time-series, both backwards and forwards; and I use as binding links the identical points in any content suggested.\(^1\) This construction I call the "real" series, and whatever content declines to take its place in my arrangement, I condemn as unreal. And the process is justifiable within limits. If we mean only that there is a certain group of phenomena, and that, for reality within this group, a certain time-relation is essential, that doubtless is true. But it is another thing to assert that every possible phenomenon has a place in this series. And it is once more another thing to insist that every time-series has a temporal unity in the Absolute.

Let us consider the first point. If no phenomenon is "real," except that which has a place in my temporal arrangement, we have, first, left on our hands the whole world of "Imagination." The fact of succession there becomes "unreal," but it is not got rid of by the application of any mere label. And I will mention in passing another difficulty, the disruption of my "real" series in mental disease. But—to come to the principle—it is denied that phenomena can exist unless they are in temporal relation with my world. And I am able to find no ground for this assumption. When I ask why, and for what reason, there cannot be changes of event, imperceptible to me and apart from my time-series, I can discover no answer. So far as I can see, there may be many time-series in the Absolute, not related at all for one another, and for the Absolute without any unity of time.

And this brings us to the second point. For phenomena to exist without inter-connection and unity, I agree is impossible. But I cannot perceive that this unity must either be temporal or else nothing. That would be to take a way of regard—

\(^1\) For this construction see p. 84, and Principles of Logic, Chapter ii.
ing things which even we find imperfect, and to set it down as the one way which is possible for the Absolute. But surely the Absolute is not shut up within our human limits. Already we have seen that its harmony is something beyond relations. And, if so, surely a number of temporal series may, without any relation in time to one another, find a way of union within its all-inclusive perfection. But, if so, time will not be one, in the sense of forming a single series. There will be many times, all of which are at one in the Eternal—the possessor of temporal events and yet timeless. We have, at all events, found no shred of evidence for any other unity of time.

2. I will pass now to another point, the direction of time. Just as we tend to assume that all phenomena form one series, so we ascribe to every series one single direction. But this assumption too is baseless. It is natural to set up a point in the future towards which all events run, or from which they arrive, or which may seem to serve in some other way to give direction to the stream. But examination soon shows the imperfection of this natural view. For the direction, and the distinction between past and future, entirely depends upon our experience. That side, on which fresh sensations come in, is what we mean by the future. In our perception of change elements go out, and something new comes to us constantly; and we construct the time-series entirely with reference to this experience. Thus, whether we regard events as running forwards from the past, or as emerging from the future, in any case we use one method of taking our bearings. Our fixed direction is given solely by the advent of new arrivals.

1 See on this point Mind, xii. 579-82. We think forwards, one may say, on the same principle on which fish feed with their heads pointing up the stream.
But, if this is so, then direction is relative to our world. You may object that it is fixed in the very nature of things, and so imparts its own order to our special sphere. Yet how this assumption can be justified I do not understand. Of course there is something not ourselves which makes this difference exist in our beings, something too which compels us to arrange other lives and all our facts in one order. But must this something, therefore, in reality and in itself, be direction? I can find no reason for thinking so. No doubt we naturally regard the whole world of phenomena as a single time-series; we assume that the successive contents of every other finite being are arranged in this construction, and we take for granted that their streams all flow in one direction. But our assumption clearly is not defensible. For let us suppose, first, that there are beings who can come in contact in no way with that world which we experience. Is this supposition self-contradictory, or anything but possible? And let us suppose, next, that in the Absolute the direction of these lives runs opposite to our own. I ask again, is such an idea either meaningless or untenable? Of course, if in any way I could experience their world, I should fail to understand it. Death would come before birth, the blow would follow the wound, and all must seem to be irrational. It would seem to me so, but its inconsistency would not exist except for my partial experience. If I did not experience their order, to me it would be nothing. Or, if I could see it from a point of view beyond the limits of my life, I might find a reality which itself had, as such, no direction. And I might there perceive characters, which for the several finite beings give direction to their lives, which, as such, do not fall within finite experience, and which, if apprehended, show both directions harmoniously combined in a consistent whole.

To transcend experience and to reach a world of
Things-in-themselves, I agree, is impossible. But does it follow that the whole universe in every sense is a possible object of my experience? Is the collection of things and persons, which makes my world, the sum total of existence? I know no ground for an affirmative answer to this question. That many material systems should exist, without a material central-point, and with no relation in space—where is the self-contradiction? That various worlds of experience should be distinct, and, for themselves, fail to enter one into the other—where is the impossibility? That arises only when we endorse, and take our stand upon, a prejudice. That the unity in the Absolute is merely our kind of unity, that spaces there must have a spatial centre, and times a temporal point of meeting—these assumptions are based on nothing. The opposite is possible, and we have seen that it is also necessary.

It is not hard to conceive a variety of time-series existing in the Absolute. And the direction of each series, one can understand, may be relative to itself, and may have, as such, no meaning outside. And we might also imagine, if we pleased, that these directions run counter, the one to the other. Let us take, for example, a scheme like this:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
  a & b & c & d \\
  b & a & d & c \\
  c & d & a & b \\
  d & c & b & a \\
\end{array}
\]

Here, if you consider the contents, you may suppose the whole to be stationary. It contains partial views, but, as a whole, it may be regarded as free from change and succession. The change will fall in the perceptions of the different series. And the diverse directions of these series will, as such, not exist for

\footnote{See Chapter xxii}
the whole. The greater or less number of the various series, which we may imagine as present, the distinct experience which makes each, together with the direction in which it runs—this is all matter, we may say, of individual feeling. You may take, as one series and set of lives, a line going any way you please, up or down or transversely. And in each case the direction will be given to it by sensation peculiar to itself. Now without any question these perceptions must exist in the whole. They must all exist, and in some way they all must qualify the Absolute. But, for the Absolute, they can one countervail, another, and so their characters be transmuted. They can, with their successions, come together in one whole in which their special natures are absorbed.

And, if we chose to be fanciful, we might imagine something more. We might suppose that, corresponding to each of our lives, there is another individual. There is a man who traverses the same history with ourselves, but in the opposite direction. We may thus imagine that the successive contents, which make my being, are the lives also of one or more other finite souls.\(^1\) The distinctions between us would remain, and would consist in an additional element, different in each case. And it would be these differences which would add to each its own way of succession, and make it a special personality. The differences, of course, would have existence; but in the Absolute, once more, in some way they might lose exclusiveness. And, with this, diversity of direction, and all succession itself, would, as such, disappear. The believer in second sight and witchcraft might find in such a view a wide field for his vagaries. But I note this merely in passing, since to myself fancies of this sort are not inviting. My purpose here has been simple. I have tried to show

\(^1\) On the possibility of this compare Chapter xxiii.
that neither for the temporal unity of all time-series, nor for the community of their direction, is there one shred of evidence. However great their variety, it may come together and be transformed in the Absolute. And here, as before, possibility is all we require in order to prove reality.

The Absolute is above relations, and therefore we cannot construct a relational scheme which could exhibit its unity. But that eternal unity is made sure by our general principle. And time itself, we have now seen, can afford no presumption that the universe is not timeless.¹

There is a remaining difficulty on which perhaps I may add a few remarks. I may be told that in causation a succession is involved with a direction not reversible. It will be urged that many of the relations, by which the world is understood, involve in their essence time sequent or co-existent. And it may be added that for this reason time conflicts with the Absolute. But, at the point which we have reached, this objection has no weight.

Let us suppose, first, that the relation of cause and effect is in itself defensible. Yet we have no knowledge of a causal unity in all phenomena. Different worlds might very well run on together in the universe, side by side and not in one series of effects and causes. They would have a unity in the Absolute, but a unity not consisting in cause and effect. This must be considered possible until we find some good argument in favour of causal unity. And then, even in our own world, how unsatisfactory the succession laid down in causation. It is really never true that mere a produces mere b. It is true only when we bring in the unspecified background, and, apart from that, such a statement is made merely upon sufferance (Chapters vi.,

¹ I shall make some remarks on Progress in Chapter xxvi.
And the whole succession itself, if defensible, may admit of transformation. We assert that \((X)b\) is the effect which follows on \((X)a\), but perhaps the two are identical. The succession and the difference are perhaps appearances, which exist only for a view which is isolated and defective. The successive relation may be a truth which, when filled out, is transmuted, and which, when supplemented, must lose its character in the Absolute. It may thus be the fragment of a higher truth not prejudicial to identity.

Such considerations will turn the edge of any objection directed against our Absolute from the ground of causation. But we have seen, in addition, in our sixth chapter that this ground is indefensible. By its own discrepancy causation points beyond itself to higher truth; and I will briefly, here once more, attempt to make this plain. Causation implies change, and it is difficult to know of what we may predicate change without contradiction. To say "\(a\) becomes \(b\), and there is nothing which changes," is really unmeaning. For, if there is change, something changes; and it is able to change because something is permanent. But then how predicate the change? "\(Xa\) becomes \(Xb\)"; but, if \(X\) is \(a\) and afterwards \(b\), then, since \(a\) has ceased to qualify it, a change has happened within \(X\). But, if so, then apparently we require a further permanent. But if, on the other side, to avoid this danger, we take \(Xa\) not to change, we are otherwise ruined. For we have somehow to predicate of \(X\) both elements at once, and where is the succession? The successive elements co-exist unintelligibly within \(X\), and succession somehow is degraded to mere appearance.

To put it otherwise, we have the statement "\(X\) is first \(Xa\), and later also \(Xb\)." But how can "later also \(b\)" be the truth, if before mere \(a\) was true? Shall we answer "No, not mere \(a\); it is not mere
\( Xa \), but \( Xa \) (given \( c \)), which is later also \( b'\)? But this reply leaves us still face to face with a like obstacle; for, if \( Xa \) (\( c \)) is \( X \) later \( b \), then how separate these terms? If there is a difference between them, or if there is none, our assertion in either case is untenable. For we cannot justify the difference if it exists, or our making it, if it does not exist. Hence we are led to the conclusion that subject and predicate are identical, and that the separation and the change are only appearance. They are a character assuredly to be added to the whole, but added in a way beyond our comprehension. They somehow are lost except as elements in a higher identity.

Or, again, say that the present state of the world is the cause of that total state which follows next on it. Here, again, is the same self-contradiction. For how can one state \( a \) become a different state \( b \)? It must either do this without a reason, and that seems absurd; or else the reason, being additional, forthwith constitutes a new \( a \), and so on for ever. We have the differences of cause and effect, with their relation of time, and we have no way in which it is possible to hold these together. Thus we are drawn to the view that causation is but partial, and that we have but changes of mere elements within a complex whole. But this view gives no help until we carry it still further, and deny that the whole state of the world can change at all. So we glide into the doctrine that partial changes are no change, but counterbalance one another within a whole which persists unaltered. And here certainly the succession remains as an appearance, the special value of which we are unable to explain. But the causal sequence has drifted beyond itself and into a reality which essentially is timeless. And hence, in attempting an objection to the eternity of the Absolute, causation would deny a principle implied in its own nature.
At the end of this chapter, I trust, we may have reached a conviction. We may be convinced, not merely as before, that time is unreal, but that its appearance also is compatible with a timeless universe. It is only when misunderstood that change precludes a belief in eternity. Rightly apprehended it affords no presumption against our doctrine. Our Absolute must be; and now, in another respect, again, it has turned out possible. Surely therefore it is real.

I shall conclude this chapter with a few remarks on the nature of space. In passing to this from time, we meet with no difficulties that are new, and a very few words seem all that is wanted. I am not attempting here to explain the origin of space; and indeed to show how it comes to exist seems to me not possible. And we need not yet ask how, on our main view, we are to understand the physical world. That necessary question is one which it is better to defer. The point here at issue is this, Does the form of space make our reality impossible? Is its existence a thing incompatible with the Absolute? Such a question, in my judgment, requires little discussion.

If we could prove that the spatial form were a development, and so secondary, that would give us little help. The proof could in no degree lessen the reality of a thing which, in any case, does exist. It would at most serve as an indication that a further growth in development might merge the space-form in a higher mode of perception. But it is better not to found arguments upon that which, at most, is hardly certain.

What I would stand upon is the essential nature of space. For that, as we saw in our First Book, is entirely inconsistent. It attempts throughout to

---

1 I must here refer back to Chapter iv.
reach something which transcends its powers. It made an effort to find and to maintain a solid self-existence, but that effort led it away into the infinite process both on the inside and externally. And its evident inability to rest within itself points to the solution of its discords. Space seeks to lose itself in a higher perception, where individuality is gained without forfeit of variety.¹

And against the possibility of space being in this way absorbed in a non-spatial consummation, I know of nothing to set. Of course how in particular this can be, we are unable to lay down. But our ignorance in detail is no objection against the general possibility. And this possible absorption, we have seen, is also necessary.

¹ The question as to whether, and in what sense, space possesses a unity, may be deferred to Chapter xxii. A discussion on this point was required in the case of time. But an objection to our Absolute would hardly be based on the unity of space.
CHAPTER XIX.

THE THIS AND THE MINE.

We have seen that the forms of space and time supply no good objection to the individuality of the Absolute. But we have not yet faced a difficulty which perhaps may prove more serious. There is the fact which is denoted by the title of the present chapter. The particularity of feeling, it may be contended, is an obstacle which declines to be engulfed. The "this" and the "mine" are undeniable; and upon our theory, it may be said, they are both inexplicable.

The "this" and the "mine" are names which stand for the immediacy of feeling, and each serves to call attention to one side of that fact. There is no "mine" which is not "this," nor any "this" which fails, in a sense, to be "mine." The immediate fact must always come as something felt in an experience, and an experience always must be particular, and, in a sense perhaps, "unique." But I shall not enter on all the problems implied in the last word. I am not going to inquire here how we are able to transcend the "this-mine," for that question will engage us hereafter (Chapter xxi.), and the problem now before us is confined to a single point. We are to assume that there does exist an indefinite number of "this-mines," of immediate experiences of the felt. And, assuming this fact, we are to ask if it is compatible with our general view.

