

AP
4
.N86
v.30

THE

NORTH BRITISH REVIEW.

FEBRUARY—MAY 1859.

VOL. XXX.

EDINBURGH:
W. P. KENNEDY, SOUTH ST ANDREW STREET.
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.
DUBLIN: M'GLASHAN & GILL.

MDCCCLIX.

ART. X.—*Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*. By Sir W. HAMILTON, Bart., etc. Edited by the Rev. W. L. MANSSELL, B.D., Oxford, and JOHN VEITCH, M.A., Edinburgh. Vols. 1 and 2. William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1859.

THESE Lectures do not await our commendation to the metaphysical public. There are few in this country whose studies are at all philosophical who do not acknowledge deep obligations to Sir W. Hamilton. To him, indeed, is due in great measure the revival of philosophy in this country. His indefatigable earnestness and independence in the pursuit of truth, as truth, not as originality, produced the usual effect of such qualities in inspiring a similar ardour in the minds of his hearers. At the same time, the spirit of common sense which characterised his philosophy recommended it to the English mind, which is naturally repelled by the shadowy unreality of idealist speculation. The lover of truth was pleased to find philosophy in unison with his highest belief, and to join in overthrowing the logic of the sceptic by a logic more solid and more profound. Without the comprehensive knowledge of a history of speculation the acutest logic would lose half its force; but when to the acuteness of Sir W. Hamilton's logic was added the weight of his well-compacted learning, the weapon became irresistible, and not untruly was its wielder characterised by M. Cousin as the first of European critics. Nevertheless we believe that the very qualities which entitled him to this distinction as a critic, were not always a guarantee against false theories in philosophy. The more resistless his logic in exposing the weakness of an adversary, in carrying out his principles to their legitimate issue, the more careful should we be to ascertain that the premises are certain before we commit ourselves to the inevitable deduction. Once involved in the chain, we may be fascinated by the closeness of argument, and forget the necessity of examining on what the whole hangs. Strong in the power to arrange and classify, Sir W. Hamilton revels in dilemmas and exhaustive enumerations. Sir Robert Peel's invariable three courses were but a type of the Disjunctive Method so largely employed by the great philosopher. He draws out his table of solutions with all possible divisions and subdivisions, and, one after the other, all are banished but the favoured one to which we are irrevocably shut up. Accept his enumeration, and you cannot escape his conclusion. But in a process involving a manifold complication of collateral and consecutive arguments and hypotheses, it is difficult, without the insight of the author himself, to affirm unhesitatingly that no error can

have crept in. By the nature of the process, a slight error in the first distribution is not eliminated but multiplied in the subsequent steps. But of all subjects (not excepting Physiology) the sciences concerned about human nature are those in which this method is most dangerous. It requires a perfect knowledge of the matter in hand to be able to say, It must be so or so. In fact, it presupposes a complete solution of the problem and something more, even the knowledge of all possible solutions and their conditions. It is therefore a method highly useful indeed in systematising knowledge already obtained, and giving us a clear hold upon it; but, when substituted for direct proof, must always be received with suspicion.

But, after all, it must be remembered that, as Kant observes, the office of the Professor of Philosophy is to teach, not philosophy, but to philosophise; and since Sir W. Hamilton was unquestionably successful in this object to a very large extent, our objections must not be understood as intended in any degree to derogate from his merits as a philosopher. Criticism of his philosophy is, however, not the less our duty. We are here engaged in a study in which nothing can be known on authority of others; in which instruction is only instruction as it enables us to teach ourselves. If, then, even the whole system of a philosopher be overthrown by his disciples, the glory is still his; he is himself the victor in his own defeat.

With respect to the editing of the Lectures, it is very satisfactory that the task was entrusted to such able hands. The enormous number of references to be searched out, where the name only was supplied by the author, would have deterred any editors less conscientious and considerate for the profit of the reader. The labour of supplying these references must have been immense, considering that it is that kind of labour which produces least apparent result. But the careful reader will appreciate the facilities thus given to him for his own researches. We have often been provoked with authors who, to save themselves the trouble of verifying a reference, which to them ought to be easy, have imposed on perhaps scores of readers the labour of searching for it, or the necessity of resting unsatisfied for want of it. We are therefore grateful to the present editors, who have taken all the trouble upon themselves. In adding a copious index and marginal summaries, they have done everything in their power to give the work the utmost possible utility.

There is not so much of absolutely new matter as was perhaps expected; a considerable part being in substance the same that has been already published in the Discussions and Dissertations. But the treatment, as adapted to the lecturer's audience, is of a more elementary character, more clear and full. Some ques-

tions are treated which are but slightly alluded to in the works just mentioned; for example, the subject of Latent Modifications. And as this involves some important questions with respect to Consciousness, we shall consider it before proceeding to the more distinguishing principles of Sir W. Hamilton's philosophy. If we seem too negative in our criticism, his admitted eminence is itself our excuse; he needs and asks no favour from his critics but strict fair play.

I know—I feel—I do. These are the general phenomena which obtrude themselves upon the psychologist; and with a slight extension of the meaning of the words, they include all the phenomena with which he has to do. In the subject of the several predications, *I*, is implied a conscious recognition of the phenomena as phenomena of Self. If a cognition, act, or feeling exists of which I am not conscious, it is not mine. Consciousness is the distinguishing characteristic of intelligence, and is therefore implied in the statement of every act of intelligence; it is to mind what extension is to body, the essential condition of all its phenomena. It would be a contradiction to suppose a thought of which no being is conscious. But further, to speak of degrees of Consciousness, in the strict sense of the word, is as improper as to speak of degrees of Extension. There may be degrees of feeling, of desire, of vividness of conception,—in other words, of the predicate; but in each *I* feel. The feeling is more or less intense—it is not more or less mine. Nevertheless, in a certain sense, we may speak of intensity of Consciousness, inasmuch as feelings, etc., may be more or less obscure, and therefore less easy of recognition on reflection, whether from transiency or other causes. For we must distinguish the different senses in which Consciousness is spoken of. First, in an act of thought I am conscious of the cognition, inasmuch as it is I that know. But I may direct my attention to the cognition itself rather than its object, and thus make it the object of a Reflex Consciousness, which has sometimes been called, by way of distinction, Self-consciousness; but which, as all Consciousness is Self-consciousness, might be better denominated Reflex in contrast to Primitive Consciousness. Now, the more transient and the weaker a feeling has been, or the less attended to at the moment, the less clear will be the Reflex Consciousness; or, to speak more exactly, since the phenomenon (except in certain cases) perishes in the desire to observe it, the less clear will be the reminiscence of which reflection takes cognisance. We shall not dwell further at present on this distinction.

Consciousness, then, is the field of the psychologist, and Reflex Consciousness is his instrument. And the phenomena of Consciousness may be classified (with Kant and Hamilton) as Cog-

nitions, Feelings, and Exertions or Conations; the last term being that employed by Sir W. Hamilton to denote the phenomena of Will and Desire. This classification is, of course, open to objection, but it appears at least as good as any other that has been proposed. But having exhausted Consciousness, have we exhausted all the mental phenomena; or must we acquiesce in the doctrine that there exist, or may exist, modifications of mind, call them what we will, with which we can never become acquainted, except perhaps by their effects,—proceedings in the depths of Unconsciousness, of which only now and then a trace reaches the surface? Is Consciousness an instrument by means of which we contemplate our own internal modifications, but whose power is insufficient to cope with the delicacy and variety of the mental energies? The reader will perhaps ask a preliminary question: Are we entitled to put such an hypothesis at all, having spoken just now of Consciousness as the form of internal phenomena, as extension of external? However, let the question for the present be discussed on its own merits, and we give him leave to moot the point of consistency afterwards.

From the question stated must be distinguished another. Do the phenomena which memory testifies exhaust Consciousness? Are we, for example, conscious in sleep when we have no recollection of dreams? But although the questions are in themselves distinct, yet in the discussion they necessarily run very much together, and the same facts bear upon the solution of both. We shall proceed to consider some of these phenomena in their bearing on the first question, and to compare the theories adopted by Stewart and Sir W. Hamilton respectively.

