

Aristotle



*Organon - Posterior
Analytics*

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goodpress@okpublishing.info

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ALL doctrine, and all intellectual discipline, arise from pre-existent knowledge. Now this is evident, if we survey them all, for both mathematical sciences are obtained in this manner, and also each of the other arts. It is the same also with arguments, as well those which result through syllogisms, as those which are formed through induction, for both teach through things previously known, the one assuming as if from those who understood them, the other demonstrating the universal by that which is evident as to the singular. Likewise also do rhetoricians persuade, for they do so either through examples, which is induction, or through enthymemes, which is syllogism. It is necessary however to possess previous knowledge in a twofold respect; for with some things we must pre-suppose that they are, but with others we must understand what that is which is spoken of; and with others both must be known, as for instance, (we must pre-assume,) that of every thing it is true to affirm or deny that it is, but of a triangle, that it signifies so and so, and of the monad (we must know) both, viz. what it signifies and that it is, for each of these is not manifest to us in a similar manner. It is possible however to know from knowing some things previously, and receiving the knowledge of others at the same time, as of things which are contained under universals, and of which a man possesses knowledge. For he knew before that every

triangle has angles equal to two right angles, but that this which is in a semi-circle is a triangle, he knew by induction at the same time. For of some things knowledge is acquired after this manner, nor is the extreme known through the middle, as such things as are singulars, and are not predicated of any subject. Perhaps however we must confess that we possess knowledge after a certain manner before induction or the assumption of a syllogism, but in another manner not. For what a man is ignorant about its existence at all, how could he know at all that it has two right angles? But it is evident that he thus knows because he knows the universal, but singly he does not know it. Still if this be not admitted, the doubt which is mentioned in the Meno will occur, either he will learn nothing, or those things which he knows, for he must not say, as some endeavour to solve the doubt, "Do you know that every duad is an even number or not?" for since if some one says that he does, they would bring forward a certain duad which he did not think existed, as therefore not even; and they solve the ambiguity, not by saying that he knew every duad to be even, but that he was ignorant as to what they know is a duad. Nevertheless they know that of which they possess and have received the demonstration, but they have received it not of every thing which they know to be a triangle or a number, but of every number and triangle singly, for no proposition is assumed of such a kind as the number which you know, or the rectilinear figure which you know, but universally. Still there is nothing (I think) to prevent a man who learns, in a certain respect knowing and in a certain respect being ignorant, for it is absurd, not that

he should in some way know what he learns, but that he should thus know it, as he does when he learns it, and in the same manner.

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WE think that we know each thing singly, (and not in a sophistical manner, according to accident,) when we think that we know the cause on account of which a thing is, that it is the cause of that thing, and that the latter cannot subsist otherwise; wherefore it is evident that knowledge is a thing of this kind, for both those who do not, and those who *do* know, fancy, the former, that they in this manner possess knowledge, but those who know, possess it in reality, so that it is impossible that a thing of which there is knowledge simply should subsist in any other way. Whether therefore there is any other mode of knowing we shall tell hereafter, but we say also that we obtain knowledge through demonstration, but I call demonstration a scientific syllogism, and I mean by scientific that according to which, from our possessing it, we know. If then to know is what we have laid down, it is necessary that demonstrative science should be from things true, first, immediate, more known than, prior to, and the causes of the conclusion, for thus there will be the appropriate first principles of whatever is demonstrated. Now syllogism will subsist even without these, but demonstration will not, since it will not produce knowledge. It is necessary then that they should be true, since we cannot know that which does not subsist, for instance, that the diameter of a square is commensurate

with its side. But it must be from things first and indemonstrable, or otherwise a man will not know them, because he does not possess the demonstration of them, for to know those things of which there is demonstration not accidentally is to possess demonstration. But they must be causes, and more known, and prior; causes indeed, because we then know scientifically when we know the cause; and prior, since they are causes; previously known also, not only according to the other mode by understanding (what they signify), but by knowing that they are. Moreover they are prior and more known in two ways, for what is prior in nature, is not the same as that which is prior in regard to us, nor what is more known (simply) the same as what is more known to us. Now I call things prior and more known to us, those which are nearer to sense, and things prior and more known simply, those which are more remote from sense; and those things are most remote which are especially universal, and those nearest which are singular, and these are mutually opposed. That again is from things first, which is from peculiar principles, and I mean by first, the same thing as the principle, but the principle of demonstration is an immediate proposition, and that is immediate to which there is no other prior. Now a proposition is one part of enunciation, one of one, dialectic indeed, which similarly assumes either (part of contradiction), but demonstrative which definitely (assumes) that one (part) is true. Enunciation is either part of contradiction, and contradiction is an opposition which has no medium in respect to itself. But that part of contradiction (which declares) something, of somewhat, is affirmation, and that (which signifies)