The difficulty of this inquiry arises in great part from vagueness. The "this" and "mine" are
taken as both positive and negative. They are to possess a singular reality, and they are to own in some sense an exclusive character. And from this shifting basis a rash conclusion is hastily drawn. But the singular reality, after all, may not be single and self-existent. And the exclusive character, perhaps, may be included and taken up in the Whole. And it is these questions which we must endeavour to clear up and discuss. I will begin with what we have called the positive aspect.

The "this" and the "mine" express the immediate character of feeling, and the appearance of this character in a finite centre. Feeling may stand for a psychical stage before relations have been developed, or it may be used generally for an experience which is not indirect (Chapters ix., xxvi., and xxvii.). At any time all that we suffer, do, and are, forms one psychical totality. It is experienced all together as a co-existing mass, not perceived as parted and joined by relations even of co-existence. It contains all relations, and distinctions, and every ideal object that at the moment exists in the soul. It contains them, not specially as such and with exclusive stress on their content as predicated, but directly as they are and as they qualify the psychical "that." And again any part of this co-existence, to which we attend, can be viewed integrally as one feeling.

Now whatever is thus directly experienced—so far as it is not taken otherwise—is "this" and "mine." And all such presentation without doubt has peculiar reality. One might even contend that logically to transcend it is impossible, and that there is no rational way to a plurality of "this-mines." But such a plurality we have agreed for the present to assume. The "this," it is however clear, brings a sense of superior reality, a sense which is far from being wholly deceptive and untrue. For all our knowledge, in the first place, arises from the "this."
It is the one source of our experience, and every element of the world must submit to pass through it. And the "this," secondly, has a genuine feature of ultimate reality. With however great imperfection and inconsistency it owns an individual character. The "this" is real for us in a sense in which nothing else is real.

Reality is being in which there is no division of content from existence, no loosening of "what" from "that." Reality, in short, means what it stands for, and stands for what it means. And the "this" possesses to some extent the same wholeness of character. Both the "this" and reality, we may say, are immediate. But reality is immediate because it includes and is superior to mediation. It develops, and it brings to unity, the distinctions it contains. The "this" is immediate, on the other side, because it is at a level below distinctions. Its elements are but conjoined, and are not connected. And its content, hence, is unstable, and essentially tends to disruption, and by its own nature must pass beyond the being of the "this." But every "this" still shows a passing aspect of undivided singleness. In the mental background specially such a fused unity remains a constant factor, and can never be dissipated (Chapters ix., x., xxvii.). And it is such an unbroken wholeness which gives the sense of individual reality. When we turn from mere ideas to sensation, we experience in the "this" a revelation of freshness and life. And that revelation, if misleading, is never quite untrue.¹

We may, for the present, take "this" as the positive feeling of direct experience. In that sense it will be either general or special. It will be the

¹ It is mere thoughtlessness that finds in Resistance the one manifestation of reality. For resistance, in the first place, is full of unsolved contradictions, and is also fixed and consists in that very character. And in the second place, what experience can come as more actual than sensuous pain or pleasure?
character which we feel always, or again in union with some particular content. And we have to ask if, so understood, the "this" is incompatible with our Absolute.

The question, thus asked, seems to call for but little discussion. Since for us the Absolute is a whole, the sense of immediate reality, we must suppose, may certainly qualify it. And, again, I find no difficulty when we pass to the special meaning of "this." With every presentation, with each chance mixture of psychical elements, we have the feeling of one particular datum. We have the felt existence of a peculiar sensible whole. And here we find beyond question a positive content, and a fresh element which has to be included within our Absolute. But in such a content there is, so far, nothing which could repel or exclude. There is no feature there which could resist embracement and absorption by the whole.

The fact of actual fragmentariness, I admit, we cannot explain. That experience should take place in finite centres, and should wear the form of finite "thisness," is in the end inexplicable (Chapter xxvi.). But to be inexplicable, and to be incompatible, are not the same thing. And in such fragmentariness, viewed as positive, I see no objection to our view. The plurality of presentations is a fact, and it, therefore, makes a difference to our Absolute. It exists in, and it, therefore, must qualify the whole. And the universe is richer, we may be sure, for all dividedness and variety. Certainly in detail we do not know how the separation is overcome, and we cannot point to the product which is gained, in each case, by that resolution. But our ignorance here is no ground for rational opposition. Our principle assures us that the Absolute is superior to partition, and in some way is perfected by it. And we have found, as yet, no reason even to
doubt if this result is possible. We have discovered, as yet, nothing which seems able from any side to stand out. There is no element such as could hesitate to blend with the rest and to be dissolved in a higher unity.

If the whole could be an arrangement of mere ideas, if it were a system barely intellectual, the case would be altered. We might combine such ideas, it would not matter how ingeniously; but we could not frame, and we should not possess, a product containing what we feel to be imparted directly by the "this." I admit that inability, and I urge it, as yet another confirmation and support of our doctrine. For our Absolute was not a mere intellectual system. It was an experience overriding every species of one-sidedness, and throughout it was at once intuition and feeling and will. But, if so, the opposition of the "this" becomes at once unmeaning. For feelings, each possessing a nature of its own, may surely come together, and be fused in the Absolute. And, so far is such a resolution from appearing impossible, that I confess to me it seems most natural and easy. That partial experiences should run together, and should unite their deliverances to produce one richer whole—is there anything here incredible? It would indeed be strange if bare positive feelings proved recalcitrant and solid, and stood out against absorption. For their nature clearly is otherwise, and they must be blended in the one experience of the Absolute. This consummation evidently is real, because on our principle it is necessary, and because again we have no reason to doubt that it is possible. And with so much, we may pass from the positive aspect of the "this."

For the "this" and "mine," it is clear, are taken also as negative. They are set up as in some way opposed to the Absolute, and they are considered, in some sense, to own an exclusive character. And
that their character, in part, is exclusive cannot be
denied; but the question is in what sense, and how
far, they possess it. For, if the repulsion is relative
and holds merely within the one whole, it is compat-
ible at once with our view of the universe.

An immediate experience, viewed as positive, is
so far not exclusive. It is, so far, what it is, and it
does not repel anything. But the "this" certainly
is used also with a negative bearing. It may mean
"this one," in distinction from that one and the
other one. And here it shows obviously an exclu-
sive aspect, and it implies an external and negative
relation. But every such relation, we have found,
is inconsistent with itself (Chapter iii.). For it
exists within, and by virtue of an embracing unity,
and apart from that totality, both itself and its terms
would be nothing. And the relation also must
penetrate the inner being of its terms. "This," in
other words, would not exclude "that," unless in
the exclusion "this," so far, passed out of itself.
Its repulsion of others is thus incompatible with self-
contained singleness, and involves subordination to
an including whole. But to the ultimate whole
nothing can be opposed, or even related.

And the self-transcendent character of the "this"
is, on all sides, open and plain. Appearing as im-
mediate, it, on the other side, has contents which
are not consistent with themselves, and which refer
themselves beyond. Hence the inner nature of the
"this" leads it to pass outside itself towards a
higher totality. And its negative aspect is but one
appearance of this general tendency. Its very ex-
clusiveness involves the reference of itself beyond
itself, and is but a proof of its necessary absorption
in the Absolute.¹

¹ The above conclusion applies emphatically to the "this" as
signifying the point in which I am said to encounter reality. All
contact necessarily implies a unity, in and through which it takes
place, and my self and the reality are, here, but partial appear-
And if the "this" is asserted to be all-exclusive because it is "unique," the discussion of that point need not long detain us. The term may imply that nothing else but the "this-mine" is real, and, in that case, the question has been deferred to Chapter xxi. And, if "unique" means that what is felt once can never be felt again, such an assertion, taken broadly, seems even untrue. For if feelings, the same in character, do in fact not recur, we at least hardly can deny that their recurrence is possible. The "this" is unique really so far as it is a member in a series, and so far as that series is taken as distinct from all others.¹ And only in this sense can we call its recurrence impossible. But here with uniqueness once more we have negative relations, and these relations involve an inclusive unity. Uniqueness, in this sense, does not resist assimilation by the Absolute. It is, on the other hand, itself incompatible with exclusive singleness.

Into the nature of self-will I shall at present not enter. This is opposition attempted by a finite subject against its proper whole. And we may see at once that such discord and negation can subserve unity, and can contribute towards the perfection of the universe. It is connection with the central fire which produces in the element this burning sense of selfness. And the collision is resolved within that harmony where centre and circumference are one. But I shall return in another place to the discussion of this matter (Chapter xxv.).

We have found that the "this," taken as exclusive, proclaims itself relative, and in that relation forfeits its independence. And we have seen that,

¹ On this point compare Principles of Logic, Chapter ii.
as positive, the "this" is not exclusive at all. The "this" is inconsistent always, but, so far as it excludes, so far already has it begun internally to suffer dissipation. We may now, with advantage perhaps, view the matter in a somewhat different way. There is, I think, a vague notion that some content sticks irremovably within the "this," or that in the "this," again, there is something which is not content at all. In either case an element is offered, which, it is alleged, cannot be absorbed by the Whole. And an examination of these prejudices may throw some light on our general view.

In the "this," it may appear first, there is something more than content. For by combining qualities indefinitely we seem unable to arrive at the "this." The same difficulty may be stated perhaps in a way which points to its solution. The "this" on one hand, we may say, is nothing at all beside content, and, on the other hand, the "this" is not content at all. For in the term "content" there lies an ambiguity. It may mean a "what" that is, or again, is not, distinct from its "that." And the "this," we have already seen, has inconsistent aspects. It offers, from one aspect, an immediate undivided experience, a whole in which "that" and "what" are felt as one. And here content, as implying distinction, will be absent from the "this." But such an undivided feeling, we have also seen, is a positive experience. It does not even attempt to resist assimilation by our Absolute.

If, on the other hand, we use content generally, and if we employ it in the sense of "what" without distinction from "that"—if we take it to mean something which is experienced, and which is nothing but experience—then, most emphatically, the "this" is not anything but content. For there is nothing in it or about it which can be more than experience. And in it there is further no feature which cannot be made a quality. Its various aspects can all be
separated by distinction and analysis, and, one after another, can thus be brought forward as ideal predicates. This assertion holds of that immediate sense of a special reality, which we found above in the character of each felt complex. There is, in brief, no fragment of the "this" such that it cannot form the object of a distinction. And hence the "this," in the first place, is mere experience throughout; and, in the second place, throughout it may be called intelligible. It owns no aspect which refuses to become a quality, and in its turn to play the part of an ideal predicate.¹

But it is easy here to deceive ourselves and to fall into error. For taking a given whole, or more probably selecting one portion, we begin to distinguish and to break up its confused co-existence. And, having thus possessed ourselves of definite contents and of qualities in relation, we call on our "this" to identify itself with our discrete product. And, on the refusal of the "this," we charge it with stubborn exclusiveness. It is held to possess either in its nature a repellent content, or something else, at all events, which is intractable. But the whole conclusion is fallacious. For, if we have not mutilated our subject, we have at least added a feature which originally was not there—a feature, which, if introduced, must of necessity burst the "this," and destroy it from within. The "this," we have seen, is a unity below relations and ideas; and a unity, able to develop and to harmonize all distinctions, is not found till we arrive at ultimate Reality. Hence the "this" repels our offered predicates, not because its nature goes beyond, but rather because that nature comes short. It is not more, we may say, but less than our distinctions.

And to our mistake in principle we add probably an error in practice. For we have failed probably

¹ Compare here p. 175, and Principles of Logic, chapter ii.
to exhaust the full deliverance of our "this," and the residue, left there by our mere failure, is then assumed blindly to stand out as an irreducible aspect. For, if we have confined our "this" to but one portion of the felt totality, we have omitted from our analysis, perhaps, the positive aspect of its special unity. But our analysis, if so, is evidently incomplete and misleading. And then, perhaps again, qualifying our limited "this" by exclusive relations, we do not see that in these we have added a factor to its original content. And what we have added, and have also overlooked, is then charged to the native repellence of the "this." But if again, on the other hand, our "this" is not taken as limited, if it is to be the entire complex of one present, viewed without relation even to its own future and past—other errors await us. For the detail here is so great that complete exhaustion is hardly possible. And so, setting down as performed that which is in fact impracticable, we once more stumble against a residue which is due wholly to our weakness. And we are helped, perhaps, further into mistake by another source of fallacy. We may confuse the feeling which we study with the feeling which we are. Attempting, so far as we can, to make an object of some (past) psychical whole, we may unawares seek there every feature which we now are and feel. And we may attribute our ill success to the positive obstinacy of the resisting object.¹

The total subject of all predicates, which we feel in the background, can be exhausted, we may say in general, by no predicate or predicates. For the

¹ Success here is impossible because, apart from the difficulty of analysis and exhaustion, our present observing attitude forms a new and incompatible feature. It is an element in our state now, which (ex hyp.) was absent from our state then. In this connection I may remark that to observe a feeling is, to some extent, always to alter it. For the purpose in hand that alteration may not be material, but, it will in all cases be there. I have touched on this subject in *Principles of Logic*, p. 65, note.
subject holds all in one, while predication involves severance, and so inflicts on its subject a partial loss of unity. And hence neither ultimate Reality, nor any "this," can consist of qualities. That is one side of the truth, but the truth also has another side. Reality owns no feature or aspect which cannot in its turn be distinguished, none which cannot in this way become a mere adjective and predicate. The same conclusion holds of the "this," in whatever sense you take it. There is nothing there which could form an intractable crudity, nothing which can refuse to qualify and to be merged in the ultimate Reality.

