

Review of the Work of Mr John Stuart Mill Entitled, 'Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy.' eBook

Review of the Work of Mr John Stuart Mill Entitled, 'Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy.' by George Grote

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JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS

An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, and of the Principal Philosophical Questions discussed in his Writings. By John Stuart Mill. London: Longmans. 1865.

The work bearing the above title is an octavo volume, consisting of twenty-eight chapters, and five hundred and sixty pages. This is no great amount of print; but the amount of matter contained in it is prodigious, and the quality of that matter such as to require a full stretch of attention. Mr Mill gives his readers no superfluous sentences, scarcely even a superfluous word, above what is necessary to express his meaning briefly and clearly. Of such a book no complete abstract can be given in the space to which we are confined.

To students of philosophy—doubtless but a minority among the general circle of English readers—this work comes recommended by the strongest claims both of interest and instruction. It presents in direct antithesis two most conspicuous representatives of the modern speculative mind of England—Sir W. Hamilton and Mr John Stuart Mill.

Sir W. Hamilton has exercised powerful influence over the stream of thought during the present generation. The lectures on Logic and Metaphysics delivered by him at Edinburgh, for twenty years, determined the view taken of those subjects by a large number of aspiring young students, and determined that view for many of them permanently and irrevocably.[1] Several eminent teachers and writers of the present day are proud of considering themselves his disciples, enunciate his doctrines in greater or less proportion, and seldom contradict him without letting it be seen that they depart unwillingly from such a leader. Various new phrases and psychological illustrations have obtained footing in treatises of philosophy, chiefly from his authority. We do not number ourselves among his followers; but we think his influence on philosophy was in many ways beneficial. He kept up the idea of philosophy as a subject to be studied from its own points of view: a dignity which in earlier times it enjoyed, perhaps, to mischievous excess, but from which in recent times it has far too much receded—especially in England. He performed the great service of labouring strenuously to piece together the past traditions of philosophy, to re-discover those which had been allowed to drop into oblivion, and to make out the genealogy of opinions as far as negligent predecessors had still left the possibility of doing so.

The forty-six lectures on Metaphysics, and the thirty-five lectures on Logic, published by Messrs Mansel and Veitch, constitute the biennial course actually delivered by Sir W. Hamilton in the Professorial Chair. They ought therefore to be looked at chiefly with reference to the minds of youthful hearers, as preservatives against that mischief forcibly described by Rousseau—'L'inhabitude de penser dans la jeunesse en ote la capacite pendant le reste de la vie.'



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Now, in a subject so abstract, obscure, and generally unpalatable, as Logic and Metaphysics, the difficulty which the teacher finds in inspiring interest is extreme. That Sir W. Hamilton overcame such difficulty with remarkable success, is the affirmation of his two editors; and our impression, as readers of his lectures, disposes us to credit them. That Sir W. Hamilton should have done this effectively is in itself sufficient to stamp him as a meritorious professor—as a worthy successor to the chair of Dugald Stewart, whose unrivalled perfection in that department is attested by every one. Many a man who ultimately adopted speculative opinions opposed to Dugald Stewart, received his first impulse and guidance in the path of speculation from the lasting impression made by Stewart's lectures.

But though we look at these lectures, as they ought to be looked at, chiefly with a view to the special purpose for which they were destined, we are far from insinuating that they have no other merits, or that they are useless for readers who have already a metaphysical creed of their own. We have found them both instructive and interesting: they go over a large proportion of the field of speculative philosophy, partly from the point of view (not always the same) belonging to the author, partly from that of numerous predecessors whom he cites. We recognize also in Sir W. Hamilton an amount of intellectual independence which seldom accompanies such vast erudition. He recites many different opinions, but he judges them all for himself; and, what is of still greater moment, he constantly gives the reasons for his judgments. To us these reasons are always of more or less value, whether we admit them to be valid or not. Many philosophers present their own doctrine as if it were so much ascertained and acknowledged truth, either intimating, or leading you to suppose, that though erroneous beliefs to the contrary formerly prevailed, these have now become discredited with every one. We do not censure this way of proceeding, but we prefer the manner of Sir W. Hamilton. He always keeps before us divergence and discrepancy of view as the normal condition of reasoned truth or philosophy; the characteristic postulate of which is, that every affirmative and every negative shall have its appropriate reasons clearly and fully enunciated.

In this point of view the appendix annexed to the lectures is also valuable; and the four copious appendixes or dissertations following the edition of Reid's works, are more valuable still. How far Sir W. Hamilton has there furnished good proof of his own doctrines on External Perception, and on the Primary Qualities of Matter, we shall not now determine; but to those who dissent from him, as well as to those who agree with him, his reasonings on these subjects are highly instructive: while the full citations from so many other writers contribute materially not only to elucidate the points directly approached, but

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also to enlarge our knowledge of philosophy generally. We set particular value upon this preservation of the traditions of philosophy, and upon this maintenance of a known perpetual succession among the speculative minds of humanity, with proper comparisons and contrasts. We have found among the names quoted by Sir W. Hamilton, and, thanks to his care, several authors hardly at all known to us, and opinions cited from them not less instructive than curious. He deserves the more gratitude, because he departs herein from received usage since Bacon and Descartes. The example set by these great men was admirable, so far as it went to throw off the authority of predecessors; but pernicious so far as it banished those predecessors out of knowledge, like mere magazines of immaturity and error. Throughout the eighteenth century, all study of the earlier modes of philosophizing was, for the most part, neglected. Of such neglect, remarkable instances are pointed out by Sir W. Hamilton.

While speaking about the general merits and philosophical position of Sir William Hamilton, we have hitherto said nothing about those of Mr Mill. But before we proceed to analyze the separate chapters of his volume, we must devote a few words to the fulfilment of another obligation.

Mr John Stuart Mill has not been the first to bestow honour on the surname which he bears. His father, Mr James Mill, had already ennobled the name. An ampler title to distinction in history and philosophy can seldom be produced than that which Mr James Mill left behind him. We know no work which surpasses his 'History of British India' in the main excellencies attainable by historical writers: industrious accumulation, continued for many years, of original authorities—careful and conscientious criticism of their statements—and a large command of psychological analysis, enabling the author to interpret phenomena of society, both extremely complicated, and far removed from his own personal experience. Again, Mr James Mill's 'Elements of Political Economy' were, at the time when they appeared, the most logical and condensed exposition of the entire science then existing. Lastly, his latest avowed production, the 'Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind,' is a model of perspicuous exposition of complex states of consciousness, carried farther than by any other author before him; and illustrating the fulness which such exposition may be made to attain, by one who has faith in the comprehensive principle of association, and has learnt the secret of tracing out its innumerable windings. It is, moreover, the first work in which the great fact of Indissoluble Association is brought into its due theoretical prominence. These are high merits, of which lasting evidence is before the public; but there were other merits in Mr James Mill, less publicly authenticated, yet not less real. His unpremeditated oral exposition was hardly less effective than his prepared work with the pen; his colloquial fertility



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on philosophical subjects, his power of discussing himself, and of stimulating others to discuss, his ready responsive inspirations through all the shifts and windings of a sort of Platonic dialogue—all these accomplishments were, to those who knew him, even more impressive than what he composed for the press. Conversation with him was not merely instructive, but provocative to the dormant intelligence. Of all persons whom we have known, Mr James Mill was one who stood least remote from the lofty Platonic ideal of Dialectic—[Greek: *Tou didhonai kahi dhechesthai lhogon*]—(the giving and receiving of reasons) competent alike to examine others, or to be examined by them, on philosophy. When to this we add a strenuous character, earnest convictions, and single-minded devotion to truth, with an utter disdain of mere paradox—it may be conceived that such a man exercised powerful intellectual ascendancy over younger minds. Several of those who enjoyed his society—men now at, or past, the maturity of life, and some of them in distinguished positions—remember and attest with gratitude such ascendancy in their own cases: among them the writer of the present article, who owes to the historian of British India an amount of intellectual stimulus and guidance such as he can never forget.

When a father, such as we have described, declining to send his son either to school or college, constituted himself schoolmaster from the beginning, and performed that duty with laborious solicitude—when, besides full infusion of modern knowledge, the forcing process applied by the Platonic Socrates to the youth-Theaetetus, was administered by Mr James Mill, continuously and from an earlier age, to a youthful mind not less pregnant than that of Theaetetus—it would be surprising if the son thus trained had not reached even a higher eminence than his father. The fruit borne by Mr John Stuart Mill has been worthy of the culture bestowed, and the volume before us is at once his latest and his ripest product.

The 'Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy' is intended by Mr Mill (so he tells us in the preface to the sixth published edition of his 'System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive') as a sequel and complement to that system. We are happy to welcome so valuable an addition; but with or without that addition, the 'System of Logic' appears to us to present the most important advance in speculative theory which the present century has witnessed. Either half of it, the Ratiocinative or the Inductive, would have surpassed any previous work on the same subject. The Inductive half discriminates and brings into clear view, for the first time, those virtues of method which have insensibly grown into habits among consummate scientific inquirers of the post-Baconian age, as well as the fallacies by which some of these authors have been misled. The Ratiocinative half, dealing with matters which had already been well handled by Dutrieu and other



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scholastic logicians, invests their dead though precise formalism with a real life and application to the actual process of finding and proving truth. But besides thus working each half up to perfection, Mr Mill has performed the still more difficult task of overcoming the repugnance, apparently an inveterate repugnance, between them, so as chemically to combine the two into one homogeneous compound; thus presenting the problem of Reasoned Truth, Inference, Proof, and Disproof, as one connected whole. For ourselves, we still recollect the mist which was cleared from our minds when we first read the 'System of Logic,' very soon after it was published. We were familiar with the Syllogistic Logic in Burgersdicius and Dutrieu; we were also familiar with examples of the best procedure in modern inductive science; but the two streams flowed altogether apart in our minds, like two parallel lines never joining nor approaching. The irreconcilability of the two was at once removed, when we had read and mastered the second and third chapters of the Second Book of the 'System of Logic;' in which Mr Mill explains the functions and value of the Syllogism, and the real import of its major premiss. This explanation struck us at the time as one of the most profound and original efforts of metaphysical thought that we had ever perused, and we see no reason to retract that opinion now.[2] It appears all the more valuable when we contrast it with what is said by Mr Mill's two contemporaries—Hamilton and Whately: the first of whom retains the ancient theory of reasoning, as being only a methodized transition from a whole to its parts, and from the parts up to the whole—Induction being only this ascending part of the process, whereby, after having given a complete enumeration of all the compound parts, you conclude to the sum total described in one word as a whole;[3] while the second (Whately) agrees in subordinating Induction to Syllogism, but does so in a different way—by representing inductive reasoning as a syllogism, with its major premiss suppressed, from which major premiss it derived its authority. The explanation of Mr Mill attacks the problem from the opposite side. It subordinates syllogism to induction, the technical to the real; it divests the major premiss of its illusory pretence to be itself the proving authority, or even any real and essential part of the proof—and acknowledges it merely as a valuable precautionary test and security for avoiding mistake in the process of proving. Taking Mr Mill's 'System of Logic' as a whole, it is one of the books by which we believe ourselves to have most profited. The principles of it are constantly present to our mind when engaged in investigations of evidence, whether scientific or historical.

