



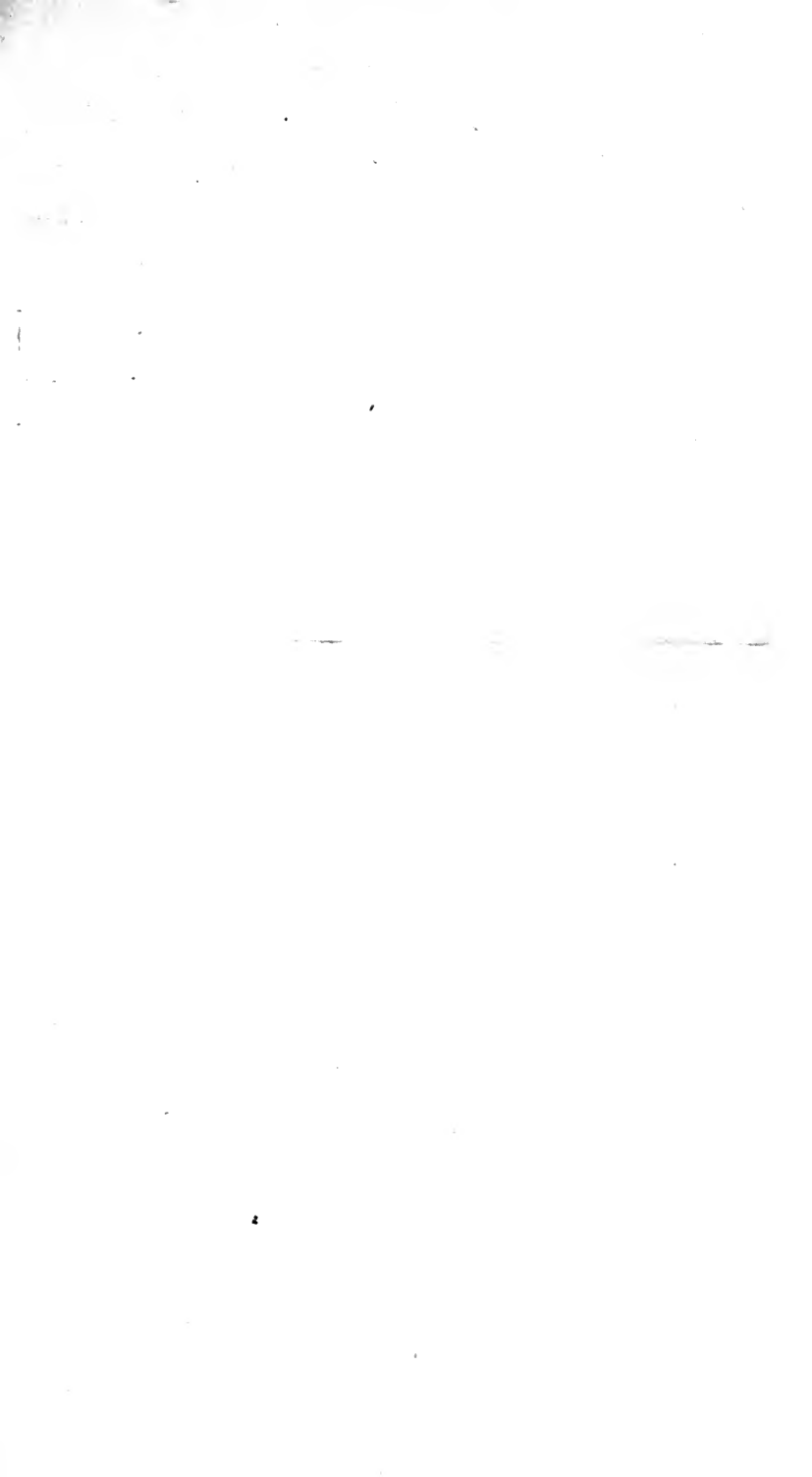
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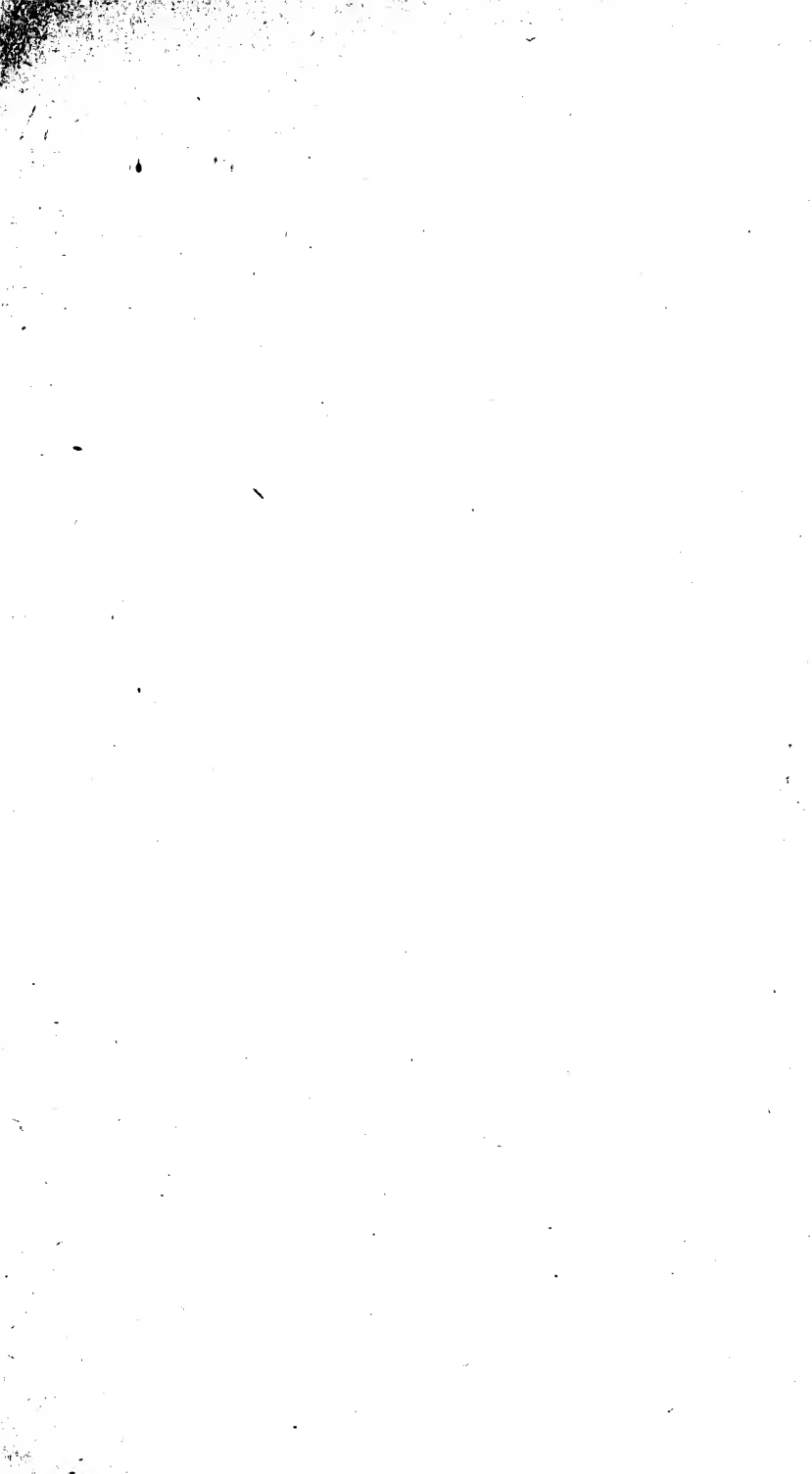


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FIRST LINES  
OF THE  
HUMAN MIND.

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BY JOHN FEARN.

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TO THE  
REV. DR. SAMUEL PARR;  
AND  
BASIL MONTAGU, ESQ.

Much Revered Sirs,

IN dedicating to you the fruits of my more mature labor, and the present time being one in which the sentiments of every individual appear to be pregnant with some consequence, I first desire to prostrate myself with ineffable gratitude and adoration to Almighty God, for having bestowed upon me, together with existence, three of the most precious gifts which any sublunary being can enjoy;—a desire to contemplate the general laws of His Providence;—an age and country in which I have liberty to express my conceptions of them;—and means to relinquish other pursuits in favor of this bent, without stooping to solicitation, or dependence upon aid, which might have prevented my choice, or biassed my opinions.

While I trust the avowal of this feeling will not be unacceptable to you, inasmuch as it is a test of the spirit in which the present offering is made; I beg to assure you, it has never tended to diminish my sensibility to friendly manifestations of any sort, and far less could it operate to make me overlook what I conceive to be a debt, both of a private and a public nature. If the following Volume should be found to contain any new truth, worthy the philosophical consideration either of our contemporaries or of those who shall come after us; I desire it may bear testimony, that to you I stand particularly indebted for a warm and uniform interest displayed for the success of these inquiries.

To one of you, I am obliged for that spontaneous and unequivocal approbation of my earlier endeavours, which, when I reflected upon the pre-eminence of erudition whence it came, was sufficient to encourage my perseverance against a very rare combination of forbidding circumstances. To the commendation received from such a quarter, my best acknowledgments are certainly due.

To the other, the circumstance of locality has admitted of my being additionally indebted, for the edification and pleasure received in his converse, and for a course of obliging civilities, during a series of years; which have proved at



once a stimulus to my endeavours and a solace under the languor induced by them.

Among the few external circumstances that could have made me proud, is the reflection that to these pursuits, and to no other origin, I owe the honor of your friendship. And I shall consider it among the most gratifying events of my life, if I continue, during the remainder of it, to possess any share of your regard.

I am,

Gentlemen,

With much Veneration,

Your faithful Servant,

JOHN FEARN.



TO

**DUGALD STEWART, ESQ.,**

**F. R. SS. LOND. AND EDINB., &c. &c. &c.**

**FORMERLY PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.**

**SIR,**

As it is impossible I should think of going before the public with the following work, without providing a clear understanding of the merits of the subject which has been matter of discussion between us during the last three years; I yield with extreme reluctance to the necessity under which I am placed.

In resorting to the only alternative left me, for removing an intolerable pressure upon both my past and future exertions, in the pursuit to which I have sacrificed a considerable portion of my life; I cannot by any consideration be prevented from rendering to you the acknowledgments due to your great intellectual attainments, and no less so to your high general character. In addition to this, I owe your having been pleased, in your last letter to me, to express yourself in terms for which it appears I am under deep obligation to our common friends, and which render it a task of inexpressible irksomeness to be under the necessity to follow out this discussion. Although you have left me no hope of attaining my object from any farther private reply; and though I cannot but feel the

difference between being obliged to justify myself in a publication like the present, and being righted by you in a vehicle of such extensive circulation as an Encyclopedia; I have no feeling toward you but what is in perfect consonance with a trust that you can explain the matter to your own satisfaction; while I cannot doubt of the impression which my case must carry to every impartial understanding. I shall proceed, with the utmost possible brevity, to narrate the facts in question.

In the course of following out some speculations with regard to the Human Mind, which were first submitted to the press near ten years since, I was led, by successive steps, to effect what I apprehend to be an analysis of the Act and Phenomena of Perception;—a matter which, as it advanced, I laid before the public, in two or three small evanescent Tracts upon the subject. The *generic principle* of this analysis, is the fact that a VARIETY of colors is necessary for the formation of every visible figure or outline: and the consequence deduced from this generic principle is, that visible figure or outline is purely a relation of contrast between two of our own ideas.

Before I proceed farther; it is important to remark, that the consequence of demonstrating that *two various colors* are necessary for an act of perception of visible outline, (whereas it had always heretofore been assumed that *one color only* is requisite for that purpose) is that of transferring the Subject of Perception, from the Province of mere *Inductive Science*, to which it had without any exception been always supposed to belong, to Science that is *generically mathematical or demonstrative*. I believe I run no hazard of being contradicted when I affirm, that the difference between the whole philosophical structure which can be erected upon this last foundation, and that which can possibly be raised upon the as-

sumption that Perception is a subject of mere inductive evidence, is incalculable.

Under favorable auspices; I might certainly have expected that a matter of this aspect would have excited curiosity and immediate general attention. But I had launched it from any thing other than vantage ground. At length, however, it was very fairly taken up by public criticism; whose even-handed strictures furnish indubitable evidence of impartiality; while I am happy to be able to declare, that I know not the quarter whence it came: and you were judged to be loudly called upon to defend your own positions, or those of your venerable Predecessor, which are therein supposed to be successfully questioned. Still, the matter had but a very limited circulation, beyond my own friends; and the obstruction appeared to be wholly unaccountable.

It was in this state of the case that I first found leisure to take up your "DISSERTATION," prefixed to the Fifth Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica and published in the year 1815; the perusal of which I had till then postponed, owing to languid health and pressing avocations. That work, I was aware, was *professedly* HISTORICAL; and, certainly, although I deemed the perusal of it to be indispensable, I was less in haste about it, inasmuch as nothing was farther from my expectation than to find in it any thing of the appearance of *original matter*. In the course of going over it, however, I was struck with indescribable surprise, upon finding, toward the latter part, that you had suggested, (expressly with a view "*toward a solution*" of a certain problem proposed by Mr. D'Alembert,) that a VARIETY of colors is necessary to the act of perceiving Visible Figure or Outline.— Having started this suggestion; you introduce a very conspicuous *Foot Note* at the bottom of the page (101), of which the following is a copy:

“ In Dr. Reid’s Inquiry, he has introduced a discussion concerning the perception of *visible figure*, which has puzzled me since the first time (more than forty years ago) that I read his work. The discussion relates to this question, ‘ Whether there be any sensation proper to visible figure, by which it is suggested in vision ?’ The result of the argument is that our eye *might* have been so framed as to suggest the figure of the object, without suggesting colour, or any other quality ; and, of consequence, that there is *no sensation* appropriated to visible figure, this quality being suggested *immediately* by the material impression upon the organ, of which impression we are not conscious.—To my apprehension nothing can appear more manifest than this, that if there had been no *variety* in our sensations of colour, and still more if we had had no sensation of colour whatever, the organ of sight could have given us no information, either with regard to *figures* or to *distances*.”

Now Sir, I will only suppose that any reader, who had been perusing one of my prior publications of the analysis of Perception, (*in which the fact of A VARIETY OF COLORS forms the fundamental Principle,*) had taken up your “ DISSERTATION,” and had read the *Foot Note* in question ; and I will then leave it to the judgment of any impartial person, or to your own candor, if they must not have been struck with violent doubts of my originality, and even of my ingenuousness of character ?

As, from your last letter, you altogether admit that there is no hint of any such matter as the operation of A VARIETY of colors in perception, in any one of your prior writings up to the appearance of your Dissertation in the year 1815 ; it must be allowed to have been a most unfortunate accident for me, that you should have brought before the public a claim to a long antecedent

knowledge of the fact in question, just after I had made two or three successive attempts to bring the matter into notice as my own original suggestion. And it must also be admitted, that, to those who may have perused my statements, it was giving the matter an aspect of some implied *particular meaning*, that you deemed it worth your while to bring the claim forward in a Work professedly only *Historical*, when you had never thought it worthy of notice in any of your Volumes which treat directly of the Subject. I must however request you to observe, that I have never at all imputed to you any intention to injure me by this proceeding: On the contrary, I have, throughout the discussion, I hope with the utmost consideration for your station and character, always made the supposition of its being merely an accidental co-incidence. But I cannot help expressing my surprise that you should have been so slow to understand, what I have repeatedly endeavoured to impress upon your attention, namely, that although I never was "*offended*;" nor supposed injury to have been meant, I was unfortunately laboring under an intolerable pressure from what you had published; which, until it should be removed by your explanation in some public channel, must actually amount to a suffocation of my past and future endeavours; and that, too, attended with additional very painful feelings.

Sir; It is impossible for any person for a moment to doubt, what the effect of your Foot Note *must have been*; and, unless counteracted, *must continue to be*; upon the minds of that very large and important class of readers who will make it a point to read your Dissertation; and, (much more than this,) upon that far larger number which will continue to find your Foot Note recorded in a Vehicle of such extensive circulation as the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. I blush when I yield to the necessity of feeling, that every one of that class of persons, who may happen to take up either any former publication of mine or any

that I may still be enabled to produce, including the Volume now submitted to the Public, if they be not aware of any thing to the contrary, whenever they perceive that I am endeavouring to advance any matter as deduced from the *generic principle of a VARIETY OF COLORS*, they cannot choose but throw the thing from them with unqualified disgust, under the impression that I was attempting *to impose upon the public as an original matter of my own*, a thing which had been known to Professor Stewart “*more than forty years.*”

But, although this certainly is the most painful consequence of what you have published ; there is another effect, which, if not counteracted, must present a complete bar to my hope of being useful in the walk in which I have been engaged. This is, that you have mentioned the matter concerning *A VARIETY OF COLORS* as a mere *barren inconsequential fact* ; and the natural conclusion with readers, from this, must be, that I am engaged in some very mistaken or frivolous research, when I offer to the public, as a matter pregnant with the most extensive philosophical consequences, a fact which, although it has been known to Professor Stewart more than forty years, *has not been found by him to involve any philosophical consequence whatever.*

It was under the pressure of these two evils that I privately addressed you, between two and three years ago, and have repeated the appeal in several subsequent letters, to request that you would explain the matter, and place me, as far as possible, in safety from its effects, by acknowledging my *priority* in the suggestion of the generic principle in question, in some public channel, especially in the *Second Dissertation* which it was understood you were to furnish to the Encyclopedia; this being the only channel commensurate with that in which I am a sufferer.



After several intermediate communications with which you honored me, of an indecisive tenor; you have, at length, under date the 30th of August last, vouchsafed me the satisfaction of admitting that priority which I claimed: but, although you acknowledge this in so far as regards yourself, you have qualified the recognition with an intimation that the matter at issue is of an older origin; and this alone would place me under the necessity to animadvert upon a part of your letter, which I shall for this purpose transcribe. But farther, I am to observe, you have not for a moment listened to my request that you would counteract the evil pressing upon me, by offering an explanation of the matter in any public channel. Nothing therefore is left for me, but to endeavour to right myself in the channel of my own publication.

Your last letter being in answer to my urgent representation, that I was upon the very eve of publishing the following Volume, and that I could not possibly go before the public without noticing the matter; you of course intended the answer to be final, and that I should make this use of it. It appears therefore necessary for me to offer some observations upon the following part of it.

“ You refer to something I have said about *Varieties of colour*; and call on me to acknowledge your priority. “ The only passage I can discover in which I have used “ that expression, is in pp. 100, 101, where I have mentioned as a self-evident proposition, that ‘ if there had “ “ been no variety in our sensations of colour, and still “ “ more if we had had no sensation of colour whatever, “ “ the organ of sight could give no information either with “ “ respect to figures or to distances.’ If this be the passage which has given you offence, I must take the “ liberty of observing, that I have taken no credit to myself for the *novelty* of the remark, and which is to be

“ found in various books written fifty years before I ever  
 “ heard of your name. I shall only mention the first  
 “ volume of Lord Monboddo’s *Origin and Progress of*  
 “ *Language*, where it is expressly said, that ‘ Colour is  
 “ ‘ the primary perception of the sense of Seeing, and that  
 “ ‘ the others are only consequential. Figure and Magni-  
 “ ‘ tude’ (he adds) ‘ are nothing else but colour of a certain  
 “ ‘ extent and terminated in a certain manner.’ (Vol. 1. 2d  
 “ Edit. page 26. Edin. 1774.) Should this really be the  
 “ observation you allude to (and I cannot possibly think  
 “ of any other), you have my free consent to take the cre-  
 “ dit of the discovery ; nor shall I ever dispute your  
 “ originality. I have only to request, on the other hand,  
 “ that you shall not insist on any acknowledgment on  
 “ my part, that I learned it from your publications.—If  
 “ from this principle which has so long remained barren  
 “ in the hands of others, you have been able to deduce  
 “ any important consequences, the greater is the praise  
 “ due to your inventive powers, and to your philosophi-  
 “ cal sagacity.”

With regard to this passage of your letter ; I must, in the first place, beg to point out to you a most important consideration ; namely, that although it is your own *Foot Note* that you have quoted in it, and which certainly is the very matter of which I have complained, you have entirely omitted that part of it which asserts that the matter in question had been contemplated by you “ *more than forty years ago.*”

Now this assertion, *of your forty years knowledge of the fact*, is the very point which, it is quite manifest, has borne with intolerable weight, not only upon my subject and prospects, but also upon my claims to sincerity or ingenuousness ; because it naturally leads any reader to conclude, that you must have mentioned *so old a fact* in some one or other of your former writings

which treat properly of the Mind; and that, from the nature of my studies, I could not have been ignorant that you were before me in it. Yet you omit this part of your Note; and persevere in supposing that I am "*offended*:" when the unfortunate truth is that I am not offended, but am very seriously *harmed*, and have only sought for relief.