Let us consider the phenomena of acquired dexterities and habits. We shall put the case, for example, of an expert performer on the pianoforte, able to play either from notes or from memory with rapidity while carrying on a totally different train of thought; or that of the equilibrist, who balances several objects at once, and at the same time maintains his own footing on a rope, attending with eye and mind to the rapidly varying disturbances of equilibrium, and willing the motions necessary to counteract them. In these cases there is no memory, even for a moment, of the various separate motions which have been executed. We are conscious of the series of operations, but not of the separate operations themselves. To account for these and similar phenomena, three principal theories have been put forward. "In the first place, we may say that the whole process is effected without either volition or any action of the thinking principle, it being merely automatic or mechanical. In the second place, it may be said that each individual act of which the process is made up, is not only an act of mental agency, but a con-

scious act of volition ; but that there being no memory of these acts, they consequently are unknown to us when past. In the third place, it may be said that each individual act of the process is an act of mental agency, but not of Consciousness and separate volition ; a conscious volition being allowed in regard to the series, but not the separate acts."¹ The last opinion is Sir W. Hamilton's, the second Stewart's, the first is adopted by Reid and Hartley. The former says, "I conceive it to be a part of our constitution, that what we have been accustomed to do, we acquire not only a facility, but a proneness to do on like occasions ; so that it requires a particular will or effort to forbear it, but to do it requires very often no will at all." Now, it would be absurd in the extreme to suppose that Reid meant to deny, in such cases as those above cited, the fact of an initial and general volition ; to affirm, *e.g.*, that the musician was led to his instrument by an occult power, and commenced or continued to play involuntarily and without knowing what he was about. But, if this be admitted, then Reid's opinion and Hamilton's substantially coincide ; while Reid's statement, however objectionable in some respects, has the advantage of comprehensiveness. As Sir W. Hamilton states his theory, it is applicable indeed to acquired dexterities, but it leaves altogether out of account the phenomena of involuntary habits ; such, for example, as the apparently unconscious use of certain expressions, manner of address, or gestures of the body. These Reid evidently had in view. There is, of course, room for further difference of opinion in the explanation of these supposed latent agencies, according as they are regarded, with Hamilton, as an ultimate fact, or referred, with Berkeley (who, however, suggests the hypothesis only as an alternative to that of conscious action), to some foreign intelligence,—“the same, perhaps, which governs bees and spiders, and moves the limbs of those who walk in their sleep ;” or, thirdly, supposed to depend wholly or in part on the constitution of the bodily organs. That Reid did not, as Hamilton supposes, incline to the second supposition, is clear from his saying that he saw no reason to think that we shall ever be able to assign the physical cause either of instinct or of the power of habit. His application to them of the term mechanical is far from proving the contrary. It is unfair criticism, although universally adopted by historians of philosophy, to infer an author's views from our definition of his terms to the exclusion of his own. What, then, is Reid's definition of the term here used ? “There are some principles of action which require no attention, no deliberation, no will. These, for distinction's sake, we shall call mechanical.” The definition applies precisely to the latent agencies of Sir W. Hamilton, and to nothing else. Now, as the

¹ Lectures, i., p. 367.

latter admits the validity of Stewart's refutation of Reid, it must be equally valid against his own theory, so far as the distinctive characteristic, if any, of Reid's theory is not involved. We shall therefore cite the substance of the passage which contains this refutation, together with the counter theory.

"I cannot help thinking it more philosophical to suppose that those actions which are originally voluntary always continue so, although, in the case of operations which are become habitual in consequence of long practice, we may not be able to recollect every different volition. Thus, in the case of a performer on the harpsichord, I apprehend that there is an act of the will preceding every motion of the finger, although he may not be able to recollect these volitions afterwards, and although he may, during the time of his performance, be employed in carrying on a separate train of thought. For it must be remarked, that the most rapid performer can, when he pleases, play so slowly as to be able to attend to, and to recollect, every separate act of his will in the various movements of his fingers;¹ and he can gradually accelerate the rate of his execution till he is unable to recollect these acts. Now, in this instance, one of two suppositions must be made. The one is, that the operations in the two cases are carried on precisely in the same manner, and differ only in the degree of rapidity; and that, when this rapidity exceeds a certain rate, the acts of the will are too momentary to leave any impression on the memory. The other is, that when the rapidity exceeds a certain rate, the operation is taken entirely out of our hands, and is carried on by some unknown power, of the nature of which we are as ignorant as of the cause of the circulation of the blood, or of the motion of the intestines. The last supposition seems to me to be somewhat similar to that of a man who should maintain, that although a body, projected with a moderate velocity, is seen to pass through all the intermediate spaces in moving from one place to another, yet we are not entitled to conclude that this happens when the body moves so quickly as to become invisible to the eye. The former supposition is supported by the analogy of many other facts in our constitutions. Of some of these I have already taken notice, and it would be easy to add to their number. An expert accountant, for example, can sum up, almost with a single glance of his eye, a long column of figures. He can tell the sum, with unerring certainty, while, at the same time, he is unable to recollect any one of the figures of which that sum is composed; and yet nobody doubts that each of these figures has passed through his mind, or supposes that when the rapidity of the process becomes so great that he is unable to recollect the various steps of it, he obtains the result by a sort of inspiration."

He proceeds to combat the only plausible objection he can conceive, and which is one that Sir W. Hamilton, at least, would not have thought of urging; namely, the astonishing rapidity thus supposed in our intellectual operations. He argues, from

¹ This is not absolutely true, but the qualification does not affect the argument.

the analogy of the microscope, that having demonstrated the existence of various intellectual processes which escape our attention in consequence of their rapidity, we are entitled to carry the supposition a little farther, in order to bring under the known laws of the human constitution a class of mental operations which must otherwise remain perfectly inexplicable.

"Surely," he adds, "our ideas of time are merely relative, as well as our ideas of extension; nor is there any good reason for doubting that, if our powers of attention and memory were more perfect than they are, so as to give us the same advantage in examining rapid events which the microscope gives for examining minute portions of extension, they would enlarge our views with respect to the intellectual world, no less than that instrument has with respect to the material."

The preceding theory assumes no principle but this, that there may be acts which, though present to Consciousness, are so transient that they disappear from memory immediately, or nearly so. The examples to which Stewart alludes in the above passage, as demonstrating this principle, are such as these: "A person who falls asleep at church, and is suddenly awakened, is unable to recollect the last words spoken by the preacher; or even to recollect that he was speaking at all. And yet that sleep does not suspend entirely the powers of perception, may be inferred from this, that if the preacher were to make a sudden pause in his discourse, every person in the congregation would instantly awake." Again, in reading a book, especially in a language not perfectly familiar, we must perceive successively every letter, and afterwards combine these letters into syllables and words, before we comprehend the meaning of a sentence; yet this process leaves no trace on the memory. He also confirms the principle by its application to the phenomena of association; but as these are among the facts of which the explanation is in question, they cannot be brought as proof of either theory. The principle is, however, fully admitted by Sir W. Hamilton in its application to the example taken from sleep; in fact, he states that we must at once answer in the negative the question, Have we always a memory of our Consciousness? (vol. i. 312). And again, "The assumption of Locke [with regard to this matter of Consciousness in sleep], that Consciousness and Recollection are convertible, is disproved in the most emphatic manner by experience" (319). What, then, are the objections which Sir William considers decisive against Stewart's theory? In the first place, it assumes, without a shadow of proof, the existence of Consciousness without Memory. In the next, this assumption contradicts the law, that Memory and Consciousness are in the direct ratio of each other. Thirdly, it violates the law of Parcimony, since Hamilton's counter theory is not only beyond the sphere of Con-

