

**PRACTICAL ETHICS; A
COLLECTION OF
ADDRESSES AND ESSAYS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649205158

Practical ethics; a collection of addresses and essays by Henry Sidgwick

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HENRY SIDGWICK

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ADDRESSES AND ESSAYS

BY

HENRY SIDGWICK

Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Cambridge

AUTHOR OF

"THE METHODS OF ETHICS"; "THE ELEMENTS OF POLITICS"
ETC. ETC.



LONDON

SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO., LIM.

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN CO.

1898

PREFACE

THE greater part of the present volume consists of addresses delivered before one or other of the Ethical Societies that were founded some ten years ago in London and Cambridge. These societies were partly—though not entirely—modelled on the “Societies for Ethical Culture” which had been started in America a few years before: they aimed at meeting a need which was believed to be widely felt for the intelligent study of moral questions with a view to elevate and purify social life. At the first meeting of the Cambridge Ethical Society, in May, 1888, I endeavoured, in an address which I have placed first in this volume, to set forth my conception of the work that the Society might profitably undertake. Four years later, at a meeting of the London Ethical Society, of which I was at the time President, I attempted a somewhat fuller analysis of the aims and methods of such an association. This stands second in the volume. In three other addresses, delivered before one or other of these societies, I endeavoured to apply my general conception to particular topics of interest and difficulty

—the “Morality of Strife,” the “Ethics of Conformity,” and “Luxury.” These stand respectively fourth, fifth, and seventh in the volume. These addresses, except the first, have already appeared in the *International Journal of Ethics*.

Along with these addresses I have included four papers, having, either in whole or in part, similarly practical aims. Two of these, on “Public Morality” and “Clerical Veracity,” and part of a third, on the “Pursuit of Culture,” are published here for the first time. I have placed each of the three either before or after the address that appeared most cognate in subject. The connection is closest in the case of the paper on “Clerical Veracity”; which is, in fact, a fuller exposition—called forth by controversy—of my views on a portion of the subject of the address that precedes it. The last paper in the volume—on “Unreasonable Action”—I have not included without some hesitation, as it was written primarily from a psychological rather than a practical point of view: but on the whole it appeared to me to have sufficient ethical interest to justify its inclusion.

HENRY SIDGWICK.

NEWNHAM COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

November, 1897.

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