

THE  
PSYCHOLOGY  
OF THE  
GROWTH OF IDEAS.

A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Department of Philosophy  
University of Southern California.

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by  
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May, 1910.

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INTRODUCTION.

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To the student of history and human affairs, one of the most interesting and fascinating observations is the development of ideas. This process is the more striking for its close analogy to the development of living forms, beginning with a germ thought and expanding by the double power of its own energy and that of its surroundings, until it reaches such a stage of maturity as to reproduce by giving off the seed thought out of which distinct ideas grow.

A close similarity to this life history of ideas in the individual mind, is found in group, national, and race ideas.

Throughout an undergraduate course, majoring in history and electing as much philosophy as possible, this field was very attractive to the writer of this paper. After graduation in 1905 his interest was deepened by frequent discussions with the Rev. John Oliver, who was then preparing a graduate thesis on the related theme, "Why Ideas Live."

While not attempting to treat a subject of such familiarity, with entire originality, an effort of this paper will be to avoid a mere collection of quotations hyphenated by original connectives.

As our interest is in the process of their growth and not in the ideas themselves, we shall be at liberty to observe in any fields of thought which shall offer good examples,

and our interest in the character of the ideas examined shall be secondary to the inquiry, how they grow.

Beginning with the proof of the ground of our thesis, already suggested, that ideas are a growth, we shall proceed to examine the process of their growth, first in the individual mind, then in groups, nations, and races. Throughout these examinations an effort will be made to discover such uniformities as would indicate a law for the growth of ideas.

Before the subject proper is entered upon we should define the important terms of the thesis. Broadly speaking, "psychology is the science of mind;" but in developing a science of mind, two diametrically opposite methods are now in vogue, introspection and external experiment. The first deals primarily with consciousness and performs its experiments in this inner sphere; the second deals first with physical stimuli and physical manifestations of mental action. Our psychology will be of an introspective character, believing, to use a parody, that the only proper study of mentality is mind. By introspection, however, we shall connote all of what is usually termed "inner experience," and to whatever degree inner experience gets its materials from the outer world, we shall be concerned to examine the sensuous contact between them. Our point of insistence is that the inner experience is the legitimate realm of psychology.

By "growth" as applied to ideas we shall mean such change as helps to attain a beneficial end. The term growth thus applied has this emphatic difference from its usual meaning, it may as well stand for diminution as expansion. For the

definition, "The objects of the understanding when a man thinks."

The progress of our study has led us into such wide and diverse fields that we have been compelled to condense into a paragraph observations which it might take a series of volumes to put forth in detail. For this, however, we offer no apology, for we seek to set forth how ideas grow in the large field of human thought and not in any one or few of its specialized corners.

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## CHAPTER I.

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IDEAS ARE A GROWTH.

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It must be with modesty and caution that the thesis, "ideas are a growth" is approached, for it leads immediately into the much disputed and almost interminable field of the origin of ideas.

A brief sketch of the history of this dispute, naming only a few of the principal disputants, may furnish the setting for the position taken. Such a sketch must begin with Plato, the unquestioned pioneer in this field of philosophical thought. His theory of ideas formed the center of his whole system. He held that ideas were the true forms of all things toward which all objects and sense perceptions of objects were approximations. These true forms were spiritual and therefore were incapable of complete embodiment in objective form or of perception through the senses. The ideas were also fixed spiritual entities, where-as the whole phenomenal world and perceptions of it were in continual flux. The ideas constituted an intellectual world which could be entered only by the reason, and the goal of philosophy was to induct the learner into that world where the ideas would be known immediately and all objects and perceptions of objects would be comprehended as imperfect approximations to their real

forms, the ideas. Manifestly, Plato's whole treatment of the subject precluded the possibility of the growth of ideas. They were the only fixed things, all the rest might grow or decay but ideas were the permanent realities.

Plato's most illustrious pupil, Aristotle, modified his teacher's views considerably in the direction of their attitude toward the objective world. What Plato had called "ideas", Aristotle called "universals." They were the fixed eternal materials of knowledge, but Aristotle allowed a large place to the senses in furnishing materials to the reason by which, over a syllogistic stairway, the mind might reach, "the knowledge of unchangable Being and of the ultimate basis of things, of the universal and necessary." Thus in Aristotle there is not a growth of ideas, but a growth of opinion which is helpful in arriving at the comprehension of these fixed universals.

In the succeeding Greek schools of Stoics, Epicurians and Sceptics the attitudes are of a mixed and varying degree Platonic and Aristotelian, their distinctive names coming rather from the practical deduction they made from their epistemology than from its character.

Christian counterparts for Plato and Aristotle were found in Origen and Augustine, the church fathers, who effected the adoption of philosophy by the church. What Origen

<sup>1</sup> A discussion of the relation of this and other views to our first proposition must be reserved until after the other views have been presented.

held for the apriori character of ideas, Augustine modified by his insistence upon the use of experience and critical examination directed by doubt. These added no real element to the dispute in question, but prepared the way for that long period of the "schoolmen", whose main concern with philosophy was to whip its conclusions into line with the dictums of the then dominant church. Suffice it to say of them that the problem fluctuated in their hands as in those of their greater predecessors, but without the addition of important elements.

Des Cartes in the first half of the seventeenth century gave the study of the method of knowledge its first modern impulse. There was little in which he was an originator, being distinctly in the Aristotle-Augustine line of intellectual descendance, but his insistence upon critical method is his chief part in ushering in the modern era of philosophic and scientific thought. His Principia begins with the enunciation of this basic principle of his systematic universal doubt,<sup>1</sup> "Once in life we should endeavor to doubt of all things." This was in effect to reduce the mind to a blank and in reconstructing it to admit only such ideas as could pass muster after the inspection of doubt. The first challenge of his doubt was lodged against his very existence and resulted in the finding, "Cogito, ergo sum." With this certificate of his being in the fact of his thinking he challenged the existence of all other

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from biographical article in Biblical and Theological Cyclopaedia, McClintock & Strong.

things and concluded that they must also depend upon an Intelligence. His own mind was found to contain an idea of such an Intelligence. Having thus accounted for himself and God and the material universe and innate, god-implanted ideas in the mind, he was ready to examine the process of knowledge getting. This he found to be a mixture of apriorism and empiricism. The basis of his examination is his "critèrion of truth;" if ideas are simple they are innate, if clear and distinct they may be received with no further doubt. Thus Des Cartes marks a step nearer the present scientific view, principally in his critical method, but not enough nearer to escape the rebuttals of the English leaders of the scientific school, soon to appear.

What Des Cartes was doing on the continent, always working in fear of the inquisitorial hand of Rome, Bacon was doing across the channel with a freer hand. His importance to this discussion, however, was most in his establishment of the inductive method of procedure, which quickly possessed the whole field of English thought. Like most of new tendencies, Bacon's induction soon led to excesses in supposing that induction alone could lead to a conclusion. Induction can pile its materials to the heavens but they must remain a more or less homogeneous pile of specific instances until the mind does some authoritative work upon them and forms its deduction. As put in a remark of Wundt,<sup>1</sup> "The chief difference between modern

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by editor of Nation, in review of "Analogies of Human Mind, J. S. Mill; Nation, Nov., 1869.

attempts to put psychology on a basis like that of physical science and earlier speculative systems, is that speculations are now put forth as the results of scientific research, while formerly facts of observation were frequently put forth as objects of pure thought." It was very easy for the English school of philosophers to take the bent of Bacon and make induction the only means of arriving at knowledge of the sciences, and later to say that the beginnings of knowledge are derived solely from a sensuous induction.

