

Art. III. *Aristotle's whole Works.*—*Bekker's Edition.* 11 vols. 8vo. Reprinted at the Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1837.

‘PLATO and Aristotle were the wisest of men.’ ‘Whoever studies Plato is treading on holy ground. So heathens always felt it. So even Christianity confessed.’*

Such sentiments are certainly rather startling, and more than we had expected from our high church contemporary, although we know that Plato was a sort of prophet in the eyes of Clement and his Alexandrian school, and that Aristotle is still a text book of abstract philosophy at the university of Oxford. But while unable to sympathize with such panegyrics, we are desirous of seeing ancient philosophy receive its due meed of attention; and by no means wish that it should be quite put out of sight by natural science, political economy, or other modern investigations.

The two names, Plato and Aristotle, go together like Peter and Paul; we might almost say like female and male. It is scarcely possible to treat of Aristotle, without treating of Plato; and this must be our excuse, if we introduce the latter name oftener than might have been expected from the heading of the article. In truth, Grecian philosophy had a colour of its own so peculiar, and so different from every thing with which we are now familiar, that some acquaintance with its history is nearly essential, rightly to understand the views of a single teacher. It was the growth of the age; it was fashioned by the science, by the mythology, by the rhetoric of the day, and by the poets, from whom the prevailing moral notions had been imbibed. The minds of individuals threw it into shapes widely different, but there always remained much in common.

On the earliest schools, (those of Thales and Pythagoras), great influence was exerted by ancient legends, concerning the origin of the world from water or from fire, and by other stories, or perhaps vague traditions of truth; and Plato, who was deeply impressed by Pythagorean doctrines, exhibits a strong love of all these mythical narratives, and a childish tendency† to doat on the authority of poets, as Pindar or Simonides. The masculine mind of his disciple Aristotle, rose far above this. He understood the place and value of poets well; and, as a man of taste, occasionally quotes them by way of illustration; but no one could imagine that they biassed his judgment. Yet he has not escaped the influence which the science and the rhetoric then in vogue exercised on all his contemporaries.

* From an able article, entitled, ‘Plato,’ in the *British Critic*, July, 1838.

† Some commentators say, that this was to *satirize the sophists*. But when a man imitates sophists so closely, it is no easy task to know where he is in earnest.

The science which the Greeks first cultivated, was, geometry. Tradition alleges that an eclipse was calculated by Thales, and that the most remarkable proposition in the first book of Euclid, (viz. the 47th); was first demonstrated by Pythagoras; but the truth of the latter statement is doubted, and the former would not prove that Thales understood the grounds of the rules which he applied. So much at least is certain; that a considerable progress in geometry had been made in Greece; that its practical value was known in Athens in the days of Pericles; and that it was then becoming a staple article of youthful education,* to the annoyance of the admirers of the older times. It was most zealously taken up by Plato, whose enthusiasm for the science surpassed all bounds. He is said to have written up over his door, 'Let no person enter, who is uninstructed in Geometry,' viewing it as the gate of all philosophy, and indispensable to those who sought instruction from him. To his followers, accordingly, the science was indebted for the most remarkable improvements and extensions which it afterwards received. Among them originated the celebrated problems of the 'tri-section of an angle,' and the 'duplication of the cube'; in the attempt to solve which, many curious curves were invented. The geometrical Analysis, and geometrical Loci, have been attributed to Plato himself.

It may seem paradoxical to say (what we yet believe was the case), that the success of the Greeks in geometry, was a main reason of their failing in other philosophy. Thenceforward, their effort was to force all science into geometrical shape; and if this were unsuccessful, they concluded that the subject itself was in fault. Astronomy (so far as it is a science of mere observation), is eminently susceptible of a purely geometrical form; and in this they reached perhaps as great perfection as the rudeness of their instruments, and want of the telescope, would allow. That part of mechanics which teaches the doctrines of equilibrium, and a certain portion of hydrostatics, can also be treated as little more than a problem of geometry; and in these likewise the lofty genius of Archimedes proved successful. With him the discoveries of mathematical science were ended; for they had exhausted all that could be treated, without recurring to experiment and induction.

But the effect of geometry upon their philosophy was yet more injurious; and Plato, as most in love with that study, was most deeply infected by the mischief. The first speculation resulting, was, on the existence of Eternal Truth. That 'the three angles of a triangle, are together equal to two right angles,' is a truth which will decay neither with time nor place; it is true at

* See the Clouds of Aristophanes, in proof.

the remotest bounds of the universe; true, before the foundations of the earth were laid!—Nay, it is a truth independent of the senses. Our gross organs can neither draw nor appreciate mathematical lines. Sense would mislead us, but intellect guides us to an infallible conclusion. How magnificent, how spiritual, how worthy of the noblest mind,—in short, how divine, is the study of everlasting realities!

He proceeded to infer the uncertainty and emptiness of the senses. They can never furnish us with truth, but only with fantasies; not with realities, but with shadows. It is as though a man, instead of employing infallible intellect to demonstrate a proposition, were to assay it by measurement or by weighing. He could not thus establish his point unerringly: his measurements would be too gross, his weights inaccurate; he would also be dealing with but one case at a time: he could only reach a faint opinion, a notion, but not* knowledge. Wherefore all that comes by the senses is *fantastic*, or apparent; all that comes of the mind, without the senses, is *true*.

A farther deduction was concerning forms. If a proposition concerning triangles and circles is eternal, the triangles and circles themselves must be eternal; and so must be all other geometrical figures. Hence they existed before the world had its shape, and they are the patterns of which sensible objects are a rude imitation. The irregular globe which constitutes our earth, is nothing but an ill-made copy of the eternal sphere, a mortal image of the immortal, a sensible representation of the invisible and divine. Three things have existed from all eternity; namely, God, forms, and matter. The first two being immaterial, and known by mind, are perfect; the third, being known by sense, is intrinsically imperfect.

It is then clear, that the Divine Being, who is the highest and purest intellect, would never contaminate himself by the fantasies of sense. Nothing but truth can find a place in his mind; and nothing is to be called true, that changes from moment to moment, and has no stability or consistency. That only is true, which is eternally true; and such are the propositions of geometry. These, therefore, are the grand occupation of the divine intellect. 'God studies geometry.' And those who desire to be like him, must purge themselves from all sensible things; must resolve not to consult those outer organs, which are the avenues of error, as often as of truth; but implicitly to trust the indications of the inner man, the true soul, the pure intellect, that which is most divine within us.

* Hence the Greek term *ἐπιστήμη*, which, like the Latin *scientia*, means 'knowledge:' because, as Aristotle explains, we have never a right to say that we 'know' a thing, (*ἐπιστάμεθα*) unless it be a necessary and eternal truth; and this makes science.

Applying the same principles to astronomy, he willingly overlooked the circumstance, that only by the *senses* have we information of the rotation of the heavens, and movements of the planets. Holding the indications of sense to be empty, he naturally discarded as rapidly as possible, every appeal to matter of fact. It had been discovered that the equatorial motion was invariable; the motion of the sun in the ecliptic, was believed to be so likewise: the planetary orbits were known to be nearly in the plane of the ecliptic; and Pythagoras had seized upon the opinion that they were circular. This served Plato with a sufficient basis for his speculations. He did not wish to reason about the heavens as they *are*, but rather as they *ought to be*; and was, of course, satisfied to borrow as little as possible from the diligent observations of astronomers. The equatorial motion gave him the idea of uniformity, the ecliptic having some irregularity attending it (both because it crosses the path of the equator, and because it does not exactly contain the planets), suggested the idea of diversity; and from uniformity, diversity, and matter, he teaches that the universe is made up. From such fancies sprang the belief, that the circle and sphere were the only 'perfect' figures; that rotation was the most 'sagacious' of motions; (*φρονιμωτάτη*, says Plato,) and the consequent stiff refusal to believe that a planetary orbit could be any thing but circular; an error which clung to philosophy until the researches of Kepler.

