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# Practical Essays

Alexander Bain

# Imprint

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## PREFACE.

The present volume is in great part a reprint of articles contributed to Reviews. The principal bond of union among them is their practical character. Beyond that, there is little to connect them apart from the individuality of the author and the range of his studies.

That there is a certain amount of novelty in the various suggestions here embodied, will be admitted on the most cursory perusal. The farther question of their worth is necessarily left open.

The first two essays are applications of the laws of mind to some prevailing Errors.

The next two have an educational bearing; the one is on the subjects proper for Competitive Examinations; the other, on the present position of the much vexed Classical controversy.

The fifth considers the range of Philosophical or Metaphysical Study, and the mode of conducting this study in Debating Societies.

The sixth contains a retrospect of the growth of the Universities, with more especial reference to those of Scotland; and also a discussion of the University Ideal, as something more than professional teaching.

The seventh is a chapter omitted from the author's "Science of Education"; it is mainly devoted to the methods of self-education by means of books. The situation thus assumed has peculiarities that admit of being handled apart from the general theory of Education.

The eighth contends for the extension of liberty of thought, as regards Sectarian Creeds and Subscription to Articles. The total emancipation of the clerical body from the thralldom of subscription, is here advocated without reservation.

The concluding essay discusses the Procedure of Deliberative Bodies. Its novelty lies chiefly in proposing to carry out, more thoroughly than has yet been done, a few devices already familiar. But for an extraordinary reluctance in all quarters to adapt simple and obvious remedies to a growing evil, the article need never have

appeared. It so happens, that the case principally before the public mind at present, is the deadlock in the House of Commons; yet, had that stood alone, the author would not have ventured to meddle with the subject. The difficulty, however, is widely felt: and the principles here put forward are perfectly general; being applicable wherever deliberative bodies are numerously constituted and heavily laden with business.

ABERDEEN, *March*, 1884.

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