consciousness to refute, but is actually proved by the phenomena of Perception. And lastly, Consciousness itself presupposes Memory. Now, passing over the unceremonious treatment of Stewart's supposed "demonstration," there is really nothing absurd in the supposition of Consciousness without Memory. For where, of two relatives, one is known to vary indefinitely, while the other either varies not at all, or in a wholly different manner, there is no absurdity in conceiving that the former may disappear altogether without the latter ceasing to be. But, says Sir W. Hamilton, they vary in the direct ratio of each other; and therefore, if one disappears, so must the other also. This is to assume, without proof and contrary to analogy, that a proposition in mental science which holds generally, and *cæteris paribus*, may be pushed to its utmost limits according to the laws of Mathematics. Even in Mathematics one quantity may vary directly as another, within the limits of observation, and yet may not vanish with it. But here all we know is, that the more concentrated Consciousness or Attention has been, the longer will its trace remain on the Memory; but it would puzzle even Sir W. Hamilton to prove that the ratio is always identical. What signification can be attached to the notion of ratio between Memory and Consciousness? Between time or space, and intensity, there can be no ratio, nor is there any measure of intensity except by its quantitative effects. The duration of Memory may be measured, but how shall we measure the intensity of Consciousness? How shall we define what is meant by a double amount of Consciousness? Shall we measure it by the duration of Memory, as we measure heat by expansion? Well; if necessary for convenience, let it be so; but let it be remembered that this is a mere conventional basis of comparison, and can supply no reliable knowledge when pushed beyond the limits of possible observation. But further, it is not true that intensity of Consciousness, if we must use the expression, is the only element which determines the retention in the Memory. The attention bestowed upon other concomitant and immediately succeeding thoughts, the variety of succeeding impressions, the familiarity of their suggested ideas, and other circumstances, are all important elements in determining whether and how long a conception shall be retained. Memory, moreover, is dependent in a quite peculiar degree, on a set of corporeal conditions unconnected with Consciousness. The supposed constant ratio, then, is a mere hypothesis, groundless, incapable of proof, and opposed to admitted facts. Let us, however, grant the assumed law in its fullest extent; and let us see whether it will not rather make for Stewart than against him. Memory being conceived only as relative to duration, we have no difficulty in conceiving a remini-

scence more transient than the shortest period that can be named. But for the purposes of psychological observation a recollection of some considerable duration is necessary. For these purposes, therefore, a very brief Memory is as none. In speaking of duration, we mean, of course, duration measured by the succession of our thoughts. By the very terms of the problem, the thought, of which it is questioned whether we are conscious, cannot be reflected upon until one or more thoughts have succeeded and passed away; it is therefore impossible to prove that it has not been remembered for the minimum time which Sir W. Hamilton thinks necessary, viz., so as to be present along with that immediately succeeding. Numerous trivial examples, where Memory seems to be no longer, might be mentioned; but we leave the reader to supply them.

But if these objections cannot be maintained on their own merit, they are peculiarly incompetent to Sir W. Hamilton. First, he affirms, as we have seen, that in certain circumstances, *e.g.* in sleep, Consciousness is possible without Memory. Secondly, he does not limit this assertion to the case of sleep. "Something similar to the rapid oblivion of our sleeping Consciousness happens to us occasionally, when awake. When our mind is occupied with any subject, or more frequently when fatigued, a thought suggests itself. We turn it over and fix our eyes in vacancy; interrupted by the question what we are thinking of, we attempt to answer, but the thought is gone! We cannot recall it, and say that we were thinking of nothing" (i., p. 324). But there is a greater inconsistency still. He holds, in the next place, that the mind may be conscious of several objects at once; the degree of Consciousness, and therefore the Memory of each, being in the inverse ratio of the number of objects, and in proportion to the vividness of our desire to know it more distinctly" (vol. i., p. 246-7). Again, he holds that every modification of mind is a quantity, and must therefore be conceived divisible *ad infinitum* (i., p. 365). This is therefore true of Consciousness, and Memory in particular; and we are shut up to the conclusion lately established, that an evanescent Memory implies only an evanescent Consciousness and an evanescent modification. But this is not all. The principle is implicitly adopted by Stewart in the illustration of the microscope quoted above; and Hamilton, in adopting the principle, was naturally led to the same illustration. "Could we magnify," he says, "the discerning power of Consciousness as we can magnify the power of vision by the microscope, we might enable Consciousness to extend its cognisance to modifications twice ten times ten thousand times less than it is now competent to apprehend; but still there must be some limit" (i., p. 365). Now, mark the suicidal effect of this doc-

trine. Consciousness, we are told, cannot take cognisance of mental modifications below a certain amount, but every modification must be conceived capable of division *ad infinitum*; we must therefore allow the possibility of Cognitions, Feelings, Conations so small as to escape the ken of Consciousness. But Sir William has established as the very fundamental principle of his psychology, that Consciousness is inseparable from every knowledge, feeling, and exertion; that it is, in fact, the very act itself, only in another point of view. We are taught, therefore, that the act becomes null in its relation to the knowing subject, while it does not cease to exist in relation to the object known. Unless he chooses to maintain that while a cognition, for instance, implies Consciousness, the absence of Consciousness only reduces it to a quasi-cognition; its other characters remaining unaltered.

Sir W. Hamilton considers it a favourable circumstance for his theory, that Consciousness can testify nothing against what, *ex hypothesi*, does not come within its sphere. This we consider rather an argument against the introduction of such a mode of accounting for phenomena. A hypothesis which, by its nature, is beyond direct refutation, is a sort of *Deus ex machina* to which we should be careful of resorting, especially if any other solution is possible. But where no counter evidence is forthcoming, we must be allowed the fullest liberty in cross-examining the witnesses who appear. Three of the demonstrations adduced are not difficult to dispose of. One is founded, strangely enough, on the divisibility of mental modifications, which we have adduced to support an opposite conclusion. "As every mental modification is a quantity, and as no quantity can be conceived not divisible *ad infinitum*, we must, even on this hypothesis, allow (unless we assert that the ken of Consciousness is also infinite) that there are modifications of mind unknown in themselves, but the necessary coefficients of known results" (vol. i., 365, in immediate connection with the passage already cited). After what has been said this passage needs no further comment; its refutation is contained in the parenthesis. Another argument precisely similar is taken from the divisibility of time. "Some minimum of time must be admitted as the condition of Consciousness; and as time is divisible *ad infinitum* whatever minimum be taken, there must be admitted to be beyond the cognisance of Consciousness, intervals of time in which, if mental agencies be performed, these will be latent to Consciousness" (i., pp. 369, 370). The author has supplied his own refutation. "Consciousness is not to be viewed as anything different from these modifications themselves" (i., p. 193). "Consciousness and knowledge are the same thing considered in different aspects" (p. 195). "The mental phenomena are all possible only under the condition of Conscious-

ness"¹ (p. 182). If there be, then, a minimum of time necessary for Consciousness, it is only so far as the same minimum is the necessary condition of a mental modification.

There remains, however, what Sir W. Hamilton regards as a demonstrative proof of the existence of latent modifications,—the facts of Perception. We see, for example, a speck on a piece of glass of no distinguishable form; but if we bring it within the field of a microscope, we discern head, wings, legs, and all the other organs of a perfect insect. Now, here we really see nothing with the instrument which had not equally produced its impression upon the naked eye. If the separate parts had produced no impression, we should have seen nothing. Here, therefore, the whole of which we are conscious is made up of parts of which we are unconscious. This example is from Kant. Hamilton's illustration is the greenness of a distant forest, in which no leaf, perhaps no tree, is separately visible. The other senses furnish like illustrations, since in each the minimum perceived is made up of an infinitude of parts too small for perception, but contributing their elements to the whole effect. The noise of the distant sea is made up of the imperceptible noises of its several waves. Now we are always suspicious of psychological arguments which rest chiefly on explanations of the manner of perception. The ground is a dangerous one, where so much depends on the relations of mind and body, and on the mode of action of the organs of sense; on both of which subjects we are in all but the darkest ignorance. For example, we see in the retina an extremely complex structure, in which new complexity is being continually brought to light, and yet of no single portion of it is the function really known; it is not even ascertained what part is the percipient of the luminous impression. We only know that we must hold ourselves prepared to give up all the hitherto received opinions on the matter. Over the office and action of the nerve still greater obscurity, if possible, rests. Any argument, therefore, founded on the organic phenomena of Perception must be eminently unsafe. The preceding argument in particular, in which Sir W. Hamilton follows Leibnitz, Kant, and other great philosophers, rests upon the supposed relation to the mind of the spatial affections of the organism. When the argument was from the necessity of a minimum of time, we could deal with it fairly, because the mind as well as the organism exists in time; but in the present argument we are wholly at sea for want of any preliminary principle of translation of extension into mental modification. Let us, however, examine whether, even with our imperfect knowledge, we cannot discern various possible solutions of the phenomenon in question.

¹ So pp. 183, 187, 269, etc.

