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Sketches Of The History Of Man

In Two Volumes

Home, Henry

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Sect. 4. Of the book concerning Interpretation.

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subject itself. Primary substances are more substances than the secondary; and of the secondary, the species is more a substance than the genus. If there were no primary, there could be no secondary substances.

The properties of substance are these: 1. No substance is capable of intension or remission. 2. No substance can be in any other thing as its subject of inherence. 3. No substance has a contrary; for one substance cannot be contrary to another; nor can there be contrariety between a substance and that which is no substance. 4. The most remarkable property of substance, is, that one and the same substance may, by some change in itself, become the subject of things that are contrary. Thus, the same body may be at one time hot, at another cold.

Let this serve as a specimen of Aristotle's manner of treating the categories. After them, we have some chapters, which the schoolmen call *postpredicamenta*; wherein, first, the four kinds of opposition of terms are explained; to wit, *relative*, *privative*, of *contrariety*, and of *contradiction*. This is repeated in all systems of logic. Last of all we have distinctions of the four Greek words which answer to the Latin ones, *prius*, *simul*, *motus*, and *habere*.

SECT. 4. *Of the book concerning Interpretation.*

We are to consider, says Aristotle, what a noun is, what a verb, what affirmation, what negation, what speech. Words are the signs of what passeth in the mind; writing is the sign of words. The signs both of writing and of words are different in different nations, but the operations of mind signified by them are the same. There are some operations of thought which are neither true nor false. These are expressed by nouns or verbs singly, and without composition.

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A noun is a sound which by compact signifies something without respect to time, and of which no part has signification by itself. The cries of beasts may have a natural signification, but they are not nouns. We give that name only to sounds which have their signification by compact. The cases of a noun, as the genitive, dative, are not nouns. *Non homo* is not a noun, but, for distinction's sake, may be called a *nomen infinitum*.

A verb signifies something by compact with relation to time. Thus, *valet* is a verb; but *valetudo* is a noun, because its signification has no relation to time. It is only the present tense of the indicative that is properly called a verb; the other tenses and moods are variations of the verb. *Non valet* may be called a *verbum infinitum*.

Speech is sound significant by compact, of which some part is also significant. And it is either enunciative, or not enunciative. Enunciative speech is that which affirms or denies. As to speech which is not enunciative, such as a prayer or wish, the consideration of it belongs to oratory, or poetry. Every enunciative speech must have a verb, or some variation of a verb. Affirmation is the enunciation of one thing concerning another. Negation is the enunciation of one thing from another. Contradiction is an affirmation and negation that are opposite. This is a summary of the first six chapters.

The seventh and eighth treat of the various kinds of enunciations or propositions, universal, particular, indefinite, and singular; and of the various kinds of opposition in propositions, and the axioms concerning them. These things are repeated in every system of logic. In the ninth chapter he endeavours to prove, by a long metaphysical reasoning, that propositions respecting future contingencies are not, determinately, either true or false; and that if they were, it would follow, that all things happen necessarily,