

before us communities which, in defiance of his prophecies, have become extensive without becoming disunited. By his own methods of induction and comparison we can refute some of the laws which he regarded as immutable.

Still we must start from Aristotle. His account of the city-state may be supplemented and corrected, but not superseded. The governing ideas of any polity are always best expressed by those to whom they stand for the absolute and final truth; and there is no form of polity which the student of political science should study with more care than the city-state. Just because it is comparatively simple, just because it is unlike the states with which we are personally acquainted, it contains the key to many modern problems. Aristotle is the best interpreter of an essential link in the chain of political development.

But he is something more than this, more than a Greek who states the case of Greece. He is also a philosopher and a student of human nature. His views as to the origin and ultimate structure of society, as to the aims of civic life, as to the mutual obligations of the state and the individual, as to the nature of political justice, all have a value which is independent of his historical position. It is often difficult to follow his discussions of these and cognate subjects. His arguments are stated with extreme conciseness, and the train of thought which leads him from one topic to another is often far from clear. But those who have the patience to wrestle with his text will find in it theories of perennial value, and refutations of fallacies which are always re-emerging. Nor is it merely from his more abstract disquisitions that such lessons are to be extracted. While there could be no greater mistake than to apply his criticisms of democracies and aristocracies to modern governments which go by the same names, without stopping to enquire how far the names have changed their