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BOOK 1 (a)

CHAPTER 1

All men by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above all, the sense of sight. For not only with a view to action, but even when we are not going to do anything, we prefer sight to almost everything else. The reason is that this, most of all the senses, makes us know and brings to light many differences between things.

By nature animals are born with the faculty of sensation, and from sensation memory is produced in some of them, though not in others. And therefore the former are more intelligent and apt at learning than those which cannot remember; those which are incapable of hearing sounds are insensible though they cannot be taught, e.g. the bee, and any other race of animals that may be like it; and those which besides memory have this sense of hearing, can be taught.

The animals other than man live by appearances and memories, and have but little of connected experience; but the human race lives also by art and reasonings. And from memory experience is produced in men; for many memories of the same thing produce finally the capacity for a single experience. Experience is almost identified with human science and art, but really science and art come to men through experience; for 'experience made art', as Polus says,\(^1\) and rightly, 'aust inexperience lack.' And art arises, when from many notions gained by experience one universal judgement about a class of objects is produced. For to have a judgement that when Callias was ill of this disease this did him good, and similarly in the case of Socrates and in many individual cases, is a matter of experience; but to\(^10\)

\(^1\) Cf. Gorgias, 469c.

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judge that it has done good to all persons of a certain constitution, marked off in one class, when they were ill of the disease, e.g. to phlegmatic or bilious people when burning with fever,—this is a matter of art.

With a view to action experience seems in no respect inferior to art, and we even see men of experience succeeding to a man. The more than those who have theory without experience. The reason is that experience is knowledge of individuals, art of the universal; for the physician does not cure man, except the individual; for, in the incident way, such as Socrates or the wise in the incident way, such as Socrates or the wise. It is the individual name, who happens to be called by some such individual name, as we included in this, as he will often fail to cure; for it is the incident that is to be cured. But yet we think that knowledge belonged to art rather than to experience and understanding belong to art rather than to knowledge; and we suppose artists to be wiser than men. We have said in the Ethics what the difference is between art and science and the other kindred faculties; but the point of our present discussion is this, that all men suppose what is called Wisdom to deal with the first causes and the principles of things. This is why, as has been said before, the man of a few experience is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any perception whatever, the artist wiser than the man of experience, the master-worker than the mechanic, and the theoretical kinds of knowledge to be more of the nature of Wisdom than the productive. Clearly then Wisdom is knowledge about certain causes and principles.

CHAPTER II

Since we are seeking this knowledge, we must inquire of what kind are the causes and the principles, the knowledge of which is Wisdom. If we were to take the notions we have about the wise man, this might perhaps make the answer more evident. We suppose first, that, the wise man knows all things, as far as possible, although he has not
know ledge of each of them in detail; secondly, that he who can learn things that are difficult, and not easy for man to know, is wise (sense-perception is common to all, and therefore easy and no mark of Wisdom); again, he who is most exact and more capable of teaching the causes is wise, for every branch of knowledge; and of the sciences, also, that which is desirable on its own account and for the sake of knowing it is more of the nature of Wisdom than that which is desirable on account of its results, and the superior science is more of the nature of Wisdom than the ancillary; for the wise man must not be ordered but must order, and he must not obey another, but the less wise must obey him.

Such and so many are the ways of Wisdom and the wise. Now of these characteristics that of knowing all things must belong to him who has the highest degree of universal knowledge; for he knows a sense of all the subordinate objects. And these things, the most universal, are on the whole the hardest for men to know for they are furthest from the senses. And the most exact of the sciences are those which deal most with first principles, for those which involve fewer principles are more exact than those which involve additional principles, e.g. arithmetic than geometry. But the science which investigates causes is also the more communicable, for the people who teach those who tell the causes of each thing. And understanding and knowledge pursued for their own sake are found most the knowledge of which is most knowable; for he who chooses to know for the sake of knowing will choose most readily that which is most truly knowable, and such is the knowledge of that which is most knowable; and the science principles and the causes are most knowable; for by means of these, and from these, all other things are known, but the are not known by means of the things subordinate to the And the science which knows to what end each thing is done is the most authoritative of the sciences, and is authoritative than any ancillary science; and this end is to good to each class, and in general the supreme good in whole of nature. Judged by all the tests we have mentioned, the science in question ('Wisdom') falls to the science; this must be a science that investigates the first principles and causes; for the good, i.e. the end and aim, is one of the causes.

That it is not a science of production is clear even from the history of the earliest philosophers. For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, e.g. about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun, and about the stars and about the genesis of the universe. And a man who is puzzled and wonders thinks himself ignorant (whence even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of Wisdom, for the myth is composed of wonders); therefore since they philosophized in order to escape from ignorance, evidently they were pursuing science in order to know, and not for any utilitarian end. And this is confirmed by the facts; for it was when almost all the necessities of life and the things that make for comfort and recreation were present, that such knowledge began to be sought. Evidently then we do not seek it for the sake of any other advantage; but as the man is free, we say, who exists for himself and not for another, so we pursue this as the only free science, for it alone exists for itself.

