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HUME'S ETHICAL SYSTEM.

WE must not look for perfect continuity in the development of Utilitarianism, even after the doctrine had once been clearly enunciated. Two of the most prominent writers of the Utilitarian school, Tucker and Paley, were destined to carry out, almost to the letter, the scheme of moral theory which Gay had outlined in his "Preliminary Dissertation" of 1731; but the next writer standing for the 'greatest happiness' principle appears to owe nothing to Gay. On the contrary, so far as formative influences are concerned, Hume seems to have taken his starting-point in Ethics from those who, like Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, had maintained the existence of a 'moral sense.'

This is by no means to say that Hume was himself a 'moral sense' philosopher. Quite as much as anything else, his object was to show that what the 'moral sense' writers had professed to explain by merely referring to a supposed 'faculty,' could really be explained in a scientific way, according to the most general principles of human nature. Still, his primary contention was that morality was founded, not on 'reason,' as he expressed it, but on 'sentiment'; that our starting-point in ethical discussions must always be the fact of our approval of moral actions, — a fact which could not, by any possibility, be explained on purely rational principles. In emphasizing 'feeling' at the expense of 'reason,' Hume was clearly with