-discrepant. We must not, if we take the predicate in its usual sense, in all cases place the contradiction within that. But where discrepancy is found in the result of qualification, it is there that we have error. And I will now pass to the second main problem of this chapter.

2. The question is about the relation of error to the Absolute. How is it possible for false appearance to take its place within reality? We have to some extent perceived in what error consists, but we still are confronted by our original problem. Qualification by the self-discrepant exists as a fact, and yet how can it be real? The self-contradiction in the content both belongs, and is unable to belong, to reality. The elements related, and their synthesis, and their reference to existence—these are things not to be got rid of. You may condemn them, but your condemnation cannot act as a spell to abolish them wholly. If they were not there, you could not judge them, and then you judge them not to be; or you pronounce them apparently somehow to exist without really existing. What is the exit from this puzzle?

There is no way but in accepting the whole mass of fact, and in then attempting to correct it and

---

\(^1\) I do not here touch the question why John is sacrificed rather than William (or both). On this, see Chapter xxiv.

\(^2\) See Chapter xxvii.
make it good. Error is truth, it is partial truth, that is false only because partial and left incomplete. The Absolute has without subtraction all those qualities, and it has every arrangement which we seem to confer upon it by our mere mistake. The only mistake lies in our failure to give also the complement. The reality owns the discordance and the discrepancy of false appearance; but it possesses also much else in which this jarring character is swallowed up and is dissolved in fuller harmony. I do not mean that by a mere re-arrangement of the matter which is given to us, we could remove its contradictions. For, being limited, we cannot apprehend all the details of the whole. And we must remember that every old arrangement, condemned as erroneous, itself forms part of that detail. To know all the elements of the universe, with all the conjunctions of those elements, good and bad, is impossible for finite minds. And hence obviously we are unable throughout to reconstruct our discrepancies. But we can comprehend in general what we cannot see exhibited in detail. We cannot understand how in the Absolute a rich harmony embraces every special discord. But, on the other hand, we may be sure that this result is reached; and we can even gain an imperfect view of the effective principle. I will try to explain this latter statement.

There is only one way to get rid of contradiction, and that way is by dissolution. Instead of one subject distracted, we get a larger subject with distinctions, and so the tension is removed. We have at first A, which possesses the qualities c and d, inconsistent adjectives which collide; and we go on to produce harmony by making a distinction within this subject. That was really not mere A, but either a complex within A, or (rather here) a wider whole in which A is included, The real subject is A + D; and this subject contains the contradic-
tion made harmless by division, since A is c and D is b. This is the general principle, and I will attempt here to apply it in particular. Let us suppose the reality to be X (a b c d e f g . . . ), and that we are able only to get partial views of this reality. Let us first take such a view as "X (a b) is b." This (rightly or wrongly) we should probably call a true view. For the content b does plainly belong to the subject; and, further, the appearance also—in other words, the separation of b in the predicate—can partly be explained. For, answering to this separation, we postulate now another adjective in the subject; let us call it β. The "thatness," the psychical existence of the predicate, which at first was neglected, has now also itself been included in the subject. We may hence write the subject as X (a b β); and in this way we seem to avoid contradiction. Let us go further on the same line, and, having dealt with a truth, pass next to an error. Take the subject once more as X (a b c d e . . . ), and let us now say "X (a b) is d." This is false, because d is not present in the subject, and so we have a collision. But the collision is resolved if we take the subject, not as mere X (a b), but more widely as X (a b c d). In this case the predicate d becomes applicable. Thus the error consisted in the reference of d to a b; as it might have consisted in like manner in the reference of a b to c, or again of c to d. All of these exist in the subject, and the reality possesses with each both its "what" and its "that." But not content with a provisional separation of these indissoluble aspects, not satisfied (as in true appearance) to have aα, bβ, and dδ—forms which may typify distinctions that bring no discord into the qualities—we have gone on further into error. We have not only loosened "what" from "that," and so have made appearance; but we have in each case then bestowed the "what" on a wrong quality within the real subject.
We have crossed the threads of the connection between our "whats" and our "thats," and have thus caused collision, a collision which disappears when things are taken as a whole.

