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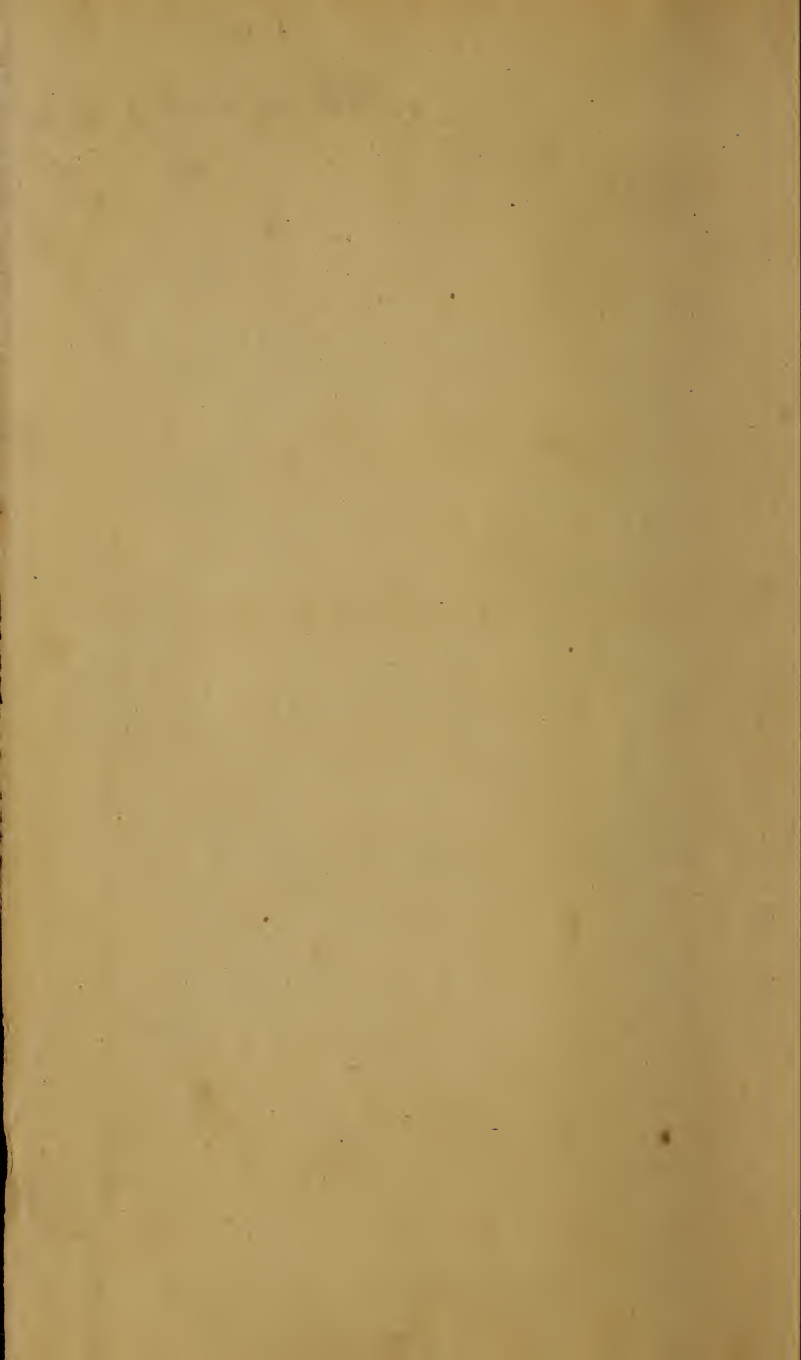


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*Ballantyne, James Robert*

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*Alex. G. Duff*

AN OUTLINE

*January 21.  
1857.*

OF

METAPHYSICAL ENQUIRY,

WITH

SPECIAL REFERENCE

TO THE

PHENOMENA OF THE HUMAN MIND.

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## P R E F A C E .

