

scarce agree with each other in one empty question or one worthless sophism, or one operation of science, as one man agrees with another in the practical operations of medicine, surgery, and the like arts of secular men. Indeed,' he adds, 'not only the philosophers, but the saints have fallen into errors which they have afterwards retracted,' and this he instances in Augustin, Jerome, and others. He gives an admirable sketch of the progress of philosophy from the Ionic School to Aristotle; of whom he speaks with great applause. 'Yet,' he adds,⁷ 'those who came after him corrected him in some things, and added many things to his works, and shall go on adding to the end of the world.' Aristotle, he adds, is now called peculiarly⁸ the Philosopher, 'yet there was a time when his philosophy was silent and unregarded, either on account of the rarity of copies of his works, or their difficulty, or from envy; till after the time of Mahomet, when Avicenna and Averroes, and others, recalled this philosophy into the full light of exposition. And although the Logic and some other works were translated by Boethius from the Greek, yet the philosophy of Aristotle first received a quick increase among the Latins at the time of Michael Scot; who, in the year of our Lord 1230, appeared, bringing with him portions of the books of Aristotle on Natural Philosophy and Mathematics. And yet a small part only of the works of this author is translated, and a still smaller part is in the hands of common students.' He adds further⁹ (in the Third Part of the *Opus Majus*, which is a Dissertation on Language), that the translations which are current of these writings, are very bad and imperfect. With these views, he is moved to express himself somewhat impatiently¹⁰ respecting these works: 'If I had,' he says, 'power over the works of Aristotle, I would have them all burnt; for it is only a loss of time to study in them, and a course of error, and a multiplication of ignorance beyond expression.' 'The common herd of students,' he says, 'with their heads, have no principle by which they can be excited to any worthy employment; and hence they mope and make asses of themselves over their bad translations, and lose their time, and trouble, and money.'

⁷ *Op. Maj.* p. 36.

⁸ *Autonomicè.*

⁹ *Op. Maj.* p. 46.

¹⁰ See *Pref.* to Jebb's edition. The passages there quoted, however, are not extracts from the *Opus Majus*, but (apparently) from the *Opus Minus* (*MS. Cott. Tib. c. 5*). "Si haberem potestatem supra libros Aristotelis, ego facerem omnes cremari; quia non est nisi temporis amissio studere in illis, et causa erroris, et multiplicatio ignorantiae ultra id quod valent explicari. . . . Vulgus studentum cum capitibus suis non habet unde excitetur ad aliquid dignum, et ideo languet et *asinat* circa male translata, et tempus et studium amittit in omnibus et expensas."