

8. To prove how essentially linked together the morality of any act is with its wilfulness, it is of no consequence, whether the volition that gave rise to the act, be the one which preceded it immediately as its proximate cause, or be a remote and anterior volition—in which latter case, it is termed a purpose, conceived at some period which may have long gone by, but which was kept unalterable till the opportunity for its execution came round.* There may be an interval of time, between that resolution of the will which is effective, and that performance by which it is carried into effect. One may resolve to-day, with full consent and purpose of the will, on some criminal enterprise for to-morrow. It is to-day that he has become the criminal, and has incurred a guilt to which even the performance of the morrow may bring no addition and no enhancement. The performance of to-morrow does not constitute the guilt, but only indicates it. It may prove what before the execution of the will was still an uncertainty. It may prove the strength of that determination which has been already taken—how

* It is true that if the desire were to cease for the object to be attained by the proposed act, the purpose would cease along with it, but it were confounding the things which in reality are distinct from each other, to represent on this account the desire and the purpose as synonymous. The one respects the object that is wished for; the other respects the action by which the object is to be attained.