

then (I answer) the attempt of the Institutes must be abandoned as hopeless; just as it would have been hopeless for Euclid to attempt to make out a single necessary proposition respecting the circle, if he had not first fixed what a circle is. One would stare who should be asked to demonstrate that the object of $X\ Y\ Z$ must always be self-cum-alio: but it would not be more unreasonable to demand this of him, than to ask him to prove that the object of knowledge must be self-cum-alio, the nature of knowledge being undetermined.

Professor Ferrier was thoroughly aware of this. He saw that a solution of the question: What is knowledge? is the prime condition of a system of necessary propositions respecting knowledge, and indeed must contain in itself the whole concentrated essence of an Epistemology. Has he then answered the question? He thinks that he has. But his answer is in reality none. It is not a definition of the matter needing to be defined, but a statement regarding a different point altogether. Let us consider what is implied in a definition of knowledge. This is brought out with great clearness in the *Theætetus*, a dialogue of Plato, which our author quotes and comments upon very felicitously. The interlocutors are Socrates, and a young man called *Theætetus*. Socrates puts the question: "What does science (knowledge) appear to you to be?" *Theætetus* answers, "It appears to me that sciences are such things as one may learn from *Theodorus*: geometry, and the others which you just now enumerated." To which Socrates with exquisite raillery rejoins, "Nobly and munificently, answered my friend, when asked for one thing, 'you give many:'" adding, "The question asked was not this: of what things there is science; for we did not enquire with a view to enumerate them, but to know what science itself is." He illustrates his meaning by supposing a person to be asked, What is clay? The person would answer, not by enumerating the different kinds of clay: potters' clay, ovenbuilders' clay, brickmakers' clay, and the like, but by stating what is common to all clay—that it is earth mixed with water. In like manner, it is no reply to the question, What is knowledge, to specify various kinds of knowledge, the knowledge of geometry, the knowledge of music, &c.; but the thing on which information is desired, is: What common element belongs to all cognition?—"Come," said Socrates to his young friend, "endeavour to designate many sciences (kinds of knowledge) by one notion" He therefore who would explain what knowledge is, must, if Plato has reasoned well, show us the one notion designative of the many varieties of knowledge. Has Professor Ferrier done this? He has not. He thinks that he has. In the opening proposition of the