I confess that I shrink from using metaphors, since they never can suit wholly. The writer tenders them unsuspiciously as a possible help in a common difficulty. And so he subjects himself, perhaps, to the captious ill-will or sheer negligence of his reader. Still to those who will take it for what it is, I will offer a fiction. Suppose a collection of beings whose souls in the night walk about without their bodies, and so make new relations. On their return in the morning we may imagine that the possessors feel the benefit of this divorce; and we may therefore call it truth. But, if the wrong soul with its experience came back to the wrong body, that might typify error. On the other hand, perhaps the ruler of this collection of beings may perceive very well the nature of the collision. And it may even be that he provokes it. For how instructive and how amusing to observe in each case the conflict of sensation with imported and foreign experience. Perhaps no truth after all could be half so rich and half so true as the result of this wild discord—to one who sees from the centre. And, if so, error will come merely from isolation and defect, from the limitation of each being to the "this" and the "mine."

But our account, it will fairly be objected, is untenable because incomplete. For error is not merely negative. The content, isolated and so discordant, is after all held together in a positive discord. And so the elements may exist, and their relations to their subjects may all be there in the Absolute, together with the complements which make them all true, and yet the problem is not solved. For the point of error, when all is said, lies
in this very insistence on the partial and discrepant, and this discordant emphasis will fall outside of every possible rearrangement. I admit this objection, and I endorse it. The problem of error cannot be solved by an enlarged scheme of relations. Each misarrangement cannot be taken up wholly as an element in the compensations of a harmonious mechanism. For there is a positive sense and a specific character which marks each appearance, and this will still fall outside. Hence, while all that appears somehow is, all has not been accounted for by any rearrangement.

But on the other side the Absolute is not, and cannot be thought as, any scheme of relations. If we keep to these, there is no harmonious unity in the whole. The Absolute is beyond a mere arrangement, however well compensated, though an arrangement is assuredly one aspect of its being. Reality, consists, as we saw, in a higher experience, superior to the distinctions which it includes and overrides. And, with this, the last objection to the transformation of error has lost its basis. The one-sided emphasis of error, its isolation as positive and as not dissoluble in a wider connection— this again will contribute, we know not how, to the harmony of the Absolute. It will be another detail, which, together with every "what" and "that,” and their relations, will be absorbed into the whole and will subserve its perfection.

On this view there still are problems as to error and truth which we must deal with hereafter. But the main dilemma as to false appearance has, I think, been solved. That both exists and is, as such, not real. Its arrangement becomes true in a wider rearrangement of "what” and of "that.” Error is truth when it is supplemented. And its positive isolation also is reducible, and exists as a mere element within the whole. Error is, but is not barely what it takes itself to be. And its mere
onesidedness again is but a partial emphasis, a note of insistence which contributes, we know not how, to greater energy of life. And, if so, the whole problem has, so far, been disposed of.

Now that this solution cannot be verified, in the sense of being made out in detail, is not an admission on my part. It is rather a doctrine which I assert and desire to insist on. It is impossible for us to show, in the case of every error, how in the whole it is made good. It is impossible, even apart from detail, to realize how the relational form is in general absorbed. But, upon the other hand, I deny that our solution is either unintelligible or impossible. And possibility here is all that we want. For we have seen that the Absolute must be a harmonious system. We have first perceived this in general, and here specially, in the case of error, we have been engaged in a reply to an alleged negative instance. Our opponent's case has been this, that the nature of error makes our harmony impossible. And we have shown, on the other side, that he possesses no such knowledge. We have pointed out that it is at least possible for errors to correct themselves, and, as such, to disappear in a higher experience. But, if so, we must affirm that they are thus absorbed and made good. For what is possible, and what a general principle compels us to say must be, that certainly is.
CHAPTER XVII.

EVIL.

We have seen that error is compatible with absolute perfection, and we now must try to reach the same result in the case of evil. Evil is a problem which of course presents serious difficulties, but the worst have been imported into it and rest on pure mistake. It is here, as it is also with what is called "Free Will." The trouble has come from the idea that the Absolute is a moral person. If you start from that basis, then the relation of evil to the Absolute presents at once an irreducible dilemma. The problem then becomes insoluble, but not because it is obscure or in any way mysterious. To any one who has sense and courage to see things as they are, and is resolved not to mystify others or himself, there is really no question to discuss. The dilemma is plainly insoluble because it is based on a clear self-contradiction, and the discussion of it here would be quite uninstructive. It would concern us only if we had reason to suppose that the Absolute is (properly) moral. But we have no such reason, and hereafter we may hope to convince ourselves (Chapter xxv.), that morality cannot (as such) be ascribed to the Absolute. And, with this, the problem becomes certainly no worse than many others. Hence I would invite the reader to dismiss all hesitation and misgiving. If the questions we ask prove unanswerable, that will certainly not be because they are quite obscure or unintelligible. It will be simply because the data we possess are
insufficient. But let us at all events try to understand what it is that we seek.