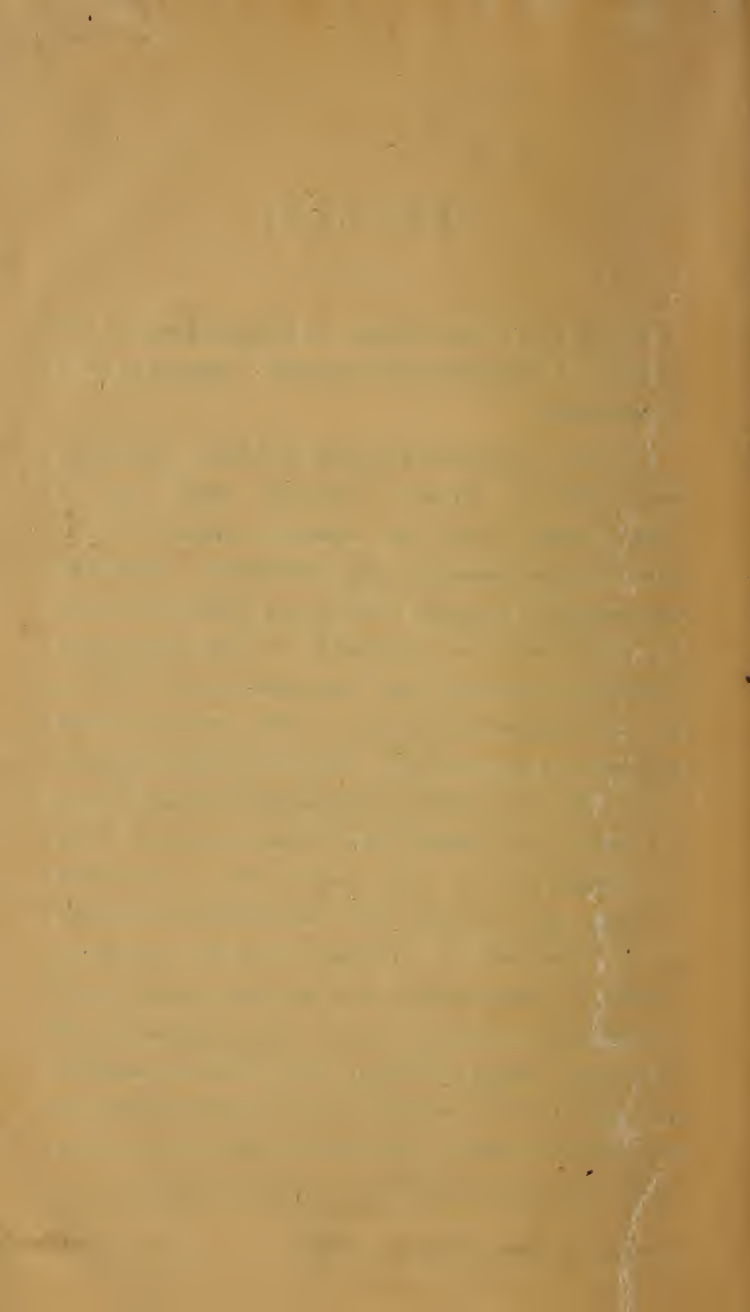
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A BARE and clear outline, or sketch-map, of the province of Metaphysical research, appears to be a desideratum.

