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**Sketches Of The History Of Man**

In Two Volumes

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Sect. 2. On the Ten Categories, and on divisions in general.

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enumeration, and yet not one of the ancient predicables is included in the number.

The author of the Treatise of Human Nature, proceeding upon the same principle, That all our knowledge is only a perception of the relations of our ideas, observes, "That it may perhaps be esteemed an endless task, to enumerate all those qualities which admit of comparison, and by which the ideas of philosophical relation are produced: but if we diligently consider them, we shall find, that without difficulty they may be comprised under seven general heads: 1. Resemblance; 2. Identity; 3. Relations of Space and Time; 4. Relations of Quantity and Number; 5. Degrees of Quality; 6. Contrariety; 7. Causation (a)." Here again are seven predicables given as a complete enumeration, wherein all the predicables of the ancients, as well as two of Locke's, are left out.

The ancients in their division attended only to categorical propositions which have one subject and one predicate; and of these, only to such as have a general term for their subject. The moderns, by their definition of knowledge, have been led to attend only to relative propositions, which express a relation between two subjects, and those subjects they suppose to be always ideas.

SECT. 2. *On the Ten Categories, and on Divisions in general.*

The intention of the categories or predicaments is, to muster every object of human apprehension under ten heads: for the categories are given as a complete enumeration of every thing which can be expressed without *composition* and *structure*; that is,

(a) Vol. I. p. 33 and 125.



of every thing which can be either the subject or the predicate of a proposition. So that as every foldier belongs to some company, and every company to some regiment; in like manner every thing that can be the object of human thought, has its place in one or other of the ten categories; and by dividing and subdividing properly the several categories, all the notions that enter into the human mind may be mustered in rank and file, like an army in the day of battle.

The perfection of the division of categories into ten heads, has been strenuously defended by the followers of Aristotle, as well as that of the five predicables. They are indeed of kin to each other. They breathe the same spirit, and probably had the same origin. By the one we are taught to marshal every term that can enter into a proposition, either as subject or predicate; and by the other, we are taught all the possible relations which the subject can have to the predicate. Thus, the whole furniture of the human mind is presented to us at one view, and contracted, as it were, into a nut-shell. To attempt, in so early a period, a methodical delineation of the vast region of human knowledge, actual and possible, and to point out the limits of every district, was indeed magnanimous in a high degree, and deserves our admiration, while we lament that the human powers are unequal to so bold a flight.

A regular distribution of things under proper classes or heads, is, without doubt, a great help both to memory and judgement. And as the philosopher's province includes all things human and divine that can be objects of enquiry, he is naturally led to attempt some general division, like that of the categories. And the invention of a division of this kind, which the speculative part of mankind acquiesced in for two thousand years, marks a superiority of genius in the inventor, whoever he was. Nor does it appear, that the general divisions which, since the decline of the Peripatetic

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tic philosophy, have been substituted in place of the ten categories, are more perfect.

Locke has reduced all things to three categories; to wit, substances, modes, and relations. In this division, time, space, and number, three great objects of human thought, are omitted.

The author of the Treatise of Human Nature has reduced all things to two categories; to wit, ideas, and impressions: a division which is very well adapted to his system; and which puts me in mind of another made by an excellent mathematician in a printed thesis I have seen. In it the author, after a severe censure of the ten categories of the Peripatetics, maintains, that there neither are nor can be more than two categories of things; to wit, *data*, and *quesita*.

There are two ends that may be proposed by such divisions. The first is, to methodize or digest in order what a man actually knows. This is neither unimportant nor impracticable; and in proportion to the solidity and accuracy of a man's judgement, his divisions of things which he knows, will be elegant and useful. The same subject may admit, and even require, various divisions, according to the different points of view from which we contemplate it: nor does it follow, that because one division is good, therefore another is naught. To be acquainted with the divisions of the logicians and metaphysicians, without a superstitious attachment to them, may be of use in dividing the same subjects, or even those of a different nature. Thus, Quintilian borrows from the ten categories his division of the topics of rhetorical argumentation. Of all methods of arrangement, the most antiphilosophical seems to be the invention of this age; I mean, the arranging the arts and sciences by the letters of the alphabet, in dictionaries and encyclopedies. With these authors the categories are, A, B, C, &c.

Another end commonly proposed by such divisions, but very rarely



rarely attained, is, to exhaust the subject divided; so that nothing that belongs to it shall be omitted. It is one of the general rules of division in all systems of logic, That the division should be adequate to the subject divided: a good rule, without doubt; but very often beyond the reach of human power. To make a perfect division, a man must have a perfect comprehension of the whole subject at one view. When our knowledge of the subject is imperfect, any division we can make of it, must be like the first sketch of a painter, to be extended, contracted, or mended, as the subject shall be found to require. Yet nothing is more common, not only among the ancient, but even among modern philosophers, than to draw, from their incomplete divisions, conclusions which suppose them to be perfect.

A division is a repository which the philosopher frames for holding his ware in convenient order. The philosopher maintains, that such or such a thing is not good ware, because there is no place in his ware-room that fits it. We are apt to yield to this argument in philosophy, but it would appear ridiculous in any other traffic.

Peter Ramus, who had the spirit of a reformer in philosophy, and who had a force of genius sufficient to shake the Aristotelian fabric in many parts, but insufficient to erect any thing more solid in its place, tried to remedy the imperfection of philosophical divisions, by introducing a new manner of dividing. His divisions always consisted of two members, one of which was contradictory of the other; as if one should divide England into Middlesex and what is not Middlesex. It is evident that these two members comprehend all England: for the logicians observe, that a term, along with its contradictory, comprehend all things. In the same manner, we may divide what is not Middlesex into Kent and what is not Kent. Thus one may go on by divisions and subdivisions that are absolutely complete. This example may  
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