Evil has, we all know, several meanings. It may be taken (I.) as pain, (II.) as failure to realize end, and (III.), specially, as immorality. The fuller consideration of the last point must be postponed to a later chapter, where we can deal better with the relation of the finite person to the Absolute.

I. No one of course can deny that pain actually exists, and I at least should not dream of denying that it is evil. But we failed to see, on the other hand, how pain, as such, can possibly exist in the Absolute. Hence, it being admitted that pain has actual existence, the question is whether its nature can be transmuted. Can its painfulness disappear in a higher unity? If so, it will exist, but will have ceased to be pain when considered on the whole.

We can to some extent verify in our actual experience the neutralization of pain. It is quite certain that small pains are often wholly swallowed up in a larger composite pleasure. And the assertion that, in all these cases, they have been destroyed and not merged, would most certainly be baseless. To suppose that my condition is never pleasant on the whole while I still have an actual local pain, is directly opposed to fact. In a composite state the pain doubtless will detract from the pleasure, but still we may have a resultant which is pleasurable wholly. Such a balance is all that we want in the case of absolute perfection.

We shall certainly so far have done nothing to confute the pessimist. "I accept," he will reply, "your conclusion in general as to the existence of a balance. I quite agree that in the resultant one

1 Chapter xiv. This conclusion is somewhat modified in Chapter xxvii., but, for the sake of clearness, I state it here unconditionally. The reader can correct afterwards, so far as is required, the results of the present chapter.
feature is submerged. But, unfortunately for your view, that feature really is not pain but pleasure. The universe, taken as a whole, suffers therefore sheer pain and is hence utterly evil." But I do not propose to undertake here an examination of pessimism. That would consist largely in the weighing of psychological arguments on either side, and the result of these is in my opinion fatal to pessimism. In the world, which we observe, an impartial scrutiny will discover more pleasure than pain, though it is difficult to estimate, and easy to exaggerate, the amount of the balance. Still I must confess that, apart from this, I should hold to my conclusion. I should still believe that in the universe there is preponderance of pleasure. The presumption in its favour is based on a principle from which I see no escape (Chapter xiv.), while the world we see is probably a very small part of the reality. Our general principle must therefore be allowed to weigh down a great deal of particular appearance; and, if it were necessary, I would without scruple rest my case on this argument. But, on the contrary, no such necessity exists. The observed facts are clearly, on the whole, in favour of some balance of pleasure. They, in the main, serve to support our conclusion from principle, and pessimism may, without hesitation, be dismissed.

We have found, so far, that there is a possibility of pain ceasing, as such, to exist in the Absolute. We have shown that this possibility can to some extent be verified in experience. And we have a general presumption in favour of an actual balance of pleasure. Hence once more here, as before with error, possibility is enough. For what may be, if it also must be, assuredly is.

There are readers, perhaps, who will desire to go farther. It might be urged that in the Absolute pain not merely is lost, but actually serves as a kind of stimulus to heighten the pleasure. And doubt-
less this possibly may be the case; but I can see no good reason for taking it as fact. In the Absolute there probably is no pleasure outside of finite souls (Chapter xxvii.); and we have no reason to suppose that those we do not see are happier than those which we know. Hence, though this is possible, we are not justified in asserting it as more. For we have no right to go farther than our principle requires. But, if there is a balance of clear pleasure, that principle is satisfied, for nothing then stands in the way of the Absolute's perfection. It is a mistake to think that perfection is made more perfect by increase of quantity (Chapter xx.).

