

W. Stanley Jevons (edited by Robert Adamson and Harriet A. Jevons). *Pure Logic and Other Minor Works*. Bristol, Thoemmes Antiquarian Books, Ltd., 1991. xxiii + 299 pp. np.

Reviewed by

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The scant notice which W. Stanley Jevons usually receives in general history of logic place his contribution to the subject as a kind of footnote to Boole. Where Boole insisted on an exclusive interpretation of disjunction when applied to classes, Jevons interpreted it inclusively, a move which is sometimes interpreted as mending a flaw in Boole's version of algebraic logic. To leave it at that, however, is largely to miss Jevons' proper and significant place in the development of the emerging science.

Jevons' "place," in fact, was to stand astride a major divide in that development. On the one side, he remained committed to an older way of thinking in terms of which logic was confined to being simply a direct representation of the actual order of thought in reasoning. The extreme longevity of the idea that the syllogism is the true focal point in logic is a result of this commitment; those who took the syllogism as mirroring the way we think were those who remained loyal to it.

On the other side, as a young mathematician Jevons had been introduced to Boole's major works, and he was considerably impressed by the clarity and generality of the more abstract approach he found in them. Now instead of speaking of eliminating a mere middle term in an inference from premisses to conclusion, Boole's system presented a systematic method for the reduction of indefinitely large sets of equations. The problem was that for all its power and elegance, Boole's calculus was not uniformly interpretable in ordinary language. Not only did coefficients other than 1 and 0 appear from time to time, there were other expressions as well (the quantifier 'v,' for instance) which defied