

Professor Ferrier remarks in one place that philosophy stands much "in want of a clear and developed doctrine of the Contradictory." No question but it does—and I humbly think that the Professor's own discussions afford evidence of this. Not casually or *per incuriam*, but formally, and as a vital part of his system, he lays down the position, that Real Being is not the absolutely inconceivable—as if the words did, or could to us convey any idea! Let it be distinctly understood that *we cannot speak of absolute inconceivability, without saying we know not what*—speaking in an unknown tongue, or rather in a tongue which is no tongue at all—becoming barbarians alike to ourselves and to others. It is ridiculous here to adduce such examples as a square circle, or a stick with only one end, to illustrate the assertion that it is within our power intelligibly to talk of absolute inconceivability in certain cases. Examples of this sort are nothing to the purpose. I can conceive a square. I can also conceive a circle. These two conceptions are mutually repugnant. In this sense, a square circle may be pronounced the absolutely contradictory; that is to say, the expression *square circle* brings forward two ideas incapable of agreeing with one another in any mind in which the ideas separately can be realised. The same may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of the stick with only one end, which is so mighty a favorite with our author. But who does not see, that though an expression significant of two conceptions, each of which we are capable of realising, but which are irreconcilable with one another, may in a perfectly intelligible sense be called a contradiction absolutely, it is not thereby proved to be competent for us to speak of an absolutely inconceivable, *where no ideas are brought before the mind at all?*

When Being has been identified, whether by definition or by supposed proof, with the Non-Contradictory, our author's task would seem to be ended. For, if nothing can be known by any intelligence, except a subject in synthesis with an object; and if Absolute Existence is not the Contradictory, and is therefore knowable, Absolute Existence must be the synthesis of subject and object—which is the ultimate conclusion of the Institutes—their grand Q. E. D. The equation not only of the known and the existent with each other, but of each of them with a subject united to an object, is made out. Professor Ferrier, however, is not satisfied to enter port so easily. Betwixt the Epistemology and the Ontology, he has introduced a cumbrous series of propositions forming an Agnoiology (as it is euphoniously entitled) or Theory of Ignorance, which he considers indispensable to a legitimate procedure in the On-