We have found that, in a sense, the "this" is not, and does not own, content. But, in another sense, we have seen that it contains, and is, nothing else. We may now pass to the examination of a second prejudice. Is there any content which is owned by and sticks in the "this," and which thus remains outstanding, and declines union with a higher system? We have perceived, on the contrary, that by its essence the "this" is self-transcendent. But it may repay us once more to dwell and to enlarge on this topic. And I shall not hesitate in part to repeat results which we have gained already.

If we are asked what content is appropriated by the "this," we may reply that there is none. There is no inalienable content which belongs to the "this" or the "mine." My immediate feeling, when I say "this," has a complex character, and it presents a confused detail which, we have seen, is content. But it has no "what" which belongs to it as a separate possession. It has no feature identified with its own private exclusivity. That is first a negative relation which, in principle, must qualify the internal from outside. And in practice we find that each element contained can refer itself elsewhere. Each tends naturally towards a wider whole outside of the
“this.” Its content, we may say, has no rest till it has wandered to a home elsewhere. The mere “this” can appropriate nothing.

The “this” appears to retain content solely through our failure. I may express this otherwise by calling it the region of chance; for chance is something given and for us not yet comprehended. So far as any element falls outside of some ideal whole, then, in relation with that whole, this element is chance. Contingent matter is matter regarded as that which, as yet, we cannot connect and include. It has not been taken up, as we know that it must be, within some ideal whole or system. Thus one and the same matter both is, and is not, contingent. It is chance for one system or end, while in relation with another, it is necessary. All chance is relative; and the content, which falls in the mere “this,” is relative chance. So far as it remains there, that is through our failure to refer it elsewhere. It is merely “this” so far as it is not yet comprehended; and, so far as it is taken as a feature in any whole beyond itself, it has to change its character. It is, in that respect at least, forthwith not of the “this,” but only in it, and appearing there. And such appearance, of course, is not always presentation to outer sense. All that in any way we experience, we must experience within one moment of presentation. However ideal anything may be, it still must appear in a “now.” And everything present there, so far as in any respect it is not subordinated to an ideal whole—no matter what that whole is—in relation to that defect is but part of the given. It may be as ideal otherwise as you please, but to that extent it fails to pass beyond immediate fact. Such an element so far is still immersed in the “now,” “mine,” and “this.” It remains there, but, as we have seen,

1 For a further discussion of the meaning of Chance see Chapter xxiv.
it is not owned and appropriated. It lingers; we may say, precariously and provisionally.

But at this point we may seem to have encountered an obstacle. For in the given fact there is always a co-existence of elements; and with this co-existence we may seem to ascribe positive content to the "this." Property, we asserted, was lacking to it, and that assertion now seems questionable. For co-existence supplies us with actual knowledge, and none the less it seems given in the content of the "this." The objection, however, would rest on misunderstanding. It is positive knowledge when I judge that in a certain space or time certain features co-exist. But such knowledge, on the other hand, is never the content of the mere "this." It is already a synthesis, imperfect no doubt, but still plainly ideal. And, at the cost of repetition, I will point this out briefly.

(a) The place or time, first, may be characterised by inclusion within a series. We may mean that, in some sense, the place or time is "this one," and not another. But, if so, we have forthwith transcended the given. We are using a character which implies inclusion of an element within a whole, with a reference beyond itself to other like elements. And this of course goes far beyond immediate experience. To suppose that position in a series can belong to the mere "this," is a misunderstanding.1

(b) And more probably the objection had something else in view. It was not conjunction in one moment, as distinct from another moment, which it urged was positive and yet belonged to the "this." It meant mere coincidence within some "here" or some "now," a co-presentation immediately given without regard to any "there" or "then." Such a bare conjunction seems to be something possessed by the "this," and yet offering on the other side a

---

1 See above, and compare also Chapter xxi.
positive character. But again, and in this form, the objection would rest on a mistake.

The bare coincidence of the content, if you take it as merely given within a presentation, and if you consider it entirely without any further reference beyond, is not a co-existence of elements. I do not mean, of course, that a whole of feeling is not positive at all. I mean that, as soon as you have made assertions about what it contains, as soon as you have begun to treat its content as content, you have transcended its felt unity. For consider a "here" or "now," and observe anything of what is in it, and you have instantly acquired an ideal synthesis (Chapter xv.). You have a relation which, however impure, is at once set free from time. You have gained an universal which, so far as it goes, is true always, and not merely at the present moment; and this universal is forthwith used to qualify reality beyond that moment. And thus the co-existence of a and b, we may say, does not belong to the mere "this," but it is ideal, and appears there. Within mere feeling it has doubtless a positive character, but, excluding distinctions, it is not, in one sense, coincidence at all. In observing, we are compelled to observe in the form of relations. But these internal relations properly do not belong to the "this" itself. For its character does not admit of separation and distinction. Hence to distinguish elements within this whole, and to predicate a relation of co-existence, is self-contradictory. Our operation, in its result, has destroyed what it acted on; and the product which has come out, was, as such, never there. Thus, in claiming to own a relation of co-existence and a distinction of content, the mere "this" commits suicide.

From another point of view, doubtless, the observed is a mere coincidence, when compared, that is, with a purer way of understanding. The relation is true, subject to the condition of a confused
context, which is not comprehended. And hence the connection observed is, to this extent, bare conjunction and mere co-existence. Or it is chance, when you measure it by a higher necessity. It is a truth conditioned by our ignorance, and so contingent and belonging to the "this." But, upon the other side, we have seen that the "this" can hold nothing. As soon as a relation is made out, that is universal knowledge, and has at once transcendened presentation. For within the merely "this" no relation, taken as such, is possible. The content, if you distinguish it, is to that extent set free from felt unity. And there is no "what" which essentially adheres to the bare moment. So far as any element remains involved in the confusion of feeling, that is but due to our defect and ignorance. Hence, to repeat, the "this," considered as mere feeling, is certainly positive. As the absence of universal relations, the "this" again is negative. But, as an attempt to make and to retain distinctions of content, the "this" is suicidal.

It is so too with the "mere mine." We hear in discussions on morality, or logic, or æsthetics, that a certain detail is "subjective," and hence irrelevant. Such a detail, in other words, belongs to the "mere mine." And a mistake may be made, and we may imagine that there is matter which, in itself, is contingent.\(^1\) It may be supposed that an element, such perhaps as pleasure, is a fixed part of something called the "this-me." But there is no content which, as such, can belong to the "mine." The "mine" is my existence taken as immediate fact, as an integral whole of psychical elements which simply are. It is my content, so far as not freed from the feeling moment. And it is merely my content, because it is not subordinate to this or that ideal whole. If I regard a mental fact, say, from the side

\(^1\) Or again, having no clear ideas, we may try to help ourselves with such phrases as "the individuality of the individuals."
of its morality, then whatever is, here and now, not relevant to this purpose, becomes bare existence. It is something which is not the appearance of the ideal matter in hand. And yet, because it exists somehow, it exists as a fact in the mere "mine." The same thing happens also, of course, with aesthetics, or science, or religion. The same detail which, in one respect, was essential and necessary, may, from another point of view, become immaterial. And ther at once, so far, it falls back into the merely felt or given. It exists, but, for the end we are regarding, it is nothing.

This is still more evident, perhaps, from the side of psychology. No particle of my existence, on the one hand, falls outside that science; and yet, on the other hand, for psychology the mere "mine" remains. When I study my events so as to trace a particular connection, no matter of what kind, then at any moment the psychical "given" contains features which are irrelevant. They have no bearing on the point which I am endeavouring to make good. Hence the fact of their co-existence is contingent, and it is by chance that they accompany what is essential. They exist, in other words, for my present aim, in that self which is merely given, and which is not transcended. On the other hand, obviously, these same particulars are essential and necessary, since (at the least) somehow they are links in the causal sequence of my history. Every particular in the same way has some end beyond the moment. Each can be referred to an ideal whole whose appearance it is; and nothing whatever is left to belong merely to the "this-mine." The simplest observation of what co-exists removes it from that region, and, chance has no positive content, except in relation to our failure and ignorance.

And any psychology, which is not blind or else biased by false doctrine, forces on our notice this
alienation of content. Our whole mental life moves by a transcendence of the "this," by sheer disregard of its claim to possess any property. The looseness of some feature of the "what" from its fusion with the "that"—its self-reference to, and its operation on, something beyond—if you leave out this, you have lost the mainspring of psychical movement. But this is the ideality of the given, its non-possession of that character with which it appears, but which only appears in it. And Association—who could use it as mere co-existence within the "this"? But, if anything more, it is at once the union of the ideal, the synthesis of the eternal. Thus the "mine" has no detail which is not the property of connections beyond. The merest coincidence, when you observe it, is a distinction which couples universal ideas. And, in brief, the "mine" has no content except that which is left there by our impotence. Its character in this respect is, in other words, merely negative.

Hence to urge such a character against our Absolute would be unmeaning. It would be to turn our ignorance of system into a positive objection, to make our failure a ground for the denial of possibility. We have no basis on which to doubt that all content comes together harmoniously in the Absolute. We have no reason to think that any feature adheres to the "this," and is unable to transcend it. What is true is that, for us, the incomplete diversity of various systems, the perplexing references of each same feature to many ideal wholes, and again that positive special feeling, which we have dealt with above—all this detail is not made one in any way which we can verify. That it all is reconciled we know, but how, in particular, is hid from us. But because this result must be, and because there is nothing against it, we believe that it is.

We have seen that in the "this," on one side, there
is no element but content, and we have found that no content, on the other side, is the possession of the "this." There is none that sticks within its precincts, but all tends to refer itself beyond. What remains there is chance, if chance is used in the sense of our sheer ignorance. It is not opposition, but blank failure in regard to the claim of an idea. And opposition and exclusiveness, in any sense, must transcend the bare "this." For their essence always implies relation to a something beyond self; and that relation makes an end of all attempt at solid singleness. Thus, if chance is taken as involving an actual relation to an idea, the "this" already has, so far, transcended itself. The refusal of something given to connect itself with an idea is a positive fact. But that refusal, as a relation, is evidently not included and contained in the "this." On the other hand, entering into that relation, the internal content has, so far, set itself free. It has already transcended the "this" and become universal. And the exclusiveness of the "this" everywhere in the same way proves self-contradictory.

And we had agreed before that the mere "this" in a sense is positive. It has a felt self-affirmation peculiar and especial, and into the nature of that positive being we entered at length. But we found no reason why such feelings, considered in any feature or aspect, should persist self-centred and aloof. It seemed possible, to say the least, that they all might blend with one another, and be merged in the experience of the one Reality. And with that possibility, given on all sides, we arrive at our conclusion. The "this" and "mine" are now absorbed as elements within our Absolute. For their resolution must be, and it may be, and so certainly it is.

1 Chance, in this sense of mere unperceived failure and privation, can hardly, except by a licence, be called chance. It cannot, at all events, be taken as qualifying the "this."
CHAPTER XX.

RECAPITULATION.

It may be well at this point perhaps to look back on the ground which we have traversed. In our First Book we examined some ways of regarding reality, and we found that each of them contained fatal inconsistency. Upon this we forthwith denied that, as such, they could be real. But upon reflection we perceived that our denial must rest upon positive knowledge. It can only be because we know, that we venture to condemn. Reality therefore, we are sure, has a positive character, which rejects mere appearance and is incompatible with discord. On the other hand it cannot be a something apart, a position qualified in no way save as negative of phenomena. For that leaves phenomena still contradictory, while it contains in its essence the contradiction of a something which actually is nothing. The Reality, therefore, must be One, not as excluding diversity, but as somehow including it in such a way as to transform its character. There is plainly not anything which can fall outside of the Real. That must be qualified by every part of every predicate which it rejects; but it has such qualities as counterbalance one another’s defects. It has a super abundance in which all partial discrepancies are resolved and remain as higher concord.

And we found that this Absolute is experience, because that is really what we mean when we predicate or speak of anything. It is not one-sided experience, as mere volition or mere thought; but it
is a whole superior to and embracing all incomplete forms of life. This whole must be immediate like feeling, but not, like feeling, immediate at a level below distinction and relation. The Absolute is immediate as holding and transcending these differences. And because it cannot contradict itself, and does not suffer a division of idea from existence, it has therefore a balance of pleasure over pain. In every sense it is perfect.

Then we went on to enquire if various forms of the finite would take a place within this Absolute. We insisted that nothing can be lost, and yet that everything must be made good, so as to minister to harmony. And we laid stress on the fact that the how was inexplicable. To perceive the solution in detail is not possible for our knowledge. But, on the other hand, we urged that such an explanation is not necessary. We have a general principle which seems certain. The only question is whether any form of the finite is a negative instance which serves to overthrow this principle. Is there anything which tends to show that our Absolute is not possible? And, so far as we have gone, we have discovered as yet nothing. We have at present not any right to a doubt about the Absolute. We have got no shred of reason for denying that it is possible. But, if it is possible, that is all we need seek for. For already we have a principle upon which it is necessary; and therefore it is certain.

In the following chapters I shall still pursue the same line of argument. I shall enquire if there is anything which declines to take its place within the system of our universe. And, if there is nothing that is found to stand out and to conflict, or to import discord when admitted, our conclusion will be attained. But I will first add a few remarks on the ideas of Individuality and Perfection.

We have seen that these characters imply a
negation of the discordant and discrepant, and a doubt, perhaps, may have arisen about their positive aspect. Are they positive at all? When we predicate them, do we assert or do we only deny? Can it be maintained that these ideas are negative simply? It might be urged against us that reality means barely non-appearance, and that unity is the naked denial of plurality. And in the same way individuality might be taken as the barren absence of discord and of dissipation. Perfection, again, would but deny that we are compelled to go further, or might signify merely the failure of unrest and of pain. Such a doubt has received, I think, a solution beforehand, but I will point out once more its cardinal mistake.

