

ARISTOTLE



THE CONSTITUTION OF ATHENS

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INTRODUCTORY.

The treatise on 'The Constitution of Athens' has been translated by me primarily for such English readers as may feel curiosity about a book which has excited, and is still exciting, so much interest in the learned world.

The recovery of such a book, after its loss for so many centuries, is an event in literature; at the same time its argument, largely concerned as it is with the development of democracy at Athens, provides matter of political and practical, rather than of academic, interest for the English reader of to-day.

I have the pleasure of acknowledging here the courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum in allowing me to translate from their Text, as edited by Mr. Kenyon, and my great obligations to his labours; they form, unquestionably, a contribution of the highest value, particularly on the subject-matter of the book. It can hardly be expected that, minor corrections excepted, any substantive addition of

importance can be made for some time; indeed, not until the 'experts' of Europe have had the opportunity of severally recording their views, both as to the text and its matter.

The gaps and corruptions in the text, however interesting to the critic and emendator, will not long detain the English reader or the student. The hiatuses would seem to be few and generally slight, while some of the corrupt passages open up a wide field for the learned and ingenious. In my translation have taken the text with its difficulties as I found it, reproducing as nearly as I could in English what the Greek, corrupt as it might be, appeared to me to contain. In one or two cases, where the text is obviously corrupt, I have perhaps used a little freedom in my endeavour to extract something like an intelligible meaning. I have had no higher ambitions. There has been no attempt or desire on my part to offer a solution of difficulties which are now being dealt with by more competent hands.

The first forty-one chapters, forming about two-thirds of the work, treat of the Constitution, its development and history. The remainder of the book, consisting of twenty-two chapters, furnishes a detailed account of the Council, with some information about the Assembly, and describes the principal offices of state, the modes of appointment, by lot or vote, and their chief functions, concluding with a short mutilated notice of the constitution of the courts of justice.

T. J. D.

26, Blenheim Crescent, Notting Hill, W. March 26, 1891.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS FOR THE ENGLISH READER.