Since he perceived that the sun has somewhat less uniformity than the stars,—that the planets have less than the sun,—that the moon is exceedingly variable,—while meteors, clouds, wind, rain, follow no conceivable law; this chimed-in most happily with the notion, that the cause of disturbance lies, in the proximity to this wretched world of sense. The starry heavens alone show true perfection, and are a very image of Deity. Hence (in the *Timæus*), Plato scruples not to call the celestial sphere an only begotten God. 'Such was the entire process of reasoning,' says he, 'bestowed by God on the God that was to be brought into existence; and for such reasons did he make him to be a smooth body, and level every where, and equal from the centre, and entire, and perfect out of perfect bodies. And having put a soul into the middle of him, he extended it all through him, and even on the outside covered his body with it; and set him up to be a single heaven, alone and isolated, a circle rolling circularly, by native virtue capable of finding companionship in his own self, and needing nothing from without; but well acquainted with, and on sufficiently good terms with, his own self. For all these reasons, it was a happy God that he begat.' Similar monstrosities were propagated in the Stoic branch of his followers, whose doctrine, that all the planets and stars, and the sphere itself, were blessed gods, inflamed the atheistic tendencies of the Epicurean

school, and produced their bitter taunts against * ‘round, rolling, and restless divinities.’

It is true that Plato gives these as the sentiments of Timæus; but if on this account they are not to be considered as his own, then no opinions are his own; for he puts all his notions into the mouth of another; generally into that of Socrates. But as he has exerted his utmost powers in recommending laboriously the views of Timæus, they must pass for Plato's; as, indeed, all the ancients regarded them. Or if any one suspect him of total scepticism, then let it be understood that in speaking of the opinions of Plato, we mean the opinions set off and recommended in his works, whether he believed them or not.

The doctrine of Forms was extended by him to all abstract notions, by the following process. If we compare two pieces of stone that are nearly of one size, we may at first sight say that they are equal; but on closer inspection, we discover that they are not quite equal. Our notion of equality does not come from them, for equality is not in them; *therefore* the notion existed in the mind before we saw them. But no two things are really equal; so that the idea never came to us from without, but we must always have possessed it. By other considerations, he satisfied himself that the idea is not infused at the moment of birth; hence it must have pre-existed; and, if so, it existed from all eternity. And in the same way, says he, we may prove that the abstract forms of white and black, of good, of bad, of beautiful, of just,—in short, ‘the meaning of every adjective,’ has existed from all eternity, ‘without inhering in any substantive.’

The barbarian philosophy had generally a tendency to merge all sciences into one—namely, theology,—as happens when the priesthood are the sole depositary of knowledge. The Greeks, at least from the time of Socrates, recognised the separation of sciences as much as of arts; and their great acuteness, joined with the flexibility of their language, soon drove them into the extreme of needlessly multiplying them. The termination *ικη*, added to a substantive, instantly invents a new art or science! This is manifest, even in the Socrates of Xenophon. In Aristotle, we find numberless arts and sciences, all marshalled in imaginary subjection to that which he calls ‘architectonic,’ namely, politics in its grandest sense. We have the sciences of getting, and of using, and of deliberating, and of executing, and of judging, and so on without end. He almost invests them with personality: thus (asks he gravely), ‘who else is to have the use of domestic implements, if Economics is not?’ This extreme is foppish and laughable, but secures the advantage of a full and independent

* See Cicero de Naturâ Deorum.

cultivation of each separate field of science, without which no progress can be made. Plato, while using the phraseology of Socrates, seems never to have got rid of the Pythagorean tendency to confound different sciences. Thus, in his celebrated discussion upon the immortality of the soul, (which, to us it is self-evident, must be a doctrine either of physiology or of theology), we find him rest on arguments drawn from *grammar!* and from what (for want of a better name), we call *metaphysics!*

But we must proceed to his *morals*. Here also he strove for the geometrical principle of beginning with a Definition, and thence deducing, by pure reasoning, the principles of the science. The evidence of this is scattered through his works. In the opening of the 'Menon,' Socrates says, that he is so far from knowing whether virtue is communicable by teaching, that he has not yet learned *even* the definition of virtue: 'but when I do not yet know the essence of a thing, how can I know its properties?' Accordingly, he strove to gain by a direct effort of mind, an abstract conception of virtue, as the 'perfection of form,'—that is, beauty. He regarded the sphere, as of all shapes most perfect, 'because,' says he, 'it is most similar to itself; and likeness is ten thousand times more beautiful than unlikeness.' The effort then was, to find in morals some analogy to this perfection; something equable, smooth, evenly balanced on all sides, harmonious, unchanging, eternal: this would be the true beauty,—this would be virtue. But as the mind was ever running after this, and could never reach it from its geometrical side; his reasonings are generally quite of a sceptical kind, undermining every thing, and proving nothing; to effect which, the Socratic method of always interrogating, and never replying, was highly conducive.

Lest our readers suspect us of exaggerating that which we cannot prove without extended quotations, we will avail ourselves of the admission made by the zealous eulogist of Plato, quoted at the beginning of this article. After recounting the magnificent aim which ever guided Plato's pen, 'to purify the morals of the Athenian youth, elevate the standard of morality, lay a firm foundation for a new national character, cleanse the Augean stable of Grecian democracy, open a new world of thought and feeling, as yet hidden beneath polytheism,' he adds, that a right understanding of this, 'offers the only explanation to those *innumerable mysteries and anomalies which meet us in every page of his works*; which have made many men abandon them in despair, some play with them as a complicated enigma, others ridicule them as unintelligible chaos; *a whole succession of philosophical schools claim him as the champion of their scepticism*, and even Cicero himself declare, that Plato never hazards an assertion, but *argues on both sides of the question, and then leaves the reader in his doubt.*'

As a single example, we refer to the dialogue called Protagoras, written, as would seem, to ridicule the conceit of that celebrated sophist. Yet, if we judged of him only by this dialogue, we should hold him to be an eloquent, polished, sensible, practical man, to whom Plato had chosen to impute about as much self-complacency in his own talents, as Cicero freely avows; but who was not cunning enough to cope with Socrates, while that dishonest wrangler holds himself at liberty to interrogate, and pertinaciously refuses to reply. The argument opens on the part of Socrates, who declares that he can find no proof that instruction or education is of any avail towards making men virtuous; and as Protagoras professes to teach people to become virtuous citizens, and virtuous members of families, he is challenged to show the possibility of such teaching. Protagoras, in reply, insists that moral qualities are not,—like the arts, to which Socrates had compared them,—appropriated to individuals; but are a common possession of mankind. He argues, that, so far from no teachers of virtue existing, (as Socrates had alleged), all in their measure seek to teach all: that the use of punishment, private and public, proves the universal belief in the efficacy of training and correction towards improving men's morals; and that, as a fact, moral education is specially attended to, and most of all, by the most intelligent classes. A more satisfactory harangue, we are disposed to think, is not to be found in all the works of Plato. And now how does he make Socrates behave? He first affects to be struck dumb with admiration. After waiting awhile, and finding that the enchanting voice is really at an end, he pours forth satirical flattery, which to a mind not besotted with vanity, would be felt as insulting. He proceeds to say, that he wants only one little difficulty removed, to complete his satisfaction; namely, his doubt 'whether virtue is a *single* essence, or *many*'; a question, which, if answerable, is wholly remote from the subject. The other party having been indiscreet enough to submit to be thus questioned, Socrates gradually presses him towards the conclusion which he * himself holds, that virtue consists in nothing but knowledge or science; (modesty, for instance, and bravery, are each Knowledge;) a conclusion which Protagoras most strongly resists. For, as a plain sensible man, he ever reverts to the realities of life for his replies, and tries to prevent one error from drawing another after it, to which the acute sophistry of his opponent would force him. A tedious dissertation on a passage of Simonides, (which Socrates expounds as though it were the rule

* This may have been an unhappy crotchet of Socrates's, or may have been advanced merely to puzzle the sophists. Aristotle, however, believed him to hold the sentiment sincerely.

of morals), was, perhaps, thrown in to enliven the argument. But in short, Socrates wins the game, and then *confesses that he has confuted himself*; for if virtue be mere knowledge, and thus be a single essence, it is of course communicable by instruction; which is all that Protagoras was originally maintaining.* In a concluding speech, Socrates then complains that all moral subjects are dreadfully uncertain and unintelligible.

