

cially manifested his care of them by the constant presence and aid of a good genius, who directed all their actions, and guarded them by secret monitions from impending evils; but on this subject, as he declined to express himself with precision, it has been reasonably conjectured, that he alluded merely to the influence of conscience, which extends its power to the virtuous alone, and deserts the vicious, abandoning them to the just consequences of their crimes. With regard to the pursuit of knowledge, Socrates held that all science was contemptible which did not tend to the happiness of man, by the regulation of his conduct in society; that the most beneficial wisdom is to be intimately acquainted with ourselves, to see our errors and defects, that we may be enabled to amend them. He inculcated a veneration for the religion of our country, a strict respect to its laws, and a reverence for its governors, while at the same time he held the rational opinion that the true foundation of legal government is the consent of the people, and the surest bond of the subject's allegiance, the watchful care and virtuous disposition of the sovereign.

Socrates did not affect the manners or the habits of a public teacher. He had no school; he gave no professed lectures on philosophy; he mingled with his fellow citizens in all ranks of life, conversing with each man on the subjects best suited to his occupation and talents. The theatres, the temples, the shops of the artists, the courts of justice, the public streets, were all occasionally the scene of his moral conversations and instructive arguments. Even the house of the courtesan Aspasia was honored with his frequent visits. He found in that accomplished woman a mind stored with various knowledge, an acute and vigorous understanding, and those engaging manners which gave her a powerful hold of the minds of the Athenian youth. She was the mistress and confidant of Pericles, who did not disdain to consult her on affairs of public concern. If we should hesitate to suppose that the philosopher thought it not unworthy of his character to improve her morals and reclaim her mind to virtue, he might reasonably seek his own improvement, and avail himself of her knowledge of the world to enlarge and extend his powers of utility.

"Tutor of Athens! he in every street  
Dealt priceless treasure: goodness his delight,  
Wisdom his wealth, and glory his reward.  
Deep through the human heart, with playful skill,  
His simple question stole; as into truth  
And serious deeds he smiled the laughing race;  
Taught moral happy life, whate'er can bless  
Or grace mankind; and what he taught he was."

*Thomson's Liberty, part ii.*

With the death of Socrates, sophistry regained her empire. Even his own disciples departed from the doctrines of their master. Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaic sect, adopted great part of the Socratic morality, but added some peculiar opinions of his

own. It was his idea that a philosopher would follow justice and the practice of virtue, from the sole consideration of his own advantage, and without regard to the interests of others. He placed the chief happiness of man in pleasure, and true philosophy was that which procured the largest portion of selfish gratification. We must presume that intellectual, not sensual pleasure, was in the philosopher's contemplation while he advanced this dogma; but even with this allowance, his object was far less worthy than that which his master proposed, general utility.

The morality of Socrates, thus modified by the Cyrenaic sect and not improved, was pushed the length of extravagance by the Cynics. The founder of this sect was Antisthenes, a pupil of Socrates, but who probably did not possess the esteem of his master. To evince his contempt of luxury, he chose to wear an old and tattered cloak. "Why so ostentatious?" said Socrates. "Through your ragged coat I see your vanity." Virtue, in the opinion of the Cynics, consisted in renouncing all the conveniences and comforts of life. They clothed themselves in rags, disdained to live in a house, slept in the streets, ate nothing but what was coarse and insipid, and wandered about the country with a stick and a knapsack. They decried all the arts as either useless or dangerous. Science was altogether fruitless and unnecessary; for a virtuous man had attained to the perfection of his nature, and had no need to learn any thing. From voluntary ignorance they advanced to impudence; and having nothing to lose, while they scorned all gain, they indulged themselves in satire and invective without restraint. It is, however, not improbable that this spirit of censure with which they were actuated has drawn many calumnies on their sect. The vices with which Diogenes has been reproached are hardly to be believed, when we know that some of the most virtuous of the Greeks were his admirers and disciples.

As the character of this extraordinary person was differently judged of in his own time, some accounting him the wisest of men, and others little better than a madman, it is no wonder that his estimation with the moderns should be equally various. It is not to be doubted that the love of singularity was a powerful motive of his conduct and opinions. He opposed the common sense of mankind, and affected a contempt even of reputation, as he found that conduct a new mode of acquiring it. But that in his character there were many features of a truly philosophic mind, we are warranted to conclude from the uncommon excellence of those opinions and sentiments of his which the ancient authors have preserved. Diogenes held that the practice of virtue was man's chief end of existence; that as the body is strengthened by active labor, the mind is invigorated and kept in health by a constant tenor of active virtue; that even the contempt of pleasure is a solid and rational pleasure; that self-applause is a sufficient reward to the wise man;

while glory, honors, and wealth are only the bait of fools; that the consummation of folly is to be loud in the praise of virtue without practising it; that the gods refuse the prayers of man often from compassion.