Next; With regard to the "*discovery*" of the generic fact in question, namely, that A VARIETY of colors is necessary for the perception of visible outline; although I shall state my reasons for confidently believing that the fact resides with myself, I freely acknowledge it is so self-evident a thing that I shall never plume myself upon the discernment of it, unless from the negative consideration that it never has been adverted to by those who have gone before me. And, as the deduction of the Four Specific Laws of Vision is the matter in which all the importance of the Subject lies; and there is no fear that I can be deprived of the originality of this matter; it would certainly not be worth a controversy to insist upon my claim to the *mere generic fact*. But, as I have had occasion to mention repeatedly, both in former publications and in the course of the following Volume, that it is not to be found in any author with whom I am acquainted; and, as it will greatly conduce to the advancement of the Subject to have the merits of the fact clearly ascertained, at the same time that I feel it to be absolutely incumbent upon me to justify my own assertions; it is impossible for me to forego a specific answer to this part of your letter.

First; As you say the generic fact is "to be found in various books;" and have quoted Lord Monboddo's work as a particular instance; it may be presumed you had no better one in your recollection, at the moment. You must, Sir, then allow me to express my surprise, that you should for a moment offer the passage from Lord

Monboddo's work, as an instance of an assertion that a VARIETY of colors is necessary to the perception of visible outline. You have quoted the passage correctly. But; Does the assertion that "*Figure and Magnitude are nothing else but colour of a certain extent, and terminated in a certain manner,*" furnish the most distant hint of the MANNER in which color IS terminated?

Upon this occasion I must observe, after many years intense study of this part of our constitution, that there is a subtilty in the phenomena of vision, which renders even the most self-evident facts extremely difficult to hit; although nothing can be more manifest the moment after they have struck us. You acknowledge that you have looked into the Essay on Consciousness, which I had the honor to send to you in the year 1812. Now, in page 47 of that Volume I incipiently broached the fact concerning a variety of colors; but it was not until the year 1813 that I was able to publish a clear statement even of the generic principle; and it was somewhat later than that, that I was first enabled to deduce the other three laws of vision, so as to form the general analysis of perception;—every one of which laws, however, is *as self-evident* as the generic fact itself. I state these circumstances merely to show, that Philosophers might, and indeed I have myself all along pointed out the fact that they ALWAYS HAVE entertained the supposition that "*Visible Figure is nothing else but color terminated in a certain manner,*" but, that this is being (*in point of consequences*) no less than an infinite distance from discerning the simple self-evident truth of nature, that VISIBLE FIGURE is *nothing but* A CONTRAST between TWO colors. As a proof of this; the supposition of Lord Monboddo, or of any other of the adherents of the Ideal Theory, leaves the Subject of Perception within the Province of mere *physical or inductive science*; whereas, the moment we recognize that a visible line is only a contrast between two of our own sensations of colors,

we discern that a line is an *eternal and necessary result of the phenomena*, and Perception becomes instantly acknowledged for *demonstrative science; strictly speaking!*

When a writer is treating philosophically of the nature of Visible Magnitude and Figure, as was the case with Lord Monboddo; and makes use, as he did, of the phrase "*terminated in a certain manner;*" there are but two possible meanings which this expression can convey: either it betrays that the writer DOES NOT KNOW *the manner*, so as to be able to state it precisely or philosophically, or else, that a *description* of it would demand some *inconvenient expense of words*. Now I put it to the common sense of every person; Whether, if an author had at all known the strict simple fact, that a visible figure is the **TERMINATION OF ONE COLOR by ANOTHER COLOR**, he would have expressed himself in such a dark, unmeaning, and in such case unnecessarily affected and pompous phraseology, as to say that visible figure is "*colour terminated in a certain manner.*" The matter speaks for itself:—the phrase "*terminated in a certain manner*" is a manifest indication of the ignorance of the *particular manner* in which it is terminated. And here I must beg to impress upon your attention, the infinite difference there is between *a truth being self-evident when suggested*, and its being *infallibly evident without being pointed out*. All the Propositions in the analysis of Perception are as self-evident as the Axioms of Geometry; and yet, the present discussion will furnish ample evidence that the truths which those Propositions affirm have in all ages escaped detection.

I will myself suggest to you the name of an author who, I think, has approached far more nearly to the fact under consideration than Lord Monbdodo; but who is yet vastly distant from the truth in question. Bishop Berkeley, (in his *New Theory of Vision*, Prop. 156.,) where he is inquiring what progress a Spirit, en-

dowed with no Sense except that of Sight, could make in the knowledge of Geometry, expresses himself in the following terms.—“ All that is properly perceived by “ the Visive Faculty amounts to no more than Colours “ with their Variations and different proportions of light “ and shade.”---And then he says,---“ It’s true, there be “ divers of ’em perceived at once ; and more of some, “ and less of others ; But accurately to compute “ their Magnitude, and assign precise determinate Pro- “ portions between things so variable and inconstant, “ if we suppose it possible to be done, must yet be a “ very trifling and insignificant labour.”

What Berkeley has said in this passage *with regard to GEOMETRY*, is manifestly just : but the fact he describes, if he had seen a little farther into it *in its character of a fact of PERCEPTION*, would have shown him a vast field of consequences in PNEUMATOLOGY, which, as it happened, he entirely overlooked. As it is ; any person who is not accustomed to contemplate those distinctions between the connected phenomena of the mind, which to an ordinary observer appear to be hardly any distinctions at all, but which involve vast results in science, would naturally suppose, that an author who has expressed himself as Berkeley has done in the above passages, must certainly have discerned the simple strict fact that visible figure or outline is *the termination of one color by another color* : nay, after all the attention I have paid to the subject, it appears to me a miracle that Berkeley should not have discerned this : and yet I will venture to believe that his whole writings bear the most indisputable evidence of his having been entirely in the dark with regard to this simple fact. Not only are there no such expressions in his works, as that of Visible Figure or Outline being at all a PARTITION *between TWO COLORS* ; but, more than this, he in one place talks positively of VISIBLE LINES *as being THEM-*

SELVES COLORS. Thus in Prop. 131, of his *New Theory of Vision*, he says, “*A Blue and a Red line I can conceive added together into one sum, and making one continued line.*” How, then, is it possible that Berkeley should have discerned that a Visible Line is *a thing between two colors*; when we have his express affirmation that A VISIBLE LINE IS ITSELF SOME ONE COLOR, such as “A BLUE,” or “A RED LINE?” Besides this; Berkeley never supposed Perception to be any other than a subject of INDUCTIVE Science; whereas if he had for a moment adverted to the fact that a LINE is *a thing between two colors*, he must have discerned that Perception belongs to DEMONSTRATIVE Science.

I hope, Sir, I have now furnished the most unanswerable proofs, that you have fallen into a manifest confusion of two vastly different Propositions; (which I could not in the least have expected;) when you have supposed that Lord Monboddo’s assertion, that visible figure is “*colour terminated in a certain manner,*” is the same thing as an assertion that *a VARIETY OF COLORS is necessary to the perception of visible figure.* It has, in point of fact, in several distinct publications, been my great object, and it is now for manifold reasons an indispensable obligation upon me, to point out the difference between these two Propositions: and it is not in my option to spare any reasoning which confounds the distinctions between them. In the statement you have offered, therefore, you have left me no choice short of a full discussion of the real merits of the case.

To justify most conclusively my assertions, made at different times, that the original notice of even the *generic fact* resides with myself; I now proceed to observe, that, although I have had occasion to peruse and make very frequent references to the works of BERKELEY, of HUME, of DR. REID and of PROFESSOR

STEWART; between whom, it is undeniable, the great controversy concerning Perception has been carried on during near a century; I will venture to believe there is not the most distant hint, in any one of their Volumes, that a VARIETY of colors is necessary for the act of perceiving *visible figure or outline*: nor do they at all hint at any such assertion as being made by any writer, either ancient or modern. The truth of this remark so far as regards your own writings, you acknowledge in your letter. Then I will put it to your justice, or to the impartial sentence of any other person; Whether it ought not to be presumed that the fact is not adverted to by any other author: for, Can it be thought probable that if the fact were heeded at all, it could possibly have escaped coming out, in some shape or other, in the course of so protracted and so keen a controversy, between authors of such metaphysical acumen and extensive erudition?

I hardly need observe, that I have not found it in Locke: And I declare that I have never met with the most distant hint of it in any other author. As for your citation of Lord Monboddo: nothing could be more satisfactory to my views concerning it; and I therefore confidently rest upon these grounds for the assertion of it. To this, also, I must add, that, after having shown such grounds as these, I should not think myself at all the less justified in my assertion, even if you, or any other person, should at any time be able to produce the mention of it in some old author: and I confess it is only wonderful to me that it has not been adverted to by metaphysicians in general.

To convince you that I do not in the least assume there was any thing profound or abstruse in what you are pleased to call the "*discovery*" of the matter in question; I now observe that the fact under considera-



tion is well known (*in one point of view*) to every painter's boy, and even to the multitude. If a painter were to be seen attempting to *paint a NAME, or a SIGN*, with the *same color* as that of the SIGN BOARD; the very million would set him down for insane. But I ask; What avails this, provided Philosophers in their speculations have been altogether blind to the fact; which it is wholly undeniable they have been? The inadvertency thus manifested, is a striking and indeed an edifying proof, how far philosophical acumen may be foiled, and actually has been so, both in other metaphysicians and in yourself, when all writers on the Subject, although sharpened by the use of controversy, have entirely overlooked and have absolutely reasoned in the face of the fact. How vastly you, in particular, have reasoned thus; I deem it yet indispensably necessary to show. In the interim I must observe, that it is not even *what ordinary men in one sense know*, that is of any utility in Science, if, owing to any fatality, Philosophers in their teaching *never happen to ADVERT to it*. To this I have to add, that I have given you undeniable proofs of my most earnest desire to confine such strictures as these to private discussion; and that it is to your fixed, and I must say arbitrary resolve, to deny me all philosophical consideration, that you must attribute whatever animadversions you have forced from me, in what I hope must be considered a very natural and justifiable struggle.

It appears, from your *Foot Note* and your last Letter together, not only that you had adverted to the fact in question *more than forty years ago*, but also that you did not, in the mention of it, consider the matter as any "*novelty*." It is impossible I should doubt your direct assertion; and therefore I conclude the thing has, at some particular times, been viewed by you as you have

stated: but you will pardon me for observing, that there is a circumstance, which, as it stands, appears to me to require some explanation; and, inasmuch as it is deeply important to the advancement of the Subject of Perception, I here state it for your notice. In the First Volume of your "*Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*," Chap. 1. Sect. 3. 8<sup>vo.</sup> ed. pp. 91, 92, 93. in giving a succinct account of Dr. Reid's Theory, you say, that, from his view of the subject it follows,

*"That, although by the constitution of our nature, certain sensations are rendered the constant antecedents of certain perceptions, yet it is just as difficult to explain how our perceptions are obtained by their means, as it would be, upon the supposition that the mind were all at once inspired with them, without any concomitant sensations whatever."*

This doctrine of Reid, moreover, you therein immediately make your own: for, in the very next paragraph, you express yourself as follows:

*"These remarks are general, and apply to all our various perceptions; and they evidently strike at the root of all the common theories upon the subject."*

Now, Sir, along with the first of these two passages I must beg to repeat the following one, as contained in the *Foot Note* of your DISSERTATION.

*"To my apprehension nothing can appear more manifest than this, that if there had been no VARIETY in our sensations of colour, and still more if we had had no sensation of colour whatever, the organ of sight could have given us no information, either with regard to FIGURES or to DISTANCES."*

To the best of my understanding, these two passages form one of the most manifest and insoluble contradictions that words can frame; but I conclude you can reconcile them if you should judge it fit. All I can say

is, that the first of the two passages is continued on to the *Fifth Edition* of your Elements; and that I believe it must, of itself alone, most completely warrant me, in the opinion of every reader, for having all along supposed (until I saw your Dissertation) that you never could have contemplated the fact of a VARIETY of colors being necessary for the perception of *Figure* or *Outline*. If therefore you should not judge it behoves you to reconcile the two passages; I am satisfied.—One observation I must beg leave to make; which is, that, if ever there was a place in your writings, in which the notice of the fact of a VARIETY of colors ought to have been introduced, I think it was that place where you have expressed your approbation of Reid's doctrine; because it destroys that doctrine. In a word; it must carry conviction to the most ordinary understanding, that you annihilated the Theory of Reid the moment you uttered the *Foot Note* in your DISSERTATION: although in the act of so doing it has by some means escaped your acumen.

I fully trust I have now produced the most decisive tests, that I was well warranted in demanding your public acknowledgment of my priority in the generic fact of a VARIETY of colors. And I must distinctly inform you that I shall always think you have not rendered me complete justice, until you shall acknowledge this priority in some public vehicle of as extensive a circulation as the one in which you have overshadowed my claim: although I am perfectly disposed to make every allowance for you that is compatible with justice to myself and to the possible progress of the Subject in which I am engaged. My views have been obstructed during five years by what has appeared in your Dissertation; and I hope it will be admitted, that when an individual has devoted a large portion of his life to the advance-

ment of general truth, he ought not to have his whole labor rendered abortive by any such accident. I have naturally therefore sought for relief; but I have never entertained any feeling of "*offence.*"

I must particularly here observe, that, had the science in question been like that of any of the principal branches of physical science, which engage the attention of a large class of readers, and are, to a certain degree, extensively understood; the effect of what you have published would have been vastly less prejudicial than in the existing case. But the science of pneumatology engages the attention of but comparatively few, and still fewer understand its merits; and, what is more, a strong feeling of incredulity has long pervaded the public mind with regard to any advance being made, especially in the subject of PERCEPTION: It is impossible therefore to doubt the effect it must have, upon readers in general, to have any thing uttered by such a distinguished authority as your own, which appears to call in question either the originality or the importance, of any matter that is advanced as having both these claims by an author who is but little known to the public. The result, if not counteracted, must manifestly be fatal to his hopes.

Finally, Sir, I must beg to offer some remark upon that passage of your Letter wherein you are pleased to say, that, "If from this principle which has so long remained barren in the hands of others, you have been able to deduce any important consequences, the greater is the praise due to your inventive powers, and to your philosophical sagacity." And here, Sir, I will address you as the person who, both by public acknowledgment and from your own conscious superiority, has for a long series of years stood far pre-eminent in Pneumatological Science, especially in this

Country; a situation which involves very great responsibility. And in this situation I will ask, Whether the above sentence is all that the Philosophical World has a claim to expect from you, with regard to a matter which, as I have before remarked, has been pointed out to your attention by most impartial public criticism, and which, from a single glance of your eye, must flash upon you a full conviction of the predicament in which the Theory of Dr. Reid now stands?

You have, somewhere, in your writings, quoted with marked approbation a saying of Mr. Burke, to the effect "*that Science ought not to be suffered to stagnate.*"—I must ask you, therefore, Whether in this instance, and in the case of every one of the steps which I have been making in the present Subject since the year 1812, you have not, so far as in you lay, permitted science to stagnate?

In another part of your writings, you have recorded the anecdote of Dr. Clarke, with whom Bishop Berkeley had an interview, and whom Berkeley charged with want of candor, for avoiding the question concerning an external world from a consciousness of being unable to answer his arguments against it. In What other light, Sir, am I to regard you, unless you stand forth and give, as I can assert is expected of you by some of your warmest admirers, either your *assent* or your *dissent* to the conclusiveness of that analysis of Perception which has been, under such peculiar circumstances, calling upon your attention?

That analysis you will now find re-stated in the Second Chapter of the following Volume, together with the supplementary matter which I have deemed requisite for its completion, in order to embrace some special modifications of the phenomena: and if you should not choose to furnish the world with a specific opinion with regard to

it, I trust the public mind will be satisfied what conclusion to draw. It was not thus, Sir, that you treated the strictures of Dr. Priestley upon the Theory of Reid. You found Dr. Priestley's ground very assailable; and you have not spared him. You will permit me to add, that any individual who has purchased and studied your works, and sacrificed much time upon them, has a special claim upon your consideration, besides the general claims of mankind.

It would be out of the question to suppose, that any avocations in which you either are or can be engaged, ought for a moment to prevent your furnishing a decisive opinion upon the subject; because, indisputably, there is no part of the Superstructure of the Philosophy of the Mind, that is of importance at all comparable with any material change in its Foundations, and with the Physical and Moral Consequences of that change. Neither, indeed, could it occupy any portion of your time: because the analysis of Perception, in point of fact, consists of *only Four Self-evident Propositions*; and the very first aspect of it is sufficient to fill your mind with a complete view of its bearing upon the Theory of Reid.

You will proceed in this as you judge best. Those who come after will certainly judge between us: but I confess, I hope the merits of the Subject cannot now be hid from our contemporaries.

You have, Sir, alluded to some hypothetical matter contained in the Essay on Consciousness, which I sent to you in the year 1812. I frankly confess that the Essay in question is not a legitimate work: although I fully expect that some part, even of the hypothetical matter of it, will one day find a consideration which you very little anticipate. The *matter of fact* of that Essay, however, had, besides the honor of your favorable partial admis-

sions, from the beginning found the approbation of other persons of acknowledged erudition ; and I think you cannot but be informed that it originated in very peculiar circumstances, in a most remote Country, secluded far from philosophical aids, and even from the converse of men ; and was afterwards prepared and submitted to the press in the midst of years of debilitated health, and in the prospect of approaching dissolution. No sooner had some measure of returning constitution admitted of my application to study what had been done by those who have gone before me, than I was led fully to appreciate the illegitimacy of that procedure into which speculative minds, in every age of the world, have been disposed to fall, who have not been initiated into the principles of the Inductive Logic. The series of years which have elapsed since then, has certainly been time sufficient, if I have made good use of it, to place me upon very different ground.—I believe, Sir, I may venture to invite you to examine, in the following Volume, whether you can find any vestige of a writer who once amused himself with an hypothesis ; and, indeed, I may say the same with regard to the subject matter of every one of the small tracts which have been presented for your notice, for some years past.

I have now only to add, upon various grounds, my unfeigned regret to that which you have done me the honor to express, that there should be any matter of difference between us ; and my sincere wish, that the matter may terminate to the advancement of general truth, without leaving any unpleasant reflection in the mind of either. I have, in the course of the following Volume, had occasion to offer considerable strictures upon Dr. Reid's philosophy and your own. I am glad that this happened while I had yet an expectation from you of

a public acknowledgment of my claim, that it may not be supposed I was therein biassed by a feeling of offence. Your Philosophy has in me a most earnest opponent: but, throughout, an opponent forward to do justice to your great and distinguished merits, and incapable of a wish to detract from them. Always acknowledging these;

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN FEARN,



## PREFACE.

---

THE leading Chapter of the present Volume being intended to comprise, among its other topics, an introduction to that part of the Philosophy of our mental constitution which is treated in the sequel ; the principal object of this preface is merely that of furnishing an explanation of the arrangement which has been adopted, with regard to the various Subjects of the work.

The Powers and Operations of the Human Mind are so intimately connected and blended among themselves, that there is hardly any species of thought which does not comprehend the exercise of many of these Powers together. On this account, there is perhaps no practicable division of our mental Faculties which would not be liable to some objection. The most usual general division of these Faculties, which has been followed by our best writers on the Subject, has been that which disposes them into the SPECULATIVE and the ACTIVE Powers ; and I do not contemplate any different general plan.

It is with the consideration of what is called the *speculative* part of our constitution, including also

the *substantive*, that the Volume now before the reader is entirely occupied. But, in the investigation of the speculative Powers, I have been led to adopt an arrangement which differs very widely from that embraced by any preceding writer;—an innovation which might naturally appear strange and illogical, if no reason were assigned for it.

It will be remarked, in the course of reading, that, after having considered only so much of the mere sensitive part of our nature as is requisite for our *Intuitive Faculty or Judgment* to operate upon, the plan entertained has led, at once, to an analysis of *that Faculty itself*, together with that of its *Objects in General*; which latter make up the great *Category of Relation*: And this consequently brings in a discussion of the different topics which form the subsequent Chapters of the Volume.

Previously to this, indeed, it will appear, that what has heretofore been called *External Perception* is demonstrably a legitimate act of our Judgment, exercised between any two of our own Sensations; and, that every perceived figure, or outline of an object, is purely a Relation between some two Sensations. It will therefore, I have little doubt, be admitted to have been strictly logical, to follow up the Chapter of Perception with that which treats of Judgment and Relations: But it will be observed with surprise, and perhaps at first with dissatisfaction, that the usual order of

precedence, or succession, of the Faculties of the Mind, is in this case remarkably violated.

Before I attempt to offer any justification of this proceeding ; I deem it expedient to present a statement, of the two very different arrangements which have been adopted, by two of the latest and most distinguished writers on the Science of Mind which this Country has produced ; and both of them of the same School.

The Speculations of one of these authors are graduated in the following order.

“Of the Powers we have by means of the External Senses.”—“Memory.”—“Conception.”—“Abstraction.”—“Judgment.”—“Reasoning.”

The Scale adopted by the other, consists of—

“The Powers of External Perception.”—“Attention.”—“Conception.”—“Abstraction.”—“Association of Ideas.”—“Memory.”—Imagination.”—To which, in a subsequent Volume, is added an investigation of the nature of “Reason.”

