

ial elaboration of these results. During a period of many centuries, and until the powerful mind of Aristotle was revealed, the phenomena of nature, not regarded as objects of acute observation, were subjected to the sole control of ideal interpretation, and to the arbitrary sway of vague presentiments and vacillating hypotheses, but from the time of the Stagirite a higher appreciation for empirical science was manifested. The facts already known were now first critically examined. As natural philosophy, by pursuing the certain path of induction, gradually approached nearer to the scrutinizing character of empiricism, it became less bold in its speculations and less fanciful in its images. A laborious tendency to accumulate materials enforced the necessity for a certain amount of polymathic learning; and although the works of different distinguished thinkers occasionally exhibited precious fruits, these were unfortunately too often accompanied, in the decline of creative conception among the Greeks, by a mere barren erudition devoid of animation. The absence of a careful attention to the form as well as to animation and grace of diction, has likewise contributed to expose Alexandrian learning to the severe animadversions of posterity.

The present section would be incomplete if it were to omit a notice of the accession yielded to general knowledge by the epoch of the Ptolemies, both by the combined action of external relations, the foundation and proper endowment of several large institutions (the Alexandrian Museum and two libraries at Bruchium and Rhakotis),\* and by the collegiate association of so many learned men actuated by practical views. This encyclopedic species of knowledge facilitated the comparison of observations and the generalization of natural views.† The

\* The library in the Bruchium, which was destroyed in the burning of the fleet under Julius Cæsar, was the more ancient. The library at Rhakotis formed a part of the "Serapeum," where it was connected with the museum. By the liberality of Antoninus, the collection of books at Pergamus was joined to the library of Rhakotis.

† Vacherot, *Histoire Critique de l'École d'Alexandrie*, 1846, t. i., p. v. and 103. The institute of Alexandria, like all academical corporations, together with the good arising from the concurrence of many laborers, and from the acquisition of material aids, exercised also some narrowing and restraining influence, as we find from numerous facts furnished by antiquity. Adrian appointed his tutor, Vestinus, high-priest of Alexandria (a sort of minister presiding over the management of public worship), and at the same time head of the museum (or president of the academy). (Letronne, *Recherches pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Égypte pendant la Domination des Grecs et des Romains*, 1823, p. 251.)