This overworking of the principle of induction in the realm of psychology was first indulged in by Locke, who sought to maintain by it, the bald thesis that all ideas originate from sensations and are in fact only the mental equivalents of sensations, and this upon the observation of individual cases of sense stimulation. The weakness of his work is lamented by Professor Ladd, himself very much of an empiricist.<sup>1</sup> His view of the mind as a blank page to be written upon by the objective world, through the senses, leaves much to be explained in the action of the mind.

Hume following Locke applied a little more critical ability to the same thesis and together they furnished a

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<sup>1</sup> "But alas! Like so many of his avowed or unconscious followers, he was guilty of the fallacy which lies in the supposition - even now so widely current - that a survey of the superficial content of our individual cognitions, and of their more obvious associations and logical relations, is a sufficient answer to the quest for a philosophy of knowledge." -Lodd, "Philosophy of Knowledge", p. 62, Scribners' Sons, New York, 1897.

foundation for the more radically materialistic doctrines of J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer. These men opened the door into the present popular physiological psychology, seconded as they were by a strong German school of the same bent.

It remains for us to speak of only one other conspicuous figure in this battle of the giants, Immanuel Kant, undoubtedly the central star in the philosophical constellation. The manner in which he weighed in the balances both sides of the long controversy can hardly be better commended than by using the language of one holding many counter views to the great German: <sup>1</sup> "To the lonely thinker of Koenigsburg it was given, first among men, to plan and to attempt the critique of human cognition in a manner which left the impress of his thinking upon both the problem and its answer to the end of time." Kant's three critiques resulted not only in adding much new light on the method of getting knowledge but especially in focalizing the discussion of the subject so as to throw out irrelevant matters. To epitomize his findings on the matter in question, sense impressions can give the mental faculty only a heterogeneous manifold; such impressions come to the mind through its own constitutional forms, which he calls the catagories; the mind does its supreme work not in receiving and acting upon the sense impression given by contact with the outside world, but by transcending what is given by its own activities. The human mind at

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<sup>1</sup> Ladd, "Philosophy of Knowledge," p. 72, Scribners' Sons, New York, 1897.

Kant's conclusion is seen to be a unity and while its functions, qualities, or parts may be subjected to criticism apart from the whole, these criticisms are not of the mind as a unity but of the parts, qualities or functions.<sup>1</sup>

It would go beyond our purpose to discuss the relation of each one of the disputants noticed in this sketch to our thesis, ideas are a growth. We have given this outline to bring out the fact that in this controversy, as old as philosophy itself, the ease of working from the sense and object side has ever offered an alluring prospect, but in every period of history when the facility of this surface method has long engaged the workers in the psychological field, its futility has driven some master mind back to the touch-stone of psychology, the nature and functions of the mind as observable in its self activity. With all the glowing promises of adequate results of the study of the mind from the sense side, there is ever a note of disappointment at the meagreness of the actual returns, even among the most enthusiastic devotee of that method. This, however, might be expected to be the case, since touching only the outside rim of mental phenomena would naturally yield surface conclusions.

The exaggerated empiricism now prevalent is giving great encouragement to experiments upon the physical organs most intimately effecting the thinking self, and it would be foolish as well as impossible to set at naught the many achieve-

<sup>1</sup> The best brief sketch of the history of this dispute known to us is found in Philosophy of Knowledge, Ladd, Chapters II & III, Scribners' Sons, New York, 1897.

ments in this line of investigation, but in the light of the long epistemological controversy there is reason to predict the return to the deeper method of introspection before a satisfactory knowledge of growth of ideas is attained. In fact the more recent writings of Wm. James<sup>1</sup> and especially the work of the late Borden P. Bowne<sup>2</sup> are distinct returns to the introspective method.

What is really under examination in most of the so-called physiological-psychology experiments is the physical mediate between the mind itself and the outside world. It is urged by the devotees to this method that the mind cannot be separated from this mediate, the senses, but if this is granted it must be with the qualification that they are the exterior furniture of the mind, related to the interior as the doors and windows are related to a house. A study of the material, structure and functions of the doors and windows may be interesting and important as such, and indeed it may lead to some discoveries of minor importance regarding the occupant, but it could scarcely be dignified with the name of a complete study of the man within. So with measure of the time it takes for the nervous system to bring a sense impression to consciousness and return to observable expression the signs of the consciousness produced, may prove how well the door is hung and whether or not the window sticks in opening, but it

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<sup>1</sup> James, "The Will to Believe." James.

<sup>2</sup> Bowne, "Theory of Thought and Knowledge." Bowne.



cannot come much nearer to giving a knowledge of the thinking self.

Then to say that ideas are a growth is in effect to say that mental work is a growth, which few will deny. And if it is freely granted that at least the initial stimuli to mental work are received from the outer world through the senses, this does not in any measure approach the admission that the mind is simply the sum total of animal sensitivity in a highly evolved form. To make out of this heterogenous mass of sense impressions given in a sight of a Raphael picture the finished product which the mind does, grace, harmony and beauty in color and form, a library of history, an oratorio of music, and a thrill of tragedy; this so far transcends the function of any series of finely adjusted ganglia, as to call for no apology in saying the mind is more than its sense accessories.

We are thus free to say ideas are a growth. The mind is always mind and never a simple nervous disturbance, and it impresses its imperial form upon all which comes to it. In its simplest activity it is regal and it is hardly a lack of reverence to say, "of its kingdom there shall be no end." It imposes its authority upon all things which come in its path and this increase of its kingdom is the growth of ideas.

It would be failing to take account of facts if some of the benefits of the physiological method were not noted here. Certainly the least that can be said is that the present over-emphasis on the physical side of the problem has so aroused

attention that psychology can never again be that purely speculative study which it once was. Also great moral and ethical results have come from the teaching which has called especial attention to the relation between physical and mental well being. But again we must insist that when the utmost possibilities of the physical method have been exhausted, the investigators will stand barely inside the threshold of pure psychology.

It must be noticeable even in the brief sketch here given of the historic controversy as to the origin of ideas, that the content of the word "idea" has changed upon the lips of almost every disputant, and it is left for us in this chapter to give the reason for the content which we have espoused in the introduction and to fit it into our thesis.

It is certainly open to one to give to the term its Platonic content of "real form," but if that is done, another name must be supplied for what Locke was speaking of when he said, "Whatever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks, I call an idea." The Platonic content is well enough to describe a perfection of knowledge only attainable by an absolute being, but as we seek not to construct a theoretical psychology of a deity, but a psychology of the actual operations of the human mind, we should give a content to the term which describes what the human mind does, rather than what a mind differently constituted might do. Under these limitations the best definition of which we have knowledge is the simple "objects of the understanding when a man thinks."

