MATERIALISM

MATERIALISM [Lat. materia, material].
Gen. Materialismus; Pr. materialisme; Ital. materialismo.
That metaphysical theory which regards all the facts of the universe as sufficiently explained by the assumption of body or matter, as conceived extended, inextensional, eternally existing, and susceptible of change of position.

Material motion is held to be the fundamental constituent or ultimate fact of the universe; and all phenomena, including the phenomena of consciousness, are reduced by the theory to transformations of material molecules.

As Paulsen points out, the reduction of psychical processes to physical is the special thesis of materialism.

The atomism of Leucippus and Democritus is the first formulation of a definitely materialistic system. It is true that in the pre-Socratic theories of the Pre-Socratics (q.v.) the principle of explanation is materialistic, and consequently received, but this is due to the fact that the student between matter and spirit had not yet fully materialised. Hence it is the existence of the atoms, which is customary to apply the term "Hylomorphism" (q.v.) to the earliest Greek cosmologies.

But where even the principle of explaining the universe appears most abstract and idealistic, as in Aristotle's physics, it is found on closer scrutiny that the definition of being as a "fulfilled potential, endless plenum" implies the materialisation of the idealism of the ancients.

Hence it has been argued by Bertrand Russell and the "Great Philosopher," that "Parcae nomysis is not, as some have supposed, an idealism, but rather a materialism."

This was attributed to the fact that Parmenides held that the alphabet being replaced by any term whatever, the result would be a word, precise, or specific argument, and that the same was equally in the sphere of logic, a logic which does not produce such general forms, but conceives a homogenized universe having peculiar properties.

Such, for example, would be a logic in which every class was assumed to consist of a finite number of individuals; so that the