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ARISTOTLE'S
HISTORY OF ANIMALS.

IN TEN BOOKS.

TRANSLATED BY
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P R E F A C E.

THE following Translation of Aristotle's History of Animals has been made from the text of Schneider. In a work of considerable difficulty it is hardly possible entirely to avoid errors; but it is hoped that those which have escaped are neither numerous nor important. The notes of Schneider have been consulted throughout; and in places of difficulty the English translation by Taylor, the French of Camus, and the German of Strack, have been severally referred to.

The work itself is the most ancient and celebrated contribution to science which has come down to us; and it is hardly possible, when we consider the means of observation which were accessible at the time, to imagine a work of more accurate observation. From the numerous quotations in which our author avails himself of the experience of his predecessors in the same field, as well as corrects their errors, there can be no doubt that Aristotle had the advantage of many works which have perished in the lapse of ages. In the Appendix to the present Translation will be found the Essay of Schneider on the sources whence Aristotle derived his knowledge of the animals he describes; and these sources, together with his own accu-

rate observations, are probably sufficient to account for the correct knowledge of the history of animals displayed throughout the work.

It is right, perhaps, to observe in this place, that Dr. Smith, in his Dictionary of Biography, speaks of the 'History of Animals' as partly the result of the royal liberality of Alexander; and doubtless Aristotle would gladly have introduced into his work any fresh materials which might have been made available to him either during his residence at the Macedonian court, or by the subsequent victories of Alexander in the East, if the information so obtained had reached Athens in sufficient time to be incorporated. But in the first instance he would naturally use the materials ready to his hand in the works of his predecessors, and these were not few. The animals also which he describes are principally those of Greece and of the countries with which the enterprising Greeks had frequent and commercial intercourse. He says little of the animals of the interior of Asia and of India, and speaks very cautiously of such as he does mention; and one who quotes his authorities so freely would hardly have failed to notice the sources of his information.

The study, or at least the knowledge of the classification of animals appears to have been carefully pursued in the earliest period of man's history. The oldest records that we possess contain abundant notices of the peculiarities of animals. The Mosaic law abounds in them, in its distinctions between the clean and the unclean, a distinction not then first established, but of the most remote antiquity. Indeed it could hardly be otherwise than that men engaged in the pursuits of agriculture and the chase should study the habits of the animals that were valuable to them, as well as those which were injurious. A study thus commenced