

fellow used to wake me up every mornin' at the crack o' day with his crowin'; and it's got to that I can't hear a single rooster on the place, and I hain't the words to tell how my feelin's inside o' me was hurted when I found it out."

He put his handkerchief momentarily to his eyes, as if to warn back any weak tear that might feel itself impelled to the front, and then continued:

"But the thing is, my son, that I'm a-beginnin' to suspicion 'em o' dodgin' me in my own house, like they do everywhere else, and that it make 'em tired, and sometimes it even fret 'em, to have to talk to me. And then I git fretted too, after all I've been to 'em. And it's got so I try my level best to not want to know about things like I used to do. Yit, when I see them a-workin' o' their mouth in a way that make me certain in my mind somethin' interestin' is up, I can't help, to save my life—I can't help from wantin' to know what it's about. And then when one of 'em comes and bawls it in my year, frequent it's not worth talkin' about, and then I suspicion 'em of foolin' me by a-tellin' me the poorest, insignificantest part, and a-holdin' back the rest. Then, 'casionally the idee takes holt on me that they're a-talkin' about me, and a-sayin' they wish I were n't so troublesome, and all that, and it sting me mighty nigh the same like anybody was to run a pin in me."

After another pause, turning his face all about, as if to be sure that none other were in hearing, with a look of grave apprehension, almost of alarm, in lower tones he said:

"And, sir, don't you know, sir, that the suspicionin' o' them in that kind o' style have got so it have begun to make me ruther deceitful myself? It jest skeers me to think about it. You must n't let on I told you so. I was positive

oblegged to tell somebody, it lay so heavy on my mind, and I tell it to you because you're always good, respectable to me, and you never dodges me, nor runs away from me when I'm a-talkin' to you. Fact, sir, sometimes when my years ain't quite as cloudy as common, special when the a'r is on my side, I can gather what they're sayin', and they don't know it. But I jest know I've got not to let on, to keep 'em from suspicionin' me of makin' out I'm worse off than what I actuail am. Now, ain't sech as that a pity for a man of my cha-rec-ter, that's if they is any thing I ever did hate, it was deceitful, and special when I caught people a-tryin' to put it on me, and make a fool of me? I jest declare, I git so sorry for myself sometimes a-thinkin' about it, that I can but hope the thing will let up on me after a while, so I can git back to the usefulness I had before I got in this fix."

At this juncture, one of the neighbors, who had just arrived, after alighting, and fastening his horse at one of the racks, approached, in order to pay his respects. Mr. Pate, after a look of incipient resentment toward the comer, turned to me, and in low, hurried tones said:

"There, now, my son, that'll do; you can go now; but *don't you let on what I told you.*"

To his injunction of silence regarding his confession I paid what respect was possible, limiting disclosure to my parents and a few other intimate acquaintances. After observations through many years among the aged, to say nothing of even more reliable sources, I seem to recall, what I was then too young to discern in my old friend's droll words, some real pathos, and if not some wisdom, a pathetic simulation of wisdom, felt to be necessary to one in his condition; and so his case, feeling at this late day I may be held excusable, I now, for the first time, make public.

Richard Malcolm Johnston.

THE IMITATIVE FUNCTIONS, AND THEIR PLACE IN HUMAN NATURE.



HAVE been led of late, in connection with certain philosophical inquiries, to begin the study of a subject the general interest of which, for teachers, for students of any region of art, and for lovers of human

nature at large, seems to me so considerable, that I am now disposed to ask for the coöperation of a larger public in the pursuit of the research. At the same time, I may as well take the opportunity which this paper affords to ex-

plain, as well as I can, why I have begun this task, and why I see so much reason to hope for good results from the further consideration of the matter.

I.

THE object of this study is, directly speaking, psychological, and relates to the nature, the scope, and the significance of what may be called, in general, the imitative functions of mankind. No functions are, in one sense, more familiar. None are more frequently interesting. We all are aware that children are imitative,

that both among children and among adults virtue and vice alike are, under favorable circumstances, "catching"; that fashion has, in certain matters, an irresistible sway; that not only commercial panics, and mobs, and "fads," but also great reform movements, and disciplined armies, and such historical events as the conversion of nations in the old days from heathenism to Christianity, all illustrate, in their several ways, the potency of imitative tendencies; and that art itself, at least according to Aristotle's famous definition, is essentially imitation. We know that there are sometimes epidemics of crime or of suicide. We know that the doleful prevalence of the current popular melody is due, not to a love of music, but to the insistent force of the imitative tendency. Turn, thus, which way we will, the familiar presence of the imitative functions in human life impresses itself upon us.

"Verily," says M. Tarde, an eminent French sociologist, in his remarkable book, "*Les Lois d'Imitation*" — verily, "*La société, c'est l'imitation*," or as one may freely translate, "Imitation of imitations," saith the professor, "in society all is imitation." In this extreme form, of course, the assertion does indeed remind us of many qualifications; but of these we shall speak further on.

Were I anxious, then, for mere illustrations of the frequency of the imitative functions in the life of man, I should indeed have no trouble in getting my fill of them, without other aid than that of my own eyes. But with the mere confirmation of their frequency, the question of their real significance is first brought really to the front. And along with this question there come before us a vast number of others, all interesting to the student of human nature. How, in the growth of the individual, do these imitative functions arise? Are any of them truly instinctive, or are all of them, as Alexander Bain has contended, acquired functions, due to experience? Or, in other words, does man learn to imitate because he is brought up in a social environment; or, on the contrary, is he capable of life in a social environment only because he is first, by nature and instinct, an imitative animal? What is the history of the imitative functions in childhood? When, and in what order, do they appear? How are they related to the growth of the childish reason, conscience, imagination, insight, skill? Of what use can the imitative functions, at any age, be made for the development of the child's intellect and will? Such are the first psychological questions that come to one's mind in this connection. It may already, in general, be clear how serviceable the study of such problems can become both to teachers and to all others interested in the psychology of childhood.