The great discrepancy between these two Scales, (especially when we consider that they are the adoptions of two writers who have, if compared with other authors on the same subject, manifested a very unusual extent of consonance in their several opinions,) furnish a certain and striking proof that philosophers have yet gained but a very confused knowledge of the precise limits which bound and separate the various Powers or Faculties of the Mind. Upon the arrangements

in question, however, I propose no present animadversion: my sole intention in bringing them forward, upon this occasion, being to offer an indubitable reason whereon I ground a hope, that a reader will not condemn the order which I have been led to prefer, until he shall have duly weighed the consequences in the sequel.

It remains to state the general reasons which have induced me to deviate so materially from the usual course.

*First.* It is, I apprehend, a fact, although it has been very generally overlooked, that every operation or thought of the mind comprehends an exercise of our *Judgment*, because every species of mental act includes some sort of *Relation*. It will be shown, in its proper place, that our Sensations themselves, notwithstanding they have uniformly been supposed to be *simple* affections of the mind, are in reality *very complex* ones; being, for the most part, made up of a tissue of Relations, interwoven together with their primary or substantive elements. And the same remark, I imagine, applies with regard to every *object*, and *exercise*, not only of Reasoning and of Abstraction, but also of Imagination, of Memory, and Perception, and of Simple Apprehension itself.

If this view of the matter should be substantiated; it will be granted, that, in order to understand an analysis of any other of the Faculties above mentioned, it is essential we should be pre-

viously put in possession of the principles of that which operates in, and in point of fact forms the basis of them all. A striking example of the truth of this remark is furnished by the fact of Perception: which has uniformly been considered as being either *mere sensation*, or, at the utmost, an *instinctive result of some sort*; whereas, its analysis shows it to be so legitimately an act of our Intuitive Faculty, in the discernment of a Relation between two Sensations, that, logically considered, the proposed Chapter of PERCEPTION ought to have been made no other than a Section of the Chapter of JUDGMENT AND RELATIONS; and the two Subjects are divided merely for the sake of convenience, and on account of that precedence which the act of Perception has in the order of our intercourse with the world around us.

This explanation, I hope, lets in a considerable light upon the reasons which have governed me, in the arrangement adopted. But much more will these reasons have weight, if it should appear, in the result, that the *Category of Relation* differs in reality, and most extremely, from that nature which has heretofore been ascribed to it.

In addition to this primary reason for letting the Faculty of Judgment take precedence in the order of the mental Powers; there are other considerations, which I think are not wanting in moment.

The Faculties of Memory, Imagination, and Conception, (which are usually treated next after Perception by means of the External Senses,) are

sufficiently understood by every man, from the teaching of nature alone, to enable him to exercise those Faculties for every purpose of comprehending an analysis of Judgment and Relations. But I will hazard the belief that no man can acquire a philosophical knowledge of Imagination, Conception, or Memory, or even of Sensation itself, until after he has comprehended the nature of Judgment and its Objects in general.

Another, and a very different consideration from the above is, that, although the analyses of the other Faculties of the Mind are certainly very important in a subordinate point of view, the due understanding of their nature involving the advancement of the human mind in the Fine Arts, and even in the Sciences; it must however be granted that the investigation of them does not comprehend, or at all bear upon, any of those great questions in philosophy, the solution of which would form any of the principal desiderata that have engaged the attention of thinking men. In a word; the subordinate Faculties in question are not fields which contain discovery: These Faculties, therefore, will stand first with such writers only, on the Science of Mind, as have their principal attention directed to the cultivation of literary taste, and to the arts with which that taste is connected. By these observations, I would not be understood to deny the influence which the Faculties in question have over the moral bent and conduct of the Species. All I design to assert,

is, that the analysis of them ought to be *postponed* to that of our Great Faculty of Intuition.

There is yet another consideration, which cannot in strictness be refused admittance here; namely, that our acts of Judgment must, in point of fact, *in the very beginning, precede* any act of Imagination, or of Memory: Or, at least, it may be affirmed that Judgment does *not presuppose* any other knowledge, or act, except that of Sensation alone; whereas, I have already suggested, it will distinctly appear, that the exercise of all the other Powers must involve that of Judgment.

If I may suppose the order of the Faculties here-in adopted, to be logical for the reasons assigned; it will appear, in the progress of the work, that the investigation of the Faculty of Judgment, or, rather, the series of analyses of the Subject of Relation in General and of its Principal Species, together with the considerations of Space and Time, unavoidably fill up the whole of the present Volume and extend it to the fullest convenient size. So much, indeed, is this the case; that one great Species of Relation, which is repeatedly mentioned in the course of the Volume, as being intended to form one of its most considerable topics, namely, that of Necessary Connection, has been thereby excluded, together with that of Number and some others: although the materials of them were nearly prepared, and I had fully intended to comprehend them in the present publication.

Nothing in this Volume, however, has any *dependence* upon the Speculations thus excluded; and I regret the postponement of them the less, from the extent of matter at risk, in the thing as it now stands.

The Speculations reserved, may, in point of fact, come in more appropriately with some others, (which, according to my plan, must at any rate have extended the work beyond a single Volume), because I think the concluding Chapter of the present Series, forms the most proper termination of that part of the work which primarily regards our Faculty of Judgment, since it is therein exercised upon the evidence we have of our own substantive existence and that of other Finite Intellectual Beings.

In any event, I do not contemplate an enlargement, or alteration, of the matter now submitted; my desire being rather to push forward, if health and circumstances permit. And if the reception of the present offering should lead me to hazard the publication of a Second Volume, it will of course be adapted to the first.

As I anticipate that the Title given to the work will not escape animadversion; it may be proper to offer a few words with regard to it. I am as ready as the most fastidious critic can be to think, that, looking to myself, the humbler Title of an **ESSAY** would have appeared much more becoming what is to be contained under it. And I hope



that those who know me will be of opinion, that I am not naturally addicted to mistate my pretensions. But, upon the present occasion, I had a higher duty to perform than even that of manifesting humility. I do not deny that I offer the following Speculations in competition with other Works which have appeared under equivalent Titles; and, therefore, I should have deeply compromised the interests of the Subject if I had, by the adoption of a loose title, affected a diffidence with regard to the legitimacy (perhaps I might say the rigor) with which the different topics have been investigated; which, at this stage of my devotion to them, it would rather be discreditable to me to feel; at the same time that I do not in the least hereby presume that I have avoided a proportion of faults, but leave it entirely to the candid and judicious reader to estimate the extent of that proportion.

To this statement, I shall only add; that, during the time I have been employed on the Subject, I have bestowed upon it a much more intense and exclusive application, than I believe it would be very easy for an individual to do, whose time should be at all engaged in any collateral avocation. If therefore it be true, that the object of my pursuit was to be obtained, not by looking without, but by looking within; I have some faint hope that, upon this ground, I may escape the charge of any unpardonable presumption.



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# CHAPTER I.

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OF THE VIEWS ENTERTAINED BY PHILOSOPHERS WITH REGARD TO MATTER AND TO MIND.—AND OF THE GENERAL MORAL CONSEQUENCES OF THESE VIEWS.

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## *Preliminary Observations.*

**P**REVIOUSLY to entering upon the subjects which will be treated in the following Chapters, it appears requisite to take a comprehensive and in great part a critical view, of what has been done in that primary department of the Philosophy of the Mind which forms the course of the intended investigation ; and to suggest the principal result contemplated in the prosecution of the work.

With regard to the VIEWS which will be unfolded in the course of this preliminary Chapter, considered distinctly from any matters of criticism which it may contain, it appears material to state, that they are delineated, solely, from the expectation founded upon that analysis of the act and phenomena of perception which is to follow. Looking to the different considerations which will be pre-

viously introduced ; there is reason to hope they will be found to possess a sufficient degree of truth and importance. But in order to render the application of the analysis *availing*, to the ultimate extent here contemplated, it certainly requires that not a shadow of doubt should exist over the rigorous character and conclusiveness of its evidence.

As the propositions, upon which the philosophical and moral consequences together depend, do not belong to physical or inductive science, but form a special department of necessary truth ; and as these propositions have already, to a certain extent, undergone the sentence both of private and of public judgment ; I hope it is warrantable in me to trust, that what will be advanced in the two leading Chapters of this Volume, claim by far the first place, in the most considerable series of speculations in which I could ever have hoped to engage. The general judgment alone can confirm this trust, and secure the matter at stake from that suspicion of latent fallacy, which may justly be supposed liable to exist, even in subjects of demonstrative or intuitive evidence, until they have undergone repeated scrutiny. But, if the result should be found to justify the confidence which has been reposed ; I have the encouragement to reflect, there are forthcoming ample evidences to vouch, that, in the principal application I intend to make of the analysis, the united voices of philosophers have already ratified the conclusion I shall draw.

In offering this notice, I would not diminish the real importance of the topics which compose the subsequent Chapters of the Volume. These subjects consist of the primary Operations and Objects of the Human Intellect. If, therefore, they do not herein prove of considerable interest; it must arise entirely from the manner in which I have treated them, and cannot proceed from any want of importance in the subjects themselves. The *General Subject of Relation*, from its comprehensiveness, and its *Subordinates*, forms indeed, *in a mere logical view*, the principal labour of the undertaking.

The necessity which every succeeding writer, upon the science of mind, finds himself placed under, to examine and remove some part of the superstructure, or materials, which had been amassed by those who have gone before him, has been a common subject of complaint, and affords a certain test that the foundations of the science itself have never yet been laid. It is vain therefore to expect, that any other mode of procedure can be had, until some fortunate accident shall lead to solidity in our fundamental assumptions and conclusions.

If it should be supposed, that, in this, as in other cases, a writer might state his own views directly, without any regard to what has been done by preceding authors in the same field of research; it may be pronounced virtually impossible. Most read-

ers who would feel interested in any new train of metaphysical speculation, have already had their minds occupied with the opinions of various other writers on the subject ; and it is sufficiently known that the prejudices imbibed in this field of inquiry, lay a peculiar hold of the imagination and render it, in a great measure, incapable of receiving even the most demonstrative proofs of any new principles, unless the prominent points of existing prepossession be first *distinctly* exploded.

In proof of the truth of these observations, I need only appeal to the very large proportion which is occupied by philosophical criticism, in the works of our latest and most eminent metaphysical writers ; especially those of this country.

In this case, therefore, I am evidently subjected to the same necessity with other writers, to examine such principles of preceding inquirers as would otherwise stand materially in the way of my own views. In the execution of this task, however, I rest upon an earnest desire to approach the truths of nature by the most direct paths which circumstances have left open to me.

The attempt to furnish the requisite criticisms on the doctrines of my predecessors, I have reason to feel, is an undertaking sufficiently arduous. The result must prove whether I have been adequately given to the subject to justify a hazard of such responsibility. Had those of the following

speculations which regard the *Subject of Perception* and the *Nature of our Primary Ideas*, appeared immediately subsequent to the Essay concerning Human Understanding; the analysis, which I propose to offer, of this part of our constitution, would have been found to have accorded so essentially with the *guarded* part of Locke's doctrine upon the same subject; and unquestionably so with that of Plato, and of other ancient philosophers who had derived their views from a still earlier source; that, all that would have been requisite, upon this head, would have been merely to point out the peculiar nature of that course which has conducted me to the same conclusions. But the Ideal Theory, as it was modified by some other of the ancient philosophers; and, still more, as it passed through the hands of Berkeley and of Hume; exhibits such a complexion of profound and mischievous errors, as indispensably demand to be carefully pointed out, upon one hand. While the new and singular philosophy of the School of Reid, which originated at a later period, and has been energetically followed up during the greater part of a century, presents, upon the other side, an accumulation of matter, which, from the influence it must be supposed to possess, cannot be passed over without a very particular examination.

The labour, therefore, and the space it will occupy, must unavoidably be commensurate with the matter to be investigated. But, if in the result it shall be found that the Science of the Mind

has retrograded ; it will, doubtless, be granted that any success which may be had, in recalling philosophical opinion from that recession and fixing it upon a different course, will be equivalent to an actual advance in the subject. Upon this ground, I entertain some hope, that the strictures which I shall be induced to hazard, among the various topics which will constitute this preliminary chapter, will form not the least considerable part of these speculations.

## SECTION FIRST.

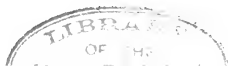
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OF THE CAUSES OF THE WANT OF PROGRESS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIND.—OF THE PARITY OF ACQUISITION BETWEEN ANCIENT AND MODERN PNEUMATOLOGISTS.—AND OF A CERTAIN VIEW, ENTERTAINED EQUALLY BY MATERIALISTS, AND IMMATERIALISTS, WITH REGARD TO THE MIND'S MOST GENERAL NATURE.

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### 1.

WHEN we reflect that the elementary study of the Human Mind has, in a greater or less degree, engaged the attention of nearly all the most profound philosophers in Europe, since the revival of learning; it might certainly argue something insuperable in the nature of the subject, to observe the vast disparity of acquirement which has been made in it, compared with the progress attained in what is now exclusively called *physical science*. But on a mature consideration of the circumstances in which the science of pneumatology has hitherto been prosecuted, it will be found, that they amount to a sufficient reason of all the existing disproportion; without the supposition of any insuperable barrier in the nature of the subject itself.



Some of these circumstances are sufficiently obvious to remark, and have long been acknowledged ; although the antagonist principles of human nature have prevented that due exertion of rationality which is necessary for their effectual removal. The force, we might almost say the omnipotence of preconceived opinion, especially when re-enforced by that association which is usually formed, in learned minds, between pneumatological assumptions and religious opinions, is a theme which has been too often urged to require its being dwelt upon here : but it must always, however, be *enumerated*, as a most powerful and continual cause of obstruction ; from which the physical sciences have, for a long time, been fortunately exempted.

Among the remaining reasons of the want of progress, there is one which hardly appears to be at all adverted to ; but which, nevertheless, I conceive to be of essential moment. This consideration is, that, whereas it is universally acknowledged to be a matter of extreme difficulty to acquire, in any degree, a power of critically distinguishing those elements of thought, which, in their various combinations, make up the complex and more obvious phenomena of the mind, yet, perhaps, there is hardly a single instance in which the study of the subject has been prosecuted, with any thing like that laborious, continued, and methodical intension, which has produced the justly boasted advances in natural science. \* It would be vain to



attempt to point out any considerable number of writers, who have made the study of pneumatology a *principal* pursuit, or who have therein emulated the *systematic* labours of the physiologist, the chymist, or the astronomer. Then Why (it may be asked) should we expect, that the most subtile and difficult of all the sciences, should make any proportionate advance, under so vast a disproportion, or at least so inferior a disposition, of applied mental energy?

With regard to writers in general, upon the operations and phenomena of the mind; it is manifest from their known other avocations, from the early period of life at which many of them have published their *first* opinions, and from the internal evidence of their various productions, that they have indulged the subject only as a very secondary employment, if not rather, in frequent instances, as an amusement or diversion from other and more indispensable undertakings. It will hardly be denied, that a large proportion of these writers have gathered their speculations from the stores of ancient literature, usually mixed up with analogies of some particular physical science in which they have happened to be immersed, rather than from a laborious and analytical examination of the phenomena of the mind itself.

There indeed appears, with the exception of Locke, scarcely more than one British author, whose writings carry internal evidence of his having attempted to analyze the *primary* phenomena of his

own mind, after the manner now prescribed for all physical investigations. And it is lamentable to be under the necessity to add, that the observations and experiments of this philosopher have been vitiated, or their results misapprehended; and the fruits which would otherwise, in all probability, have followed such a legitimate course of analysis, have been prevented; owing to as vast a weight of prejudice as ever depressed the human understanding.

That the science of mind has been thus obstructed by accidental causes, and not by any known necessary and attained limit, is farther manifest from the fact that all writers on the subject have, hitherto, either expressly or tacitly, adopted some principles or data from the scholastic ages, *unexamined*. Those authors who have been most aware of this source of error, and most pointed in their directions to avoid it, are far from being altogether clear of the charge of having fallen into it. It will be granted to be a conspicuous and not an invidious example of this inconsistency, when I remark, that the illustrious founder of the inductive logic, himself, notwithstanding his admirable general caution, in that work in which it was his great aim to banish from the theatre of philosophy all hypothetical assumptions, has, nevertheless, implicitly embraced the most gratuitous and erroneous conceits with regard to the nature of MIND. Thus, among various other equally unfounded notions on the subject, he adopted the ancient assumption of an *Intellect*, distinct from

the *Soul*. And he confidently asserted that the Soul is a *material thing*, or, rather, the result of a juxtaposition of material atoms.

From this procedure of BACON we discern, that though the *Inductive Logic of Body* and the *Inductive Logic of Mind* were produced at the same birth, and nurtured in the same cradle, there has, from the beginning, been a sinister fatality attendant upon the latter, which has distorted its frame and debased its constitution: and it is certain that the generality of subsequent writers on the subject have not laboured in a way the most conducive to the cure of that original deformity.

## 2.

It must be confessed, that, from the causes above-mentioned, when we compare the extent of knowledge attained in the science of mind by the ancient philosophers whose opinions have been handed down to us, with that now actually possessed by the moderns; there appears, upon the whole, a surprising parity of advancement, if advance it can be called, rather than *consent* on the part of the latter. A similar mixture of important truths, with erroneous and often grossly contradictory assumptions, runs through the whole mass of what has been elaborated by each of the parties in this comparison. The same fundamental questions, which were agitated in the early days of Greek philosophy, still remain unsettled and disputed. And it

justly claims both our remark and our acknowledgment, that there is hardly a single argument, or opinion, started by any of the moderns, with regard to these very momentous subjects, which has not been *anticipated* by some one, or other, of the ancient writers.

The question concerning the *Origin of our Knowledge*, is still in the very same state of indecision (I mean with regard to the general suffrage of philosophers) in which it was left by the opposite opinions of Plato and Aristotle. The erroneous reference of all our knowledge, directly to the *informations of sense*, has been maintained by LOCKE, as the result of a *regular analysis*; and, as such, it has been subscribed to by a host of subsequent writers; whereas the same thing was only *loosely suggested* by the STAGIRITE. And the unfounded doctrine of both, has become the creed of a large proportion of modern metaphysicians, owing principally to the mistaken labours of the English Philosophers.

The contrary doctrine, which ascribes our knowledge to the exercise of certain *intellectual powers*, has indeed been asserted by a few enlightened writers of modern times. But this has been done only upon the same, and not *upon more enlarged or more analytical ground*, than that which was embraced in its favor by Plato himself. And, it is remarkable, that no writer has attempted to refute the analysis of Locke; nor does it even appear to have gained the attention of philosophers, on this

side of the question, that a *General Analysis of the Subject or Category of Relation* is the *only ground*, upon which the question concerning the *Origin of our Knowledge* can ever be completely investigated.

Another fundamental question, namely, that concerning the *General Nature of our Ideas*, is, in the present era, marked by a greater diversity and extravagance of opinions than it was even in the days of the Peripatetics. With regard to our *sensations*, and their *representatives in the imagination and memory*; there appears, on every hand, only a deplorable darkening of the subject. Those writers who have gratuitously supposed these sensations and other ideas to be *material substances*, and have placed them in the *brain*, are not near so unjustifiably in array against inductive evidence, as those, upon the other hand, who, with an astonishing contempt of the acknowledged rule of philosophising, assume that the spectral appearances which we call red, blue, and yellow, are *not spread out*, that is, have neither length, breadth, nor divisibility of any kind.

With regard to a third primary question; it is here first to be observed, that some writers have supposed that the *Scepticism of Hume*, with respect to the *existence of minds*, has flowed logically from the common theory of Ideas, considered as the *immediate objects of our perception*. Accordingly, therefore, a great deal of erudite labour has been

employed to *deny that our ideas are any such objects*. But it may safely be affirmed that Hume's celebrated conclusion could possess no validity whatever, except only upon the strength of that assumption which was embraced by *Berkeley*, namely, that our *sensations or ideas are an order of beings existing distinctly by themselves, and are not substantially identical with the thinking subject or mind*. The moment that we, on the contrary, recognise the real fact in nature, that our sensations and other ideas are nothing but modifications or affections of the mind itself, the Scepticism of Hume (*upon this point*) becomes a subject not of serious refutation, but of ridicule.

Now I have adverted, in this place, to the Scepticism in question, only for the sake of remarking, that the *substantial identicalness of our sensations with the mind*, was subscribed to by ARISTOTLE, no less than by REID; although the particular modification of this identity as supposed by the former, any more than that assumed by the latter, is not that which can be supported by analysis. And it is also to be added, that the recognition of this great truth, namely, that *our thoughts are nothing but modifications of ourselves*, has been subscribed to, although indeed not consistently or uniformly, by philosophers in every age, even by those who in their general doctrines have appeared to deny it.