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Concerned as we are here with Mr Mill only as a logician and philosopher, we feel precluded from adverting to his works on other topics—even to his ‘Elements of Political Economy,’ by which he is probably more widely known than by anything else. Of the many obligations which Political Economy owes to him, one only can be noticed consistent with the scope of the present article: the care which he has taken—he alone, or at least, he more explicitly and formally than any other expositor—to set forth the general position of that science in the aggregate field of scientific research; its relation to sociology as a whole, or to other fractions thereof, how far derivative or co-ordinate; what are its fundamental postulates or hypotheses, with what limits the logical methods of induction and deduction are applicable to it, and how far its conclusions may be relied on as approximations to truth. All these points will be found instructively handled in the Sixth Book of Mr Mill’s ‘System of Logic,’ as well as in his smaller and less known work, ‘Essays on Some Unsettled Questions in Political Economy.’ We find him, while methodizing and illustrating the data of the special science, uniformly keeping in view its relation to philosophy as a whole.

But there is yet another work in which the interests of philosophy, as a whole, come into the foreground and become the special object of vindication in their largest compass and most vital requirements. We mean Mr Mill’s ‘Essay on Liberty,’ one half of which takes for its thesis the *libertus philosophandi*. He maintains, emphatically, in this book, the full dignity of reasoned truth against all the jealous exigencies of traditional dogma and self-justifying sentiment. He claims the most unreserved liberty of utterance for negative and affirmative on all questions—not merely for the purpose of discriminating truth from falsehood, but also to keep up in individual minds the full sense and understanding of the matters controverted, in place of a mere partial and one-sided adherence. At first sight, indeed, it might seem as if Mr Mill was fighting with a shadow; for liberty of philosophizing is a postulate which, in general terms, every one concedes. But when you come to fathom the real feelings which underlie this concession, you discover that almost every man makes it under reserves which, though acting in silence, are not the less efficacious. Every one has some dogmas which he cannot bear to hear advocated, and others which he will not allow to be controverted in his presence. A writer has to consider not merely by what reasons any novelty of belief or disbelief may be justified, but also how much it will be safe for him to publish, having regard to the irritable sore places of the public judgment. In July, 1864, we were present at the annual meeting of the French Academy at Paris, where the prizes for essays sent in, pursuant to subjects announced for study beforehand, are awarded. We heard the titles of various compositions

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announced by the President (M. Villemain), with a brief critical estimate of each. Their comparative merits were appreciated, and the prize awarded to one of the competitors. Among the compositions sent to compete for the prize, one was a work by M. Taine, upon which the President bestowed the most remarkable encomiums, in every different point of view: extent of knowledge, force of thought, style, arrangement, all were praised in a manner which we have rarely heard exceeded. Nevertheless, the prize was not awarded to this work, but to another which the President praised in a manner decidedly less marked and emphatic. What was here the *ratio decidendi*? The reason was, and the President declared it in the most explicit language, that the work of M. Taine was *deeply tainted with materialism*. 'Sans doute,' said the esteemed veteran of French literature in pronouncing his award, 'sans doute les opinions sont libres, *mais*'—It is precisely against this *mais*—ushering in the special anathematized or consecrated conclusion which it is intended to except from the general liberty of enforcing or impugning—in matters of philosophical discussion, that Mr Mill, in the 'Essay on Liberty,' declares war as champion of Reasoned Truth.

He handles this grand theme—*eleythheroys eleythheros philosophein*—involving as it does the best interests of philosophy, as an instructress to men's judgments, and a stimulus to their intelligence—with great depth of psychological analysis sustained by abundant historical illustration. And he in the same volume discusses most profitably another question akin to it—To what extent, and by what principles, the interference of others is justifiable, in restraining the liberty of taste and action for each individual? A question at once grave and neglected, but the discussion of which does not belong to our present article.

A new work from one who has already manifested such mastery of philosophy, both in principle and in detail, and a work exhibiting the analysis and appreciation of the philosophical views of an eminent contemporary, must raise the highest expectation. We think no reader will be disappointed who peruses Mr Mill's 'Examination,' and we shall now endeavour to give some account of the manner in which he performs it. Upon topics so abstract and subtle as the contents of this volume, the antithesis between two rival theories is the best way, and often the only way, for bringing truth into clear view; and the 'Examination' here before us is professedly controversy. But of controversy in its objectionable sense—of captious or acrimonious personality—not a trace will here be found. A dignified, judicial equanimity of tone is preserved from first to last. Moreover, though the title and direct purpose of the volume is negative and critical, yet the destructive criticism is pervaded by many copious veins of constructive exposition, embodying Mr Mill's own views upon some of the most intricate problems of metaphysics.



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Mr Mill begins his work by analyzing and explaining the doctrine called the Relativity of Human Knowledge:

'The doctrine (chap. ii. p. 5) which is thought to belong in the most especial manner to Sir W. Hamilton, and which was the ground of his opposition to the transcendentalism of the later French and German metaphysicians, is that which he and others have called the Relativity of Human Knowledge. It is the subject of the most generally known and impressive of all his writings—the one which first revealed to the English metaphysical reader that a new power had arisen in philosophy. Together with its developments, it composes the Philosophy of the Conditioned, which he opposed to the French and German philosophies of the Absolute, and which is regarded by most of his admirers as the greatest of his titles to a permanent place in the history of metaphysical thought. But, "the relativity of human knowledge," like most other phrases into which the words *relative* or *relation* enter, is vague, and admits of a great variety of meanings,' &c.

Mr Mill then proceeds to distinguish these various meanings, and to determine in which of them the phrase is understood by Sir W. Hamilton.

One meaning is, that we only know anything by knowing it as distinguished from something else—that all consciousness is of difference. It is not, however, in this sense that the expression is ordinarily or intentionally used by Sir W. Hamilton, though he fully recognizes the truth which, when thus used, it serves to express. In general, when he says that all our knowledge is relative, the relation he has in view is not between the thing known and other objects compared with it, but between the thing known and the mind knowing—(p. 6).

The doctrine in this last meaning is held by different philosophers in two different forms. Some (e.g. Berkeley, Hume, Ferrier, &c.), usually called Idealists, maintain not merely that all we can possibly know of anything is the manner in which it affects the human faculties, but that there is nothing else to be known; that affections of human or of other minds are all that we can know to exist—that the difference between the ego and the non-ego is only a formal distinction between two aspects of the same reality. Other philosophers (Brown, Mr Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte, with many others) believe that the ego and the non-ego denote two realities, each self-existent, and neither dependent on the other; that the Noumenon, or 'thing *per se*,' is in itself a different thing from the Phenomenon, and equally or more real, but that, though we know its existence, we have no means of knowing what it is. All that we can know is, relatively to ourselves, the modes in which it affects us, or the phenomena which it produces—(pp. 9—11).



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The doctrine of Relativity, as held by Kant and his many followers, is next distinguished from the same doctrine as held by Hartley, James Mill, Professor Bain, &c., compatible with either acceptance or rejection of the Berkeleian theory. Kant maintains that the attributes which we ascribe to outward things, or which are inseparable from them in thought, contain additional elements over and above sensations *plus* an unknowable cause—additional elements added by the mind itself, and therefore still only relative, but constituting the original furniture of the mind itself—inherent laws, partly of our sensitive, partly of our intellectual faculty. It is on this latter point that Hartley and those going along with him diverge. Admitting the same additional elements, these philosophers do not ascribe to the mind any innate forms to account for them, but hold that place, extension, substance, cause, and the rest, &c., are conceptions put together out of ideas of sensation, by the known laws of Association—(pp. 12—14).

Partial Relativity is the opinion professed by most philosophers (and by most persons who do not philosophize). They hold that we know things partly as they are in themselves, partly as they are merely in relation to us.

This discrimination of the various schools of philosophers is highly instructive, and is given with the full perspicuity belonging to Mr Mill's style. He proceeds to examine in what sense Sir W. Hamilton maintained the Relativity of Human Knowledge. He cites passages both from the 'Discussions on Philosophy' and from the Lectures, in which that doctrine is both affirmed in its greatest amplitude, and enunciated in the most emphatic language—(pp. 17, 18, 22, 23). But he also produces extracts from the most elaborate of Sir W. Hamilton's 'Dissertations on Reid,' in which a doctrine quite different and inconsistent is proclaimed—that our knowledge is only partially, not wholly, relative; that the secondary qualities of matter, indeed, are known to us only relatively, but that the primary qualities are known to us as they are in themselves, or as they exist objectively, and that they may be even evolved by demonstration *a priori*—(pp. 19-26, 30). The inconsistency between the two doctrines, professed at different times, and in different works, by Sir W. Hamilton, is certainly manifest. Mr Mill is of opinion that one of the two must be taken 'in a non-natural sense,' and that Sir W. Hamilton either did not hold, or had ceased to hold, the doctrine of the full relativity of knowledge (pp. 20-28)—the hypothesis of a flat contradiction being in his view inadmissible. But we think it at least equally possible that Sir W. Hamilton held both the two opinions in their natural sense, and enforced both of them *at different times* by argument; his attention never having been called to the contradiction between them. That such forgetfulness was quite possible, will appear clearly in many parts of the present article. His argument in support of both is equally characterized by that peculiar energy of style which is frequent with him, and which no way resembles the qualifying refinements of one struggling to keep clear of a perceived contradiction.



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From hence Mr Mill (chap. iv.) proceeds to criticise at considerable length what he justly denominates the celebrated and striking review of Cousin's philosophy, which forms the first paper in Sir W. Hamilton's 'Discussions on Philosophy.' According to Mr Mill—

'The question really at issue is this: Have we or have we not an immediate intuition of God? The name of God is veiled under two extremely abstract phrases, "The Infinite and the Absolute," perhaps from a reverential feeling; such, at least, is the reason given by Sir W. Hamilton's disciple, Mr Mansel, for preferring the more vague expressions; but it is one of the most unquestionable of all logical maxims, that the meaning of the abstract must be sought for in the concrete, and not conversely; and we shall see, both in the case of Sir William Hamilton, and of Mr Mansel, that the process cannot be reversed with impunity.'—p. 32.

Upon this we must remark, that though the 'logical maxim' here laid down by Mr Mill may be generally sound, we think the application of it inconvenient in the present case. Discussions on points of philosophy are best conducted without either invoking or offending religious feeling. M. Cousin maintains that we have a direct intuition of the Infinite and the Absolute: Sir W. Hamilton denies that we have. Upon this point Mr Mill sides entirely with Sir W. Hamilton, and considers 'that the latter has rendered good service to philosophy by refuting M. Cousin,' though much of the reasoning employed in such refutation seems to Mr Mill unsound. But Sir W. Hamilton goes further, and affirms that we have no faculties capable of apprehending the Infinite and the Absolute—that both of them are inconceivable to us, and by consequence unknowable. Herein Mr Mill is opposed to him, and controverts his doctrine in an elaborate argument.

