

powerful school of Platonists (not Neoplatonists) was formed in Italy, including some of the principal scholars and men of genius of the time; as Picus of Mirandula in the middle, Marsilius Ficinus at the end, of the fifteenth century. At one time, it appeared as if the ascendancy of Aristotle was about to be overturned; but, in physics at least, his authority passed unshaken through this trial. It was not by disputation that Aristotle could be overthrown; and the Platonists were not persons whose doctrines led them to use the only decisive method in such cases, the observation and unfettered interpretation of facts.

The history of their controversies, therefore, does not belong to our design. For like reasons we do not here speak of other authors, who opposed the scholastic philosophy on general theoretical grounds of various kinds. Such examples of insurrection against the dogmatism which we have been reviewing, are extremely interesting events in the history of the philosophy of science. But, in the present work, we are to confine ourselves to the history of science itself; in the hope that we may thus be able, hereafter, to throw a steadier light upon that philosophy by which the succession of stationary and progressive periods, which we are here tracing, may be in some measure explained. We are now to close our account of the stationary period, and to enter upon the great subject of the progress of physical science in modern times.

5. *Subjects omitted. Civil Law. Medicine.*—My object has been to make my way, as rapidly as possible, to this period of progress; and in doing this, I have had to pass over a long and barren track, where almost all traces of the right road disappear. In exploring this region, it is not without some difficulty that he who is travelling with objects such as mine, continues a steady progress in the proper direction; for many curious and attractive subjects of research come in his way: he crosses the track of many a controversy, which in its time divided the world of speculators, and of which the results may be traced, even now, in the conduct of moral, or political, or metaphysical discussions; or in the common associations of thought, and forms of language. The wars of the Nominalists and Realists; the disputes concerning the foundations of morals, and the motives of human actions; the controversies concerning predestination, free will, grace, and the many other points of metaphysical divinity; the influence of theology and metaphysics upon each other, and upon other subjects of human curiosity; the effects of opinion upon politics, and of political condition upon opinion; the influence of literature and philosophy