It may, perhaps, be of some importance to remark, here, that there have, in point of fact, been, from the beginning, two very different Ideal Theo-

ries, entertained in the conceptions of philosophers. By this distinction I do not mean the various *mere modifications* which have at different times been fabricated of the Ideal Theory, but two essentially different SYSTEMS ; which, when followed out, lead to the most opposite general results. One of these schemes, namely, that which was embraced by Bishop Berkeley, and was the prevalent general hypothesis of the subject, supposes the existence of ideas as *a distinct order of Beings, loose or detached from the mind*, although occasionally residing or floating in some manner therein : which ideas are, by all the different sects of idealists, supposed to be the *immediate*, or, rather, the *only objects of our perception*. The other scheme, which however does not appear to have at any time gained a name, or to have been at all insisted upon, especially since the revival of learning, likewise assumes ideas as the immediate and only objects of our perception ; but, with this vast and essential difference from the former one, that it considers these ideas *not as detached loose beings*, but as the *actual affections or modifications of the mind itself*. This last mentioned assumption, which has been left, to a surprising degree, unappreciated and neglected in modern times, is no other than that which is ascribed to the earliest Atomists ; and is the same which appears to have been derived by Aristotle, and previously by Plato, from the most ancient sources of human authority. It is also the predominant, although *not the uniform or consistent doctrine of Locke* : and it has even been recog-

nised, though with a great preponderancy of expression against it, by Malebranche, by Berkeley, and by Hume; the most extravagant of the adherents to the assumption of loose detached ideas.

I have, as a preparatory consideration, adverted to this most ancient form of the Ideal Theory, (which also, in one sense, may be called the most general form of it, since, in despite of every intention to the contrary, it pervades, in occasional expressions, the writings of all the different authors who have asserted the general hypotheses of detached ideas,) because it is that upon which I profess to insist.

Having been led to touch here, at all, on the Scepticism of Hume; I conceive it may tend to remove some obscurity or confusion in the subject, to remark, that his Scepticism regards two very different natures. One of these, is *the existence of minds*: The other, *the reality of moral distinctions, and that of every other subject that is not resolvable into an impression upon some one of our senses*. This distinction I now point out for the sake of remarking, that it is *only the first mentioned* of the two kinds of Scepticism that Dr. Reid has in reality attacked, under his attack of the Ideal Theory. The other kind, namely that which questions the reality of the objects of our knowledge, and which is by far the most deserving of any serious refutation, I have here to observe, could not be affected



by the demolition of any system of the Ideal Theory, but can only be proceeded against upon the ground of RELATIONS; which I shall fully insist upon, in a subsequent part of this volume.

I have digressed farther than was intended, in order to show how little advantage, of any fundamental nature, has been gained by the moderns over the ancient inquirers into the *primary* operations and most general attributes of the mind: but I hope that the incidental remarks, which I have been induced to hazard, may be found in some degree conducive to the better understanding of the subject. In closing these strictures, it is to be acknowledged, that the moderns have introduced a rational method of philosophising into this science, in imitation of that which has already produced such valuable fruits in the cultivation of natural philosophy; and which, *if rigorously adhered to*, promises very different results from any that have yet awaited the labours of pneumatologists.

### 3.

The principal innovation which can properly be ascribed to the moderns, in the science of mind, or which can be set up as forming a great or important change from the views entertained by the ancient writers, is that which was suggested by the French Philosopher DES CARTES.

As this suggestion, moreover, has operated with a series of important consequences, upon the speculations and conclusions of two very eminent writers of our own country, whose opinions must be supposed to possess a considerable share of influence, especially among the literary classes of this Island; it appears unavoidable that I should advert particularly to it, previously to submitting what will be offered in the next section, with regard to the *assumed scope and limits of the philosophy of the mind*. Another and weighty reason for my touching upon this point, is, that it leads to the suggestion of one of the most important considerations which, I think, can be presented to the reader, within the whole scope of metaphysical research.

With this intention, therefore, I am to observe, first, that it appears to have been the universal opinion of the ancients that the *Sensitive Soul is an extended essence*. So uniformly was this tenet entertained by all preceding philosophers; that, as I have already remarked, the founder of the inductive logic appears to have adopted it without any scruple. The genius of Des Cartes, however, aimed at the root of this long-established tenet: and he therein, certainly, has the credit of having marked a notable epoch in the philosophy of the mind. He *assumed* that the *whole essence* of the mind, or, what amounts to the same thing, *its sole attribute*, consists in THINKING: By which scheme, he designed to place an infinite distinction be-

tween the *nature of mind* and the *nature of matter* ; the essence of which last he supposed to consist in EXTENSION.

In rejecting the distinction which had been made by the ancients, between the *Intellect* and the *Sensitive Soul*, and thus reducing *both to one same essence* ; I conceive, Des Cartes yielded to the truth of nature, and introduced a just and important simplicity in the subject. But when, in order to accomplish this, he judged it requisite to deny the *extension* of the Sensitive Soul ; which attribute the ancient philosophers and almost all the moderns after them have uniformly acknowledged ; I apprehend he suggested at once the most erroneous and most mischievous innovation that has ever been imagined.

This Cartesian innovation, however, has been entertained by some very eminent writers : And it has also, very naturally, been adopted by many persons of less competent judgment ; biassed, doubtless, by a supposition that it *exalts* the nature of the thinking principle, to have no property in common with what is believed to be a dead inert substance. It has, among other advocates of the first class, been embraced, especially, by the school of Reid ; the writers of which, consider it to be the greatest improvement that has been made in the study of pneumatology in modern times, and as forming the true line of demarcation between the science of *matter* and the science of *mind*.

I shall not enter into a consideration of the absurdities into which this assumption has driven its founder, Des Cartes himself; by making him place *our ideas* of extended objects in the *brain*, which he was manifestly compelled to do, since it is evident they could no longer be accommodated in a mind which was assumed to be wholly void of extension. Neither shall I animadvert upon the alternative proposed by Dr. Reid, namely, that of *depriving our ideas* (which, we are to observe, Des Cartes himself never thought of doing) *of all resemblance to figure or extension*. The object of the present observations is merely to remark, that the *consequence* of this Cartesian scheme has been that of a *great and general schism between the whole race of Pneumatologists*, considered as MATERIALISTS and IMMATERIALISTS; in which, the *extension or inextension* of the mind has been the grand object of dispute.

The consideration, however, which I desire principally to point out, in the present case, is, that the *immediate reason* of the controversy in question is a certain *assumption*, which BOTH PARTIES therein have been *equally forward to adopt*, as a truth altogether unquestionable; namely, that *if our sensations are extended*; or, which is the same thing, *if the mind itself is extended*; it must in this case be a MATERIAL ESSENCE: While, if the mind be a material essence, at all, it is certain that it cannot be *a simple principle*, but must be *a mere mode*, the result of an organisation of material atoms, and, consequently, a thing GENERABLE and

**CORRUPTIBLE.** Hence, we clearly discern a most powerful reason, why one set of men should, even upon very superficial appearances, eagerly advocate the *extension of the mind*; while another Sect, resting upon no more substantial evidence, should cling fast to the assumption that the mind is not of that nature which *they suppose* would admit of its destruction.

There is, indeed, a *third party* of philosophers; who, with Locke and Newton at their head, have considered the mind as being at once *both immaterial and extended*. But this party, which has, by some fatality, become of late altogether unfashionable in the metaphysical world, is not comprehended in the subject of my present animadversions. It may however be remarked, for a strange and unaccountable inconsistency in opinion, that, while the current of *physical doctrine* with regard to *matter*, has during half a century flowed strongly toward the conclusion that matter itself is no other than *an extended immaterial agent*, or rather that what we call body is no other than the *exerted energies of some spiritual principle*; yet, we find both the great contending sects of pneumatologists of the present day, agreed to unite their suffrages against any supposition that an IMMATERIAL MIND can possess the quality of extension.

What I have thus far adverted to, has been touched upon only as preparatory to the consider-

ation which is now to follow, and to which I would earnestly solicit the attention of my readers, as forming the great and ultimate object of the two leading chapters of this volume. It is to this suggestion that I pointed, in the outset of the present chapter; and, as I profess to have followed it, not in a light or hasty spirit of inquiry; nor, I hope, upon any ground that has not been carefully examined; I would here, with some confidence, recommend it to the serious consideration of every mind that is disposed to reflect deeply, and to think for itself upon matters of such momentous issue.

How profoundly *both* the above-mentioned contending sects of philosophers have been labouring in the dark, as to the CONSEQUENCES which they have agreed to suppose must follow *from proving the mind to be* AN EXTENDED ESSENCE, will become strikingly manifest from what I am now to submit, and which, at the same time, I have beforehand the satisfaction to reflect, will not be denied, since the thing which I am to propose is an acknowledged truth, and has been in the fullest manner recognised, even by those philosophers against whose general views it is now to be brought into operation.

The consideration which I have deemed as fully claiming to be prefaced thus emphatically, is briefly this, that, *provided it be established, upon a basis of legitimate science, as the result of a rigorous analysis, that our SENSATIONS ARE EXTENDED, and, as such, that the MIND ITSELF IS AN EXTENDED ESSENCE; it must then be so far from being supposable that the mind is a MATERIAL THING, that, on the*

*contrary, the very SUPPOSITION OF MATTER, or of the EXISTENCE OF A MATERIAL WORLD, must thereby be absolutely exposed for a chimera which has no foundation ; and must, unquestionably, be expunged from the page of philosophy, as having neither any inductive evidence, nor yet any rational suggestion of the understanding to support it.*

As for the *vouchers of the validity* of the above-mentioned conclusion ; not to interfere with other and more immediate considerations, I must beg to refer my readers to their proper place, in the Third Section of this chapter. I have introduced the mere mention of the thing here, only for the purpose of pointing out the importance (and very great therefore I consider that importance to be) of an inquiry into *the Scope and Limits proper to the Philosophy of the Mind* ; especially, as I humbly conceive that those limits are at present very erroneously estimated, to the serious prejudice of the views which I contemplate.

Supposing, however, for the moment, that the conclusion which I have now suggested is conditionally valid ; and, that the requisite condition for establishing its real existence, namely, the extension of the human mind were rigorously proved ; Curious and instructive it must appear, that MATERIALISTS, in asserting the extension of the mind, have been all along unwittingly labouring *to explode every evidence and argument in favor of a MATERIAL WORLD* : While IMMATERIALISTS, by assuming the existence of *TWO opposite essences*, that

of MIND and that of MATTER, have only been exerting their learning and ingenuity to *uphold the supposition of a brute inanimate substance diffused through space*; which supposition I have some confidence will appear, in a subsequent section, to have uniformly proved itself *one of the greatest of obstacles to the advancement of philosophy, and of calamities to the human race.*

## 4.

If it should be said, as I anticipate it will by those who are but superficially acquainted with the subject, that, in the view which is now indicated to the reader, I project a revival of the scheme of Berkeley; I would observe, that my ULTIMATE OBJECT is one and the same with that of Berkeley, *in so far as regards an explosion of the belief in a material world.* But, at the same time, I must particularly urge, that both the *reasonings* and the *data* upon which my own conclusion is to rest, are so essentially different from those employed by Berkeley, and the whole method of proof so foreign to that attempted by him: besides which the two speculations differ so vastly, in the one denying the reality of space and extension, while the other includes this as a fundamental principle; (not to enumerate other material distinctions) that I would formally protest against so deplorable a confusion of the subject, as that of confounding, or even *classing*, the two schemes together.

Those who know to what extent I have been



occupied with the subject, will perhaps grant me credit for having weighed the difference between the two attempts, before I ventured to proceed. And I may truly affirm, that it could have been no small difference between their two grounds, that could have encouraged me for a moment to hope, that I might at all conduce to the attainment of such an object, after the learning and genius of Berkeley had been exerted in vain.

With regard to my own views, and the foundation upon which they are grounded; I confess I am not at all discouraged in them by the failure of Berkeley. And I can at least say, that in avowing them on this occasion, I have embraced a course to which my judgment has never been *pledged* in any former publication; although my opinions have from the beginning inclined upon the same side. I therefore certainly am not betrayed into this procedure by a desire, usual in mankind, to maintain a judgment that has once been hazarded; nor have I been hasty to make up my mind to a conclusion of such unspeakable moment. I consider it, indeed, some reproach, that, under the influence of natural prejudice, I had so long demurred to the strength of evidences which render this conclusion the only one that sound philosophy can endure.

Upon this occasion, I must not omit to observe, that what has given additional and determining strength to the hope now entertained, is the con-

sideration that the state of the world is much more *ripe* for such a change in the general opinion of mankind, and especially of philosophers, than it was when Berkeley's "Principles of Human Knowledge" appeared.—Two causes, in particular, may be here enumerated, as operating to prepare the general opinion for this subject. The great political events which have passed upon the theatre of the world since Berkeley's attempt was made, and the appalling deluge of calamities which a certain cast of philosophical belief, now so prevalent in Europe, has *unnecessarily* infused into the completion of these events, cannot fail, upon one hand, to impress the most unreflecting persons, and to fill with the deepest concern those who *do* reflect: While, upon the other, we have, since the projection of the scheme of Berkeley, become considerably more generally enlightened; *especially with regard to the subject of MATTER*; and, what bears very importantly upon the subject, we have also, *by a new channel*, become possessed of the fact, that the oldest and in many respects the most luminous philosophy of our species, had led, though by what steps is altogether unknown, to *a most confirmed and lasting tenet, that the supposition of MATTER is nothing but a mere illusion*. With such a coincidence of stimulating circumstances, therefore, we should, I think, be worse than supine if our curiosity and interest were not excited, to examine, with the utmost attention and rigor, any set inquiry whose result appears to coincide with the desirable conclusion of that most ancient philosophy.

It may safely be affirmed, that there never was a time at which the question concerning the existence of a material world, or any evidence of its non-existence, ought to have been examined with so much interest as at the present epoch. The Sole ultimate proper object of Philosophy, is to augment and conserve the happiness of Sensitive Beings. And it possesses the self-evidence of an axiom that the most powerful *lever* for the elevation, or depression, of general happiness, is a belief, or an unbelief, of the existence of an Intelligent First Cause. It would be absurd to argue that this engine, even when embraced on the favorable side, has sometimes been unskilfully, and even very mischievously applied. The fact is true: but the result was accidental; and, whenever this power shall be directed upon wise and enlightened general principles, the consequence cannot be doubtful.—Accordingly, it is to be observed, that *the grand object of every Philosophy*, is to induce in mankind A BELIEF, either FOR or AGAINST an *Intelligent First Ruler of events*. This object has, in ordinary, been avowed by every Philosopher, in the foreground of his speculations; but sometimes from prudential considerations we find it only gradually or obliquely insinuated. Whichever course is pursued, and *whichever side is taken*, this, certainly, is the ultimate project that is entertained.

But it is now to be called to our attention, that those writers who have embraced the adverse side of the subject, have increased in number and in power, within the last century, to an extent which no

general observer can contemplate without dread. And, unquestionably, the world has never received such a practical lesson from Philosophical Infidelity as it has done under our own immediate observation. At no time, therefore, can it have been so seriously important to mankind, to enquire what are the real causes of this tide of baneful opinion and what is the probability of our being ever secured from the ravages of its practical results.

In a case so pregnant with consequences, I am tempted to hint a comparison, for which, perhaps, some of my readers may be very little prepared. It, doubtless, may startle many persons to be told, upon authority which cannot be doubted, that modern Europe, notwithstanding its high claims to be considered as the scientific light of the world, is, with regard to the present subject, in a state of no less than barbarous darkness, or rather what may be called vulgar prejudice, when compared with the contemporary people of remote and unestimated nations. Not only has it been, from time immemorial, a tenet of the ancient Hindoo philosophy; but it is now matter of notoriety, as a fact uniformly reported by writers of unquestionable veracity, that, even in the present day, "*multitudes of Musselmauns,*" as well as of Hindoos, are satisfied, "that all spirit is homogeneous, that the Spirit of God is in kind the same with that of man, and that, "*as material substance is mere illusion, there exists in this universe only one generic spiritual substance, the sole cause, efficient, substantial, and formal, of all*

“*appearances whatsoever, but endowed in the highest degree, with a sublime providential wisdom.*”

I forbear to enlarge upon this head at present; but shall resume the testimony and sentiments of Sir William Jones, upon this subject, in the sequel. In the mean time, I hope it may tend to stimulate both curiosity and serious reflection with regard to it, in the mind of the European philosopher, and in that of every person who may be philosophically disposed, to observe the striking *sublimity of belief* which actuates the vastly different races of mankind who form the distinct votaries of *Menou* and of *Mahomed*; While the disciples of NEWTON and the converts of BOSCOVICH, with few exceptions, are still grovelling in the *assumption of an INANIMATE BRUTE WORLD.*

When we find human conduct bottomed upon such a foundation as that ancient tenet just now adverted to, we cease to wonder at the prodigious and incredible manifestations of devotion in the Musselmaun and the Hindoo, in the *believed service of the DEITY* and in all the mistaken observances of the rites of their respective religions. What results, to the general happiness of the species, might not be expected; if *such a capability of virtue* in the human character were only exerted in a proper direction?

## SECTION SECOND.

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OF THE SCOPE AND LIMITS OF INQUIRY PROPER TO THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIND.

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### 1.

*Of the striking inconsistency in the Views which have  
been taken of this Subject.*

To those who are conversant on the subject, it must be obvious to remark, that the limits of inquiry prescribed for the physical sciences, are very materially contracted, within that extent which was contemplated by the founder of the inductive method; and, that a considerable reduction of these limits has taken place, even since the investigations and conclusions of the greatest philosopher of the inductive school.

How far this limitation is logical, or tenable, with regard to *all* the branches of what is now exclusively denominated *physical science*, I do not here intend to inquire; although this question will form a subject of speculation in the sequel: but I must in this place hazard the opinion, that it cannot hold

good with regard to the *Philosophy of the Mind*. The limits of this latter science are, indeed, I conceive, very far from having been ascertained, or justly laid down; and, if this opinion should appear to be ultimately well-founded, it becomes a primary consideration that the judgment of a reader on the subject, should, in the outset, be emancipated from any bias which it may have been led to contract, under any extant assumptions of philosophers.

Whatever can be justly asserted, with regard to the utility of the various *other* objects of the study of mind; I apprehend it will be shewn undeniably, from evidences which will be submitted in the next section, that the real importance of all these objects, taken together, is not greater, (*as affecting the general happiness of the species*) than that of the *consequences* which have arisen, and which must ever continue to flow, from the conclusions which mankind form, with regard to the MIND'S MOST GENERAL NATURE, and to the MOST GENERAL NATURE OF THE EXTERNAL EFFICIENT of our daily sensations: Both which subjects have, by a very distinguished British Metaphysician, been contemned and virtually proscribed, as being illegitimate and unfit objects of philosophical research.

The influence of a sentence pronounced by such authority, cannot fail to be of considerable extent: and more especially so, as this judgment *appears* to

be sanctioned by the acknowledged limitation of inquiry proper to the various branches of *natural science*; to which, in this respect, the *philosophy of the mind* has been supposed to be *perfectly analogous*. It therefore becomes the more urgent consideration, that I should solicit the attention of the reader, to the evidences which will be herein adduced, to show that the assumed limitation of the *science of mind* has neither any logical ground, nor yet so much as a *consistency of procedure* in its distinguished advocate, to support it.

The *inconsistency* to which I have now alluded, is so remarkable; and it forms, of itself alone, an argument so cogent; that I am induced to afford it the first consideration, here. At the same time, it may readily be imagined, that, if I were not fully assured it must present a species of evidence which is more than usually impressive, I would certainly have avoided placing it in so conspicuous a situation; even if any one should suppose that I am, at all, disposed to entertain objections of a light or trivial nature.

The eminent writer to whose views I have just adverted, is the Second, in succession, of a School which is entitled to very high consideration, among those which the last century has produced in the *Philosophy of the Mind*. And upon no account has its labours been more deserving of estimation, than for its uniform endeavours to introduce a rigid adherence to the acknowledged rule of philosophising, in this yet infant department of science.



It is, nevertheless, upon the present occasion, to be held up to particular remark, that this School took its *origin* from a desire of its founder *to assert the belief of a material world* by proving, as the result of a regular analytical inquiry, *that the human mind, or, what will be shewn to be the same thing, that any sensation of the human mind, is NOT EXTENDED.*

Such, in fact, were the two great objects which engaged the attention and urged the philosophical labours of Dr. Reid, in his "*Inquiry into the Mind on the Principles of Common Sense.*"—And such, too, were the speculations which have been subsequently advocated and promulged by Professor Stewart; who has, moreover, found it requisite to enter, himself, in his various publications, into these subjects, and this not merely with the view of pointing them out as topics to be avoided, but as the avowed follower of his predecessor, on one side of the subject. Yet, strange and unaccountable as it must certainly appear, it is in the very same Volumes that Mr. Stewart has thus eulogised the procedure of Reid, upon one hand; while he has contemned any inquiry concerning the extension, or inextension of the mind, as being unphilosophical, upon the other.

I am very sensible it must be natural to conjecture, especially in those who are acquainted with the great general attainments of this writer, that there is some mistake in the statement which I have just now offered. Upon this account, therefore, as well as on account of the influence which

the writings of Mr. Stewart must be supposed to have produced upon the general opinion, with regard to the proper objects and scope of the philosophy of the mind, I deem it requisite to go into such evidences of the correctness of my statement, as, I can have no doubt, must prove in the highest degree satisfactory.