This shuts out all irrational mental activity, for that is not thought. Likewise it includes all rational mental activities of whatsoever character, from the first mental activity which may be called consciousness to the most involved problem or speculation which the mind can conceive. In short the mind works in terms of ideas always, and it cannot work rationally in any other way. When the avenues of entrance, the nervous system, have been so obstructed as to distort out of coherency the information given, the product of the mind does not deserve the name ideas. It is the material of ideas broken and scattered.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE GROWTH OF IDEAS IN THE INDIVIDUAL MIND: INFANT MIND.

When it is found that ideas are a growth, the process of their growth immediately becomes an engaging subject. The individual mind is the most natural field for observation on this topic, and the individual mind at the outset of idea-growing, in infancy, is the quarter of the field most capable of yielding instructive results in the study. We therefore turn our attention to this quarter.

Strangely this was one of the latest fields of psychological investigation to be entered, but so fruitful has it been found, that during the last thirty years a voluminous and rich literature has developed from it.<sup>1</sup> In a characteristically clear introduction to the English translation of "Infant Mind, by Prof. W. Preyer" -, Dr. W. T. Harris, names Dr. Stanly Hall as "the pioneer and enthusiastic promoter" of this branch of study in America, through his enthusiasm this literature has sprung up and has exerted a great influence upon the home life and public school system of our country. Added to this general interest, a propaganda has been instituted and now exists in almost every city, village and rural community, called "child study circles." These are mostly in connection

<sup>1</sup> For a partial list of this literature, see the bibliography at the end of this paper.

with schools or women's clubs.

In the book above referred to, and in a two volume work which preceded it, entitled "The Mind of the Child," Professor Preyer has made one of the most valuable contributions to this field of inquiry. It is avowedly physiological in its starting point, but throughout recognizes the limits imposed upon such an investigation. His opening sentence in "Infant Mind" draws a sharp distinction between the mind as such, and the senses as its accessories, by saying "the senses are the only gate at which the world enters the mind of man."

From this generally admitted fact there has always been a temptation for the psychologist to say that the mind is a "tabula rasa" on which the senses inscribe the records of the outside world. This view which has passed down from Aristotle and received its most exaggerated emphasis in Locke and his successors, seems to have found so much charm in the simplicity of its answer, that it has overlooked the remarkable qualities implied in a blank page which can make out of its simple impressions so much more than is given in them. It is like saying the human voice is only a sound of such and such volume and tone. No one will deny that it is such a sound, but it is so much more, that it is said George Whitefield could pronounce the word "Mesopotamia" in such a manner as to cause his hearers to weep. In truth when rightly considered, this very fact that the mind at the beginning is such a blank as to achievement, but such a power-house as to potentiality, instead

of showing that sensitivity is the mind, is one of the most demonstrative proofs that the mind is lord of a castle, the "gate" of which is sense.

This fact, noted at the close of the last chapter, is brought forth again because even in dealing with the infant mind it must be remembered that battering at the "gate" will rouse his lordship, and that when aroused, not the things which batter, or the gate which is battered will determine his action, but his own regal fiat.<sup>1</sup>

With this firmly borne in mind, we may examine how the "gate" swings open and brings to the self activity the raw material which is transformed in the very act of being received and by the very nature of the mind which receives it, into ideas. Until this idea-form has been put upon what is given in sense, it must remain something less than mental activity, less than thought. What we call sense-impression must so remain until it has aroused the self and the self has conformed that which is presented to its own constitution; in other words until it has made out of the presentation, an idea.

Whatever the arousing stimuli may be, mental activity has not taken place until some form has been created in consciousness be it, sweet, loud, soft, bright or fragrant, or

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<sup>1</sup> "That which is an original energy cannot be explained by its environment because it is independent; nor is it, strictly speaking, correlated to the body, although it uses it in sense-perception and in volition as an instrument of communication with the outer world." Harris, W.T., "Psychological Foundations of Education" D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1898.

only the more rudimentary forms of pleasure or pain. In short there is no possibility for anything but ideas in consciousness, and whatever may lead up to consciousness, it is ever less than consciousness until the mind has conformed what is given, to itself; and as soon as that has taken place the product is something so vastly more than the stimulus and different from it, that it must bear a new name; it is an idea. The distinction of sense-impression and perception, which is commonly made between these is not sharp enough, unless it is remembered that all which is less than a perception is less than a mental act. As Preyer points out "I perceive something, means, strictly speaking, I have coordinated a certain sensation sharply, clearly, perfectly defined from every other." Hence when we speak of the first ideas which the infant mind creates, we are not describing how it becomes a mind, but how the mind performs its first activity.

Infant psychology has led to the discovery that not only is the mind without ideas at birth, but that the senses are none of them acute, and some of them do not come into activity until some time after birth. Professor Preyer gives as the order of beginning activity, taste, smell, touch, sight, hearing. The prime problem of the origin of knowledge then, is to find what idea-forms the mind puts upon what is first presented in each one of these, and the final problem is

1 W. Preyer, Infant Mind; translated by H. W. Brown; D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1896.

to find how it works over the simple forms which it gives to these first things which it receives, into ever more complex forms independent of immediate sense stimuli.

To follow the order suggested by Preyer, what form does the infant mind put upon the first taste stimulus? Its actions will not justify us in saying any more than a simple idea of desirability or the opposite.

What we have here described has seemed to most investigators too simple to be called an idea, so under the name of sense-impression it has been allowed to stand half in the physical and half in the mental realm. But this unwillingness to give the name idea to these simplest of mental acts, has led to endless and confusing divisions and classifications of mental activities,<sup>1</sup> as though the mind were now receiving sense-impressions, now forming perceptions, now conceptions, et cetera. It is first truer, then simpler, and then more coherent to say that from first to last the mind creates and works with ideas, and if beyond that it is found that they need a classification, let a language be used which will not indicate that it begins work with something less than ideas, and finally gets to something greater.

But what have we in a simple desirable or undesirable taste? Only a base for comparison with succeeding tastes,

<sup>1</sup> This is the danger which Harris calls "Inventory Psychology," and which he thoroughly escapes by showing the unity and coherence of all mental activities, in his Psychological Foundations of Education, W. T. Harris; D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1898.



each one of which, if it were different, would receive a different idea-form, but each new comer would be referred to those which had preceeded it, and from the comparison all would gain more distinctness, that is they would grow. It may be alleged that we are dealing with quantities here which are psychological atoms, but if so, we reply with a plea for psychological microscopy of sufficient high-power to keep the entities in separate and sharp view, for this is indeed the cell nucleus in the body of thought, and to turn from it because of its minuteness, to deal with some larger and more convenient unit, is to invite misunderstanding in the higher processes.

But what can the mind do with such vague and varying germs of thought, beside bringing each into sharper distinction by comparison with those unlike it? Here again the regal self-activity is manifest. It recognizes similarities as well as differences, and the similarities noted are more potent, at least in the early process, of idea growing than are the differences.<sup>1</sup> Or perhaps it is better, than assigning comparative degrees of potency to them, to say that the differences noted regulate the number of ideas while the similarities regulate their growth.

