

many of its difficulties and ambiguities. The Atomic Theory will furnish us with an example of this process in a matter which is now regarded as belonging to Science. The Atomism of Democritus is not merely an anticipation of the Monadologie of Leibnitz; it presents in many respects a striking analogy to the latest conclusions of Science, but we do not, therefore, accuse Science of having travelled in a circle and made no progress. Aristotle's account of the origin of abstract ideas or universals will furnish another example more within the domain of Philosophy. The universal, he says, comes before the particular conception; the most general conceptions are the most primitive. Thus, if we see something at a great distance we cannot tell what it is, we can only place it under the general conception of substance; when we approach nearer, we are able to recognize it as (say) an animal; when we see it close, we can distinguish the particular species. So an infant will call every man "dada," showing that he has the general conception of man before he acquires the particular conception of father. On this Mr. Lewes remarks that "The fallacy is patent. It confounds an indefinite with a generalized conception."¹ Yet modern speculation comes round again to a very similar thought when Professor Max Müller tells us that general conceptions are formed not by the power of the mind in the process of abstraction in the first instance, but by its weakness in being unable to grasp all the details which go to the formation of the particular conception at one time.² But the thought, though similar, is not identical with Aristotle's, and it will, perhaps, be found not quite so easy to dismiss it as a fallacy, supported as it is by the history of the growth of language. Let us take another example from the ethical side of Philosophy. Aristotle teaches that the first principles of ethics are to be derived from the essential character of man; they are to be found in the idea of man as such, and must express the end for us as men, *τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθόν*. One of the latest writers on ethics, Professor Schurman, still holds this to be

¹ *History of Philosophy*, 3rd edit., i. 295.

² *Three Introductory Lectures on the Science of Thought*. Appendix, p. 26.