

"We seek," he says,¹¹ "the principles of sensible things, that is, of tangible bodies. We must take, therefore, not all the contrarieties of quality, but those only which have reference to the touch. Thus black and white, sweet and bitter, do not differ as tangible qualities, and therefore must be rejected from our consideration.

"Now the contrarieties of quality which refer to the touch are these: hot, cold; dry, wet; heavy, light; hard, soft; unctuous, meagre; rough, smooth; dense, rare." He then proceeds to reject all but the four first of these, for various reasons; heavy and light, because they are not active and passive qualities; the others, because they are combinations of the four first, which therefore he infers to be the four elementary qualities.

"¹²Now in four things there are six combinations of two; but the combinations of two opposites, as hot and cold, must be rejected; we have, therefore, four elementary combinations, which agree with the four apparently elementary bodies. Fire is hot and dry; air is hot and wet (for steam is air); water is cold and wet, earth is cold and dry."

It may be remarked that this disposition to assume that some common elementary quality must exist in the cases in which we habitually apply a common adjective, as it began before the reign of the Aristotelian philosophy, so also survived its influence. Not to mention other cases, it would be difficult to free Bacon's *Inquisitio in naturam calidi*, "Examination of the nature of heat," from the charge of confounding together very different classes of phenomena under the cover of the word *hot*.

The correction of these opinions concerning the elementary composition of bodies belongs to an advanced period in the history of physical knowledge, even after the revival of its progress. But there are some of the Aristotelian doctrines which particularly deserve our attention, from the prominent share they had in the very first beginnings of that revival; I mean the doctrines concerning motion.

These are still founded upon the same mode of reasoning from adjectives; but in this case, the result follows, not only from the opposition of the words, but also from the distinction of their being *absolutely* or *relatively* true. "Former writers," says Aristotle, "have considered heavy and light *relatively* only, taking cases, where both things have weight, but one is lighter than the other; and they imagined that, in

¹¹ De Gen. et Corrupt. ii. 2.

¹² Ib. iii. 8.