We may suppose, 1st, that a certain amount of the physical antecedent (*e.g.*, in the case of sound, vibration of the air) is necessary, in order that any impression should reach and excite the organ; 2d, that a certain amount of distinctness is necessary, in order that the impressions on the organ should not run into one; 3d, that a certain amount of impression on the organ is necessary to the excitement of the nerve; and the same may be said of distinctness of impressions; 4th, a certain excitement of nerve necessary, in order (to be first perhaps propagated to the brain, and then) to produce a mental modification; 5th, a certain amount of modification necessary to produce Consciousness; and, finally, a certain amount of Consciousness in order to be remembered. Of these hypotheses (which do not pretend to be exhaustive) some are demonstrably true; others are, at least, probable, but, of all, that which separates Consciousness from the mental modification appears in every respect the least philosophical.

We do not think, then, that Perception can be regarded as proving the doctrine of Latency, however useful that doctrine might be in its explanation if otherwise securely established. Nor have we found it necessary to admit it in order to explain the facts previously adduced. There remain, however, some cases in which, according to Hamilton, the doctrine of Stewart "would constrain our assent to the most monstrous conclusions." The example he gives is that of a person reading aloud, when, if the matter be uninteresting, his thoughts may be wholly occupied with meditation on a different subject. As we wish to be brief, we shall not question the supposition that our meditation in such circumstances is wholly undisturbed; nor shall we dwell on the difficulty of conceiving so complex a process carried on without Consciousness, involving, as it does, a series of perceptions (or *quasi*-perceptions) of Light and Sound¹—of judgments, reminiscences, volitions. We shall not argue on the necessity of remembering from letter to letter, and syllable to syllable, in order to pronounce correctly, and from word to word, with cognition of the character, at least, of each, in order not to bestow a ridiculous emphasis on prepositions and conjunctions; although, if all this can be done without any act of proper cognition or volition, there are more things in human nature than are dreamt of in our philosophy. But we shall direct attention to one or two facts. First, then, we hold it for certain that a person temporarily deaf could not read with correct intonation in such circumstances,—a proof that we are conscious of the just emphasis and correctness of enunciation. Secondly, suppose, in our reading, we should suddenly come upon some monstrous blunder, or if, as is likely to occur, we commit some error our-

¹ On the complexity of the act, compare Hamilton, vol. i., p. 228.

selves ; or suppose some interesting matter should suddenly turn up, our attention is infallibly awaked : Or, again, if suddenly interrupted, we should remember the last word uttered. We speak, of course, from recollection, as the experiment is one which can scarcely be deliberately tried.

An anecdote is related by Sir W. Hamilton which illustrates the possibility of unconscious reading. Erasmus relates of his friend Oporinus, that, when fatigued with his day's journey, he was reading a manuscript to a fellow-traveller. The latter found it necessary to put a question about some word he had not rightly understood, and then discovered that Oporinus had been for some time asleep ; and, on being awakened, he had no recollection of what he had been reading. Curiously enough, this anecdote is adduced by Sir William to prove or to confirm the thesis, that the mind is consciously active during sleep ; and this, while he carefully distinguishes the conclusion thus arrived at from the question, whether the mind can be unconsciously active. Indeed, although he distinguishes the two questions, the proofs given of the affirmative of the latter, are absolutely swept away by his arguments on the former. We have not space to quote this discussion, which the reader will find extremely interesting. We consider Sir W. Hamilton's chapter on this subject unquestionably conclusive. We shall merely quote a statement of the result of his own experience. "When suddenly awaked during sleep (and to ascertain the fact, I have caused myself to be roused at different seasons of the night), I have always been able to observe that I was in the middle of a dream. The recollection of this dream was not always equally vivid. On some occasions, I was able to trace it back until the train was gradually lost at a remote distance ; in others, I was hardly aware of more than one or two of the latter links of the chain ; and sometimes was scarcely certain of more than the fact, that I was not awakened from an unconscious state. When snatched suddenly from the twilight of our sleeping imaginations and placed in the meridian lustre of our waking perceptions, the necessary effect of the transition is at once to eclipse or obliterate the traces of our dreams." We leave the reader to extend these observations to the state in which, some thoughts remaining in this obscure twilight, others are at the same time in the full clearness of Consciousness, and to judge what ought to be the legitimate conclusion. We therefore retort on Sir W. Hamilton's theory his objections to Stewart's. First, it violates the law of Parcimony, on the one hand, in explaining analogous phenomena on wholly distinct principles ; and, on the other, in that, while admitting every principle implied in Stewart's hypothesis,

it postulates the existence of a new class of phenomena. The principle it assumes is unproved, and is, moreover, of such a nature that decisive proof of it is impossible. But our last objection has been kept in reserve, and its gravity requires a little further development. It makes Consciousness a special faculty, and thereby again violates the first principles of the author himself.

Sir William accuses Reid and Stewart of committing this capital psychological blunder, both implicitly and explicitly. We shall easily vindicate them from any deliberate error in this respect. Stewart affirms, that a phenomenon of mind of which we are not conscious is inconceivable; Reid, too, asserts that every operation of the mind is attended with Consciousness. The appearance of a contrary doctrine arises from their employing the same word to indicate Consciousness in general, and also the specific faculty, called by Sir W. Hamilton Self-consciousness; just as, in Natural History, the same name is given to the genus and the most characteristic species. But we now retort the charge on Sir W. Hamilton himself, notwithstanding, or rather, the more because of, his own deliberate rejection of it. Consistency is the first essential of a philosophical system, the first merit of a philosophical writer; and the most indulgent criticism cannot allow a psychologist to defend his special doctrines, on the ground that they are inconsistent with his most express fundamental principles. When, therefore, Sir W. Hamilton lays down the principle, "Let Consciousness remain one and indivisible, comprehending all the modifications, all the phenomena, of the thinking subject" (vol. i., p. 183); when he affirms that "Consciousness is to the mind what extension is to matter or body" (*ib.*, p. 156), and so forth; these passages may affect his consistency, but cannot be used to rebut the inference we are about to establish. We say, then, that the great philosopher, both implicitly and explicitly, erects, or rather degrades, Consciousness into a special faculty. Implicitly; for to say that it is a special faculty, not the general condition or form of the exercise of all our faculties, if it have any meaning at all, must mean this—that modifications or energies of mind do or may exist, of which we have no knowledge in Consciousness; and *vice versa*. But, as we have seen, this is precisely what Sir William labours to establish. Explicitly; when he says that a modification must be present before we have a Consciousness of it; and further, that it can be known only on condition of the memory of a preceding modification (i. 203, 349, etc.); when he treats it as a faculty cognising mental acts in relation to their objects,—the operation being expressly indicated as one term of the relation, of which the object is the other (i. 228, 212, etc.); when he states it as evident that Consciousness is an act of

knowledge, a phenomenon of cognition (p. 187¹); and, finally, in the two decisive passages already partially quoted, viz., vol. i. p. 365: "Could we magnify the discerning power of Consciousness as we can magnify the power of vision by the microscope, we might enable Consciousness to extend its cognisance to modifications twice ten times ten thousand times less than it is now competent to apprehend; but still there must be some limit. And as every mental modification is a quantity,² and as no quantity can be conceived not divisible *ad infinitum*, we must, even on this hypothesis, allow (unless the ken of Consciousness is also infinite) that there are modifications of mind unknown in themselves, but the necessary coefficients of known results." And again, as of intensity and of space, so of time, p. 349, "In the internal perception of a series of mental operations, a certain time, a certain duration is necessary, for the smallest section of continuous energy to which Consciousness is competent. Some minimum of time must be admitted as the condition of Consciousness," etc., as quoted previously. See, then, the last shred of the very cardinal principle of philosophy (i., p. 208) torn to atoms and scattered to the winds! We have a momentary glimpse of the last remnant of this "cardinal point" in the parenthesis, "unless the ken of Consciousness is also infinite." Here the notion that Consciousness is co-extensive with the mental modifications is merely glanced at, in order to remind us that it is not quite forgotten, that the standard we pledged ourselves to follow has not been lost sight of, but wittingly and ruthlessly destroyed. In the second passage now quoted,³ there is no further trace of the devoted "cardinal;" it dies and makes no sign; it is now established that Consciousness requires some minimum of time, but that mental energies in general do not.

But it is of importance to examine the principal ground on which Sir W. Hamilton charges Reid and Stewart with making Consciousness a special faculty; namely, their according to it a cognisance of operations, and not of their objects. The knowledge of relatives is one; and as the operation of any faculty is necessarily relative to some particular object, it is manifestly impossible, says Sir W. Hamilton, to be conscious of an act and not of the object to which that act relates. Yet, no doubt, in ordinary philosophical language, Consciousness is confined to

¹ Compare p. 191. "Other philosophers say that Consciousness is a knowledge.—Here, again, we have the same violation of logical law."

