

THE
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THE GENESIS OF THE ETHICAL SELF.

IN a recent publication¹ the writer has called attention to certain facts of the child's life which lead to a view of the rise of his sense of his personal self. We find, on the one hand, that he has what we may call an 'ego-sense'; a mass of personal material — largely suggestions from other persons — which he has worked up into a more or less systematic whole by his own acts of an imitative kind. When he thinks of himself, this is very largely what his consciousness is filled with. Let us now call this the 'self of habit,' or the 'habitual self,' — terms which are common and which carry their ordinary meaning. It is this self which he uses to 'eject' into the bodies of others, to use Clifford's phrase; and when thus used we may call it the 'alter' as opposed to the 'ego' of his private sense. But, on the other hand, we have found that the child has another self — the self that learns, that imitates, that accommodates to new suggestions from persons in the family and elsewhere. It is this self that is in part yet 'projective,' unfinished, constantly being modified by the influences outside, and, in turn, passing the new things learned over to the self of habit. Let us call this, for reasons also evident from the common significance of the term, the 'accommodating self.' Not that the child has at any time two distinct thoughts of himself existing side by side, — that is not true, — but that his one thought

¹ *Mental Development, Methods and Processes*, ch. xi, § 3.