BUT a wider scope still has of late been given to the psychological study of the imitative functions by the results of research in the domain of hypnotism. How deep-seated the imitative functions are, it has needed hypnotic research not so much to demonstrate as to illustrate, and to bring, through illustration, to our clearer scientific consciousness. The principal positive value of hypnotism for psychology, up to the present time, has consisted in the fact that the apparently marvelous, and, at first sight, even miraculous-seeming, phenomena of the hypnotic state have served to make the familiar facts of the prevalence of imitation in human life look, for the time, in these singular illustrations, unfamiliar; so that, in consequence, the attention of psychologists has been attracted to the matter in a new way and from a new side. That this is the principal service rendered by hypnotism to psychology was first pointed out at some length by the aforesaid M. Tarde, who herein, I believe, followed up a suggestion of Taine's. In a paper first published in 1884, early in the history of hypnotic research, — a paper which was later incorporated into the book called "*Les Lois d'Imitation*," — M. Tarde asserted and developed the interesting formula that what the individual hypnotizer is to his sleeping and abnormally plastic subject, such, almost precisely, is society to the waking and normally plastic man.

The hypnotized subject believes what the hypnotizer says, and supposes this belief to be his own conviction; does what his hypnotizer suggests, and believes, or may believe, that he does this of his own free will; has suggested hallucinations of taste, sight, smell, or suggested emotions, and believes these to be his own independent and individual experiences. Well, just so the waking man usually believes, concerning politics, concerning the state of business, concerning religion, whatever the people of his party, or set, or faction, or profession, or sect, declares to be the truth; and he supposes, nevertheless, that his mind is his own. The waking man, moreover, as to all the endlessly numerous deeds of convention and custom, does what his portion of society declares to be the proper thing, and fancies all the while that he is choosing of his own free will. Finally, the waking man's emotions — as, for example, his esthetic emotions — are usually at the mercy, or, at all events, deeply under the influence, of social suggestion; and even his sensations and perceptions are not exempt from this influence.

Illustrations are here easy. What is beautiful in decorative art the community at large learns by social suggestion. Esthetic tastes as to domestic interiors, and as to the architecture of

private dwellings, are subject in every generation to changes which work upon individuals in almost precisely the same way as hypnotic suggestions made to sleeping subjects work during experiments in hypnotism. One hears that this or this is admirable in the way of house-building or of decoration. Society declares the fact; and forthwith one perceives with one's own eyes, if one is but an average man, that this is indeed beautiful, just as the people say; and one is naively unaware that if all the people had said that it was ugly, one would equally have observed that fact instead. Even so, too, as to our sensations, or, at all events, as to our immediate reaction of liking or of dislike in presence of our sensations. Everybody has many acquired tastes. Some people, to be sure, have liked olives from the first taste of them; but many have not. Yet, as the saying goes, if you eat in succession seven olives, you will henceforth like them. It would be more psychological to say that after you have received seven quasi-hypnotic social suggestions from your neighbors, each suggestion being strong enough to make you try to behave toward olives as the rest do, then, at length, your immediate sensations may yield, and henceforth the olives will taste as the other men say that they taste—namely, good. It is in such a fashion that one becomes a connoisseur in the world of mere sensations of taste and of smell, just as before in the world of art. The connoisseur as to wines, teas, perfumes, dinners, and other such sensory experiences, is a person of fairly keen native sensory discrimination, whose actual discriminations, and expressions of like and dislike, have been subjected to a long course of quasi-hypnotic social training. His tastes are never purely, or even largely, his own, although it is his game, as connoisseur, to pretend, and often his fate, as social bondman, to believe, that they are his own. Were they, however, original, he would not be reckoned as a connoisseur, but as a barbarian.

Such are some of the possible illustrations of M. Tarde's interesting thesis. In bringing them forward here in my own way, and with my own choice determining their selection, I am of course well aware that there are other factors at work besides the conventional or suggested factors, and that, too, even in the most conventional regions of life — factors which, despite all our imitativeness, determine our individual varieties of taste. We never reach perfect agreement with our neighbors as to these things of convention. A certain stubborn variety of individual caprice consciously forms a pleasant social contrast to our more imitative judgments. And so for the rest, despite all conformity, there are many social conventions which themselves require of the individual, within certain

limits, a certain degree of individuality and of nonconformity.

But here is only one of the many cases where the imitative functions become, as we shall later more fully see, beautifully, and almost inextricably, entangled with the "temperamental" varieties of function in the individual. And it is this entanglement, as we shall find, that constitutes the very soul of the significance of the imitative functions, which, when properly developed, do not lead at all to the suppression of originality, but may actually form the condition of the growth of individuality, and of the only true independence of opinion and of ideals that is possible to man. But of this hereafter. Moreover, it is this same endless entanglement of imitative or "suggested" factors in taste and in belief with individual factors that makes the psychology of the imitative functions of man so complex and fascinating a problem for the student of human nature.

If the social phenomena in themselves, considered thus, serve to indicate by their universality, as it were, the breadth, the extent, of the imitative functions of humanity, certain of the well-known phenomena of hypnotism, viewed apart, tend especially to bring to mind the depth, the inner potency, of these functions in the life of each individual. It is true, as we have seen, that, viewed on the whole, the plasticity of the hypnotic subject is not something essentially novel, but is substantially the normal social plasticity of a man set at work under somewhat abnormal conditions. It is, however, also true that, under these abnormal conditions, there appear some unexpected special consequences of the general imitativeness of man — consequences that startle us by the indications which they give of the depth to which the imitative tendency reaches in its influence upon our unconscious, yes, upon even our lower physiological, life.

That by suggestion you can make a man notice what he would otherwise overlook is a strictly normal and familiar fact. Much, if not all, of that marvelous acuteness of senses which is often shown by hypnotic subjects seems, in the opinion of many observers, to be only a case of this directly or indirectly suggested concentration of attention upon his own fainter experiences on the part of the hypnotized subject. And so far the anomalies of hypnotism would seem to be related only to the peculiar conditions under which the hypnotic subject is influenced, and to the extraordinary source of the influence, which is here not, as normally, the authority of society in general, but the voice of his hypnotizer. Yet, in addition, it is indeed true that, in case of hypnotism, there also appear certain other aspects of the imitative functions — aspects which, in the case of the normal social influences, may also be present, and which prob-

ably are present, but which are there masked by their more obvious and conscious accompaniments; while, in case of the hypnotic subject, these other aspects come to light. Hypnotic suggestion, namely, is found to influence not only the acuteness of one's perceptions and the course of one's conscious habits, but the performance of a good many bodily functions that usually seem to have small relation to the will. Circulation, digestion, and general functional nervous conditions of a decidedly manifold sort, have been found to be more or less subject to hypnotic suggestion. To be sure, this sort of influence is seldom without very decided limits, which vary endlessly from person to person. But the fact remains that, in a given person, the imitative plasticity which leads him to follow out so faithfully the ideas which his hypnotizer suggests may lead him also to alter relatively deep and unconscious organic functions, such as he has never explicitly learned to influence by his will, and such as, normally, neither he nor his fellows would be aware of influencing. Yet, as many considerations make probable, what the hypnotic experiment thus brings to light cannot well be anything new in kind. Doubtless our organisms are at all times deeply plastic to suggestions; only this plasticity, on account of the complexity of our normal functions, remains masked until the hypnotic experiment, working upon a much simplified state of affairs, brings it to light.