Of this argument, able and ingenious, like all those in the present volume, our limits only enable us to give a brief appreciation. In so far as Mr Mill controverts Sir W. Hamilton, we think him perfectly successful, though there are some points in his reasoning in which we do not fully concur.

In our opinion, as in his, the Absolute alone (in its sense as opposed to relative) can be necessarily unknowable, inconceivable, incogitable. Nothing which falls under the condition of relativity can be declared to be so. The structure of our minds renders us capable of knowing everything which is relative, though there are many such things which we have no evidence, nor shall ever get evidence, to enable us to know. Now the Infinite falls within the conditions of relativity, as indeed Sir W. Hamilton himself admits, when he intimates (p. 58) that though it cannot be known, it is, must be, and ought to be, *believed* by us, according to the marked distinction which he draws between belief and knowledge. We agree with Mr Mill in the opinion that it is thinkable, conceivable, knowable. Doubtless we do not conceive it adequately, but we conceive it sufficiently to discuss and reason upon it intelligibly to ourselves and others. That we conceive the Infinite inadequately, is not to be held as proof that we do not conceive it at all; for in regard to finite things also, we conceive the greater number of them only inadequately.

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We cannot construe to the imagination a polygon with an infinite number of sides (i.e. with a number of sides greater than any given number), but neither can we construe to the imagination a polygon with a million of sides; nevertheless, we understand what is meant by the first description as well as by the second, and can reason upon both. There is, indeed, this difference between the two: That the terms used in describing the first, proclaim at once in their direct meaning that we should in vain attempt to construe it to the imagination; whereas the terms used in describing the second do not intimate that fact. We know the fact only by trial, or by an estimate of our own mental force which is the result of many past trials. If the difference here noted were all which Sir W. Hamilton has in view when he declares the Infinite to be unknowable and incogitable, we should accede to his opinion; but we apprehend that he means much more, and he certainly requires more to justify the marked antithesis in which he places himself against M. Cousin and Hegel. Indeed, the facility with which he declares matters to be incogitable, which these two and other philosophers not only cogitate but maintain as truth, is to us truly surprising. The only question which appears to us important is, whether we can understand and reason upon the meaning of the terms and propositions addressed to us. If we can, the subjects propounded must be cogitable and conceivable, whether we admit the propositions affirmed concerning them or not; if we cannot, then these subjects are indeed incogitable by ourselves in the present state of our knowledge, but they may not be so to our opponent who employs the terms.

In criticising the arguments of Sir W. Hamilton against M. Cousin, Mr Mill insists much on a distinction between (1) the Infinite, and (2) the Infinite in any one or more positive attributes, such as infinite wisdom, goodness, redness, hardness, &c.[4] He thinks that Sir W. Hamilton has made out his case against the first, but not against the last; that the first is really 'an unmeaning and senseless abstraction,' a fasciculus of negations, unknowable and inconceivable, but not the last. We think that Mr Mill makes more of this distinction than the case warrants; that the first is not unmeaning, but an intelligible abstraction, only a higher reach of abstraction than the last; that it is knowable inadequately, in the same way as the last—though more inadequately, because of its higher abstraction.

As the finite is intelligible, so also is its negation—the Infinite: we do not say (with M. Cousin) that the two are conjointly given in consciousness—but the two are understood and partially apprehended by the mind conjointly and in contrast. Though the Infinite is doubtless negative as to a degree, it is not wholly or exclusively negative, since it includes a necessary reference to some positive attribute, to which the degree belongs; the positive element is

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not eliminated, but merely left undetermined. The Infinite (like the Finite, [Greek: to peperasmhenon—to hapeiron]) is a genus; it comprehends under it the Infinitely Hard and the Infinitely Soft, the Infinitely Swift and the Infinitely Slow—the infinite, in short, of any or all positive attributes. It includes, doubtless, ‘a farrago of contradictions;’ but so, also, does the Finite—and so, also, do the actual manifestations of the real, concrete universe, which manifestations constitute a portion of the Finite. Whoever attempts to give any philosophical account of the generation of the universe, tracing its phenomena, as an aggregate, to some ultra-phenomenal origin, must include in his scheme a *fundamentum* for all those opposite and contradictory manifestations which experience discloses in the universe. There always have been, and still are, many philosophers who consider the Abstract and General to be prior both in nature and time to the Concrete and Particular; and who hold further that these two last are explained, when presented as determinate and successive manifestations of the two first, which they conceive as indeterminate and sempiternal. Now the Infinite (Ens Infinitum or Entia Infinita, according to the point of view in which we look at it) is a generic word, including all these supposed indeterminate antecedents; and including therefore, of course, many contradictory agencies. But this does not make it senseless or unmeaning; nor can we distinguish it from ‘the Infinite in some one or more given attributes,’ by any other character than by greater reach of abstraction. We cannot admit the marked distinction which Mr Mill contends for—that the one is unknowable and the other knowable.

It may be proper to add that the mode of philosophizing which we have just described is not ours. We do not agree in this way either of conceiving, or of solving, the problem of philosophy. But it is a mode so prevalent that Trendelenberg speaks of it, justly enough, as ‘the ancient Hysteron-Proteron of Abstraction.’ The doctrine of these philosophers appears to us unfounded, but we cannot call it unmeaning.

In another point, also, we differ from Mr Mill respecting that inferior abstraction which he calls ‘the Infinite in some particular attribute.’ He speaks as if this could be known not only as an abstraction, a conceivable, an ideal—but also as a concrete reality; as if ‘we could know a concrete reality as infinite or as absolute’ (p. 45); as if there really existed in actual nature ‘concrete persons or things possessing infinitely or absolutely certain specific attributes’—(pp. 55—93). To this doctrine we cannot subscribe. As we understand concrete reality, we find no evidence to believe that there exist in nature any real concrete persons or things, possessing to an infinite degree such attributes as they do possess: *e.g.* any men infinitely wise or infinitely strong, any horses infinitely swift, any stones infinitely

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hard. Such concrete real objects appear to us not admissible, because experience not only has not certified their existence in any single case, but goes as far to disprove their existence as it can do to disprove anything. All the real objects in nature known to us by observation are finite, and possess only in a finite measure their respective attributes. Upon this is founded the process of Science, so comprehensively laid out by Mr Mill in his 'System of Logic'—Induction, Deduction from general facts attested by Induction, Verification by experience of the results obtained by Deduction. The attributes, whiteness or hardness, in the abstract, are doubtless infinite; that is, the term will designate, alike and equally, any degree of whiteness or hardness which you may think of, and any unknown degree even whiter and harder than what you think of. But when perceived as invested in a given mass of snow or granite before us, they are divested of that indeterminateness, and become restricted to a determinate measure and degree.

Having thus indicated the points on which we are compelled to dissent from Mr Mill's refutation of Sir W. Hamilton in the pleading against M. Cousin, we shall pass to the seventh chapter, in which occurs his first controversy with Mr Mansel. This passage has excited more interest, and will probably be remembered by a larger number of readers, than any portion of the book. We shall give it in his own words (pp. 99—103), since the energetic phraseology is quite as remarkable as the thought:—

'There is but one way for Mr Mansel out of this difficulty, and he adopts it. He must maintain, not merely that an Absolute Being is unknowable in himself, but that the Relative attributes of an Absolute Being are unknowable also.[5] He must say that we do not know what Wisdom, Justice, Benevolence, Mercy, &c., are, as they exist in God. Accordingly, he does say so. "It is a fact" (says Mr Mansel) "which experience forces upon us, and which it is useless, were it possible, to disguise, that the representation of God after the model of the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving, is not sufficient to account for all the phenomena exhibited by the course of his natural Providence. The infliction of physical suffering, the permission of moral evil, the adversity of the good, the prosperity of the wicked, the crimes of the guilty involving the misery of the innocent, the tardy appearance and partial distribution of moral and religious knowledge in the world—these are facts, which no doubt are reconcilable, we know not how, with the Infinite Goodness of God, but which certainly are not to be explained on the supposition that its sole and sufficient type is to be found in the finite goodness of man." "In other words" (continues Mr Mill commenting) "it is necessary to suppose that the infinite goodness ascribed to God is not the goodness which we know and love in our

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fellow-creatures, distinguished only as infinite in degree; but is different in kind, and another quality altogether. Accordingly Mr Mansel combats as a heresy of his opponents, the opinion that infinite goodness differs only in degree from finite goodness. —Here, then, I take my stand upon the acknowledged principle of logic and of morality; that when we mean different things we have no right to call them by the same name, and to apply to them, the same predicates, moral and intellectual. If, instead of the glad tidings that there exists a Being in whom all the excellences which the highest human form can conceive, exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a being whose attributes are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn, except that the highest human morality does not sanction them—convince me of this and I will hear my fate as I may. But when I am told that I must believe this, and at the same time call this being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say, in plain terms, that I will not. Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing he shall not do; he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go.'

This concluding declaration is memorable in many ways. Mr Mill announces his resolution to determine for himself, and according to his own reason and conscience, what God he will worship, and what God he will not worship. For ourselves, we cordially sympathize with his resolution. But Mr Mill must be aware that this is a point on which society is equally resolved that no individual shall determine for himself, if they can help it.[6] Each new-born child finds his religious creed ready prepared for him. In his earliest days of unconscious infancy, the stamp of the national, gentile, phratric, God, or Gods, is imprinted upon him by his elders; and if the future man, in the exercise of his own independent reason, acquires such convictions as compel him to renounce those Gods, proclaiming openly that he does so—he must count upon such treatment as will go far to spoil the value of the present life to him, even before he passes to those ulterior liabilities which Mr Mill indicates in the distance. We are not surprised that a declaration so unusual and so impressive should have been often cited in critical notices of this volume; that during the month preceding the last Westminster election, it was studiously brought forward by some opponents of Mr Mill, and more or less regretted by his friends, as likely to offend many electors, and damage his chance of success; and that a conspicuous and noble-minded ecclesiastic, the Dean of Westminster, thought the occasion so grave as to come forward with his characteristic generosity, for the purpose of shielding a distinguished man suspected of heresy.



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The sublime self-assertion, addressed by Prometheus to Zeus, under whose sentence he was groaning, has never before been put into such plain English.[7] Mr Mill's declaration reminds us also of Hippolytus, the chaste and pure youth, whose tragic fate is so beautifully described by Euripides. Hippolytus is exemplary in his devotions to the Goddess Artemis; but he dissents from all his countrymen, and determines for himself, in refusing to bestow the smallest mark of honour or worship upon Aphrodite, because he considers her to be a very bad Goddess.[8] In this refusal he persists with inflexible principle (even after having received, from an anxious attendant, warning of the certain ruin which it will bring upon him), until the insulted Aphrodite involves him, along with the unhappy Phaedra and Theseus himself, in one common abyss of misery. In like manner Mr Mill's declaration stands in marked contrast with the more cautious proceeding of men like Herodotus. That historian, alike pious and prudent, is quite aware that all the Gods are envious and mischief-making, and expressly declares them to be so.[9] Yet, far from refusing to worship them on that account, he is assiduous in prayer and sacrifice—perhaps, indeed, all the more assiduous in consequence of what he believes about their attributes;[10] being persuaded (like the attendant who warned Hippolytus) that his only chance of mollifying their ungentle dispositions in regard to himself is, by honorific tribute in words and offerings.

