

CHAPTER XVI

KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF

The Knowledge of the Truth and Its Sources : the Activity of the Senses and the Association of Presentations—Organs of Sense and Organs of Thought—Sense-Organs and their Specific Energy—Their Evolution—The Philosophy of Sensibility—Inestimable Value of the Senses—Limits of Sensitive Knowledge—Hypothesis and Faith—Theory and Faith—Essential Difference of Scientific (Natural) and Religious (Supernatural) Faith—Superstition of Savage and of Civilized Races—Confessions of Faith—Unsectarian Schools—The Faith of Our Fathers—Spiritism—Revelation

EVERY effort of genuine science makes for a knowledge of the truth. Our only real and valuable knowledge is a knowledge of nature itself, and consists of presentations which correspond to external things. We are incompetent, it is true, to penetrate into the innermost nature of this real world—the “thing in itself”—but impartial critical observation and comparison inform us that, in the normal action of the brain and the organs of sense, the impressions received by them from the outer world are the same in all rational men, and that in the normal function of the organs of thought certain presentations are formed which are everywhere the same. These presentations we call *true*, and we are convinced that their content corresponds to the knowable aspect of things. We *know* that these facts are not imaginary, but real.