But if our imitativeness thus actually extends far beyond the region of our conscious and voluntary life, one sees at once that one has to do with functions the basis of which probably lies deep down among the inborn and instinctive tendencies of our nature. And of such probably instinctive and original imitativeness childhood gives us many indications. For children often appear to sympathize imitatively with the expressed emotions of their elders even when there is no adequate basis in the previous childish experience for the emotions in question. A young child, taken unkindly to a funeral, or forced by unhappy fortune to witness one in the family, has suggested to him, in the faces and behavior of his elders, emotions of a depth and intensity for which his own experience can give no basis. These elders themselves know why they sorrow. The young child knows very dimly, or perhaps realizes not yet at all, why death is what it is, and means what it does. Yet sometimes he shows on such occasions an overwhelming sense of the horror of the situation, a sense which people usually refer to his direct and inborn dread of death and of his surround-

ings. There is, in fact, probably present some such original instinct concerning death; but very likely this instinct does not account for the whole of the child's horror, or yet perhaps for the larger part of it. This larger part is probably due rather to a contagion of emotion, the origin of which lies in another instinct—that of imitation. The child, without consciousness of the reason, assumes, by instinctive imitation, the expressive bodily states and attitudes of his elders, and accordingly, since our emotions are, in part at least, the results rather than the causes of our bodily states of emotional expression,¹ the child, having imitated the organic expression, consequently in some measure imitates the emotion, without at all well comprehending why the emotion ought to be felt. If everybody else at the funeral conspired with his fellows to seem gay and to talk merrily, it is unlikely that the child's own original instincts about death would be enough to terrify him. He would then very likely look at the corpse rather with wonder than with horror.

Just so, too, it is in youth, or even throughout life, so long as we retain any freshness of sympathetic experience. With the aid of certain deep and instinctive tendencies to assume imitatively the bodily attitudes or the other expressive functions of our fellows, functions which may be in part internal as well as external, we are able to share the emotions of others even when these emotions relate to matters that lie far beyond our own previous experience. When one first witnesses a serious accident, or attends another through a painful illness, or sees a friend suffering from some tremendous personal grief, one gets a sense of what this calamity means—a sense which may far transcend one's power to recall similar experiences in one's own life. There are some people, to be sure, who sympathize, like the maids of Andromache when she parted from Hector, or like the comforters of Gudrun when she sat tearless over Sigurd's body, or like Polonius himself, only by recalling, in the sufferer's presence, their own present or past griefs. "Truly, I in youth suffered many things of love—very near this." But such sympathy is not the only sort or the most spontaneous. The emotions of the theater carry the sensitive spectator, especially when he is young, far beyond any memory of his own experiences. Notice such a spectator, and you will see him imitating unconsciously, by play of feature, or possibly even by gestures of hands, arms, or body, the actor whose skill absorbs him. But meanwhile, through this imitation, he is ex-

¹ To this fact Professor James has recently given an expression in his now well-known theory of the emotions—a theory according to which "we do not cry because we feel sorry, but feel sorry because we cry."

This theory, in its extreme form, may be inadequate. There can be little doubt that it expresses an important part of the truth.

perceiving something of emotions before unknown to him — the sorrows of *Lear*, the remorse of *Macbeth*, the agony of *Othello*. To him these experiences seem as novel as if they had been original happenings in his own life. Such are the quasi-hypnotic suggestions of the stage. They often give us, as we say, wholly new insights into life.

As for other instances of the depth of such imitative emotions, there will be known to many of us cases of sensitive young women who, at the sight of accidents, or bodily ailments (say in elder women), misfortunes the causes of which they themselves have never yet experienced, are quite capable of feeling suggested internal pangs, or serious, if temporary, physical derangements, of the imitative, and at the same time partly instinctive, character of which there can be little reason to doubt. Nor are women alone in such imitative sufferings. Many men have felt such, and have been surprised at their vigor. The emotions of mobs, moreover, have the same character of imitative contagion, going much beyond the previous personal experiences of many, or perhaps, most members of the mob. In an important sociological monograph, entitled (in its French translation) "*La Foule Criminelle*," an Italian criminologist, Signor Scipio Sighele, has recently treated at length the problem of the psychology of mobs, and has dwelt much on the analogy between these phenomena, and those of hypnotic suggestion. It seems impossible to interpret such cases without supposing that the imitative functions of man have a very profound instinctive basis, and are by no means as purely secondary and acquired functions as Alexander Bain has supposed. So much, then, for the lessons derived from hypnotism, and from daily life, concerning the depth and significance of imitation in man.

III.

BUT now, as regards the uses and the results of the imitative functions in human life, the foregoing general indication of their breadth and their depth is only the merest beginning of a comprehension of the part they play in our education and in our consciousness. It is not because they are common, or because they are, in deepest origin, partly instinctive, that I lay such stress upon them. It is because they are, in their proper and almost inextricable entanglement with our individual or temperamental functions, absolutely essential elements of all our rationality, of all our mental development, of all our worth as thinkers, as workers, or as producers; it is, too, because this value of imitation as the necessary concomitant, and condition, and instrument, of all sound originality is still so inadequately understood by teachers,

by critics of art, by students of human nature generally — it is on these accounts that I deem the study of the imitative functions probably the most important task in the psychology of the immediate future. The mental relations of the imitative functions are what I therefore have, next, briefly to indicate. This I may here do in the most summary form, thus:

It is a commonplace that most of our rational thinking (some psychologists incorrectly say, *all* of our rational thinking) is done in language. Well, language is very obviously a product of social imitation; is, therefore, a case of human imitativeness in every individual who learns it. So, then, without imitativeness, no higher development of rational thought in any of us. Only the imitative animal can become rational. So much for a beginning. But the fruitfulness of the imitative functions does not cease here. It is, in the second place, well recognized that our social morality, whatever else within or without us it implies, is in one direction dependent upon our regard for the will, the interest, the precepts, or the welfare of our fellows. Now such regard is, in its turn, dependent upon our power, by imitation, to experience and to comprehend the suggested will, interest, authority, and desires of those about us. So, then, without imitativeness, no chance for the development of the social conscience. The imitative functions, in combination of course with other functions, but still with essential significance, as factors in the whole process, are thus at the basis of the development of both reason and conscience. Nor yet is this all. Reason not only uses language as an instrument, but it aims at a certain well-known goal; it aims at the imitation in conscious terms of the truth of things beyond us. Reason thus not only depends upon imitative functions; it is explicitly imitative in its purposes. Just so, too, conscience is not only based, as to its origin, upon social imitations, so that you educate the childish conscience through obedience and through authority; but conscience, too, is in its goal explicitly imitative. It sets before us ideals of character, and then bids us imitate them. These ideals are, in general, personal. Conscience says: Such and such a self, thus and thus employed in reasonable service, is the right sort of self for you. You conceive such an ideal self. Now, in your practical life, imitate this conception. One imitates the ideal — precisely as, in childhood, the little boys imitate the big boys. Man the imitative animal is thus at the very heart of man the rational and man the moral animal, no matter how high in the scale the developed man may rise.

Yet the psychological importance of the imitative functions is not even thus to be exhausted. It is an odd fact, and one of vast sig-

nificance, that all of us come by our developed personal self-consciousness through very decidedly imitative processes. Of this fact a later discussion may give a fuller account. It is enough now to remind observers of children how full of proud self-consciousness is the little boy who drives horse, or who plays soldier, or who is himself a horse, or a bird, or other creature, in his play. To be what we call his real self is, for his still chaotic and planless inner consciousness, so long as it is not set in order by his imitativeness, the same as to be nobody in particular. But to be a horse, or a coachman, or a soldier, or the hero of a favorite story, or a fairy, that is to be somebody, for that sort of self one first witnesses from without, or finds portrayed in the fascinating tale, and then imitatively assimilates, so that one thereupon conceives this new self from within, and rejoices in one's prowess as one does so.

Nor does this process of acquiring one's self-hood vicariously, as it were, cease with childhood. My various present social functions I have, in the first place, imitatively learned. Others, my guides and advisers, first showed me the way to these functions; for it was thus that I learned to move in company, to speak, to assume the outward forms of my calling, to conduct myself as just this particular kind of social organ. Now I myself, as what the psychologist calls an "empirical ego," am just now, for myself as well as for my fellows, the man who possesses, among other things, such and such a calling, position, office, rights, and aptitudes. Of all these things I had no knowledge in childhood. I had to learn my whole social trade; I learned it by imitations. But now that I have got such a calling and place, my knowledge of it determines for me, all the while, my current notion of who I am. I am what my profession and my social relations define me to be. Thus it is actually true that just as my social guides — my parents, teachers, advisers, friends, critics — together gave me, through my love of imitating them and of being influenced by their characters, by their conduct, and by their ideals — just as they, I say, gave me a knowledge of my calling, so too they have furnished me with the very material of my present self-consciousness. Self-consciousness itself, in each one of us, is a product of imitation.

Reason, conscience, self-consciousness — these are significant possessions. Yet without imitativeness we should never have come by any one of them. They are results, and, as they stand, are even now embodiments of imitation. Such is my present thesis. Nor is this statement itself more than the beginning. As a fact, I hold that far more specific mental products than have yet been named — for instance, spe-

cific beliefs of reason, such as the so-called "axioms" at the basis of science — can be explained as determined in their nature by the special conditions under which the imitative functions of mankind have been developed. But herewith, indeed, I reach topics that lie far beyond the scope of the present paper, and within the domain of the deepest problems of philosophy.

IV.

AND NOW for the announcement of the immediate practical purpose of this paper. I have written it for the sake of getting aid in the collection of facts. I venture, then, herewith to invite teachers, other observers of children, and observant persons generally, to communicate to me, either through letters addressed to the editor, or through letters addressed direct to me, their own past or future observations of certain classes of facts which may be accessible to them, and which, if collected, compared, and kept on record, may prove of service in studying the still much neglected question of the psychology of imitation. What is most needed is the coöperation of many independent observers; and owing to the nature of the facts concerning which I shall here ask, such observers will be able to contribute many useful data for comparison, even where the observers themselves are not experts in psychology. Meteorological societies have derived much assistance from non-expert observers, who, scattered over wide regions of country, have agreed to take the trouble to note such simple phenomena as the time of the first clap of thunder heard at the beginning of a thunder-shower at a given place, the direction whence and whither a thunder-cloud came and went, the duration of the attendant shower, and similarly obvious phenomena of the weather. Just so, could I get many psychological data of certain kinds from various independent observers, widely sundered in place, and widely differing in their opportunities, I should be aided in guiding certain of my intended investigations into the nature, the development, and the factors of these imitative functions of mankind.

In answer to any of the following questions, I ask, then, for independent observations, drawn as directly as possible from life, and described as fully as possible. Teachers and observant parents will be most likely to have such information to give; but in some cases my questions call for observations made by a person upon himself, and in these, as well as in most of the other cases contemplated by my questions, there will be other persons besides teachers and parents who may have facts to offer. All plain statements, written with the internal evidences of interest and of watchfulness, will be

welcome, whether made by persons acquainted with psychology or not. The use that can be made of such data, when once they come to hand, is capable of being submitted to pretty careful tests, such as the individual writers cannot well know in advance. The specific purposes of some of my questions will not at once be obvious to every reader. It is enough to say, in general, that all my questions bear upon some topic connected with the natural history of imitation.¹

SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS ON IMITATIVE FUNCTIONS.

