

acteristic achievements—the genetic view. There is another view which a superficial glance at organic life, with its well known phases of birth, culmination, and decay, has frequently impressed upon the observer; there seemed another lesson to learn than that which our age is trying to master.

7.
"Cyclical"
view.

That other view can best be termed the "cyclical" view of things, the doctrine that every thing runs in a cycle¹ and repeats itself, that all change is periodic and recurrent, that there is nothing new under the sun.²

¹ Mr Thomas Whittaker has given me various references to the writings of ancient philosophers which bear on this subject. He finds the cyclical or recurrent aspect of the world-process prominently put forward by the Stoics. Zeller ('Philosophie der Griechen,' vol. iii. I. p. 136, &c., 2nd ed.) says in his account of the stoical philosophy: "Out of the original substance the separate things are developed according to an inner law. For inasmuch as the first principle, according to its definition, is the creative and formative power, the whole universe must grow out of it with the same necessity as the animal or the plant from the seed. The original fire—according to the Stoics and Heraclitus—first changes to 'air' or vapour, then to water; out of this a portion is precipitated as earth, another remains water, a third evaporates as atmospheric air, which again kindles the fire, and out of the changing mixture of these four elements there is formed—from the earth as centre—the world. . . . Through this separation of the elements there arises the contrast of the active and the passive principle: the soul of the world and its body. . . . But as this contrast came in time, so it is also destined to cease; the original substance gradually consumes the

matter, which it segregated out of itself as its body, till at the end of this world-period a universal world-conflagration brings everything back again to the primæval condition. . . . But when everything has thus returned to the original unity, and the great world-year has run out, the formation of a new world begins again, which is so exactly like the former one that in it all single things, persons, and phenomena return exactly as before; and in this wise the history of the world and the deity . . . moves in an endless cycle through the same stages." Zeller, in a note to this passage, remarks that "the conception of changing world-periods is frequent in the oldest Greek philosophy; the Stoics found it first in Heraclitus. The further statement, however, that the succeeding worlds resemble one another down to the minutest detail, is to be found, to my knowledge, before Zeno only in the Pythagorean school . . . and is connected with the doctrine of metempsychosis and the world-year."

² Mr Whittaker quotes a passage from Aristotle's 'Metaphysics,' towards the end of the 12th book (Berlin ed., p. 1074, b. 10-12): "Κατὰ τὸ εἶδος πολλάκις εὐρημένῃς εἰ τὸ δυνατόν ἐκάστης καὶ τέχνης καὶ φιλοσοφίας καὶ πάλιν φθειρομένων.