But while by such cavilling, Plato undermines the whole foundation of morals; as to practical questions, he is doubtless, sometimes, perspicuous enough. If in any treatise he was in earnest, it is probably in his 'Republic,' a laborious production in ten long books. In it are found his severest philippics against the Athenian democracy; and when applications were made to him from the Arcadians and the Thebans, to give his help in new modelling their laws, he refused it, unless they would adopt the system of an equal distribution of property, as laid down in his Republic. Its fundamental regulations are as follows. 1st. Community of property. 2nd. Community of wives. 3rd. Separation of the whole population into two castes, warriors and workers, of whom the former shall never work, and the latter never bear arms. 4th. A fusion of the two sexes into one class, so that women shall be warriors, and men perform domestic operations, indiscriminately. Whether this would 'purify the morals of the Athenian youth, and elevate 'the standard of morality,' the reader must judge; but that it would 'lay a firm foundation for a new national character,' is beyond a doubt.

Equally immoral is his mode of dealing with that vice, which was the plague-spot of civilized Greece, and not least of Athens. We do not judge him by Christian maxims; we compare him with his contemporaries, with the populace, with the comedians. Nor is it possible here to enter on the unpleasant discussion, how far Socrates is implicated in Plato's criminality. Certain it is, that the latter, under the flimsy pretence of 'improving the subject,' to moral purposes, exerted his eloquence and genius in accustoming the high-born youth of Athens, to look steadily, and even

* Ritter, in his History of Ancient Philosophy, book vi. ch. 3, says: 'For understanding the doctrine of Protagoras, we possess the very dubious advantage, that in the Thætetus, it is developed at length by Plato. But Plato, it is certain, did not hesitate to introduce much that did not really belong to Protagoras.' (Morrison's Translation.) It is unfortunate for the fame of the sophists, that their doctrines have been transmitted only by their opponents. Plato appears to have been incapable of narrating plain truth. Whether he relates the sentiments of Socrates or Protagoras, Timæus or Gorgias, it is impossible to trust him. As his astronomy is 'nature as it should be,' so his dialogues describe what he thinks the speakers *should have* said.

complacently, into the face of a vice, from which the conscience of the vulgar turned with disgust and contempt. If it be possible, under such circumstances, to claim for the philosopher any purity of mind, it can only be by enormous concessions as to his utter want of common sense. But from other sources we have full proof that in his view, the study of virtue is carried on by the faculty which contemplates outward forms of beauty ; by the mind, we may say, of a painter or sculptor. The fruit borne by the doctrine is here manifest. In theory and in practice alike, his admiration of virtue was a mere affair of the imagination, a fine picture, a literature, something that engaged his *taste*, but did not move his *heart* or *conscience*. And this will account for his little care whether his arguments left their readers in universal scepticism concerning the first principles of morals. His object was, to write something fine, to be admired, to hold up contemporary philosophers to ridicule, and to satirize the Athenian democracy : but, from a mind so flighty and so mystical, no reverential search after *truth* was to be expected. In his Republic, we give him more credit for sincerity than usual ; because the deformity of his scheme, and its repugnance to every natural feeling, seem to prove that it was not framed to amuse. It is evident, moreover, that Aristotle had no doubt, that that book contained Plato's serious and deliberate notions on the relations of the sexes.

Our readers may ask, why he has been and is so admired. We believe, chiefly, because his literary merits are those, not of a philosopher, but of a poet or romance writer. His conceptions are often noble ; his language is gorgeous, yet perspicuous ; his very obscurities savor of the mystical, and leave play for the imagination ; his descriptions are admirable, his satire most* refined. Separate passages are often splendid, and (as our readers may have seen) his very absurdities occasionally admit of a Christian interpretation ; he appears to rise above the dim region of sense, and to revel in eternal realities. Such qualifications peculiarly fitted him to the taste of one smitten with the monastic spirit ; imagining that perfection is to be sought by abstinence from the world, and from sense, and that God is to be known by direct contemplation. The error of such mystics consists in an extravagant over-rating of the powers of the intellect, and as extravagant an under-valuing of the things of sense, as though the mind did not depend on the body ; in both which points they find wonderful sympathy in Plato. A recent writer,

* Much of his satire is doubtless lost upon a vast majority of modern readers, as on ourselves. This is a new source of delight to a devoted student of Plato, when he discovers the clever hits which had long been unintelligible to him.

himself a half Platonist, well compares it to the mistake of a man, who, instead of looking on the groves and meadows, mountains and ocean, men and beasts, heaven and earth, and seeing in them the face of God reflected, insists on gazing up at the pure bright light, in which He sits enthroned; a sight which can neither instruct nor please, but may possibly strike one blind.

It would be uncandid not to add, that, miserably mischievous as we regard his system of morals and metaphysics to be, his properly theological notions were more likely than those of other Grecian philosophers, to make men 'search after God, if haply 'they might find him.' Indeed, one who cared so little for consistency, and who rather jumped after truth than cautiously tracked it out, could afford to throw out bold thoughts on every side; and, amid many errors, he strikes out many noble sentiments. The extravagant speculations concerning Deity, in which he indulges, though tending to produce impiety in some minds, would be to a majority far less hurtful than the deadening doctrine that pervades the Aristotelic school; of which we shall speak more below.

One more topic must be named, concerning the effect of geometry on philosophy. In geometrical theorems, we find certain results flow demonstrably from certain hypotheses. Thus the moment we attribute to a triangle the being equilateral, it instantaneously follows that it is also equiangular. Hence they were led to say that its being equilateral is the *cause* of its being equiangular. (This kind of cause was afterwards named the *formal* cause, to distinguish it from a physical cause, which latter must necessarily *precede* its effect by some short time.) It is wonderful what a waste of acuteness, what a strain upon a reader's attention, is produced by this phraseology; what a mass of mere verbal controversy has flowed out of it. To explain this, it may be enough to suggest a controversy, whether it is equilateralness (let us beg for the use of the word) that makes a triangle equiangular, or equiangularness that makes it equilateral: or again; since perfect virtue and perfect moral wisdom are inseparable, whether virtue is the cause of wisdom, or wisdom of virtue. Some of Plato's arguments of this kind are nearly untranslatable; as, when he alleges that 'a thing is not loved by those who love it, 'because it is an object of love; but is an object of love, because 'it is loved;' whence he drives his friend to the conclusion, that 'what 'is God-loved (*ἑοφιλές*), since it is loved by the Gods, is God-loved 'by the fact of its being so loved; but is not loved by them by 'reason of its being God-loved.' In this way, the strong line that ought ever to separate verbal and real questions, was miserably obscured, and the mind was so over-worked by attention to subtleties, as to be often incapacitated for taking a broad and sensible view of a question.

Other vexatious discussions are connected with the same topic, as,—which of two things is *prior in nature*. Aristotle seems only to express a universally admitted principle, when he reasons as follows: ‘Every plane figure is either rectilinear or curvilinear. ‘The rectilinear is contained by many lines, the curvilinear by ‘one. But since in every class the One is *prior in nature* to the ‘Many, and the Simple to the Complex, the circle must be *the first* ‘of plane figures.’ (De Cælo, ii. 4.) He proceeds to infer, that the heaven *must of necessity* be spherical; proving himself here-in a true disciple of Plato.

In such a school was Aristotle educated; open not only to the full influence of Plato’s doctrines, but surrounded by the rhetoric and sophistry, the schools of wrangling (*ἑριστικὴ*, as they themselves called it), in which young men were instructed in the art of ‘proving whatever was required.’ That he should have been deeply imbued with the errors incident to his situation, was only to be expected; yet of these he threw off many, and what he added of his own to the existing stock of knowledge, at this day justly excites our admiration. The worst part of Plato’s system—that which concerns forms,—he not only thoroughly rejected, but pointedly refuted. In the Ethics, his main argument is the practical one, that ‘since we can neither see nor get the Form of ‘Good, it is wholly useless to talk about it;’ but his metaphysical refutation is there neither clear nor satisfactory, and it does not seem to have pleased himself. In the Analytics, he alludes to the subject like a man who is wearied out by its vexatiousness, and who has experienced that he cannot convince people by any but his practical ground. He says,* ‘An adjective of necessity ‘implies a substantive; and nothing can be white, without being ‘something else besides white. *For away with ideas* (or forms), ‘*for they are twitterings*; and if they exist, they do not alter the ‘meaning of words; but it is from the meaning that demonstra- ‘tions must be drawn.’

