

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

APPRECIATION AND DESCRIPTION AND THE
PSYCHOLOGY OF VALUES.¹

I.

THE antithesis between appreciation and description has become sufficiently familiar and influential to make its discussion a necessary preliminary to any study of the worth consciousness. It is not difficult to understand the motives which led to this antithesis. On the one hand, the failure to distinguish the principles of the normative disciplines from those of descriptive psychology led to a confusion of method detrimental to both. On the other hand, the forms of so-called scientific description in vogue, the psycho-physical and biological, approaching as they did the problem of description from the outside and finding irrelevant all aspects of experience except those which could be connected with biological and physiological conceptions, soon showed their inadequacy as means of describing our worth experiences. The simplest solution of the problem seemed, therefore, to consist in looking upon values as merely appreciable and not communicable in terms of any objective description. Worth is always the meaning of an attitude of a subject, and attitude is not describable in terms of mental elements. An attitude can be merely appreciated.

I cannot but think that this antithesis is falsely conceived, and that it arises primarily from the fact that we have to do here with a false setting of the problem. Instead of going directly to experience, the point of view here disclosed starts with a wholly

¹ Read in part before the American Philosophical Association at Princeton, December, 1903.