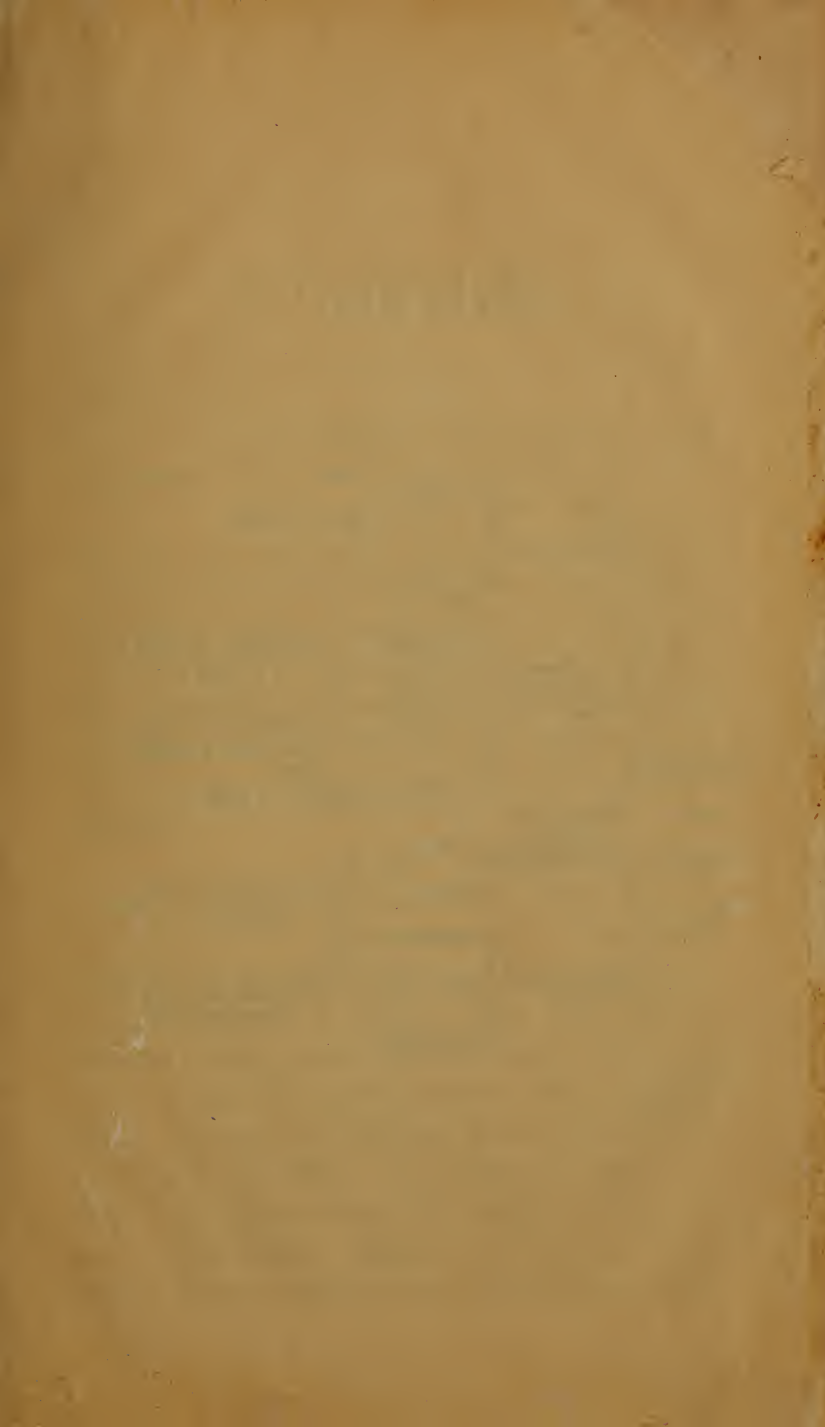
In the voluminous writings of Locke, Berkeley, Reid, Stewart, Brown, Whewell, Mill, &c. "a mighty maze, though not without a plan," the majority of schoolboys get quite bewildered. Even Dr. Abercrombie's popular work is too diffuse to serve as a convenient first text-book. In the few pages following, an attempt has been made to give the reader an available definition of the principal terms employed in the enquiry, and a methodical framework, into the clearly apprehended compartments of which each observation of value connected with the subject that he may meet with in his future reading, will naturally fall, and settle in its proper place. Towards the effecting of such a purpose, brevity is indispensable, and no other apology need be offered for adopting a style simply dogmatic, and for giving a single definition, and, as far as possible, the central and etymological one, of words which the vagueness of current use would enable one to define under half-a-dozen different shades of signification.

*Benares College, Sept. 8, 1848.*

*J. R. Ballantyne*

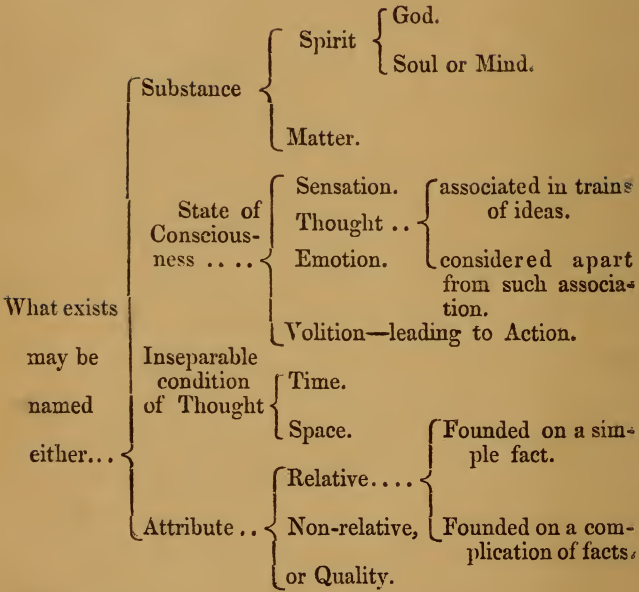






# SYNOPSIS.

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## METAPHYSICS.

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1.—Whatever can be conceived, can *Existence.* have a name assigned to it ; and whatever is nameable, either exists, or it does not. A philosopher may have doubted the existence of an external world, and of other thinking beings besides himself, but no one can well doubt his own existence ; for the fact of his doubting, or thinking, is to him the proper, and indeed the only possible evidence that he himself exists, even were every other apparently existing thing a delusion.