His great good sense led him to see the absurdity of supposing that the human mind could start from general principles, instead of going towards them, in the mixed sciences; and, accordingly, he held it absolutely necessary to begin from matter of fact which the senses furnish, and so to work upwards by induction. But there are occasional indications of his retaining so much of Plato’s prejudice, as to look on this as a sort of humiliating necessity, which a philosopher ought to escape as often as possible. He regarded induction as an imperfect enumeration; in which case it is a *ne-*

* The doctrine has been unawares revived by a modern philosopher, Mr. Exley, who inculcates that what we call ‘matter,’ consists of nothing but force without substance. A Force is forcible, *without being any thing else besides forcible*.

cessary evil in argument; for if any one say, that all lead will sink in water, because this piece of lead, and that, and a third piece sink; it may still be urged that thousands of pieces remain, that have not been tried. Hence he opposes it to deduction, saying that 'induction is more persuasive and plainer, and 'addresses itself more to the senses, and is better adapted for the 'multitude; but syllogism (deduction) is more cogent, and has 'more energy in controversy.'

The sentiment here expressed, points to the influences by which philosophy was corrupted. A controversialist is eager for victory, not for truth; he is not contented with looking for the most obvious reasons, best fitted to satisfy men of sense; but he wants, if possible, a demonstrative argument, which shall stop an adversary's mouth. It is obvious that no amount of evidence drawn from fact and experience, to prove that oak is heavier than cork, would have stopped a wrangler from objecting that the thing was not 'demonstrated.' He would constantly reply, 'You 'have only shown that *some* oak is heavier than *some* cork; but 'you are now pretending that you have proved it of *all*.' Thus each party looked out for universal propositions, of such a nature that their truth might be known by mere inspection, and which by ingenious management might be employed to demonstrate the particular truth required. Such is the hackneyed one, that 'a 'single thing can have but a single contrary to it:' again: 'contraries fall under the same science;' (or, know a thing, and you know its contrary; know what is justice, and you know what is injustice, &c.) and others, which are as freely used by Plato as by Aristotle. To us of course it is manifest, that these specious generalities, when true at all, are either real truths learned only by induction, or else are merely verbal, and can be of no use whatever in proving a matter of fact. But the weak point of the Greek mind, was, to mistake a question of words for a question of facts. If Aristotle did not open their eyes to this, it certainly was not he who beclouded them.

It is not easy to convey to an English reader, the full amount of absurdity which arose in the schools of wrangling, from the use of these generalities; because, many of them drew whatever they had of speciousness, out of the forms of Greek grammar. A few specimens may prove amusing. (1.) Goodness is always a quality; but pleasure is not a quality; therefore pleasure is not a good. (2.) Opposite extremes are equally bad; but pain is an evil; therefore pleasure also is an evil. (3.)* What is most honorable, ought to hold the most honorable place; but fire is more

* A Pythagorean argument. Arist. De Cælo, ii. 13.

divine and more honourable than earth, and the centre is more honourable than the circumference; therefore the sun occupies the centre of the system, and the earth revolves round it.

Modern readers may regret, that Aristotle so labored to make his treatises invulnerable and complete, that he thought it incumbent on him to notice and refute a hundred objections, and many arguments as contemptible as the above. He must forsooth prove that 'not all things are one thing, and that one thing, immoveable;' he must refute those, who, because fire is moveable, heating and burning, said that it was a sphere, or (others said) a pyramid; alleging that 'these figures are the most moveable.' Hence arise many of Aristotle's chief difficulties. Sentence after sentence is inserted to strike at some objection, or some fancy, of which the reader has never heard; and his most difficult passages are to us generally his most worthless ones. A single specimen of convincing reasoning, and successful investigation, divested of every thing extraneous, would have been more valuable to his contemporaries, and more pleasing to us, than all his refutations of sophistry. The details of his logic were mainly intended to expose sophisms, to which no modern philosopher would deign a reply.

But we must in fairness here advert to the circumstances under which his writings have come down to us; and it may be permitted to borrow the words of Brucker, as abridged by Enfield. 'Aristotle left his own writings, together with his library, to his successor, Theophrastus. Theophrastus, at his death, bequeathed them to Neleus of Scepsis. Some of them were sold to Ptolemy Philadelphus, and shared the fate of the Alexandrian library. The heirs of Neleus, in order to secure the rest from being seized by the kings of Pergamus, who were industriously collecting a library, buried them in a cavern, where they lay 130 years, and suffered much injury. They were after this sold to Apellicon, a Teian, a great collector of books, who was particularly attached to the Peripatetic philosophy. Finding the MSS. injured by time, he had them transcribed, and with injudicious industry supplied from his own conjectures, and those of his copyists, such passages as were become illegible. After the death of Apellicon, Sulla, at the taking of Athens (B. C. 85.) seized his library, and ordered it to be conveyed to Rome, where Tyrannio, a grammarian, employed ignorant amanuenses to take copies of them, which he suffered to pass out of his hands without proper correction. Moreover, it seems that the ancient arrangement of the books has been so disturbed, that it is now become impossible to reduce them to their original order.'

To us it appears yet more probable, that many of them never received their final shape from the author. There is a vast difference between them as to polish and perfection, some being

well-finished productions, while others are so ill-jointed, so full of digressions and repetitions, with so many minor flaws, as to appear like loose papers from his portfolio. That very few of them were ever published by himself, may be fairly inferred from the fact, that none have come down to us by any other channel than that above narrated; although Fabricius reckons up 197 lost treatises of Aristotle, great and small. They should all be read with the allowance that is to be made for posthumous and miserably edited works; and instead of laboring to reconcile his minor difficulties, as many a poor Oxford student thinks himself forced to do; it were often wiser to strike the pen boldly through them. If the author has been unduly idolized during the middle ages, we do think he is as unfairly depreciated in more modern times. His works, doubtless, abound with opinions and dogmas, which recent science has exploded; and his followers in the dark ages, revelled in those parts of his system, which were least valuable and least original. We feel it hazardous to make a general assertion concerning voluminous writers, as Aristotle and Plato; but a frequent experience of it in particular cases, has strongly impressed on us the belief, that all which is injuriously wrong in Aristotle, comes to him from Plato, or from yet earlier sources; while that which he has himself added, is generally sound, valuable, and indicating high capacity for investigation. The prevailing errors of the Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy,—viz., the desire to set out from a definition,—the fancy that it is more philosophic to reason *from* general principles, than *towards* generals,—with the adoption of current false * generalizations,—the seeking mathematical demonstration in a moral argument,—the using moral reasonings in a physical argument,—the amusing one's self with fanciful analogies,—these all appear in a modified and more sober form in Aristotle than in Plato, while several of them he particularly rebukes and avoids. As for definition, it is remarkable that he arbitrarily sets out from it all through his Rhetoric, (which is a popular treatise,) in deference to received notions; while, in his Ethics, he proceeds analytically *towards* the definitions of the very same terms, and expressly lays down that this is the more scientific plan. He declares that to look to a moral philosopher for geometrical proof, is as absurd as to approve of appeals to the passions from a mathematician. His analogies are doubtless often exceedingly fanciful, but when any better

* Such as—'To one thing only one can be contrary:' 'What is done in an opposite way, is done by opposites:' 'Substance is prior to relation:' 'Nothing is made from nothing:' 'Where the things ruled are better, the rule is better:' 'Those (heavenly bodies) must be best, which belong to the best part.' Many of these absurdities might have been earlier exploded, if some Grecian wit had happened to write the sentiment:

'Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat.'

source of information is open, he does not employ them as the foundation of an argument. At many we have but to smile, and pass on; as when he illustrates different forms of government, by saying, that the soul governs the body *despotically*, the mind governs the desire *royalty*, and *within constitutional limits*; the husband governs the wife *oligarchically*, &c., &c. Or again, when he pursues the comparison of the globe to an animal, and calls the decay of parts of the earth, 'old age.' In fact, such notions were current long before him. Previous philosophers had taught that the sea was nothing but the 'sweat' of the earth, and this was the reason of its saltness; and such modes of reasoning were universally received as the best that were to be had. Yet Aristotle was well aware of the vast chasm which separates organized and unorganized bodies: he distinctly teaches, that *parts* of the earth suffer change, but the *whole* is free from decay or old age; and many metaphorical terms were with him logically unimpeachable (because he knew that they were only* metaphors), the introduction of which was yet very mischievous.