It is a boot-less and beclouding endeavor to discover a mystery in this matter of similarity and difference. If it is ascribed to inherent qualities in the ideas, it suggests too  
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"The more mature analysis differentiates, while the earlier synthetic activity identifies and catches analogies.  
Psychological Foundations of Education, W. T. Harris,  
D. Appleton & Co. 1898.

much fixity in these forms which the mind imposes upon its materials, and it is an easy step from this to the view that the universe is crowded with ready-made mental forms, which "peel off" from objects and fly to the mind, or which the mind must seek by rumaging in the objective world. If we are asked if the fact that all human minds recognize such similarities and differences, does not prove that these are inherent qualities of the ideas, we answer that it rather proves that they are human minds, and not sausage mills or jelly fish.

We are to regard ideas not as things which exist apart from the mind and have a fixed character of their own which the mind seeks to discover, but as the forms which the mind imposes upon all of its outer and inner experience, and these forms so far from being fixed before-hand, are whatever the mind makes them.

But lest some fearful hands should be raised in horror that thus the criterion of truth is lost and thought is reduced to the tyrannical play of a wanton autocrat, we assert that the human mind itself, generically considered, is the criterion of truth, as it is represented in the big term "sanity." A sane mind interprets its experience with a fair approximation to this generic standard, not because it has admitted certain ideas from without which carry certificates of character from the minds of other men, but because to be a sane mind means to have such a constitution as to impose the forms of the generic mind upon experience.

This is essential to the question of similarity and difference as it is to the whole matter of naming and classifying mental phenomena. Any names or classification which indicate an independent and fixed character apart from the mind itself tends to confusion. Whatever fails to note similarity and difference is less than the human mind or a derangement of it.

With these granted as constitutional powers of the mind we pass to examine how similarity aids in the growth of ideas. We shall keep to the taste sense for this. With a second or succeeding taste experience the mind must determine whether or not the desirability, or opposite, is the same or different than the preceding one. If different, a new idea-form is added, and a little more content is given to what preceded it in consciousness. If the same, the whole energy of the mental act goes to intensify the idea. But if similar, that is having so little difference as not to be known as entirely new, the old element unites it to the idea already existent and all that is new contributes to the growth of that idea, not by simple addition but multiplication.

If continuous different taste experiences were presented to the mind, the idea-forms would be very simple and very vague. But as soon as one is presented which has enough in common with a previous one to be known as similar, something like fertilization takes place, and the consequent reproduction (to continue the use of that figure) transcends in its speed

and variety anything known in the biological world, and in its higher stages it transcends even the changes of chemistry.

If water, milk, quinine, sugar and vinegar were presented, there would be an idea of <sup>1</sup> desirable or the opposite in each case, and the comparison of these would give greater sharpness to all. But let the milk be given time after time and the likeness will so intensify that idea-form that it stands out clearer than all others.

Now, to continue with the easily suggest milk example, its intensified idea-form grows rapidly with the introduction of similars in experience. Hot or cold, rich or thin, sweet or sour and a multitude of others, are new elements which may be introduced in experience, and they all mean the growth of the idea.

What has been noted with reference to taste might be found to exist with slight modification in the early idea growing, through any of the avenues of sense. For the sake of brevity this will be taken as typical, and the others will not be stated. Enough has been introduced to show that in its earliest stages as in its highest achievements, consciousness amounts to the sum total of the forms, both in quantity and quality, which the mind has imposed upon what has been presented in experience, and the higher idea-structures which it has made by working over the simple forms given by it to its

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<sup>1</sup> If it is suggested that the use of one of the other taste stimulants named might produce serious physical results, we answer that the mental result would be the same, an intensified idea-form, which is all we imply.

initial experiences; and further, that this is growth.

The first six years of life are usually assigned as the time given to these simpler processes. The mind filling consciousness with idea-forms, few simple and unstable indeed, as compared with the later achievements of life, but marvelous when viewed in the light of what was given in experience, out of which they were created.

In concluding this discussion of the infant mind we offer a brief list of idea-forms normally achieved during this period, following mostly Preyer and Harris;<sup>1</sup> (a) simple ideas from individual sense contacts, and hence of things; (b) class ideas which the mind has generalized from particular experiences. These are vastly more than the sum of the individual experiences. They are mind creations, incipient "conceptions" or "universals." (c) Ideas of personality, of self and a few others. These are very incomplete until a later stage of reflection. (d) Ideas of language, in its simpler forms and uses.<sup>2</sup> The discussion warrants us in stating the following very general laws: (a) The human mind being equipped for life in a material world, begins its activity by its contacts

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<sup>1</sup> In one important matter we dissent from Preyer, namely that time, space and causality are ideas learned from experience. See "Infant Mind" pages 31-37. We think the Kantian view as present by Harris, that these are constitutional forms of the mind, is the correct one.

<sup>2</sup> The part which is played in this period by the forms of the mind, time, space, causality and the categories, as well as by the symbolic and imitative stages, belong rather to a discussion of the structure of the mind than to the growth of ideas and hence are not treated here.

with material objects through sense. (b) It makes vastly more out of these contacts than is given in them, namely ideas. (c) These simplest ideas are intensified and classified by repetition and comparison. (d) The determining elements in this process come not from without, but from the forms and energy of the self activity.

## CHAPTER III.

## GROWTH OF IDEAS IN THE INDIVIDUAL MIND: CHILDHOOD AND ADULT MIND

Interesting and engaging as we have found the earliest stages of idea-growing, when the human being emerges from infancy into childhood, which is from five to seven years of age, the whole question receives an added attraction, both from the rapidity with which ideas grow, and the new and larger fields which they cover. It must be remembered, however, that there is a great fluctuation as to time in all these stages, but that the only way of making a statement which covers the case, is to adopt a standard which for want of a more exact name, may be called the "normal."

Viewed from the point of its future possibilities, the most important set of ideas achieved in the infant period are the ideas of language especially among cultured people. It is of fundamental importance that, at least in the infant mind, ideas do exist prior to language, and therefore independent of it.<sup>1</sup> But when the first idea in the mind has found communicable form in a word, the person has entered the great realm of spiritual communion, and has become the pensioner of all the stored up knowledge and experience of the race.

Not only does language levy upon all the experience and knowledge of others, but by it, the mind is able to think a long series of ideas or experiences at once; to use Preyer's

<sup>1</sup> W. Preyer, Infant Mind, Chapter VI.

language, "It lightens the task of arranging and systematizing his stock of knowledge, which is daily increasing in extent."

Perhaps the best way to approach a realization of the function of language in the growth of ideas is to attempt to imagine what would be possible for man without its help. We have seen that at least the early ideas are formed independent of it, and therefore such a case is not wholly beyond imagination. Sense stimulations would be possible and the simple idea-forms which the mind puts upon them would result. Some growth of these from repetitions and comparisons would be possible. But without language in symbol or word the only means of growth in ideas would be by the limited number of sense contacts possible for an individual and the limited amount of generalization and reasoning which could be done without these subtle condensers of thought. This effort to abstract language from life's equipment will at least direct us to an examination of its positive part in the growth of ideas. Beginning with the symbol stage from which it grows, we shall examine spoken language in its effect upon the individual's power to reason upon his own experience, then to appropriate the ideas of others, next through written language to formulate his own ideas and then to appropriate the writing of others, then its place in mathematics, invention, experiment and - - - - - lastly reflection.

