Attention produces effects upon the nervous system. These effects are habits, or nervous associations. A habit arises, when, having had the sensation of performing a certain act, \( m \), on several occasions \( a, b, c \), we come to do it upon every occurrence of the general event, \( l \), of which \( a, b \) and \( c \) are special cases. That is to say, by the cognition that

Every case of \( a, b, \) or \( c \), is a case of \( m \),

is determined the cognition that

Every case of \( l \) is a case of \( m \).

Thus the formation of a habit is an induction, and is therefore necessarily connected with attention or abstraction. Voluntary actions result from the sensations produced by habits, as instinctive actions result from our original nature.


References: W 2:232-3; CP 5.297

Date of Quote: 1868

URL: http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-some-consequences-four-incapacities-7