II. Let us go on to consider evil as waste, failure, and confusion. The whole world seems to a large extent the sport of mere accident. Nature and our life show a struggle in which one end perhaps is realized, and a hundred are frustrated. This is an old complaint, but it meets an answer in an opposing doubt. Is there really any such thing as an end in Nature at all? For, if not, clearly there is no evil, in the sense in which at present we are taking the word. But we must postpone the discussion of this doubt until we have gained some understanding of what Nature is to mean.¹ I will for the present admit the point of view which first supposes ends in Nature, and then objects that they are failures. And I think that this objection is not hard to dispose of. The ends which fail, we may reply, are ends selected by ourselves and selected more or less erroneously. They are too partial, as we have taken them, and, if included in a larger end to which they are relative, they cease to be failures. They, in short, subserve a wider scheme, and in that they are realized. It is here with evil as it was before with error. That was lost in higher

¹ For the question of ends in Nature see Chapters xxii. and xxvi.
truth to which it was subordinate, and in which, as such, it vanished. And with partial ends, in Nature or in human lives, the same principle will hold. Idea and existence we find not to agree, and this discord we call evil. But, when these two sides are enlarged and each taken more widely, both may well come together. I do not mean, of course, that every finite end, as such, is realized. I mean that it is lost, and becomes an element, in a wider idea which is one with existence. And, as with error, even our onesidedness, our insistence and our disappointment, may somehow all subserv a harmony and go to perfect it. The aspects of idea and of existence may be united in one great whole, in which evil, and even ends, as such, disappear. To verify this consummation, or even to see how in detail it can be, are both impossible. But, for all that, such perfection in its general idea is intelligible and possible. And, because the Absolute is perfect, this harmony must also exist. For that which is both possible and necessary we are bound to think real.

III. Moral evil presents us with further difficulties. Here it is not a question simply of defect, and of the failure in outward existence of that inner idea which we take as the end. We are concerned further with a positive strife and opposition. We have an idea in a subject, an end which strives to gain reality; and on the other side, we have the existence of the same subject. This existence not merely fails to correspond, but struggles adversely, and the collision is felt as such. In our moral experience we find this whole fact given beyond question. We suffer within ourselves a contest of the good and bad wills and a certainty of evil. Nay, if we please, we may add that this discord is necessary, since without it morality must wholly perish.

And this necessity of discord shows the road into the centre of our problem. Moral evil exists
only in moral experience, and that experience in its essence is full of inconsistency. For morality desires unconsciously, with the suppression of evil, to become wholly non-moral. It certainly would shrink from this end, but it thus unknowingly desires the existence and perpetuity of evil. I shall have to return later to this subject (Chapter xxv.), and for the present we need keep hold merely of this one point. Morality itself, which makes evil, desires in evil to remove a condition of its own being. It labours essentially to pass into a super-moral and therefore a non-moral sphere.

But, if we will follow it and will frankly adopt this tendency, we may dispose of our difficulty. For the content, willed as evil and in opposition to the good, can enter as an element into a wider arrangement. Evil, as we say (usually without meaning it), is overruled and subserves. It is enlisted and it plays a part in a higher good end, and in this sense, unknowingly is good. Whether and how far it is as good as the will which is moral, is a question later to be discussed. All that we need understand here is that “Heaven’s design,” if we may speak so, can realize itself as effectively in “Catiline or Borgia” as in the scrupulous or innocent. For the higher end is super-moral, and our moral end here has been confined, and is therefore incomplete. As before with physical evil, the discord as such disappears, if the harmony is made wide enough.

But it will be said truly that in moral evil we have something additional. We have not the mere fact of incomplete ends and their isolation, but we have in addition a positive felt collision in the self. And this cannot be explained away, for it has to fall within the Absolute, and it makes there a discord which remains unresolved. But our old principle may still serve to remove this objection. The collision and the strife may be an element in some fuller realization. Just as in a machine the resist-
ance and pressure of the parts subserve an end beyond any of them, if regarded by itself—so at a much higher level it may be with the Absolute. Not only the collision but that specific feeling, by which it is accompanied and aggravated, can be taken up into an all-inclusive perfection. We do not know how this is done, and ingenious metaphors (if we could find them) would not serve to explain it. For the explanation would tend to wear the form of qualities in relation, a form necessarily (as we have seen) transcended in the Absolute. Such a perfect way of existence would, however, reconcile our jarring discords; and I do not see how we can deny that such a harmony is possible. But, if possible, then, as before, it is indubitably real. For, on the one side, we have an overpowering reason for maintaining it; while upon the other side, so far as I can see, we have nothing.