Only passing reference has been made to that important phase of mental activity in which the imagination



symbolizes objects and ideas, and in later life whole systems of these. It requires more treatment here because of its important part in the initiation and progress of language. In a fundamental sense all ideas are symbolic and what Kant calls the "synthetic imagination" is that function of the mind which does not actually take into itself the objects, actions and relations, which come before it, but from what is given in sense, the imagination forms a spiritual symbol which stands in consciousness for these things of experience. Hence the invention of a spiritual symbolism, the more inclusive and suggestive possible, is one of the most important requisites to the growth of ideas.<sup>1</sup>

Because of our almost complete adult dependence upon the symbolism of language, it is difficult to conceive of the mind using any less simple signs, but the established fact of ideas precedent to language establishes also the fact of such symbols. If we begin with the stage of desirable and the opposite as the idea-form which the mind puts upon its first sense contacts, even these are crude symbols; the sense contact is one thing, the idea of desirable or opposite, which the mind puts upon it, is another thing, and it symbolizes the former. We need only to say further that from this beginning on the mind by its function of synthetic imagination shapes all its<sup>1</sup>

Under the head of "Race Ideas," in our concluding chapter, the subject of language as a race achievement will be treated. Although strongly suggested by our last statement, its introduction here would lead too far from our present purpose.

idea-forms as symbols, but that all which it attains previous to language, in comparison with that mightiest of symbolic agents, includes and suggests so little as to drop out of sight as soon as language is attained.

If we therefore think of the child who has been able, under the word "Mama," "Mutter," or an equivalent in any language, to symbolize all that has been previously held in its mind, somewhat vaguely grouped, of form, face, dress, voice, manners, and of what is far subtler, the spirit of her who has given it birth, we have before us an example of what an achievement even the first word of language is. It is not surprising therefore, that the infant mind being deluged with its own production of idea-forms grasps largely the symbols which it finds in vogue in the society into which it is born.

In so brief a paper we may not examine in detail the attainment of language. It accomplishes our purpose to point out that the achievement of each noun marks a great growth of ideas, not only by the addition of the word itself, but especially that by adopting the word-symbol, the ideas previously in the mind have been "so changed as to help in the attainment of a beneficial end," and this is our definition of growth as applied to ideas.

By the end of the period of infancy (in an advanced society) a considerable number of the simpler of these very complex symbols (words) have been attained and on the threshold of childhood the mind stands equipped for its induction into the

conventionalities of life. Nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, connectives, phrases, clauses and sentences have come into use each in its turn, and they have specialized and evolved increasingly what the first noun did in the growth of ideas. Not to examine each form of speech as it comes into use, suffice it to say, that the simplest sentence which includes a noun, verb and adjective, so groups the ideas symbolized in each as to multiply their significance by an almost innumerable measure.

This process has been going on with little knowledge or concern on the part of the infant; but with the beginning of formal education the mind is set not only to acquire the knowledge symbolism in vogue in society, but to examine, analyze and understand it. Here again is idea growth, not by simple addition of the new facts acquired, but by what we have previously described as something like fertilization and reproduction.<sup>1</sup>

With the visualization of the spiritual symbols of language in writing and figures, another immeasurable element in the growth ideas is introduced, but we wish to withhold its discussion until after a little further examination of language in speech.

To bring out the idea-growing value of language for

<sup>1</sup> The part which imitation plays in this, as well as in all the stages of the growth of human knowledge, is omitted in this discussion only because language, which is acquired by the individual imagination imitating what is in vogue, lies closer to our subject, and a complete analysis is impossible in this paper.

the individual child and adult, we shall indulge in an abstraction from the known conditions of actual life. Suppose a human being having the ideas bound up in a highly perfected language, to be suddenly separated from all other human beings and most of the accessories of our civilization. A literary personage who might aid us to make such a supposition is Robinson Crusoe. It does not require a flight of the imagination to discover that the fact of his having a language, though there were no other person with whom he might communicate, would vastly increase his power to think. Having the habit of subsuming his ideas under word symbols, he would name new objects and conditions which he might meet and even his own feelings and subjective states.

Such a case may help us to appreciate the part of language in idea-growing for the individual considered as out of social contact; but as soon as Crusoe's "Man Friday," arrives on the scene, its multiplied power as a medium between minds is suggested. The fiction shows them using the lower symbolism of gesture to aid them in arriving at the higher symbols of speech. As they come nearer and nearer together in the use of language, each becomes able to give to the other all his store of mental wealth, all the history of himself and his people. Out of this contact Crusoe becomes more than himself plus Friday, mental contributions and vice versa. Each communicated idea gains a new content from the original energy and the previous idea wealth of the mind which receives it.

This furnishes some suggestion of the idea-growing

value of language to men in the social state. An even better means of appreciating this, however, is the consideration of how much of tradition, history, poetry and general knowledge was achieved before writing was invented, and handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

With the invention of the crudest hieroglyphics all that has been said about the possibility of the growth of ideas must be again multiplied, and as the art of writing is perfected and the printing press is made, other multiplications must follow. The meaning of these for the growth of ideas is, that in them the mind has a means of incarnating itself.

In an effort to appreciate this we shall again try to think of the individual apart and then in society. We admit the straining of normal conditions in this view, and introduce it only because it helps us to see what really exists, but is difficult to appreciate in social complexity. Imagine one having a perfected language and the ability to reduce his thoughts to the printed page, being suddenly deprived of association with others. The ability which he would thus have of putting into material form the symbols which would bring back past thoughts and experiences, supplemented by the added ability in reasoning because of the increased amount which could be held before the mind at one time, would in itself be a great means of growth in ideas.

But great as speech and writing might be as means of development in an isolated state, they are the unmistakable marks

of man as a social being, and in his most perfected social conditions they show their idea-growing potency in its highest degree. It is significant that the first uses of writing are always to chronicle the past; as if men were fain to die and be forgotten. But it is this characteristic of humanity which has made the ordinary scholar of the present a participant in the life and heir of the ideas of more than six thousand years of the past. To measure the idea-growing power of the study of history alone, transcends the ability of any set expression, but it can be suggested by the fact that history has been regarded as the basis of a liberal education for generations.

We have had occasion to mention that the imagination is active in the achievement of language, but all that it has loaned to the making of word-symbols has been paid back with interest in the increase of its own powers, by the use of the language which has helped to make. Poetry in some form has always followed the writing of history. It has usually been an epic poem to celebrate the heroes of the land, but the significance of this from the point of our topic is that not only do men seek to keep their actual deeds in the memory of man, but they seek also to give their imaginations permanent form and leave them to posterity. Thus in mythology and early poetry, the present generation has incarnated for its acquaintance the very imagination of the ancients. How greatly this has influenced the growth of imaginative ideas among English poets is best seen in the fact that a knowledge of the

myths and poems of Greece and Rome are quite necessary to an understanding of their writings.

Not only in poetry, however, does the imagination of the past live over, but in every work of fiction. Dickens has preserved something in English life which no one in history or poetry has been able to preserve. The recent very popular Scotch novels have set in the permanence of print the rare spirit of a disappearing type. In both of these the subtle thing which the novelists have done is to incarnate the imagination of a people that it may live after them.

