

us were eagerly taken up, and erroneous cosmical views, whose groundlessness had long been shown by the mathematical school of Alexandria, were revived under the sanction of Christian authority. Thus the dominion of Platonism, or, more correctly speaking, the new adaptations of Platonic views, were propagated far into the Middle Ages, under varying forms, from Augustine to Alcuin, Johannes Scotus, and Bernhard of Chartres.*

When the Aristotelian philosophy gained the ascendancy by its controlling influence over the direction of the human mind, its effect was manifested in the two-fold channel of investigation into speculative philosophy and a philosophical elaboration of empirical natural science. Although the former of these directions may appear foreign to the object I have had in view in the present work, it must not be passed without notice, since, in the midst of the age of dialectic scholastics, it incited some few noble and highly-gifted men to the exercise of free and independent thought in the most various departments of science. An extended physical contemplation of the universe not only requires a rich abundance of observation as the substratum for a generalization of ideas, but also a preparatory and invigorating training of the human mind, by which it may be enabled, unappalled amid the eternal contest between knowledge and faith, to meet the threatening impediments which, even in modern times, present themselves at the entrance of certain departments of the experimental sciences, and would seem to render them inaccessible. There are two points in the history of the development of man which must not be separated—the consciousness of man's just claims to intellectual freedom, and his long unsatisfied desire of prosecuting discoveries in remote regions of the earth. These free and independent thinkers form a series, which begins in the Middle Ages with Duns Scotus, Wilhelm of Occam, and Nicolas of Cusa, and leads from Ramus, Campanella, and Giordano Bruno to Descartes.†

The seemingly impassable gulf between thought and act-

* Friedrich von Raumer, *Ueber die Philosophie des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*, in his *Hist. Taschenbuch*, 1840, s. 468. On the tendency toward Platonism in the Middle Ages, and on the contests of the schools, see Heinrich Ritter, *Gesch. der Christl. Philosophie*, th. ii., s. 159; th. iii., s. 131-160, and 381-417.

† Cousin, *Cours de l'Hist. de la Philosophie*, t. i., 1829, p. 360 and 389-436; *Fragmens de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 8-12 and 403. Compare also, the recent ingenious work of Christian Bartholomès, entitled *Jordano Bruno*, 1847, t. i., p. 308; t. ii., p. 409-416.