When, however, after appreciating as we are bound to do Mr Mill's declaration of subjective sentiment, we pass to its logical bearing on the controversy between him and Mr Mansel, we are obliged to confess that in this point of view it has little objective relevancy. The problem was, how to reconcile the actual evil and suffering in the universe (which is recited as a fact by Mr Mansel, though in terms conveying a most inadequate idea of its real magnitude) with the goodness of God. Mr Mill repudiates the explanatory hypothesis tendered by Mr Mansel, as a solution, but without suggesting any better hypothesis of his own. For ourselves, we are far from endorsing Mr Mansel's solution as satisfactory; yet we can hardly be surprised if he considers it less unsatisfactory than no solution at all. And when we reflect how frequently and familiarly predicates applicable to man are applied to the Supreme Being, when they cannot possibly be understood about Him in the same sense—we see no ground for treating the proceeding as disingenuous, which Mr Mill is disposed to do. Indeed, it cannot easily be avoided: and Mr Mill himself furnishes us with some examples in the present volume. At page 491, he says:—

'It would be difficult to find a stronger argument in favour of Theism, than that the eye must have been made by one who sees, and the ear by one who hears.'

In the words here employed, *seeing* and *hearing* are predicted of God.



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Now when we predicate of men, that they *see* or *hear*, we affirm facts of extreme complexity, especially in the case of *seeing*; facts partly physical, partly mental, involving multifarious movements and agencies of nerves, muscles, and other parts of the organism, together with direct sensational impressions, and mental reconstruction of the past, inseparably associated therewith; all which, so far as they are known, are perspicuously enumerated in the work of Professor Bain[11] on the 'Senses and the Intellect,' Again, Mr Mill speaks (in p. 102 and elsewhere) of 'the veracity of God.' When we say of our neighbour that he is a veracious man, we ascribe to him a habit of speaking the truth; that is, of employing his physical apparatus of speech, and his mental power of recalling and recombining words lodged in the memory, for the purpose of asserting no other propositions except such as declare facts which he knows, or beliefs which he really entertains. But how either *seeing*, or *hearing*, or *veracity*, in these senses, can be predicated of God, we are at a loss to understand. And if they are to be predicated of God in a different sense, this admits the same license as Mr Mansel contends for in respect to Goodness, when he feels that undeniable facts preclude him from predicating that epithet univocally respecting God and respecting man.[12]

On the whole, it seems to us, that though Mr Mill will consent to worship only a God of perfect goodness, he has thrown no new light on the grave problem—frankly stated though imperfectly solved, by Mr Mansel—how such a conception of God is to be reconciled with the extent of evil and suffering actually pervading human life and animal life throughout the earth. We are compelled to say, respecting Mr Mill's treatment of this subject—what we should not say respecting his treatment of any other—that he has left an old perplexing problem not less perplexing than he found it.

Reverting, not unwillingly, from theology to philosophy, we now pass on to Mr Mill's ninth chapter (p. 128 seq.), of the Interpretation of Consciousness. There is assuredly no lesson more requiring to be taught than the proper mode of conducting such interpretation; for the number of different modes in which Consciousness has been interpreted is astonishing. Mr Mill begins by citing from Sir W. Hamilton's lectures a passage of some length, upon which he bestows considerable praise, regarding it as—

'One of the proofs that, whatever may be the positive value of his (Sir W. Hamilton's) achievements in metaphysics, he had a greater capacity for the subject than many metaphysicians of high reputation; and particularly than his two distinguished predecessors in the same school of thought—"Reid and Stewart."'—p. 131.

This is one of the greatest compliments to Sir W. Hamilton that the book contains, and as such we are glad to cite it.



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On the subject of Consciousness, Mr Mill has cited from Sir W. Hamilton other good observations besides the one last alluded to; but, unfortunately, these are often neutralized by opposite or inconsistent opinions also cited from other parts of his works. The number of such inconsistencies produced is indeed one remarkable feature in Sir W. Hamilton's philosophical character. He seems to follow out energetically (as Plato in his various dialogues) the vein of thought pervading his mind at each particular moment, without troubling himself to look back upon his own prior speculations. Even compared with the best views of Sir W. Hamilton, however, Mr Mill's mode of handling the subject of Consciousness exhibits signal improvement. To some of his observations we shall call particular attention.

All philosophers agree that what Consciousness testifies is to be believed; but they differ much on the question—To what points Consciousness does testify? and even on the still deeper question—How shall we proceed to ascertain what *are* these attested points? What is the proper method of studying or interrogating Consciousness? Upon this Mr Mill remarks (pp. 145—147):—

'Here emerges the distinction between two different methods of studying the problems of metaphysics; forming the radical difference between the two great schools into which metaphysicians are divided. One of these I shall call for distinction, the *introspective* method; the other, the *psychological*. M. Cousin observes that Locke went wrong from the beginning, by placing before himself, as the question to be first resolved, the origin of our ideas. This (he says) was commencing at the wrong end. The proper course would have been to begin by determining what the ideas now are; to ascertain what it is that Consciousness now tells us; postponing till afterwards the attempt to frame a theory concerning the origin of any of the mental phenomena.' I accept the question as M. Cousin states it; and I contend that no attempt to determine what are the direct revelations of Consciousness can be successful, or entitled to any regard, unless preceded by what M. Cousin says ought only to follow it—an inquiry into the origin of our acquired ideas. For we have it not in our power to ascertain, by any direct process, what Consciousness told us at the time when its revelations were in their pristine purity. It only offers itself to our inspection, as it exists now, when those original revelations are overlaid and buried under a mountainous heap of acquired notions and perceptions.' It seems to M. Cousin, that if we examine with care and minuteness our present states of Consciousness, distinguishing and defining every ingredient which we find to enter into them—every element that we seem to recognize as real, and cannot “by merely concentrating our attention upon it analyze into anything simpler—we



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reach the ultimate and primary truths, which are the sources of all our knowledge, and which cannot be denied or doubted without denying or doubting the evidence of Consciousness itself—that is, the only evidence that there is for anything. I maintain this to be a misconception of the condition imposed on inquirers by the difficulties of psychological investigation. To begin the inquiry at the point where M. Cousin takes it up is, in fact, to beg the question. For he must be aware, if not of the fact, at least of the belief of his opponents, that the laws of the mind—the Laws of Association, according to one class of thinkers, the Categories of the Understanding, according to another—are capable of creating, out of those data of Consciousness which are uncontested, purely mental conceptions, which become so identified in thought with all our states of Consciousness, that *we seem, and cannot but seem, to receive them by direct intuition*. For example, the belief in matter in the opinion of these thinkers is, or at least may be, thus produced:—"The proof that any of the alleged Universal Beliefs, or Principles of Common Sense, are affirmations of Consciousness—supposes two things: that the beliefs exist, and that they cannot possibly have been acquired. The first is, in most cases, undisputed; but the second is a subject of inquiry which often taxes the utmost resources of psychologists. Locke was therefore right in believing that 'the origin of our ideas' is the main stress of the problem of mental science, and the subject which must be first considered in forming the theory of the Mind."

This citation from Mr Mill's book is already almost too long, yet we could have wished to prolong it still more, from the importance of some of the succeeding paragraphs. It presents, in clear discrimination and contrast, two opposite points of view according to which the phenomena of mind are regarded by different philosophers, and the method of studying them determined: the *introspective* method, adopted by M. Cousin and others—the *psychological* or analytical method, pursued by Locke and by many other eminent men since Locke—"the known and approved method of physical science, adapted to the necessities of psychology"—(p. 148).

There are passages of Sir W. Hamilton's writings in which he appears to feel that the *introspective* method alone is insufficient for the interpretation of Consciousness, and that the analytical method must be employed to reinforce it. But on this as on other points he is not always consistent with himself. For in laying down the principle upon which the primary truths of Consciousness, the original data of intelligence, are to be ascertained and distinguished from generalizations out of experience and custom, he declares that the one single and certain mark is Necessity—they must be beliefs which we are under the necessity of believing—of which we cannot get rid by



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any mental effort. He decides this, of course, for himself, by the *introspective* method alone. He (with M. Cousin and other philosophers who take the same view) does not apply the analytical method to inquire whether his necessity of belief may not be a purely acquired necessity and nowise congenital. It is, indeed, remarkable that these philosophers do not even seek to apply the introspective method as far as that method will really go. They are satisfied with introspection of their own present minds; without collecting results of the like process as applied to other minds, in different times and places. They declare various beliefs to be necessary to the human mind universally, merely because such is the actual fact with their own minds and with those immediately around them; sometimes even in defiance of proof that there are (or have been) persons not sharing such beliefs, and occasionally even believing the contrary; therefore, when even the introspective method really disallows their affirmative instead of sustaining it. This is, in truth, an abuse of the introspective method; yet even if that method were employed in its fullest extent—if the same incapability of believing otherwise could be shown as common to all mankind—it might still be only the effect of a strong association. The analytical method must still be called in to ascertain whether we are forced to suppose such incapability to be an original fact of consciousness, or whether it may not have been generated in the mind by circumstances under the natural working of the laws of association. It is certain that these laws not only may, but must, give birth to artificial inconceivabilities in the mind—and that some of these may be equal in strength to such, if any, as are natural.

'The History of Science' (says Mr Mill, following out the same train of reasoning which we read in the third Book of his 'System of Logic') 'teems with inconceivabilities which have been conquered; and with supposed necessary truths, which have first ceased to be thought necessary, then to be thought true, and have finally come to be deemed impossible.'—p. 150.

After various observations, chiefly exhibiting the rashness of many censures bestowed by Sir W. Hamilton on Brown, Mr Mill gives us three valuable chapters (xi., xii., xiii.), wherein he analyzes the belief in an External World, the Belief in Mind as a separate substance or Noumenon, and the Primary Qualities of Matter. To each of these topics he applies what he calls the *psychological* method, as contrasted with the simply *introspective* method of Sir W. Hamilton (the Ego and Non-Ego affirmed to be given together in the primary deliverance of Consciousness) and so many other philosophers. He proves that these beliefs are no way intuitive, but acquired products; and that the known laws of Association are sufficient to explain how they are acquired; especially the Law of Inseparable Association, together with that of



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Obliviscence—a very useful, discriminating phrase, which we first find employed in this volume—(p. 259 et passim). He defines Matter to be a *permanent possibility of Sensation*; he maintains that this is really all which (apart from philosophical theories) mankind in general mean by it; he shows that mere possibilities of sensation not only may, but must, according to the known Laws of Association, come to present 'to our artificialized Consciousness' a character of objectivity—(pp. 198, 199). The correlative subject, though present in fact and indispensable, is eliminated out of conscious notice, according to the Law of Obliviscence.