² How this assumption is to be proved we are ignorant; even a materialist would scarcely maintain it so broadly.

³ When writing this, we confess we forgot, for the moment, that p. 305 comes after p. 349. We believe it is the privilege of critics, especially critics in philosophy, to arrange an author's statements according to their logical, not their accidental order. Our remarks, however, are not affected by the order of the passages.

the "recognition by the mind of its own acts and affections." It is Sir W. Hamilton himself who thus describes it. Let us consider for a moment. In an act of Perception, for example, we may recognise three several relations. First, the relation of the knowing subject and the known object—the relation of cognition; secondly, the relations in which the object is conceived to exist, as of quality to substance, etc.—objective relations; and thirdly, the relation of the knower to the knowledge,—and this twofold, as exerting a faculty, and as consciously exerting it. But these relations do not enter equally into the act of cognition. I primarily know the object, and of this knowledge I am said to be conscious; that term expressing the necessary relation of the subject of knowledge to the act. The relations of the cognition to the subject and the object are essentially distinct. I know the object—I am the knower; and these relations are expressed by the terms *Perception* and *Consciousness* respectively; but the several relations implied in the cognition are not brought into Consciousness as the primitive act. Logical and chronological simultaneity are by no means convertible. So far as self is cognised it becomes an object, and this it may be in a reflex act; but it is incorrect to say that in the primitive act of cognition the relation between self and its modification becomes the matter of a judgment.¹ Common language fully confirms the distinctness of the steps by which these different relations are known. We are said to *perceive* the object, to be *conscious*, or, in unphilosophical language, to *feel* that we know, and to *know* or *believe* the relations of existence of the object. If it be, then, a capital psychological error to class Consciousness as a special faculty, it is equally an abuse of language to identify it with the whole energy of the mental faculties, or, thirdly, to confound the implicit judgment of the Primitive Consciousness. *I know* = *I am the knower*, with the explicit judgment of the Reflex Consciousness—*I know that I know*. This Sir W. Hamilton apparently does in the passage last referred to.

When, therefore, Sir William asks of Reid, what must we call the faculty which cognises self and not-self in their relation; for it cannot be Reid's Perception, which is only cognisant of the latter, and it cannot be Reid's Consciousness, which is cognisant only of the former. We reply, on behalf of Reid, that Consciousness at least is not such a faculty; for it is but a part of the relation of the activity of every faculty. Hamilton's argument, if it proves anything, proves the absolute identity of Consciousness and Perception. It will be equally proper, or equally improper, to say, with Hamilton, that I am conscious of the inkstand, and to say that I am conscious of not alone its qualities but its sub-

¹ See Hamilton, vol. i., p. 193.

stance, and that I perceive the mental modification, and perceive also the mental substance. We shall then require a new set of terms to express the subordinate relations which require to be viewed as distinct. If Hamilton did not explicitly identify Perception and Consciousness in the passage referred to, it is only because he there treats Consciousness as a higher faculty cognising the act of Perception. We shall see presently what important consequences follow from the doctrine that Consciousness of an act implies Consciousness of its object, with reference to the theory of the Conditioned, to which we now proceed.

The sum of this theory is stated in vol. ii., p. 373. "The Conditioned, or the thinkable, lies between two extremes or poles; and these extremes or poles are each of them unconditioned, each of them inconceivable, each of them exclusive or contradictory of the other. Of these two repugnant opposites, the one is that of Unconditional or Absolute Limitation, the other that of Unconditional or Infinite Illimitation. The one we may therefore, in general, call the Absolutely Unconditioned; the other, the Infinitely Unconditioned, or more simply, the Absolute and the Infinite. The term *Absolute* expressing that which is finished or complete; the term *Infinite*, that which cannot be terminated or concluded. The notion of either Unconditioned is negative:—the Absolute and the Infinite can each be only conceived as a negation of the thinkable. In other words, of the Absolute and Infinite we have no conception at all." From this doctrine is derived a solution of the principles of Cause and Effect, of Substance and Accident, and of the perplexity of Liberty and Necessity. We are equally incapable of conceiving an absolute commencement and an infinite non-commencement of time; but this is merely the result of a mental impotence, not of a mental power; and it is in consequence of this impotence that, when we see an apparent commencement of existence, we are compelled to suppose that what apparently commences to exist must have existed previously, either actually or potentially,—that is to say, we suppose for it a Cause. We venture to maintain that this supposed judgment does not give the law of Causality; it does give another judgment not universal and necessary; it rests ultimately upon a different notion of Cause; and lastly, it is not true. With respect to the last allegation, we shall merely remark at present that an absolute commencement of time, or of existence in time, is something very different from the commencement of a particular existence in time. But in an argument such as this, our first business is to ascertain with certainty, and without prejudice, what is the primary datum of Consciousness. It is not enough to present us with a certain statement, and to say, This is equivalent, logically or metaphy-

sically, to the law of Causality, and therefore we may accept it as the original deliverance of Consciousness. It is false logic in psychology to say, A implies B, therefore B is given as a consequence of A. We are not to seek a metaphysical explanation of the notion of Cause, and set it up as an original datum of belief. Here the question is a simple one, of which Consciousness must be the test. I am conscious of a sensation, for which I am compelled to posit a cause,—*i. e.*, says Hamilton, to judge that the sensation existed potentially in me and the exciting cause together. What does this mean? It is only explicable by saying—I had a capacity to be so affected; and the rose, for example, had the power to affect me with the sensation of fragrance. Thus, in endeavouring to reduce the idea of Cause to that of Potentiality, we find ourselves driven to the converse reduction. Again, an animal dies suddenly before me: I conceive no new existence here, but a cessation of existence, and the application of the phraseology in question would produce simple nonsense, or would lead to a judgment very different from that of Causality. When we see a piece of a cliff give way, a branch of a tree broken off, what is it we suppose? Do we necessarily and at once believe that the event was produced by a cause with power? or do we necessarily and spontaneously believe only that the phenomenon did previously exist? If every man to whom this analysis is proposed recognises it as a correct account of what passes in his mind when he speaks or thinks of a Cause, there is no more to be said. But we doubt whether Sir W. Hamilton, if not defending a theory, *εἰ μὴ θεσιν διαφυλάττων*, would maintain that this is the primitive form of the judgment, that which is influential in men who have never learned to philosophise. Again, in the case of the act of an intelligent agent, do we infer that the agent had power because we are compelled to believe that the effect existed in him potentially, or are we at first compelled to suppose the power, and then by analysis of our notion conclude that we may say the effect existed in him? One single fact is sufficient to tear asunder these metaphysical subtleties: it is the impossibility of expressing Hamilton's statement in common language, or of making it plain to common men. It is only by the help of expressions invented by philosophers that it can be made intelligible; it is, therefore, not the primitive datum of Consciousness. This notion of a phenomenon, not a substance, existing in its causes, is a metaphysical generalisation, applying to events a conception primarily and properly applicable only to substances. And this it does by introducing the idea of Power. What is meant by saying that an action existed previously in the agent? It is merely an improper way of expressing that he had power to perform it. An oration necessarily supposes an

orator. Do we then believe this, because we believe that the sum of existence remains unchanged, and the oration must therefore have existed previously in the author's brain, and in the capacity of the atmosphere to transmit vibrations, and of the ear to receive them, etc. ? Well ; but are we then compelled to believe that the oration having left the author's brain, his capacity is diminished by so much, or that the capacity of the air for transmitting sounds is enfeebled, or our capacity for hearing is lessened ? We believe no such thing. We believe the oration was an exercise of power, which is so far from being diminished, that we can conceive it increased by the exertion ; *i. e.*, adopting our author's expression, we can actually believe that the sum of existence is increased.

We are confirmed in the above reasoning on the nature of the causal judgment, on the one hand, by the testimony of those philosophers who resolved it into a logical principle, or who considered it self-evident ; and, on the other, by that of Kant. He clearly saw, and explicitly states the principle of the Permanence of Substance, as standing at the head of the *a priori* laws of nature ; but he saw the necessity of distinguishing from it the law which regulates the succession of phenomena, *viz.*, that of Causality. Sir W. Hamilton takes the former principle alone, and extends it to phenomena at the expense of its evidence and truth. Whatever semblance of truth it retains, is owing partly to the notion of substance still adhering to the terms employed, and partly to the unexplained notion of power which it presupposes. For the theory which makes the causal judgment the result of impotence is, by its nature, precluded from giving the idea which lies at its root.

