

**MOTIVE-FORCE AND  
MOTIVATION-TRACKS, A  
RESEARCH IN WILL  
PSYCHOLOGY**

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Motive-force and motivation-tracks, a research in will psychology by E. Boyd Barrett

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# MOTIVE-FORCE

AND

# MOTIVATION-TRACKS

A RESEARCH IN WILL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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TO  
MY MOTHER



## PREFACE.

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Much interest has, of late, been manifested in the problem of Character-Formation, and Will-Education. Many books have been written on the subject, and psychological researches have been undertaken, with the object of elucidating various details of the problem. All serious Educators now aim, rather at training the Will and Intellect, than at burdening the Memory. The wisdom of Montaigne's saying is recognised :  
« *J'ayme encore mieulx forger mon âme que la meubler.* »

The problem of Character-Formation however, presents peculiar difficulties. It presupposes a Science of Man, capable of explaining the complex, vital dynamism of human activity. Such a science does not exist, and its possibility even is doubtful. Yet even if such a Science did exist, with all its principles fully developed, and accurately formulated, its application to practical needs would still be exceedingly difficult.  
« *Whether or no a science of man constructed in fluid*

*or living terms is possible, it is certain that we cannot make the same use of it that we make of the other sciences. We cannot use it to predict or control the behaviour of men, as we use the others to predict and control the behaviour of the bodies or forces to which they refer » (1).*

Towards such a science, be it realisable or no, the first step must be an efficient Psychology of the Will. Every phase of volitional activity must be fully analysed, and, as it seems to us, such an analysis is alone possible by means of the new experimental method.

It was with the object of analysing some phases of the Choice-Process that the present experimental researches were undertaken. They were carried on in the Psychological Laboratory, of the Superior Institute of Philosophy, at Louvain University, during the academic years 1909-10, and 1910-11.

This thesis, submitted in part for the Doctorate of Philosophy, at Louvain, and afterwards as a whole, for the degree of Master of Arts, in the National University of Ireland, has been written under pressure of time. The author feels that he has neither done justice to the subject treated, nor to the materials at his disposal. Nevertheless, he feels that first efforts, towards an experimental knowledge of the Will are likely to be received indulgently, especially if they lead to some improvement or development of the method of this nascent branch of Psychology.

It has, then, been the first aim of the author, to

(1) L. P. JACKS, *The Alchemy of Thought*, p. 196.

secure that the method employed in these researches should be able to stand the test of criticism. No detail has been consciously neglected, and no improvement due to the development of the modern psychical method has been ignored. In preparation for this research, the author has had the advantage of visiting many famous psychological laboratories : Leipzig, Berlin, Göttingen, Würzburg, Frankfort, Bonn, Grönningen, Utrecht, Ghent, etc., and of hearing the views of many eminent psychologists, Külpe, Müller, Marbe, Heymans, Rupp, Zwaardemaker, Van Biervliet, and others, on the method and technique of modern Psychology.

The standpoint adopted in this book is, of course, strictly empirical and experimental. The method is, in general, that of the Würzburg School, viz., *the Introspective Method*. This school might well take as its *motto* the Ἐνδον βλέπε of Marcus Aurelius (1).

It is hardly necessary to point out that this thesis is not written for the general public, presupposing as it does the discipline of Philosophy. It is distinctly technical, and the terminology of modern Psychology is employed. It is written for the those engaged in the study of the Will, and of Character. There are nevertheless, some chapters which may interest the general reader. It is well perhaps here, in order to forestall possible misunderstandings, to add a word of explanation with regard to the position of this work, with respect to the problem of the « Freedom of the Will. »

(1) Ἐνδον βλέπε. Ἐνδον ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, καὶ δεῖ ἀναβλέψαι δυναμένη, εἰάν δεῖ σκάπτου. *Thoughts*, VII, 59.