

ESSAYS
IN
PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM

EDITED BY
ANDREW SETH AND R. B. HALDANE

WITH A PREFACE BY
EDWARD CAIRD

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WHYTE'S PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY
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PREFACE.

THE various contributors to a volume of Essays such as the present may naturally be supposed to be animated by some common purpose or tendency; and I have been requested to say a few words to indicate how far such a common purpose or tendency exists.

In the first place, then, I have to state that the Essays have been written quite independently by their several authors, and that any agreement which exists among them is due, not to an intention to advocate any special philosophical theory, but rather to a certain community of opinion in relation to the general principle and method of philosophy. In other words, it may be described as an agreement as to the direction in which inquiry may most fruitfully be prosecuted, rather than a concurrence in any definite results that have as yet been attained by it. Such an agreement is consistent with great and even vital differences. For any idea that has a principle of growth in it, any idea that takes hold of man's spiritual life on many sides, is certain, as it develops, to produce wide divergencies, and even to call forth much antagonism and conflict between its supporters. A doctrine that passes unchanged from hand to hand, is by that very fact shown to have exhausted its inherent force; and those ideas have been the most fruitful both in religion and philosophy, which, accepted as a common starting-point, have given rise to the most far-reaching controversy. Never-