PREFACE

One of the potential uses of a preface is to explain the title of a book; and at least one word in the present title seems to need some explanation—the word "reflections." The term does not explain whose reflections are in question; but this happens to be a convenient ambiguity, because part of the volume is an attempt at a historical account of the conceptions held—chiefly since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—of the desires which motivate human behavior, and of the implications of these theories for economics, politics, and ethics. But the book also contains some observations and critical appraisals by the present author on the same subject, and also some psychological theorems which seem to him unfamiliar and of high importance—namely, the distinction between terminal and adjectival values and the peculiarly complex character of the influence exercised by man’s self-consciousness upon his affective and appetitive life. One of the lectures, the third, is wholly devoted to this topic and it manifests itself also in some of the lectures primarily historical in their theme.

The lectures were delivered originally on the Cooper Foundation at Swarthmore College in 1941. I regret the excessive time which because of various circumstances has
elapsed between their original deliverance and their present appearance in print. Even after this long interval, the book would hardly have reached publication without the aid of Mr. Bernard R. Mathews, Jr., an advanced graduate student in the department of philosophy at Johns Hopkins University, as research assistant, and his valuable suggestions and discussions with the author.

Arthur O. Lovejoy

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