*First*, therefore, I am to remark, that it is duly and in the fullest manner recognised by the School of Reid, that our *sensations are actual affections of the thinking principle or mind*. From this recognition, it is plainly no less than an identical proposition, that *any inquiry concerning the extension, or inextension, of our SENSATIONS, is an inquiry concerning the extension or inextension of the MIND ITSELF*. Now, the inconsistency which I here ascribe to Professor Stewart, is, that, while he has altogether co-incided with and followed Dr. Reid, in his entertainment of this subject under ONE of the two forms of the proposition, he has contemned and thereby in effect proscribed it under the OTHER. The following extracts, from the writings of both these philosophers, are therefore intended to carry conviction of the matter, to the minds of those readers who may not happen to have retained a very fresh recollection of what is advanced in their respective volumes.

The *condemnation* of the subject, to which I have referred in the foregoing remarks, and which I shall here place first in evidence, is contained in the

early part of the Introduction to the *First Volume* of Mr. Stewart's "*Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*;" and it runs as follows.

"A similar distinction takes place among the questions which may be stated relative to the human mind. Whether it be extended or unextended; whether or not it has any relation to place; and (if it has) whether it resides in the brain, or be spread over the body by diffusion, are questions perfectly analogous to those which Metaphysicians have started on the subject of matter. It is unnecessary to inquire, at present, whether they admit of any answer. It is sufficient for my purpose to remark, that they are as widely and obviously different from the view which I propose to take of the human mind in the following work, as the reveries of Berkeley concerning the non-existence of the material world, are from the conclusions of Newton, and his followers."

With regard to this *initial passage* of Mr. Stewart's *Elements*; I hardly need observe, that the *antithesis* by which he has expressed his contempt of the inquiry in question, is a much more severe form of condemnation, than if he had expressly forbid it in the most direct terms; and it may farther be remarked, that the tenor of the passage which immediately precedes it, and indeed the whole immediate context, is but a suitable commentary upon this prohibitory sentence itself.

As for the tenor of the passage in other respects; I shall not here animadvert upon the *classification* which it assumes, namely, that of the question con-

cerning the *extension* of the mind, with that in regard to *its place in the human body*. But I shall simply remark, that, although the limit which Mr. Stewart has prescribed to himself, appears to have been very proper to suit the character of his own speculations, we are not thereby to be prevented from observing, with suitable reflections, that it is in the very same volume he has held up the *Inquiry of Reid, concerning the inextension of our sensations*, as a model of the proper method of research with regard to the nature of the mind. Nor is it for a moment to be denied, that Reid's Inquiry, according to both his own and Professor Stewart's most ample acknowledgment, is *an inquiry concerning the extension, or inextension, of the mind itself*, since the following judgment is what they have both uniformly pronounced with regard to the nature of our sensations.

“A moment's reflection” (says Mr. Stewart, in his *Elements*, Vol. I. Chap. i. Sect. 1.) “must satisfy any one, that the sensation of colour can only reside in a mind.”

“The sensation I feel” (says Dr. Reid, in his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, Essay II. Chap. 16.) “is in my mind. The mind is the sentient being.”

“SENSATION” (says Mr. Stewart, in his *Philosophical Essays*, Note F) “properly expresses *that change in the state of the mind which is produced by an impression upon an organ of sense.*”

Thus we find it repeatedly asserted, in the most express terms, by both the writers in question, that sensations are not beings substantially distinct from

the mind, but are mere "*feelings*," or in other words "*changes*" or occasional "*states*" of the mind itself. It was indeed, perhaps, wholly unnecessary to have cited a single passage from their writings, to establish this fact, because the great bent of their attack of the Ideal Theory is directed against the chimerical hypothesis that our sensations and other ideas are a set of beings substantially distinct from the mind. The evidence of this sound doctrine, in both the authors in question, is therefore complete; and it becomes thereupon an identical proposition, that an inquiry concerning the inextension of our sensations is an inquiry concerning the inextension of the mind itself.

It remains to exhibit a view of the terms in which Professor Stewart has expressed himself, with regard to the speculations of Dr. Reid; and, likewise to point out, and ascertain precisely, what was the real nature of those speculations. For the first of these two purposes, however, the following brief passage might, doubtless, supercede the necessity of offering any other evidence.

In the First Volume of his *Elements*, in the Introduction, (Part I.) where he is treating of the proper objects of pneumatological research, Mr. Stewart has entered into a very conspicuous notice of the labours of his predecessor; wherein he emphatically calls the attention of his readers, to "*the excellent models of this species of philosophising which the writings of Dr. Reid exhibit*:"—which models, he concludes, "give us ground to expect, that the time is not far distant, when the study

“ of the mind shall assume that rank which it is  
“ entitled to hold among the sciences.”

Now this summary of evidence, as marking the degree of Mr. Stewart's approbation, is manifestly in the highest degree conclusive : but it will be incidentally exemplified in what is to follow.

All that remains, therefore, is to certify, beyond dispute, *what was the real complexion of these MODELS*, for which we are indebted to the genius of Dr. Reid. In order that not a shadow of doubt should remain over the fact, as to what were in reality the particular parts of Dr. Reid's writings, to which Mr. Stewart has thus remarkably referred ; I shall here quote a passage from the Philosophical Essays of the latter, (a work produced many years subsequently to the First Volume of his Elements,) which will set the matter in the clearest possible light. In the Notes annexed to the work just now mentioned (Note F), we have the following renewal of the endeavour to bring the Inquiry of Reid under general observation.

“ The idea of extension (without having recourse  
“ to any other) furnishes an *experimentum crucis*, for  
“ the determination of this question. The argument  
“ which it affords against the truth of the Ideal The-  
“ ory is very forcibly stated by Dr. Reid, in a pas-  
“ sage, the greater part of which I intended to have  
“ transcribed here, in order to excite the curiosity of  
“ my readers with respect to the work in which it is  
“ detailed at length. As I am prevented, however,  
“ from doing so by want of room, I must request  
“ such of them as have a relish for these speculations,  
“ to study with care the 5th and 6th Sections of the

“ 5th Chapter of his Inquiry into the Mind; also  
 “ the 7th Section of the same Chapter, beginning  
 “ with these words, ‘ This I would therefore hum-  
 “ bly propose, as an *experimentum crucis*.’ ”

Most certainly, I think, I have brought this investigation to such a point, that my readers can have only one other question to ask with regard to it; namely, *What is the TENOR* of the 5th, 6th, and 7th Sections of the 5th Chapter of Reid’s Inquiry? To answer this question, therefore, I shall first present the very passage which Mr. Stewart himself has particularly selected and recommended for the study of his readers.

“ This therefore I would humbly propose,” (says Dr. Reid,) “ as an *experimentum crucis*, by which  
 “ the ideal system must stand or fall; and it brings  
 “ the matter to a short issue: Extension, figure, mo-  
 “ tion, may, any one, or all of them, be taken for the  
 “ subject of this experiment; either they are ideas  
 “ of sensation, or they are not. If any one of  
 “ them can be shewn to be an idea of sensation, or  
 “ to have any resemblance to any sensation, I lay  
 “ my hand upon my mouth, and give up all pre-  
 “ tence to reconcilè reason to common sense in  
 “ this matter.”

Such, then, is the “ MODEL” of inquiry, pointed out by Professor Stewart; who has nevertheless, at the same time, classed any inquiry, as to “ *whether the mind is extended or unextended,*” along with reveries and chimeras; and has thus induced toward it the last degree of philosophical contempt.

But, perhaps, it is not quite enough to have shewn what was Dr. Reid's *general* object of inquiry. And I deem it of moment to present a specimen, or two, of the *precise method* and *tenor* of research employed by him in the work in question.

In one of the Sections referred to by Mr. Stewart, namely the 5th Section of the 5th Chapter, Dr. Reid has argued in the following terms: "Extension, therefore, seems to be a quality suggested to us, by the very same sensations, which suggest the qualities above mentioned. When I grasp a ball in my hand, I perceive it at once hard, figured, and extended. The feeling is very simple, and hath not the least resemblance to any quality of body."

Again, in Section 6th of the same Chapter, he says, "We shall, first, suppose his body fixed immoveably in one place, and that he can only have the feeling of touch, by the application of other bodies to it. Suppose him first to be pricked with a pin; this will, no doubt, give a smart sensation; he feels pain; but what can he infer from it? Nothing, surely, with regard to the existence or figure of a pin."

Thirdly; in his 6th Chapter, (Sect. 8.) where he treats of the sense of SEEING, Dr. Reid goes on in the following strain. "If it should be said, that it is impossible to perceive a figure, unless there be some impression of it upon the mind; I beg leave not to admit the impossibility of this without some proof; and I can find none."

Such (if the reader be not already acquainted



with it) is the *particular* tenor of that Inquiry which Dr. Reid furnished to the world, with a view to overthrow *every modification, and both the different systems* of the Ideal Theory. And such is the Inquiry which has been, in so conspicuous a manner, eulogised and sustained by Professor Stewart.

Here, then, I would crave the indulgence of those readers who are competent to form any judgment upon the matter, to pause; and I would ask them, What are we to think of the *consistency* of a philosopher, who, at the same time that he has thus used every means in his power to recommend and to uphold *a course of inquiry concerning the extension or inextension of the mind*, has, nevertheless, in the outset of his own speculations, and doubtless moved at the moment by another view of the subject, virtually *prohibited every such inquiry*, in terms of the most degrading contempt, and has thereby, perhaps, from the weight of his authority, well nigh succeeded in averting the attention of future generations, from the most important field of research which the philosophy of the mind presents to human understanding?

That I have no desire to animadvert with undue severity, upon any oversight, or error, of the distinguished writer in question, is a truth which I feel with a conscious serenity upon which no sinister construction of any one could for a moment impinge. But, as I rest under the plainest conviction, that to draw off the direction of philosophical research from that course of inquiry which

was in reality followed by Dr. Reid, would be to foreclose the hopes of its future advancement; and, as nothing can be more palpable than that the course chalked out by Professor Stewart would cause *a complete dereliction of that pursued by Dr. Reid*; I have no small hope, that I render a most essential service to the subject by thus circumstantially impressing upon my readers the vast degree of inconsistency into which Mr. Stewart has in this case fallen; the due exposition of which, I anticipate, must utterly quash every design to bring the inquiry concerning the extension of the mind into contempt. It is, I trust, unnecessary for me to say, that I make no question that the views of Mr. Stewart in this procedure were the result of the best intentions; but, how strikingly they have been inconsistent and erroneous, I now leave for the judgment of every person who is in earnest upon the subject, and who has any degree of competency to pronounce with regard to it.

It has sufficiently appeared, in the foregoing strictures, that I am so far from denying the claims of Reid's Inquiry, in so far as regards the *legitimacy of its OBJECT*, that, on the contrary, my intention herein has been to *assert this legitimacy*; and it will be seen, in the sequel, that the analysis of perception which I propose to submit has the *very same general object*; although the nature of my research differs vastly in the means by which it endeavours to attain that object. In other words; each of the two inquiries has the question con-

cerning the extension of the thinking principle for its primary or proximate object; though the two methods of analysis are utterly foreign to each other, and the two *conclusions* are diametrically opposite.—But it is impossible for me, upon the present occasion, to refrain from entering my protest against the conclusions which Dr. Reid has been led to draw, from the analysis which he has conducted. His design was to prove, as the result of an inductive inquiry, that our sensations are *not extended*. I shall not, in this place, enter into a course of animadversion upon the *selection* of his experiments for this purpose, or upon the *manner* in which he has conducted them; except barely to advert to one of them, because it happens to be mentioned in a foregoing quotation, in which, Dr. Reid judged it *a fit* instance to experiment *a prick from the point of a pin*, in order to ascertain *whether or not our sensations resemble extension!* Upon this subject I shall have occasion to touch again, in the sequel. At present I desire only, in the most impressive manner to affirm, that I think the *manner* in which Dr. Reid has conducted his Inquiry, exhibits so deplorably the devastations of prejudice, in the extent to which they have vitiated his observations, and misguided his experiments, that, with every inclination to do justice to the merits of this venerable philosopher, I never look into the Fifth and Sixth Chapters of his Inquiry without a renewal of astonishment.

In adverting to the *spirit* in which Dr. Reid

has conducted his Inquiry, it may tend to throw some light on the subject, to remark, that, although nothing is more certain than that it was in reality *an inquiry concerning the extension or inextension of the mind*, yet, I have reason to think, from various expressions, that Dr. Reid had in a great measure contrived to *conceal from himself that it was so*. He indeed neither any where, I believe, *asserts* nor *denies* the simple truth, that this is the nature of his Inquiry. But we find that both he and Professor Stewart uniformly make use of a *softening expression*, to designate the nature of the "INQUIRY;" for they invariably assert that our sensations have NO RESEMBLANCE to figure or extension. Now it is plain, that any thing that RESEMBLES *extension is*, LITERALLY SPEAKING, EXTENDED; for nothing can resemble extension, except *extension itself*. And we are certain that no philosopher will ever encounter the ridicule of attempting to deny this plain truth, or to mutilate it by any affected distinction whatever. If our sensations *do not resemble* extension; they, certainly, *are not extended*: but, if they DO RESEMBLE extension; they, as certainly, ARE EXTENDED. This is the simple truth, without circumlocution or evasion.

Notwithstanding this unanswerable position, I am led to believe, from certain oblique remarks in his Inquiry, and also from the invariable affectation of the word RESEMBLANCE, that Dr. Reid seldom, or perhaps never, confessed to himself that he was all along engaged upon no other inquiry than that

concerning the *extension or inextension of his own mind*. This curious circumstance I have adverted to here, because it seems to furnish us with an apparent clue, to account for the inconsistency of Professor Stewart with regard to it; who, it would appear, any more than Dr. Reid, has *never supposed* that the Inquiry of the latter was in reality an inquiry concerning the inextension of the mind.

It is, certainly, a most instructive lesson to all future inquirers, if it cannot be denied that the strength of prejudice in this case has been so powerful, as absolutely to hide from men's discernment the *most palpable nature* of the inquiries upon which they were at the time employed. And, wonderful as it may seem, there appears to be no other conjecture to form, than that a *loathing and aversion*, of both the philosophers in question, to admit what they conceived to be so degrading a thought as the *possibility of the mind's extension*, has prevented them from being sensible that *the question for, or against, the extension of the mind* was the *great object* of the research of one of them, and of eulogium on the part of the other. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Has not Professor Stewart, (in the Note G of his Philosophical Essays,) recorded the following remarkable and conclusive assertion of Hume: "That the mind either is no substance, or that it is an extended and divisible substance; because the *ideas* of extension cannot be in a subject which is indivisible and unextended?" And has not Mr. Stewart, in the same Note, shewn it to be the doctrine of Locke, that the *ideas* in question are, in the most obvious sense, extended? And, lastly, has it

If these philosophers had adverted to the fact which forms the ultimate object of the present speculation, namely, that, *to prove the extension of thinking beings, is to annihilate at once the very foundations of materialism*; How differently might it not have operated upon their views of the subject?

## 2.

*The Philosophy of the Mind and Natural Philosophy not altogether analogous in their Objects, or Scope.*

The statements which have already been submitted, must, doubtless, render it unnecessary to adduce any other argument, for the purpose of proving that an inquiry concerning the extension of the thinking principle is a legitimate object of philosophical research. But it would be doing great injustice to those who have laboured in this research, not to record, that Dr. Reid, although he has certainly appeared to have engaged in it in *a more analytical* spirit than any of his predecessors, is far from being the only philosopher who has been engaged therein.

not been the whole drift of Reid's Inquiry to shew that Hume, as well as Locke, was *mistaken* in attributing *extension to our ideas*? What then (it may be asked) was Reid's Inquiry, but a research of that nature which Professor Stewart has condemned, namely, an inquiry "*as to whether the mind is extended or inextended?*"

Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, are conspicuous instances of the same bent of inquiry. And, in a word, I may remark, that perhaps no philosopher of the mind, from *Moschus* down to *Reid*, has ever commenced his inquiries with any other subject than that of the *extension of our sensations or ideas*. It is in the ANALYTICAL CHARACTER, therefore, and *not* in the OBJECT, that Dr. Reid has differed from other philosophers, in their researches after the *primary operations and most general nature of the mind*: and I am forward to acknowledge, that, *so far as the subject lies within the pale of INDUCTION*, his *method* was excellent, although its results have been so vitiated by the strength of his *prejudice*. I must not, however, omit to observe, here, that the subject of Perception soon quits INDUCTIVE science; and can only be followed out upon DEDUCTIVE evidence.

That Dr. Reid has in this case sacrificed to prejudice, in a most astonishing degree, may, before we come to analytical proof, be supposed at least probable, when it is noticed that every philosopher, both ancient and modern, with the exception of himself and his disciples, has lived and died in the firm conviction that our sensations of colour and of touch are *outspread or extended*. I notice this matter, at present, however, only for the purpose of correcting a mistake, into which a strenuous opponent of the views of Dr. Reid has inadvertently fallen.

In the strictures which were published many

years ago, by Dr. Priestley, upon the philosophy of Reid, the former supposed, that the word *image* has been used by Idealists only in a *figurative sense*; or, in other words, that the term *resemblance* does not mean that our ideas are of the *actual shapes* of those external things by which they are, in some way, impressed upon the mind, “but only *that* “*impressions of some kind or other* are conveyed to “the mind by means of the organs of sense.” This view of the subject, being vastly erroneous, and in its effects equally prejudicial to sound philosophy; I deem it of importance to disavow it here, in the most particular manner; especially, as I suspect that this error has been infused into the minds of many persons, who consider themselves as siding with the general principle of the ideal theory. Its vast misconception has been very justly animadverted upon by Professor Stewart, in Note G of the Philosophical Essays: and there cannot be a moment’s question, that Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, as well as Aristotle and Plato, and all the ancient Philosophers, confidently believed our sensations to be *extended and figured*, in the *most obvious and literal sense of these terms*.

To these suffrages I may add, that neither Locke nor Newton feared to look with confidence upon the extension of our sensations, or, in other words, upon the extension of the mind itself; and they nevertheless considered the mind to be an *immaterial essence*, even although *they* believed firmly in the *existence of a material world*. Must it not, then, animate our spirit of inquiry, when it is suggested, that the fact of the extension of the mind, if esta-



blished and duly followed out, must *imperatively forbid the supposition or belief of matter at all?*

When the nature of this last argument shall be developed, in the sequel of the Chapter, the reader will be enabled to judge what claims it has to his serious consideration.

In fine ; I conclude, that the proper scope and limits of the Philosophy of the Mind are *not the same* as those which are uniformly prescribed for the various branches of natural science. The two kinds of research are *not altogether* analogous ; and I feel confident that the most deplorable bar to human capability of attainment, or of happiness, would follow from ultimately assuming an identicalness of their limits.

The Chymist, the Physiologist, or the Astronomer, has no concern with any inquiry beyond the *mere general laws* which regulate the phenomena of his particular science. So far as he is only *a natural philosopher*, it is of no consequence to his hopes, or fears, or moral conduct, whether the MIND with which he views appearances be supposed to be EXTENDED, or whether the SUPPOSED MATTER upon which he experiments be IN REALITY MIND. The *results* of his investigations, and their *utility* to the world, will be exactly the same in either case. But, vastly different is the case of the Philosopher of the Mind. HE, indeed, has, in the first place, various classes of objects *perfectly analogous to those which engage the attention of the*

*Hu. Mi.* D

**NATURAL PHILOSOPHER.** But, besides these, the **Pneumatologist** has *an ulterior object, of a very different kind*; namely, to ascertain what is *the general nature of the INTERCOURSE carried on between himself, as a sensitive being, and the EXTERNAL CAUSE of his sensations*; and, therefrom, if possible, to discover whether **HIMSELF** and the **EXTERNAL CAUSE of his sensations are of ONE SAME general nature, or of TWO HETEROGENEOUS ONES.**

In proof of the fact, that this ulterior object has ever been the grand desideratum of philosophy, it may be sufficient to ask, Is not the whole philosophical world, at this moment, divided into two great sects, namely, **MATERIALISTS** and **IMMATERIALISTS**: And is there the slightest chance, even if the subject should, by the highest authorities, be pronounced unphilosophical, that this sentence will ever operate, either practically or speculatively, upon the great bulk of intelligent men? The momentous truth is, that *Materialists* and *Immaterialists* (with particular exceptions) mean *believers in the FUTURE ANNIHILATION of their own mind* and *believers in its FUTURE EXISTENCE.* Hence we never find, and we never shall find, any person of a liberal education *who STOPS* at being either a **NEWTONIAN** or a **BOSCOVICHIAN**; and who (*religion apart*) goes daily about his intercourse with mankind with no cast of philosophical belief, beyond the *mere general laws* which form the exclusive objects of the **NATURAL PHILOSOPHER.**

As a particular instance in proof of the truth of

this reasoning ; it is a triumphant circumstance to remark, that even Professor Stewart, himself, in what I conceive to be decidedly the most valuable part of his writings, has directed the attention of his readers to that ANALOGY, upon which he dwells as being favorable to our FUTURE HOPES. If it be philosophical to speculate with regard to these hopes, *upon the ground of ANALOGY* ; it must surely be still more so upon *the ground of ANALYSIS*. And, if this latter ground had not been that upon which I was peculiarly urged to proceed ; I should have been content to have rested my hope of contributing any thing towards the advancement of the subject, upon the very different train of speculation that formed the subjects of a work which I was first induced to submit to the press about ten years since.

