

**A COURSE OF PHILOSOPHY:
EMBRACING LOGIC,
METAPHYSICS AND ETHICS.
DESIGNED AS A TEXT-BOOK FOR
THE USE OF SCHOOLS**

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A Course of Philosophy: Embracing Logic, Metaphysics and Ethics. Designed as a Text-Book for the Use of Schools by A. Louage

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BY

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PREFACE.

IT is the unanimous opinion of those best qualified to judge, that a knowledge of the first principles of Philosophy is necessary to complete any course of classical or scientific studies. Experience as well as reason teaches that those who complete their education with a course of sound Philosophy, thus acquire an accurate method for the continuation of their studies, for the instruction of others, or for the pursuit of any calling to which they may devote their talents.

The man who learns what truth is, learns also to love it; and will not be easily led astray by the systems of error which are everywhere paraded before him, labelled with the false appellation of Philosophy: he despises the contradictions of pseudo-philosophers, he abhors the repulsive doctrines of the wicked, and avoids with care the corruption of morals which always accompanies them. Everywhere and always he perceives the presence of the Divinity, and is accordingly filled with awe and reverence: he sees also, with consolation, the excellence of his own soul and its future destiny, and not only preserves it from the contamination of vice, but also adorns it with every virtue; thus conscientiously discharging all the duties of his station in life, he must ascend higher and higher in the scale of being.

When we thus point out the abundant and inestimable fruits of Philosophy, it is evident that we do not speak of that so-called Philosophy which ignores the light of Divine revelation, but of that true Christian Philosophy which is guided as far as possible by reason, but which freely admits the light of faith where that of reason fails: for, as we shall see, reason alone is not capable of completely solving some of the most serious problems which concern the salvation of man.

The young man who, while at college, has either wholly neglected to study the rules of judging and knowing, or who has not engraven them deeply on his mind, wanders without a guide through dark and devious ways, and is "carried about by every wind of doctrine." He reads indiscriminately every book, good or bad, that chance throws in his way, and peruses them with little attention or reflection. Hence he fills his mind with imperfect notions of things, without any order; everywhere he sees contradictory systems, and in the midst of this general darkness he remains uncertain of the truth, and even becomes doubtful of the very existence of certitude. Soon the truth of religion appears to him as not sufficiently proved; and, owing to the prejudices to which he has yielded, he begins to deny that there is any excellence in virtue or any turpitude in vice. Passions rise in his heart, which, not being restrained, but rather flattered and excited by many causes, soon lead to deplorable results; for they shake his reason, which is already weak and deprived of its natural support, they destroy the vigor of his

physical system, they deprave his nature, and finally carry the unfortunate youth to utter destruction.

That this is not an overdrawn picture is plain to any one who chooses to look around him with an unprejudiced eye; and it shows conclusively the importance of a knowledge of the primary principles of Philosophy. On this knowledge, in truth, depends the progress which we shall make in science, the solidity of our mind, our love of truth and detestation of falsehood, our sagacity in choosing what is best, the integrity of our morals, the peace of families, the well-being of society, in a word, our happiness both in public and in private life.

The teacher, therefore, who is incompetent, negligent or dishonest, is the cause of an irreparable loss to those under his care; while he who is learned, diligent and consistent in his instruction, sows in the minds of those committed to his charge the seeds of truth and virtue which will bring forth an abundant harvest of the richest fruits of a good education. To attain so desirable an end, the pupil should be guided, not by obscure and uncertain precepts, but by those which are established upon the clearest principles of reason: even as a child as yet unacquainted with the way is guided, not by the hand of an ignorant or a dangerous man, but by that of his father.

We do not approve of the method of teaching Philosophy by lecture; for long lectures, however well developed, are not always understood by the student and are very easily forgotten: we are rather in favor of placing in the hands of the pupil a

small but comprehensive text-book, which he can readily commit to memory, and easily retain. Such a text-book should be concise without being obscure, so that the attention of the student may be sufficiently attracted and exercised; but, more than all, a book written for this object should be exact.

An elementary book of this kind is not often found; indeed it may be doubted whether one possessing all the qualities mentioned above exists in any modern tongue. Some excellent compendiums written in the Latin language have been published since 1825; but they cannot serve our purpose, which requires a manual of Philosophy adapted particularly to the wants of those who are not acquainted with the classics. To unlock the treasures of Philosophy for them, we concluded that it would be well to prepare a text-book having as far as possible the requisites mentioned above.

During the preparation of our manual we have diligently consulted the best works on the subject; and we now submit the result of our labors in the form of an elementary text-book on Philosophy, which we trust will meet the requirements of those for whom it is intended: and may God grant that, owing to the good intentions of the author, this book may be the means of advancing the best interests of the youths for whom it was written.

S. N. D. B.

INTRODUCTORY.

BEFORE entering the sanctuary of Philosophy, a few words are necessary by way of introduction. We shall arrange these preliminary remarks under four heads. Under the *first* we shall give the DEFINITIONS of several words of common occurrence: under the *second* we shall examine the DEFINITIONS of PHILOSOPHY: under the *third* we shall give the DIVISIONS OF PHILOSOPHY: and under the *fourth* we shall say something of ARGUMENT.

I.

DEFINITIONS OF WORDS.

A BEING OR THING is that which *exists or may exist*: it is therefore twofold, real or possible.

EXISTENCE is the *real union* of the parts or attributes which constitute a being.

POSSIBILITY is the *agreement* of the attributes which constitute a being, in such a way that its existence does not involve any contradiction.

THE ATTRIBUTES are the *qualities* of a being: they are *essential* or *constitutive* when the thing cannot exist without them, and *accidental* when the thing can exist without them.

The ESSENCE of a being consists of the collection of