2.—Every name denotes either *Nameable things.* a Substance, or a State of Consciousness, or an Inseparable condition of Thought, or an Attribute. Substance is either Matter, or Spirit ; which latter denotes God the Creator, and Mind, the seat of Consciousness. A state of Consciousness is either a Sensation, a Thought, an Emotion, or a Volition. The inseparable conditions of thought are Space and Time. An Attribute is either Relative or Non-relative. Non-relative attributes are termed Qualities. Relative attributes are either simple or com-

plex. Simple Relative Attributes are those of Position, Simultaneity, Succession, Similarity, Identity, Difference, Power, Number, Quantity, &c. Complex relative attributes, such as Paternity, Property, and the like, are innumerable.

3.—The unknown proximate cause  
*Matter.* of our sensations is called Matter. In regard to Matter we know nothing except its phenomena ; that is to say, the ways in which it affects our senses. When we speak of a portion of Matter, of a Stone for example, we can tell nothing about its nature, except that it is something which appears to us to be of a certain size, figure, weight, &c. &c.; in other words, it is something in which we may say that the qualities of size, figure, weight, &c. reside ; but what that something is, in which these qualities reside, we cannot tell. We can give it a name, and we give it the name of Matter, but the name records no addition to our knowledge ; it merely serves to refer the hearer to “ something, we cannot tell what.” It is like the letter conventionally used in Algebra as the symbol of an unknown quantity. The use of such symbols enables us to arrive at the knowledge of a great many valuable truths, and the risk of its leading us into error, arises only when we forget that the symbol, standing for something that we do not know, is the evidence not of our knowledge, but of our ignorance.

4.—In like manner, when we speak of *Mind*. the Mind, we can tell nothing about its nature, except that it is something which possesses certain qualities, or which exists in various states of consciousness, which appear to follow certain laws. The characteristic of mind is consciousness,—this being the generic name for all the classes of feeling. As the Mind is the essential part of man's nature, it constitutes, what is termed his Soul,—that in virtue of which a man is himself. That, in virtue of which a man is himself, is not his body. We do not say of Devadatta's dead body that it is himself. We speak of it as something which he himself has quitted—which his soul has quitted. We proceed to consider in their order, the states of consciousness.

5.—Sensation is a state of the mind, *Sensation*. brought about through the medium of the senses of Sight, Hearing, Smell, Taste and Touch.

6.—The organ of sight is the Eye. By *Sight*. the eye we judge of the distance of an object from us, and of its size ; but this is an acquired power, and is the result of inference. Things near, appear distinct, and things distant, appear indistinct. A very large tree may be seen as if depicted on the glass of a very small window through which we view it ; yet the tree does not give us the impression of its being small, because

its indistinctness reminds us that it is distant. The sun is ninety millions of miles distant, but the sun is not indistinct; and therefore, though it is immensely larger than the earth, it appears to the eye to be at no great distance, and smaller than a potter's wheel.

7.—The organ of hearing is the Ear.  
*Hearing.* Knowledge received through the ear, like that received through the eye, is much modified by inference. A sound, to one near the cause of the sound, is louder than to one more distant from it; hence, when we do not know the distance of the cause of the sound, we may confound the thunder of a distant cloud, with the rumbling of a neighbouring cart.

8.—The sense of smell has its  
*Smell and Taste.* organ in the Nose, which is conveniently situated over the Mouth, in which resides the sense of Taste, as if designed to watch that nothing unsavoury—and what is really offensive to the nose is seldom savoury—shall pass into the mouth in the way of food.

Taste and smell are the only two among the senses that have the slightest resemblance to each other. The quality of matter, of which the one takes cognizance when the matter is suspended in a liquid, is not utterly unlike that which the other recognises when the matter is suspended in air.

9.—The sense of Touch is distributed  
*Touch.* in greater or lesser measure over the  
 greater portion of the body. It is parti-  
 cularly delicate at the tips of the fingers.

10.—Our sensations are re-  
*Object and Event.* ceived either simultaneously or  
 successively. When several are  
 received simultaneously, as the smell, the taste,  
 the colour, the form, &c., of a fruit, their as-  
 sociation makes up the notion of an Object; and  
 the separate cause of each of the associated sen-  
 sations which we attribute to it, is called a qua-  
 lity of the object. When sensations are received  
 successively, their association makes up the notion  
 of an Event;—as when the sight of the lightning  
 is followed by the sound of the thunder.

11.—When we think of a body, or  
*Space.* portion of matter, we are, from the  
 very conditions of such a conception,  
 obliged to admit that it occupies a space as large  
 as itself. Where there is this amount of space, we  
 cannot help feeling that there must be more adjoin-  
 ing it on all sides; and however much more we may  
 think of, we cannot conceive it as having an end.

12.—To what we regard as having  
*Infinity.* no end, we give the name of Infinite.