What has been here said about history, poetry and fiction, might be said with the same force of every form of literature, but the cases mentioned suffice to bring out writing and printing as related to the growth of ideas. Law, medicine, the sciences, invention, government and every considerable human achievement has its literature, and the significance of that literature for the consideration before us is that by it, he who knows how to read, may stand on the shoulders of all his predecessors to view any subject. They have incarnated their minds at their best in books, and the reader may have their idea-growth as an heritage for the reading. It is this fact which should give humility to every present day writer for in an immeasurable sense, "other men have labored and we have entered into their labors." If in his idea-making every man were limited to what his own mind might achieve, aided only by what he might hear in the speech of

others, our intellectual possibilities would be greatly narrowed.

We have left until now the consideration of an important factor in idea-growth, which has been at once a most fascinating and delusive topic for the philosophers of all time, because of its perfect exactness and its seeming independence of the objective world it is mathematics. We cannot go into the minute study necessary to show how its intricate symbolism comes into use, but only note that from its simplest number to its most complex problem, increasingly great ideas and systems of ideas are held in condensed form before the mind, in such relation that through the medium of its symbolism, the mind is able to attain to new ideas and systems which it is unthinkable could be brought before it in any other manner. Considering its facility for expressing great things and intricate relations, it is not surprising that the meditative Jew Spinoza and a large number of other philosophers, should have attempted to find a solution of the very problem of existence through its profound expressions.

The growth of the very science of mathematics itself is an indication of the idea-generating energy contained in it, but the large part which it has played in the attainment of all the physical sciences is its only adequate measure. This field of investigation is so vast that we dare only mention it here, but its mere mention sustains our point; mathematics is among the greatest of the means of the mind for the conservation and growth of ideas.



But the greatest effort of the mind to put itself into material shape has been made in the field of invention. Indeed that term may be appropriately applied to the spiritual symbolism of language, and the material expression of it in letters and figures, but we here use it in its commonest meaning, the reshaping of matter and material forces for desired ends.

This includes all the arts and physical sciences, therefore we are again in a field where only a general statement is possible. Every picture, statue, building or machine crystalizes the thought involved in its invention. What we mean when we speak of the evolution of the different arts and sciences is that the ideas of one generation have thus been passed on in concrete form to their successors, who have been able thereby to continue the growth of ideas in that particular field, without having to work out in experience what others have done. As an example of this, the wonder-world of present day electrical achievement is not the result of the sudden discovery of a magic wand, but the abundant idea-harvest of germ ideas present in the beginnings of invention.

Another fruitful source of ideas is found just short of the attainment of invention in experiment. This is the vital center of what is called "the scientific spirit." Ideas which lie beyond the unassisted logical processes of the mind, are constantly being brought to view by this method. Many of the great inventions of man have been attained by a leap of the

imagination, and without the plodding process of experiment, but a far greater number have been unexpectedly found while seeking, by experiment, to put in form other idea-systems of the mind.

We have left until our last consideration in this chapter the profoundest of idea-growing fields, namely its thought of itself and its relations in the universe. This field may be denominated by the paradoxical name, the psychology of psychology. Very early in the process of thought the mind begins to seek a knowledge of itself. It is often alleged that such a search is vain and its end unattainable; and from the very fact that the mind's achievements are a growth, the latter is probably true. Nevertheless the ancient Greek exhortation, "man know thyself," is not a command to the impossible, but to an effort to keep self knowledge balanced with the other phases of mental growth. It is impossible for man, being such a creature as he is, to know himself outside of a world of relations to other persons and things. It is therefore out of the impulse to self-knowledge, through self expression, that all which we mean when we say "civilization" has come into existence. To put into a sentence the bearing of this upon our topic: every new idea gained of the character and worth of the human mind (which is indeed the essence of personality) gives immeasurable meaning to every other human achievement. The importance of comfort, health and knowledge for men when they are thought "finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark," is little indeed. For a man to know himself means to know others, and

them as related to himself, and all as related to their destiny. Hence an adequate psychology is the strongest possible impulse in all the open fields of mind-endeavor.

To gather up the considerations of this chapter: we have presented (a) the imagination in symbolizing; (b) Symbols before language, (c) language is spiritual symbolism, (d) growth in ideas with growth in language; (e) Visualization of language; (f) Language and ideas for the individual; (g) the Robinson Crusoe case, (h) language in social contact; (i) Writing and ideas; (j) writing and printing for the individual; (k) writing and printing in social contact; (l) history and ideas; (m) poetry and ideas (n) fiction and ideas (o) literature in general and ideas; (p) Mathematics and ideas; (q) mathematics and the sciences; (r) invention and ideas; (s) experiment and ideas; (t) psychology and ideas. This section from our table of contents will assist us in stating the following definitions and laws for the growth of ideas.

(a) All ideas are spiritual symbols. (b) The more inclusive and suggestive symbolism the mind invents, the larger its possibilities of idea-growth. (c) Language is the mind's highest symbolism (d) Specializations of language increase its idea-growing power. (e) The highest use of language is the attainment of self knowledge.

## CHAPTER IV.

## GROUP IDEAS.

Although the subject approached in this chapter invites an exhaustive treatment, we can present only a few of its salient points. In our observations upon literature, art and invention, we have had occasion to mention the social relations of men.

Throughout all literature the statement "man is a social being" is often met in varied form. Except in the French Revolutionary doctrine of "the social contract" it has seldom been opposed until recently, when the opposition has found expression in such bald and dogmatic statements as that made in the opening sentence of a recent text book of sociology, "man is not naturally a social being." It is not pertinent to our task to bring forward the abundant proofs to the contrary, but as the allowance of such a statement must modify all the contents of this chapter, we introduce the one incontrovertible proof against it. In all history man has never been found living out of some form of society. Crude and degraded as his social state has sometimes been, he has never been known outside of it. The class of writers who are putting forward this doctrine now, wish themselves to be known especially for their abstainence from speculation and firm adherence to "scientific method," but

<sup>1</sup> Dealy and Ward, "Text Book of Sociology," Macmillan Co., New York, 1909.

we submit that nothing but the most ill-founded speculation could antedate all known conditions of mankind and assert that he was once without that distinguishing characteristic.

It is unquestionably true that the social institutions of the present are a growth, but they have certainly grown out of the social nature of man. If it is stated that his reason has given direction and stimulus to the growth, we reply that this is the very function which we have found reason performing in all the fields of idea-growing, and it is not to be expected that it would be otherwise in the field of social ideas.

Historical mankind has always been found in a more or less well-defined social relation. To note how the increasingly complex institutions which have been the form of his social state have embodied the idea growth of the past and have been the germ ideas out of which new institutions have grown, is the purpose of this chapter.

What has been found of literature, the arts, and sciences, namely that they incarnate the ideas of the men who have formed them, is true also of social institutions. How great an idea-growing and conserving means these institutions are, can best be appreciated by again employing the method of abstraction. Take from our stock of ideas all of those which are directly or indirectly contingent upon our social relation and the meagre remainder would be the best estimate of their power in our idea world. First of all, man out of a social state could not have language. There would be no occasion for it, no

one with whom to use it. It is a social convention of life. Hence all the benefits of language which we have suggested are contingent upon the social state. Invention is almost wholly impossible outside of society. The man whose whole heritage should be his own senses and what his original reason might make out of their presentations from the outside world, would certainly be too much preoccupied with supplying his own immediate natural wants, and with the wonder and mystery of the world, to make much progress in invention. Furthermore most inventions are contingently social in that their very production as well as their use implies specialization and division of labor. All ethical ideas are unthinkable outside of society; and in the nature of the case, social ideas without society could not exist. In a sentence human life is an organic unity and cannot be thought as the thing which it is apart from its members, of which one of the important is social relation.