Hence the possession of it might be justly regarded as beyond human power; for in many ways human nature is in bondage, so that according to Samonides 'God alone can have this privilege', and it is unholy that man should not be content to seek the knowledge that is suited to him. If, then, there is something in what the poets say, and jealousy is natural to the divine power, it would probably occur in this case above all, and all who excelled in this knowledge would be unfortunate. But the divine power cannot be jealous (say, according to the proverb, 'birds tell many a lie'), nor should any science be thought more honourable than one of this sort. For the most divine science is also most honourable; and this science alone is, in two ways, most divine. For the
science which it would be most meet for God to have a divine science, and so is any science that deals with divine objects; and this science alone has both these qualities; for (1) God is thought to be among the causes of all things and to be a first principle, and (2) such a science either God alone can have, or God above all others. All the sciences, indeed, are more necessary than this; but none is better. Yet the acquisition of it must in a sense end in something which is the opposite of our original inquiries. For when we begin, as we said, by wondering that the matter was so (as those who have not yet perceived the explanation marvel at automatic marionettes)—whether the object or their wonder be the solicitude or the incommensurability of the diagonal of a square with the side; for it seems wonderful to all men that there is a thing which cannot be measured even by the smallest unit. But we must end in the contrary sense, according to the proverb, the better state, as is the case with these instances when men learn the cause; for there is nothing which would surprise a geometer so much as if the diagonal turned out to be commensurable.

We have stated, then, what is the nature of the sciences we are searching for, and what is the mark which our search and our whole investigation must reach.

CHAPTER III

Evidently we have to acquire knowledge of the origin of causes (for we say we know each thing only when we think we recognize its first cause), and causes are spoken of in four senses. In one of these we mean the substance, i.e., the cause or matter (for the ‘why’ is reducible finally to the formula, and the cause or matter, ‘why’ is a cause and principle); in another the matter or substratum, in a third the source of the change, and in a fourth the cause opposed to this, the purpose and the goal (for this is the end of all generation and change). We have studied these causes sufficiently in our work on natural philosophy, says the principle is water (for which reason he declared that the earth rests on water), getting the notion perhaps from seeing that the mass of all things is moist, and that heat itself is generated from the moist and kept alive by it (and that from which they come to be is a principle of all things). He got his notion from this fact, and from the fact that the seeds of all things have a moist nature, and that water is the origin of the nature of moist things.

Some think that the ancients who lived long before the present generation, and first framed accounts of the gods, had a similar view of nature; for they made Ocean and Tethys to be the source of creation, and described the birth of the gods as being by water, which the poets themselves call ‘Styx,’ for what is oldest is most honourable, and the most honourable thing is that by which one swears. It may perhaps be uncertain whether this opinion about nature is primitive and ancient, but Thales at any rate is said to have declared him-
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self thus about the first cause. Hippo no one would think fit to include among these thinkers, because of the paltness of his thought.

5 Anaximenes and Diogenes make air prior to water, and the most primary of the simple bodies, while Hippasus of Metapontum and Heraclitus of Ephesus say this of fire, and Empedocles says it of the four elements, adding a fourth—

earth—to those which have been named; for these, he says, 10 always remain and do not come to be, except that they come to be more or fewer, being aggregated into one and segregated out of one.

Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, who, though older than Empedocles, was later in his philosophical activity, says the principles 15 are infinite in number; for he says almost all the things that are made of parts like themselves are generated and destroyed (as water or fire) by only aggregation and segregation, and not in any other sense generated or destroyed, but remain in them eternally.

From these facts one might think that the only cause is the so-called material cause; but as men thus advanced, the very facts showed them the way and joined in forcing them to investigate the subject. However true it may be that all generation and destruction proceed from some one or more elements, why does this happen and what is the cause? For some one or more causes are everywhere and in everything, and they must be such as do not change at all, and at least the substratum itself does not make itself change, e.g. neither the wood nor the bronze causes the change of either of them, nor does the wood manufacture a bed and the bronze a statue, but something else is the cause of the change.

And to seek this is to seek the second cause, as one should say—that from which comes the beginning of the movement. Now those who at the very beginning set themselves to this kind of inquiry, and said the substratum was one, were not at all dissatisfied with themselves; but some at least of those who maintained it to be one—though defeated by this search 20 for the second cause—say the one and nature as a whole is unchangeable not only in respect of generation and destruction, but in itself (for this is a primitive belief, and all agreed in it), but also of all other change; and this view is peculiar to them also of all other change; and this view is peculiar to them.

Of those who said the universe was one, none succeeded in discovering a cause of this sort, except perhaps Parmenides, and he only insomuch that he supposes that there is not only one, 25

but in some sense two causes. But for those who make more 30 elements it is more possible to state the second cause; e.g. for those who make hot and cold, or fire and earth, the elements; 35 for they treat fire as having a nature which fits it to move things, and water and earth and such things they treat in the contrary way.

When these men and the principles of this kind had had their day, as the latter were found inadequate to generate the nature of things, men were again forced by the truth itself, as 40 we said, to inquire into the next kind of cause. For surely it is not likely either that fire or earth or any such element should be the reason why things manifest goodness and beauty both in their being and in their coming to be, or that those thinkers should have supposed it was; nor again could it be right to ascribe so great a matter to spontaneity and luck. 45

When one man said, then, that reason was present—as in animals, so throughout nature—as the cause of the world and of all its order, he seemed like a sober man in contrast with the random talk of his predecessors. We know that Anaxagoras certainly offered these views, but Hermotimus of Clazomenae is credited with expressing them earlier. Those who thought thus stated that there is a principle of things which is at the same time the cause of beauty, and that sort of cause from which things acquire movement.

CHAPTER IV

One might suspect that Heraclitus was the first to look for such a thing—or some one else who put love or desire among existing things as a principle, as Parmenides does; for he, in 50 constructing the genesis of the universe, says: 1

Love first of all the Gods she planned.

And Heraclitus says: 2—

First of all things was chaos made, and then 55 broad-breasted earth, and love that foremost is among all the immortals.

1 Fr. 15, 16, Herakl.-histor.