But, apart from the necessities of theory, is there any ground for supposing the judgment to be the issue of impotence ? We think not. A judgment so issuing cannot be a primitive spontaneous judgment ; it is first given, not in a primitive act, but in a reaction upon the attempt to pass the limits which our nature imposes. But if there be a conception or a judgment formed spontaneously, given in a primitive act, then, however logically it may be contained in our impotence, it must psychologically be wholly independent. Infant humanity may be unable to digest the strong meat of the Unconditioned ; but, in ignorance of its inability, it is impelled by a powerful instinct to seize the only instrument fitted to extract the secret treasures of its parent Nature. It would be no marvel if our whole nature were found to correspond to our instincts, so as even logically to contain the judgments they direct ; but the instincts have an unquestionable chronological independence. A learned and philosophic drake might argue profoundly and plausibly that

ducks swim in the pond, and quaffer with their bills in the mud at the bottom ; because, first, they cannot walk easily and gracefully on dry land ; and, secondly, the branches of the fifth nerve distributed to the skin of their bill make that organ highly sensitive, while they have little sense of touch on other parts of the body. We should be inclined to tell him that if his ancestors had walked on the dry land, or skipped about on trees to the best of their ability, until they discovered their unfitness for *terra firma*, and the proper use of their bill, they would probably have disappeared without issue. And, we suspect, so would our own ancestors, if they had no judgment of Causality until they tried to conceive an increase in the sum-total of being in the universe. As man lives in society, not because he has found the inconvenience or impossibility of living alone, but because he was born into the family, and his instinct made him remain there ; so it is that by other instincts, innate powers, or whatever they may be called, he is enabled to grasp at once the truths which are necessary to his preservation, and on which, at a later period, he turns his philosophic Consciousness, and discovers the law which he spontaneously obeyed.

Such a spontaneous development is that of the principle of Causality at first ; the true statement of which, as given by Reid, is, " Whatever begins to exist must have a cause which produced it." This judgment is given, not in the attempt to form an impossible conception, but by a natural inspiration. We have a consciousness of exercising a power of willing, and at the same time become aware that the desired effect has been produced. It is true the production of the organic effect is contingent ; and, therefore, some philosophers would have us believe that the whole process has the same character ; but it is certainly not so. Our ignorance of the connection of soul and body prohibits us from analysing all the steps in the effort ; otherwise we might be able to mark the exact point where it becomes dependent on the soundness of the bodily organs. But this one thing we know, that in the normal state, we do, by a mere exertion of will, set in motion a chain of processes, all unknown except the last, which is the effect intended. We are conscious of the first step, the effort of the will ; with the last we become acquainted contingently ; but it is not the less necessary to complete and develop our notion of effective power. The effort, indeed, logically presupposes the imperfect notion ; and if thwarted by paralysis, the exertion is not the less, but rather the more, for the disappointment which seems to do violence to the order of nature ; the consciousness of power goes on to seek its own completion in the desired effect, by the exercise of the authority which it knows to be rightfully its own. When we will—when

the infant wills to move its head and it moves, Consciousness tells him, and tells him truly, that himself produced the effect. This is the instinctive or spontaneous operation of the law, giving us at once the idea of power and the necessary connection of events with agents, which in the next step becomes explicit in particular instances, and is finally formulated in a general principle. And not only is it one of the earliest instincts of the human kind, but even in animals there is trace of a corresponding instinct. No theory, then, can be true which does not account for the spontaneous as well as the reflective judgment, or which ascribes to the developed principle an origin inconsistent with the earliest operations of the natural revelation which gave it birth.

Now, in general, what sort of causes does the law require us to suppose? Obviously efficient causes. "Savages," says Raynal, and Reid adds, children, "wherever they see motion they cannot account for, there they suppose a soul." Experience teaches us to push farther back the notion of efficiency, and then we get the notion, necessary for practical convenience, of physical causes. Yet Stewart notices, that even at a later age we often momentarily attribute life to inanimate objects. It is then no mere induction from experience which leads us to assign life where we see motion; on the contrary, it is the first impulse of the child, the savage, and even the beast. The cause we seek is a doer, an agent with power; and our idea of cause is correlative to, or rather convertible with, that of living activity. We cannot but suppose for every event, a cause with power to produce it; mere physical antecedents do not satisfy us. But could an efficient cause be discovered, we should seek no further. Let Consciousness decide the question, leaving apart logical inferences for the moment. When we are conscious of willing an act, do we feel compelled to seek an efficient cause of our will? Do we not, on the contrary, say at once, I did so? On this point we may appeal with perfect justice to the unprejudiced testimony of children and savages. They feel as forcibly as the philosopher the necessity of supposing causes for events; but they feel none for believing that they themselves are subject to the same law as the stones. *I choose, because I choose*, is their truly wise and irrefragable judgment, to which the highest philosophy can but return.

It is only reflection and experience which teach us that we act upon motives; and the first step in philosophy is to change analogy into identity, and to subject the mind itself to physical laws. Assume that the law is absolutely universal, and then we must logically include the mind; but we do so by an extravagance of logic, which would perforce include the monarch himself in the "Whosoever" of his royal decree. The soul rebels

against the attempt to subject her to the authority she has herself created.

But, is it not asked further of an intelligent agent, Why he did so? True, and language teaches us that in the answer to the question, it is not now a cause that we seek, but a reason. We say, What reason had he? implying indeed that a rational being acts not without motive,—as a judge not without evidence, but still as master of his own determination and will. Nor does the intelligent agent cease to be an efficient, even if it were proved that the will always obeys certain laws. But the proof of this must rest on some other principle distinct from that of the law of Causality. The principle which demands a motive for the actions of a rational being, is as distinct from that which requires a cause for a physical event, as the latter is from the principle of continuance of the laws of nature, or almost any other in the range of philosophy; and the ideas on which they rest are as heterogeneous as those of extension and time: one is necessary, the other contingent; one *a priori*, the other *a posteriori*; the one applicable exclusively in the sphere of body, the other exclusively in the sphere of mind. So far are cause and motive from being identical, that they are contradictory, and exclude each other. The latter notion is applied with confidence only in proportion to the rationality attributed to the object concerned; the former in proportion to the absence of life. To act without motives is called irrational; and the very perfection of independent and purely rational activity, which would be to act uninfluenced by prejudice or feeling, merely on a deliberate comparison of motives, would altogether exclude the notion of preceding physical causes. The will of such a being would be about as accessible to the influence of causes as an Irish millstone to the whistling of a jig.

When Sir W. Hamilton, then, charges the advocates of liberty with inconsistency in postulating a universal principle and then refusing its legitimate consequences. We deny both his premises and the legitimacy of his reasoning. The naturalist who affirms that every bird comes from an egg, is not inconsistent in holding that there was a first generation which did not come from an egg. The question, then, is not one of logic, but of psychology. The principle requires an intelligent cause for every event; but the intelligent cause itself is out of its sphere. And the absurdity is increased, when it is considered that our only ideas of cause and power, and the principle itself, are founded in our own Consciousness of being the very cause sought. And it remains to be proved that any person, whether necessitarian or otherwise, feels directly impelled to regard his own volition as an effect of a physical or efficient cause. Directly, we say; that is, otherwise

than as the consequence of a supposed logical or rational necessity. That we cannot conceive free agency is not wonderful; we cannot conceive the mental operations of others at all; for we can have no intuition of any mental power except as in ourselves. On the general question of the inconceivability of liberty, we shall have some remarks to offer presently.