I will mention in passing another point, the unique sense of personality which is felt strongly in evil. But I must defer its consideration until we attack the problem of the "mine" and the "this" (Chapter xix.). And I will end here with some words on another source of danger. There is a warning which I may be allowed to impress on the reader. We have used several times already with diverse subject-matters the same form of argument. All differences, we have urged repeatedly, come together in the Absolute. In this, how we do not know, all distinctions are fused, and all relations disappear. And there is an objection which may probably at some point have seemed plausible. "Yes," I may be told, "it is too true that all difference is gone. First with one real existence, and then afterwards with another, the old argument is brought out and the old formula applied. There is no variety in the solution, and hence in each case the variety is lost to the Absolute. Along with
these distinctions all character has wholly disappeared, and the Absolute stands outside, an empty residue and bare Thing-in-itself." This would be a serious misunderstanding. It is true that we do not know how the Absolute overrides the relational form. But it does not follow from this that, when the relational form is gone, the result is really poorer. It is true that with each problem we cannot say how its special discords are harmonized. But is this to deny the reality of diverse contents in the Absolute? Because in detail we cannot tell in what each solution consists, are we therefore driven to assert that all the detail is abolished, and that our Absolute is a flat monotony of emptiness? This would indeed be illogical. For though we do not know in each case what the solution can be, we know that in every case it contains the whole of the variety. We do not know how all these partial unities come together in the Absolute, but we may be sure that the content of not one is obliterated. The Absolute is the richer for every discord, and for all diversity which it embraces; and it is our ignorance only in which consists the poverty of our object. Our knowledge must be poor because it is abstract. We cannot specify the concrete nature of the Absolute's riches, but with every region of phenomenal existence we can say that it possesses so much more treasure. Objections and problems, one after the other, are not shelved merely, but each is laid up as a positive increase of character in the reality. Thus a man might be ignorant of the exact shape in which his goods have been realized, and yet he might be rationally assured that, with each fresh alienation of visible property, he has somehow corresponding wealth in a superior form.
CHAPTER XVIII.

TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL APPEARANCE.

Both time and space have been shown to be unreal as such. We found in both such contradictions that to predicate either of the reality was out of the question. Time and space are mere appearance, and that result is quite certain. Both, on the other hand, exist; and both must somehow in some way belong to our Absolute. Still a doubt may be raised as to this being possible.

To explain time and space, in the sense of showing how such appearances come to be, and again how without contradiction they can be real in the Absolute, is certainly not my object. Anything of the kind, I am sure, is impossible. And what I wish to insist on is this, that such knowledge is not necessary. What we require to know is only that these appearances are not incompatible with our Absolute. They have been urged as instances fatal to any view such as ours; and this objection, we must reply, is founded on mistake. Space and time give no ground for the assertion that our Absolute is not possible. And, in their case once more, we must urge the old argument. Since it is possible that these appearances can be resolved into a harmony which both contains and transcends them; since again it is necessary, on our main principle, that this should be so—it therefore truly is real. But let us examine these appearances more closely, and consider time first.

It is unnecessary to take up the question of time's
origin. To show it as produced psychologically from timeless elements is, I should say, not possible. Its perception generally may supervene at some stage of our development; and, at all events in its complete form, that perception is clearly a result. But, if we take the sense of time in its most simple and undeveloped shape, it would be difficult to show that it was not there from the first. But this whole question, however answered, has little importance for Metaphysics. We might perhaps draw, if we could assume that time has been developed, some presumption in favour of its losing itself once more in a product which is higher. But it is hardly worth while to consider this presumption more closely.

Passing from this point I will reply to an objection from fact. If time is not unreal, I admit that our Absolute is a delusion; but, on the other side, it will be urged that time cannot be mere appearance. The change in the finite subject, we are told, is a matter of direct experience; it is a fact, and hence it cannot be explained away. And so much of course is indubitable. Change is a fact, and, further, this fact, as such, is not reconcilable with the Absolute. And, if we could not in any way perceive how the fact can be unreal, we should be placed, I admit, in a hopeless dilemma. For we should have a view as to reality which we could not give up, and should, on the other hand, have an existence in contradiction with that view. But our real position is very different from this. For time has been shown to contradict itself, and so to be appearance. With this, its discord, we see at once, may pass as an element into a wider harmony. And, with this, the appeal to fact at once becomes worthless.