These chapters will well repay the most careful perusal. We can only find room for one passage (pp. 214, 215):—

'Throughout the whole of our sensitive life, except its first beginnings, we unquestionably refer our sensations to a *me* and *not-me*. As soon as I have formed, on the one hand, the notion of Permanent Possibilities of Sensation, and on the other, of that continued series of feelings which I call my life—both these notions are, by an irresistible association, recalled by every sensation I have. They represent two things, with both of which the sensation of the moment, be it what it may, stands in relation; and I cannot be conscious of the sensation without being conscious of it as related to these two things. They have accordingly received relative names, expressive of the double relation in question. The thread of consciousness which I apprehend the relation as a part of, is called the *Subject*; the group of Permanent Possibilities of Sensation to which I refer it, and which is partially realized and actualized in it, is called the *Object* of the sensation. The sensation itself ought to have a correlative name, or rather ought to have two such names—one denoting the sensation as opposed to its Subject, the other denoting it as opposed to its Object; but it is a remarkable fact that this necessity has not been felt, and that the need of a correlative name to every relative one has been considered to be satisfied by the terms Object and Subject themselves. It is true that these two are related to one another, but only through the sensation. We have no conception of either Subject or Object, either Mind or Matter, except as something to which we refer our sensations, and whatever other feelings we are conscious of. *The very existence of them both, so far as cognizable by us, consists only in the relation they respectively bear to our states of feeling.* Their relation to each other is only the relation between those two relations. The immediate correlatives are, not the pair, *Object, Subject*, but the two pairs, *Object, Sensation objectively considered*—*Subject, Sensation subjectively considered*. The reason why this is overlooked might easily be shown, and would furnish a good illustration of that



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important part of the Laws of Association, which may be termed the Laws of Obliviscence.'

This chapter, on the Primary Qualities of Matter, controverts the opinion of Sir W. Hamilton, that extension, as consisting of co-existent *partes extra partes*, is immediately and necessarily apprehended by our consciousness. It cites, as well as confirms, the copious proof given by Professor Bain (in his work on the Senses and the Intellect) that our conception of extension is derived from our muscular sensibility: that our sensation of *muscular motion impeded* constitutes that of filled space: that our conception of extension, as an aggregate of co-existent parts, arises from the sense of sight, which comprehends a great number of parts in a succession so rapid as to be confounded with simultaneity—and which not only becomes the symbol of muscular and tactile succession, but even acquires such ascendancy as to supersede both of them in our consciousness. Confirmation is here given to this important doctrine, not merely by observations from Mr Mill himself, but also from the very curious narrative, discovered and produced by Sir W. Hamilton, out of a work of the German philosopher, Platner. Platner instituted a careful examination of a man born blind, and ascertained that this man did not conceive extension as an aggregate of simultaneous parts, but as a series of sensations experienced or to be experienced in succession—(pp. 232, 233). The case reported from Platner both corroborates the theory of Professor Bain, and receives its proper interpretation from that theory; while it is altogether adverse to the doctrine of Sir W. Hamilton—as is also another case, which he cites from Maine de Biran:—

'It gives a very favourable idea of Sir W. Hamilton's sincerity and devotion to truth (remarks Mr Mill, p. 247), that he should have drawn from obscurity, and made generally known, two cases so unfavourable to his own opinions.'

We think this remark perfectly just; and we would point out besides, in appreciating Sir W. Hamilton's merits, that his appetite for facts was useful to philosophy, as well as his appetite for speculation. But the person whose usefulness to philosophy we prefer to bring into the foreground, is Platner himself. He spent three weeks in patient examination of this blind man, and the tenor of his report proves that his sagacity in interpreting facts was equal to his patience in collecting them. The rarity of all such careful and premeditated observation of the facts of mind, appears to us one main reason why (what Mr Mill calls) the *psychological* theory finds so little acceptance; and why those who maintain that what now seems a mental integer was once a multiplicity of separate mental fragments, can describe the antecedent steps of the change only as a *latens processus*, which the reader never fully understands, and often will not admit. Every man's mind is gradually

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built up from infancy to maturity; the process is always going on before our eyes, yet the stages of it—especially the earliest stages, the most pregnant with instruction—are never studied and put on record by observers trained in inductive logic, knowing beforehand what they ought to look for as the *sine qua non* for proving or disproving any proposed theory. Such cases as that cited by Platner—cases of one marked congenital defect of sense, enabling us to apply the Method of Difference—are always within reach; but few Platners are found to scrutinize and record them. Historians of science describe to us the laborious and multiplied observations, and the elaborate precaution for ensuring accuracy of observation, which recent chemical and physical inquirers have found indispensable for the establishment of their results. We cannot, therefore, be surprised that mental philosophers, dealing with facts even more obscure, and careless about enlarging, varying, authenticating their records of particular facts, should have had little success in establishing any results at all.

But if even those, who adopt the psychological theory, have been remiss in the observation of particular mental facts,—those who deny the theory have been far more than remiss; they have been blind to obvious facts contradicting the principles which they lay down. Mr Mill, in chap. xiv., deals with this denial, common to Mr Mansel with Sir W. Hamilton. That philosophers so eminent as both of them should declare confidently—'what I cannot but think must be *a priori*, or original to thought; it cannot be engendered by experience upon custom' (p. 264)—appears to us as extraordinary as it does to Mr Mill. Though no one ever surpassed Sir W. Hamilton in large acquaintance with the actual diversities of human belief, and human incapacities of believing—yet he never seems to have thought of bringing this acquaintance into account, when he assured the students in his lecture-room, that custom, experience, indissoluble association, were altogether insufficient to engender a felt necessity of believing. Such forgetfulness of well-known mental facts cannot be reproached to the advocates of the psychological theory.

In chap. xv. Mr Mill examines Sir W. Hamilton's doctrine on unconscious mental modifications. He points out the confused manner in which Sir W. Hamilton has conceived *mental latency*, as well as the inconclusive character of the reasoning whereby he refutes the following doctrine of Dugald Stewart—That in the most rapid trains of association, each separate item must have been successively present to consciousness, though for a time too short to leave any memory. Sir W. Hamilton thinks that the separate items may pass, and often do pass, unconsciously; which opinion Mr Mill also, though not approving his reasons, is inclined to adopt.



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'I am myself inclined (p. 285) to admit unconscious mental modifications, in the only sense in which I can attach any very distinct meaning to them—namely, unconscious modifications of the nerves. It may well be believed that the apparently suppressed links in a chain of association, those which Sir W. Hamilton considers as latent, really are so: that they are not even momentarily felt, the chain of causation being continued only physically—by one organic state of the nerves succeeding another so rapidly, that the state of mental consciousness appropriate to each is not produced.'

Mr Mill gives various illustrations in support of this doctrine. He at the same time calls attention to a valuable lecture of Sir W. Hamilton's, the thirty-second lecture on Metaphysics; especially to the instructive citation from Cardaillac contained therein, noting the important fact, which descriptions of the Law of Association often keep out of sight—that the suggestive agency of Association is carried on, not by single antecedents raising up single consequents, but by a mass of antecedents raising up simultaneously a mass of consequents, among which attention is very unequally distributed.

We shall say little upon Mr Mill's remarks on Sir W. Hamilton's Theory of Causation—(chap. xvi.). This theory appears to Mr Mill absurd; while the theory of Mr Mill (continued from Hume, Brown, and James Mill) on the same subject, appears to Sir W. Hamilton insufficient and unsatisfactory—'professing to explain the phenomenon of causality, but, previously to explanation, evacuating the phenomenon of all that desiderates explanation'—(p. 295). For ourselves we embrace the theory of Mr Mill:[13] yet we are aware that the remark just cited from Sir W. Hamilton represents the dissatisfaction entertained towards it by many objectors. The unscientific and antiscientific yearnings, prevalent among mankind, lead them to put questions which no sound theory of Causation will answer; and they are ready to visit and trust any oracle which professes to deliver a confident affirmative solution of such questions. Among all the terms employed by metaphysicians, none is used in a greater variety of meanings than the term Cause.

In Mr Mill's next chapter (xvi.) he comments on Sir W. Hamilton's doctrine of Concepts or General Notions. There are portions of this chapter with which we agree less than with most other parts of the volume; especially with his marked hostility to the term *Concept*, and the reasons given for it, which reasons appear to us not very consistent with what he has himself said in the 'System of Logic,' Book IV. chap. ii. Sec. 1—3. The term *Concept* has no necessary connection with the theory called Conceptualism. It is equally available to designate the idea called up by a general name, as understood either by Mr Bailey or by James Mill. We think it useful as an equivalent to the German word *Begriff*, which sense Sir W. Hamilton has in view when he introduces it, though he does not always adhere to his profession. And when Mr Mill says (p. 331)—



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'I consider it nothing less than a misfortune, that the words Concept, General Notion, or any other phrase to express the supposed mental modification corresponding to a general name, should ever have been invented.'

we dissent from his opinion. To talk of 'the Concept of an individual,' however, as Mr Mansel does (pp. 338, 339), is improper and inconsistent with the purpose for which the name is given.

We are more fully in harmony with Mr Mill in his two next chapters (xviii. et seq.) on Judgment and Reasoning; which are among the best chapters in this volume. He there combats and overthrows the theory of Reasoning laid down by Sir W. Hamilton; but we doubt the propriety of his calling this 'the Conceptualist theory' (pp. 367, 368); since it has nothing to do with Conceptualism, in the special sense of antithesis to Realism and Nominalism,—but is, in fact, the theory of the Syllogism as given in the Analytics of Aristotle, and generally admitted since. Not merely Conceptualists, but (to use Mr Mill's own language, p. 366) 'nearly all the writers on logic, taught a theory of the science too small and narrow to contain their own facts.' Such, indeed, was the theory constantly taught until the publication of Mr Mill's 'System of Logic;' the first two books of which corrected it, by arguments which are reinforced and amplified in these two chapters on Judgment and Reasoning, as well as in the two chapters next following—chaps. xx. and xxi.—('Is Logic the Science of the Forms of Thought—On the Fundamental Laws of Thought.') The contrast which is there presented, in many different ways, between the limited theory of logic taught by Sir W. Hamilton and Mr Mansel, and the enlarged theory of Mr Mill, is instructive in a high degree. We consider Mr Mill as the real preserver of all that is valuable in Formal Logic, from the unfortunate consequences of an erroneous estimate, brought upon it through the exaggerated pretensions of logicians. When Sir W. Hamilton contrasts it pointedly with physical science (of which he talks with a sort of supercilious condescension, in one of the worst passages of his writings, p. 401)—when all its apparent fruits were produced in the shape of ingenious but barren verbal technicalities—what hope could be entertained that Formal Logic could hold its ground in the estimation of the recent generation of scientific men? Mr Mill has divested it of that assumed demonstrative authority which Bacon called 'regere res per syllogismum;' but he has at the same time given to it a firm root amidst the generalities of objective science. He has shown that in the great problem of Evidence or Proof, the Laws of Formal Logic, though bearing only on one part of the entire procedure, yet bear upon one essential part, proper to be studied separately: and that the maintenance of consistency between our affirmations (which is the only special province of Formal Logic), has great importance and value as a part of the process necessary for ascertaining and vindicating their truth, or exposing their character when false or uncertified—but no importance or value except as a part of that larger exigency.