In the first place a mere negation is unmeaning (p. 138). To deny, except from a basis of positive assumption, is quite impossible. And a bare negative idea, if we could have it, would be a relation without a term. Hence some positive basis must underlie these negations which we have mentioned. And, in the second place, we must remember that what is denied is, none the less, somehow predicated of our Absolute. It is indeed because of this that we have called it individual and perfect.

1. It is, first, plain that at least the idea of affirmative being supports the denial of discrepancy and unrest. Being, if we use the term in a restricted sense, is not positively definable. It will be the same as the most general sense of experience. It is different from reality, if that, again, is strictly used. Reality (proper) implies a foregone distinction of content from existence, a separation which is overcome. Being (proper), on the other hand, is immediate, and at a level below distinctions\(^1\); though I have not thought it necessary always to

\(^1\) Compare here p. 225, and for the stricter meaning of some other phrases see p. 317.
employ these terms in a confined meaning. However, in its general sense of experience, being underlies the ideas of individuality and perfection. And these, at least so far, must be positive.

2. And, in the second place, each of them is positively determined by what it excludes. The aspect of diversity belongs to the essence of the individual, and is affirmatively contained in it. The unity excludes what is diverse, so far only as that attempts to be anything by itself, and to maintain isolation. And the individual is the return of this apparent opposite with all its wealth into a richer whole. How in detail this is accomplished I repeat that we do not know; but we are capable, notwithstanding, of forming the idea of such a positive union (Chapters xiv. and xxvii.). Feeling supplies us with a low and imperfect example of an immediate whole. And, taking this together with the idea of qualification by the rejected, and together with the idea of unknown qualities which come in to help—we arrive at individuality. And, though depending on negation, such a synthesis is positive.

And, in a different way, the same account is valid of the Perfect. That does not mean a being which, in regard to unrest and painful struggle, is a simple blank. It means the identity of idea and existence, attended also by pleasure. Now, so far as pleasure goes, that certainly is not negative. But pleasure is far from being the only positive element in perfection. The unrest and striving, the opposition of fact to idea, and the movement towards an end—these features are not left outside of that Whole which is consummate. For all the content, which the struggle has generated, is brought home and is laid to rest undiminished in the perfect. The idea of a being qualified somehow, without any alienation of its "what" from its "that"—a being at the same time fully possessed of all hostile distinctions, and the richer for their strife—this is a positive idea. And it can
be realised in its outline, though certainly not in detail.

I will advert in conclusion to an objection drawn from a common mistake. Quantity is often introduced into the idea of perfection. For the perfect seems to be that beyond which we cannot go, and this tends naturally to take the form of an infinite number. But, since any real number must be finite, we are at once involved here in a hopeless contradiction. And I think it necessary to say no more on this evident illusion; but will pass on to the objection which may be urged against our view of the perfect. If the perfect is the concordant, then no growth of its area or increase of its pleasantness could make it more complete. We thus, apparently, might have the smallest being as perfect as the largest; and this seems paradoxical. But the paradox really, I should say, exists only through misunderstanding. For we are accustomed to beings whose nature is always and essentially defective. And so we suppose in our smaller perfect a condition of want, or at least of defect; and this condition is diminished by alteration in quantity. But, where a being is really perfect, our supposition would be absurd. Or, again, we imagine first a creature complete in itself, and by the side of it we place a larger completion. Then unconsciously we take the greater to be, in some way, apprehended by the smaller; and, with this, naturally the lesser being becomes by contrast defective. But what we fail to observe is that such a being can no longer be perfect. For an idea, which is not fact, has been placed by us within it; and that idea at once involves a collision of elements, and by consequence also a loss of perfection. And thus a paradox has been made by our misunderstanding. We assumed completion, and then surreptitiously added a condition which destroyed it. And this, so far, was a mere error.
But the error may direct our attention to a truth. It leads us to ask if two perfections, great and small, can possibly exist side by side. And we must answer in the negative. If we take perfection in its full sense, we cannot suppose two such perfect existences. And this is not because one surpasses the other in size; for that is wholly irrelevant. It is because finite existence and perfection are incompatible. A being, short of the Whole, but existing within it, is essentially related to that which is not itself. Its inmost being is, and must be, infected by the external. Within its content there are relations which do not terminate inside. And it is clear at once that, in such a case, the ideal and the real can never be at one. But their disunion is precisely what we mean by imperfection. And thus incompleteness, and unrest, and unsatisfied ideality, are the lot of the finite. There is nothing which, to speak properly, is individual or perfect, except only the Absolute.
CHAPTER XXI.

SOLIPSISM.

In our First Book we examined various ways of taking facts, and we found that they all gave no more than appearance. In the present Book we have been engaged with the nature of Reality. We have been attempting, so far, to form a general idea of its character, and to defend it against more or less plausible objections. Through the remainder of our work we must pursue the same task. We must endeavour to perceive how the main aspects of the world are all able to take a place within our Absolute. And, if we find that none refuses to accept a position there, we may consider our result secure against attack. I will now enter on the question which gives its title to this chapter.

Have we any reason to believe in the existence of anything beyond our private selves? Have we the smallest right to such a belief, and is it more than literally a self-delusion? We, I think, may fairly say that some metaphysicians have shown unwillingness to look this problem in the face. And yet it cannot be avoided. Since we all believe in a world beyond us, and are not prepared to give this up, it would be a scandal if that were something which upon our theory was illusive. Any view which will not explain, and also justify, an attitude essential to human nature, must surely be condemned. But we shall soon see, upon the other hand, how the supposed difficulties of the question have been created by false
doctrine. Upon our general theory they lose their foundation and vanish.

The argument in favour of Solipsism, put most simply, is as follows. "I cannot transcend experience, and experience must be my experience. From this it follows that nothing beyond my self exists; for what is experience is its states."

The argument derives its strength, in part, from false theory, but to a greater extent perhaps, from thoughtless obscurity. I will begin by pointing out the ambiguity which lends some colour to this appeal to experience. Experience may mean experience only direct, or indirect also. Direct experience I understand to be confined to the given simply, to the merely felt or presented. But indirect experience includes all fact that is constructed from the basis of the "this" and the "mine." It is all that is taken to exist beyond the felt moment. This is a distinction the fatal result of which Solipsism has hardly realized; for upon neither interpretation of experience can its argument be defended.

I. Let us first suppose that the experience, to which it appeals, is direct. Then, we saw in our ninth chapter, the mere "given" fails doubly to support that appeal. It supplies, on the one hand, not enough, and, on the other hand, too much. It offers us a not-self with the self, and so ruins Solipsism by that excess. But, upon the other side, it does not supply us with any self at all, if we mean by self a substantive the possessor of an object, or even its own states. And Solipsism is, on this side, destroyed by defect. But, before I develope this, I will state an objection which by itself might suffice.

My self, as an existence to which phenomena belong as its adjectives, is supposed to be given by a direct experience. But this gift plainly is an illusion. Such an experience can supply us with no reality beyond that of the moment. There is no faculty which can deliver the immediate revelation
of a self beyond the present (Chapter x.). And so, if Solipsism finds its one real thing in experience, that thing is confined to the limits of the mere “this.” But with such a reflection we have already, so far, destroyed Solipsism as positive, and as anything more than a sufficient reason for total scepticism. Let us pass from this objection to other points.

Direct experience is unable to transcend the mere “this.” But even in what that gives we are, even so far, not supplied with the self upon which Solipsism is founded. We have always instead either too much or too little. For the distinction and separation of subject and object is not original at all, and is, in that sense, not a datum. And hence the self cannot, without qualification, be said to be given (*ibid.*). I will but mention this point, and will go on to another. Whatever we may think generally of our original mode of feeling, we have now verifiably some states in which there is no reference to a subject at all (*ibid.*). And if such feelings are the mere adjectives of a subject-reality, that character must be inferred, and is certainly not given. But it is not necessary to take our stand on this disputable ground. Let us admit that the distinction of object and subject is directly presented—and we have still hardly made a step in the direction of Solipsism. For the subject and the object will now appear in correlation; they will be either two aspects of one fact, or (if you prefer it) two things with a relation between them. And it hardly follows straight from this than only one of these two things is real, and that all the rest of the given total is merely its attribute. That is the result of reflection and of inference, a process which first sets up one half of the fact as absolute, and then turns the other half into an adjective of this fragment. And whether the half is object or is subject, and whether we are led to Materialism, or to what is called sometimes “Idealism,” the process essentially is the same. It equally con-
sists, in each case, in a vicious inference. And the result is emphatically not something which experience presents. I will, in conclusion, perhaps needlessly, remark on another point. We found (Chapter ix.) that there prevailed great confusion as to the boundaries of self and not-self. There seemed to be features not exclusively assignable to either. And, if this is so, surely that is one more reason for rejecting an experience such as Solipsism would suppose. If the self is given as a reality, with all else as its adjectives, we can hardly then account for the supervening uncertainty about its limits, and explain our constant hesitation between too little and too much.

What we have seen so far is briefly this. We have no direct experience of reality as my self with its states. If we are to arrive at that conclusion, we must do so indirectly and through a process of inference. Experience gives the “this-mine.” It gives neither the “mine” as an adjective of the “this,” nor the “this” as dependent on and belonging to the “mine.” Even if it did so for the moment, that would still not be enough as a support for Solipsism. But experience supplies the character required, not even as existing within one presentation, and, if not thus, then much less so as existing beyond. And the position, in which we now stand, may be stated as follows. If Solipsism is to be proved, it must transcend direct experience. Let us then ask, (a) first, if transcendence of this kind is possible, and, (b) next, if it is able to give assistance to Solipsism. The conclusion, which we shall reach, may be stated at once. It is both possible and necessary to transcend what is given. But this same transcendence at once carries us into the universe at large. Our private self is not a resting-place which logic can justify.

II. (a) We are to enquire, first, if it is possible
to remain within the limits of direct experience. Now it would not be easy to point out what is given to us immediately. It would be hard to show what is not imported into the "this," or, at least, modified there by transcendence. To fix with regard to the past the precise limit of presentation, might at times be very difficult. And to discount within the present the result of ideal processes would, at least often, be impossible. But I do not desire to base any objection on this ground. I am content here to admit the distinction between direct and indirect experience. And the question is whether reality can go beyond the former? Has a man a right to say that something exists, beside that which at this moment he actually feels? And is it possible, on the other side, to identify reality with the immediate present?

This identification, we have seen, is impossible; and the attempt to remain within the boundary of the mere "this" is hopeless. The self-discrepancy of the content, and its continuity with a "what" beyond its own limits, at once settle the question. We need not fall back for conviction upon the hard shock of change. The whole movement of the mind implies disengagement from the mere "this"; and to assert the content of the latter as reality at once involves us in contradictions. But it would not be profitable further to dwell on this point. To remain within the presented is neither defensible nor possible. We are compelled alike by necessity and by logic to transcend it (Chapters xv. and xix).

But, before proceeding to ask whither this transcendence must take us, I will deal with a question we noticed before (Chapter xix.). An objection may be based on the uniqueness of the felt; and it may be urged that the reality, which appears in the "this-mine" is unique and exclusive. Whatever, therefore, its predicates may seem to demand, it is not possible
to extend the boundaries of the subject. That will, in short, stick hopelessly for ever within the confines of the presented. Let us examine this contention.

It will be more convenient, in the first place, to dismiss the word "unique." For that seems (as we saw) to introduce the idea of existence in a series, together with a negative relation towards other elements. And, if such a relation is placed within the essence of the "this," then the "this" has become part of a larger unity.

The objection may be stated better thus.\(^1\) "All reality must fall within the limits of the given. For, however much the content may desire to go beyond, yet, when you come to make that content a predicate of the real, you are forced back to the 'this-mine,' or the 'now-felt,' for your subject. Reality appears to lie solely in what is presented, and seems not discoverable elsewhere. But the presented, on the other hand, must be the felt 'this.' And other cases of 'this,' if you mean to take them as real, seem also to fall within the 'now-mine.' If they are not indirect predicates of that, and so extend it adjectivally, then they directly will fall within its *datum.* But, if so, they themselves become distinctions and features there. Hence we have the 'this-mine' as before, but with an increase of special internal particulars. And so we still remain within the confines of one presentation, and to have two at once seems impossible."

Now in answer, I admit that, to find reality, we must betake ourselves to feeling. It is the real, which there appears, which is the subject of all predicates. And to make our way to another fact, quite outside of and away from the "this" which is "mine," seems out of the question. But, while admitting so much, I reject the further consequence. I deny that the felt reality is shut up and confined

\(^1\) On this whole matter compare my *Principles of Logic,* Chapter ii.
within my feeling. For the latter may, by addition, be extended beyond its own proper limits. It may remain positively itself, and yet be absorbed in what is larger. Just as in change we have a "now," which contains also a "then"; just as, again, in what is mine there may be diverse features, so, from the opposite side, it may be with my direct experience. There is no opposition between that and a wider whole of presentation. The "mine" does not exclude inclusion in a fuller totality. There may be a further experience immediate and direct, something that is my private feeling, and also much more. Now the Reality, to which all content in the end must belong, is, we have seen, a direct all-embracing experience. This Reality is present in, and is my feeling; and hence, to that extent, what I feel is the all-inclusive universe. But, when I go on to deny that this universe is more, I turn truth into error. There is a "more" of feeling, the extension of that which is "now mine"; and this whole is both the assertion and negation of my "this." That extension maintains it together with additions, which merge and override it as exclusive. My "mine" becomes a feature in the great "mine," which includes all "mines."

