

and bone. As the former tenet points to the corpuscular theories of modern times, so the latter may be considered as a dim glimpse of the idea of chemical analysis. The Stoics also, who were, especially at a later period, inclined to materialist views, had their technical modes of speaking on such subjects. They asserted that matter contained in itself tendencies or dispositions to certain forms, which dispositions they called *λόγοι σερματικοί*, *seminal proportions*, or *seminal reasons*.

Whatever of sound view, or right direction, there might be in the notions which suggested these and other technical expressions, was, in all the schools of philosophy (so far as physics was concerned) quenched and overlaid by the predominance of trifling and barren speculations; and by the love of subtilizing and commenting upon the works of earlier writers, instead of attempting to interpret the book of nature. Hence these technical terms served to give fixity and permanence to the traditional dogmas of the sect, but led to no progress of knowledge.

The advances which were made in physical science proceeded, not from these schools of philosophy (if we except, perhaps, the obligations of the science of Harmonics to the Pythagoreans), but from reasoners who followed an independent path. The sequel of the ambitious hopes, the vast schemes, the confident undertakings of the philosophers of ancient Greece, was an entire failure in the physical knowledge of which it is our business to trace the history. Yet we are not, on that account, to think slightingly of these early speculators. They were men of extraordinary acuteness, invention, and range of thought; and, above all, they had the merit of first completely unfolding the speculative faculty—of starting in that keen and vigorous chase of knowledge out of which all the subsequent culture and improvement of man's intellectual stores have arisen. The sages of early Greece form the heroic age of science. Like the first navigators in their own mythology, they boldly ventured their untried bark in a distant and arduous voyage, urged on by the hopes of a supernatural success; and though they missed the imaginary golden prize which they sought, they unlocked the gates of distant regions, and opened the seas to the keels of the thousands of adventurers who, in succeeding times, sailed to and fro, to the indefinite increase of the mental treasures of mankind.

But inasmuch as their attempts, in one sense, and at first, failed, we must proceed to offer some account of this failure, and of its nature and causes.