

lation of facts, and manifest a wonderful power of systematizing; but are not works which expound principles, and therefore do not require to be here considered.

The Physical Lectures are possibly the work concerning which a well-known anecdote is related by Simplicius, a Greek commentator of the sixth century, as well as by Plutarch. It is said, that Alexander the Great wrote to his former tutor to this effect; "You have not done well in publishing these lectures; for how shall we, your pupils, excel other men, if you make that public to all, which we learnt from you?" To this Aristotle is said to have replied: "My Lectures are published and not published; they will be intelligible to those who heard them, and to none besides." This may very easily be a story invented and circulated among those who found the work beyond their comprehension; and it cannot be denied, that to make out the meaning and reasoning of every part, would be a task very laborious and difficult, if not impossible. But we may follow the import of a large portion of the Physical Lectures with sufficient clearness to apprehend the character and principles of the reasoning; and this is what I shall endeavor to do.

The author's introductory statement of his view of the nature of philosophy falls in very closely with what has been said, that he takes his facts and generalizations as they are implied in the structure of language. "We must in all cases proceed," he says, "from what is known to what is unknown." This will not be denied; but we can hardly follow him in his inference. He adds, "We must proceed, therefore, from universal to particular. And something of this," he pursues, "may be seen in language; for names signify things in a general and indefinite manner, as *circle*, and by defining we unfold them into particulars." He illustrates this by saying, "thus children at first call all men *father*, and all women *mother*, but afterwards distinguish."

In accordance with this view, he endeavors to settle several of the great questions concerning the universe, which had been started among subtle and speculative men, by unfolding the meaning of the words and phrases which are applied to the most general notions of things and relations. We have already noticed this method. A few examples will illustrate it further:—Whether there was or was not a *void*, or place without matter, had already been debated among rival sects of philosophers. The antagonist arguments were briefly these:—There must be a void, because a body cannot move into a space except it is