The caustic wit of Diogenes procured him both enemies and admirers. Of this talent the ancient writers, and particularly his namesake Laertius, have preserved many specimens. There was a mutual hostility between him and Plato. That the latter, however, entertained no mean opinion of the talents of his rival, appears from his terming him *a Socrates run mad*. Plato had defined man to be a two-legged animal without feathers. Diogenes plucked the feathers from a cock, and thrust him into the academy: "See," said he, "Plato's man!" The bluntness of his manners was exemplified in his celebrated answer to Alexander the Great, who, coming to visit the philosopher, and finding him seated in his tub, asked if he could do him any favor; "Yes," said the other, "stand from between me and the sun." Discouraging, one day, in a grave tone, on the practice of virtue, when he observed his auditors dropping off, he began all at once to bawl out a song of ribaldry and nonsense, when immediately a great crowd gathered around him: "See," said he, "how willingly a fool is listened to, when a wise man is neglected." Hearing, on one occasion, a worthless fellow lamenting that he was dying at a distance from his native country, "Don't be uneasy, friend, about that," said he, "wherever you die, you'll find a passage to hell."

It is not a little extraordinary that a sect even of sophists should have arisen from the school of Socrates. This was the Megaric sect, of which Euclid was the founder; not Euclid the mathematician, for his science owned no affinity with sophistry. The Megaric philosophers were the happy inventors of those logical quibbles which, even in modern ages, have exercised the talents of the gravest men, and which were often employed with success to propagate error and obscure the truth. The chief philosophers of this sect, besides its founder, were Eubulides, Alexinus Eleënsis, characteristically named *Elenchinus* or the Wrangler, Diodorus, surnamed *Cronos* or the Driveller, and Stilpo, a philosopher of real learning and ability, but who gave too much importance to subtilty of disputation—in Brucker's phrase, *in litigioso dicendi genere potentissimus*.

The most celebrated of the disciples of Socrates was Plato, a philosopher whose doctrines have had a more extensive and a more lasting empire over the minds of mankind than those perhaps of any other of the ancients. Plato, a native of Ægina, and thus by his country an Athenian, was born about 430, B. C. His lineage was most illustrious, being descended on the father's side from Codrus, and on the mother's from Solon. With every accomplishment of education suitable to his birth, and showing

early indications of a genius for poetry, he attached himself at the age of twenty to the school of Socrates, and soon became the greatest adept in the philosophy of his master, whose discourses he committed to writing in the same colloquial form in which they were delivered. The Dialogues of Plato are therefore the most ample documents of the Socratic philosophy, though not the most correct and pure; for it was Plato's practice to blend his own opinions with those of Socrates, and this without any note of distinction. He learned the dialectic art from Euclid the Megaric; he studied the Pythagorean system under Phitolaus and Archytas; and his travels into Egypt accomplished him in all the wisdom of that country, and particularly in the science of geometry. Returning to Athens, he established his school in the grove called the Academy, over the gate of which, to show the importance he annexed to mathematical studies, he placed this inscription, *Ουδεις αγεωμετριος εισιτω*, "Let none enter here who is ignorant of geometry."

The reputation of Plato procured him numberless hearers and admirers. Among these were some of the most eminent men of Greece. It is enough to say that Demosthenes, Isocrates, and Aristotle were his disciples. The philosophy of Plato embraced three distinct branches of science: theology, under which are comprehended his metaphysical opinions; physics; and politics. In the first department it was Plato's fundamental doctrine *that from nothing, nothing can proceed*. Believing, therefore, in the eternal existence of the Deity, he believed likewise in the eternity of *matter*, as the substratum or *ύλη* of the Deity's operations. This *matter*, however, was in a chaotic state, and endowed with no qualities whatever, till the eternal mind conferred these qualities upon it, reduced it into order, and thus formed the beautiful fabric of the universe, of which *the idea* or archetype had existed from all eternity in himself. But in chaotic matter Plato conceived that as there was an original deformity, so there was a natural resistance to that perfect order and excellence which the Deity sought to produce, but which he could not entirely overcome; and hence the origin of that evil which partially contaminates his works: yet here the philosopher seems himself to perceive the objection from the boundless power of the Divinity, as he expresses himself with great obscurity on the subject. His notions of God, however, are not only most sublime, but extremely refined. He conceived that the Divine nature consisted of three distinct essences, states, or hypostases: the first a pure and self-existent Essence, whose sole attribute was goodness, hence indiscriminately termed by Plato *τὸ ὄν* and *τὸ ἀγαθόν*; the second he conceived to be Mind, the wisdom or reason of the first, and the proper Creator of the universe, and therefore by Plato termed sometimes *Νους* (the intelligence,) *Λογος* (the word,) and sometimes *Δημιουργος* (the Creator;); the third he conceived to be the Soul of the world; as

he conceived the activity of created matter to infer an inhabiting mind, and this he termed either simply the *ψυχη* (the soul,) or *ψυχη το κοσμου* (soul of the world.) The second *hypostasis* he supposed to be an emanation from the first, and the third from both. Such is the Platonic Trinity, bearing, in its general description, a strong resemblance to the Christian; but differing in this material point, that in the former, the second and third persons are subordinate and inferior to the first. Yet the learned Cudworth and other ingenious men have strenuously labored to prove the perfect conformity of the two doctrines.

