

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

THE PLATONIC DISTINCTION BETWEEN 'TRUE' AND 'FALSE' PLEASURES AND PAINS.

§ 1. What I have to say in the present paper is drawn, directly or indirectly, from the discussions of Plato and Aristotle. But I shall try to develop the subject in my own way, with only an occasional reference to the passages in question, and without examining them in detail.

Plato advances the distinction between true and false (*i. e.*, real and illusory) pleasures and pains against a commonly accepted view.¹ And in the main that view still holds the field. It is generally supposed—it is even sometimes asserted as “self-evident”—that there can be no question as to the ‘truth’ or ‘reality’ of pleasure or pain. Pleasure and pain—or ‘feeling’²—are in this respect marked off, if not from all other forms of experience, at least from all forms of ‘knowing’³ and of ‘willing.’

About the fact of any and every experience (feelings, emotions, sensations, beliefs, inferences, volitions, etc.), it is generally supposed that there can, in one sense, be no dispute. My sensations may be illusory, my beliefs, judgments, or inferences may be erroneous, my volitions morally reprehensible; but there can be no doubt for me that I *do* feel, sensate, perceive, judge, or will, that I *am* moved to sorrow or anger. Upon this indubitable

¹ Cf. *Philebus*, 36 e. “ ΠΡΩ. πάνθ' οὕτω ταῦτα, ὡς Σώκρατες, ἔχειν πάντες ὑπειλήφαμεν.”

² ‘Feeling’ is to be understood as equivalent to pleasure and pain, unless the context makes it plain that the term is used in a wider sense.

³ Throughout this paper I use the term ‘knowing’ to include all forms of experience in which anything is apprehended:—perception, *e. g.*, as well as judgment and inference (whether true or false), and again memory and imagination, whether waking or in dream.