1. *The General Question of the Place of Imitation in Child-Life.* Throughout our country there are now to be found a considerable number of groups of parents or of teachers who, in one way or another, are engaged in organized observations of children on the lines laid down by Preyer, in his well-known book on "The Mind of the Child." I shall be glad to receive, as time goes on, from any persons or circles engaged in this kind of definite and organized labor, information of any and every sort bearing upon the first appearance, and later development, of the imitative functions of infants and young children. For the benefit of all such persons, I may add that the best special observations of the imitative functions in their early stages, so far as I know, are those published by Professor J. Mark Baldwin in the journal "Science," for 1891 (p. 113), for 1892 (p. 15); and that these papers of Professor Baldwin's have been of great service in directing attention to the theoretical importance of this topic, and will be an excellent guide to any future observer of the imitative functions of children. In a future paper I hope to return to the mention of Professor Baldwin's work, to which I already owe much.²

2. *Imitative Games.* All the games of childhood are of course in general due to imitation. But there is one sort of game that deserves to be called above all the imitative game. It is the type that I have mentioned, in passing, already. But I am especially anxious to get as many descriptions as possible, drawn from the life, of just such games, and of the children that play them. In Professor James's larger "Psychology," Vol. II. p. 409, the type of sport in question is thus described:

The dramatic impulse, the tendency to pretend one is some one else, contains this pleasure of mimicry as one of its elements. Another ele-

ment seems to be a peculiar sense of power in stretching one's own personality, so as to include that of a strange person. In young children this instinct often knows no bounds. For a few months in one of my children's third year, he literally hardly ever appeared in his own person. . . . If you called him by his name, H—, you invariably got the reply; "I'm not H—, I'm a hyena, or a horse-car," or whatever the feigned object might be.

Now, what is psychologically important about games of this sort is, first, that they are usually relatively *original imitations*. They are not, like the traditional childish games, handed down from an immemorial antiquity. Each child chooses, as it were, his own dramatic games of personation. The more the child's own private experience determines the thing, the more individual, eccentric, or stubborn the choice, the more characteristic is an imitative drama of this sort. The second importance of this type of mimicry lies in its before-mentioned deep, and, as I think, momentous relations to the whole development of character and of self-consciousness in the child. A third element of significance consists in the wonderful fixity and almost delusional persistence and vividness with which a mimicry of this sort is often kept up by a given child. But very transient, if vigorous, fits of such mimicry also have great interest.

I am accordingly extremely anxious to get all the fresh and exact accounts that I can of cases of this phenomenon of personation, or systematic mimicry, either in one child alone, or in any small group of children, who, playing together, do not merely repeat some of the old traditional games of childhood, but invent their own drama. In case of each child concerned I shall be glad of as full an account as possible of the whole story of its imitative game, and of all the details of its life and character that seem to be relevant to the matter in hand. For a detailed comparison of such instances must throw light on the psychological mechanism of the processes involved. Cases of fixed family games of mimicry, confined to one family group of children, and apparently invented by them, will also be very welcome if accompanied by pretty full accounts of the children concerned.

In some cases those adults who are good at recalling their own childhood will have personal remembrance of experiences of this sort, and will be able to tell of such mimic and unreal child-lives lived for months or years alongside of their real lives—fancied lives that have left traces behind in memory such as often prove

¹ Answers to any of these inquiries may be sent either to the editor of THE CENTURY MAGAZINE, or to Josiah Royce, 103 Irving Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

² The highly important paper on imitation in "Mind" for January, 1894, and the recent volume on "Mental

Evolution in the Child and the Race," both by Professor Baldwin, have appeared since the text of the present paper was written. They should be consulted by all students of this topic.

of no small import for the feelings and character of the mature person. Any one who can tell pretty fully of experiences of this sort may be sure that the story will have a very real psychological interest.

3. *Imitative naughtiness.* It is often said by observers of children that if you tell a child one story of a good boy, and of his ways and rewards, and another story, no more vivid in detail, of a bad boy, and of his deeds and downfall, you will pretty certainly find the effect, other things being equal, to be that the child will manifest far more interest in imitating the naughty boy of the latter story, and in taking his risks, than in imitating the good boy, and in winning the praises showered upon him. The case is here the well-known one of the "lilies and languors of virtue." Unquestionably, childhood contains great numbers of cases where what may be called unintended counter-suggestion, the process of setting a child to imitate an undesirable fashion of life by means of your very efforts to keep him from such imitation, takes effect, and does mischief. Now of course I do not hope, by any collection of incidents, to solve so complex a psychological question as that of this frequent and primary attractiveness of evil in the heart of the natural man, when first such a heart contrasts ill with good. Into that frequent result far too many mental factors enter for us to hope to deal with it in any simple way. But still I have a reason for wishing to collect instances of such "counter-suggestions"; *i. e.*, cases where a child has been apparently tempted to do the wrong merely by hearing that it *is* the wrong, as well as instances where children have seemed from the start disposed to imitate evil examples rather than good, to admire bad big boys rather than good ones, to be forced to build fires in dangerous places just because they have learned of the danger, in a word, to be fascinated by mischief merely because it *is* mischief. That this may, and often does, happen we all know. Why it happens, no particular instances can in general make clear. But what I now want is no theory on *this* topic, but as concrete and precise a story as possible of individual instances, reported from the life, which may seem to fall under this general head, and to illustrate this well-known and frequent tendency. It is needless to explain why such stories may serve the purpose of throwing light on the imitative functions. It is enough that, if told freshly and circumstantially, and, as I say, from the life, they will help me, although those who tell them cannot well foresee how they can do so, and will therefore be all the more able to tell them without any presuppositions or prejudices.

4. *Imitative emotions* aroused in the minds of inexperienced persons. Observers of chil-

dren and of youth, as well as self-observant persons of all ages, may have cases coming under their notice, either in their own inner lives, or in the lives of people under their charge, where the sympathetic or imitative contagion of emotion appears to give to a sensitive person emotional states that far transcend anything in his own previous experience. Of such cases I have spoken earlier in this essay. The emotions of the theater, the precocious emotions of young children on noteworthy occasions,—*e. g.*, at funerals,—the reactions of sensitive people at the sight of disease and of accidents, are all cases in point. For the sake of guiding possible future inquiries into matters of this kind, I want, as a general basis, a collection of individual instances, reported just as they appear to the observers to have taken place, the person who had the experience, and the circumstances, being described as precisely as possible. The study of a branch of natural history has to begin with just such collections of individual experiences, which may be valuable even when the circumstances seem to the persons concerned relatively insignificant or even trivial.