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While Mr Mill was amending the Syllogistic theory so as to ensure for Formal Logic its legitimate place among the essentials of scientific procedure, Sir W. Hamilton was at the same time enlarging it on its technical side, in two modes which are highly esteemed both by himself and by others: 1. The recognition of two kinds of Syllogisms; one in Extension, the other in Comprehension: 2. The doctrine of the Quantification of the Predicate.—Both these novelties are here criticised by Mr Mill in chapter xxii., which we recommend the reader to peruse conjointly with Lectures 15 and 16 of Sir W. Hamilton on Logic.

Now whereas the main objection, by which the study of the syllogistic logic has been weighed down and discredited in modern times, is this, that it encumbers the memory with formal distinctions, having no useful application to the real process and purposes of reasoning—the procedure of Sir W. Hamilton might almost lead us to imagine that he himself was trying to aggravate that objection to the uttermost. He introduces a variety of new canons (classifying Syllogisms as Extensive and Intensive, by a distinction founded on the double quantity of notions, in Extension and in Comprehension) which he intimates that all former logicians have neglected—while it plainly appears, even on his own showing, that the difference between syllogisms, in respect to these two sorts of quantity, is of no practical value; and that 'we can always change a categorical syllogism of the one quantity into a categorical syllogism of the other, by reversing the order of the two premises, and by reversing the meaning of the copula' (Lect. xvi. p. 296); nay, that every syllogism is already a syllogism in both quantities (Mill, p. 431). Against these useless ceremonial reforms of Sir W. Hamilton, we may set the truly philosophical explanation here given by Mr Mill of the meaning of propositions.

'All judgments' (he says—p. 423), 'except where both the terms are proper names, are really judgments in Comprehension; though it is customary, and the natural tendency of the mind, to express most of them in terms of Extension. In other words, we never really predicate anything but attributes; though, in the usage of language, we commonly predicate them by means of words which are names of concrete objects—because' (p. 426)—'we have no other convenient and compact mode of speaking. Most attributes, and nearly all large bundles of attributes, have no names of their own. We can only name them by a circumlocution. We are accustomed to speak of attributes, not by names given to themselves, but by means of the names which they give to the objects they are attributes of.' 'All our ordinary judgments' (p. 428) 'are in Comprehension only; Extension not being thought of. But we may, if we please, make the Extension of our general terms an express object of thought. When I judge that all oxen ruminates, I have nothing in my thoughts but the attributes and their co-existence.

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But when by reflection I perceive what the proposition implies, I remark that other things may ruminare besides oxen, and that the unknown multitude of things which ruminare form a mass, with which the unknown multitude of things having the attributes of oxen is either identical or is wholly comprised in it. Which of these two is the truth I may not know, and if I did, took no notice of it when I assented to the proposition, all oxen ruminare; but I perceive, on consideration, that one or other of them must be true. Though I had not this in my mind when I affirmed that all oxen ruminare, I can have it now; I can make the concrete objects denoted by each of the two names an object of thought, as a collective though indefinite aggregate; in other words, I can make the Extension of the names (or notions) an object of direct consciousness. When I do this, I perceive that this operation introduces no new fact, but is only a different mode of contemplating the very fact which I had previously expressed by the words, all oxen ruminare. The fact is the same, but the mode of contemplating it is different. There is thus in all Propositions a judgment concerning attributes (called by Sir W. Hamilton a Judgment in Comprehension) which we make as a matter of course; and a possible judgment in or concerning Extension, which we *may* make, and which will be true if the former is true.'

From the lucid explanation here cited (and from a following paragraph too long to describe p. 433), we see that there is no real distinction between Judgments in Comprehension and Judgments in Extension; that the *appearance* of distinction between them arises from the customary mode of enunciation, which custom is here accounted for; that the addition to the theory of the Syllogism, for which Sir W. Hamilton takes credit, is alike troublesome and unprofitable.

The like may also be said about his other innovation, the Quantification of the Predicate. Still more extensive are the changes (as stated by himself) which this innovation would introduce in the canons of Syllogism. Indeed, when we read his language (Appendix to 'Lectures on Logic,' pp. 291—297) censuring generally the prior logicians from Aristotle downwards, and contending that 'more than half the value of logic had been lost' by their manner of handling it—we may appreciate the magnitude of the reform which he believed himself to be introducing. The larger the reform, the more it behoved him to be sure of the ground on which he was proceeding. But on this point we remark a serious deficiency. After laying down, with appropriate emphasis, the valuable logical postulate, *to state explicitly what is thought implicitly*, on which, Sir W. Hamilton says,

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'Logic ever insists, but which logicians have never fairly obeyed—it follows that logically we ought to take into account the quantity, *always understood in thought*, but usually, and for manifest reasons, elided in expression, not only of the *subject*, but also of the *predicate*, of a judgment.'—('Discussions on Philos.,' p. 614.)

Here Sir W. Hamilton assumes that the quantity of the predicate is always understood in thought; and the same assumption is often repeated, in the Appendix to his 'Lectures on Logic,' p. 291 and elsewhere, as if it was alike obvious and incontestable. Now it is precisely on this point that issue is here taken with Sir W. Hamilton. Mr Mill denies altogether (p. 437) that the quantity of the predicate is always understood or present in thought, and appeals to every reader's consciousness for an answer:—

'Does he, when he judges that all oxen ruminates, advert even in the minutest degree to the question, whether there is anything else that ruminates? Is this consideration at all in his thoughts, any more than any other consideration foreign to the immediate subject? One person may know that there are other ruminating animals, another may think that there are none, a third may be without any opinion on the subject; but if they all know what is meant by ruminating, they all, when they judge that every ox ruminates, mean precisely the same thing. The mental process they go through, *as far as that one judgment is concerned*, is precisely identical; though some of them may go on farther, and *add other judgments* to it.'

The last sentence cited from Mr Mill indicates the vice of Sir W. Hamilton's proceeding in quantifying the predicate, and explains why it was that logicians before him declined to do so. Sir W. Hamilton, in this proceeding, insists on stating explicitly, not merely all that is thought implicitly, but a great deal more;[14] adding to it something else, which *may*, indeed, be thought conjointly, but which more frequently *is not* thought at all. He requires us to pack two distinct judgments into one and the same proposition: he interpolates the meaning of the Propositio Conversa *simpliciter* into the form of the Propositio Convertenda (when an universal Affirmative), and then claims it as a great advantage, that the proposition thus interpolated admits of being converted *simpliciter*, and not merely *per accidens*. Mr Mill is, nevertheless, of opinion (pp. 439-443) that though 'the quantified syllogism is not a true expression of what is in thought, yet writing the predicate with a quantification may be sometimes a real help to the Art of Logic.' We see little advantage in providing a new complicated form, for the purpose of expressing in one proposition what naturally throws itself into two, and may easily be expressed in two. If a man is prepared to give us information on one Quaesitum, why should he be constrained to use a mode of speech which forces on his attention at the same time a second and distinct Quaesitum—so that he must either give us information about the two at once, or confess himself ignorant respecting the second?



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The two next chapters of Mr Mill, noticing some other minor peculiarities (all of them unfortunate, and one, p. 447, really unaccountable) of Sir W. Hamilton's Formal Logic; and some Fallacious Modes of Thought countenanced by Sir W. Hamilton (chs. xxiii., xxiv.—pp. 446, 478), we are compelled to pass over. We must find space, however, for a few words on the Freedom of the Will (ch. xxv.), which (in Mr Mill's language, pp. 488—549), 'was so fundamental with Sir W. Hamilton, that it may be regarded as the central idea of his system—the determining cause of most of his philosophical opinions.' Prior to Sir W. Hamilton, we find some writers who maintain the doctrine of Free-will, others who maintain that of Necessity: each supporting their respective conclusions by reasons which they deem sufficient. Sir W. Hamilton declares that both the one doctrine and the other are inconceivable and incomprehensible; yet that, by the law of Excluded Middle, one or other of them must be true: and he decides in favour of Free-will, of which he believes himself to be distinctly conscious; moreover, Free-will is essential (he thinks) to moral responsibility, of which also he feels himself conscious. He confesses himself, however, unable to explain the possibility of Free-will; but he maintains that the same may be said about Necessity also. 'The champions of both the two opposite doctrines are at once resistless in attack, and impotent in defence'—(Hamilton's 'Footnotes on Reid,' p. 602.) Mr Mansel also asserts, even more confidently than Sir W. Hamilton, that we are directly conscious of Free-will—(p. 503).

Sir W. Hamilton has himself given some of the best arguments against the doctrine of Free-will, in refutation of Reid: arguments, some of which are here cited by Mr Mill with praise which they well deserve—(pp. 497, 498). But Mr Mill's own reasoning on the same side is of a still higher order, enlarging the grounds previously urged in the last book of his 'System of Logic,' He protests against the term *Necessity*; and discards the idea of Necessity, if it be understood to imply anything more than invariability of antecedence and consequence. If it mean *that*, experience proves thus much about antecedents in the world of mind, as in the world of matter: if it mean more, experience does not prove more, either in the world of matter or in the world of mind: nor have we any grounds for affirming it in either—(p. 501.) If it were true, therefore, that consciousness attested Free-will, we should find the testimony of consciousness opposed to a full proof from experience and induction. But does consciousness really attest what is called Free-will? Mr Mill analyzes the case, and declares in the negative.



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'To be conscious of Free-will, must mean to be conscious, before I have decided, that I am able to decide either way; exception may be taken *in limine* to the use of the word *consciousness* in such an application. Consciousness tells me what I do or feel. But what I am *able* to do, is not a subject of consciousness. Consciousness is not prophetic; we are conscious of what is, not of what will or can be. We never know that we are able to do a thing, except from having done it, or something similar to it. Having acted, we know, as far as that experience reaches, how we are able to act; *and this knowledge, when it has become familiar, is often confounded with, and called by, the name of consciousness*. But it does not derive any increase of authority from being misnamed: its truth is not supreme over, but depends upon, experience. If our so-called consciousness is not borne out by experience, it is a delusion. It has no title to credence, but as an interpretation of experience; and if it is a false interpretation, it must give way.'—pp. 503, 504

After this salutary and much-needed warning against the confusion between consciousness as an infallible authority, and belief upon experience, of which we are conscious as a belief—Mr Mill proceeds to sift the alleged self-evident connection between Free-will and Accountability. He shows, not merely that there is no connection, but that there is a positive repugnance, between the two. By Free-will is meant that a volition is not determined by motives, but is a spontaneous mental fact, neither having a cause, nor admitting of being predicted. Now, the very reason for giving notice that we intend to punish certain acts, and for inflicting punishment if the acts be committed, is, that we trust in the efficacy of the threat and the punishment as deterring motives. If the volition of agents be not influenced by motives, the whole machinery of law becomes unavailing, and punishment a purposeless infliction of pain. In fact, it is on that very ground that the madman is exempted from punishment; his volition being presumed to be not capable of being acted upon by the deterring motive of legal sanction. The *free* agent, thus understood, is one who can neither feel himself accountable, nor be rendered accountable, to or by others. It is only the *necessary* agent (the person whose volitions are determined by motives, and, in case of conflict, by the strongest desire or the strongest apprehension) that can be held really accountable, or can feel himself to be so.

