



Elementary Treatise on Electricity and Magnetism

James Clerk Maxwell

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EDITOE'S PREFACE.

MOST of the following pages were written by the late Professor Clerk Maxwell, about seven years ago, and some of them were used by him as the text of a portion of his lectures on Electricity at the Cavendish Laboratory. Very little appears to have been added to the MS. during the last three or four years of Professor Maxwell's life, with the exception of a few fragmentary portions in the latter part of the work. This was partly due to the very great amount of time and thought which he expended upon editing the Cavendish papers, nearly all of which were copied by his own hand, while the experimental investigations which he undertook in order to corroborate Cavendish's results, and the enquiries he made for the purpose of clearing up every obscure allusion in Cavendish's MS., involved an amount of labour which left him very little leisure for other work.

When the MS. came into the hands of the present Editor, the first eight chaptel*s appeared to have been finished and were carefully indexed and the Articles numbered. Chapters IX and X were also provided with tables of contents, but the Articles were not numbered, and several references, Tables, etc., were omitted as well as a few sentences in the text. At the end of the table of contents of Chapter X three points to be treated were mentioned, viz.:—the Passage of Electricity at the surfaces of insulators ; Conditions of spark, etc.; Electrification by pressure, friction, rupture, etc.: no Articles corresponding to these headings could be found in the text. Some portions of Chapters IX and X formed separate bundles of MS., and

there was no indication of the place which they were intended to fill. This was the case with Arts. 174-181 and 187-192. Arts. 194-196 and 200 also formed a separate MS. with no table of contents and no indication of their intended position.

It was for some time under consideration by the friends of Professor Maxwell, whether the MS. should be published in its fragmentary form or whether it should be completed by another hand, so as to carry out as far as possible the author's original design; but before any decision had been arrived at it was suggested that the book might be made to serve the purposes of students by a selection of Articles from Professor Maxwell's Electricity and Magnetism, so as to make it in a sense complete for the portion of the subject covered by the first volume of the last-mentioned work. In accordance with this suggestion, a number of Articles have been selected from the larger book and reprinted. These are indicated by a * after the number of the Article. Arts. 93-98 and 141 are identical with Arts. 118-123 and 58 of the larger treatise, but these have been reprinted in accordance with directions contained in Professor Maxwell's MS.

In the arrangement of the Articles selected from the Electricity and Magnetism care has been taken to interfere as little as possible with the continuity of the MS. of the present work, and in some cases logical order has been sacrificed to this object, so that some subjects which are treated briefly in the earlier portions are reintroduced in the latter part of the book. In Chapter XII some articles are introduced from the larger treatise which may appear somewhat inconsistent with the plan of this book; this has been for the sake of the practical value of the results arrived at. The latter part of the note on pages 149 and 150 may be taken as Professor Maxwell's own comment on the method proposed in Art. 186, written a few years subsequently to

that Article.


All references, for the accuracy of which Professor Maxwell is not responsible, and all Tables, notes or interpolations in-

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serted by the Editor, are enclosed in square brackets. This system has not been carried out in the table of contents, but the portion of this contained in Professor Maxwell's MS. is stated above.

Of the Author's Preface the portion here given is all that has been

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