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**Sketches Of The History Of Man**

In Two Volumes

**Home, Henry**

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Sect. 1. Of the Conversion of Propositions.

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## C H A P. III.

## Account of the First Analytics.

SECT. I. *Of the Conversion of Propositions.*

I N attempting to give some account of the Analytics and of the Topics of Aristotle, ingenuity requires me to confess, that tho' I have often purposed to read the whole with care, and to understand what is intelligible, yet my courage and patience always failed before I had done. Why should I throw away so much time and painful attention upon a thing of so little real use? If I had lived in those ages when the knowledge of Aristotle's Organon intitled a man to the highest rank in philosophy, ambition might have induced me to employ upon it some years painful study; and less, I conceive, would not be sufficient. Such reflections as these, always got the better of my resolution, when the first ardor began to cool. All I can say is, that I have read some parts of the different books with care, some slightly, and some perhaps not at all. I have glanced over the whole often, and when any thing attracted my attention, have dipped into it till my appetite was satisfied. Of all reading it is the most dry and the most painful, employing an infinite labour of demonstration, about things of the most abstract nature, delivered in a laconic style, and often, I think, with affected obscurity; and all to prove general propositions, which when applied to particular instances appear self-evident.

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There is probably but little in the Categories, or in the book of Interpretation, which Aristotle could claim as his own invention: but the whole theory of syllogisms he claims as his own, and as the fruit of much time and labour. And indeed it is a stately fabrick, a monument of a great genius, which we could wish to have been more usefully employed. There must be something however adapted to please the human understanding, or to flatter human pride, in a work which occupied men of speculation for more than a thousand years. These books are called *Analytics*, because the intention of them is to resolve all reasoning into its simple ingredients.

The first book of the First Analytics, consisting of forty-six chapters, may be divided into four parts; the first treating of the conversion of propositions; the second, of the structure of syllogisms in all the different figures and modes; the third, of the invention of a middle term; and the last, of the resolution of syllogisms. We shall give a brief account of each.

To convert a proposition, is to infer from it another proposition, whose subject is the predicate of the first, and whose predicate is the subject of the first. This is reduced by Aristotle to three rules. 1. An universal negative may be converted into an universal negative: thus, *No man is a quadruped*; therefore, *No quadruped is a man*. 2. An universal affirmative can be converted only into a particular affirmative: thus, *All men are mortal*; therefore, *Some mortal beings are men*. 3. A particular affirmative may be converted into a particular affirmative: as, *Some men are just*; therefore, *Some just persons are men*. When a proposition may be converted without changing its quantity, this is called *simple conversion*; but when the quantity is diminished, as in the universal affirmative, it is called *conversion per accidens*.

There is another kind of conversion, omitted in this place by Aristotle, but supplied by his followers, called *conversion by contraposition*,

