

THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

when in 1872, in his famous *Ignorabimus-Speech*, he spoke of consciousness as an insoluble problem, and opposed it to the other functions of the brain as a supernatural phenomenon. I return to the point in the tenth chapter.

The peculiar character of many of the psychic phenomena, especially of consciousness, necessitates certain modifications of our ordinary scientific methods. We have, for instance, to associate with the customary *objective*, external observation, the *introspective* method, the *subjective*, internal observation which scrutinizes our own personality in the mirror of consciousness. The majority of psychologists have started from this "certainty of the ego": "*Cogito ergo sum*," as Descartes said—I think, therefore I am. Let us first cast a glance at this way of inquiry, and then deal with the second, complementary, method.

By far the greater part of the theories of the soul which have been put forward during the last two thousand years or more are based on introspective inquiry—that is, on "self-observation," and on the conclusions which we draw from the association and criticism of these subjective experiences. Introspection is the only possible method of inquiry for an important section of psychology, especially for the study of consciousness. Hence this cerebral function occupies a special position, and has been a more prolific source of philosophic error than any of the others (cf. chap. x.). It is, however, most unsatisfactory, and it leads to entirely false or incomplete notions, to take this self-observation of the mind to be the chief, or, especially, to be the only source of mental science, as has happened in the case of many and distinguished philosophers. A great number of the principal psychic phenomena, particu-