

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

THE ALLEGED FALLACIES IN MILL'S "UTILITARIANISM."

IT may well seem superfluous, at this time of day, to discuss once more the familiar argument of Mill in the essay on "Utilitarianism." Have not the undoubted fallacies in that argument been shown up again and again by critics alike of the Intuitionist and of the Idealistic school? The present writer formerly shared this view,¹ but repeated study of the essay has convinced him of its essential injustice. All that is necessary, in defence of Mill from the charge that he has fallen into fallacies which are patent to the veriest tyro in logic, is to interpret his argument in the light of its context and of the purpose the author has in view. It is usual, while admitting Mill's candor and "sympathetic insight," to accuse him at the same time of a "facility in making compromises"² and a transgression of the most familiar rules of logic which is hardly credible in the author of an epoch-making work on that subject. Even so careful a writer as Professor Sorley attributes to him "a logical quibble" which is discreditable either to his candor or to his intelligence. I have preferred to assume that Mill is at once candid and coherent in his reasoning, and I think I have succeeded in clearing up the apparent fallacies, if not in eliminating the inconsistencies, in his ethical thought as presented in the famous essay.

To take first the most glaring, and therefore to my mind the most incredible case, the critics have with one consent accused Mill of committing the fallacy either of Composition or of Divi-

¹ See Preface to ninth edition of *A Study of Ethical Principles*.

² J. S. Mackenzie, *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, p. 204.

³ *Ethics of Naturalism* (2d ed.), p. 65.