

interpreting visible things, we reason by certain processes, and make use of certain intellectual forms; and the time inevitably comes when these processes and forms are made the object of special investigation. Man is to himself the centre of all things. Within him is a world of thought that mirrors the forms and laws of external nature, and a world of feelings and desires, that join him by spiritual bonds to his kind, and aspirations that finite and temporal things are insufficient to satisfy. He cannot search into the nature of thought without finding that he is more closely related to the outer world than he at first supposed; he cannot study his social sympathies without perceiving that deep in his spiritual nature lie the impulses which give rise to society, and lead to the consciousness of moral obligations; nor can he adequately explain his noblest longings without tracing them up to their source in the Infinite. The origin of philosophy lies in the felt necessity of obtaining some solution of the problems thus opened up. "The Philosopher," as Goethe remarks, "is he who stands in the centre; to him the lowest must ascend, and the highest come down." The rudiments of those fertile studies, whose end is to discover the relation of man to the world, of the individual to society, and of the finite to the infinite, are dimly perceptible at a very early stage of civilization. And as the physical wants come to engross less attention, the feeble consciousness of man awakens to higher life, and his nature, duties and destiny become all-absorbing topics. In the oldest written documents of the race we find deep glimpses into truth curiously interblended with fantastic imagery and puerile superstitions. But at length thought begins to predominate over fancy, reason to usurp the place of imagination; and henceforth philosophy, having learned her true mission, advances without interruption on her onward course. Here, also, as in the realm of natural science, we learn how one generation of thinkers prepares the way for the next. The history of successive systems is not, as is sometimes averred, a record of repeated failures; contemporaneously with the progress of the race, philosophy makes ever nearer