13.—In the case of an event, the  
*Time.* existence of an impression along with  
 the memory of a previous impression,

compels us to view these associated impressions as belonging to successive portions of what *Eternity*. we call Time. Time, like space, we cannot help regarding as infinite.—The infinity of time is expressed by the term Eternity.

14.—A sensation continues only so long as its cause is not removed. After the sensation has ceased, however, all knowledge of it does not vanish. That the mind retains a knowledge of a state of consciousness after it has ceased, is expressed by saying, that it has the faculty of Memory. What remains after the departure of a sensation, being regarded as a picture or copy of the sensation, is generally called an Idea, from a Greek word signifying an image, or representation.

We are not to imagine that there are any actual pictures thus impressed on some portion of the Mind, and that this portion of the Mind is called the Memory. The word Idea is to be understood merely as denoting the unknown cause of our remembering sensations, and other states of consciousness.

Some philosophers, wondering how Mind could take cognizance of Matter, have supposed that the Mind does so only by means of a representation, such as we have warned the reader against fancying an Idea to be. They then quite consistently argu-



ed that we can be certain of the existence of the representation alone, and that our belief in the existence of the material world is an error. This argument is to be met by denying the necessity for the supposed representation. How Mind takes cognizance of Matter, is known to God only.

Those ideas are the most likely to remain in the Memory, the original impression of which was the most vivid. When, out of several simultaneous impressions, some one occupies the Mind *Attention.* more vividly, we are said to *attend* to it.

The Mind possesses a certain control over the vividness of its impressions, and this, which is called the faculty of Attention, being the basis of all intellectual progress, is of primary importance in the education of the Mind.

15.—Each of the Ideas *Association of Ideas.* which we may speak of the memory as being stored with, does not act at all times upon the Mind as a cause of consciousness; but our ideas are so associated one with another, that the presence of one recalls another, and that other a third; and this process is constantly going on in the mind, and producing, what is called, the *The Train of Thought.* Train of Thought. For example, I see a *pandit.* I immediately think of the Sanskrit language. The idea of the Sanskrit probably suggests that of the

Greek, which so strikingly resembles it. The idea of the Greek language calls up the idea of the country of Greece, or perhaps of Oxford, where it is so diligently studied. And so the train of thought goes on, until some fresh sensation occurs to turn it into perhaps some entirely

*Reflection.* different channel. When thought consists in comparing ideas and their relations, it is frequently termed Reflection.

16.—The laws of Association, according to which the train of thought takes place, seem all to be resolvable into two. The first is this, that if two very vivid impressions have been experienced either simultaneously or in immediate succession, then whenever either of these impressions, or the idea of it, recurs, it tends to excite the idea of the other. We take advantage of this law of association, when we tie a knot on our pocket handkerchief, whilst thinking steadily of something which we wish it to remind us of. When we again see the knot, it recalls the idea which we had in our mind at the time when we tied it.

*Recollection.* When an idea is thus rendered afresh the subject of Consciousness, we are said to recollect it. The second law of Association is this, that the tendency of one idea to recall another, is increased by their being repeatedly viewed together, or in immediate succession. It

is by repetition that a boy gets the alphabet by heart. The sounds gradually become so associated in his mind in their successive order, that the first, when uttered, suggests the second, that the third, and so on. That his power of recollection in this case depends upon this alone, he may convince himself by attempting to repeat the letters of the alphabet rapidly backwards,—an attempt in which he will be sure to fail.

Of an object which we are in the habit of seeing daily, the idea is always becoming linked in new associations, so that an object which at first suggested nothing but painful ideas, such as the death of a lost friend to whom it belonged, gradually comes to be linked with ideas not simply painful. We say that we “get used to” the sight of it. But if we see such an object for the first time since our loss, after however long a period, then, as it has been associated with nothing new in the interval, it will be sure to affect us more by recalling nothing but the unmitigated consciousness of our loss.

17.—If we employ the word Idea to signify what is left by a sensation, we must say that a man has no idea of that which has never been presented to his senses. Thus a blind man can have no idea of colour. In the same way a man who has never met with a lion, has no idea of a lion; but, on being told that a lion is a kind of very large cat, with a mane of shaggy hair on its shoulders, he may put

together the ideas which he already possesses of a cat, and of great bulk, and of a shaggy mane, and

thus attain to what is called the *Conception*. The word *conception* means the "taking together" of several ideas, to make up another. By a convenient extension of its meaning, the same term may be employed to designate the taking together certain residuary portions of a complex idea. Thus, a tuberose has a very powerful odour; but we can easily form a conception of a tuberose destitute of odour. The blind man, on the other hand, can form no conception of colour, because the ideas with which his mind is furnished cannot, by any

process of combination or separation, give colour as a result. When the formation of new ideas, which we have just described by the term *Conception*, is employed by the poet for the purpose of presenting to the reader novel images of striking beauty or grandeur, the term *Imagination* is employed to designate the mental process in question.

