

OUTLINES
OF
MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

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WITH A MEMOIR, A SUPPLEMENT, AND QUESTIONS,

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P R E F A C E.

My principal object in this publication is to exhibit such a view of the arrangement of my Lectures as may facilitate the studies of those to whom they are addressed. In a course which employs more than five months, and which necessarily includes a great variety of disquisitions, it is difficult for a hearer to retain a steady idea of the train of thought leading from one subject to another; and, of consequence, the lectures, by assuming the appearance of detached discourses, are in danger of losing the advantages arising from connection and method. The following Outlines will, I hope, not only obviate this inconvenience, but will allow me in future a greater latitude of illustration and digression than I could have indulged myself in with propriety so long as my students were left to investigate the chain of my doctrines by their own reflections.

In the execution of this design I have attempted at the same time to state, under each head, a few fundamental principles, which I was either anxious to impress on the memory of my hearers, or which I thought might be useful to them, by relieving their attention during the discussion of a long or a difficult argument.

The branch of Moral Philosophy which relates to the Principles of Politics being less abstract than the others, I have contented myself with a simple enumeration of the most important articles treated of in the third part of my course. It is scarcely necessary for me to mention, that in this enumeration I have not aimed at anything approaching

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PREFACE.

to systematical arrangement; and that in illustrating the titles it contains, I am obliged, by the term prescribed to my academical labours, to confine myself to very general sketches. As soon as my other engagements allow me sufficient leisure for such an undertaking, I shall attempt a separate course of lectures on this very extensive and difficult subject.

With respect to my general plan, those who are in the smallest degree conversant with ethical writers will perceive, that in its formation I have been guided almost entirely by the train of my own speculations. In following the order which these prescribed, I was far from proceeding on the supposition that it was likely to possess, in the opinion of the public, advantages over the arrangements already proposed; but it appeared to me reasonable to think, that a plan resulting from my own habits of thought would probably be better executed in my hands than any one, how perfect soever, suggested by the views of another.

DUGALD STEWART.

College of Edinburgh, Nov. 8th, 1793.

P.S.—Having of late carried into execution (at least in part) the design announced in the foregoing Preface, by a separate course of Lectures on Political Economy, I have omitted in this Edition of my Outlines the Articles which I formerly enumerated under that general title; substituting in their stead a few others, calculated to illustrate the peculiar and intimate connection between this department of Politics and the more appropriate objects of Ethics. The observations which these articles are meant to introduce may be useful, at the same time, in preparing the minds of Students for disquisitions, the details of which can scarcely fail to appear uninviting to those who are not aware of the important conclusions to which they are subservient.

Nov. 2nd, 1801.

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