It is mere superstition to suppose that an appeal to experience can prove reality. That I find something in existence in the world or in my self, shows that this something exists, and it cannot show more.
Any deliverance of consciousness—whether original or acquired—is but a deliverance of consciousness. It is in no case an oracle and a revelation which we have to accept. It is a fact, like other facts, to be dealt with; and there is no presumption anywhere that any fact is better than appearance. The "given" of course is given; it must be recognised, and it cannot be ignored. But between recognising a datum and receiving blindly its content as reality is a very wide interval. We may put it thus once for all—there is nothing given which is sacred. Metaphysics can respect no element of experience except on compulsion. It can reverence nothing but what by criticism and denial the more unmistakably asserts itself.

Time is so far from enduring the test of criticism, that at a touch it falls apart and proclaims itself illusory. I do not propose to repeat the detail of its self-contradiction; for that I take as exhibited once for all in our First Book. What I must attempt here first is to show how by its inconsistency time directs us beyond itself. It points to something higher in which it is included and transcended.

1. In the first place change, as we saw (Chapter v.), must be relative to a permanent. Doubtless here was a contradiction which we found was not soluble. But, for all that, the fact remains that change demands some permanence within which succession happens. I do not say that this demand is consistent, and, on the contrary, I wish to emphasize the point that it is not so. It is inconsistent, and yet it is none the less essential. And I urge that therefore change desires to pass beyond simple change. It seeks to become a change which is somehow consistent with permanence. Thus, in asserting itself, time tries to commit suicide as itself, to transcend its own character and to be taken up in what is higher.
2. And we may draw this same conclusion from another inconsistency. The relation of the present to the future and to the past shows once more time's attempt to transcend its own nature. Any lapse, that for any purpose you take as one period, becomes forthwith a present. And then this lapse is treated as if it existed all at once. For how otherwise could it be spoken of as one thing at all? Unless it is, I do not see how we have a right to regard it as possessing a character. And unless it is present, I am quite unable to understand with what meaning we can assert that it is. And, I think, the common behaviour of science might have been enough by itself to provoke reflection on this head. We may say that science, recognising on the one side, on the other side quite ignores the existence of time. For it habitually treats past and future as one thing with the present (Chapter viii.). The character of an existence is determined by what it has been and by what it is (potentially) about to be. But if these attributes, on the other hand, are not present, how can they be real? Again in establishing a Law, itself without special relation to time, science treats facts from various dates as all possessing the same value. Yet how, if we seriously mean to take time as real, can the past be reality? It would, I trust, be idle to expand here these obvious considerations. They should suffice to point out that for science reality at least tries to be timeless, and that succession, as such, can be treated as something without rights and as mere appearance.

3. This same tendency becomes visible in another application. The whole movement of our mind implies disregard of time. Not only does intellect accept what is true once for true always, and thus fearlessly take its stand on the Identity of Indiscernibles—not only is this so, but the whole mass of what is called "Association" implies the same principle. For such a connection does not hold except
between universals. The associated elements are divorced from their temporal context; they are set free in union, and ready to form fresh unions without regard for time's reality. This is in effect to degrade time to the level of appearance. But our entire mental life, on the other hand, has its movement through this law. Our whole being practically implies it, and to suppose that we can rebel would be mere self-deception. Here again we have found the irresistible tendency to transcend time. We are forced once more to see in it the false appearance of a timeless reality.

It will be objected perhaps that in this manner we do not get rid of time. In those eternal connections which rule in darkness our lowest psychical nature, or are used consciously by science, succession may remain. A law is not always a law of what merely coexists, but it often gives the relation of antecedent and sequent. The remark is true, but certainly it could not show that time is self-consistent. And it is the inconsistency, and hence the self-transcendence of time which here we are urging. This temporal succession, which persists still in the causal relation, does but secure to the end the old discrepancy. It resists, but it cannot remove, time's inherent tendency to pass beyond itself. Time is an appearance which contradicts itself, and endeavours vainly to appear as an attribute of the timeless.