*Fancy*. When the conceptions differ not merely in degree, but in kind, from the ideas due to human experience, the process takes the name of *Fancy*. The conception of a hero endowed with the strength of an elephant, and the speed of a deer, is imaginative:—that of a centaur, with the head of a man, and the body of a horse, is fanciful.

18.—Although whatever can be conceived can have a name assigned to it, yet as things *General Terms.* conceivable are innumerable, and we cannot afford to have innumerable names, we must make one name serve for many individuals. We do this by giving one name to a number of similar things in respect of their similarity. Thus we call a great number of individuals by the term “man” in respect of their similarity. That in respect of which they resemble, be it what it may, may be denoted by such a term as *Humanity*, or *man’s nature*, just as an unknown quantity in Algebra is denoted by a letter. We are not to suppose that this Humanity is something that resides in each man; much less that it is something eternal, and residing for a time in transient beings. When we say that “the nature of a jar is not in cloth,” the jar and the cloth are the only things thought of; and we are really saying no more than this, that “cloth is not a jar.” If we say that “the absence of the nature of a jar is the cause why cloth is not a jar,” then the statement forms no addition to the knowledge conveyed in the equivalent statement, that “cloth is not a jar, because it is something different.”

19.—Such a name as “Man,” which is capable of being truly affirmed, in the same sense, of each of an indefinite number of things, is called a Common, or General name. Generalization, or the act

of comprehending under a common name several objects which the name serves to denote, and which resemble each other in some particular which the name is said to con-note, is not merely useful in economizing language. It is by means of general names that we are enabled to form general propositions, without which there could be no reasoning. What we can affirm with truth of an individual, may possibly be true of no other individual:—but what we can affirm with truth of all who are denoted by a common name, may be affirmed with truth of each individual denoted by the name:—and this

*Classification.* is the fundamental axiom of Logic, the science of reasoning. The objects denoted by a common name are said to constitute a class, and the arrangement of groupes of objects under such names is called Classification.

20.—Having classified sugar, honey, &c. as being things sweet to the taste, when we turn our attention to that in which all the members of the class resemble each other, the mind is said to perform the operation of Abstraction, which signifies “taking away” that in which the similarity consists, and denoting it by a separate term. The term denoting the supposed object of consideration in such a case—for example “sweetness”—is called

an abstract term. Opposed to *Concrete Terms*. abstract is the term Concrete, by which is meant a word denoting that which furnishes the source of an abstract term. Although every thing conceivable is nameable, it does not follow that every thing nameable is conceivable. A triangle with four sides, is nameable without being conceivable; and the name, like an abstract term, may be employed without leading us into error, so long as we do not suppose that it represents a possible reality. Many valuable results in Algebra are arrived at by means of logical operations on symbols representing what are avowedly designated Impossible Quantities. The Algebraist is not led by this to imagine that his Impossible Quantities are existing realities; but he has as good reason to do so, as we have to conclude that an abstract term represents an existing reality, because we arrive at truths, by employing it as a symbol. The use of the term "sweetness" need lead us into no error, so long as we do not forget that the sentence "Sugar is agreeable to the taste, from its sweetness," means nothing different from this, that "Sugar is sweet, and therefore it is agreeable to the taste."

21.—Doubt is the association of two conflicting notions with one object, as when, *Doubt*. in the case of an object seen at some distance, the notion arises that it is a man, and at the

same time the notion that it is a post. Doubt continues until the one notion excludes the other.

22.—Belief is the absence of doubt.

*Belief.* A proposition which we believe we call true. By a true proposition we mean

*Truth.* that which speaks of a thing as it really is. When we believe a proposition

*Perception.* which is not true, we are in error. Perception is the belief that a given sensation has an external cause, which we recognize under the denomination of the object perceived. Reasoning is the inferring that something is true, because we believe that something else is true. As

every proposition which we believe  
*First Truths.* to be true must be either self-evident or else dependent on some other truth, some truths must necessarily be self-evident, otherwise there would be no end to the chain of reasoning, and nothing could be established by the process. These self-evident propositions, or First Truths, we must know and believe in a superlative degree, for the very reason that we know and believe all other truths through them. For example, we require no proof of the assertion that "it is impossible for the same thing at once both to be and not to be." The person who either does not perceive the truth of this, or who imagines that its truth could be rendered clearer by any process of demonstration, is held to be deficient



in common sense. The acceptance of a self-evident truth or axiom, is called an act of common sense, or of Reason. Reason,—the acceptance

*Reason.* of what is self-evident—is not to be confounded with reasoning—the making of an inference. We believe many things to be true on the testimony of other men. The credibility of

Testimony is of great moment in *Testimony.* History, in treating of which, the question of the trustworthiness of our authorities requires to be carefully considered.