But in the metaphysics of Plato there is yet another principle, which it is more difficult to comprehend. This is his doctrine of *ideas*, which in some parts of his writings he seems to consider as eternal existences separate from the Divinity, and in others, to regard only as certain forms or notions eternally existing in the Divine mind. The former, Plutarch\* seems to think, was Plato's meaning. But be this as it may, he regarded those ideas as something eternal and immutable, and therefore held that they were the only true and proper objects of science. It was according to these eternally-existing ideas that God himself had formed the universe, which he endowed with a living soul, whence proceed both its periodical revolutions and its active and productive energy. But the universe, being thus animated by a soul which proceeds from God, is hence to be considered as containing a part of the Divinity. The planets are in like manner animated by a part of the Divine nature. Man, endowed with a rational soul, contains within himself a part of God. That part—his intellectual spirit—therefore, existed from all eternity, and is in its nature incapable of extinction. Inhabiting a body of corrupt and rebel matter, it is subject to vice and misery; but, by a noble warfare against the corruption of its earthly vehicle, by subduing its unruly passions, and exercising itself in the practice of virtue and divine contemplation, it best fits itself for returning to its original state, a coexistence with the Divinity.

What is properly termed the physics of Plato is so chimerical, to say no worse, that it scarcely merits attention. Fire and earth he supposed were the component parts of the visible world, and these were united by air and water. The particles of earth are cubes, those of fire are pyramidal, those of air are *octohedrons*, and those of water *eicosihedrons*. They are combined according to geometrical laws, and the *anima mundi* gives motion and regularity to the whole.

In politics Plato was equally a visionary speculatist as in physics. In his *Republic* and *Dialogue on Laws*, his notions betray an ignorance of human nature, with much enthusiasm of mind, and a

\* See his Platonic Questions and Commentary on the *Timæus* of Plato.

large fund of benevolence. He wished to make all men philosophers, and to extinguish every vicious propensity by an absolute control of the passions; and his Republic might subsist were such a scheme practicable.

Two circumstances seem chiefly to have contributed to the great popularity and duration of the Platonic philosophy: the one, the eloquence with which its doctrines were propounded; the other, the pleasing effect of the notion which, by approaching man to the Deity, and making him even a part of the Divine nature, flattered his pride, and increased his self-importance.

The school of Plato, or the philosophy of the Ancient Academy, had in itself many divisions, whose particular distinguishing tenets it would be both tedious and fruitless to enumerate. But the Platonic philosophy found its chief opponents in four remarkable sects—those of Aristotle, of Pyrrho, of Zeno, and Epicurus; in other words, the Peripatetic, the Sceptic, the Stoic, and the Epicurean.

Aristotle was born at Stagyræ, a Thracian city, then under the dominion of Macedonia. His father was physician to Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. After a youth of dissipation, he betook himself with indefatigable ardor to the study of philosophy, and was for twenty years a favorite disciple of Plato. His high reputation for universal learning procured him from Philip the important charge of the education of the young Alexander—a trust which he fulfilled with zeal and ability. After his pupil had arrived at manhood, and had begun the career of his impetuous life, the philosopher repaired to Athens, where he established a school of philosophy in the Lyceum. It was his custom to discourse to his disciples in walking, and hence his philosophy was termed *peripatetic*. Endowed with great original genius, he disdained an implicit adherence to the doctrines of Plato, or those of any other philosopher. He not only dared to think and reason for himself on almost every branch of human knowledge, but, nobly confident of his own powers, to prescribe the laws of reasoning to others, and even to reduce to system the combined result of all that was known in his age, both in the science of matter and of mind. A great body of his writings is yet preserved,\*

\* Very few of the writings of Aristotle were published during his lifetime. Among these few were probably his *Poetics* and his *Art of Rhetoric*, as both these treatises were composed for the use of his pupil Alexander, and might probably pass into many hands during the life of their author. The rest of his works he bequeathed to Theophrastus, who left them to Neleus Scepsius; the latter sold a part of them to Ptolemy Philadelphos, and these perished in the burning of the Alexandrian library. The rest were buried, as is said, for the sake of preservation, in some subterraneous vault, where they lay forgotten for 130 years, and at their recovery were found in a very defective state from corruption. In that state they fell into the hands of Apellicon of Teos, who supplied the deficiencies from his own invention, and not always with great

and is sufficient to warrant our estimation of Aristotle as one of the most vigorous and comprehensive geniuses that ever the world has produced.