Now, if within the "this" there were found anything which could stand out against absorption—anything which could refuse to be so lost by such support and maintenance—an objection might be tenable. But we saw, in our nineteenth chapter, that a character of this kind does not exist. My incapacity to extend the boundary of my "this," my inability to gain an immediate experience of that in which it is subordinated and reduced—is my mere imperfection. Because I cannot spread out my window until all is transparent, and all windows disappear, this does not justify me in insisting on my window-frame's rigidity. For that frame has, as such, no existence in reality, but only in our impo-
tence (Chapter xix.). I am aware of the miserable inaccuracy of the metaphor, and of the thoughtless objection which it may call up; but I will still put the matter so. The one Reality is what comes directly to my feeling through this window of a moment; and this, also and again, is the only Reality. But we must not turn the first "is" into "is nothing at all but," and the second "is" into "is all of." There is no objection against the disappearance of limited transparencies in an all-embracing clearness. We are not compelled merely, but we are justified, when we follow the irresistible lead of our content.

(b) We have seen, so far, that experience, if you take that as direct, does not testify to the sole reality of my self. Direct experience would be confined to a "this," which is not even pre-eminently a "mine," and still less is the same as what we mean by a "self." And, in the second place, we perceived that reality extends beyond such experience. And here, once more, Solipsism may suppose that it finds its opportunity. It may urge that the reality, which goes beyond the moment, stops short at the self. The process of transcendence, it may admit, conducts us to a "me" which embraces all immediate experiences. But, Solipsism may argue, this process can not take us on further. By this road, it will object, there is no way to a plurality of selves, or to any reality beyond my private personality. We shall, however, find that this contention is both dogmatic and absurd. For, if you have a right to believe in a self beyond the present, you have the same right to maintain also the existence of other selves.

I will not enquire how, precisely, we come by the idea of other animates' existence. Metaphysics has no direct interest in the origin of ideas, and its business is solely to examine their claim to be true.
But, if I am asked to justify my belief that other
selves, beside my own, are in the world, the answer
must be this. I arrive at other souls by means of
other bodies, and the argument starts from the
ground of my own body. My own body is one of
the groups which are formed in my experience.
And it is connected, immediately and specially, with
pleasure and pain, and again with sensations and
volitions, as no other group can be. But, since
there are other groups like my body, these must
also be qualified by similar attendants. With my
feelings and my volitions these groups cannot
respond. For they are usually irrelevant and
indifferent, and often even hostile; and they enter
into collision with one another and with my body.
Therefore these foreign bodies have, each of them,
a foreign self of its own. This is briefly the argu-
ment, and it seems to me to be practically valid. It
falls short, indeed, of demonstration in the following
way. The identity in the bodies is, in the first place,
not exact, but in various degrees falls short of com-
pleteness. And further, even so far as the identity
is perfect, its consequence might be modified by
additional conditions. And hence the other soul
might so materially differ from my own, that I should
hesitate, perhaps, to give it the name of soul. But
still the argument, though not strict proof, seems
sufficiently good.

It is by the same kind of argument that we reach
our own past and future. And here Solipsism, in
objecting to the existence of other selves, is unawares
attempting to commit suicide. For my past self,
also, is arrived at only by a process of inference, and
by a process which also itself is fallible.

1 Compare Mind, XII. 370 foll. I do not think it is necessary
for present purposes to elaborate this argument.
2 This step rests entirely on the principle of the Identity of
Indiscernibles.
3 Cf. Chapter xxvii.
We are so accustomed each to consider his past self as his own, that it is worth while to reflect how very largely it may be foreign. My own past is, in the first place, incompatible with my own present, quite as much as my present can be with another man's. Their difference in time could not permit them both to be wholly the same, even if their two characters are taken as otherwise identical. But this agreement in character is at least not always found. And my past not only may differ so as to be almost indifferent, but I may regard it even with a feeling of hostility and hatred. It may be mine mainly in the sense of a persisting incumbrance, a compulsory appendage, joined in continuity and fastened by an inference. And that inference, not being abstract, falls short of demonstration.

My past of yesterday is constructed by a redintegration from the present. Let us call the present $X (B-C)$, with an ideal association $x (a-b)$. The reproduction of this association, and its synthesis with the present, so as to form $X (a-B-C)$, is what we call memory. And the justification of the process consists in the identity of $x$ with $X$. But it is a serious step not simply to qualify my present self, but actually to set up another self at the distance of an interval. I so insist on the identity that I ride upon it to a difference, just as, before, the identity of our bodies carried me to the soul of a different man. And it is obvious, once more here, that the identity is incomplete. The association does not contain all that now qualifies $X$; $x$ is different from $X$, and $b$ is different from $B$. And again, the passage, through this defective identity to another concrete fact, may to some extent be vitiated by unknown interfering conditions. Hence I cannot prove that the yester-

---

1 For the sake of simplicity I have omitted the process of correcting memory. This is of course effected by the attempt to get a coherent view of the past, and by the rejection of everything which cannot be included.
day's self, which I construct, did, as such, have an actual existence in the past. The concrete conditions, into which my ideal construction must be launched, may alter its character. They may, in fact, unite with it so that, if I knew this unknown fact, I should no longer care to call it my self. Thus my past self, assuredly, is not demonstrated. We can but say of it that, like other selves, it is practically certain. And in each case the result, and our way to it, is in principle the same. Both other selves and my own self are intellectual constructions, each as sure as we can expect special facts to be. But, if any one stands out for demonstration, then neither is demonstrated. And, if this demand is pressed, you must remain with a feeling about which you can say nothing, and which is, emphatically, not the self of any one at all. On the other hand, if you are willing to accept a result which is not strictly proved, both results must be accepted. For the process, which conducts you to other selves, is not weaker sensibly, if at all, than the construction by which your own self is gained. On either alternative the conclusion of Solipsism is ruined.

And if memory, or some other faculty, is appealed to, and is invoked to secure the pre-eminent reality of my self, I must decline to be persuaded. For I am convinced that such convenient wonders do not exist, and that no one has any sufficient excuse for accepting them. Memory is plainly a construction from the ground of the present. It is throughout inferential, and is certainly fallible; and its gross mistakes as to past personal existence should be very well known (pp. 84, 213). I prefer, in passing, to notice that confusion as to the present limits of self, which is so familiar a feature in hypnotic experiments. The assumption of a suggested foreign personality is, I think, strong evidence for the secondary nature of our own. Both, in short, are

A. R.
results of manufacture; and to account otherwise for the facts seems clearly impossible.¹

We have seen, so far, that direct experience is no foundation for Solipsism. We have seen further that, if at all we may transcend that experience, we are no nearer Solipsism. For we can go to foreign selves by a process no worse than the construction which establishes our own self. And, before passing on, I will call attention to a minor point. Even if I had secured a right to the possession of my past self, and no right to the acceptance of other selves as real, yet, even with this, Solipsism is not grounded. It would not follow from this that the not-myself is nothing, and that all the world is merely a state of my self. The only consequence, so far, would be that the not-myself must be inanimate. But between that result and Solipsism is an impassable gulf. You can not, starting from the given, construct a self which will swallow up and own every element from which it is distinguished.

I will briefly touch on another source of misunderstanding. It is the old mistake in a form which is slightly different. All I know, I may be told, is what I experience, and I can experience nothing beyond my own states. And it is argued that hence my own self is the one knowable reality. But the truth in this objection, once more, has been pressed into falsehood. It is true that all I experience is my state—so far as I experience it. Even the Absolute, as my reality, is my state of mind. But this hardly shows that my experience possesses no other aspect. It hardly proves that what is my state of mind is no more, and must be taken as real barely from that one point of view.

¹ It is of course the intervention of the foreign body which prevents my usually confusing foreign selves with my own. Another's body is, in the first place, not immediately connected throughout with my pleasure and pain. And, in the second place, its states are often positively incompatible with mine.
The Reality certainly must appear within my psychical existence; but it is quite another thing to limit its whole nature to that field.

My thought, feeling, and will, are, of course, all phenomena; they all are events which happen. From time to time, as they happen, they exist in the felt "this," and they are elements within its chance congeries. And they can be taken, further, as states of that self-thing which I construct by an inference. But, if you look at them merely so, then, unconsciously or consciously, you mutilate their character. You use a point of view which is necessary, but still is partial and one-sided. And we shall see more clearly, hereafter, the nature of this view (Chapters xxiii. and xxvii.). I will here simply state that the import and content of these processes does not consist in their appearance in the psychical series. In thought the important feature is not our mental state, as such; and the same truth, if less palpable, is as certain with volition. My will is mine, but, none the less, it is also much more. The content of the idea willed (to put the matter only on that ground) may be something beyond me; and, since this content is effective, the activity of the process cannot simply be my state. But I will not try to anticipate a point which will engage us later on. It is sufficient here to lay down generally, that, if experience is mine, that is no argument for what I experience being nothing but my state. And this whole objection rests entirely on false preconceptions. My private self is first set up, as a substantive which is real independent of the Whole; and then its palpable community with the universe, which in experience is forced on us, is degraded into the adjective of our miserable abstraction. But, when these preconceptions are exposed, Solipsism disappears.

Considered as the apotheosis of an abstraction,
Solipsism is quite false. But from its errors we may collect aspects of truth, to which we sometimes are blind. And, in the first place, though my experience is not the whole world, yet that world appears in my experience, and, so far as it exists there, it is my state of mind. That the real Absolute, or God himself, is also my state, is a truth often forgotten and to which later we shall return. And there is a second truth to which Solipsism has blindly borne witness. My way of contact with Reality is through a limited aperture. For I cannot get at it directly except through the felt “this,” and our immediate interchange and transfluence takes place, through one small opening. Everything beyond, though not less real, is an expansion of the common essence which we feel burningly in this one focus. And so, in the end, to know the Universe, we must fall back upon our personal experience and sensation.

But beside these two truths there is yet another truth worth noticing. My self is certainly not the Absolute, but, without it, the Absolute would not be itself. You cannot anywhere abstract wholly from my personal feelings; you cannot say that, apart even from the meanest of these, anything else in the universe would be what it is. And in asserting this relation, this essential connection, of all reality with my self, Solipsism has emphasized what should not be forgotten. But the consequences, which properly follow from this truth, will be discussed hereafter.¹

¹ I shall deal in Chapter xxvii. with the question whether, in refuting Solipsism, we have removed any ground for our conclusion that the Absolute is experience.
CHAPTER XXII.

NATURE.

The word Nature has of course more meanings than one. I am going to use it here in the sense of the bare physical world, that region which forms the object of purely physical science, and appears to fall outside of all mind. Abstract from everything psychical, and then the remainder of existence will be Nature. It will be mere body or the extended, so far as that is not psychical, together with the properties immediately connected with or following from this extension. And we sometimes forget that this world, in the mental history of each of us, once had no existence. Whatever view we take with regard to the psychological origin of extension, the result will be the same. There was a time when the separation of the outer world, as a thing real apart from our feeling, had not even been begun. The physical world, whether it exists independently or not, is, for each of us, an abstraction from the entire reality. And the development of this reality, and of the division which we make in it, requires naturally some time. But I do not propose to discuss the subject further here.¹

Then there comes a period when we all gain the idea of mere body. I do not mean that we always, or even habitually, regard the outer world as standing and persisting in divorce from all feeling. But, still, at least for certain purposes, we get the notion of such a world, consisting both of primary and also

¹ For some further remarks see Mind, No. 47.
of secondary qualities. This world strikes us as not dependent on the inner life of any one. We view it as standing there, the same for every soul with which it comes into relation. Our bodies with their organs are taken as the instruments and media, which should convey it as it is, and as it exists apart from them. And we find no difficulty in the idea of a bodily reality remaining still and holding firm when every self has been removed. Such a supposition to the average man appears obviously possible, however much, for other reasons, he might decline to entertain it. And the assurance that his supposition is meaningless nonsense he rejects as contrary to what he calls common sense.

And then, to the person who reflects, comes in the old series of doubts and objections, and the useless attempts at solution or compromise. For Nature to the common man is not the Nature of the physicist; and the physicist himself, outside his science, still habitually views the world as what he must believe it cannot be. But there should be no need to recall the discussion of our First Book with regard to secondary and primary qualities. We endeavoured to show there that it is difficult to take both on a level, and impossible to make reality consist of one class in separation from the other. And the unfortunate upholder of a mere physical nature escapes only by blindness from hopeless bewilderment. He is forced to the conclusion that all I know is an affection of my organism, and then my organism itself turns out to be nothing else but such an affection. There is in short no physical thing but that which is a mere state of a physical thing, and perhaps in the end even (it might be contended) a mere state of itself. It will be instructive to consider Nature from this point of view.

We may here use the form of what has been called an Antinomy. 

(a) Nature is only for my body; but, on the other hand, 

(b) My body is only for Nature.
(a) I need say no more on the thesis that the outer world is known only as a state of my organism. Its proper consequence (according to the view generally received) appears to be that everything else is a state of my brain. For that (apparently) is all which can possibly be experienced. Into the further refinements, which would arise from the question of cerebral localization, I do not think it necessary to enter.

(b) And yet most emphatically, as we have seen at the beginning of this work, my organism is nothing but appearance to a body. It itself is only the bare state of a natural object. For my organism, like all else, is but what is experienced, and I can only experience my organism in relation to its own organs. Hence the whole body is a mere state of these; and they are states of one another in indefinite regress.

How can we deny this? If we appeal to an immediate experience, which presents me with my body as a something extended and solid, we are taking refuge in a world of exploded illusions. No such peculiar intuition can bear the light of a serious psychology. The internal feelings, which I experience, certainly give nothing of the sort; and again, even if they did, yet for natural science they are no direct reality, but themselves the states of a material nervous system. And to fall back on a supposed wholesale revelation of Resistance would be surely to seek aid from that which cannot help. For the revelation in the first place (as we have already perceived in Chapter x.), is a fiction. And, in the second place, Resistance could not present us with a body independently real. It could supply only the relation of one thing to another, where neither thing, as what resists, is a separate body, either apart from, or again in relation to, the other. Resistance could not conceivably tell us what anything is in itself. It gives us one thing as qualified
by the state of another thing, each within that known relation being only for the other, and, apart from it, being unknown and, so far, a nonentity.