To afford my readers a general conception of the nature of that analysis which I now propose to submit, and to prevent any misconception on the subject ; I here explain, that what I mean by an inquiry into *the mind's most general nature*, (as distinguished from its operations) does not involve any such inquiry into its OCCULT nature as that which is alluded to by Mr. Stewart, when he remarks that metaphysicians have started certain questions with regard to the subject of *matter*. On the contrary, the *only question* entertained or contemplated by me, on the present subject, *is that which was the object of Dr. Reid's research*, namely, as to

Whether or not it results, from a rigorous analysis, that *the thinking subject or mind is an EXTENDED THING*. Upon the condition that it be shewn to be extended; my intention is farther to show, (as I have already said) in concurrence with the united voices of otherwise-contending philosophers, that the supposition of a material world becomes in the last degree gratuitous and absurd. If, on the contrary, any doubt shall be left over the fact of the extension of the mind; we shall then have still to cherish the assumption of a material world, together with all the baneful fruits of that assumption.

With regard to the GENERAL NATURE of this inquiry; I shall here offer but one farther remark. When philosophers continually assume the *extension of BODY*; this procedure is never looked upon as being illegitimate, or as an attempt to examine into the OCCULT NATURE of *body*. Then, surely, by parity of reasoning, if we can, by a rigorous analysis, demonstrate that certain classes of WELL KNOWN EXTENDED PHENOMENA, which are popularly considered to be *phenomena of body*, are in reality no other than *phenomena or modifications of our own thinking subject*; it must be absurd and ridiculous to endeavour to brand such an inquiry, as an attempt to examine into the OCCULT NATURE OF MIND.

By keeping this simple but most important parallel in view, we shall, I apprehend, avoid a profound abyss of error; into which the neglect of it might precipitate us, under the influence of great names.

If I have been under the necessity to devote a Section, to little other purpose than to turn the direction of pneumatological science to the greatest of all its objects, from which it had been diverted by a very powerful influence ; I trust it will be admitted that it is a matter of essential importance, provided it be judged that I have succeeded in the attempt.

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In the foregoing view, I have confined myself to justifying that species of inquiry, of which my own leading speculations form an instance : and this I have asserted because I have been led to a firm conviction that it involves consequences of the very last importance. But I might, I conceive, have taken a far wider range on the subject. The science of MIND has been assumed to be *perfectly analogous*, in its *objects* and *scope*, to the science of what is called MATTER. If this be the proper view of the subject, it follows that the science of mind has nothing to do with any inquiry or investigation, except with intent to ascertain the *mere general laws which regulate mental phenomena*. This indeed is expressly asserted by Professor Stewart to be the scope of the subject. In his Introduction ; after having observed that “ in the investigation of physical laws, it is well known, that our inquiries “ must always terminate in some general fact ; ” he says, “ The case is exactly the same in the philosophy of the mind. When we have once ascer-

“ tained a general fact ; such as the various laws  
 “ which regulate the association of ideas, or the  
 “ dependence of memory upon that effort of the  
 “ mind which we call Attention ; it is *all we ought*  
 “ *to aim at in this branch of science.*” But I would  
 here ask, Can it for a moment be said, that the  
 science of Mind, (or rather the *First Philosophy,*)  
 has no other legitimate objects than the above-  
 mentioned *mere general laws* ? Do these general  
 laws answer, or at all extend to, any such questions  
 as the following : namely, That concerning the *ex-*  
*istence of our own minds.*—That with regard to the  
*reality of moral distinctions.*—That with respect to the  
*existence of an Intelligent First Cause.*—Or, That  
 concerning *the Origin and Sources of our knowledge* ?

I readily grant, that the general laws which re-  
 gulate the phenomena of the mind furnish us with  
 the *data* for answering, or speculating upon, such  
 questions as those just now suggested. But I appre-  
 hend that when we use the results of general laws,  
 as data for this purpose, we are engaged in a very  
 different science or research from that of the inves-  
 tigation of these laws themselves : and yet I sup-  
 pose it will not be pretended that we have got  
 beyond the Philosophy of the Mind.

Upon the other hand ; I would ask, *What has*  
 SCEPTICISM or INFIDELITY *to do with general laws*  
*themselves*, whether of supposed matter or of mind ?  
 Mr. Hume no more either denied or doubted the  
 acknowledged general laws both of matter and of  
 mind, than Mr. Stewart doubts them. But, has this

prevented the former from filling the world with doubts, disputes, and alarms; with regard to the existence of minds, the reality of moral distinctions, and the hopes of hereafter?

Moreover, it may be demanded; Has not the *great object* of the founder of the Scottish School been to attack and annihilate SCEPTICISM and INFIDELITY with regard to such questions as the above: In order to effect which, Dr. Reid has investigated *the nature of our sensations* MERELY TO FURNISH HIM WITH DATA whereupon to proceed, or to ground his conclusions? And, above all; Has it not been a very principal object of Professor Stewart's own speculations, to oppose Scepticism and Infidelity: And has he not, in the most conspicuous manner, approved and embraced the means employed by Dr. Reid to effect this great object, *by arguing* FROM FACTS OR LAWS, TO *consequent* CONCLUSIONS? But if this be admitted; then, I must beg leave to observe, that, in the analysis which he has given to the world, of the faculties of the mind, in the First Volume of his Elements, he *never could, without stepping out of the limits of the general laws which govern these faculties, have uttered any opinion at all* with regard to scepticism, to infidelity, to our situation in the universe, or to our future expectations: all which, however, he HAS touched upon. And it is quite certain, that, if he had not *vastly* overstepped those limits; his writings could not have possessed any thing like the interest, *with real or profound thinkers*, which they actually do.

As a proof of the truth of this last remark ; I shall close these supplementary observations by transcribing a passage from the writings of Newton, which has been selected and stated with the most marked approbation by Professor Stewart himself, in the latest of his principal works ; at a moment when, doubtless, he must have forgotten the limits which he had prescribed for the philosophy of the mind in the outset of his speculations. In the *Fourth Chapter* of the *Second Volume* of his *Elements*, (Sect. 6,) in speaking of Maclaurin's view of Newton's sentiments with regard to Final Causes ; Mr. Stewart says, " It is Newton's own language, however, which alone can do justice to his sentiments on the present subject." He then supplies the following quotation.

" The main business of Natural Philosophy is  
" to argue from phenomena, without feigning hypo-  
" theses, and to deduce causes from effects till we  
" come to the very first cause, which certainly is  
" not mechanical ; and not only to unfold the me-  
" chanism of the world, but chiefly to resolve these  
" and such like questions : Whence is it that Nature  
" does nothing in vain ; and whence arises all that  
" order and beauty which we see in the world.  
" How came the bodies of animals to be con-  
" trived with so much art, and for what ends are  
" their several parts. Was the eye contrived with-  
" out skill in optics, and the ear without know-  
" ledge of sounds ?"

In addition to these approved questions, of



this illustrious authority, I would only beg to subjoin one more; namely, Can such questions be *solved by confining our investigations to the mere general laws which regulate phenomena?*—I will venture to reply, that this can no more be done than the most abstruse discoveries in Geometry could have been effected by an attempt to concatenate the AXIOMS of that science. And I hazard the belief, wholly beside any authority, that, not only the *General Facts of the Mind*, but likewise the *General Facts of Natural Philosophy itself*, would be altogether as *barren* as the Axioms of Mathematics, if the Laws of the two former sciences were not *applied* by us, *under certain transcendental maxims of the understanding*, to produce all those momentous and consequent CONCLUSIONS which men have already drawn, and all those which we must *hope to draw*, from such General Facts.

## SECTION THIRD.

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OF THE GENERAL PHILOSOPHICAL RESULT OF THE BELIEF IN A MATERIAL WORLD; AND OF THE OPINIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ENTERTAINED FOR AND AGAINST THE REALITY OF MATTER.

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### 1.

#### *Preliminary Observations.*

THE exercise of our powers of external perception has uniformly led to philosophical consequences, which have borne with a vast influence upon the pursuits and conduct of mankind, both speculative and practical; owing to two great and fundamental assumptions, to which it has given origin and general acceptance. ONE of these is that of the *existence of Ideas*, considered as a distinct order of beings, which administer to the mind in the near office of its *immediate objects*, without, however, being numerically or substantially identical with the mind itself. THE OTHER is a correlative subject with the former, being a supposition of the existence of A MATERIAL WORLD, consisting of inanimate beings, which are the supposed *archetypes*, and whose various changes are

thought to be the *external physical occasions*, of the Ideas already mentioned.

It is, moreover, to be observed, that the influence which these two great assumptions have had over the affairs and happiness of the species, has ever been of a pernicious and baneful nature. The first mentioned of the two having furnished the ground of various systems of Scepticism; and the last, a foundation for the conclusions of every species of Atheist.

The consideration first mentioned, however, has ceased to be formidable; since philosophers may be considered as being unanimous with regard to the fact that our sensations and other ideas are nothing but the modifications or affections of our own minds; and it is certain that it would now be the most unfounded and ridiculous procedure to assert the contrary. It is from the LATTER assumption, alone, therefore, namely, *that of the* EXISTENCE OF A MATERIAL WORLD, that mankind have to dread the progress, and the consequences, of philosophical infidelity.

It does not, indeed, appear to be thought, even by those philosophers who are arranged in opposition to the increase of infidelity, that any danger or disadvantage, is to be apprehended from a belief in the existence of a material world. On the contrary, it has been supposed by some of the most enlightened writers, on this side of the subject, that our advance in the various departments of natural science, especially from the growing indica-

tions it affords us of the existence of *Final Causes*, must prove a sufficient barrier against all the effects of mere Materialism. This opinion appears to have been held by no less an authority than that of Newton. And it has been recently asserted by Professor Stewart, in very impressive terms. But I hesitate not to confess, that I am altogether unable to subscribe to that extent of expectation which has been evinced of the subject by the last-mentioned writer.

At the time when Newton lived, there might have been a plausible hope, that our advance in the discovery of Final Causes would have produced the general effect which he expected. But, that this hope has *not been realised* is a truth so strikingly manifest, on every hand; that I am surprised the growth of the contrary result could have been overlooked, in any late view of the subject.

It is to recal attention, and to fix it upon a state of facts, the most recent and operative of which cannot but be already sufficiently known, and which, I conceive, must be much more than sufficient to show the evil consequences of the belief in a material world, that is the object of the early part of this section. At the same time, I shall not omit, nor am I at all disposed to under-value, the real claims of the consideration of *final causes*.

The remaining part of the section I propose to devote to the purpose of insisting upon that most important consideration, which was suggested in

the foregoing part of the chapter; namely, that provided it shall be established that *our sensations are extended*, it must then be so far from being supposeable that the mind is a *material* thing, that, on the contrary, the very supposition of matter, or of a material world, must be given up, as a conceit the most gratuitous and unfounded.

## 2.

*The belief in a Material World the Grand Source of Philosophical Infidelity in all ages.*

It is sufficiently known, that a large proportion of the ancient Greek Philosophers were sunk in the depths of a sheer and invincible Atheism: While it is equally manifest, that this result was occasioned by their having been immersed in the contemplation of phenomena which *they supposed* to be the properties of an *inanimate brute substance*. Upon the other hand, we have the certain evidence of our own observation to inform us, how strongly every modification of *modern Materialism* (unless it be accidentally restrained by the operation of some particular bias) tends to draw its votaries toward the conclusion that there is NO CAUSE OF THINGS, other than that which, by way of eminence, is emphatically entitled the POWER OF NATURE.

If we take a momentary retrospect of the most general opinions of mankind, with regard to this subject, in ancient times; it will be found (notwithstanding the belief entertained by the most en-

lightened Sages, of the existence of a Supreme Intelligence) that the bulk of the species has, undeniably, in all those ages, been buried in the manifold superstitions of a virtual and operative Atheism. The Egyptian worship of animals and embalmment of dead men, and the multiform polytheism of the Greeks and Romans under the auspices of a blind and inevitable fate, were, strictly speaking, in effect, only the various modifications of an Atheism which sprung from contemplating the powers of SUPPOSED MATTER. Nor has this enormous superstition been limited to the above mentioned countries, or to a few nations. An authority, the extent of whose knowledge and the impartiality of whose spirit of inquiry, with regard to this subject, will not be denied, has expressed himself in the following terms with regard to it.

“ I cannot but agree” (says Sir William Jones, speaking with reference to the concurrent opinions of Bryant and of Newton) “ that one great spring  
“ and fountain of all Idolatry, in the four quarters of the globe, was the veneration paid by  
“ men to that vast body of fire which ‘ looks from  
“ ‘ his sole dominion like the god of this world ;’  
“ and another the immoderate respect shown to  
“ the memory of powerful or virtuous ancestors,  
“ especially the founders of kingdoms, legislators,  
“ and warriors, of whom the sun and the moon  
“ were wildly supposed to be the parents.”

The same writer, in his Piece on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India, observes, that “ We

“ must not be surprised at finding, that the charac-  
 “ ters of all the pagan deitiès, male and female,  
 “ melt into each other, and, at last, into one or  
 “ two ; for it seems a well founded opinion, that  
 “ the whole crowd of gods and goddesses, in an-  
 “ cient Rome and modern Varanes, *mean only*  
 “ *powers of nature, and principally those of the sun*  
 “ *and moon,* expressed in a variety of ways and by  
 “ a multitude of fanciful names.”

With regard to the opinion of the ancient bulk of mankind, I shall offer only one other evidence, and this from the same authority.

“ Many learned Mythologists ; with Geraldus at  
 “ their head, consider the peaceful Minerva as the  
 “ Isis of Egypt ; from whose temple at Lais a  
 “ wonderful inscription is quoted by Plutarch,  
 “ which has a resemblance to the four Sanscrit  
 “ verses above exhibited as the text of the Bhága-  
 “ vat, ‘ *I am all that hath been, and is, and shall be ;*  
 “ ‘ *and my veil hath no mortal ever removed.*’ For  
 “ my part I have no doubt that the Iswara and  
 “ Isi of the Hindus are the Osiris and Isis of the  
 “ Egyptians: they mean, I conceive, the Powers of  
 “ Nature considered as Male and Female ; and  
 “ Isis, like the other goddesses, represents the  
 “ active powers of her lord.”

Here, however, I am to observe, that the importance I attach to the opinion entertained by the bulk of the species, in ancient times, with regard to the subject in question, is not intrinsic ; but is chiefly for the purpose of showing *how*

*uniformly and consistently*, (as will presently appear) mankind have been *influenced, by the belief in matter, to a disbelief of an Intelligent First Cause, whatever has been their state of advancement in general knowledge.* I shall now, therefore, proceed to take a passing view of opinions held in the subsequent ages of the world.

In what have been usually called the middle ages, after the decline of the heathen worship in Europe, Atheism appears to have received a serious check, and to have in a great degree slept, under the Christian Dispensation, especially in these Countries: but this only because, from the general ignorance of the times, and the shackles imposed by the Church, mankind were kept from any free or enlarged researches into the operations of nature.

The revival of learning has led to a state of natural knowledge vastly more advanced than was ever attained by the ancient Greek Philosophers. And, accordingly, we find, in these latter ages, that although philosophical infidelity has had, to say the least, a well organised and most sublime system of religion to contend against, it has, notwithstanding, been *much more than resuscitated* by the same general cause by which it was originally engendered; namely, by *men's immersion in the operations and phenomena of a SUPPOSED MATERIAL UNIVERSE*: Nor can it at all be denied, that natural science, *as it is now pro-*



*secuted*, has a powerful tendency to produce in its votaries the conclusion, that NATURE is the sole cause of her own operations.

Although it is not to any former period, but to the *present state* of philosophical opinion, to which I shall chiefly appeal, as furnishing unanswerable evidences of the fact here to be insisted upon; I am, however, induced to exhibit the following particular instance, as being one which, on account of the singular eminence of the philosophical character who is the subject of it, and from the age and circumstances in which he lived, and, above all, from the extent to which he was immersed in the contemplation of *supposed material phenomena*, furnishes, I think, a case that is peculiarly applicable to the purpose; more especially, as it also affords me an occasion to notice the belief which has been entertained by so many philosophers of the *eternity of matter*.

The illustrious founder of the inductive logic, while he exposed with a sufficient degree of severity the various *other* philosophic dramas of the ancients; at the same time implicitly subscribed to, and warmly espoused, the *atomic philosophy* of Democritus. Let us therefore observe, what was the *effect* of that material creed, upon the profound and capacious mind of Lord Bacon.

In the first place, then, I am to remark, that he, very significantly, treats the supposition of the *creation of matter* as an *object of FAITH*. "For,"

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says he, "there seem to be three particulars known by *Faith*, with relation to this affair, viz. " *First*, that Matter was created out of nothing." —And he concludes the passage by saying, that, "In these particulars, therefore, it were better to rest upon the foundation of *Faith*." I quote Dr. Shaw's Version, "History of Natural Philosophy, Sect. 2."

Secondly; As the natural fruit of his believing in the *eternity* of matter (to be inferred from the above passage) this rarely gifted of mankind confidently supposed, that the Soul is the result of a juxtaposition of material atoms. Thus, in the Piece already mentioned, he says, that "the abstraction of motion has produced infinite fantastical conceits, about souls, life, and the like; as if these could not possibly be owing to MATTER *and* FORM, but must depend upon separate principles of their own."

It will be said, however, that Bacon *was not an Atheist*. To this assertion it may be answered, that, for not having gone the whole length of Infidelity, he appears to have been more indebted to the age in which he lived, and to his religious education, than to his *philosophical cast*. He himself, indeed, observes, that "a little philosophy leads men to Atheism; but depth in philosophy brings them back again." But I may confidently venture to appeal to the *present existing state of philosophical opinion*, both on the continent of Europe and in this Island, to vouch the fact that

Bacon was mistaken in this last conclusion, if, by philosophy, he meant *natural philosophy*, or what is called *physical science*.

It is remarkable, that, in enumerating the causes of Atheism, he himself makes one of them to be "*learned times, especially if attended by peace and prosperity.*"

From the tenor of the two Democritical assumptions which Bacon embraced, namely, the *self-existence of matter* and the *materiality of the soul*, I think I might here leave it to the judgment of every competent person, whether it is not probable, that the views of the English Sage, would have co-incided in a still greater extent with those of the Greek Philosopher, if it had not been for the Christian age and education of the former.

But the opinion of Bacon involves a much more important consideration than I have yet adverted to. For, while I grant that any person may be a very *sincere* believer in the existence of a Deity, at the same time that he may entertain a belief in the *eternity of matter*; yet, I will venture to affirm, he must at least be a very unphilosophical one. In a word; I imagine it would be vain to attempt to dissemble, that, by believing in the self-existence of matter, Bacon so far *virtually cancelled* the mighty suffrage which he intended to have given in favor of the existence of an Intelligent Supreme Ruler: for, to suppose that any substance has existed from eternity *independent* of this Supreme, and which therefore, in this case, *he could no more annihilate*

than he has created; is absolutely to give up the point.

Now it is particularly important to remark, here, to what an extent the ancient philosophers (even those who were *not* Atheists) believed in the eternity of matter; in which predicament is to be reckoned the divine Plato himself; while I think it cannot be denied that an admission of the self-existence of matter must be a logical ground of Atheism, in any age.

But it is in proportion as the *discoveries in natural science have advanced*, since the time of Bacon, that we are called upon to mark the growth and progress of its power to induce philosophical unbelief. The reiterated appeals of writers, enlisted against this enemy to human happiness, form one continual complaint of it. The author of "Antient Metaphysics," in the 15th chapter of his Second Book, has the following observation, among a great deal more matter upon this theme; which I select here because it comprehends in few words both his own sentiments of the subject and those of a much earlier authority.

"I must own (says Lord Monboddo) I think there is some truth in Dr. Cudworth's observation, that the philosophers of this age are seized with a kind of *pneumato phobia* and *hylo mania*, a desperate aversion to *mind*, and a passionate love for *matter*."

It is a very just and important observation of Bishop Berkeley, (in his *Siris*, Sect. 331) that "Pre-

“vailing studies are of no small consequence to a state; the religion, manners, and civil government of a country ever taking some bias from its philosophy, which affects not only the minds of its professors and students, but also the opinions of the better sort, and the practice of the whole people, remotely and consequentially indeed, but not inconsiderably.”—This writer, immediately after the above passage, puts the following question. “Have not the polemic and scholastic philosophy been observed to produce controversies in law and in religion? And have not fatalism and sadducism gained ground during the general passion for the Corpuscularian and Mechanical Philosophy, which has prevailed for about a century?”