5. The study of the imitative functions is useless without a consideration of their opposites, the functions which appear to be the reverse of imitative. There are some eccentric or wilful children whose life seems to their parents or teachers a life of almost persistent refusal to imitate models. They will not play with the other children, they live much alone, they do not love what the family is most accustomed to show interest in, they seem to be determined from the outset to choose their own way, and to walk in it. In later youth such characters become especially noteworthy and perplexing. I want a collection of descriptions of such persons — children or youth, portrayed just as they seem to their often very much-concerned parents, teachers, or other friends. These eccentric types are of the utmost interest for the study of the imitative functions. How they will prove so, I can best show when the accounts are before me.

SUCH are some of the matters of natural history concerning which I just now ask for assistance from kindly disposed persons. Of the precise value of a collection of such reports it is impossible to give any fuller account without going into technical details beyond my present limits. Suffice it to say that all serious efforts to answer any of the foregoing questions will be valuable. Where, in writing to me personally, correspondents have occasion to mention persons or incidents that they wish to keep private, they may be sure of my discretion. In using my returns I shall never make in any way pub-

lic any names or personal details without express permission, and shall keep confidential statements in a safe place, where they will surely be destroyed without further examination in case of my death.

As for the further importance of a study of the psychology of imitation, I hope before long, as I have said, to have an opportunity to present considerations bearing on the numerous points which have been touched, but not developed, in the present paper. Especially do the close relations between imitation and originality need clarifying before teachers and critics of art, and of other imitative human activities, can learn to avoid certain extremely prevalent errors, which, as I believe, only psychological analysis can duly expose. As a fact, originality and imitation are not in the least opposed, but are, in healthy cases, absolutely correlative and inseparable

processes, so that you cannot be truly original in any direction unless you imitate, and cannot imitate effectively, worthily, admirably unless you imitate in original fashions. The greatest thinker, artist, or prophet is merely a man who imitates inimitably something in the highest degree worthy of his imitation. The current confusion of imitativeness with slavishness, the frequent assertion that children and idiots imitate more frequently than do sound and intelligent and reflective adults, the frequent exhortations to teachers that they shall make their young charges *not* imitative *but* spontaneous in thought (as if one could become rationally spontaneous except through imitation), all such errors rest on a false separation of imitativeness and spontaneity, a separation which can be avoided only through a careful psychological study of these fascinating processes.

Josiah Royce.

FLASH-LIGHTS.

WITH PICTURES BY W. L. METCALF.



MRS. DEEPWATER.

I.

*To Joshua R. Deepwater, Esq.,
The Bangor House, Portland, Maine.*

Sunday, January 8th, 1893.

DEAREST JOSHUA: How tiresome to have you write that you are doubtful about getting back Saturday next, when I have been count-

ing upon seeing you then. I am actually beginning to hate that odious lumber business which takes you away from me so often. Surely we must be rich enough, when even I, with the best will in the world, cannot manage to spend your entire income. Do you know there are moments when I can scarcely resist urging you to retire altogether from affairs next year, so that I can have you more to myself? And then I hesitate, fearing that the forced inaction and lack of interest might bore you, and you would end by blaming me for having advised such a radical step; so I shrink from the responsibility.

The instant you get this, dear, telegraph me the earliest possible date you can come home; for if not by Saturday, I will arrange to run down to Lakewood with the children over Sunday, returning in time to meet you in town. Gladys has been looking rather pale and languid for the past week, and the poor little thing seems to have lost her lovely color and usual good spirits; the doctor says it is nothing serious, but advises a couple of days in the country and a complete change of air. By the by, since we shall all be out of town the end of the week, if at the last moment you manage to get away sooner than you expect, instead of coming back here to a deserted house, *do* spend Sunday at Salem, and see old Aunt Angelica. She wrote me such a sad little letter the other day, bemoaning

ment in this country. Within a year the "Anti-Spoils League" has attained a membership of 10,000, representing every State and Territory, and including many prominent men of every political faith. In New York city the platform of the non-partizan Committee of Seventy, which headed the revolt against government by the criminal and semi-criminal classes, contained a specific and downright indorsement of the system. Very significant also was the nomination for Congress in the Louisville district of Mr. Edward J. McDermott, an avowed civil-service reformer. The platform of the Massachusetts Democratic Convention, and the

speech of the presiding officer, ex-Governor William E. Russell, were most pronounced in favor of the reform. As a new evidence that business men are alive to the necessity of abolishing the spoils system may be cited the reference to the subject by Mr. Herman Justi of Nashville at the recent convention of bankers at Baltimore. Indeed, there has never been more certainty that the people are in advance of their representatives on this subject, and would willingly support a radical policy which would substitute demonstrated merit for the wish of the spoilsman as a test in the selection of all government employees of the non-political grades.

OPEN LETTERS.

About Children.

A FURTHER WORD ON IMITATION.¹

THERE are one or two considerations of such practical importance to all those who wish to observe cases of imitation by children, that I venture to throw them together, only saying by way of introduction that they all follow from the general statement that nothing less than the child's personality is at stake in the method and matter of its imitations; for the "self" is but the form or process in which the personal influences surrounding the child take on their new individuality.

First. No observations are of much importance which are not accompanied by a detailed statement of the personal influences which have affected the child. This is the more important since the child sees few persons, and sees them constantly. It is not only likely—it is inevitable—that he *make up his personality*, under limitations of heredity, by imitation out of the "copy" set in the actions, temper, emotions, of the persons who build around him the social inclosure of his childhood. It is only necessary to watch a two-year-old closely to see what members of the family are giving him his personal "copy"—to find out whether he sees his mother constantly and his father seldom; whether he plays much with other children, and what their dispositions are, to a degree; whether he is growing to be a person of subjection, equality, or tyranny; whether he is assimilating the elements of some low unorganized social content from his foreign nurse. For, in Leibnitz's phrase, the boy or girl is a social monad, a little world, which reflects the whole system of influences coming to stir his sensibility. And just in as far as his sensibilities are stirred, he imitates, and forms habits of imitating. And habits?—they are character!

