

**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
REASONING: BASED ON  
EXPERIMENTAL  
RESEARCHES IN HYPNOTISM**

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The psychology of reasoning: based on experimental researches in hypnotism by Alfred Binet

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**ALFRED BINET**

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# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF REASONING

BASED ON  
EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCHES IN  
HYPNOTISM

BY  
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TO  
DOCTOR CHARLES FÉRE  
PHYSICIAN IN THE SALPÊTRIÈRE, BY HIS FRIEND  
ALFRED BINET



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## CHAPTER I.

### THE DEFINITION OF PERCEPTION.

THE important modifications which were undergone some years ago by the theory of proof stated by Aristotle, and considered for two thousand years as an impregnable truth, are well known. According to the ancient logicians, a syllogism—that is, a group of three propositions, the first of which is general—constitutes a proof. In the syllogism, "All men are mortal, Paul is a man, therefore Paul is mortal," the particular conclusion that Paul, actually living, is subject to death, is proved by the major "all men are mortal," because it is *contained* in the major. Such is the essence of proof; the particular case is considered as proved when it is contained in the general case, as a small circle within a larger circle;\* and consequently reasoning is false whenever the conclusion is not contained within the premisses. Stuart Mill was the first to show that if it were really so, if the conclusion were contained in the premisses, reasoning would be valueless, it would teach us nothing, it would not be an instrument of discovery, but a repetition under an altered form of knowledge already acquired. In other words, it would be "solemn

\*Euler, materializing this conception, represented the syllogism by three circles of different areas, and enclosed one within another. *Lettres à une Princesse d'Allemagne*, ciii et seq.