The logics of Aristotle are contained in the books of his *Organon*. A predominant passion of this philosopher, observable in most of his writings, and more particularly in his logics, is the classifying and arranging the objects of knowledge. Thus the *Organon* sets out with a division of all things of a simple or uncompounded nature, into ten categories. Those are *substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, having, doing, suffering*. Each of these is discussed at large in a separate chapter. We have next the division and arrangement of propositions into five prædicables or universals, viz.: *genus, species, difference, property, and accident*. One or other of these may be predicated or affirmed of all propositions. The purpose of the division into *categories*, is to arrange all the simple and uncompounded objects of human knowledge under certain general classes; and by subdividing these, as private soldiers make part of a company, and so many companies make a regiment, we can, in like manner, muster all the notions that enter the human mind, in rank and file, as a well-ordered and regular army. By the division into *prædicables*, we are taught all the relations which the subject can have to the predicate, or the thing affirmed of the subject. That divisions of this kind may have a beneficial effect in producing an accuracy in thinking and reasoning, it would be vain to deny; though it may be alike vain to annex to them such a degree of importance as they seem to have held with Aristotle and his followers.

But the chief part of the *Organon* of Aristotle is his theory of syllogisms contained in those books called the *Analytics*, because the intention of them is to resolve all reasoning into simple ingredients. It is well known what importance was for many ages annexed to syllogistic reasoning, in regarding it, not only as a test of truth, but as an instrument for the advancement of science. It is now, perhaps more than it ought to be, undervalued. It may be safely affirmed, that there is no false proposition which can stand the test of fair syllogistic argument; and, therefore, the utility of this criterion for the detection of sophistical reasoning cannot be denied. But it is equally an error to suppose, that syllogistic argument is capable of leading to discoveries in any of the sciences. If our forefathers, therefore, by trusting to it as a guide in the latter department, attributed more to this mode of reasoning than it was capable of performing, we of the present day, by denying its use in the former, and altogether exploding its employment,

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felicity. They came, finally, into the possession of Tyrannion, the grammarian who used the same freedom to a yet greater degree. Hence we must make much allowance for the imperfection, obscurity, and perhaps contradiction which may be found in the writings of Aristotle, as they now appear.

seem to have run to an extreme as blameable. This error has arisen from a misapprehension of the sentiments of Lord Bacon, who is generally supposed to have condemned the syllogistic mode of reasoning as altogether useless. But this is a mistake. That great philosopher justly exploded the application of logical reasoning to the science of physics, by clearly showing that such a process could never lead to discoveries in that science, which were the fruit alone of induction from experiment, and the observation of facts. But he was far from denying the utility of logical reasoning in its proper sphere. He remarks, that it is the province of logic to lead not to the invention of arts, but of arguments, and, therefore, that in the popular sciences of morality, law, divinity, and the like, it has its proper and useful application.\*

A large portion of the works of Aristotle is occupied by his physical writings. In these he treats separately of the nature of the world, of the heavens, of meteors, of the human soul, of the length and shortness of life, of youth, old age, and death. He has likewise given an ample *history of animals* in ten books—a portion only of a work which extended to forty books. The regard which Alexander entertained for his preceptor, as well as for the interests of science, was manifested in his collecting, at a prodigious expense, during his Asiatic expedition, all the rare productions of nature, and particularly an astonishing variety of animals, which he sent home to Greece, for the use of Aristotle in the composition of his natural history. The descriptions, therefore, of natural objects, and of the structure and habits of animals, contained in this work, are extremely valuable, as being the result of actual examination and study. In the description of the heavenly bodies and their motions, and generally in mathematical science, Aristotle has shown less knowledge than his predecessors, Pythagoras and Plato.

The vanity of Aristotle prompted him to aim at universal knowledge; and professing to embrace the whole circle of the sciences, he only manifests the more signally his superficial knowledge in many departments, and his presumptuous rashness in deciding questions beyond the reach of human intellect. These palpable defects have injured his legitimate reputation in those branches of science in which he is truly excellent. It is in his critical and moral writings that the talents of Aristotle are more usefully displayed than in any others of his works: I allude here to the fragment, which alone we possess, of his *Poetics*, and to his *Art of Rhetoric*; more particularly the latter.

The *Poetics* of Aristotle have commonly been considered as a

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\* See Bacon's works, vol. i. p. 63, folio edition. The utility of logical reasoning is most ably shown by Dr. Reid, in the concluding part of his *Analysis of Aristotle's Logic*, in *Sketches of the History of Man*, book iii.