

37.
Phenomenon
of centralisa-
tion.

us, but we have also a large array of external facts which have been appropriately defined by the term "the objective mind." There are, in fact, two properties with which we are familiar through common-sense and ordinary reflection as belonging specially to the phenomena of our inner self-conscious life, to the so-called "epiphenomena" of the higher organic or nervous systems, and these properties seem to lie quite beyond the sphere and the possibilities of the ordinary methods of exact research. The first of these properties is the peculiar unity exhibited by the higher forms of organic existence, and still more evident in the phenomena of mental or inner life. Instead of unity, it might perhaps be better to call it centralisation. Now, the more we apply mathematical methods, the more we become aware of the impossibility of ever arriving at a comprehensive unity by adding units or elements together. The sum of atoms or molecules, however artfully put together, never exhibits to our reasoning that appearance of concentration which the higher organisms or our conscious self seem to exhibit. In this circumstance lies the difficulty of ever arriving at any really satisfactory definition of life—which definition eminent physiologists have, as we have seen, felt compelled ultimately to relegate to the realm of the idea. In the last chapter I showed how modern research into the phenomena of life has impressed upon our thoughts the ubiquity, the continuity, and the unique character or singularity of life, without being able to fix upon any one satisfactory mechanical definition of life. But as we ascend in the scale of living things we become aware of another property: they are centred—*i.e.*, they exhibit a