

**THE METAPHYSICS
OF JOHN
STUART MILL**

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The Metaphysics of John Stuart Mill by W. L. Courtney

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W. L. COURTNEY

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BY

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57

PREFACE.

THIS book is an attempt to deal in somewhat cursory fashion with large metaphysical problems. Questions of Philosophy almost necessarily involve an abstruse mode of treatment, intricate details, and a technical phraseology, which make them difficult and repellent to the majority of the reading public; while the attempt to treat them in a simple and broad manner, without the use of a peculiar nomenclature, seems fore-doomed to ignore their complexity and arduousness. Whether it is possible to steer clear of either misfortune is, perhaps, doubtful: all that I have tried to do in the following pages is to avoid prolixity, and to set as clearly as I could before the reader the main issue between rival systems. Originality I cannot and do not claim.

That Mr. Mill's logical and psychological speculations distinctly raise metaphysical questions is in itself a proof of the reality of Metaphysics. Every system must of necessity rest on the basis of some theory of "Consciousness," and "Consciousness" brings inevitably in its train metaphysical problems. Even a physiologist like Mr. George Henry Lewes finds, in his "Problems of Life and Mind," that the Positive Philosophy must seek to lay, as best it can, the Metaphysical ghost, which is ever starting up with awkward persistence to confront experimental psychology and demonstrated materialism.

It only remains for me to acknowledge assistance received from one or two friends, especially Mr. F. H. Bradley, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. Most of all, however, I am indebted to Professor Green's Introduction to the Philosophy of Hume,—a work to which many of these pages owe any value they may contain.

OXFORD, November, 1878.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTORY	1
II.	THE ANTECEDENTS OF MILL. HUME	16
III.	THE ANTECEDENTS OF MILL (<i>continued</i>)	27
IV.	CONSCIOUSNESS	44
V.	BODY AND MIND	63
VI.	THE PRIMARY QUALITIES OF MATTER	81
VII.	CAUSATION, AND THE UNIFORMITY OF NATURE	98
VIII.	MATHEMATICAL AXIOMS AND NECESSARY TRUTHS	116
IX.	GENERAL IDEAS	134
X.	EPILOGUE	148





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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE future of metaphysical speculation is the question which is more and more agitating the modern philosophic mind. Is it doomed to yield to the conquering inroads of "Science," is it, in Mr. Lewes' language "to be crushed into dust beneath the chariot wheels of modern thought?" Or is there yet a region into which Science has never come, into which it cannot come, because Scientific methods cannot be applied to the source and fountain-head of all method whatsoever? Such a question can only be approached when it has become clear with what sort of problems metaphysics deals: it cannot be summarily despatched by the assertion that every such problem, when "rationally stated," is capable of