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THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

BEFORE undertaking to answer any questions concerning the freedom or determination of the will, we must first know what this will is. In discussions of this kind, as in others, much confusion is caused by the absence of a clear and well-defined conception of the disputed terms. It will, therefore, be profitable to enter into a psychological study of volition before attempting to solve problems of greater significance.

In studying the will, most writers begin by examining actions. The simplest movements are taken to be the groundwork of the more complicated, purposive acts. The development of such movements is pursued either through the life of the entire animal world or through the life of the individual. Such an investigation is supposed to throw light upon the origin and growth of volition. The simplest assumption here is, that wherever there is movement, there is, in some form or other, will. Or the supposition is, that voluntary acts are the outgrowth of automatic or spontaneous, *i.e.*, involuntary movements. But, inasmuch as will is a psychological phenomenon, its presence cannot be inferred from the existence of movements alone, since these may possibly occur without being preceded by a psychological element. It is perfectly safe to assert that the simplest organisms have the power of liberating motion without