The position of the Greeks, in attempting to pass from geometrical reasonings to those of physics and physiology, may be compared (by an analogy perhaps less fanciful than those above) to the case of a nation which suddenly gains political freedom, after long training to stern obedience of despotic rule. Happy experience has at length established, that that emancipation which consists in bestowing civil rights, may be given to slaves quite suddenly; but suddenly to attain *power*, is far more hazardous. Those who had been trained in the cautious and safe track of geometry, knew not how to use their freedom and wield their arms without mischief, when induction and analogy were all at once put into their hands; weapons 'unproved' in all former science. We have no doubt that the same cause has operated in modern instances, where great mathematicians have shown themselves very wild theorists; but it is now so much more rare, since the gap which separates the strictest science from the most lax probable reasoning is filled up by a chain of other sciences or systems of knowledge, which have less and less formality; and it is the fault of the individual mind, if it occupies itself only with the two extremes. We suppose it is now generally admitted, that the Greeks were incapable of using aright so double-edged and dangerous a weapon as analogy; neither is Aristotle any exception. But he is often unjustly taxed as having invented phrases and metaphors which are as old as Pythagoras or Empe-

* 'Nature's *abhorrence* of a vacuum,' seems to be no more illogical, than the common use of *φιλεῖ* (loves), for 'is wont.' Plato, however, taught the same, and it is probably Pythagorean.

docles; and all the mistakes and prejudices of the modern schoolmen, as well as of the later Greeks and Romans, are laid upon his head. It is only by experience that we have learned the danger of employing in a physical subject terms used by transference from moral and sensible affections; and if the Greeks erred in teaching that digestion is a sort of burning, and fæces are the cinders, the moderns have but recently escaped the danger of identifying the lungs with a fire-place.

The Peripatetic school was always honourably distinguished among the ancients by its grasp of multifarious knowledge. To their founder himself nothing seems to have come amiss. At one time we find him intermingling magnificent geological speculations with minute details of topography, and with antiquarian researches concerning the former state of countries: at another he is occupied with the history and politics of neighbouring nations; or with criticising a Greek drama, lecturing on comparative anatomy, expounding the doctrine of sound, or of the atmosphere. He is equally at home in a dialectic discussion, a mythological tale, a question concerning free will, or the respiration of oysters. He never writes for victory or for display, but simply aiming at truth: sometimes, indeed, as a man talking to himself, who occasionally finds that he is wrong, and has to withdraw an argument after trying it. His works are often tedious and vexatious to us, who do not wish to follow other men's flounderings, if we can avoid it; but how much better is this, than to have the suspicion that the writer is not aiming after truth at all, but merely to show off his talent! One cannot help regretting that they are posthumous. Had they been edited by himself, we may judge by his rhetorical treatise addressed to Alexander, that we should find few obscurities to complain of. As it is, the labor of reading them as a whole, can never repay many students, now that sounder knowledge is attainable at so much cheaper a rate. Could any modern *rédacteur* find it worth his while to cut down and serve up Aristotle's works in the style which Dumont has practised on Bentham, it might be a useful addition to the stock of our literature. So to deal with Plato, whose writings are elaborate in style and ornament, would be an absurdity; but, with a single exception to be afterwards noticed, the works which pass under the name of Aristotle can hardly be said to have any style at all.

We may now notice them more particularly under three heads. First, abstract science; secondly, physics and physiology; thirdly, moral philosophy, including politics and theology.

I. Concerning *abstract science* we have little to add to that which has been already said. It is manifest even by the dialogues of Plato, that the main principles of logic were older than Aristotle; and whatever opinion may be formed of the value of that science, we believe it is unjust to give to the latter more

than a fraction of the credit or discredit attached to it. On abstract topics, such as space, time, motion, the clearness of view displayed by Aristotle is in striking contrast to many even of modern would-be philosophers. He is as emphatic as Bacon can be, in urging that *facts* are the final resting-place of the mind (*ἀρχὴ τὸ δῖν*); and treats it as a weakness of understanding to be pushing ever beyond, in quest of a reason or 'final cause' (*τὸ διότι*). Nor can any modern be more decisive than Aristotle, in upholding the reality of the indications of sense as the basis of knowledge; or more clearly discern the error of the doctrine, in later times called Realism, which invests with separate existence the abstractions of the mind. With so much of the spirit of Bacon in him, it can only be imputed, we think, to the highly unfavourable influences overshadowing philosophy at that time, that he did not succeed in giving it a powerful impulse in the true direction.

As a specimen of his views, we translate from the opening of his treatise on Listening to Nature.

'Our path must be *from* the things which to us are more knowable and clearer, *towards* the things which are naturally clearer and more knowable. We have to proceed from what is in its own nature less distinct, yet to us is more distinct, in search of that which is naturally simple. But to us, things are first known and manifest in a complex state; and afterwards, by means of these the elementary principles are ascertained.'

But the laborious and uninteresting treatise of 210 closely printed octavo pages, to which this is an introduction, will reward the much enduring reader (we fear) with little better fruit, than the refutation of mystical views held chiefly by the Ionic school, concerning the infinite, the indivisible, the continuous, the moving, the immoveable, and such like abstractions.

2. The physical treatises extant ascribed to Aristotle, are but a small part of those which he is recorded to have written. The very list of the titles of those which remain will display the activity of his intellect.

On the Heaven. 3 books.
 On Generation and } 2 books.
 Corruption. }
 On Meteorology. 4 books.
 On the World.
 On the Soul. 3 books.
 On Sensation, &c., &c.
 On Longevity and Old Age.
 On Life and Death.
 On Respiration.
 The History of Animals.
 (very voluminous)

The Parts of Animals.
 On Muscular Action.
 On the Locomotion of Animals.
 On the Generation of Animals.
 On Colors—
 On Sounds—
 On Physiognomy— } in one
 On Plants, 2 books, } 8vo. vol.
 On Sundry Marvel- }
 lous Stories, &c. }
 Problems (an 8vo. volume).

Of these, the 'Problems' is supposed to have been a sort of commonplace book in the Peripatetic school, wherein every one inserted the questions which he desired to have solved, with conjectural answers. Many of these are very trifling; and the like remark has been made on the similar collection of Bacon. But in the infancy of natural science it is very difficult to distinguish, which of several inquiries is likely to be fruitful; and, as Sir J. Herschel observes, the blowing of a durable soap bubble may in some cases be an employment highly worthy of a philosopher. The existence of this book of problems seems to us to prove, how far Aristotle and his immediate disciples were from supposing that he had exhausted the field of nature: and that if the school afterwards stagnated into a mere study of the founder's works, this was a result of their despairing to go beyond him, and no result of contrivance and design on his part, as many would assert.

The two books on Plants have gone through strange vicissitudes. A preface written by a modern Greek in Hellenic language, but with vitiated taste, informs us that the original work of Aristotle was translated into Latin, thence into Arabic, thence into Latin again by a Frenchman, and thence back into Greek, the original having been long since lost. Of course we have little proof that in so many changes, the author's production remains uncontaminated by foreign addition. Julius Cæsar Scalliger rejects them entirely. Sylburgius thinks they are the work of Juba; while Ménage imagines that they are patched up from Aristotle and Theophrastus together.

