

the physiology of the absorbent and nervous systems, a natural classification could have been accomplished on principles so satisfactory as at the present day. And those individuals pay a very absurd homage to antiquity, who, on occasions like the present, would place the pretensions of the ancients upon an equality with those of the moderns: for the question does not regard the original powers of the mind, but the amount of accumulated knowledge on which those powers are to be exercised; and it would indeed be extraordinary, if, inverting the analogy of individuals, the world should not be wiser in its old age, than it was in its infancy.

In comparing, then, the zoology of Aristotle with that of the moderns, it has not been my intention to prove that the classification of the one is built upon equally clear and extensive demonstrations as that of the other; but to shew, as in harmony with the general object of this treatise, that, even in the very dawn of science, there is frequently sufficient light to guide the mind to at least an approximation to the truth—to a much nearer approximation, indeed, than could have been antecedently expected by those who are not accustomed to reflect philosophically on the uniformity of the laws of nature. Thus, as has been already mentioned, the advancement of science has shewn the existence of such a general coincidence and harmony of relation between the several component parts of an individual animal, that even a partial acquaintance with the details of its structure will frequently enable the inquirer to ascertain its true place in the scale of organization. And hence, although Aristotle knew nothing of the circulation of the blood, or of the general physiology of the nervous system, and even comparatively little of the osteology of animals, yet subsequent discoveries have scarcely disturbed the order of his arrangement. He placed the *whale*, for instance, in the same natural division with common quadrupeds, because he saw that like them it is viviparous, and suckles its young, and respire by lungs and not by gills; and with viviparous