The theory of the Conditioned is suicidal in the hands of Hamilton, and leads to the rejection of the ideas and facts of Liberty, God, the Soul, and the World. That it destroys the objectivity of the idea of Cause and the principle of Causality, in resolving it into a mental impotence, needs no further demonstration. If the idea of Substance meets the same fate. It, too, is given, according to Hamilton, by a mental impotence—the impotence of thinking a quality existing of itself, and is a merely negative notion that is to say, in our author's terminology, no notion at all. When, then, becomes of the external world,—in our conception of what as Locke says, the notion of substance is first and chief? are thus reduced, in the first instance, to phenomena without permanent basis. But do we rest here? No; for these phenomena of the Non-Ego are given in the act of Perception, the contradictory of the Ego. But we are incapable of this except under the condition of the relation of two contradictories and one of Hamilton's own examples of this principle is Consciousness of Self and Not-Self. See, then, the belief in non-ego reduced to a datum of mental impotence! Again, we cognise the external world only¹ as foreign cause and for substance; but the notions, cause and substance, which are null, as void of content, are suggested only in consequence of our impotence. Here, again, the doctrine of natural dualism is wrecked; and bodily substance has no objective reality. But, if the external world is lost, if the non-ego is reduced to a mental phenomenon, can we stop here? Surely Consciousness must be trusted when it gives us the Unity and Identity of Mind. Let us see. Is the substance of mind thinkable? is it also a mere negative result of impotence to think modifications apart from a subject modified? Sir William places precisely the same basis as bodily substance. It too, the null notion, the vain issue of incapacity. Unity and Identity bear the stamp of the same mint. The one cannot be the subject of Consciousness, the condition of which is Difference and Plurality; but we cannot think Plurality except under the condition of Unity; and hence, in the Plurality of modifications, we are blindly impelled to attribute Unity to the supposed substance. We cannot think of succession except “the quantum of existence.”

¹ Reasons might be alleged for excepting the case of Vision; but I leave this to W. Hamilton's principles.

remains unchanged;" and hence, again, the negative notion of Identity. In fact, in the inner world and in the outer, the same law leads to the same results. Mind is given as One, as Substance, as Cause; but all these are negative, *i.e.*, null conceptions. There remains the form under which all mental modifications are given—Self. I am conscious of a modification, that is, not the substance is conscious of the modification, nor a new modification is conscious of the former, for the consciousness and the modification are one and the same; it is then the modification which recognises itself, or rather the plural modifications, which recognise themselves, and conceive themselves to belong to one subject, which we, that is, the aforesaid modifications are incapable of conceiving, except as something contradictory and inconceivable *viz.*, as Substance, Cause, and One. In the last result, then, Hamilton's philosophy and Kant's are identical. Hegel summed up the latter thus: "It is not true, for we must necessarily believe it;" and Hamilton almost accepts the principle, when he says (*Discussions*, p. 28), "It behoved M. Cousin, instead of assuming the objective correality of his two elements on the fact of their subjective correlation, to have suspected on this very ground that the reality of the one was inconsistent with the reality of the other."

It is true Sir W. Hamilton escapes this annihilating result by affirming that the belief in Self and Not-Self, and the Unity and Identity of the former, is given by a mental power, not a mental impotence. But he brings no reason for thus placing these conceptions on a special ground of their own. By his theory we cannot think Self as cause, or as substance, or as one. What, then, is the Self which is none of these? If inconceivable as existing under these characters, much less, if possible, is it conceivable out of them—as absolute. If Consciousness is appealed to for the directness of the deliverance and the immediate obligation to believe; the principles of Cause, of Substance, and the Infinite, will not yield to the belief in an external world, even could they be separated. The history of philosophy with incontestable evidence affirms their power of surviving unshaken the destruction of this natural belief.

There is yet another point of view in which, as it seems to us, the weapons of Sir W. Hamilton may be turned against his own theory. But as it is more closely connected with the question of the truth, apart from the consistency, of the theory, we shall proceed to examine shortly the former question.

In the first place, then, we must deny the supposed equilibrium of what Sir W. Hamilton calls the Absolute and the Infinite; but if this equilibrium is disproved, the whole theory falls to the ground. How do we reach, for example, the notions (we cannot

now call them conceptions) of a bounded and unbounded space? or of an indivisible minimum and of infinite divisibility? It is true I cannot conceive a division finally terminated; but I can place myself mentally at any supposed limit, and then I perceive the impossibility that there should not be further divisibility. Of course, we speak of space, not of matter. So also I can place myself at the supposed bounds of space, I can conceive any finite space of whatever magnitude; but I know then that in its essence it implies space beyond. Small and large are but relative, and a small and a large space must possess the same attributes;—I believe therefore that space is infinite. But in trying to compass this Infinite in representation, we find ourselves incompetent to the task; for we can have no presentative knowledge of the Infinite, and therefore no representation. Do we then feel ourselves forced to admit its impossibility? By no means. We feel that it is our own weakness which renders our efforts vain. So far, then, is this example from justifying Sir W. Hamilton in affirming that the opposite extremes are equally unthinkable, and therefore alternately rejected, that we say, on the contrary, that the one extreme is known, in the attempt to think it, to involve contradiction; for its supposed attributes are separately thinkable, but cannot be united in thought, while the opposite extreme is wholly unthinkable (in representation) in any of its attributes; but not the less is it believed: I seek the Infinite because I cannot rest in the finite—I recoil from it only because I am unable to attain it in intuition.

Sir W. Hamilton has, it is true, collected a number of contradictions involved in the notion of the Infinite; but these contradictions do not really arise from the notion, but from the application to it of conceptions which, for want of an intuition, we cannot at once judge to be incompatible with it. A little more knowledge might show these antilogies to be as ridiculous as those which the guests of Taurus used to contribute to his intellectual pic-nics. Such as, Does a man die when alive or when dead; or when does a learner become a skilful artist—when he is such, or when he is not? and the like; and, of course, whatever side be taken can be shown to be absurd. Endless examples of the like dilemmas may be found in the older dialecticians, beginning from Plato; and more may be added *ad libitum*. Take, as an instance, a demonstration of the impossibility of melody. For the sounds must be perceived either simultaneously, and then there is harmony, or only in succession, and then there is a mere series of unrelated impressions. Motion was long ago shown to involve manifold contradictions, and Hamilton affirms the validity of Zeno's argument. We may thank him for placing the conceivability of the Infinite and of Motion on the same founda-

tion; we are content that they should stand or fall together. But, in fact, Sir W. Hamilton really, and to all practical purpose, gives up the equilibrium of the Infinite and Absolute when he says (vol. ii., p. 539), "We cannot positively conceive (what however we firmly believe) the eternity of a Self-Existent—of God; but still less can we think or tolerate the supposition of something springing out of nothing."

The Infinite is unthinkable, says Hamilton, because we can think only under the condition of existence in relation; and—the other premiss, one would think, ought to be, the Infinite cannot exist in relation—but Sir William does not maintain so absurd a paradox; he admits expressly that the Infinite does not cease to be Infinite by existing in relation, but affirms that, as an object of thought, it ceases to be thought as Infinite if thought in relation. But what then? Is the Infinite, which we are incapable of conceiving, after all not the Infinite which we believe, but a mere abstract notion as impossible as it is inconceivable,—an Infinite whose only attribute is infinity, which is neither cause nor effect, substance nor attribute? We are told that we cannot conceive God; we, while admitting the inadequacy of our conception, affirm its reality as given in our belief in His existence, His infinity, His goodness, power, and other attributes. But, replies the philosopher, these are Relations; these annihilate the idea. If you would form a conception of the Infinite, you must strip it of all attributes; you must conceive it out of relation; thus only can you attain the conception. But supposing this done, of what then have we the conception? Of the true Infinite as existing? No; it has attributes, it exists in relation. Of a possible Infinite? No; of a metaphysical abstraction, which does not and cannot exist, a mere word. What matters it if the Infinite as Infinite is inconceivable, if the Infinite as existing is conceived?

We may appeal to language as containing the universal and unprejudiced judgment of mankind, that the notion of the Infinite is natural to the mind. To this argument Hamilton replies,—1. That the word *infinite* is in all languages negative; 2. That words exist in all languages to express the negation of thought, *e. g.*, *inconceivable*. Now, to take the second argument first, the words referred to are required to express the impossibility of uniting in one subject two or more given conceptions. In other words, though applied to an impossible whole, they imply the previous conception of the parts; and as we can attempt the combination of our intuitions in all enumerable ways, these words are necessary to distinguish those that are impossible to thought. But if we have no conception of the Infinite whatever, there exists no such reason for the formation of the word. If we

know and can think only finite objects, no combination of conceptions can possibly necessitate the use of such a predicate. In short, the *inconceivable* may arise out of elements of thought being brought together by the ordinary laws of mind; but the Infinite presupposes the Infinite.

