

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

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## PRINCIPLES IN ETHICS.

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IN the present discussion I am going to assume without argument that the *origin* of moral judgments, and the final source of the confidence a man may feel that his own intuitions of value are justified, are to be located not in 'reason,' but in certain pre-rational elements of impulse and of feeling. However important the part reason has to play, it is not its work to set ultimately the ends of conduct and supply their raw material; and any attempt to give to it a primary rôle will result in turning ethical principles into abstractions that have no virtue in them for the actual guidance of human life. When one turns, however, to the education or development of the ethical life, the emphasis will need to be differently placed. What we call refinement of feeling would seem indeed to be in large measure refinement of perception. Goodness is hardly separable from a certain moral tact, a sympathetic sensitiveness to niceties of quality and conduct; and progress lies not so much in strengthening the feelings—these may already be strong enough where they are actually evoked, as is shown by the ease with which even a hardened audience can be worked up over some fictitious case presented vividly on the stage—as in cultivating a capacity to see the occasion of sympathy in a wider range of situations, and a superior responsiveness to those shades of a situation calculated to evoke the inhibitive impulses and feelings. The callous man, on the other hand, is the man who acts to a morally irrelevant part of the situation. The unscrupulous business man admires himself