

THE ELEMENTS OF ETHICS

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The Elements of Ethics by J. H. Muirhead

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J. H. MUIRHEAD

**THE ELEMENTS
OF ETHICS**

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of
Ethics

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Τὰ καθήκοντα ὡς ἐπίπαι τῶν σχετικῶν παραμετρῶν
ΕΠΙΚΤΕΤΟΥ

"There is no other genuine enthusiasm for humanity than one which has travelled the common highway of reason—the life of the good neighbour and the honest citizen—and can never forget that it is still only a further stage of the same journey."—T. H. GREEN

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1892

University Extension Manuals,

Edited by PROFESSOR KNIGHT.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

This Series is primarily designed to aid the University Extension Movement throughout Great Britain and America, and to supply the need, so widely felt by students, of Text-books for study and reference, in connection with the authorised Courses of Lectures.

The Manuals differ from those already in existence in that they are not intended for School use, or for Examination purposes; and that their aim is to educate, rather than to inform. The statement of details is meant to illustrate the working of general laws, and the development of principles; while the historical evolution of the subject dealt with is kept in view, along with its philosophical significance.

The remarkable success which has attended University Extension in Britain has been partly due to the combination of scientific treatment with popularity, and to the union of simplicity with thoroughness. This movement, however, can only reach those resident in the larger centres of population, while all over the country there are thoughtful persons who desire the same kind of teaching. It is for them also that this Series is designed. Its aim is to supply the general reader with the same kind of teaching as is given in the Lectures, and to reflect the spirit which has characterised the movement, viz., the combination of principles with facts, and of methods with results.

The Manuals are also intended to be contributions to the Literature of the Subjects with which they respectively deal, quite apart from University Extension; and some of them will be found to meet a general rather than a special want.

They will be issued simultaneously in England and America. Volumes dealing with separate sections of Literature, Science, Philosophy, History, and Art have been assigned to representative literary men, to University Professors, or to Extension Lecturers connected with Oxford, Cambridge, London, and the Universities of Scotland and Ireland.

A list of the works in this Series will be found at the end of the volume.

P R E F A C E .

THIS manual has been written with a special view to the wants and difficulties of University Extension students, to whom, in the first instance, the substance of it was given in a course of lectures. Though attempting to deal with the most recent phases of ethical problems, it does not profess to treat them in an original manner, but merely to apply to their solution ideas which, owing to the labours of the best thinkers of our own time and country, are now common property. Those of my readers who are acquainted with the history of thought in the field of Moral Philosophy will readily recognise the debt I owe to the epoch-making writers Plato and Aristotle among the ancients, Kant and Hegel in modern times. Only second to these in importance for the student are their distinguished exponents in Germany and Great Britain, Erdmann, Zeller, T. H. Green, and Professor Edward Caird. For those who are as yet beginners in philosophy, my best hope in

writing this manual will be realised if they are stimulated by it to apply themselves to these and other perennial sources of ethical inspiration.

Students who are familiar with recent continental literature on the subject may be surprised at the absence of all allusion to the ethical writings of Wundt, Steinthal, Paulsen, Höffding, and others. The reason of this omission, as well as of the general character of the references, has been my desire not to burden a book which is meant for a special class of English readers with references to authors to whom they may not have ready access.

In the preparation of these sheets for the press, besides the assistance I have obtained from the Editor of this series, I have to acknowledge my obligations to Mr. J. S. Mackenzie, of Trinity College, Cambridge, whose criticisms upon the proof I found extremely valuable. But my chief thanks are due to Miss M. S. Gilliland, who read the whole of my manuscript and made many helpful suggestions, both as to the matter and the form of treatment.

LONDON, *January*, 1892.

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