Man is naturally disposed to rely upon the veracity of those who tell him any thing. The child does so until he has been once deceived. The chief cautions in regard to the acceptance or rejection of the testimony of any person are involved in the three questions, “Had he sufficient opportunities of observing the facts to which he testifies?” “Was he competent to judge of the facts which he had these opportunities of observing?”—and “Is he under no temptation to give a false report?”

23.—That state of mind which *Emotion.* excites a desire for action, is called Emotion. One state of mind is of such a kind, that we do not care whether its duration be long or short. This state we call one of Indifference. Another is of such a kind, that we would put an end to it instantly, if we could. This state we call Pain. Another is of such a kind, that we would make some effort to

prolong it. This state we call *Enjoyment*. The cause of pain we term *Evil*; that of its opposite we term *Good*. The intentional producing of evil as pure evil, is always hated; and that of good, as pure good, always loved. Love and Hatred, or Desire and Aversion, mark out the two great divisions of the emotional states of mind which are also called the *Affections*. An Affection of great intensity is termed a *Passion*. The cause of the conviction that the one kind of action is *Wrong*, or deserving of disapproval; and the other *Right*, or deserving of approval, is termed *Conscience*. The question of what actions tend to produce good or evil, and are therefore right or wrong, belongs to the science of *Ethics*.

24.—The cause of action, or that which immediately precedes it, is called *Volition*, or *Willing*. The will is determined by *Emotions*. We naturally wish to avoid a pain which is utterly unconnected with any good, and to possess a good which entails no pain. Some men, eager to seize upon any pleasure placed within their reach, disregard the danger that a far more serious amount of pain may be entailed by the action which they resolve upon. To enable a man accurately to weigh the consequences of his actions is the business of that division of *Ethics* which when applied to practice, is called *moral Educa-*

tion. His moral education is not complete however, nor is he entitled to the name of a virtuous man, until the feeling of disapproval is so indissolubly associated in his mind with the notion of what is wrong, that he shrinks back from what is wrong instinctively, and without condescending to calculate the chances of advantage. He who acts always merely on a calculation of the consequences, even should he always act rightly, is only prudent. The natural consequences of an action which, to the ethical enquirer, furnish the criterion of its fitness, can furnish no proper substitute for the steady motives of action originating in those virtuous habits, which it is the most important business of education to cultivate.

25.—Actions may produce good or evil to others besides the agent. The prevention of those actions which are designed or calculated to produce evil to others, is the object of that department of Ethics which, when applied to practice, is termed Law or Jurisprudence. The encouragement of actions calculated to produce good to others, is partly provided for by that department of practical Ethics, which is termed Politics, or the general management of a state; and still more by Religion, which signifies the viewing of ourselves and all things as related to God, and accountable to Him.

26.—Attributes, as has been already *Attributes.* stated, are either Relative or Non-relative. Attributes which are not relative, are called Qualities. Such are Colour, Taste, Smell, &c., which we speak of as belonging to an orange or a melon, without reference to each other, or to any other object. The qualities of external objects are their powers of *Relation.* causing sensation. Relation is the term for the mode in which we view two things which, in consideration of some fact in which they are both concerned, receive names, each of which suggests the other. That in consideration of which the names are given is called the ground of the relation. Thus, in consideration of the fact that William has lent money to Thomas, Thomas is called William's debtor, and William is called Thomas's creditor. Debtor and Creditor are relative names. Each of the names is said to be the Correlative of the other. Simple relations are those which are founded on a notion which is incapable of being resolved into any thing simpler. Such are the relations founded on likeness, unlikeness, identity, difference, simultaneousness, sequence, quantity, position, change. Every body knows what these mean, and nobody can tell; just as every body who can see, knows what *white* means, but nobody can convey to a blind man a notion of what it means.

The relation of difference gives rise to  
*Number.* the conception of Number; for, where there is difference, there is more than one. Quantities, some multiple of the lesser of which may equal some multiple of the greater, are called commensurable. Where this is not the case, they are called incommensurable. When the excess of a quality in any object is not directly  
*Intensity.* susceptible of numerical representation, the difference is called one of Intensity. Thus the blue colour of the sky is more intense at one time than at another, but cannot be said to be at one time twice or thrice what it was at another time.

