

**THE BATTLE OF THE
TWO PHILOSOPHIES.
BY AN INQUIRER**

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The Battle of the Two Philosophies. By an Inquirer by L. F. March Phillipps

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L. F. MARCH PHILLIPPS

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THE BATTLE
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a.

BY AN INQUIRER.



'Whatever nation has given up Philosophy,—whatever nation has given up Metaphysics,—is in a state of intellectual insolvency. Though its granaries should be bursting; though its territories should be netted with railroads; though its mills and foundries should be the busiest in the world; the mark of the beast is upon it, and it is going the way of all brutality.'

ESSENTIAL BARRIERS PHILOSOPHY.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1866.

265. j. 26.



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THE little interest usually manifested in this country in questions of abstract philosophy, was agreeably exchanged last spring for the hearty applause which welcomed Mr. Mill's "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy." Whilst its pages were yet hot from the press, it was pronounced by the writing public to be a complete success; and the joy with which the overthrow of Sir W. Hamilton's authority and the destruction of his philosophical system was proclaimed, was almost equal to that which welcomes the victory of the popular champion in the more ignoble strife of the Ring. Any interest shown in such discussions must be regarded as a healthy sign, even though it arises from our interest in the victor rather than in the victory. It is something to have learnt that metaphysical speculations are not wholly ridiculous and trivial. It is a healthy sign when a nation learns to be proud of its intellectual superiors;

and it may lead us to better things still; it may lead us to study their thoughts. Taking, however, all the circumstances of the battle into consideration, there is nothing to be surprised at, there may be something to be learnt, from this general outburst of enthusiasm. Besides the natural delight which British souls must ever experience in watching well-delivered and down-right blows, given in any fair fight whatever; besides that from the practical nature and utility of Mr. Mill's philosophical writings, and from their great merit, he has long been the best known of our greater thinkers; and that just before this last work of his appeared, the events of the Westminster election had shown us that he is looked upon by foreigners as in some sort our national intellectual champion; besides all this, the philosophy he seeks to destroy is the very one it most behoves us to get rid of, would we bring our physical science and our mental philosophy into full harmony, by finally subjecting the elder to the younger and more vigorous brother, as modern thought demands.

On the other hand, Sir W. Hamilton has been comparatively little known. A name rather than a teacher to most of us, the grounds of his acknowledged authority have not been generally understood; but his system of philosophy has been felt to be wholly obstructive to that advance which the sciences of matter have been of late years so earnestly striving to make into the territory hitherto

reserved to the science of mind ; an advance which, if they are to be, as many think, the lords of all, they must make ; and which, if they do not speedily effect, their present career must be most materially changed.

But it is not only because Mr. Mill's teaching is practical and Sir W. Hamilton's is abstract ; not only because the one is helpful and the other obstructive to the course of modern thought ; there is that difference in the mode in which they have taught us, which, there is too much reason to fear, will in the present day inevitably decide the popularity or the unpopularity of any writer. Sir William Hamilton always declared he neither would nor could teach any who would not think for themselves. And most thoroughly has he kept his word. Whoever becomes his scholar is put into an intellectual gymnasium, and forced to face every problem, define every term, and analyse every fact for himself. Still, in his works, fragmentary as most of them are, the now silent master seems to say to us all, as he was wont to say in his lecture-room, 'Think, and I will help you to learn ; refuse to think, and I have taken very good care you shall learn nothing here.' How could such a teacher be popular in an age so eager to learn, so abhorrent of the labour of thought as the present ? Now, Mr. Mill's writings not only instruct us, they think for us. His readers float down towards his goal on the stream of his lucid style, admiring the skill of his reasoning, instructed by the information