Ideas held in common constitute the cement which holds the social groups together; as Professor Ross says, "Except for the processes which weave into innumerable men certain ground patterns of ideas, beliefs and professions, great societies could not endure."<sup>1</sup> Our interest is therefore in tracing the growth of these ideas rather than in the history of the groups themselves.

The family in some form is the earliest known human group. Beyond the physical instinct for reproduction the earliest known "ground idea" of the family was religious. Hearne, Smith

<sup>1</sup> E. A. Ross, "Social Psychology," Macmillan Co., New York, 1908.

and Maine have brought this out clearly in their writings on the early aryans. The founder of the family was deified and it became the religious concern of every successor in the family that there should be a son left to continue the worship. It may be stated that this does not hold with equal truth in the case of all primitive peoples, but as a discussion of all the early types of the family is impossible, and as some phases of this religious "ground idea" has shown itself in so many primitive peoples, it will serve to show the effect of the earliest integrating family ideas. In some races this stage of idea-growth has crystalized and has remained practically static for centuries, as in China. In most of them, however, it has been but a stepping stone to higher ideas. In Greece and Rome it was so modified as to give rise to their ornate mythologies, which we held as traditions for centuries after directly blood descendance was claimed from the gods. However, these former ideas had left their impress in the feeling of loss in being childless and the shame involved in having a parent without the prescribed funeral rites. In the Hebrew race the religious "ground Idea" took a larger form, and not the nature father of founder of the family was to be worshipped, but the god whom the fathers had worshipped was to receive the homage.

These religious ideas of the family have a double relation to it which seems paradoxical. They made the family and the family made them; or perhaps it is more correct to say that they gave the family its specific form, and as it gained more

stability it gave strengthening sanction and enlarging form to the ideas. It is therefore more than a coincident of history that religion and institutions for the reproduction of the race have maintained a close equilibrium. Where religious superstition, ignorance or impiety has prevailed, the family group has been correspondingly debased, and where there has been improvement is either, a like improvement has soon been manifest in the other.

As long as the family group has been sustained by a ground-idea of ancestor worship, however modified, its object has been primarily the reproduction of the race, and romantic love has entered little into its formation or maintenance. This condition still prevails in India and China.

The Hebrew race furnishes one of the most striking and informing examples of the inter-influence of ideas of religion and marriage. The man who came out from <sup>Ur</sup> ~~Bab~~ of Chaldea had been brought up in polygamy and idolatry. The high spiritual religious ideas under which he attempted the long journey and founding of a new family in a strange land, brought a constantly elevating influence to bear upon marriage among his new people. This example is the more striking because all the influence of both previous and present custom were against any change. Their ancestors as well as the people by whom they were environed were idolatrous polygamists. These ideas were not immediate or absolute in their effects upon the people who held them, hence the frequent lapses in Hebrew history



from both of these new sets of ideas into the prevalent customs around them; but slowly and thoroughly their leaven affected the whole lump of Hebrew life, until they became the distinguishing characteristics of a new race.

Not only have family ideas usually had a religious ground but their basal character for all social ideas has been demonstrated by the fact that all of the religious, social and political institutions of a people have much of the form and spirit of their family group ideas. In India and China woman is a mere chattel as to marriage, hence her education is not important, she has no legal or political status, and religiously her only hope is so to conduct herself in the inferior state of a woman as to have some hope of a future incarnation as a man. To contrast this with the condition in the most enlightened Christian lands, is to get a clear general notion of the idea-making power of family group ideas. The Christian notion of equality at the marriage-altar and in the family, has reflected itself in the higher education of women, the opening of every avenue of civil activity to her, if she wishes to enter it, and the "suffragette movement" is only a troublesome child of family equality ideas.

We have thus far mentioned religious ideas only as they have effected the family. In the social groups which gather about distinct religious ideas they furnish an interesting field. As the ancient social life grew out of the family and the family was a religious institution, the whole social fabric of a people was held together on a religious base, so that to change one's

religion meant to change all other relationships; to become a citizen of any political group meant first of all to accept its form of worship. It is a comparatively modern thing that two or more forms of religion should be found in the same political group.

The freedom and latitude of the Christian faith has made it the natural agent of religious toleration. In spite of the frequent surface appearances to the contrary, the under current of its influence has always been in this direction. Not only in its attitude toward other faiths, but also within itself, the very character of Christianity has encouraged diversity in the institutions growing out of it. The characteristic of the ancient faiths was homogeneity and authority in their institutions, but the opposite is true of Christianity.

A thorough treatment of religious group ideas as presented in Christianity alone, would involve a review of every group presented in Christian Church history, and is manifestly impossible here; but a few examples will suffice.

The early struggles of the East and West factions of the Catholic Church which resulted in division, were but emphatic demonstrations that the same religion became different as it was presented to the Eastern or Western mind. The more Northern and Western divisions of the Roman Church were always held in uncertain grasp until the reformation, when they asserted their temperamental traditions have determined this, and in the extreme West of the United States, all of these factors

have so combined as to make this country the home of the most diversified Protestantism.

Within these three general groups there has been unlimited diversity. Because of greater familiarity with them, examples from the Protestant group will best serve here, and among these none are more striking than those from the British Isles. The fighting but fated Scotch furnished a temperamental soil well suited to propagate grim Calvinism. Early history and Protestant oppression combined in Ireland to make her Catholic in spite of her contradictory temper, but how strongly temperamnet has asserted itself even here may be seen in Ireland's Protestant North and Catholic South. England, in temper buoyant, in conquest successful, and often at war with the Catholic, propagated the freest Protestantism until the less-trammeled United States became a nation.

The established Church of England is an example of the effect of the previous Catholic ideas upon the Protestants, and the Methodists and Quakers are examples of how far some minds among the Protestants were able to free themselves from those ideas.

The family, the Church and the State are frequently called the primary social institutions. We have given brief consideration to the first two in the light of our topic, and have reserved the last for the next chapter. Before passing to it, however, there are some forms of group ideas which invite our attention, but are not definitely embodied in any one institution. These are such ideas as manifest themselves and grow

through the associations of people in the various forms of social contact. Some of these are fads of thought, speech, clothing or conduct, and the peculiar actions of all sorts of crowds. These are idea by-products of groups.

Psychologists and sociologists differ so widely in their inferences from these that it would be futile to attempt to present their views. But in the main there is agreement that these ideas arise from unconscious imitation, and as soon as a clear realization of what they are doing comes to the members of such a group, the whole character of their action is changed. As Ross puts it, "A one-mindedness, therefore, is the result not of reasoning or discussion or coming together of the like-minded, but of imitation, it is the mark of the true mob." "A mob, then, defined for purposes of social psychology, is a crowd of people showing a unanimity due to mental contagion."

