

Algebra identified with geometry

Preliminary notice

In: Alexander J. Ellis (author): Algebra identified with geometry. (English). London: C. F. Hodgson & sons, Gough Square, Fleet Stret, 1874. pp. [3].

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PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

The Publication and Form of the Following Notes were thus conditioned.

A Sub-committee appointed by the *Association for the Improvement of Geometrical Teaching*, laid before its members, at its last sitting, 13 January 1874, several schemes for the Treatment of Proportion, on which the members were requested to give their opinion not later than 31 March following.

In writing my own opinion as one of the members of the Association, I found it impossible to complete my argument in favour of the retention of Euclid's method, and take into consideration several points suggested in those schemes, without communicating at least the bases of certain unpublished results of researches on which I had been engaged for many years. Hence it seemed necessary, as a matter of date, to give that communication a public form. But as all remarks upon the schemes submitted by the Sub-Committee were of course private and confidential, this publicity could not be attained without dividing my remarks into two parts. The first part, called *Rough Notes on Proportion*, has been sent round privately. The present, or second part, has been made fuller than would have been necessary for the purpose of my argument, although it is still very defective as an exposition of my theory, and is formally published, in order that it may be procurable in the usual way; but copies will be presented to all members of the Association for the Improvement of Geometrical Teaching, and of the Mathematical Society, to some other learned Societies, and to some Public Libraries, and to several other English and Foreign mathematicians. So far as copies remain on hand, I shall always be happy to present one to any Professor, Tutor, or Teacher of Mathematics, at any College or Public School, or any mathematical Author, English or Foreign, who favours me with a written request.

Both parts have been written and printed under great pressure of other work, and at great speed (Appendix III.), leaving doubtless many marks of haste, for which indulgence is requested, as also for the figures, which had to be photolithographed from my own roughly executed drawings.

My ambition is to present the Arsenal of Mathematics with a New Arm of Precision, of which the following pages contain the Specification, and a Sketch of its Action, Power, and Range.

The sense in which the term "original" is used on my title page is duly explained hereafter (art. 25). Absolute originality is claimed for my Stigmatic Geometry alone (art. 35, and Appendix III.). But I have always felt it to be almost impossible that in the vast extent of mathematical literature some traces of a similar conception should not exist, although I feel confident that it can never have been worked out in the detail here indicated. I should therefore esteem it a great favour if any one into whose hands these pages may fall, would furnish me with an exact reference to any work or paper even of a later date than 1864, (when I first publicly stated the nature of my conception of Stigmatics,) which to his mind seems to have pointed in the same direction, or to have covered any part of the same ground.

ALEXANDER J. ELLIS.

29 April, 1874.

25, Argyll Road, Kensington, London, W.