Concerning some other treatises there is also controversy. That upon 'Marvellous Stories' is defended by J. C. Scaliger as Aristotle's, while Dodwell gives it to Theophrastus. But the most signal of them all is the treatise 'On the World;' which is important enough to deserve separate remarks, which we shall bestow on it before closing this article.

The natural history of Aristotle, exhibiting a striking insight into comparative anatomy, is the treatise for which the moderns will probably assign him most credit. No philosopher of Greece had ever enjoyed such advantages in studying the animals of distant climates, as the preceptor of Alexander derived from the enlightened magnificence of his royal pupil. Persia, Egypt, India, and Tartary; the Mediterranean, the ocean, the river, the lake; contributed to swell the noble zoological collection, which no Greek probably before Aristotle would have known how to use. Men of science in the present day can of course detect errors; and may complain of rash credulity on his part, as to facts which he might have examined personally. But no high eulogy is needed, than that his acuteness enabled him to anticipate many of the remarkable discoveries of Cuvier; to which circumstance notice was first called by Dr. Kidd, author of our

of the Bridgewater Treatises. Our philosopher was perhaps the first person who proposed as the basis of scientific investigation, the principle which has become so fruitful of beautiful and important results under Cuvier's cultivation; viz. the adaptation of every part in an animal body to every other part. The science itself was, indeed, created by Aristotle, and created on the basis of fact. Laborious investigation, he knew, must be the foundation of all sound knowledge; and no man ever less spared pains in such research.

But his treatise on Meteorology is also a very striking book. At a time when the laws of heat and of fluids were so ill understood, it of necessity abounded with errors. The wonder is, that it contains so much truth. The truth is not such as appears occasionally in the Pythagoreans, who anticipated the Copernican system, and taught that the comets were planets; nor in Leucippus, who equally anticipated the modern Atomic doctrine. These are the good guesses of bold speculators and rapid reasoners, which never advance knowledge, because, being unproved, they convince nobody, and teach nobody how to reason aright. But his truths are often the fruit of wide experience and patient meditation, such as might have effected a revolution in science, had they been presented in a detached form. Being blended, however, with masses of cruder stuff, no alchymy known in those days could separate the purer metal; and they were written in vain to his countrymen.

Mr. Lyell, in his Geology, has remarked, that Aristotle has forestalled many of the views which it was the special purpose of his own admirable treatise to enforce. For our philosopher had the same accurate acquaintance with the phenomena of the rivers, lakes, volcanos, earthquakes of Greece, as with her political history. All that observation and research could do, he seems to have done: where chemistry and mechanics were needed to form a sound judgment, he could not do otherwise than mistake. Although our space is confined, we are tempted to extract a few passages illustrating what we have said.

Meteor. I. 9, 5. 'We must conceive [of the atmosphere] as a sort of river flowing periodically upwards and downwards, mingled of air and water. For when the sun is near, the river of vapour flows upward; but when he retires, that of water flows downward. And this takes place perpetually in order: so that if the ancients, who said that the ocean flowed round the earth, used the word ocean in an enigmatical sense, this may have been what they meant. But as the water is ever being drawn up by the power of heat, and again carried down towards the earth by cooling, special names are given to the phenomena and to some of their varieties; for a small descent of water is called a *drizzle*; a larger one, *rain*. But of the daily evaporation, if any portion is not carried aloft (as happens when there is a deficiency of heat

in comparison to the water drawn up), this descends again by the night chill, and is called *dew* and *hoar-frost*: hoar-frost, when the vapour is frozen before it passes into a liquid state; dew, when it is only condensed into water again; namely, when the heat of the sun has not been powerful enough to dry up the vapour, nor the cold sufficient to freeze it. * * * Snow also differs from hoar-frost; for the former is from the freezing of a cloud, as the latter is from the freezing of vapour. Hence it indicates severity of the season or climate; for it could not be frozen, *when it has so much heat still in it*, unless the cold were overpowering.' [The doctrine of 'Latent Heat' in the vapour is here implied.]

§ 12. '*Hail* is ice. Now water freezes in winter; but hail is commonest in spring and in the fall of the year, or in the early autumn; but very rare in winter, and only in mild seasons. And universally, hail belongs to the hotter climates, snow to the colder. * * * The largest hailstones are those which are not round. This is a sign that they are frozen at small elevations; for those which come from a distance are broken into smaller fragments and rounded by their fall. * * * It is the same cause which makes the hail largest in hot seasons and climates, as makes the dews heaviest, and the rains most furious; namely, the *suddenness* with which the vapour or cloud is condensed into rain, or with which the rain is congealed into ice.'

13. § 10. 'Rivers do not draw their supplies from definite basins or cavities within the earth, as some say; but as, in upper air, small drops uniting into a stream, and one of these streams uniting with another, make a shower, so, underground, the filterings together of many drops produce the beginnings of rivers. And matter of fact proves it: for those who form conduits collect the water by numerous pipes and drains, as though the earth perspired from its highest parts. Hence also the sources of rivers are found in mountains, and the greatest rivers flow from the highest mountains. So, too, most fountains rise in the neighbourhood of elevated ground; while on the plains they are very rare, unless they are supplied from rivers. For a mountainous region, like a dense sponge hanging over, filters the water in small, but numerous streams: for a vast mass of rain falls upon them; and the vapours which rise around are chilled by them, and reconverted into water.'

14. 'Neither the sea nor the dry land perpetually preserve their places; but they change, according as rivers are produced or fail. Yet we must believe, that this takes place in some fixed order and circuit of things. * * * When any place becomes drier, the sources of rivers disappear, the streams shrink, the channels are finally laid dry. The river which has vanished in one place, is reproduced in another. *Here*, the sea has been banked up by the river-mud, and forced to retire, leaving the place dry: *there*, it used to be sucked up by the sand poured down into it, but now it again has cleared its channel. But all these things pass by unnoticed, from their taking place in periods of time of vast length in comparison with our life; and whole nations perish and vanish entirely, before there is time to record the series of revolutions. * * * Those who see any of

these things take place on a small scale, attribute them to a change in the heaven or the universe: thus, some think that the sea is drying up, because in particular parts the land has gained. But the opposite fact is likewise found, that the sea has invaded the land. To stir the universe for trifling alterations is absurd; while the weight and size of the earth is surely nothing in comparison with the whole heaven. We must rather conceive, that as the year has its periodical rain, so at distant periods there are peculiarly mighty rains. * * * Since time never fails, and the universe is eternal, neither the Tanais or the Nile can have flowed perpetually; but their sources must once have been dry; for their operation finds its end at length, but time has no end.

The following passage is remarkable for the proof which it affords, that Aristotle occasionally resorted to *experiment*, as well as to observation.

II. 3, § 28. 'When sea-water has been evaporated, and again condensed, it is good for drinking, and is no longer salt; as we have found by trial. The same thing happens with other liquids. If you evaporate wine, or any other juice, you will find no taste in the steam when recondensed: it is mere water, without any flavor. * * * That the saltness is something superadded to the water, you may also prove by letting down into the sea a vessel of wax, fastened so as to be water-tight. The water will force its way through the waxen sides, but will be quite sweet, all the earthy particles having been separated as if by a strainer. And nothing but the presence of the salt makes the sea-water heavier (as it is) than fresh water; and also more buoyant. For its buoyancy is so remarkable, that laden ships which are near to sinking in the rivers, are in fair trim for sailing in the sea. Moreover if one make a strong mixture of salt and water, eggs will float upon it; for it becomes almost like mud: so much substance has the sea.'

The Grecian opinion so ridiculed by the moderns, that fire, air, water, and earth, are the elements of all things, appears to have had a real basis of truth. As Aristotle explains the words; 'earth' includes all solid bodies, 'water' all liquids, 'air' all gases and elastic vapours; 'fire' is the principle of heat, or caloric. To this he adds a fifth element, answering to that which the moderns call ether, and supposed by him, as by them, to fill the distant regions of space. He also hesitatingly calls it ether (*αιθηρη*), believing this word to mean 'that which is ever running' (*αιει ριζον*); for he attributes to it a vast velocity and perpetual rotation. Whether he had a dim conception of the velocity of light and lightning, or only regarded ether as the agent which carried the stars round, we cannot determine. But he held that each of these elements might change into the one immediately neighbouring on it; as heat melts some solids, turns others into smoke, and

liquids into steam. So near did his general view come to the discoveries of modern chemistry.