By another writer, of later date, it has been remarked, that, “while there is no class of men to whom a knowledge of Physical Science is more useful than to those who hold the honorable office of the teachers of religion, inasmuch as their knowledge of their own science would be vastly hurt by an ignorance of the general constitution of nature, yet it is to be lamented that this science is too often shunned, by such persons, as a dangerous attainment, from its being likely to unhinge their own faith, and to taint the minds of their hearers.”

It was reserved, however, for a still later period, for natural science to have driven philosophical opinion to a pitch, to call forth, from contemporary

writers, such animadversions as the following.

“When we see” (says Professor Robison,)  
“the phrensy which the reasoning pride of man  
“has raised in our neighbourhood, and hear the  
“dictates of philosophy incessantly appealed to in  
“defence of whatever our hearts shudder at as  
“shocking and abominable; and when we see a  
“man of great reputation as a naturalist, and of  
“professed humanity and political moderation,  
“congratulating his countrymen upon the rapid  
“improvement and perfection of philosophy; and,  
“after giving a short sketch of the visible universe,  
“summing up all with a table of elective attractions,  
“and that particular combination and mode of  
“chrySTALLISATION which constitutes GOD; is it not  
“full time to stop and ask our hearts whither are  
“ye wandering?”

The reflecting reader, perhaps, will here be strongly disposed to join in the salutary question which concludes the above passage; and will deem it indeed “*full time*” to set about seriously inquiring, whether the assumption of the existence of a material world, which is manifestly the ground of this vast evil, may not in reality be as unfounded as many of those other assumptions and prejudices, which were long consecrated by mankind, but which are now and for ever exploded.

Such common observations on the state of philosophical opinion as have already been adduced, (and they will yet receive incidental though unnecessary additions) furnish, of themselves,

a too ample proof, that the supposition of a material world, in a philosophical point of view, has ever been deeply inimical to the belief of an Intelligent Cause of all Things. And we may be assured, that this assumption will always continue to produce its wonted evil consequences, in time to come, and this with an increasing extent, unless the prevailing belief in the existence of matter shall, from the progress of human knowledge, come to be generally exploded, except only as a prejudice which must be allowed to vulgar imagination.

It is important here, however, to remark, that philosophers can never arrive, by the prescribed road of *physical science*, at the conclusion that what we call *body*, is only a manifestation of the *energies of a thing that is in reality spiritual*; because it is to be remembered that the investigations and conclusions of the natural philosopher are restricted to the mere general laws which regulate phenomena. Supposing, therefore, that physical science could, by any means, indicate, in the most indubitable manner, that Matter does not exist, it is not in a treatise upon any one of the branches of physical science, but only in such a work as the present, that the thing could be legitimately proposed, and its evidences examined.

## 3.

*Of the small opposition which has been presented by the Philosophers of Europe, against the assumption of a Material World.*

THIS stage of the subject brings me to remark, that no opposition of any successful consequence has ever been made, in our quarter of the globe, against the general belief of a material world. Nor has there, indeed, been more than two, or three, attempts, of any celebrity, made toward exploding this conception. The hypothesis conceived by Father Malebranche, of our seeing all things in the ideas of the Divine Mind; and the more remarkable scheme of Berkeley, concerning which I shall have occasion to speak; are the only attempts of this kind that have been made, by the philosophers of Europe: And the most considerable of the two has failed, for sufficient reasons, which will be considered in the sequel.

It is, however, to be observed, upon the other hand, that a confirmed philosophical belief of the non-existence of a material world, is a tenet which has subsisted and flourished in India, in great plenitude of power, from time immemorial, and long antecedent to the origin of Greek Philosophy. As, therefore, the accidents of time have fortunately preserved to us this important document, rendered venerable by the highest and even an unknown



antiquity ; it ought, doubtless, to stimulate our curiosity, and excite our research, to discover the principles, or data, from which this conclusion was originally deduced.

One of the accounts which have been given of this Hindoo tenet, is conveyed in terms which exhibit so sublime and beautiful a conception, that it could not fail to excite our admiration, even if we were unable to discover any evidence by which to support it. It asserts, “ that the whole of creation is rather an energy than a work, by which the infinite mind, which is present at all times, and in all places, exhibits to his creatures a set of perceptions, like a wonderful picture, or piece of music, always varied, yet always uniform.”

In corroboration of this Hindoo scheme, it has all along been known, that some of the ancient Greek philosophers entertained the very same view of the subject ; although it may be more than questioned, whether they had not adopted it implicitly from the Sages of the East. We also know, that a number of the most profound thinkers of modern Europe, have entertained opinions which at least *accord* with the tenet of the Hindoo : though, with the exception of Malebranche and Berkeley, (and we must add *Norris*, a name perhaps only less fortunate than that of Berkeley) no philosopher of modern date has made any *systematic* attempt to realise such a view.

Instead of any philosophical bent having been taken in this direction, by other writers besides

those already named ; the following very different attempt is the most notable undertaking, which has been set on foot in modern times, to arrest the growth of philosophical infidelity, with all its consequent evils.

The sceptical conclusions which grew out of the old scholastic theory of Ideas, especially as that theory passed through the hands of Berkeley and of Hume, appeared at one time to be so pregnant with mischief, that it called forth the energies and the systematic opposition of a very contemplative mind, to whose speculations I have already repeatedly alluded, and who, it is sufficiently known, has in consequence become the founder of a new school in philosophy. The great object of that enterprise which has been consecutively prosecuted by Dr. Reid and by his distinguished Successor, was to explode the Ideal Theory, as forming the ground of the scepticism in question. The assumption of the *existence of a material world*, upon the other hand, was not only left unimpeached by the School of Reid, but it has even been warmly espoused by that School, *in the most deadly import of the word matter*.

I apprehend, nevertheless, that the *Scepticism of Hume*, especially that which regarded *the existence of minds*, (which alone could have been effected by the demolition of the old ideal theory,) was an evil whose sphere of influence must at any rate, in the progressive light of modern science, have ever remained immeasurably less extensive, than that

of the *ATHEISM resulting from the assumption of matter.*

In proof of the truth of this last remark, I again appeal to the present existing state of philosophical opinion, both upon the Continent of Europe and in these Countries ; and ask, Whether all that has been done by the School of Reid, to explode the ideal theory, (admitting that its ordinary and obnoxious general hypothesis is exploded) has *prevented the growth of Materialism in the world* ; Or, Whether it has prevented the progress of that *philosophical infidelity* which has herein been shewn, and will be farther completely evidenced, to be the natural fruit of the assumption of *matter* ? If this question cannot be answered in the affirmative ; it must then be confessed to be, comparatively speaking, but a very small, though a real good, to have exploded the ground of such a Scepticism as that of Hume, (*upon this point*) when a state of belief had arisen, and was most formidably upon the increase, which is of perhaps an hundred fold more general extent, and general mischief, among not only the learned, but also the middling and lower classes of society.

It would seem, indeed, that *Scepticism* has been sometimes confounded with *Atheism*, in the contemplation of philosophers ; although they know that no two states of belief can be more distinct. The Sceptic is one who cannot incline to any belief, upon a given question. The Atheist, on the contrary, suffers no suspension of belief at all, but has fixed his confidence immutably upon **MATTER**

AND ITS ENERGIES, and has utterly rejected the supposition of an INTELLIGENT FIRST CAUSE. The briefest mention of these two different estates of belief, must be enough to assure any person that Sceptics (with regard to the existence of their own minds) must ever have been extremely rare in the world: Whereas the problem has been already practically solved, in the face of all Europe, that a determination to disbelieve in an Intelligent Ruler of the World, has a tendency to spread over a whole people. And certain it is, that, as mankind continue to be immersed in the various pursuits of natural science, they, and all within the influence of their opinions, will be liable to become smitten with infidelity, because they can never lose sight of the phenomena and operations of that, which at length stands to them in the place of a Divinity.

It will hardly be understood that I suppose *all* Natural Philosophers to be Materialists; or *all* Materialists, Atheists. But I nevertheless conceive that, in the case of very many who are not such, a great deal is owing to the accident of a religious education: and I certainly conclude, that, wanting this counteracting principle, the tendency of natural science, in the present age, is, undeniably and strongly, to the conclusion that *Nature is the sole cause of her own operations.*

Among the surrounding evidences of this fact, I suppose we may, as a striking instance, appeal to the most stupendous literary engine of which the world at the present moment can boast, for the dissemination of general knowledge; and may ask,

What is its real complexion? It has been called "*A temple for the worship of Nature.*" And it is said, that, "*in the inner court of this temple, there was a confederacy formed against all those who looked higher than Nature, for the principal object of their veneration and confidence.*" Does the structure in question bear internal evidence of the truth of this charge? If it does; Can there then be a doubt as to what is the tendency, *and what must be the increasing result,* of the pursuit of natural science, *so long as it shall continue to be conducted upon an assumption of the existence of* A MATERIAL WORLD?

It is here that I conceive it to be proper to advert to the consideration of *Final Causes.*

This subject, together with the welcome conclusions which it appears to indicate, forms a considerable feature in the Second Volume of Professor Stewart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Mind*: and I am happy in being able to subscribe my individual assent to his general views with regard to it. But while I am myself satisfied of the truth of those indications which we read in the manifest designs of Providence which are more and more unfolded to mankind as they advance in the knowledge of nature, I am quite unable to cherish that expectation of *its effect upon the general opinion* which is so fondly entertained by this writer.

In the course of an observation upon this topic, made on a criticism of Cudworth, with regard to the sentiments of Lord Bacon; Mr. Stewart has expressed himself in the following manner.

“ Little was he” (Cudworth) “ aware, that, in  
 “ turning the attention of men from the history of  
 “ opinions and systems, to the observation and  
 “ study of nature, Bacon was laying the founda-  
 “ tion of a bulwark against Atheism, more stable  
 “ and impregnable than the united labours of the  
 “ ancients was able to rear;—a bulwark which  
 “ derives additional strength from every new  
 “ accession to the stock of human knowledge.”

In answer to what regards the “ *ancients*,” in this passage; I must, in the First place, beg leave to observe, that Mr. Stewart can only have alluded to the ancient *Greeks*. The far more ancient and more enlightened *Hindoos*, by their rejection of the natural prejudice in favor of a material world, it is now well known, established the most firm, most extensive, and most uniformly durable conviction of the existence of an All-Ruling and Benevolent Mind, that the philosophical history of the species has ever exhibited;—a conviction undeniably coeval with that entertained by the children of Abraham, and in all probability the parent stock of the belief of that Chaldean himself. As for the *Jews*, who differed from the followers of *MENOU* by believing in matter; we find, that the fruits of this material creed, among them, was to produce not

*merely idolatry, but SADDUCISM also ;—a folly into which the genuine Hindoo cannot possibly fall.*

But, Secondly, as for the question, How far the consideration of Final Causes either is, *or can be*, a bulwark, against Atheism ; I would here ask, Does the *present existing state* of philosophical opinion *at all justify the conclusion* which Mr. Stewart has drawn ?

That his expectation of the subject *ought to be verified ; and that, to a certain extent, it actually will be so ;* I subscribe my full assent. But the *real and momentous question*, with which we are here concerned, is this,—HAS *the expectation* YET *been verified, generally*, from the time of Bacon down to the present epoch : HAS NOT the progress of Philosophical Infidelity been UNIFORMLY ON THE INCREASE, *during all that time : And, ARE NOT its extent and practical effects vastly more general, and more formidable, than at any intervening period ?*

Not to multiply, nor to repeat, such evidences of the fact as have already been adduced ; it may, upon this occasion be asked, with peculiar effect, Has not Professor Stewart, himself, in his Chapter upon the subject, entitled one of his Sections in the following significant terms—“ *Final Causes rejected by the majority of French Philosophers ?*” And has not this writer been led to notice the actual fact that *Final Causes, even when they are admitted as existing, have not always carried the human mind toward the belief in an Intelligent Author of them.* I allude, here, to the notice

which Mr. Stewart has taken of the censure bestowed by Lord Bacon upon Aristotle, for “*substituting Nature, instead of God, as the fountain of final causes ; and for treating them rather as subservient to logic than to theology.*”

But I am farther to remark, that there is a much broader acknowledgment than the above, of the insufficiency of men’s opinion of final causes to be found in the writings of Professor Stewart. In the Introduction to the First Volume of his Elements,—a work whose later Editions are very recent, he has reasoned to the following effect.

“ Nor is it merely in order to free the mind from the influence of error, that it is useful to examine the foundation of established opinions. It is such an examination alone, that, in an inquisitive age like the present, can secure a philosopher from the danger of unlimited scepticism. To this extreme, indeed, the complexion of the times is more likely to give him a tendency, than to implicit credulity,” &c.

The whole passage, which is of considerable length, runs on in the same strain, and comprises a just and luminous view of philosophical opinions, *at the present time.* But, surely, if the operation of Final Causes had *hitherto* proved *any thing like* a bulwark against infidelity, this bulwark must have prevented so wide-spread and sweeping a current of sceptical opinion, as that upon which Mr. Stewart has thus, during a quarter of a century, continually descanted.



In a Dissertation on Final Causes, in an Appendix to the First Volume of Lord Woodhouselee's life of Lord Kames; the author, although he most warmly espouses the subject, nevertheless makes the following admission. "It is curious to remark that the Epicureans themselves, who utterly disclaimed a Divine Providence, as concerned either in the original formation, or in the government of the universe, were yet forced to acknowledge throughout the whole system, the most pregnant and incontrovertible marks of benevolent design. But how did they extricate themselves from this apparent dilemma? Why, by bestowing upon insensate and brute matter that eulogium which they refused to the Divinity."

Although it must be confessed that the evidences of Final Causes have been *multiplied greatly* in our own time; it is no less certain that, in the times of *Hobbes* and *Spinoza*, there were manifestations of the same wisdom and benevolence of design, of a nature so convincing, that no additional facts could have proved more so. The man who doubted, *then*, whether the eye was made for seeing, or the ear for hearing, we may be assured, owed his perverted judgment to some cause which all the discoveries of *Newton* and of *Cuvier*, put together, could never have removed. The real truth of the matter is, that, (not to mention particular cases) *the power of education* can enable the human mind to resist the impression which the manifestation of Final Causes *ought* to make upon it. And the fact, that it does so, is abundantly proved by the actual

philosophical bent which has been manifested by the most distinguished Professors of Natural Science, in a neighbouring country; and even in our own.

Those who have attended to the present state of philosophical opinion with regard to the subject; and who, especially, have observed the sensation which has very recently been excited in our own Country with respect to it; must, certainly, be sensible that I might have made out a much stronger case than I have thought requisite to furnish, in proof of the solidity of my position. Foreigners, who have pronounced upon this occurrence, have brought a charge of bigotry against different classes of men among us. There can be no question, among enlightened and upright minds, that bigotry is an evil; and, that all sincere researches after general truth ought to be free from every shackle, except those of reason and reflection. It cannot be thought, that, in the animadversion I am now offering, I can have any object or desire, but that of evincing *a fact*; and this, only because it is of urgent and vital importance to the general welfare. I therefore, unavoidably, here advert to it, *as a fact*; Or, I will put it in the form of a *question*; Whether it can be doubted, that the seeds of philosophical infidelity have been newly and irrecoverably sown in the minds of a large proportion of British Students, whose future speculations, when their understandings shall have operated under this bias in advancing life, will, in

all probability, be found to assimilate in a lamentable degree with the views so prevalent among the physiologists of the Continent of Europe?

With such a fact, full and fresh in our experience; Will it, for a moment, be said, agreeably with the judgment of Professor Stewart, that “*Final Causes* form a bulwark against Atheism which derives additional strength from every accession to the stock of human knowledge?”<sup>1</sup>

Having felt it to be imperatively due to the subject, to advert to the existing state of opinion in the case now under notice; I should be culpably wanting to its interests if I omitted to add, that I apprehend there is no person, who has made any proficiency in genuine pneumatological science, who will for an instant admit it possible that the great problem in question can ever be solved upon physiological ground. Human genius is most certainly mistaken, when it attempts to find any outlet from the one science to the other. Dr. Hartley

<sup>1</sup> It has been publicly said, that *Five Hundred Copies*, of the Work in question, were taken off in fourteen days. If this be the fact; it serves for a pretty good Barometer of the state of opinion upon the subject. And, when we reflect that this Country is yet far behind the Continent of Europe in the leaven of philosophical infidelity, we must be in a state of torpor, indeed, if such a test does not rouse the *believers in MIND*, to look about them and make a true estimate of *what they have to expect*, from the operation of final causes upon the judgment of natural philosophers, *so long as the assumption of the existence of matter* shall continue to hold up its head.

never supposed the problem of Matter, or of Spirit, to be within the reach of his own speculations. Or, rather, his mechanical views of our mental affections, and his professional habits together, never led him for a moment to doubt the spirituality of the Mind. The physiologist, *as such*, can never arrive at so much as a logical conjecture; Whether the subject he contemplates is the mechanism and functions of a dead brute substance, under some unknown guidance; or the identical substance of an Intelligent Agent, ordering its own operations uniformly, for grand and immutable purposes.

In the view which I have taken of the foregoing subject; it cannot be thought that I suppose a *Universal Atheism* is likely to be the consequence of the assumption of matter. On the contrary, there can be little doubt that the consideration of Final Causes, alone, will for ever occasion a partial and even an extensive counter opinion to that of Infidelity. But the case which I undertook to make out, is sufficiently and far too amply established, upon the most indubitable evidence, that a large proportion of the Professors of Natural Science, of their *professional followers*, and of *their cursory and even mere casual readers*, have been harnessed in the depressing yoke of a philosophical infidelity, and, that *the larger portion will be so, in time to come*, upon the assumption of the existence of matter.

In this case, therefore, I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction, that an utter explosion of the assumption of a material world, would present a bulwark against Atheism, infinitely more effectual than the consideration of *Final Causes* is ever likely to prove, in the opinions of philosophers: Or, rather, it would, in point of fact, be *exploding that bulwark, behind which ATHEISM*, when it has not stalked forth in open defiance, has **SKULKED SECURELY**, *in all ages, in despite of FINAL CAUSES*; to the continual perversion of sound philosophy, and the affliction of the human race.

## 4.

*Opinions for and against a Material World.—Nature of the errors of Berkeley and of Hume.—Fallacy of the belief in Matter.*

Agreeably with what was advanced in the foregoing part of this Section, I am obliged to conclude, that the philosophical labours of the School of Reid, however laudable and successful they have been in some particulars, (and that they have been so in several respects I am ready to acknowledge) have yet had for their *principal object* a field of inquiry far less extensive, and less important to the happiness of mankind, than another one which presents itself to our research.

Not only has the School of Reid not led the

way to this more important field of inquiry, although the genius of Berkeley had so strongly invited it to the attempt; but, on the contrary, it is to be objected that the Scottish Philosophers have condemned the attempt of Berkeley, and have interdicted any such, to all future inquirers.

It is assumed, by Professor Stewart, to be equally unphilosophical to endeavour to *prove* or to *disprove* the existence of a material world: Yet nothing was farther from Dr. Reid's intention or conduct, than a neutrality of opinion upon this subject. The last mentioned writer held, that the belief of a material world is to be received implicitly, upon a faith in our original prejudice with regard to it. He says, "The belief of a material world is older, and of more authority than any principles of philosophy. It declines the tribunal of reason,<sup>1</sup> and laughs at all the artillery of the logician."—See Reid's Inquiry, Chap. 1. Sect. 7.

From this it is manifest, without farther discus-

<sup>1</sup> We are told by Professor Stewart, in his Philosophical Essays, Essay 2. Chap. 1. in his account of Dr. Reid's controversy with Berkeley and Hume, that "*It is to REASONING therefore, and to REASONING alone, that he appeals, in combating their doctrines.*" And Mr. Stewart considers it as a "*very gross misapprehension*" of Reid's doctrine, arising from the *title* which he gave to his Inquiry, to suppose the contrary. The reader will judge of the justice of this statement, upon comparing it with the above-mentioned flight of Dr. Reid, in *disclaiming the authority of reason!*

sion, that even Dr. Reid himself did not for a moment think of appealing to *any argument, or evidence*, for the existence of *matter*. He had clearly discerned the futility of any such attempt, in the emptiness of those made by Des Cartes and by Locke on the subject.

With regard to the above passage, therefore, I have only to notice the lamentable rant in which Dr. Reid has indulged;—concerning which, however, it is barely worth remarking, that, if the *logician* find no stronger argument in favor of the existence of a material world, than the *popular prejudice* upon which Dr. Reid has relied, the former may, assuredly, laugh in his turn.—*How many momentous truths has the world added to its stock of knowledge, within the last two centuries, which had long laughed at all the artillery of the logician?*

Dr. Reid was little aware, when he formed his estimate of the subject, that it was the established creed of a much older philosophy than any which he ever knew, that there is no such thing as a material world. I presume he never could intend to allude to the *Mosaic* account of matter; as one from which we were to derive any notion concerning its *real essence*. And I am borne out in this, by such eminent European Churchmen as Berkeley and Malebranche; who have deemed it no offence to the *Mosaic* history to suppose what is called *earth or matter* to be a *spiritual substance*.