28.—Two relations are said to resemble each other when a resemblance exists between the facts which severally constituted the ground of the relations. The resemblance of two relations is called Analogy. If the resemblance between the ground of the two relations be slight, the analogy is said to be slight. Analogy, in the case of quantity, where the ground of the relation is not merely similar, but identical, is termed Proportion.—In proportion the analogy is complete. Complex relations are innumerable, for there are as many conceivable relations, as there are conceivable kinds of fact in which two things can be jointly concerned. We have for ex-

ample, the relation of Paternity, on which are founded (though not etymologically so) the correlative names of Father and Son:—and so again we have the correlative names, Ruler and Subject, Master and Servant, and so on.

When we believe that two objects do *Motion*. not occupy the same relative position which they occupied before, we infer that one or other of them has changed its place and moved, or that we ourselves have moved. We can tell which has moved, only by referring their present positions to some other point, the previous position of which, relatively to each, we remember, and which we assume to have remained at rest. Our conception of Motion is always relative, its correlative being Rest. It is obvious that the sun and the earth do not maintain the same relative position. Motion is necessarily inferred; and whilst one man infers that the earth has moved, another feels certain that the sun has moved. So a man in a boat does not doubt that he is receding from the shore; whilst the child in his arms doubts as little that the shore is receding from him.

29.—A most important pair of *Cause and Effect*. correlative terms is Cause and Effect. The ground of the relation in this case is supplied by our instinctive conviction that whatever existing thing did not at one time exist, must have owed its beginning to

some thing previously existing. That  
*Power.* previously existing, to which any thing  
 owed its beginning, we term its Cause.

The correlative of a cause we call its Effect. The nature of a cause, or that in virtue of which it produces an effect, is expressed by the term Power. Power, when motion is the effect, is called Force.

A cause must either be self-existent, or it must owe its existence to some other cause; and that again, if not self-existent, to some other, and so on, without end. The mind, naturally revolting against the incomprehensible idea of an infinite succession of causes, no one of which could come into existence without one previous to it, rests with assurance on the conviction that there is one Self-existing First Cause, which we recognize by the name of God. All else that we call a cause, is so, solely because God so wills it.

The only way in which we can determine that any thing is a cause, is by observing that its presence is always attended by the same phenomenon, which we therefore designate as its effect. The rules for observing correctly, constitute the art of Discovery, an art to which the greatest philosophers have made successive contributions, and the improvement of which is likely to be continually progressive as discoveries themselves accumulate. We do not derive our first notion of causation from experience, for we are at first disposed to think that every two phenomena which occur in immediate succession are

related in the way of cause and effect. It requires experience to correct this notion, and to teach us in what cases phenomena are related in the way of cause and effect, and in what cases they are merely in the relation of accidental contiguity.

When we trace back a series of causes till we can trace it no further, we are not entitled to say that we have reached the link in the chain next to that which is in the hand of God—but at the same time, we have no right to insist that we have not. For example, when we see a stone, on its being left unsupported, begin to fall to the ground, we are justified in saying that the motion had a cause, for it had a beginning; and we may call this cause, if we choose, the attraction of the earth. But the word “attraction” is merely a term which stands for the unknown cause of the phenomenon of falling bodies; and no addition will be made to our knowledge by interposing another imaginary cause, such as an attractive ether, to account for the existence of the attraction. The fact that bodies attract each other may be the immediate result of the will of God, which could of course make each body a cause of attraction to all others; or it may be the result of a long chain of causes hidden from our view.

The limit of our actual knowledge in regard to any phenomenon is

*The limit of Knowledge.* marked by the employment of a word which



signifies the unknown cause of the phenomenon. Many philosophers, deluded by the notion that the symbol which they employed for "the unknown cause of something," stood for something that they knew, have gone on supplying imaginary links to the chain of causes in the shape of imaginary powers of nature, and lengthening it out till they lost sight of the end of it, have persuaded themselves that the chain can support itself. Thus relying upon what are called Second Causes, they deny the necessity of a First Cause, being about as wise as the ancient Arabs, who fancied that the earth was supported by an angel, who stood upon a rock of ruby, sustained by a great bull on the back of an enormous fish floating on water, which was supported by darkness into which the eye or mind of man could not penetrate so as to discover any support for the fantastically accumulated load.

30.—Our knowledge of the uniform relations of things constitutes Science. The application of such knowledge to the production of particular results constitutes Art. Thus the art of mental education consists in turning our knowledge of the mind into rules for producing the highest development of the mind. The discoveries of science are recorded in the indicative mood; the rules of art are enunciated in the imperative. The investigation of the

ultimate grounds of all knowledge, having in all ages attracted the attention of the lovers of wisdom, is called (from the Greek word signifying "the love of wisdom") Philosophy.

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