Second. A point akin to the first is this: every observation should describe with great accuracy the child's relation to other children. Has he brothers or sisters; how many of each, and of what age? Does he sleep in the same bed or room with them? Do they play much with one another alone? The reason is very evident. An only child has only adult "copy." He cannot interpret his father's actions, or his mother's, oftentimes. He imitates very blindly. He lacks the mere childish example of a brother or sister near himself in age. And

this difference is of very great importance to his development. He lacks the stimulus, for example, of games in which personification is a direct tutor to selfhood, as I shall remark farther on. And while he becomes precocious in some lines of instruction, he fails in imagination, in brilliancy of fancy. The dramatic, in his sense of social situations, is largely hidden. It is a very great mistake to isolate children, especially to isolate one or two children. One alone is perhaps the worse, but two alone are subject to the other element of social danger which I may mention next.

Third. Observers should report with special care all cases of unusually close relationship between children in youth, such as childish favoritism, "platonic friendships," "chumming," in school or home, etc. We have in these facts—and there is a very great variety of them—an exaggeration of the social or imitative tendency, a narrowing down of the personal suggestive sensibility to a peculiar line of well-formed influences. It has never been studied—never even to my knowledge been mentioned—by writers either on the genesis of social emotion or on the practice of education. To be sure, teachers are alive to the pros and cons of allowing children and students to room together; but it is with a view to the possibility of direct immoral or unwholesome contagion. This danger is certainly real; but we, as psychological observers, and above all as teachers and leaders, of our children, must go even deeper than that. Consider, for example, the possible influence of a school chum and room-mate upon a girl in her teens; for this is only an evident case of what all isolated children are subject to. A sensitive nature, a girl whose very life is a branch of a social tree, is placed in a new environment, to ingraft upon the members of her mutilated self—her very personality (it is nothing less than that)—utterly new channels of supply. The only safety possible, the only way to conserve the lessons of her past, apart from the veriest chance, and to add to the structure of her present character, lies in securing for her the greatest possible variety of social influences. Instead of this, she meets, eats, walks, talks, lies down at night, and rises in the morning, with one other person, a "copy" set before her, as immature, in all likelihood, as herself, or, if not so, yet a single personality, put there to wrap around her growing self the confining cords of unassimilated and foreign habit. Above all things, fathers, mothers,

¹ Suggested by Professor Royce's interesting paper on "The Imitative Functions," in THE CENTURY for May, 1894.

teachers, elders, give the children room! They need all that they can get, and their personalities will grow to fill it. Give them plenty of companions, fill their lives with variety,—variety is the soul of originality, and its only source of supply. The ethical life itself, the boy's, the girl's, conscience, is born in the stress of the conflicts of suggestion—born right out of his imitative hesitations; and just this is the analogy which he must assimilate and depend upon in his own conflicts for self-control and social continence. For himself, later, so impressively true is this from the human point of view, that it is my opinion—formed, it is true, from the very few data accessible on such points, still a positive opinion—children should never be allowed, after infancy, to room regularly together; special friendships of a close exclusive kind should be discouraged or broken up, except when under the immediate eye of the wise parent or guardian; and even when allowed, these relationships should, in all cases, be used to entrain the sympathetic and moral sentiments into a wider field of social exercise.

Fourth. The remainder of my space must be devoted to the further emphasis of the need of close observation of children's games, especially those which may be best described as "society games." All those who have given even casual observation to the doings of the nursery have been impressed with the extraordinary fertility of the child mind, from the second year onward, in imagining and plotting social and dramatic situations. It has not been as evident, however, to these casual observers, or to many really more skilled, that they were observing in these fancy-plays the putting together anew of fragments, or larger pieces, of their own mental history. But here, in these games, we see the actual use which our children make of the personal "copy" material which they have got from you and me. If a man study these games patiently in his own children, and analyze them, he gradually sees emerge from the child's inner consciousness its picture of the boy's own father, whom he aspires to be like, and whose actions he seeks to generalize and apply anew. The picture is poor, for the child takes only what he is sensible to. And it does seem often, as Sighele pathetically notices on a large social scale, and as the Westminster divines have urged without due sense of the pathetic and home-coming point of it, that he takes more of the bad in us for reproduction than of the good. But be this as it may, what we give him is all he gets. Heredity does not stop with birth: it is then only beginning. And the pity of it is that this element of heredity, this reproduction of the fathers in the children, which might be used to redeem the new-forming personality from the heritage of past commonness or impurity, is simply left to take its course for the further establishing and confirmation of it. Was there ever a group of school children who did not leave the real school to make a play school, erecting a throne for one of their number to sit on and "take off" the teacher? Was there ever a child who did not play "church," and force her father, if possible, into the pulpit? Were there ever children who did not "buy" things from fancied stalls in every corner of the nursery, when they had once seen an elder drive a trade in the market? The point is this: the child's personality grows; growth is always by action; he clothes upon himself the scenes of his life, and acts them out; so he grows in what

he is, what he understands, and what he is able to perform.

In order to be of direct service to observers of games of this character, I shall now give a short account of an observation of the kind made a few weeks ago—one of the simplest of many actual situations which my two little girls, Helen and Elizabeth, have acted out together. It is a very commonplace case, a game the elements of which are evident in their origin; but I choose this rather than one more complex, since observers are usually not psychologists, and they find the elementary the more instructive.

On May 2 I was sitting on the porch alone with the children—the two mentioned above, aged respectively four and a half and two and a half years. Helen, the elder, told Elizabeth that she was her little baby; that is, Helen became "mama," and Elizabeth "baby." The younger responded by calling her sister "mama," and the play began.