The peculiarity of these phenomena is that people of the highest intelligence are capable of so surrendering their activities to the suggestions of a crowd as to be carried away into what ever the crowd may be doing, and will little if at all realize what they are about. Imitation, which we have found to be such a constant and potent factor in idea-growth, has here usurped the whole field of the mind and subordinated all other faculties to itself. The only escape from this tyranny of imitation in crowds is a true rationalization which will

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1  
 Ross, E. A. "The Foundations of Sociology," Chap. III, "Mob Mind;" The Macmillan Company, New York, 1905.

hold imitation as well as all other important mental tendencies in their places without annihilating them.

In summing up this chapter, we may conclude, (a) That added to the activity of the individual mind, the associations of men in groups give rise to special forms of ideas; (b) that family, religious and political groups most effect the growth of ideas; (c) that temperament history and environment greatly qualify the forms which such ideas take; (d) that imitation, which is so helpful a means to the growth of ideas, is one of its greatest dangers when allowed to go undirected by the reason.

## CHAPTER V.

## NATIONAL AND RACE IDEAS.

From our discussion thus far it will be apparent that the idea sources of the mind are such as to be greatly effected by all changes in environment. This in a measure, accounts for the great difference in the ideas of the various nations and races. Especially is this true when we include in environment not only the physical surroundings, but the institutions, traditions and customs of a people.

There are many undoubtable physical factors in making the psychology of nations. One which has been greatly emphasized is climate. The languor of the tropics creates a strong tendency to soft sentimentality; and in contrast the rigor of cold climates tends to mental severity. Another factor closely related to this is the manner in which a livelihood must be procured. Where nature lavishes her best upon a people, the effect is that they tend to an easy-going and careless mental life; but where a livelihood must be secured by a constant and precarious struggle, the tendency is to mental ruggedness. Also closely related to both of these are the artificial industrial conditions of modern times. A nation of farmers like the Danes will tend to a different mentality than a nation of manufacturers like the English.

Beside these eternal physical conditions, there are

the physiological facts of the stock from which a nation has come and heredity within itself. But all these and any others which may exist are not sufficient to give a full account of the psychology of nations. The Greeks were the artists, poets and philosophers of the ancient times, not only because Hellas was a beauty spot of the earth but because of self activity on the part of master minds among them, from whom the mass of the people took their incitements to art. The same principle applies to the Hebrews' theology, and to the Romans' law, and indeed to the psychology of all nations. Their physical and intellectual environments are important factors in the growth of national ideas, but of much greater importance is the leadership of master minds.

Two examples from our own nation may best serve to establish this fact. The ideas of democracy which were put into the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and Constitution were not a heritage from England. They were not wholly the effect of living in a freer physical and intellectual environment than in former years. They were principally the creation of the great minds of the time. Franklin, Jefferson and Washington had more to do with them than any condition of environment or heredity. Through these great minds they become the property of the nation.

It is sometimes alleged that the reason slavery took root and thrived there and did not in the North, was that the natural environment made it profitable in the South and unprofitable in the North,<sup>1</sup> and this led to the effort for abolition.

That these conditions did exist and that they were strong factors in the case, will not be denied, but the ideas of Garrison, Phillips, Whittier and Harriet Beecher Stowe outweighed the question of self-interest and profit.

From these facts a few safe laws of the growth of national ideas may be stated: (a) Physiological inheritance is a strong factor. (b) Physical environment effects strong aptitudes and tendencies. (c) Artificial conditions of civilization are also to create tendencies. (d) The strongest factor in the creation and growth of national ideas is the leadership of great minds. (e) The nation offering the greatest intellectual freedom has the greatest possibility of great leaders.

Akin to the growth of ideas in individual nations is their growth in the aggregate of all nations, the race; to which the latter part of this chapter will be devoted.

The psychology of the race considered as a whole will necessarily present greater inequalities than any view we have previously taken. No two minds have ever attained exactly the same idea-growth, as no two leaves of the forest are in every respect identical. Hence the comparison of only two minds shows inequality, and as the number of minds considered in a group increases, so does the reason to expect differences.

In order to arrive at anything like a unity, the tendency of a large school of present psychologists, particularly

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E. A. Ward, "Social Psychology," page 5. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1908. (See preceding page)



of the sociological psychologists, is to attempt to trace the highest forms of mind activity back through the human race, the animals and the vegetable world to an original ether.<sup>1</sup> Aside from the criticism that under the name of scientific certainty these men have drifted far into fields which are gauzily speculative, it must be said that the basal unity which they attempt to discover is too far from the present state of the race to be of much value. Race psychology as presented in historic man is more available and informing, notwithstanding its inequalities and seeming heterogeneity.

The fundamental characters of the human mind are always the same from the beginnings of civilization to the highest intellectual attainment of the hour, and the inequalities are all measured by the growth of ideas. That the growth of ideas in individual minds or particular groups is very greatly effected by heredity and environment, physical, intellectual and conventional, does not argue that the mind is only becoming until it has achieved certain things common the the more advanced groups. Twice in the recent history of this University has a mind taken from a greatly retarded group, measured in a few years the idea-growth of the most advanced civilization which it has required centuries to achieve. This is concrete scientific proof of the unity of the race mind, of the ability of human conventions to sum up and communicate past idea-growths, and of the ability of the normal human mind through the conventions to

<sup>1</sup> See the book by McDougall referred to in the bibliography and also "Text Book of Sociology" Dealey and Ward, Table on page 57, and chapters XVII and XVIII on "Genesis of Mind."

inherit all that other minds have thus summed up.

Human conventions, then, are seen to be the greatest aids to the idea-creating power of the mind. In a general sense the highest and most useful conventions are a race product, but in particular each nation or lesser group has its own achievement of conventions.

Reference has previously been made to language in the study of the individual mind, but as a race achievement it calls for mention here. The most highly perfected languages are not the unaided achievement of the people using them, but have grown up the ancient tongues. This is most strikingly illustrated in the English language. The saxon words form a small part of its vocabulary and it levies upon all of the European and especially upon the Latin and Greeks. Such a language by its very flexibility and inclusiveness puts its users in a position to gather up the idea-forms of many people.

With a primitive people frequently the poverty of their vocabulary sets a limit to idea-growth which can only be crossed by the adoption of the words of another tongue or the coinage of new ones. Frequently missionaries and educators are compelled to spend years before they can so shape the languages of such peoples so as to express the higher moral and spiritual conception which they attempt to teach.

Thus it appears that the possession of a language capable of expressing the highest conceptions of the mind, fits a people to be world leaders in the realm of ideas. It is this

fact which has put into the hands of the English-speaking peoples the leadership in the progress of thought.

The other conventions which we have mentioned as incarnating and communicating ideas are also in the hands of favored nations. The great problem of the future growth of ideas is thus a socialized problem and is to be undertaken by nations, groups and peoples. How much of their incentive in this growth shall be self interest, is not to our purpose here to mention. This is the channel for the outlet of the achievement of the race to all its members, and as we have seen in the smaller groups, and nations, that the leadership of great minds has been the greatest factor in growth, so in the race growth of ideas, the groups and nations having attained the most, are destined to light the race to its highest achievements.

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