And that is the general conclusion with regard to Nature to which we are driven. The physical world is the relation between physical things. And the relation, on the one side, presupposes them as physical, while apart from it, on the other side, they certainly are not so. Nature is the phenomenal relation of the unknown to the unknown; and the terms cannot, because unknown, even be said to be related, since they cannot themselves be said to be anything at all. Let us develope this further.

That the outer world is only for my organs appears inevitable. But what is an organ except so far as it is known? And how can it be known but as itself the state of an organ? If then you are asked to find an organ which is a physical object, you can no more find it than a body which itself is a body. Each is a state of something else, which is never more than a state—and the something escapes us. The same consequence, again, is palpable if we take refuge in the brain. If the world is my brain-state, then what is my own brain? That is nothing but the state of some brain, I need not proceed to ask whose. It is, in any case, not real as a physical thing, unless you reduce it to the adjective of a physical thing. And this illusive quest goes on for ever. It can never lead you to what is more than either an adjective of, or a relation between,—what you cannot find.

There is no escaping from this circle. Let us take the instance of a double perception of touch, a and b. Then a is only a state of the organ C, and b is only a state of the organ D. And if you wish to say that either C or D is itself real as a body, you can only do so on the witness of another organ E or F. You

1 For me my own brain in the end must be a state of my own brain, p. 263.
can in no case arrive at a something material existing as a substantive; you are compelled to wander without end from one adjective to another adjective. And in double perception the twofold evidence does not show that each side is body. It leads to the conclusion that neither side is more than a dependant, on we do not know what.

And if we consult common experience, we gain no support for one side of our antinomy. It is clear that, for the existence of our organism, we find there the same evidence as for the existence of outer objects. We have a witness which, with our body, gives us the environment as equally real. For we never, under any circumstances, are without some external sensation. If you receive, in the ordinary sense, the testimony of our organs, then, if the outer world is not real, our organs are not real. You have both sides given as on a level, or you have neither side at all. And to say that one side is the substantive, to which the other belongs, as an appendage or appurtenance, seems quite against reason. We are, in brief, confirmed in the conclusion we had reached. Both Nature and my body exist necessarily with and for one another. And both, on examination, turn out to be nothing apart from their relation. We find in each no essence which is not infected by appearance to the other.

And with this we are brought to an unavoidable result. The physical world is an appearance; it is phenomenal throughout. It is the relation of two unknowns, which, because they are unknown, we cannot have any right to regard as really two, or as related at all. It is an imperfect way of apprehension, which gives us qualities and relations, each the condition of and yet presupposing the other.

1 This result (the reader must remember) rests, not merely on the above, but on the discussions of our First Book. The titles of some chapters there should be a sufficient reference.
And we have no means of knowing how this confusion and perplexity is resolved in the Absolute. The material world is an incorrect, a one-sided, and self-contradictory appearance of the Real. It is the reaction of two unknown things, things, which, to be related, must each be something by itself, and yet, apart from their relation, are nothing at all. In other words it is a diversity which, as we regard it, is not real, but which somehow, in all its fulness, enters into and perfects the life of the Universe. But, as to the manner in which it is included, we are unable to say anything.

But is this circular connexion, this baseless inter-relation between the organism and Nature, a mistake to be set aside? Most emphatically not so, for it seems a vital scheme, and a necessary way of happening among our appearances. It is an arrangement among phenomena by which the extended only comes to us in relation with another extended which we call an organism. You cannot have certain qualities, of touch, or sight, or hearing, unless there is with them a certain connection of other qualities. Nature has phenomenal reality as a grouping and as laws of sequence and co-existence, holding good within a certain section of that which appears to us. But, if you attempt to make it more, you will re-enter those mazes from which we found no exit. You are led to take the physical world as a mere adjective of my body, and you find that my body, on the other hand, is not one whit more substantival. It is itself for ever the state of something further and beyond. And, as we perceived in our First Book, you can neither take the qualities, that are called primary, as real without the secondary, nor again the latter as existing apart from my feeling. These are all distinctions which, as we saw, are reduced, and which come together in the one great totality of absolute experience. They are lost there for our vision, but survive most
assuredly in that which absorbs them. Nature is but one part of the feeling whole, which we have separated by our abstraction, and enlarged by theoretical necessity and contrivance. And then we set up this fragment as self-existing; and what is sometimes called "science" goes out of its way to make a gross mistake. It takes an intellectual construction of the conditions of mere appearance for independent reality. And it would thrust this fiction on us as the one thing which has solid being. But thus it turns into sheer error a relative truth. It discredits that which, as a working point of view, is fully justified by success, and stands high above criticism.

We have seen, so far, that mere Nature is not real. Nature is but an appearance within the reality; it is a partial and imperfect manifestation of the Absolute. The physical world is an abstraction, which, for certain purposes is properly considered by itself, but which, if taken as standing in its own right, becomes at once self-contradictory. We must now develope this general view in some part of its detail.

But, before proceeding, I will deal with a point of some interest. We, so far, have treated the physical world as extended, and a doubt may be raised whether such an assumption can be justified. Extension, I may be told, is not essential to Nature; for the extended need not always be physical, nor again the physical always extended. And it is better at once to attempt to get clear on this point. It is, in the first place, quite true that not all of the extended forms part of Nature. For I may think of, and may imagine, things extended at my pleasure, and it is impossible to suppose that all these psychical facts take a place within our physical system. Yet, upon the other hand, I do not see how we can deny their extension. That, which for my mind is
extended, must be so as a fact, whether it does, or does not, belong to what we call Nature. Take, for example, some common illusion of sense. In that we actually may have a perception of extension, and to call this false does not show that it is not somehow spatial. But, if so, Nature and extension will not coincide. Hence we are forced to seek the distinctive essence of Nature elsewhere, and in some non-spatial character.

In its bare principle I am able to accept this conclusion. The essence of Nature is to appear as a region standing outside the psychical, and as (in some part) suffering and causing change independent of that. Or, at the very least, Nature must not be always directly dependent on soul. Nature presupposes the distinction of the not-self from the self. It is that part of the world which is not inseparably one thing in experience with those internal groups which feel pleasure and pain. It is the attendant medium by which selves are made manifest to one another. But it shows an existence and laws not belonging to these selves; and, to some extent at least, it appears indifferent to their feelings, and thoughts, and volitions. It is this independence which would seem to be the distinctive mark of Nature.

And, if so, it may be urged that Nature is perhaps not extended, and I think we must admit that such a Nature is possible. We may imagine groups of qualities, for example sounds or smells, arranged in such a way as to appear independent of the psychical. These qualities might seem to go their own ways without any, or much, regard to our ideas or likings; and they might maintain such an order as to form a stable and permanent not-self. These groups, again, might serve as the means of communication between souls, and, in short, might answer every known purpose for which Nature exists. Even as things are, when these secondary qualities are localized in outer space, we regard them as physical;
and there is a doubt, therefore, whether any such localization is necessary. And, for myself, I am unable to perceive that it is so. Certainly, if I try to imagine an unextended world of this kind, I admit that, against my will, I give it a spatial character. But, so far as I see, this may arise from mere infirmity; and the idea of an unextended Nature seems, for my knowledge at least, not self-contradictory.

But, having gone as far as this, I am unable to go farther. A Nature without extension I admit to be possible, but I can discover no good reason for taking it as actual. For the physical world, which we encounter, is certainly spatial; and we have no interest in trying to seek out any other. If Nature on our view were reality, the case would be altered; and we should then be forced to entertain every doubt about its essence. But for us Nature is appearance, inconsistent and untrue; and hence the supposition of another Nature, free from extension, could furnish no help. This supposition does not remove the contradictions from actual extension, which in any case is still a fact. And, again, even within itself, the supposition cannot be made consistent with itself. We may, therefore, pass on without troubling ourselves with such a mere possibility. We cannot conclude that all Nature essentially must have extension. But, since at any rate our physical world is extended, and since the hypothesis of another kind of Nature has no interest, that idea may be dismissed. I shall henceforth take Nature as appearing always in the form of space.  

Let us return from this digression. We are to

---

1 I may perhaps add that "resistance" is no sufficient answer to the question "What is Nature?" A persisting idea may in the fullest sense "resist"; but can we find in that the essence of what we mean by the physical world? The claims of "resistance" have, however, been disposed of already, pp. 116, 225, 263.
consider Nature as possessed of extension, and we have seen that mere Nature has no reality. We may now proceed to a series of subordinate questions, and the first of these is about the world which is called inorganic. Is there in fact such a thing as inorganic Nature? Now, if by this we meant a region or division of existence, not subserving and entering into the one experience of the Whole, the question already would have been settled. There cannot exist an arrangement which fails to perfect, and to minister directly to, the feeling of the Absolute. Nor again, since in the Absolute all comes together, could there be anything inorganic in the sense of standing apart from some essential relation to finite organisms. Any such mutilations as these have long ago been condemned, and it is in another sense that we must inquire about the inorganic.

By an organism we are to understand a more or less permanent arrangement of qualities and relations, such as at once falls outside of, and yet immediately subserves, a distinct unity of feeling. We are to mean a phenomenal group with which a felt particularity is connected in a way to be discussed in the next chapter. At least this is the sense in which, however incorrectly, I am about to use the word. The question, therefore, here will be whether there are elements in Nature, which fail to make a part of some such finite arrangement. The inquiry is intelligible, but for metaphysics it seems to have no importance.

The question in the first place, I think, cannot be answered. For, if we consider it in the abstract, I find no good ground for either affirmation or denial. I know no reason why in the Absolute there should not be qualities, which fail to be connected, as a body, with some finite soul. And, upon the other hand, I see no special cause for supposing that these exist. And when, leaving the abstract point of view, we regard this problem from the side of con-
crete facts, then, so far as I perceive, we are able to make no advance. For as to that which can, and that which cannot, play the part of an organism, we know very little. A sameness greater or less with our own bodies is the basis from which we conclude to other bodies and souls. And what this inference loses in exactitude (Chapter xxi.), it gains on the other hand in extent, by acquiring a greater range of application. And it would seem almost impossible, from this ground, to produce a satisfactory negative result. A certain likeness of outward form, and again some amount of similarity in action, are what we stand on when we argue to psychical life. But our failure, on the other side, to discover these symptoms is no sufficient warrant for positive denial.\footnote{1 It is natural in this connection to refer to Fechner's vigorous advocacy.} There may surely beyond our knowledge be strange arrangements of qualities, which serve as the condition of unknown personal unities. Given a certain degree of difference in the outward form, and a certain divergence in the way of manifestation, and we should fail at once to perceive the presence of an organism. But would it, therefore, always not exist? Or can we assume, because we have found out the nature of some organisms, that we have exhausted that of all? Have we an ascertained essence, outside of which no variation is possible? Any such contention would seem to be indefensible. Every fragment of visible Nature might, so far as is known, serve as part in some organism not like our bodies. And, if we consider further how much of Nature may be hid from our view, we shall surely be still less inclined to dogmatism. For that which we see may be combined in an organic unity with the invisible; and, again, one and the same element might have a position and function in any number of organisms. But there is no advantage in trying to fill the unknown with our fancies. It should be
clear, when we reflect, that we are in no condition on this point to fix a limit to the possible.\footnote{1} Arrangements, apparently quite different from our own, and expressing themselves in what seems a wholly unlike way, might be directly connected with finite centres of feeling. And our result here must be this, that, except in relation to our ignorance, we cannot call the least portion of Nature inorganic. For some practical purposes, of course, the case is radically altered. We of course there have a perfect right to act upon ignorance. We not only may, but even must, often treat the unseen as non-existent. But in metaphysics such an attitude cannot be justified.\footnote{2} We, on one side, have positive knowledge that some parts of Nature are organisms; but whether, upon the other side, anything inorganic exists or not, we have no means of judging. Hence to give an answer to our question is impossible.

But this inability seems a matter of no importance. For finite organisms, as we have seen, are but phenomenal appearance, and both their division and their unity is transcended in the Absolute. And assuredly the inorganic, if it exists, will be still more unreal. It will, in any case, not merely be bound in relation with organisms, but will, together with them, be included in a single and all-absorbing experience. It will become a feature and an element in that Whole where no diversity is lost, but where the oneness is something much more than organic. And with this I will pass on to a further inquiry.

We have seen that beyond experience nothing can exist, and hence no part of Nature can fall outside of the Absolute's perfection. But the question as to the necessity of experience may still be raised

\footnote{1} If we consider further the possibility of diverse material systems, and of the compenetrability of bodies within each system, we shall be even less disposed to dogmatize. See below, pp. 287, 289.

\footnote{2} On the main principle see Chapter xxvii.
in a modified sense. Is there any Nature not experienced by a finite subject? Can we suppose in the Absolute a margin of physical qualities, which, so to speak, do not pass through some finite perceiver? Of course, if this is so, we cannot perceive them. But the question is whether, notwithstanding, we may, or even must, suppose that such a margin exists. (a) Is a physical fact, which is not for some finite sentient being, a thing which is possible? And (b), in the next place, have we sufficient ground to take it also as real?

