

open collections of moisture, whether flowing from a spring or not; and it would then be seen that this influence, operating on the whole surface of the Nile, must diminish it as well as other rivers, in summer, and therefore could not be the cause of its overflow. He would thus have corrected his first loose conjecture by a real study of nature, and might, in the course of his meditations, have been led to available notions of Evaporation, or other natural actions. And, in like manner, in other cases, the rude attempts at explanation, which the first exercise of the speculative faculty produced, might have been gradually concentrated and refined, so as to fall in, both with the requisitions of reason and the testimony of sense.

But this was not the direction which the Greek speculators took. On the contrary; as soon as they had introduced into their philosophy any abstract and general conceptions, they proceeded to scrutinize these by the internal light of the mind alone, without any longer looking abroad into the world of sense. They took for granted that philosophy must result from the relations of those notions which are involved in the common use of language, and they proceeded to seek their philosophical doctrines by studying such notions. They ought to have reformed and fixed their usual conceptions by Observation; they only analyzed and expanded them by Reflection: they ought to have sought by trial, among the Notions which passed through their minds, some one which admitted of exact application to Facts; they selected arbitrarily, and, consequently, erroneously, the Notions according to which Facts should be assembled and arranged: they ought to have collected clear Fundamental Ideas from the world of things by *inductive* acts of thought; they only derived results by *Deduction* from one or other of their familiar Conceptions.⁶

When this false direction had been extensively adopted by the Greek philosophers, we may treat of it as the method of their *Schools*. Under that title we must give a further account of it.

⁶ The course by which the Sciences were formed, and which is here referred to as that which the Greeks did *not* follow, is described in detail in the *Philosophy*, book xi., *Of the Construction of Science*.