

perhaps, satisfactory in the result—who shall develop the obscure steps by which science first finds access to the mind? In reflecting indeed on the state of civilized society during its earlier periods, there is nothing more wonderful in the intellectual history of mankind, than the skilful management of many processes in the arts, the true nature of which was not understood till ages and ages afterwards. Thus, although zinc was scarcely known as a distinct metal till about a century since; and, almost within the same period, one of its commonest ores, calamine, was held in so little estimation in Great Britain that it was frequently used merely as ballast for shipping, (Watson's Essays, vol. iv. p. 6.); yet that same ore was used before the time of Aristotle for the purpose of making brass, and to that purpose is principally applied at the present day. The process also of making wine was known in the earliest periods of history; although the principles on which it is produced were not well understood till a few years since.

Another remarkable fact in the history of human science, which, though frequently observed, has not yet been explained, is the occasional arrest of its progress at a point immediately bordering on discoveries which did not take place till many ages subsequently^u. This

^u The substance of the following note, though not directly illustrative of the subject now under consideration, is not irrele-