

operative, the very remotest of which anticipated the new era which that illustrious philosopher inaugurated. In casting a glance over the past history of the race, we think we can recognize three ages through which we have passed, each of which is the necessary result of the one preceding, and may find its counterpart in the life of every individual. National life must find its corresponding stages in that of individual. The nation,—any nation is just an aggregate of individuals, and the influences which operate upon and impart character to the individual are the influences which operate upon all, and thus form a general character. The child comes into a world of which it knows nothing. Its novelty, the variety of objects presented to its vision, attracts its attention, and excites inquiry, while it, at the same time, inspires him with the liveliest emotions of wonder and delight. His whole being is alive, and his whole nature absorbed in present and passing impressions. His little mind is active, although its activity is of a peculiarly sensitive character, its body is vigorous, every sense is exercised and directed to its legitimate object, and materials for after thought hourly and daily acquired. But through both periods of infancy and childhood it maintains the character of a mere observer,—of a mere sensitive being. When the child arrives at youth, and approaches manhood, the novelty with which every object in nature was invested, gradually wears off, and he comes to regard them with an indifference which, a few years previous, would be unaccountable. External objects lose, to a great extent, their power of luring his attention and absorbing his thoughts. His mind has more internal activity, which is now fed from internal sources, which his previous years of observation have created. He begins to think, to reflect, and to examine the results of his former observations and experience. Before, he was a mere observer; now, he is a thinker; formerly, he was a sensitive, now, he is a reflective being. A few years previous his perceptive faculties alone were exercised; now, his reflective are at work, and are fed by the material which the former has furnished. But the highest stage of development has not yet been attained; if he remain here, his situation is perilous, for death may quickly ensue from mere mental dyspepsia. The material for thought has been accumulated, food, capable of affording nourishment, has been procured, but digestion and assimilation are necessary before any good effects can be experienced. As food is taken into the body, not for the mere sake or pleasure of so doing, but that it may nourish and invigorate for active exertion, so has material for thought been accumulated, not for the mere sake of accumulation, but as a means to originate and govern action. He first observes, in order that he may think and speculate; he again, thinks and speculates in order that he may act. The two former stages through which he has passed must be regarded as means to the attainment of the third,—the perceptive and the reflective as ministering to the active principles of his nature, which manifest themselves in practical results. Exactly analogous is it in the case of national life. Every nation passes through three stages of development corresponding to these of the individual, each