(a) In defence, first, of its possibility there is something to be said. "Admitted," we shall be told, "that relation to a finite soul is the condition under which Nature appears to us, it does not follow that this condition is indispensable. To assert that those very qualities, which we meet under certain conditions, can exist apart from them, is perhaps going too far. But, on the other side, some qualities of the sort we call sensible might not require (so to speak) to be developed on or filtered through a particular soul. These qualities in the end, like all the rest, would certainly, as such, be absorbed in the Absolute; but they (so to speak) might find their way to this end by themselves, and might not require the mediation of a finite sentence." But this defence, it seems to me, is insufficient. We can think, in a manner, of sensible quality apart from a soul, but the doubt is whether such a manner is really legitimate. The question is, when we have abstracted from finite centres of feeling, whether we have not removed all meaning from sensible quality. And again, if we admit that in the Absolute there may be matter not contained in finite experience, can we go on to make this matter a part of Nature, and call it physical? These two questions appear to be vitally distinct.

A margin of experience, not the experience of any finite centre, we shall find (Chapter xxvii.) can-
not be called impossible. But it seems another thing to place such matter in Nature. For Nature is constituted and upheld by a division in experience. It is, in its essence, a product of distinction and opposition. And to take this product as existing outside finite centres seems indefensible. The Nature that falls outside, we must insist, may perhaps not be nothing; but it is not Nature. If it is fact, it is fact which we must not call physical.

But this whole enquiry, on the other hand, seems unimportant and almost idle. For, though unperceived by finite souls, all Nature would enter into one experience with the contents of these souls. And hence the want of apprehension by, and passage through, a particular focus would lose in the end its significance. Thus, even if we admit fact, not included in finite centres of sentience, our view of the Absolute, after all, will not be altered. But such fact, we have seen, could not be properly physical.

(6) A part of Nature, not apprehended by finite mind, we have found in some sense is barely possible. But we may be told now, on the other hand, that it is necessary to assume it. There are such difficulties in the way of any other conclusion that we may seem to have no choice. Nature is too wide, we may hear, to be taken in by any number of sentient beings. And again Nature is in part not perceptible at all. My own brain, while I am alive, is an obvious instance of this. And we may think further of the objects known only by the microscope, and of the bodies, intangible and invisible, assured to us by science. And the mountains, that endure always, must be more than the sensations of short-lived mortals, and indeed were there in the time before organic life was developed. In the face of these objections, it may be said, we are unable to persist. The necessity of finite souls for the existence of Nature cannot possibly be maintained. And
hence a physical world, not apprehended by these perceiving centres, must somehow be postulated.

The objections at first may seem weighty, but I will endeavour to show that they cannot stand criticism. And I will begin by laying down a necessary distinction. The physical world exists, of course, independent of me, and does not depend on the accident of my sensations. A mountain is, whether I happen to perceive it or not. This truth is certain; but, on the other hand, its meaning is ambiguous, and it may be taken in two very different senses. We may call these senses, if we please, categorical and hypothetical. You may either assert that the mountain always actually is, as it is when it is perceived. Or you may mean only that it is always something apart from sensible perception; and that whenever it is perceived, it then develops its familiar character. And a confusion between the mountain, as it is in itself, and as it becomes for an observer, is perhaps our most usual state of mind. But such an obscurity would be fatal to the present enquiry.

(i.) I will take the objections, first, as applying to what we have called the categorical sense. Nature must be in itself, as we perceive it to be; and, if so, Nature must fall partly beyond finite minds—this is, so far, the argument urged against our view. But this argument surely would be based upon our mere ignorance. For we have seen that organisms unlike our own, arrangements pervading and absorbing the whole extent of Nature, may very well exist. And as to the modes of perception which are possible with these organisms, we can lay down no limit. But if so, there is no reason why all Nature should not be always in relation to finite sentience. Every part of it may be now actually, for some other mind, precisely what it would be for us, if we happened to perceive it. And objects invisible like my brain, or found only by the microscope, need not cause us to
hesitate. For we cannot deny that there may be some faculty of sense to which at all times they are obvious. And the mountains that endure may, for all that we know, have been visible always. They may have been perceived through their past as we perceive them to-day. If we can set no bounds to the existence and the powers of sentient beings, the objection, so far, has been based on a false assumption of knowledge.¹

(ii.) But this line of reply, perhaps, may be carried too far. It cannot be refuted, and yet we feel that it tends to become extravagant. It may be possible that Nature throughout is perceived always, and thus always is, as we should perceive it; but we need not rest our whole weight on this assumption. Our conclusion will be borne out by something less. For beyond the things perceived by sense there extends the world of thought. Nature will not merely be the region that is presented and also thought of, but it will, in addition, include matter which is only thought of. Nature will hence be limited solely by the range of our intellects. It will be the physical universe apprehended in any way whatever by finite souls.

Outside of this boundary there is no Nature. We may employ the idea of a pre-organic time, or of a physical world from which all sentience has disappeared. But, with the knowledge that we possess, we cannot, even in a relative sense, take this result as universal. It could hold only with respect to those organisms which we know, and, if carried further, it obviously becomes invalid. And again, such a truth, where it is true, can be merely phenomenal. For, in any case, there is no history or progress in the Absolute (Chapter xxvi). A Nature without sentience is, in short, a mere construction for science,

¹ "'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
Of all beyond itself."
and it possesses a very partial reality. Nor are the imperceptibles of physics in any better case. Apart from the plain contradictions which prove them to be barely phenomenal, their nature clearly exists but in relation to thought. For, not being perceived by any finite, they are not, as such, perceived at all; and what reality they possess is not sensible, but merely abstract.

Our conclusion then, so far, will be this. Nature may extend beyond the region actually perceived by the finite, but certainly not beyond the limits of finite thought. In the Absolute possibly there is a margin not contained in finite experiences (Chapter xxvii.), but this possible margin cannot properly be taken as physical. For, included in Nature, it would be qualified by a relation to finite mind. But the existence of Nature, as mere thought, at once leads to a difficulty. For a physical world, to be real, must clearly be sensible. And to exist otherwise than for sense is but to exist hypothetically. If so, Nature, at least in part, is not actually Nature, but merely is what becomes so under certain conditions. It seems another fact, a something else, which indeed we think of, but which, merely in itself and merely as we think of it, is not physical reality. Thus, on our view, Nature to this extent seems not to be fact; and we shall have been driven, in the end, to deny part of its physical existence.

This conclusion urged against us, I admit, is in one sense inevitable. The Nature that is thought of, and that we assume not to be perceived by any mind, is, in the strict sense, not Nature. Yet such a result, rightly interpreted, need cause us no trouble. We shall understand it better when we have discussed the meaning of conditional existence (Chapter xxiv.); I will however attempt to deal

---

1 See more below, p. 283.
2 That is, of course, so long as Nature is confined to actual physical fact.
here with the present difficulty. And what that comes to is briefly this. Nature on the one side must be actual, and if so, must be sensible; but, upon the other hand, it seems in part to be merely intelligible. This is the problem, and the solution is that what for us is intelligible only, is more for the Absolute. There somehow, we do not know how, what we think is perceived. Everything there is merged and re-absorbed in an experience intuitive, at once and in itself, of both ideas and facts.

What we merely think is not real, because in thinking there is a division of the "what" from the "that." But, none the less, every thought gives us actual content; and the presence of that content is fact, quite as hard as any possible perception. And so the Nature, that is thought of, to that extent does exist, and does possess a certain amount of positive character. Hence in the Absolute, where all content is re-blended with existence, the Nature thought of will gain once more an intuitional form. It will come together with itself and with other sides of the Universe, and will make its special contribution to the riches of the Whole. It is not as we think of it, it is not as it becomes when in our experience thought is succeeded by perception. It is something which, only under certain conditions, turns to physical fact revealed to our senses. But because in the Absolute it is an element of reality, though not known, as there experienced, to any finite mind,—because, again, we rightly judge it to be physical fact, if it became perceived by sense—therefore already it is fact, hypothetical but still independent. Nature in this sense is not dependent on the fancies of the individual, and yet it has no content but what is relative to particular minds. We may assume that without any addition there is enough matter in these centres to furnish a harmonious experience in the Absolute. There is no element in that unknown unity, which cannot be supplied by the fragmentary
life of its members. Outside of finite experience there is neither a natural world nor any other world at all.\(^1\)

But it may be objected that we have now been brought into collision with common sense. The whole of nature, for common sense, is; and it is, what it is, whether any finite being apprehends it or not. On our view, on the other hand, part of the physical world does not, as such, exist. This objection is well founded, but I would reply, first, that common sense is hardly consistent with itself. It would perhaps hesitate, for instance, to place sweet and bitter tastes, as such, in the world outside of sense. But only the man who will go thus far, who believes in colours in the darkness, and sounds without an ear, can stand upon this ground. If there is any one who holds that flowers blush when utterly unseen, and smell delightfully when no one delights in their odour—he may object to our doctrine and may be invited to state his own. But I venture to think that, metaphysically, his view would turn out not worth notice. Any serious theory must in some points collide with common sense; and, if we are to look at the matter from this side, our view surely is, in this way, superior to others. For us Nature, through a great part, certainly is as it is perceived. Secondary qualities are an actual part of the physical world, and the existing thing sugar we take to be, itself, actually sweet and pleasant. Nay the very beauty of Nature, we shall find hereafter (Chapter xxvi.), is, for us, fact as good as the hardest of primary qualities. Everything physical, which is seen or felt, or in any way experienced or enjoyed, is, on our view, an existing part of the region of Nature; and it is in Nature as we experience it. It is only that portion which is

\(^1\) The question whether any part of the contents of the Universe is not contained in finite centres, is discussed in Chapter xxvii.
but thought of, only that, of which we assume that no creature perceives it—which, as such, is not fact. Thus, while admitting our collision with common sense, I would lay stress upon its narrow extent and degree.

We have now seen that inorganic Nature perhaps does not exist. Though it is possible, we are unable to say if it is real. But with regard to Nature falling outside all finite subjects our conclusion is different. We failed to discover any ground for taking that as real, and, if strictly understood, we found no right to call it even possible. The importance of these questions, on the other hand we urged, is overrated. For they all depend on distinctions which, though not lost, are transcended in the Absolute. Whether all perception and feeling must pass through finite souls, whether any physical qualities stand out and are not worked up into organisms—into arrangements which directly condition such souls—these enquiries are not vital. In part we cannot answer them, and in part our reply gives us little that possesses a positive value. The interrelation between organisms, and their division from the inorganic, and, again, the separation of finite experiences, from each other and from the whole—these are not anything which, as such, can hold good in the Absolute. That one reality, the richer for every variety, absorbs and dissolves these phenomenal limitations. Whether there is a margin of quality not directly making part of some particular experience, whether, again, there is any physical extension outside the arrangements which immediately subserve feeling centres—in the end these questions are but our questions. The answers must be given in a language without meaning for the Absolute, until translated into a way of expression beyond our powers. But, if so expressed, we can perceive,
they would lose that importance our hard distinctions confer on them. And, from our own point of view, these problems have proved partly to be insoluble. The value of our answers consists mainly in their denial of partial and one-sided doctrines.

There is an objection which, before we proceed, may be dealt with. "Upon your view," I may be told, "there is really after all no Nature. For Nature is one solid body, the images of which are many, and which itself remains single. But upon your theory we have a number of similar reflections; and, though these may agree among themselves, no real thing comes to light in them. Such an appearance will not account for Nature." But this objection rests on what must be called a thoughtless prejudice. It is founded on the idea that identity in the contents of various souls is impossible. Separation into distinct centres of feeling and thought is assumed to preclude all sameness between what falls within such diverse centres. But, we shall see more fully hereafter (Chapter xxiii.), this assumption is groundless. It is merely part of that blind prejudice against identity in general which disappears before criticism. That which is identical in quality must always, so far, be one; and its division, in time or space or in several souls, does not take away its unity. The variety of course does make a difference to the identity, and, without that difference and these modifications, the sameness is nothing. But, on the other hand, to take sameness as destroyed by diversity, makes impossible all thought and existence alike. It is a doctrine, which, if carried out, quite abolishes the Universe. Certainly, in the end, to know how the one and many are united is beyond our powers. But in the Absolute somehow, we are convinced, the problem is solved.

This apparent parcelling out of Nature is but appar-
ent. On the one side a collection of what falls within distinct souls, on the other side it possesses unity in the Absolute. Where the contents of the several centres all come together, there the appearances of Nature of course will be one. And, if we consider the question from the side of each separate soul, we still can find no difficulty. Nature for each percipient mainly is what to the percipient it seems to be, and it mainly is so without regard to that special percipient. And, if this is so, I find it hard to see what more is wanted.\(^1\) Of course, so far as any one soul has peculiar sensations, the qualities it finds will not exist unless in its experience. But I do not know why they should do so. And there remains, I admit, that uncertain extent, through which Nature is perhaps not sensibly perceived by any soul. This part of Nature exists beyond me, but it does not exist as I should perceive it. And we saw clearly that, so far, common sense cannot be satisfied. But, if this were a valid objection, I do not know in whose mouth it would hold good.\(^2\) And if any one, again, goes on to urge that Nature works and acts on us, and that this aspect of force is ignored by our theory, we need not answer at length. For if ultimate reality is claimed for any thing like force, we have disposed, in our First Book, of that claim already. But, if all that is meant is a certain behaviour of Nature, with certain consequences in souls, there is nothing here but a

\(^1\) If Nature were more in itself, could it be more to us? And is it for our sake, or for the sake of Nature, that the objector asks for more? Clearness on these points is desirable.

