

AN INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC

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An introduction to logic by W. H. S. Monck

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INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC.

BY

W. H. S. MONCK, M.A., F.R.S.,

formerly Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Dublin.



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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE first ten chapters of the following treatise are intended for beginners; and nine of them are reprinted with but slight alterations from a series of articles on Logic contributed by me to *Our School Times*, a periodical then attached to Monaghan Diocesan School. They were written at the request of Dr. Hime, the Head Master, who was also the editor of the periodical in question, with the object of making the subject intelligible to advanced school-boys and other beginners who might be among the readers of the paper. Those who desire to become acquainted with the fundamental principles of Deductive Logic only may confine their attention to these chapters; but it will be seen that the subsequent chapters intended for those who desire to carry their studies farther occupy about two-thirds of the book. I do not think the order in which the various matters treated of are dealt with will occasion any embarrassment to the student who reads on to the end; while for him who means to stop at the elementary principles no other order would have been suitable.

43 537

I do not lay claim to originality in any part of the following treatise, nor indeed is originality possible in the case of a writer who takes the view of Logic which I have done—except perhaps in the criticism of hostile systems. The treatise which I now present to the public is a compilation, but it claims to be the work of a compiler who has exercised his own independent judgment on the labours of his predecessors, and who hopes that in some instances he has availed himself of what is valuable in their works, while rejecting what is irrelevant or erroneous. And here I think it best to state briefly the view which I have taken of the nature of the Science of Logic, since no compilation can be successful which does not proceed on fixed principles, both as to what it includes and what it excludes. But it does not follow that what I have excluded is in my opinion either useless or impracticable. Logic is not a compendium of all sciences, and what is outside it may be even more valuable than what it contains.

Logic is the Science of Inference or Proof, meaning by Inference conclusive or indisputable inference. It is therefore limited to what writers term Deduction, to the exclusion of Induction; for in my opinion no inductive inference (subject to the qualifications to be mentioned hereafter) possesses this conclusive and indisputable character. All our experience of the mortality of mankind does not (conclusively) refute the narrative of the translation of Elijah into heaven. *Argumentum a particulari ad universale non valet* is the watchword of (Deductive) Logic; and no matter how

numerous and well-selected the individual instances may be that go to the making up of the Particular (or rather Collective) Proposition, the only conclusive inference is to *some* not to *all*.* Conclusions arrived at by induction are only Probabilities, though sometimes Probabilities of so high an order that for all practical purposes we treat them as certainties. If this were not the case, indeed, we should find it impossible to obtain Premises for our Syllogisms: but it must be borne in mind that in the following pages I do not intend to lay down any of the *Premises* employed as perfectly certain and indisputable. I have simply *assumed* certain Premises to be true, and shown what can be conclusively inferred from them *on that assumption*; but the assumption itself may be incorrect notwithstanding, in which case all inferences from it would fall along with it. Logicians who have endeavoured to obtain indisputably true Premises for their examples have seldom succeeded in the task, while they have rendered their works uninteresting, and have sometimes led their readers to believe that the rules of Logic are inapplicable to any reasonings of real importance. Logic, however, only deals with the sequence of one Proposition from another or others, and is equally applicable however these others may

* It is to be regretted that some writers insist on using the word "particular" in the sense of "singular" or "individual." Singular propositions are in most respects similar in their logical properties to universals, not to particulars. Nevertheless, no number of singular propositions will conclusively establish a really universal proposition, for reasons which will be explained hereafter.

have been arrived at, and whether they are certain or only probable.

Inferences can only be drawn from one or more Propositions, and the inferences themselves are always Propositions. Hence it is absolutely necessary for a Logician to consider the meaning or import of a Proposition. Indeed it will be seen hereafter that before we can lay down rules for drawing or testing inferences, it is necessary to reduce all Propositions to a fixed number of stated forms. Every Proposition, too, must contain at least two terms and a copula, and therefore Terms must also be dealt with in a Treatise on Logic. Terms usually stand for Things, and they are meaningless to us unless we have some Idea or Notion of the Things they stand for. Hence the Logician cannot pass entirely over either Propositions, Words, Ideas, or Things. But Logic concerns itself with these matters only so far as it is requisite to do so in order to understand thoroughly what it is that we have to draw inferences from, and what it is that we have inferred from it. Beyond this point the structure of Propositions may be left to Grammarians or Rhetoricians; the study of Words may be referred to Philologists; that of Ideas to writers on Psychology; and that of Things to the investigators of the various Sciences which deal with the different properties of Things. Logic, no doubt, is in one respect a branch of Psychology. Inference is a mental process, and the laws which regulate this process are laws of the Human Mind. But in Logic we do not treat of these laws in

reference to the inferring mind, but in reference to the Premises employed and the results arrived at; and therefore it would be out of place to examine the character of any mental process which is not directly concerned in inference. Some writers on Logic, for example, speak of every General Term as having an Extension, because we can *conceive* or *suppose* individuals corresponding to it, though there may be none such in reality: and it is added that whether there is a real extension or not can only be ascertained by experience, and it is therefore out of the province of Logic. But it is equally out of the province of Logic to inquire whether we can *conceive* or *suppose* anything corresponding to a General Term or not; and from the purely logical point of view all that can be said of any General Term is that it may or may not have an extension real or imaginary. This places in a stronger light the distinction between Extension and Comprehension insisted on in the text. Equally out of place would it be for the Logician to inquire into the precise nature of the Idea, or whatever it is, that is in the mind when we employ a General Term. If the Term has a meaning and one which we understand, it is sufficient for his purpose: but some authors appear to forget that the meaning of a name cannot be either the name itself or some other name.

Some of the reasons for specially distinguishing Logic from Arithmetic and Algebra will appear hereafter in connexion with Sir W. Hamilton's theory of the Quantification of the Predicate. These latter