If we mistake not, the chief cause of the enormous blunders common to him with all the Greeks, in natural philosophy, lay in their limited knowledge of the terrestrial sphere, and their despair of ever reaching either the torrid or the frigid zones. It is a hard trial to an ardent spirit, longing for knowledge, to remain in suspense; a harder still to acquiesce in hopeless ignorance. Where it seemed impossible to bring matters to the test of fact, they either received vague rumours, or jumped at a most inadequate proof. Thus our author believed, that the Atlantic was 'shallow' by reason of mud; and wholly without wind, because it lies in a 'hollow.' Equal falsehoods were held concerning the North Pole.

8. But we must proceed to notice our great author in his character of moral philosopher.

It is remarkable that three distinct treatises on ethics are found among his works; one inscribed to Nicomachus, another to Euthydemus, a third strangely called *The Great Morals*. Of these the first alone is usually studied at the University of Oxford, probably because it is the longest, and is supposed to include all that is most valuable in the others. It is, however, the most unfinished in style, and has numerous difficulties arising (as appears) from a want of the author's final revision; while the others are pleasant to read, easy, and far more practical: omitting needless digression, curious dispute and arguments to prove what is better stated as fact. Until something to the contrary be shown, we shall be disposed to believe that the Nicomachean Ethics were the first rough draft, which furnished him for materials to write the other more perfect treatises.

The great acuteness of his mind, his natural aptitude for metaphysical discussion, and the reputation then acquired by the lawyer-like subtlety which passed for wisdom, tempted him doubtless to enlarge on all the more metaphysical parts of morals: and his most laboured arguments will probably seem to English readers the most worthless. But it is only the more striking that, as a whole, his ethical works should be so eminently characterized by *good sense*. On special points, we shall all quarrel with him, as with any heathen moralist. But it is no small praise to confer on a Grecian philosopher, that his doctrines are practical, and accommodated to the realities of human nature. Herein Aristotle was a true disciple of Socrates; for we judge of the genuine Socrates by his admirable public conduct: and not by the arguments attributed to him by Plato. In truth, it is a statesman, a man of the world, whose ethical treatises we have before us, and not a dreaming philosopher. He knows the weakness of human nature, and he neither forms sanguine hopes,

nor judges it morosely. He deals with man as he is, and was, and must be, and was meant to be; not with an ideal man, in ideal circumstances. The contrast between him and Plato is in this respect very broad, and it is strikingly illustrated in their treatment of the female sex. Plato's errors are precisely those of a monk, who vacillates between superhuman apathy and gross sensuality. At one time one might think that all love between the sexes was to be angelic; whence the title, 'Platonic affection,' for such attachments. At another time he can find no better reward for distinguished warriors, than to give them a prerogative of voluptuousness, consistent enough with a system which discarded marriage. His more sagacious disciple was incapable of such monstrosities. Certainly he was not likely to elevate woman entirely to the rank in which an enlightened Christian regards her: but he highly esteemed that female virtue of which Plato made so light; and was equally removed from both extremes on which we have animadverted. Very far indeed was he from the ridiculous, if not scandalous, conception, that the soul might become more virtuous by contemplating the proportions of a beautiful boy; and equally far from the least trifling on a subject, which in those times and countries involved imminent danger. Yet it is not to be supposed, that in his censures of unchastity, he could go beyond the severest heathen moralists, as for instance the Socrates of Xenophon. Both philosophers considered, not what was abstractedly right and desirable, but what was the greatest attainable morality to the bulk of mankind; and whether worse results might not happen, if too great severity were enforced: a consideration, indeed, of urgent weight in those days.

Instead of aiming to constrain nature into a channel not her own, after the manner of Lycurgus or Plato, he seeks as the only possible perfection to assist in the development of that which is natural. This is entirely Baconic; according to the apophthegm, 'by obeying nature we rule her.' To such an extent does he carry it, as to find fault with retail trade and the business of the money-changer, as being 'unnatural.' It is an axiom with him in physiology and in morals, that Nature does nothing in vain.

Men of the world, of this practical mind, are of course liable (as has been observed of Paley) to take somewhat low and lax views; and this has been charged against Aristotle. Considering his high favour in the Macedonian court, and his station as preceptor to the young Alexander, we might have expected a considerable winking at the crimes of state policy, and a suppleness of doctrine which generally follows despotism. But we are not aware of any instances of the kind. It is the statesman, not the courtier, that appears in his moral views. Holding, in common with all the Greeks, that Ethics was a branch of Politics, if

he had leaned considerably to the Utilitarian doctrine, it would not have surprised us, from an unimaginative and rather unimpassioned mind. But of this he has kept clear as a whole. His moral judgments are not drawn from his theory, but his theory was drawn from them; as it ought to be. Hence they were very much a transcript of the sentiments current in his day among the most enlightened, thoughtful, and humane minds in Greece; no fruit of school-hatching, no scheme of monkish inventiveness, but a practical reality. Of course they partook of the prevailing errors of the Greek world. Comparing them with Christian doctrine, we must look on his sentiments concerning anger, patience, courage, and ambition, as in many respects erroneous. Concerning the slavery of barbarians, we are indignant to find that he not only views it as calmly and contentedly as did all other Greeks, but adds a philosophical reason for it. It is lawful for Greeks to enslave barbarians by force, because 'nature' has gifted the Greeks with superior talents! 'For genius is naturally adapted to rule!'

In the description of one virtue (that of magnanimity), he has ventured to draw a theoretic character; and a most decided failure it is. The 'Magnanimous' man would be in our judgment ungrateful, overbearing, and intolerable. He repays benefits, not from gratitude, but because it is too painful a humiliation to be under an obligation to any one; and if unable to repay, he cannot endure to remember his benefactor. A most unamiable self-importance reigns through the whole character, though it has many good touches. It instructively illustrates the difficulty of theorizing concerning absolute human perfection, and forms a fine contrast to the meek Jesus of Nazareth.

There are extant eight Aristotelic books on Politics, two on Economics (of which the latter is judged to be spurious), and fragments of his historical work concerning the Grecian constitutions. While Plato wrote 'Laws' for nonexisting communities, and devised a 'Republic' that was to flourish in Utopia (happily called *Lubberland* by our German neighbours), the indefatigable Aristotle applied himself to compile a systematically digested account of all the real commonwealths then known, according to the most trustworthy authority 158 in number. The loss of this work is lamented as the very greatest which we have suffered. His books on Politics perhaps remained unrivalled until the days of Montesquieu, and may still be read with much advantage.

Enough has been said to show, why we decidedly prefer Aristotle, as a philosophic moralist, to Plato. All may be summed up in this: that *a hovel on terra firma is better than a castle in the air*. We feel that the former is thoroughly in earnest; that he is never writing for writing's sake; never aiming to display

his eloquence nor his ingenuity, but to unravel, if possible, the difficulties in his way. He seldom rises into high aspirations, he has little occasion for strong emotion; but he has an uncompromising, deeply rooted aversion to vice, a high sense of the claims of friendship, kindred, and country, with a clear perception that human happiness depends chiefly on a right state of the *affections*. And though he theoretically gives-in to Plato's opinion, that *the intellect* is its chief source, and that the highest virtue is intellectual preeminence (for, says he, God is intellect); yet this is neutralized by a plain avowal, that such happiness is not accommodated to *man*. It is not to perfect our intellect that our feelings must be regulated, so much as to regulate our feelings that our intellect must be enlightened. That they act and react, he strongly lays down; but he adheres to the popular conviction, that happiness is mainly in the affections. He does *not* hold with Plato and the monks, that an idle speculatist is a higher and better character than an active philanthropist. Morality is incumbent alike on the most ignorant and the most enlightened of our species; and we are intimately persuaded, that every moral treatise must be false, which does not keep close to the track of common sense. And if the suspicion enters, that all is built on some verbal fallacy, or some fanciful analogy, no vehemence of eloquence, no beauties of imagination, can console us for the want of a foundation.

