Part I.

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instruction, or in satisfying your own mind on any point, and again, whatever kind of subject-matter it is that you are engaged on, in all cases, as far as you are (in the strict sense of the word) reasoning,—that is, employing Argument—it is one and the same process (as far as it is correctly conducted) that is going on in your own mind.

And what this process is, must be the next point to be inquired into.

Although (as has been said) all men do occasionally reason, they are often, at the time, as *unconscious* of it as of the circulation of their blood, and of the various other processes that may be going on within the body. And even when they do, knowingly and designedly, use arguments, or are listening to those of another, they will often be as much at a loss to explain *why* one argument appears to them strong, and another less strong, and another utterly worthless, as if the whole were merely a matter of *taste*; like their preference of one prospect, or one piece of music to another.

In order, then, to obtain correct rules for forming a judgment on this subject, and clear expressions for explaining such judgment to others, it is necessary to analyse, as it is called,—that is, take to pieces) the Reasoningprocess. And for that purpose, we should begin by examining the most plain, short, and simple arguments, and enquiring on what it is that their validity [or conclusiveness] depends; examining also, some of those apparent-arguments which are not valid, and therefore not, in reality, arguments at all; though they are often passed off for them, as counterfeit coin is for genuine.

§ 2. You will perceive, on examination, that what is called a "Conclusion,"—that is, a proposition proved by Argument,—is drawn, in reality, from *two* other Propositions. And these are called its "Premises;" from their being (in natural order) "*premised*" or put before it.

At first sight, indeed, some might suppose that a Conclusion may follow from one Premise alone. For it happens, oftener than not, that only one is *expressed*. But in this case, there is always another Premise *understood*, and which is suppressed, from its being supposed to be fully admitted.