

The totality of our thoughts, sensations, or in general our experiences, at any moment is a limited aggregate, changing continually. Anything we may fix our attention on occupies a definite place within this circumference, and must expel something else in order to find a place in this circuit or field of thought. The field of thought is in the course of our life continually growing, but mostly only through memory. How many different and distinct features or experiences the whole of our experience may at any moment have is a question almost impossible to decide. They may be different in different persons, but that there is a great number of features can hardly be denied.

But just as little can it be denied that this number is limited, and that for every new-comer, some other or others have to make room.

Thus, for instance, a definite feeling, be this what we term bodily or mental, may drive out of our field of consciousness or experience the perception of a special thing; and again, the sudden appearance within this field of a sound or a flash of lightning may make us forget a pain we are suffering from. A landscape spread out before our view may pass unnoticed if we are occupied by some absorbing train of thought, built up entirely out of reminiscences.

It does not seem that the perceptions of our physical senses differ in this respect from mere creations of our imagination or objects of our desire. Any of these very different kinds of experience may drive out the other, engross us at one moment and be chased away the next. In fact, all our experiences lie as it were on the same plane. A lover with the image of the