

The *Politics*, in fact, would not be so valuable as they are if they expressed the views of an individual man of genius and nothing more. Here as elsewhere it is not the least of Aristotle's merits that he epitomized the best thoughts of a nation and of a stage in human history. He respected the political thinkers of the past, both the statesmen and the theorists; he was loth to admit that any institution or polity which had stood the test of time could be altogether bad. Hence he appears before us as a mediator in the controversies of his own and the preceding ages. It is his wish to lay bare the grain of truth which exists at the core of every political practice and belief. He interprets even those ideals with which he is least in sympathy. And so we learn from him what the various types of the city-state signified to the Greek mind; we are admitted under his guidance to the penetralia of their political thought.

The history of the Greek city-state we can study for ourselves, with fewer sources of information, it is true, than Aristotle had at his command, but also with a more critical appreciation of their value and a more scientific method of interpretation than was to be learned in Athenian schools of the fourth century. We are too in a better position than Aristotle to see the true place of the city-state in the evolution of society, to appreciate its limitations, to condemn its evils, and to draw the moral from its failure. We know, what he does not appear to have suspected, that the careers of his Macedonian patrons had sealed the death-warrant of the community which he regarded as the highest that human skill was capable of framing. Ampler experience has shown us that slavery is not the indispensable basis of a civilization, nor commerce always degrading to the individual and destructive of national morality. In the modern world we have