It might be instructive here to mention other spheres, where we more visibly treat mere existence in time as appearance. But we perhaps have already said enough to establish our conclusion; and our result, so far, will be this. Time is not real as such, and it proclaims its unreality by its inconsistent attempt to be an adjective of the timeless. It is an appearance which belongs to a higher character in

---

1 On these points see my Principles of Logic, and, below, Chapter xxiii.

A. R.
which its special quality is merged. Its own temporal nature does not there cease wholly to exist but is thoroughly transmuted. It is counterbalanced and, as such, lost within an all-inclusive harmony. The Absolute is timeless, but it possesses time as an isolated aspect, an aspect which, in ceasing to be isolated, loses its special character. It is there, but blended into a whole which we cannot realize. But that we cannot realize it, and do not know how in particular it can exist, does not show it to be impossible. It is possible, and, as before, its possibility is enough. For that which can be, and upon a general ground must be—that surely is real.

And it would be better perhaps if I left the matter so. For, if I proceed and do my best to bring home to our minds time's unreality, I may expect misunderstanding. I shall be charged with attempting to explain, or to explain away, the nature of our fact; and no notice will be taken of my protests that I regard such an attempt as illusory. For (to repeat it) we can know neither how time comes to appear, nor in what particular way its appearance is transcended. However, for myself and for the reader who will accept them as what they are, I will add some remarks. There are considerations which help to weaken our belief in time's solidity. It is no mass which stands out and declines to be engulfed. It is a loose image confusedly thrown together, and that, as we gaze, falls asunder.

1. The first point which will engage us is the unity of time. We have no reason, in my opinion, to regard time as one succession, and to take all phenomena as standing in one temporal connection. We have a tendency, of course, to consider all times as forming parts of a single series. Phenomena, it seems clear, are all alike events which happen;  

1 On this point see Chapter xxiii.
and, since they happen, we go on to a further conclusion. We regard them as members in one temporal whole, and standing therefore throughout to one another in relations of "before" and "after" or "together." But this conclusion has no warrant. For there is no valid objection to the existence of any number of independent time-series. In these the internal events would be interrelated temporally, but each series, as a series and as a whole, would have no temporal connection with anything outside. I mean that in the universe we might have a set of diverse phenomenal successions. The events in each of these would, of course, be related in time, but the series themselves need not have temporal relation to one another. The events, that is, in one need not be after, or before, or together with, the events in any other. In the Absolute they would not have a temporal unity or connection; and, for themselves, they would not possess any relations to other series.

I will illustrate my meaning from our own human experience. When we dream, or when our minds go wandering uncontrolled, when we pursue imaginary histories, or exercise our thoughts on some mere supposed sequence—we give rise to a problem. There is a grave question, if we can see it. For within these successions the events have temporal connection, and yet, if you consider one series with another, they have no unity in time. And they are not connected in time with what we call the course of our "real" events. Suppose that I am asked how the occurrences in the tale of Imogen are related in time to each adventure of Sindbad the Sailor, and how these latter stand to my dream-events both of last night and last year—such questions surely have no meaning. Apart from the chance of local colour we see at once that between these temporal occurrences there is no relation of time. You cannot say that one comes before, or comes after, the
other. And again to date these events by their appearance in my mental world would be surely preposterous. It would be to arrange all events, told of by books in a library, according to the various dates of publication—the same story repeating itself in fact with every edition, and to-day's newspaper and history simultaneous throughout. And this absurdity perhaps may help us to realize that the successive need have no temporal connection.

"Yes, but," I may be told, "all these series, imaginary as well as real, are surely dated as events in my mental history. They have each their place there, and so beyond it also in the one real time-series. And, however often a story may be repeated in my mind, each occasion has its own date and its temporal relations." Indubitably so, but such an answer is quite insufficient. For observe first that it admits a great part of what we urge. It has to allow plainly that the times within our "unreal" series have no temporal interrelation. Otherwise, for instance, the time-succession, when a story is repeated, would infect the contents, and would so make repetition impossible. I wish first to direct notice to this serious and fatal admission.

But, when we consider it, the objection breaks down altogether. It is true that, in a sense and more or less, we arrange all phenomena as events in one series. But it does not follow that in the universe, as a whole, the same tendency holds good. It does not follow that all phenomena are related in time. What is true of my events need not hold good of all other events; nor again is my imperfect way of unity the pattern to which the Absolute is confined.

What, to use common language, I call "real" events are the phenomena which I arrange in a continuous time-series. This has its oneness in the identity of my personal existence. What is presented is "real," and from this basis I construct a