As regards the negative form of the word, this only proves that our first notions, or at least those for which we require names first, are finite; and that the Infinite is known as the negative of the finite; but a negative notion is not, in ordinary language, the same as no notion at all. The argument, in fact, has exactly the same value as that which would deny the existence of any but sensible ideas, on the ground (equally true with that here alleged) that all words are originally the signs of these. But as for the word *infinite* itself, it is obviously an abstract term, which would not be needed until a very late stage in the history of a language; but other terms exist which contain the notion, and are not in any language negative. Such are *Ever, Eternal, God, etc.*

We appeal, in the next place, to universal belief. We hold, with M. Cousin, "Ce qui serait absolument incompréhensible n'aurait nul rapport avec notre intelligence, et ne pourrait être admis ni même soupçonné par elle. Croire c'est connaître et comprendre en quelque degré. . . . La foi, quelle que soit sa forme, quel que soit son objet, vulgaire ou sublime, ne peut pas être autre chose que le consentement de la raison."—(*Cours*, 2me. série, i., p. 97.) Is our comprehension imperfect, in contemplating its defects our faith partakes of the imperfection. Is faith triumphant, it can scorn the play of contradiction which perplexes the self-overreaching understanding, while it builds on the immovable certainty of the fragmentary knowledge it is conscious of possessing. It has light enough to see its own place in the surrounding obscure, though unable to give a consistent form to distant objects, much less to map out correctly their relative positions.¹

But let us see whether Sir W. Hamilton is not bound to admit that the Infinite is known. "To be conscious of the operation of a faculty is, in fact, to be conscious of the object of that operation" (i. 211). "It is palpably impossible that we can be conscious of an act without being conscious of the object to which that act is relative" (212). The principle is often repeated with expression sufficiently various to give it the highest degree of generality. It is applied in detail to the act of knowledge (vol. i., p. 228). "How can I be conscious that my

¹ Sir W. Hamilton appears not essentially to differ from M. Cousin in this last result. "The Divinity in a certain sense is revealed; in a certain sense concealed: He is at once known and unknown."—(*Discussions*, p. 15, note.)

present modification exists—that it is a perception, and not another mental state—that it is a perception of sight, to the exclusion of every other sense—and, finally, that it is a perception of the inkstand, and of the inkstand only, unless my Consciousness comprehend within its sphere the object which at once determines the existence of the act, qualifies its kind, and distinguishes its individuality?” Now, what is Belief? In Hamilton’s classification it must be an act of the cognitive faculty. But he expressly asserts that we believe the Infinite; we believe our own causality and liberty, etc. Without insisting here that this belief is itself a cognition, let us apply the principle that consciousness of the act implies consciousness of the object; and for Knowledge in the above quotation let us read Belief, to which the same observations must be applicable,—1. as an act of a faculty; 2. as an act, in particular, of the cognitive faculty. “I believe the Infinite. How can I be conscious that my present modification exists, that it is a belief, a belief of the Infinite, and of the Infinite only, unless my consciousness comprehend within its sphere the object [here a conception] which determines the existence of the act, qualifies its kind, and distinguishes its individuality?” The consequence is irresistible. Either Hamilton must give up the principle which he has taken such pains to establish as essential to Natural Realism, and must give up besides his classification, or else must admit that we do think the Infinite.

Again, the knowledge of contradictories being one, the conception of the Unconditioned is given along with that of the Conditioned. To M. Cousin using this argument, Hamilton replies, in the passage already quoted, that although mutually suggesting each other, contradictories are not therefore both real; nay, “it behoved M. Cousin, instead of assuming the objective correlative of his two elements [Finite and Infinite] in the fact of their subjective correlation, to have suspected, on this very ground, that the reality of the one was inconsistent with the reality of the other.” Surely never was there a more suicidal argument. The question is not now of the objective reality, but of the subjective apprehension, of the two elements. The objection calls in the latter, which it was intended to destroy, to aid in overthrowing the former, which was to have been carefully preserved. The argument might pass muster in the hands of a sceptic, but in those of Sir W. Hamilton, who affirms the objective reality here refuted, and that on the ground of a necessity of belief, it passes our comprehension.

But it is time, perhaps, to consider more precisely what is meant by the term Inconceivable. First, it is applied when two or more notions which we can think separately cannot

be thought together, either as being heterogeneous, or as containing contradictory conceptions. Again, when a notion is imperfect, and our intuitions do not supply us with any means of completing it: of this incompleteness all our conceptions partake, more or less. Again, when a fact is known, but we have not the necessary material to enable us to think how it is. This is the characteristic of all the primitive data of Consciousness. Fourthly, when a supposition is logically irreconcilable with our previous convictions, or apparently so; when, to use the expression lately cited from Sir W. Hamilton, we cannot tolerate the supposition. These cases, where we call a proposition inconceivable, ought to be distinguished from those in which the term is applied to a notion simply. Lastly, omitting more lax applications of the word, a notion is said to be inconceivable when it is incapable of representation to the imagination. What has never been presented, or consists of parts, any of which have never been known in intuition, cannot be represented; and therefore, more particularly, whatever our presentative faculties are by its nature incapable of attaining. The Infinite is for this reason not to be compassed in imagination; but it is not therefore incogitable by the Reason, which can attain a knowledge of its attributes; and finding in them no contradiction, not only is capable of thinking it, but asserts its power by discovering the necessary existence of the object of its thought. But further, as to the more special conditions of representative conceptions, Representation takes place, as Sir William Hamilton shows to be probable, through the organ of the original Presentation; for instance, a representation of an object of sight by means of the organ of vision. Experiment seems to show, that when the nervous centre appropriated to the sense loses its power, representation of this class of perceptions becomes impossible. He has not treated the question, how representation of objects of internal intuition is effected; but if a similar law may be presumed, it can only be by a reproduction of the act in the faculty to which it originally belonged. A judgment, for instance, might be reproduced by an act of judgment, but not in an act of will. A volition, on the other hand, could not be reproduced by a judgment or conception, but in its own faculty by a volition. The words *conception of a volition* are repugnant: volition is a simple and momentary act, of which the mind is conscious only at the moment of its existence; by its nature inconceivable in the sense of representation in imagination, but capable of reproduction in a new act of will. This is the only representation which is compatible with it; and the attempt to realise a representation by any other means, whether by the faculties of sense or intellect, must lead to nothing but

contradictions.¹ A demonstration of liberty must be impossible ; in fact, neither *self* nor *free* could occur in the premises. If our personal causation be assumed as an ultimate fact, the demonstration will be a circle ; if otherwise, we have no data whatever, not even the requisite ideas.

Briefly, then, to state our conclusion, we would say, that in each of the categories enumerated by Sir W. Hamilton, one extreme cannot be compassed by the understanding in representation ; the other is, besides, insupposable, repugnant to the reason.

Liberal as Sir W. Hamilton is, in general, towards his predecessors, one of the greatest of them has received rather hard measure at his hands. Had our space permitted, we should have liked to show that he has altogether mistaken the scope of the passage cited by him from the "Examination of P. Malebranche's Opinion," on the ground of which he charges Locke with holding the separate entity of ideas. This, however, must be deferred.

The last result of Locke's philosophy and that of Sir W. Hamilton's is the same ; a confession of ignorance, a knowing when the "mind is at the end of its tether." Had the former possessed the clearness and method which characterised the latter, and had he been able to employ an equally precise and consistent terminology, the history of philosophy would have been very different ; how different, it is impossible to tell. To precision and depth, Sir William adds, in his Lectures, the clearness and, we may almost say, simplicity which are so necessary in works intended for elementary instruction in philosophy. It would not be easy to find a work better fitted for such purposes than the present. Although bearing, as might be expected, abundant traces of the author's extensive learning, and of the skill which enabled him at once to draw from his ample stores whatever was to be found most appropriate to the subject under discussion ; his pages are not overloaded with recondite learning, which needed not display. Were they adorned with the eloquence of Cousin, or even the brilliancy of inferior philosophers, there would be little to desire. But we cannot have perfection ; and in philosophy, correctness of thought is certainly infinitely preferable to beauty of diction, which, indeed, too often blinds us to the emptiness or falsehood of the opinions it veils.

¹ There is another reason, too, which cannot be omitted. Neither existence nor action can be conceived except under the form of present time ; and no attribute of mind can be conceived (if we allow the term) except under the form of self.