But we cannot profess any satisfaction with the Aristotelic favorite tenet, that only by *a sort of habituation* (*ἔθισμῳ τινί*) do we know right from wrong. He was led into this opinion by perceiving that during a consistent and conscientious practice of virtuous deeds, following the light which we have, the conscience itself becomes more enlightened: a most important consideration assuredly, and in entire harmony with Christian doctrine. Again, from the imperfect state of physiology, he fell into the mistake of putting the senses and the conscience in direct contrast, in a matter upon which there is really a close similitude between them. The faculty of sight, says he, we first have, and then use (*ἔχοντες χρώμεθα*), but the moral faculty is itself gained by use (*χρησάμενοι ἔχομεν*). Obviously the truth is, that in each case the faculty is connate with the individual, needing, however, time and exercise upon its proper objects for its full development and perfection. But (to say nothing of the absurdity of using a faculty before we possess it) it is impossible to admit the notion, that habit is the *foundation* of the moral sense, without justifying the inference that good and bad may change places, if we be only accustomed to the change: an inference which Aristotle would have abhorred.

The most lamentable defect in his scheme, was his blank ignorance of the connexion of morals and religion. Having adopted

the Platonic notion that God was nothing but intellect, and that to attribute feeling to the divinity was to attribute a weakness; he pushed it to its conclusions in a manner that Plato never would have done. The very flightiness and inconsistency of the latter was here a great advantage. It appears certain that the tendency of the Peripatetic school was very strongly towards atheism; and it is difficult to see in their founder any notion of God as a Judge or Governor of mankind. On this subject, mere natural religion appears to us so indistinct, that a close reasoner is naturally sceptical. As the philosopher found no indications of a *present* divine retribution, he felt no certain ground for believing that God was at all disposed to avenge and to reward: much less did physiology intimate to him any state after death, in which identity and consciousness could survive: so that all idea of a future judgment must have seemed to him a poetical invention. He was, therefore, conscious of the want of authority and power in his moral system to abash profligates or stop the mouths of objectors: but regarding the thoroughly immoral as in a hopeless condition, he styles them 'incurable.'

We apprehend that he considered it puerile and mischievous to indulge desires after immortality, equally as to fret after the locomotive powers of birds or the longevity ascribed to stags. That which 'nature' has not granted, a wise man will feel it absurd to wish. When it is altogether out of our reach, the less we covet it the better. Indeed, our author expresses his belief, that man cannot wish himself to be any thing but man, or to be happy in any other nature. As to the notion of friendship between man and God, it was to him evidently absurd. Friendship requires (says he) a mutual independence, reciprocal sympathy, reciprocal benefits; but between those who are vastly unequal, or *one* wholly dependent on the *other*, it cannot exist. 'For any one to say that he loves Jupiter, (says our author) 'would be laughable.' Had any proof been accessible of a future state of existence, he might have entered into the hope of meeting good and eminent men in the other world. But it was impossible for so searching a reasoner to acquiesce in any abstract reasonings for the immortality of the soul: Plato's were then the best, at least the most elaborate (we do not know that they have been since at all improved); and Plato's reasonings proved the *pre-existence*, as much as the *future* existence of souls; and utterly destroyed all interest in our future self, if it was to be no more to us than the past self. Future rewards and punishments seemed to be connected with this view only by way of wholesome threat to the vulgar, and not by any argumentative propriety. Accordingly, Cicero, in the very treatise which argues Platonically for the immortality of the soul, treats future retribution as

a dream too absurd for doting old women. So mournfully were the heathen cut off from that well-spring of moral blessing, that fertilizing and renovating principle, the intercourse of the soul with its Maker in the hope of knowing Him, as He is, hereafter.

It is happy to find that so desolating a creed was not quite universal. The noble Hymn to Jupiter by the Stoic Cleanthes (from which St. Paul quotes in his speech at Athens; Acts xvii.), manifests that there *were* individuals whose souls were carried out in praise and prayer to the Great God, that their judgments might be enlightened, their sensual appetites controlled, their passions well directed. And the conversations of Socrates, as delivered by Xenophon, manifests equally that heathens could reason as powerfully as Christians from the display of *design* in the human frame, and in all the circumstances of our position, to prove the existence, the unity, the power, the benevolence, the wisdom, the upholding providence, of a great Creator. But to realize these all-important truths, does not seem to have been given to Aristotle.

One treatise remains, which forms a striking exception; but we cannot bring ourselves to believe it to be genuine; that concerning 'The World.' It differs from nearly all the rest in being *didactic*, and is formally addressed to Alexander; but this does not suffice to account for its wonderful superiority of style, its polish, its exuberance and harmony, or its religious spirit. For another treatise is also didactic, and addressed to Alexander ('Upon Rhetoric'), but displays none of these features. The critic, the statesman, the man of business predominate in the latter: it has a formal and well written introduction, but neither the poet nor the theologian appear. Among the moderns Fabricius is the greatest authority who defends the genuineness of the 'De Mundo,' but he rests on the *testimony* of Stobæus and others, who can have known no more about it than we, considering the circumstances under which the library of Aristotle was recovered. He confesses that Proclus doubted, and that *by far the greatest number** of modern critics have rejected the treatise. We think, with excellent reason. It is credible that in his old age our philosopher may have become more religious; but that one so trained through youth and mature age, and with a Greek style and habits of mind so fixed, should all at once, in one treatise, put forth the freshness and vigour of an imaginative and glowing intellect, kindling as he proceeded, until he burst forth

* Especially Muretus, both the Scaligers, Casaubon, Salmasius, Heinsius, Menagius, Vossius, Spenarus, Lipsius. Vossius says that the treatise "is all of gold, and comes of a heavenly breath, far different from that of Aristotle."

into a sort of religious rapture,* does seem to us quite incredible. For this reason (as well as because of the extent to which we have carried this critique), we decline to make any extracts from a production otherwise richly deserving it. The wonder to us is, that such a work should be anonymous, and that no clue should remain to furnish even a conjecture concerning the author.

The edition of Aristotle before us is a very acceptable present to scholars, and an appropriate production of the Clarendon Press. The type is clear, not large, and the page, by its breadth, contains more matter than usual. Professor Bekker has added no notes; and we feel it an advantage to be able to buy so voluminous an author in *only* eleven tomes. But we think that short prefaces were desirable, to inform the reader when the genuineness of a treatise is suspected. The Indices of Sylburgius, which are added at the end of every volume, are a great advantage to the edition.

Art. IV. *History of Madagascar*. Compiled chiefly from Original Documents. By the Rev. WILLIAM ELLIS. 2 Vols. 8vo. London: Fisher and Son.

IT was for a long time a favorite subject of reproach against our missionaries, that they neglected the interests of science, and devoted themselves with exclusive zeal to the religious improvement of the nations amongst whom they laboured. That the charge was to a certain extent, and for a *certain time* true, we are not concerned to deny. The following considerations, however, may serve to expose the *animus* with which the charge was brought, as well as actually to justify the missionary, in the greater number of cases, in his *supposed* indifference to the advance of science and knowledge. First, nothing can be more ridiculous than to make exclusive zeal for religion in such men a matter of censure. What were they sent out for?—to pick up shells and flowers, dig for fossils, hunt new specimens of butterflies, or enlarge the boundaries of any one of those numerous sciences, the principal aim of which is after all to gratify an intelligent and praise-worthy curiosity? No: but they went out for objects so vast,—so important,—so sublime,—that all such things must be considered frivolous in the comparison; they cannot be accounted otherwise,

* We may add, that in the *De Mundo*, he distinctly declares that God is the Preserver and *Creator* of the world (σώρηρ και γινέτωρ, vi.), whereas in the *De Cælo*, he says, “The heaven *was not created*, nor can it ever be destroyed.” (οὐ γίγνετο II).