'The true doctrine of the Causation of human actions (says Mr Mill, p. 516) maintains, in opposition both to pure and to modified Fatalism, that not only our conduct, but our character, is in part amenable to our will: that we can, by employing the proper means, improve our character: and that if our character is such that, while it remains what it is, it necessitates us to



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do wrong—it will be just to apply motives which will necessitate us to strive for its improvement. We shall not indeed do so unless we desire our improvement, and desire it more than we dislike the means which must be employed for the purpose.'

It thus appears that of the two propositions, 1, volitions are necessary, or depend on causes; 2, volitions are free, or do not depend on causes—neither the one nor the other is inconceivable or incomprehensible, as Sir W. Hamilton supposed them to be. That the first is true, and the second false, we learn by experience, and by that alone; just as we learn the like in regard to the phenomena of the material world. Indeed, the fact that human volitions are both predictable and modifiable, quite as much as all those physical phenomena that depend upon a complication of causes—which is only a corollary from what has just been said—is so universally recognized and acted upon by all men, that there would probably be little difference of opinion about this question, if the antithesis were not obscured and mystified by the familiar, but equivocal, phrases of Free-will and Necessity.

Passing over chapter xxvii., in which Mr Mill refutes Sir W. Hamilton's opinion that the study of mathematics is worthless, or nearly so, as an intellectual discipline—we shall now call attention to the concluding remarks which sum up the results of the volume. After saying that he 'differs from almost everything in Sir W. Hamilton's philosophy, on which he particularly valued himself, or which is specially his own,' Mr Mill describes Sir W. Hamilton's general merits as follows:—

'They chiefly consist in his clear and distinct mode of bringing before the reader many of the fundamental questions of metaphysics: some good specimens of psychological analysis on a small scale: and the many detached logical and psychological truths which he has separately seized, and which are scattered through his writings, mostly applied to resolve some special difficulty, and again lost sight of. I can hardly point to anything he has done towards helping the more thorough understanding of the greater mental phenomena, unless it be his theory of Attention (including Abstraction), which seems to me the most perfect we have; but the subject, though a highly important, is comparatively a simple one.'—p. 547.

Agreeing in this general view of Sir W. Hamilton's merits, we should be disposed to describe them in language stronger and more emphatic as to degree, than that which has just been cited. But what is stated in the pages immediately following (pp. 550, 551)—That Sir W. Hamilton's doctrines appear to be usually taken up under the stimulus of some special dispute, and often afterwards forgotten; That he did not think out subjects until they were thoroughly mastered, or until consistency was attained between the different views which the author took from different points of observation; That accordingly,



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his philosophy seems made up of scraps from several conflicting metaphysical systems—All this is literally and amply borne out by the many inconsistencies and contradictions which Mr Mill has brought to view in the preceding chapters. It would appear that the controversial disposition was powerful with Sir W. Hamilton, and that a present impulse of that sort (as has been said respecting Bayle, Burke, and others) not only served to provoke new intellectual combinations in his mind, but also exercised a Lethaeian influence in causing obliviscence of the old. But we can hardly follow Mr Mill in ascribing the defect to 'excessive absorption of time and energy by the study of old writers' (p. 551). If this study did no other good, it at least kept the memory in exercise. Now, what surprises us most in Sir W. Hamilton's inconsistencies, is the amount of self-forgetfulness which they imply.

While the laborious erudition of Sir W. Hamilton cannot be fairly regarded as having produced any of his intellectual defects, it undoubtedly stamped upon him his special title of excellence as a philosopher. This is fully recognized by Mr Mill; though he treats it as belonging not so much to a philosopher as to an historian of philosophy. He concludes (pp. 552—554):—

'It is much to be regretted that Sir W. Hamilton did not write the history of philosophy, instead of choosing, as the direct object of his intellectual exertions, philosophy itself. He possessed a knowledge of the materials such as no one, probably for many generations, will take the trouble of acquiring again. Independently of the great interest and value attaching to a knowledge of the historical development of speculation, there is much in the old writers on philosophy, even those of the middle ages, really worth preserving for its scientific value. But this should be extracted, and rendered into the phraseology of modern thought, by persons as familiar with that as with the ancient, and possessing a command of its language: a combination never yet so perfectly realized as in Sir W. Hamilton. This, which no one but himself could have done, he has left undone, and has given us, instead, a contribution to mental philosophy, which has been more than equalled by many not superior to him in powers, and wholly destitute of erudition. Of all persons in modern times entitled to the name of philosophers, the two, probably, whose reading on the subject was the scantiest, in proportion to their intellectual capacity, were Archbishop Whately and Dr Brown. Accordingly they are the only two of whom Sir W. Hamilton, though acknowledging their abilities, speaks with some tinge of superciliousness. It cannot be denied that both Dr Brown and Whately would have thought and written better than they did, if they had been better read in the writings of previous thinkers; but I am not afraid that posterity will contradict me when I say, that either of them has done far greater service to the world in



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the origination and diffusion of important thought, than Sir W. Hamilton with all his learning; because, though indolent readers, they were both of them active and fertile thinkers.'It is not that Sir W. Hamilton's erudition is not frequently of real use to him on particular questions of philosophy. It does him one valuable service: it enables him to know all the various opinions which can be held on the questions he discusses, and to conceive and express them clearly, leaving none of them out. This it does, though even this not always; but it does little else, even of what might be expected from erudition when enlightened by philosophy. He knew, with extraordinary accuracy, the [Greek: hoti] of each philosopher's opinions, but gave himself little trouble about the [Greek: dihoti]. With one exception, I find no remark bearing upon that point in any part of his writings. I imagine he would have been much at a loss if he had been required to draw up a philosophical estimate of the mind of any great thinker. He never seems to look at any opinion of a philosopher in connection with the same philosopher's other opinions. Accordingly he is weak as to the mutual relations of philosophical doctrines. One of the most striking examples of this inability is in the case of Leibnitz,' &c.

Here we find in a few sentences the conclusion which Mr Mill conceives to be established by his book. We shall state how far we are able to concur with it. He has brought the matter to a direct issue, by weighing Sir W. Hamilton in the balance against two other actual cotemporaries; instead of comparing him with some unrealized ideal found only in the fancy of critics and reviewers.

Comparing Sir W. Hamilton with Dr Brown, we cordially subscribe to the opinion of Mr Mill. We think that Dr Brown has 'done far greater service to the world than Sir W. Hamilton, in the origination and diffusion of important thought.' To speak only of two chief subjects in the field of important thought—Causality and the Freedom of the Will—we not only adopt the conclusions of Dr Brown, but we admire both his acuteness and his originality in vindicating and illustrating the first of the two, while we dissent entirely from the views of Sir W. Hamilton. This alone would be sufficient to make us approve the superiority assigned by Mr Mill to Dr Brown. We discover no compensating item to be placed to the credit of Sir W. Hamilton: for the great doctrine of the Relativity of Knowledge, which is our chief point of philosophical brotherhood with him, was maintained by Brown also.



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But in regard to Dr Whately, our judgment is altogether different. We cannot consent to admit him as a superior, or even as an equal, to Sir W. Hamilton, 'in the origination and diffusion of important thought.' He did much service by reviving an inclination and respect for Logic, and by clearing up a part of the technical obscurity which surrounded it: but we look upon him as an acute and liberal-minded English theologian, enlarging usefully, though timidly, the intellectual prison in which many orthodox minds are confined—rather than as a fit aspirant to the cosmopolitan honours of philosophy. 'An active and fertile thinker,' Mr Mill calls Whately; and such he undoubtedly was. But such also we consider Sir W. Hamilton to have been in a degree, at least equal. If the sentence which we have quoted above be intended to deny the predicate, 'active and fertile thinker,' of Sir W. Hamilton, we cannot acquiesce in it. His intellect appears to us thoroughly active and fertile, even when we dissent from his reasonings—nay, even in the midst of his inconsistencies, when a new growth of opinions is unexpectedly pushed up on ground which we supposed to be already pre-occupied by another both older and different. And we find this same judgment implied in the discriminating remarks upon his philosophical procedure made by Mr Mill himself—(pp. 271, 272). For example, respecting Causality and the Freedom of the Will, we detect no want of activity and fertility, though marked evidence of other defects—especially the unconditional surrender of a powerful mind to certain privileged inspirations, worshipped as 'necessities of thought.'

While thus declaring how far we concur in the parallel here drawn of Sir W. Hamilton with Brown and Whately, we must at the same time add that the comparison is taken under circumstances unduly favourable to these two last. There has been no exposure of *their* errors and inconsistencies, equal in penetration and completeness to the crushing volume which Mr Mill has devoted to Sir W. Hamilton. To make the odds fair, he ought to furnish a similar systematic examination to Brown and Whately; enabling us to read their works (as we now do those of Sir W. Hamilton) with the advantage of his unrivalled microscope, which detects the minutest breach or incoherence in the tissue of reasoning—and of his large command of philosophical premisses, which brings into full notice what the author had overlooked. Thus alone could the competition between the three be rendered perfectly fair.

We regret, as Mr Mill does, that Sir W. Hamilton did not undertake the composition of a history of philosophy. Nevertheless we must confess that we should hardly feel such regret, if we could see evidence to warrant Mr Mill's judgment (p. 554) that Sir W. Hamilton was 'indifferent to the [Greek: dihoti] of a man's opinions, and that he was incompetent to draw up an estimate of the opinions of any great thinker,' &c. Such incompetence, if proved

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to be frequent and considerable, would deprive an author of all chance of success in writing a history of philosophy. But the study of Sir William Hamilton's works does not prove it to us, though Mr Mill has convicted him of an erroneous estimate of Leibnitz. We say *frequent* and *considerable*, because no historian of philosophy is exempt from the defect more or less; or rather (to pass out of the self-confidence of the Absolute into the modesty of the Relative) we seldom find any historian whose estimate of great philosophical thinkers does not often differ from our own. Hence we are glad when ample original extracts are produced, enabling us to test the historian, and judge for ourselves—a practice which Sir W. Hamilton would have required no stimulus to enforce upon him. There ought, indeed, to be various histories of philosophy, composed from different points of view; for the ablest historian cannot get clear of a certain exclusiveness belonging to himself. But, so far as we can conjecture what Sir W. Hamilton *would* or *could* have done, we think that a history of philosophy composed by him would have surpassed any work of the kind in our language.

