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THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

BY CHARLES A. BEAUPRE

VOLUME I

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AMERICAN SCIENCE SERIES, BRIEFER COURSE

PSYCHOLOGY

BY

WILLIAM JAMES

Professor of Psychology in Harvard University



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PREFACE.

IN preparing the following abridgment of my large work, the Principles of Psychology, my chief aim has been to make it more directly available for class-room use. For this purpose I have omitted several whole chapters and rewritten others. I have left out all the polemical and historical matter, all the metaphysical discussions and purely speculative passages, most of the quotations, all the book-references, and (I trust) all the impertinences, of the larger work, leaving to the teacher the choice of orally restoring as much of this material as may seem to him good, along with his own remarks on the topics successively studied. Knowing how ignorant the average student is of physiology, I have added brief chapters on the various senses. In this shorter work the general point of view, which I have adopted as that of 'natural science,' has, I imagine, gained in clearness by its extrication from so much critical matter and its more simple and dogmatic statement. About two fifths of the volume is either new or rewritten. the rest is 'scissors and paste.' I regret to have been unable to supply chapters on pleasure and pain, æsthetics, and the moral sense. Possibly the defect may be made up in a later edition, if such a thing should ever be demanded.

I cannot forbear taking advantage of this preface to make a statement about the composition of the 'Principles of Psychology.' My critics in the main have been so indulgent that I must cordially thank them; but they have been unanimous in one reproach, namely, that my

order of chapters is planless and unnatural; and in one charitable excuse for this, namely, that the work, being largely a collection of review-articles, could not be expected to show as much system as a treatise cast in a single mould. Both the reproach and the excuse misapprehend the facts of the case. The order of composition is doubtless unshapely, or it would not be found so by so many. But planless it is not, for I deliberately followed what seemed to me a good pedagogic order, in proceeding from the more concrete mental aspects with which we are best acquainted to the so-called elements which we naturally come to know later by way of abstraction. The opposite order, of 'building-up' the mind out of its 'units of composition,' has the merit of expository elegance, and gives a neatly subdivided table of contents; but it often purchases these advantages at the cost of reality and truth. I admit that my 'synthetic' order was stumblingly carried out; but this again was in consequence of what I thought were pedagogic necessities. On the whole, in spite of my critics, I venture still to think that the 'unsystematic' form charged upon the book is more apparent than profound, and that we really gain a more living understanding of the mind by keeping our attention as long as possible upon our entire conscious states as they are concretely given to us, than by the *post-mortem* study of their comminuted 'elements.' This last is the study of artificial abstractions, not of natural things.*

* In the present volume I have given so much extension to the details of 'Sensation' that I have obeyed custom and put that subject first, although by no means persuaded that such order intrinsically is the best. I feel now (when it is too late for the change to be made) that the chapters on the Production of Motion, on Instinct, and on Emotion ought, for purposes of teaching, to follow immediately upon that on Habit, and that the chapter on Reasoning ought to come in very early, perhaps immediately after that upon the Self. I advise teachers to adopt this modified order, in spite of the fact that with the change of place of 'Reasoning' there ought properly to go a slight amount of re-writing.

But whether the critics are right, or I am, on this first point, the critics are wrong about the relation of the magazine-articles to the book. With a single exception all the chapters were written for the book; and then by an after-thought some of them were sent to magazines, because the completion of the whole work seemed so distant. My lack of capacity has doubtless been great, but the charge of not having taken the utmost pains, according to my lights, in the composition of the volumes, cannot justly be laid at my door.

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