

*Volume III.*  
*Number 2.*

*March, 1894.*

*Whole*  
*Number 14.*

THE  
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

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ANOMALIES IN LOGIC.

LOGIC has the reputation of being a very definite and precise science — as definite and precise as pure mathematics. As a formal science it, no doubt, is so. But it is not its purely formal character that gives it the value for which it is presumably a part of a college curriculum. Its rules are assumed to regulate our practical thinking. But I question whether, apart from the laws of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle, there is any science which has to qualify its formulae so frequently in its application as does the science of logic. This is partly for the general reason that all material application of principles is liable to exceptions, but mainly for the reason that some of the traditional rules of thinking are either arbitrary, or recognize only a peculiarity of Aristotelian usage, which was merely a reflection of Greek language, and, therefore, of Greek thought. Or if it be maintained that Greek usage did not differ from the present, we have only the first alternative to recognize as the common defect of all theories of formal thought. Not that their arbitrariness makes them in any respect untrue, so far as their sphere of application is concerned, but that this sphere in practice is a very circumscribed one. So various are the material conditions under which some logical laws have to be applied, that to accept them, as expressed in formal logic, is only to prepare the way for disregarding them in the first sentence we meet. Indeed, we are inevitably reminded of the proverb about Greek, Latin, and German grammars; namely, that the exceptions are more numerous than the rules. When this is the case, one wonders why any but a disciplinary value can be given to Logic as a