

mire in the Alexandrian philosophy, he declares that they were incapable of treating scientific questions. The extent to which this is true is well illustrated by the extract which he gives from Plotinus, on the question, "Why objects appear smaller in proportion as they are more distant." Plotinus denies that the reason of this is that the angles of vision become smaller. His reason for this denial is curious enough. If it were so, he says, how could the heaven appear smaller than it is, since it occupies the whole of the visual angle?

2. *Mystical Arithmetic*.—It is unnecessary further to exemplify, from Proclus, the general mystical character of the school and time to which he belonged; but we may notice more specially one of the forms of this mysticism, which very frequently offers itself to our notice, especially in him; and which we may call *Mystical Arithmetic*. Like all the kinds of Mysticism, this consists in the attempt to connect our conceptions of external objects by general and inappropriate notions of goodness, perfection, and relation to the divine essence and government; instead of referring such conceptions to those appropriate ideas, which, by due attention, become perfectly distinct, and capable of being positively applied and verified. The subject which is thus dealt with, in the doctrines of which we now speak, is Number; a notion which tempts men into these visionary speculations more naturally than any other. For number is really applicable to moral notions—to emotions and feelings, and to their objects—as well as to the things of the material world. Moreover, by the discovery of the principle of musical concords, it had been found, probably most unexpectedly, that numerical relations were closely connected with sounds which could hardly be distinguished from the expression of thought and feeling; and a suspicion might easily arise, that the universe, both of matter and of thought, might contain many general and abstract truths of some analogous kind. The relations of number have so wide a bearing, that the ramifications of such a suspicion could not easily be exhausted, supposing men willing to follow them into darkness and vagueness; which it is precisely the mystical tendency to do. Accordingly, this kind of speculation appeared very early, and showed itself first among the Pythagoreans, as we might have expected, from the attention which they gave to the theory of harmony: and this, as well as some other of the doctrines of the Pythagorean philosophy, was adopted by the later Platonists, and, indeed, by Plato himself, whose speculations concerning number have decidedly a mystical character. The mere mathematical relations of numbers,—as odd and even, perfect and imperfect,