\(^2\) It is possible that some follower of Berkeley may urge that the whole of Nature, precisely as it is perceived (and felt?), exists actually in God. But this by itself is not a metaphysical view. It is merely a delusive attempt to do without one. The un-rationalized heaping up of such a congeries within the Deity, with its (partial?) reduplication inside finite centres, and then the relation between these aspects (or divisions?) of the whole—this is an effort surely not to solve a problem but simply to shelve it.
phenomenal co-existence and sequence. It is an order and way in which events happen, and in our view of Nature I see nothing inconsistent with this arrangement. From the fact of such an orderly appearance you cannot infer the existence of something not contained in finite experiences.\footnote{I admit that I cannot explain how Nature comes to us as an order (Chapters xviii. and xxvi.), but then I deny that any other view is in any better case. The subject of Ends in Nature will be considered later.}

We may now consider a question which several times we have touched on. We have seen that in reality there can be no mere physical Nature. The world of physical science is not something independent, but is a mere element in one total experience. And, apart from finite souls, this physical world, in the proper sense, does not exist. But, if so, we are led to ask, what becomes of natural science? Nature there is treated as a thing without soul and standing by its own strength. And we thus have been apparently forced into collision with something beyond criticism. But the collision is illusive, and exists only through misunderstanding. For the object of natural science is not at all the ascertain-ment of ultimate truth, and its province does not fall outside phenomena. The ideas, with which it works, are not intended to set out the true character of reality. And, therefore, to subject these ideas to metaphysical criticism, or, from the other side, to oppose them to metaphysics, is to mistake their end and bearing. The question is not whether the principles of physical science possess an absolute truth to which they make no claim. The question is whether the abstraction, employed by that science, is legitimate and useful. And with regard to that question there surely can be no doubt. In order to understand the co-existence and sequence of phenomena, natural science makes an intellectual con-
struction of their conditions. Its matter, motion, and force are but working ideas, used to understand the occurrence of certain events. To find and systematize the ways in which spatial phenomena are connected and happen—this is all the mark which these conceptions aim at. And for the metaphysician to urge that these ideas contradict themselves, is irrelevant and unfair. To object that in the end they are not true, is to mistake their pretensions.

And thus when matter is treated of as a thing standing in its own right, continuous and identical, metaphysics is not concerned. For, in order to study the laws of a class of phenomena, these phenomena are simply regarded by themselves. The implication of Nature, as a subordinate element, within souls has not been denied, but in practice, and for practice, ignored. And, when we hear of a time before organisms existed, that, in the first place, should mean organisms of the kind that we know; and it should be said merely with regard to one part of the Universe. Or, at all events, it is not a statement of the actual history of the ultimate Reality, but is a convenient method of considering certain facts apart from others. And thus, while metaphysics and natural science keep each to its own business, a collision is impossible. Neither needs defence against the other, except through misunderstanding.

But that misunderstandings on both sides have been too often provoked I think no one can deny. Too often the science of mere Nature, forgetting its own limits and false to its true aims, attempts to speak about first principles. It becomes transcendant, and offers us a dogmatic and uncritical metaphysics. Thus to assert that, in the history of the Universe at large, matter came before mind, is to place development and succession within the Absolute (Chapter xxvi.), and is to make real outside
the Whole a mere element in its being. And such a doctrine not only is not natural science, but, even if we suppose it otherwise to have any value, for that science, at least, it is worthless. For assume that force matter and motion are more than mere working ideas, inconsistent but useful—will they, on that assumption, work better? If you, after all, are going to use them solely for the interpretation of spatial events, then, if they are absolute truth, that is nothing to you. This absolute truth you must in any case apply as a mere system of the conditions of the occurrence of phenomena; and for that purpose anything, which you apply, is the same, if it does the same work. But, I think the failure of natural science (so far as it does fail) to maintain its own position, is not hard to understand. It seems produced by more than one cause. There is first a vague notion that absolute truth must be pursued by every kind of special science. There is inability to perceive that, in such a science, something less is all that we can use, and therefore all that we should want. But this unfortunately is not all. For metaphysics itself, by its interference with physical science, has induced that to act, as it thinks, in self-defence, and has led it, in so doing, to become metaphysical. And this interference of metaphysics I would admit and deplore, as the result and the parent of most injurious misunderstanding. Not only have there been efforts at construction which have led to no positive result, but there have been attacks on the sciences which have pushed into abuse a legitimate function. For, as against natural science, the duty of metaphysics is limited. So long as that science keeps merely to the sphere of phenomena and the laws of their occurrence, metaphysics has no right to a single word of criticism. Criticism begins when what is relative—mere ways of appearance—is, unconsciously or consciously, offered as more. And I do not doubt that there are doctrines,
now made use of in science, which on this ground invite metaphysical correction, and on which it might here be instructive to dwell. But for want of competence and want of space, and, more than all perhaps from the fear of being misunderstood, I think it better to pass on. There are further questions about Nature more important by far for our general enquiry.

Is the extended world one, and, if so, in what sense? We discussed, in Chapter xviii., the unity of time, and it is needful to recall the conclusion we reached. We agreed that all times have a unity in the Absolute, but, when we asked if that unity itself must be temporal, our answer was negative. We found that the many time-series are not related in time. They do not make parts of one series and whole of succession; but, on the contrary, their interrelation and unity falls outside of time. And, in the case of extension, the like considerations produce a like result. The physical world is not one in the sense of possessing a physical unity. There may be any number of material worlds, not related in space, and by consequence not exclusive of, and repellent to, each other.

It appears, at first, as if all the extended was part of one space. For all spaces, and, if so, all material objects, seem spatially related. And such an interrelation would, of course, make them members in one extended whole. But this belief, when we reflect, begins instantly to vanish. Nature in my dreams (for example) possesses extension, and yet spatially it is not one with my physical world. And in imagination and in thought we have countless existences, material and extended, which stand in no spatial connection with each other or with the world which I perceive. And it is idle to reply that these bodies and their arrangements are unreal, unless we are sure of the sense which we give to reality. For
that these all exist is quite clear; and, if they have not got extension, they are all able, at least, to appear with it and to show it. Their extension and their materiality is, in short, a palpable fact, while, on the other hand, their several arrangements are not inter-related in space. And, since in the Absolute these, of course, possess a unity, we must conclude that the unity is not material. In coming together their extensional character is transmuted. There are a variety of spatial systems, independent of each other, and each changed beyond itself, when absorbed in the one non-spatial system. Thus, with regard to their unity, Space and Time have similar characters (pp. 210–214).

That, which for ordinary purposes I call "real" Nature, is the extended world so far as related to my body. What forms a spatial system with that body has "real" extension. But even "my body" is ambiguous, for the body, which I imagine, may have no spatial relation to the body which I perceive. And perception too can be illusive, for my own body in dreams is not the same thing with my true "real" body, nor does it enter with it into any one spatial arrangement. And what in the end I mean by my "real" body, seems to be this. I make a spatial construction from my body, as it comes to me when awake. This and the extended which will form a single system of spatial relations together with this, I consider as real.¹ And whatever extension falls outside of this one system of interrelation,

¹ With regard to the past and future of my "real" body and its "real" world, it is hard to say whether, and in what sense, these are supposed to have spatial connection with the present. What we commonly think on this subject is, I should say, a mere mass of inconsistency. There is another point, on which it would be interesting to develop the doctrine of the text, by asking how we distinguish our waking state. But an answer to this question is, I think, not called for here. I have also not referred to insanity and other abnormal states. But their bearing here is obvious.
I set down as "imaginary." And, as a mere subordinate point of view, this may do very well. But it is quite another thing on such a ground to deny existence in the Absolute to every other spatial system. For we have the "imaginary" extension on our hands as a fact which remains, and which should cause us to hesitate. And, when we reflect, we see clearly that a variety of physical arrangements may exist without anything like spatial inter-relation. They will have their unity in the Whole, but no connections in space each outside its own proper system of matter. And Nature therefore cannot properly be called a single world, in the sense of possessing a spatial unity.

Thus we might have any number of physical systems, standing independent of spatial relations with each other. And we may go on from this to consider another point of interest. Such diverse worlds of matter might to any extent still act on and influence one another. But, to speak strictly, they could not inter-penetrate at any point. Their interaction, however intimate, could not be called penetration; though, in itself and in its effects, it might involve a closer unity. Their spaces always would remain apart, and spatial contact would be impossible. But inside each world the case, as to penetration, might be different. The penetration of one thing by another might there even be usual; and I will try to show briefly that this presents no difficulty.

The idea of a Nature made up of solid matter, interspaced with an absolute void, has been inherited, I presume, from Greek metaphysics. And, I think, for the most part we hardly realize how entirely this view lies at the mercy of criticism. I am speaking, not of physics and the principles employed by physics, but of what may be called the metaphysics of the literary market-place. And the notion com-
mon there, that one extended thing cannot penetrate another, rests mainly on prejudice. For whether matter, conceivably and possibly, can enter into matter or not, depends entirely on the sense in which matter is taken. Penetration means the abolition of spatial distinction, and we may hence define matter in such a way that, with loss of spatial distinction, itself would be abolished. If, that is to say, pieces of matter are so one thing with their extensions as, apart from these, to keep no individual difference—then these pieces obviously cannot penetrate; but, otherwise, they may. This seems to me clear, and I will go on to explain it shortly.

It is certain first of all that two parts of one space cannot penetrate each other. For, though these two parts must have some qualities beside their mere extension (Chapter iii.), such bare qualities are not enough. Even if you suppose that a change has forced both sets of qualities to belong to one single extension, you will after all have not got two extended things in one. For you will not have two extended things, since one will have vanished. And, hence, penetration, implying the existence of both, has become a word without meaning. But the case is altered, if we consider two pieces of some element more concrete than space. Let us assume with these, first, that their other qualities, which serve to divide and distinguish them, still depend on extension—then, so far, these things still cannot penetrate each other. For, as before, in the one space you would not have two things, since (by the assumption) one thing has lost separate existence. But now the whole question is whether with matter this assumption is true, whether in Nature, that is, qualities are actually so to be identified with extension. And, for myself, I find no reason to think that this is so. If in two parts of one extended there are distinctions sufficient to individualize, and

A. R.
to keep these two things still two, when their separate spaces are gone—then clearly these two things may be compenetrable. For penetration is the survival of distinct existence notwithstanding identification in space. And thus the whole question really turns on the possibility of such a survival. Cannot, in other words, two things still be two, though their extensions have become one?

We have no right then (until this possibility is got rid of) to take the parts of each physical world as essentially exclusive. We may without contradiction consider bodies as not resisting other bodies. We may take them as standing towards one another, under certain conditions, as relative vacua, and as freely compenetrable. And, if in this way we gain no positive advantage, we at least escape from the absurdity, and even the scandal, of an absolute vacuum.  

We have seen that, except in the Absolute in which Nature is merged, we have no right to assert that all Nature has unity. I will now add a few words on some other points which may call for explanation. We may be asked, for example, whether Nature is finite or infinite; and we may first endeavour to clear our ideas on this subject. There is of course, as we know, a great difficulty on either side. If Nature is infinite, we have the absurdity of a something which exists, and still does not exist. For actual existence is, obviously, all finite. But,

---

1 I would repeat that in the above remarks I am not trying to say anything against the ideas used in physics, and against the apparent attempt there to compromise between something and nothing. In a phenomenal science it is obvious that no more than a relative vacuum is wanted. More could not possibly be used, supposing that in fact more existed. In any case for metaphysics an absolute vacuum is nonsense. Like a mere piece of empty Time, it is a sheer self-contradiction; for it presupposes certain internal distinctions, and then in the same breath denies them.
on the other hand, if Nature is finite, then Nature must have an end; and this again is impossible. For a limit of extension must be relative to extension beyond. And to fall back on empty space, will not help us at all. For this (itself a mere absurdity) repeats the dilemma in an aggravated form. It is itself both something and nothing, is essentially limited and yet, on the other side, without end.

But we cannot escape the conclusion that Nature is infinite. And this will be true not of our physical system alone, but of every other extended world which can possibly exist. None is limited but by an end over which it is constantly in the act of passing. Nor does this hold only with regard to present existence, for the past and future of these worlds has also no fixed boundary in space. Nor, once again, is this a character peculiar to the extended. Any finite whole, with its incomplete conjunction of qualities and relations, entails a process of indefinite transition beyond its limits as a consequence. But with the extended, more than anything, this self-transcendence is obvious. Every physical world is, essentially and necessarily, infinite.

But, in saying this, we do not mean that, at any given moment, such worlds possess more than a given amount of existence. Such an assertion once again would have no meaning. It would be once more the endeavour to be something and yet nothing, and to find an existence which does not exist. And thus we are forced to maintain that every Nature must be finite. The dilemma stares us in the face, and brings home to us the fact that all Nature, as such, is an untrue appearance. It is the way in which a mere part of the Reality shows itself, a way essential and true when taken up into and transmuted by a fuller totality, but, considered by itself, inconsistent and lapsing beyond its own being. The essence of the relative is to have and to come to an end, but, at the same time, to end always in a self-
contradiction. Again the infinity of Nature, its extension beyond all limits, we might call Nature's effort to end itself as Nature. It shows in this its ideality, its instability and transitoriness, and its constant passage of itself into that which transcends it. In its isolation as a phenomenon Nature is both finite and infinite, and so proclaims itself untrue. And, when this contradiction is solved, both its characters disappear into something beyond both. And it is perhaps not necessary to dwell further on the infinity of Nature.

And, passing next to the question of what is called Uniformity, I shall dismiss this almost at once. For there is, in part, no necessity for metaphysics to deal with it, and, in part, we must return to it in the following chapter. But, however uniformity is understood, in the main we must be sceptical, and stand aloof. I do not see how it can be shown that the amount of matter and motion, whether in any one world or in all, remains always the same. Nor do I understand how we can know that any world remains the same in its sensible qualities. As long as, on the one side, the Absolute preserves its identity, and, on the other side, the realms of phenomena remain in order, all our postulates are satisfied. This order in the world need not mean that, in each Nature, the same characters remain. It implies, in the first place, that all changes are subject to the identity of the one Reality. But that by itself seems consistent with almost indefinite variation in the several worlds. And, in the second place, order must involve the possibility of experience in finite subjects. Order, therefore, excludes all change which would make each world unintelligible through want of stability. But this stability, in the end, does not seem to require more than a limited amount of identity, existing from time to time in the sensations which happen. And, thirdly, in