

cloud^b: but, in mentioning a spring of water observed to be periodically warmer in the night, and colder in the day, he almost anticipates the views of modern chemistry respecting the different capacities of bodies for heat; when, in accounting for the fact, he supposes the heat to be forced by compression, occasioned by diminution of temperature, from the surrounding earth into the water^c. His interpretation indeed of the phenomenon is not correct; but this error does not interfere with the ingenuity of the illustration, or its coincidence with modern hypothesis: and it is remarkable that, even after the lapse of twenty centuries, the real nature of heat is still questionable. We now know that, in such instances as that just mentioned, the apparent difference of temperature depends upon the relative temperature of the surrounding air; water which has been recently drawn up from the well feeling cold in the heat of summer; but warm, during a frost. The fact is, that, being really of a mean temperature throughout the year, it will be greatly beneath the temperature of the air of summer, and therefore will then appear cold; and it will be on the other hand above the temperature of the air of winter, and will therefore at that season appear warm^d.

^b Lib. VI. 270—275.

^c Lib. VI. 861—873.

^d Aristotle, in his history of animals, mentions as a fact, without however offering any explanation of it, that during the night