We trust that Sir W. Hamilton's works will long continue to be read, along with Mr Mill's examination of them; and we should be glad if the works of other philosophers could be read along with a comment of equal acuteness and impartiality. Any point of view which could command the adherence of such a mind as Sir W. Hamilton's, deserves to be fully considered. Moreover, the living force of philosophy, as directress of human intelligence, depends upon keeping up in each of her devotees a full mastery of many divergent and opposite veins of reasoning—a knowledge, negative and affirmative, of the full case of opponents as well as of his own.

It is to Philosophy alone that *our* allegiance is sworn; and while we concur mostly with Mr Mill's opinions, we number both him and Sir W. Hamilton as a noble pair of brethren, serving alike in her train.

Amicus Hamilton; magis amicus Mill; amica ante omnes Philosophia. FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: Mr Mansel and Mr Veitch, the editors of Sir W. Hamilton's Lectures on Metaphysics, posthumously published, say in their preface (p. xiii.)—

'For twenty years—from 1836 to 1856—the courses of logic and metaphysics were the means through which Sir William Hamilton sought to discipline and imbue with his philosophical opinions the numerous youth who gathered from Scotland and other countries to his classroom; and while, by these prelections, the author supplemented, developed, and moulded the national philosophy, leaving thereon the ineffaceable impress of his genius and learning, he, at the same time and by the same means, exercised over the intellects and feelings of his pupils an influence which, for depth, feeling, and elevation, was certainly never surpassed by that of any philosophical instructor. Among his pupils there are not a few who, having lived for a season under



the constraining power of his intellect, and been led to reflect on those great questions regarding the character, origin, and bounds of human knowledge, which his teaching stirred and quickened, bear the memory of their beloved and revered instructor inseparably blended with what is highest in their present intellectual life, as well as in their practical aims and aspirations.']

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[Footnote 2: We are happy to find such high authorities as Dr Whewell, Mr Samuel Bailey, and Sir John Herschel concurring in this estimation of the new logical point of view thus opened by Mr Mill. We will not call it a *discovery*, since Sir John Herschel thinks the expression unsuitable.—See the recent sixth edition of the ‘System of Logic,’ vol. i. p. 229.]

[Footnote 3: See Sir William. Hamilton’s ‘Lectures on Logic’ (Lect. xvii. p. 320, 321; also Appendix to those Lectures, p. 361). He here distinguishes also formal induction from, material induction, which latter he brings under the grasp of syllogism, by an hypothesis in substance similar to that of Whately. There is, however, in Lecture xix. (p. 380), a passage in a very different spirit, which one might almost imagine to have been written by Mr Mill: ‘In regard to simple syllogisms, it was an original dogma of the Platonic school, and an early dogma of the Peripatetic, that science, strictly so called, was only conversant with, and was exclusively contained in, universals; and the doctrine of Aristotle, which taught that all our general knowledge is only an induction from an observation of particulars, was too easily forgotten or perverted by his followers. It thus obtained almost the force of an acknowledged principle that everything to be known must be known under some general form or notion. Hence the exaggerated importance attributed to definition and deduction; it not being considered that we only take out of a general notion what we had previously placed therein, and that the amplification of our knowledge is not to be sought for from above but from below—not from speculation about abstract generalities, but from the observation of concrete particulars. But however erroneous and irrational, the persuasion had its day and influence, and it perhaps determined, as one of its effects, the total neglect of one half, and that not the least important half of the reasoning process.’

These very just observations are suggested to Sir William Hamilton by a train of thought which has little natural tendency to suggest them, *viz.*, by the distinction upon which he so much insists, between the logic of comprehension and the logic of extension, and by his anxiety to explain why the former had been exclusively cultivated and the latter neglected.

That which Sir William Hamilton calls here truly the doctrine of Aristotle (enunciated especially at the close of the *Analyt. Post.*), and which he states to have been forgotten by Aristotle’s followers, was not always remembered by Aristotle himself.]

[Footnote 4: The distinction is given by Stier and other logicians. 1. *Infinitem simpliciter*. 2. *Infinitem secundum quid, sive in certo genere*.]

[Footnote 5: This doctrine has been affirmed (so far as reason is concerned, apart from revelation) not merely by Mr Mansel, but also by Pascal, one of the most religious philosophers of the seventeenth century, in the ‘*Pensees*’:—



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'Parlons selon les lumieres naturelles. S'il y a un Dieu, il est infiniment incomprehensible; puisque, n'ayant ni principes ni bornes, il n'a nul rapport a nous; nous sommes done incapables de connaitre ni ce qn'il est, ni s'il est.'—(See Arago, Biographie de Condorcet, p. lxxxiv., prefixed to his edition of Condorcet's works.)]

[Footnote 6: The indictment under which Socrates was condemned at Athens, as reported by Xenophon at the commencement of the Memorabilia, ran thus—'Socrates is guilty of crime, inasmuch as he does not believe in those Gods in whom the City believes, but introduces other novelties in regard to the Gods; he is guilty also, inasmuch as he corrupts the youth.'

These words express clearly a sentiment entertained not merely by the Athenian people, but generally by other societies also. They all agree in antipathy to free, individual, dissenting reason; though that antipathy manifests itself by acts, more harsh in one place, less harsh in another. The Hindoo who declares himself a convert to Christianity, becomes at the same time an outcast ([Greek: *aphrhetor, athhemistos, anhestios*]) among those whose Gods he has deserted. As a general fact, the man who dissents from his fellows upon fundamentals of religion, purchases an undisturbed life only by being content with that 'semi-liberty under silence and concealment,' for which Cicero was thankful under the dictatorship of Julius Caesar. 'Obsecro—abiiciamus ista et semi-liberi saltern, simus; quod assequemur *et tacendo et latendo*' (Epist. ad Attic, xiii. 31). Contrast with this the memorable declaration of Socrates, in the Platonic Apology, that silence and abstinence from cross-examination were intolerable to him; that life would not be worth having under such conditions.]

[Footnote 7: Aeschyl. Prometh., 996-1006—

pros tauta, rhipthestho men aithaloussa phlox, leykoptherps de niphadi kai bronthemasin chthonhiois kykhato phanta kahi tarassheto gnhampei gar ouden tondhe m'— eiseltheto se mhopot, hos ego, Dios gnhomen phobetheis, thelhynoys genhesomai, kai liparheso ton mhega stygohymenon gynaikomhimois hyptihysmasin cherhon, lyshai me dhesmon tonde toy pantos oheo.

Also v. 1047, et seq. The memorable ode of Goethe, entitled *Prometheus*, embodies a similar vein of sentiment in the finest poetry.]

[Footnote 8: Euripid Hippol., 10—

(Aph) oh gar me thaeseos pais, 'Amazonos tokos monos politon taesde gaes Troizaenias legei kakistaen daimonon pepykenai Phoibou d' adelphaen Artemin,— tima, megiotaen daimonon aegoumenos—

(Hipp.) taen saen dhe Khyprin pholl' hego Chairein lhego—
(112.)



See also v. 1328—1402.]

[Footnote 9: Herodot. t. 32. O Kroise, epistumenon me to theion pan eohn phthonerohn te kai taraxodes, epeirotas ahnthropaeion pragmhaton pheri; also iii. 40]

[Footnote 10: See Eurip. Hipp., 6-96-149. The language of the attendant, after his affectionate remonstrance to Hippolytus had been disregarded, supplicating Aphrodite to pardon the recalcitrancy of that virtuous but obstinate youth, is characteristic and touching (114-120.)]



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[Footnote 11: See especially his chapter ii. on the Sensations of Sight, pp. 222, 241—247, in the second edition of this work.]

[Footnote 12: Descartes says, in his 'Principia Philosophiae,' i 51—'Et quidem substantia quae nulla plane re indigeat, unica tantum potest intelligi—nempe Deus. Alias vero omnes, non nisi ope concursus Dei existere posse perspicimus. Atque ideo nomen substantiae non convenit Deo et illis *univoce*, ut dici solet in scholis, hoc est, nulla ejus nominis significatio potest distincte intelligi, quae Deo et creaturis sit communis.']

[Footnote 13: At the same time, we cannot go along with Mr Mill in the following affirmation (p. 201):—

'This natural probability is converted into certainty when we take into consideration that universal law of our experience which is termed the Law of Causation, and which makes us *unable to conceive the beginning of anything without* an antecedent condition, *or cause.*' Such 'inability to conceive' appears to us not in correspondence with facts. First, it cannot be properly either affirmed or denied, until agreement is obtained what the word *cause* means. If three persons, A, B, and C, agree in affirming it—A adopting the meaning of Aristotle, B that of Sir William Hamilton, and C that of Mr Mill—the agreement is purely verbal; or rather, all three concur in having a mental exigency pressing for satisfaction, but differ as to the hypothesis which satisfies it.

Next, if we reason upon Mr Mill's theory as to Cause, certainly those who deny his theory can have no difficulty in conceiving events without any cause (in that sense): nor have those who adopt this theory any greater difficulty. These latter *believe* that there are, throughout, constant and uniform conditions on which the occurrence of every event depends; but they can perfectly *conceive* events as occurring without any such uniform sequence. In truth, the belief in such causation, as pervading *all nature*, is an acquired result of scientific training. The greater part of mankind believe that some events occur in regular, others in irregular succession. Moreover, a full half of the metaphysical world espouse the doctrine of free-will, and consider that all volitions occur without any cause at all.]

[Footnote 14: Among the various authorities (upon this question of quantifying the predicate) collected by Sir W. Hamilton in the valuable Appendix to his 'Lectures on Logic,' we find one (p. 311) which takes the same ground of objection as Mr Mill, in these words:—'The cause why the quantitative note is not usually joined with the predicate, is, that there would thus be two *quaesita* at once; to wit, whether the predicate were affirmed of the subject, and whether it were denied of everything beside. For when we say, *all man is all rational*, we judge that *all man is rational*, and judge likewise *that rational is denied of everything but man*. But these are, in reality, two different *quaesita*; and therefore it has become usual to state them, not in one, but in two several propositions. And this is self-evident, seeing that a *quaesitum*, in itself,

asks only—*Does or does not this inhere in that? and not Does or does not this inhere in that, and at the same time inhere in nothing else?*



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The author of this just and sagacious remark—much surpassing what the other writers quoted in the Appendix say—was a Jew who died at Perpignan in or near 1370, named Levi Ben Gerson or Gersonides. An interesting account of this man, eminent as a writer and thinker in his age, will be found in a biography by Dr Joel, published at Breslau in 1862, 'Levi Ben Gerson als Religions—philosoph.' He distinguished himself as a writer on theology, philosophy, and astronomy; he was one of the successors to the free speculative vein of Maimonides, and one of the continuators of the Arabic Aristotelian philosophy. He both commented on and combated the doctrines of Averroes. Dr Joel thinks that he died earlier than 1370.]