

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

CAUSALITY.

IT has frequently been pointed out that many controversies are due to the fact that the disputants employ the fundamental terms in different senses. When there is no agreement concerning the basal notions used in a discussion, it will be impossible for the participants to reach the same conclusion. The way one interprets certain facts will frequently depend upon the conceptions or definitions which one has made one's starting point. I have tried to show in a paper on "The Theory of Interaction," published in *THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW*,¹ that many thinkers really deduce their conclusions on the question of the relation between mind and body from their conception of causality, and that their results differ as their interpretations of this law differ. It seems that, in spite of all that has been written on this subject, there is no universal agreement as to what causality really means. Under these circumstances it does not seem to me out of place to consider this whole problem again. We shall attempt to answer three questions here: (1) What does the notion mean? (2) What is its origin? (3) What is its validity?

Hume started out with the idea that all our notions are derived from our sensations, that when we analyze our thoughts or ideas "we always find that they resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent feeling or sentiment."² This principle largely determined his conception of causality, for on this hypothesis there can be nothing in the idea of cause that is not derived from our perceptions. Now all we

¹ Vol. X, pp. 124 ff.

² *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Section II.