"You have been asleep, baby; now it is time to get up," said mama. Baby rose from the floor,—first falling down in order to rise,—was seized upon by "mama," taken to the railing to an imaginary wash-stand, and her face washed by rubbing. Her articles of clothing were then named in imagination, and put on, one by one, in the most detailed and interesting fashion. During all this, mama kept up a stream of baby talk to her infant: "Now your stockings, my darling; now your skirt, sweetness—oh, no—not yet—your shoes first," etc. etc. Baby acceded to all the detail with more than the docility which real infants usually show. When this was done: "Now we must go tell papa good morning, dearie," said mama. "Yes, mama," came the reply; and hand in hand they started to find papa. I, the spectator, carefully read my newspaper, thinking, however, that the reality of papa, seeing that he was so much in evidence, would break in upon the imagined situation. But not so. Mama led her baby directly past me to the end of the piazza, to a column in the corner. "There's papa," said mama; "now tell him good morning." "Good morning, papa; I am very well," said baby, bowing low to the column. "That's good," said mama, in a *gruff, low voice*, which caused in the real papa a thrill of amused self-consciousness most difficult to contain. "Now you must have your breakfast," said mama. The seat of a chair was made a breakfast-table, the baby's feigned bib put on, and her porridge carefully administered, with all the manner of the nurse who usually directs their breakfast. "Now" (after the meal, which suddenly became dinner instead of breakfast) "you must take your nap," said mama. "No, mama; I don't want to," said baby. "But you must." "No; you be baby, and take the nap." "But all the other children have gone to sleep, dearest, and the doctor says you must," said mama. This convinced baby, and she lay down on the floor. "But I have n't undressed yet." So then came all the detail of undressing, and mama carefully covered her up on the floor with a light shawl, saying, "Spring is coming now; that'll be enough. Now shut your eyes, and go to sleep." "But you have n't kissed me, mama," said the little one. "Oh, of course, my darling!"—so a long siege of kissing. Then baby closed her eyes very tight, while mama went on tiptoe away to the end of the porch. "Don't go away, mama," said baby. "No; mama would n't leave her darling," came the reply.

So this went on. The nap over, a walk was pro-

posed, hats were put on, etc., the mama exercising great care and solicitude for her baby. One further incident to show this: when the baby's hat was put on — the real hat — mama tied the strings rather tight. "Oh! you hurt, mama," said baby. "No; mama would n't draw the strings too tight. Let mama kiss it. There, is that better, my darling?" — all comically true to a certain sweet maternal tenderness which I had no difficulty in tracing.

Now, in such a case, what is to be reported, of course, is the facts. Yet knowledge of more than the facts is necessary, as I have said above, in order to get the full psychological lesson. We need just the information which concerns the rest of the family, and the social influences of the children's lives. I recognized at once every phrase which the children used in this play, where they got it, what it meant in its original context, and how far its meaning had been modified in this process which I have called "social heredity." But as that story is reported to strangers who have no knowledge of the children's social antecedents, how much beyond the mere facts of imitation and personification do they get from it? And how much the more is this true when we examine those complex games of the nursery which show the brilliant fancy for situation and drama of the wide-awake four-year-old?

Yet we psychologists are free to interpret; and how rich the lessons even from such a simple scene as this! As for Helen, what could be a more direct lesson, — a lived-out exercise in sympathy, in altruistic self-denial, in the healthy elevation of her sense of self to the dignity of kindly offices, in the sense of responsibility and agency, in the stimulus to original effort and the designing of means to ends, — and all of it with the best sense of the objectivity which is quite lost in wretched self-consciousness in us adults when we personate other characters; what could further all this highest mental growth better than the game by which the lessons of her mother's daily life are read into the child's little self? And then, in the case of Elizabeth certain things appear. She *obeys* without command or sanction, she takes in from her sister the elements of personal suggestion in their simpler childish forms; and certainly such scenes, repeated every day with such variation of detail, must give something of the sense of variety and social equality which real life afterward confirms and proceeds upon. And lessons of the opposite character are learned by the same process.

All this exercise of fancy must strengthen the imaginative faculty. The prolonged situations, maintained sometimes whole days, or possibly weeks, give strength to the imagination and train the attention. I think, also, that the sense of essential reality, and its distinction from the unreal, the merely imagined, is helped by this sort of symbolic representation. But it has its dangers also — very serious ones. And possibly the best service of observation just now is to gather the facts with a view to the proper recognition and avoidance of the dangers.

In closing, I may be allowed a word to interested parents. You can be of no use whatever to psychologists — to say nothing of the actual damage you may be to the children — unless you *know your babies through and through*. Especially the fathers. They are willing to study everything else. They know every corner of the house familiarly, and what is done in it,

except the nursery. A man labors for his children ten hours a day, gets his life insured for their support after his death, and yet he lets their mental growth, the formation of their character, the evolution of their personality, go on by absorption — if no worse — from common, vulgar, imported and changing, often immoral, attendants! Plato said the state should train the children; and added that the wisest man should rule the state. This is to say that the wisest man should tend his children! Hugo gives us, in Jean Valjean and Cosette, a picture of the true paternal relationship. We hear a certain group of studies called the *humanities*, and it is right. But the best school in the humanities for every man is in his own house.

J. Mark Baldwin.

Our Christmas Pictures.

SOME of us of an older generation are familiar with the Christmas pictures of a John Gilbert, a Kenney Meadows, a Hoppin, those queer conventional contributions to the magazines and annuals of some forty years ago, — the bringing in of the boar's head, the kissing under the mistletoe, the Yule log, and the singing of carols, — without which no Christmas publication was complete. The boar's head and Yule log had virtually passed out of existence even at that time, but the mistletoe still claimed its osculatory rights. To-day we have changed all this. Coal fires have taken the place of Yule logs; canvasback, that of the boar's head; Chopin and Grieg, the carols; and the mistletoe — well, that still hangs from the chandelier, but in a perfunctory way, as a memento of the rough and boisterous fun of former times.

One wonders whether Mr. A. B. Wenzell's excellent drawings are as true to the times in which we live as were the designs of forty years ago. He introduces us into more fashionable if not better company; for Mr. Wenzell is the cleverest of the clever. His art is chic and knowing, and although his types are a little too much of the earth, earthy, they are the people whom one finds in the majority at ball and opera. His two designs show us the outside of a New York florist's, with smart and rich buyers, connoisseur-like, picking out the genuine English mistletoe from its native, smaller-berried American rival, and an interior where these same smart people at a Christmas gathering promenade in fashionable weariness under the mysterious plant. Mr. Wenzell is a native of Detroit, Michigan, and is thirty years of age. He spent seven years in art study in Munich and Paris — under Professors Löffitz and Gysis in the former place, and under Boulanger and Lefebvre in the latter.

F. S. Church's experience of Christmas cookery is, I fear, on a par with the last generation's experience of boar's heads and Yule logs. His cold sauce is very cold sauce indeed, and the effect of Christmas pudding thus served surely is to be dreaded. But who besides Church would have thought of such diverting grotesquery as this? He draws and paints what he must draw and paint, and no less an authority than "L'Art," the great French journal, has thought him worthy of a two-page article. Is Mr. Church more painter or illustrator? His quality of color is always agreeable and always pleasant. He is American through and through, unique, indebted to no man living or dead for his quaint con-