In contrasting the two different creeds together, that of *material substance* and that of *spiritual*; it is plain, to the most obvious remark, and it deserves

our serious attention, that the *former* is the early conceit of the child, and the continued prejudice of the savage or ignorant man, of every age and country; whereas the notion of the *spiritual nature* of phenomena *never could have originated in an ignorant nation*. The grounds of this belief are hidden from ordinary view; and the origin of the belief itself must have been among a very enlightened people. Such, we know, from other evidences, was, undeniably, the Hindoo race; with whom this creed became a confirmed theological tenet, in the earliest times. Can it then be called a *philosophical procedure*, to condemn a conclusion which results from the profound contemplations of enlightened man; upon no other plea but because it *contradicts the prejudice of ordinary man*? Was it by such philosophising as this, that the Copernican system was established in the world?

It is extremely deserving of remark, that, while Professor Stewart speaks with unqualified contempt of the "*reveries* of Berkeley concerning the "non-existence of a material world," (which implies that the latter, however acute and sane he might be in other respects, was at least visionary and *more than* excentric in this,) we are called upon, by the imperative voice of truth, to recognise that Berkeley has the suffrage of a most luminous era of the world, to bear him completely out in his assumption; insomuch, that, to charge him with dealing in REVERIE, for having fallen upon a view of the subject that had once been so prevalent and



so celebrated, was a step which I think Mr. Stewart would not refuse to retract, upon mature deliberation. Those who may think that Berkeley was wrong in his conclusion, cannot however, for a moment deny, that he has been backed by such a power of ancient wisdom, as must at least stamp his error with no small degree of *respectability*.

A very different author, the popularity of whose work, at one period, is an impressive instance of the tenor of metaphysical disquisition which the public taste was at that time formed to digest, has indulged upon the present subject, in such effusions as the following;—"It is indeed easy to affirm any thing, provided a man can reconcile himself to hypocrisy and falsehood. A man may affirm that he sees with the soles of his feet, that he believes there is no material world," &c. —*Beattie's Essay on Truth, Part 1. Chap. 2.*

The pure and elevated minds who, in Europe, have believed that there is no material world, would doubtless have disdained any answer to such an effusion as this; even had they stood alone in their view of the subject. But what, (it may be asked) would have become of Dr. Beattie's literary reputation, if he had lived in India three thousand years ago, and had published that work which he has entitled AN ESSAY ON TRUTH?—Is there any person so void of understanding, as to deny, whenever it is called to his notice, that, although the light of the Hindoo system has indeed passed away, yet, our certain knowledge that *it once existed*, must give it instant

admission to be fully considered, *in the present day*, as a scheme of very high pretensions, among the number of philosophies which the world has produced ;—a scheme far from being inferior to any other upon earth, either in point of duration, or in the number of sages who have subscribed to it? But, all who discern this must admit, that the language of Mr. Beattie places him in no enviable situation. And, even, those who have arraigned the views of Berkeley in more decorous, or less disgusting terms, must either withdraw the charge of *reverie*, or be subjected to the impartial judgment of posterity.

As for the attempt of Berkeley, itself; It was not only (like every other attempt on the subject that can follow it) opposed by one of the strongest and most universal prejudices of mankind; but it was, moreover, unfortunate in being *founded upon false data*, namely, upon an assumption of its author, in common with many other Idealists, that our sensations are not affections of the mind itself, but are a set of distinct and detached beings. Upon *this* assumption it followed, rigidly speaking, that even though our sensations or ideas, (of color and of touch,) be extended and figured, still, extension and figure could no more be affirmed to be qualities of *mind* than qualities of *matter*, since they must be supposed to be *foreign natures* to that of the mind itself. Besides this, also, the scheme of Berkeley was marked by some *peculiar* features, which distinctly rendered it abortive and

revolting; more especially, his denial of the *reality* of extension.

In order to satisfy such of my readers as may happen to desire it, as to what was in reality the scheme of ideas entertained by Berkeley, and which was the principal cause of his failure; I here select the following extracts, from his "*Principles of Human Knowledge*."

"The table I write on exists, i. e. I see it and feel it, and if I were out of my study I should say it existed, meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it."—Sect. 3.

Again, (§ 48,) he says, "Wheresoever bodies are said to have no existence without the mind, I would not be understood to mean this, or that particular mind, but all minds whatsoever. It does not therefore follow from the foregoing principles that bodies" (he means *ideas*) "are annihilated and created every moment, or exist not at all during the interval between our perceiving them."

Now, I am to observe, these two very explicit passages throw a noon-day light upon Berkeley's system, and clearly exhibit the *most important and characteristic feature* of his scheme.—The various other fabricators of the Ideal Theory, have usually expressed themselves in terms which leave us only to *conjecture* concerning the precise nature of detached Ideas. But as those things are here described, we find they are expressly supposed to be *a set of beings which exist permanently*, like

minds, or bodies : but, at the same time, exhibiting *a wandering or changeable disposition* with regard to their *place of residence* ; now inhabiting *one mind*, and now *another* !

From this view of the subject ; the reader will perfectly discern what an opening the doctrine of Berkeley gave, to the acumen and intrepidity of Hume. It is manifest that Ideas which were supposed to exist permanently, and also to pass and repass from one mind to another, might no less be supposed capable of existing *without any mind to reside in*. If Berkeley had been asked, I think he could not have denied that there must be a *supposable philosophical interval*, while his assumed ideas were passing from one mind to another, during which *interval* they must also be supposed to have *existed*. Upon Berkeley's hypothesis, therefore, Hume was certainly borne out, in that extravagant conclusion which produced such alarm in the philosophical world.

But, although Hume might well exult in the strength of his own reasoning, as an *argumentum ad hominem*, there can be no doubt that the part he took in the subject, presents one of the most glaring instances of self contradiction that ever disfigured the page of philosophy ; a matter which never could have escaped so great a genius, had it not overtaken him in the mood to amuse himself with the embarrassments of human reason. While he was maintaining, that *Ideas may exist without a mind to reside in* ; he had himself the singular felicity of giving to these ideas the title of **IMPRES-**

SIONS! One would think that the genius of ridicule, itself, could never have suggested a contradiction so consummately palpable. IMPRESSIONS *must be impressions upon* SOMETHING.

It is upon this, as upon many other occasions, astonishing to observe, what contemptible conceits have both escaped the most acute writers upon the subject of mind, and have also found serious consideration with other authors; such conceits as would not for a moment have been tolerated, even if they could ever have made their appearance, in any modern treatise upon physical science. It is not easy to conjecture, how so ludicrous a suicide of Hume's Sceptical conclusion, could have escaped the notice of those who have formally entered the field against that chimera: but I think we may venture to believe, that Hume himself would have been one of the first to have laughed at it.

To conclude with regard to the Ideas of Berkeley; the reader will clearly perceive, and with an interest proportioned to the magnitude of the difference, what a vast change it produces in our view of the subject, when we reject the absurd supposition that our outspread sensations of red, blue, and yellow, are a set of loose beings, flitting, like swallows, into and out of the mind; and when we, on the contrary, recognise them to be only the *actual modifications or affections of the mind itself*. In thus recognising our sensations or ideas, being nothing but *occasional states* of our mind, we possess the full concurrence of the school of Reid, and of all sound philosophers of the present

day ; and we can also produce the express acknowledgments of Idealists themselves, of Hume, of Berkeley, and of Malebranche, as well as of Aristotle and of Plato, to the same incontrovertible truth. It remains, then, only to prove, by a rigid analysis, *whether or not our SENSATIONS are extended ; in order to ascertain whether or not the MIND ITSELF is so.* And, if the latter be shown to be the real fact ; the legitimate deduction will also be shown to be, that all external extended agency is spiritual.

I proceed to touch upon the most important consideration of the present chapter ; a hint concerning which was suggested in a foregoing section.

The right way to commence that investigation, whose result must prove so deeply momentous to our conclusions on this subject ; I apprehend, is to begin by considering what would naturally have been the inference drawn by the *earliest* race of mankind, provided they had, by any means, *from the very beginning*, arrived at a certain knowledge that all the extended objects which they perceived were nothing but affections of their own minds.

The manifest truth, then, I conceive, is, that, if the Greek Philosophers, or any other set of inquirers, instead of falling into the universal delusion of believing that red, blue, and yellow, and all other phantoms of colors, are the *distinct things of an external world*, had, *from the very first*, ascertained the indubitable fact that all these

spectres are *nothing but affections of the mind itself*; in this case they *never could* have taken up any such conceit as that of *dead matter, at all*, because it is plain they *must* have recognised EXTENSION AND FIGURE *as being attributes of MIND!*

Here I am perfectly aware, that ordinary persons, who are deeply embued with the prejudice that they perceive external and distant things, and that these things are dead or inert, will be slow to admit that they could, in any case, have ever thought differently upon the subject from what they now do. But I appeal with confidence to every philosopher to vouch the legitimacy of the conclusion, that, provided we had *first of all* been inducted into the fact that the colored and extended things which we perceive are nothing but our own mental affections, we *never could* have taken up any such notion as that of *dead matter, at all*. And it is certain, that, if in these circumstances, such a conceit could have started up in the mind of any man; *it could have had NO LOGICAL FOUNDATION to support it*.

It is to show the full concurrence of philosophers, in the view of the subject which I have just now expressed, that the sequel of the present article is appropriated. Upon this occasion, therefore, it is matter of the most fortunate issue, that the truth in question, although it has never been applied to this account, nor turned to any important advantage, has nevertheless been most amply acknowledged by those very philosophers against whose general views it is now brought so conclusively to bear.

The conclusion to which I here allude, is that

which has been often repeated by different writers, in the words of Berkeley, namely, that A SENSATION CAN ONLY BE RESEMBLED BY ANOTHER SENSATION, IN THE SAME OR IN SOME OTHER MIND; which means, (in more general terms) that the *qualities of a LIVING principle or substance* cannot be resembled by those of a DEAD OR INERT *one*.

No set of philosophers could be more deeply concerned, from the nature of their general principles, to deny this conclusion, than those of the school of Reid; as will decisively appear from the result. Nothing, therefore, can be more impressive, at this stage of the subject, than to mark the fulness of assent which these writers have expressed upon this head. I shall begin with the sentiments of Professor Stewart, as expressed in his *Philosophical Essays*.

“The attempt of Berkeley” (says Mr. Stewart, *Essay 2, Chap 1.*) “to disprove the existence of a material world, took its rise from the attempt of Des Cartes to demonstrate the truth of the contrary proposition. Both undertakings were equally unphilosophical; to argue in favor of any of the fundamental laws of human belief, is not less absurd than to call them in question. In this argument, however, it must be granted that Berkeley had the advantage, the conclusion which he formed being unavoidable if the common principles be admitted upon which they both proceeded.”

For the sake of those who may be little in the subject, I shall here explain the import of this passage; which is, that Berkeley and Des



Cartes both assumed that our *ideas are the extended objects of our perception*. And hence, it is acknowledged by Professor Stewart, that, *if this assumed fact had been made out*, the conclusion against the existence of a material world must then have been fully admitted.

Again; a little farther on, Mr. Stewart observes, with regard to Reid's Inquiry, that "The object of the author is not to bring forward any proof that matter *does* exist,"—"but to overturn any pretended demonstration that matter *does not* exist, by exposing the futility and absurdity of the principles which it assumes as DATA. That from these *data* (which had been received during a long succession of ages, as incontrovertible articles of faith) both Berkeley and Hume have reasoned with unexceptionable fairness, as well as incomparable acuteness, he acknowledges in every page of his works; and only asserts, that the force of their conclusion is annihilated by the falseness and inconsistency of the hypothesis on which it rests."

In this passage, therefore, we have the quoted acknowledgment of Dr. Reid, in addition to that of Professor Stewart, that, provided only the extension of our sensations be demonstrated, there can be no ground whatever to assume the existence of a material world.

In a much later work of Reid, than his Inquiry, namely, in his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, a work near half a century subsequent to the former, we have his farther acknowledgment to the same

effect ; which may also be taken for an evidence that the admission which it makes has never been controverted by any philosopher, and we may safely conclude that it never will be.

“ Nothing” (says he, Essay 2, Chap. 9,) “ can resemble a sensation, except a similar sensation, in the same or in some other mind. To think that any quality in a thing that is inanimate can resemble a sensation, is a great absurdity. In all this I cannot but agree perfectly with Bishop Berkeley.”

I hope, I may congratulate every reader, who is competent at all to understand the nature of the subject, upon the decisive unanimity that is herein manifested, between otherwise-contending Sects of philosophers, with regard to the present momentous conclusion. And hereupon I am to observe, that it brings the matter in question to a very short issue, namely, that which I shall now state.

The great problem which we are in search of, is reduced simply to this ; “ We fully recognise” (I suppose the school of Reid to say,) “ that our *SENSATIONS and other ideas are nothing but modifications, affections, or certain occasional states, of the MIND ITSELF: THEREFORE ONLY PROVE that any of these sensations are EXTENDED, and we must then grant it to be altogether conclusive that EXTENSION, wheresoever it exists, can be nothing but an attribute of MIND.*”

I hardly need say, that this is the accepted condition upon which I advance to the proofs. And I apprehend, in the interim, that I cannot be con-

sidered as being too presumptuous in this avowal, since the world has seen that Professor Stewart, himself, has recently expressed a recognition of *the general fact which forms the fundamental proposition of these proofs*, namely, that **A VARIETY of colors is necessary to the act of perceiving visible outline or figure.** By this admission (although it is perfectly manifest, from his total silence with regard to its consequences, that *he did not in the least suspect the RESULT of what he HAS admitted*) Professor Stewart has *virtually recognised* the fact, that *the perception of A VISIBLE LINE is nothing but the perception of A RELATION OF CONTRAST between ANY TWO of our own SENSATIONS OF COLORS.*

I certainly anticipated nothing so little, as that a recognition so directly contrary to all his previous doctrine, as well as to that of Reid, should have been signified by him, as an original suggestion, after I had, during years, been stating the matter in detail to the public, in several successive tracts. But, as there cannot be the smallest doubt, that Mr. Stewart annihilated the theory of Reid the moment he uttered this recognition; it would be worse than supine not to be animated with full confidence, in following out the subject to its desired consummation.

## SECTION FOURTH.

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OF THE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS OF HUMAN BELIEF.—AND,  
OF A BELIEF IN A CONTINUANCE OF THE LAWS OF  
NATURE.

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### 1.

*Of the First of these two Subjects.—Exposition of  
arbitrary assumptions with regard to it.*

**I**N commencing the present Section, I am under the necessity to remark, that the distinguished writer upon whose doctrines I have already so repeatedly animadverted, at the same time that he has pronounced it to be unphilosophical to attempt to argue either against or in favor of the existence of a material world, has nevertheless made this problem a very conspicuous object of his solicitude, in each of his succeeding Volumes.

From the fact of the *interdiction* which I have already noticed; it might naturally be conjectured, that these repeated resumptions of the subject were for the sole purpose of exhorting philosophers not to meddle with it, one way or the other: But this

is far from being the case. On the contrary, Mr. Stewart is a principal and a very zealous advocate, on one side of the question. In the Second Volume of his Elements, especially, he has resumed the subject, with augmented animation: and therein he appears to anticipate the most decisive success in the general opinion; partly from a suggestion drawn from the speculations of *Mr. Turgot*, and partly from two or three *new considerations*, suggested by himself, as arguments “*which might more particularly have been pressed upon Berkeley, as proofs how incompatible his notions were with those laws of human belief, to which the learned and the unlearned must in common submit.*”

The striking inconsistency of interdicting a subject, as being unphilosophical; and, then, continuing to resume it, from time to time, with a suggestion of *new arguments upon one side of it*, cannot I think be rendered more manifest than by the simple statement of the fact. But as, in addition to this, I am under the necessity to think, that the manner in which Mr. Stewart has treated the subject, first and last, but more particularly in his *Second Volume*, is arbitrary in a most extreme degree; and as I am strongly impressed with the necessity there is to point out and refute his assumptions in the most explicit manner, in order to rescue the Subject from a certain and deplorable declension; I deem it unavoidable to examine, to a certain extent, what he has advanced in that Volume with regard to it.

In one of the foregoing passages from the writings of this author; it is remarked, that, "to argue in favor of any of the fundamental laws of human belief, is not less unphilosophical than to call them in question."

In expressing this remark, in the place alluded to, it is arbitrarily meant by Mr. Stewart, that *to argue against the existence of a material world is to argue against a fundamental law of human belief.* The matter, moreover, is tranquilly assumed; as if it were a self-evident truth which no one could ever think of doubting. We are, nevertheless, entitled to demand the *proofs* of this assumption.

In this and similar cases, the inquirer is referred, by the Scottish Philosophers, to "*Common Sense*;" an authority which the School of Reid, strongly tenacious of its original assumption, still continues to recognise, notwithstanding the number of times it has been subjected to the pointed animadversion of different writers. The just, I cannot say the decorous severity, with which this Idol of the Northern Writers has been treated by some of their opponents, renders it unnecessary for me to be diffuse in commenting upon it here. I shall therefore only offer two, or three, impressive instances of the absurdity of subjecting our judgment to this authority; which evidences, I apprehend, must prove abundantly conclusive.

In the first place, however, I would briefly observe, that there are *two distinct kinds of common*

*sense*, which are extremely different in their natures ; although both kinds appear to be confounded together by the advocates in favor of a material world. The one is legitimate and infallible ; the other spurious and very usually fallacious. By the former we judge the *self-evident relations between our ideas* : by the latter we mistake *relative truths* for *absolute ones*, and *apparent facts* for *realities*. I shall offer an example of each kind.

*Spurious Common Sense* informs mankind, that the earth is fixed, and the sun and stars in motion round it ; that there is an absolute up and down, and that men always walk with their heads uppermost ; that the blade of an oar seen in the water, and the steeple of a church through a waving pane of glass, are crooked ; that red, blue, and yellow, and all other phantoms of colors, are without the mind and at various distances from it ; that we *perceive external objects*, and that these objects are made of an *INERT solid substance called MATTER*. Now every one of these judgments, reserving only the two last, is notoriously known to be absolutely false and chimerical. It is therefore undeniable that the two last-mentioned judgments are found in very bad society, and they are therefore legitimate objects of suspicion and of scrutiny.

*Legitimate or Intuitive Common Sense*, on the contrary, comprehends, among its innumerable objects, such propositions, or judgments, as the following. It is impossible for blue to be yellow, or for crooked to be straight ; for right to be wrong ; or for truth to be falsehood. Each of these is a law,

which no man of sane mind, either ignorant or learned, ever attempted to disbelieve, *whether* he believed in the real existence of right and wrong, or of any of the other named principles, *or not*; because this law merely affirms a necessary relation between two of our own ideas.

But, hereupon I would ask; Does Mr. Stewart mean to assume, that there never was any man of sound mind who disbelieved the existence of a material world? Or Can it be meant, that we have the *same sort of evidence* of the existence of a material world, that we have of the equality of two and two? Dr. Beattie, however, asserts fully to this amount.

Not to repeat such names as those of Malebranche and Berkeley, in our own quarter of the globe; Can it be necessary, again, to put philosophers in mind, that a large proportion of the most enlightened part of the species, during a long succession of ages, has uniformly rejected the belief of a material world, as a mere delusion? What then becomes of the assumption that a belief in matter, is *a fundamental law of human belief*?

Can any procedure be more directly contrary to the spirit of the *inductive philosophy*, or more un-conformable to the *analogy of the development of science among the species*, than to attempt to uphold the *mere natural prejudices* of mankind, against the results of their *mature observation and profound reflection*?

The utmost that Mr. Stewart was warranted by *induction*, that is *by the general history of the philo-*



*sophical opinions of the species at large*, to have assumed in the present case, was, that to argue against a material world would be to argue against *a universal prejudice of untaught men*. Now, How many such prejudices are known to be totally void of foundation in reality?

Will it for a moment be denied, that every man, except philosophers, is as confidently assured that the phantoms we call red, blue, and yellow, are *without the mind and at various distances from it*, as he is of *the existence of a material world*? But all philosophers are firmly convinced that one of these conceptions is false: Then, Why may not the other be false, also?

So late, in the progress of human knowledge, as the time of Bacon, it was as fair an opinion, for any *philosopher*, to have urged, (upon the authority of what the Scottish writers have called *Common Sense*) *that the earth is fixed*, as it now is for Professor Stewart to assert the *existence of a material world*, upon the same authority.—Dr Reid and his distinguished Successor would be confidently forward to teach mankind, that, in believing the earth to be fixed, they have been *profoundly imposed upon by this very kind of Common Sense* which they hold up as the sole authority for our belief in the existence of matter! Can any procedure, then, be more absurd, than to reject this authority *as ignorant* in the one case, and yet not to suffer it so much as to be *doubted* in the other?

It is not to be wondered at, though it is to be regretted, that a pertinacious maintenance of such arbitrary and contradictory assumptions as these,

should have irritated a late celebrated writer, to a tone of animadversion that was certainly discreditable to philosophy.

The *only supposed evidence* that any person whatever has, of the existence of matter, is the belief of ordinary men that they *touch its solidity*. So late as the time of Locke and of Newton, the opinion was universal and unshaken, that this belief was founded on a reality: Bodies were supposed to act upon other bodies by the medium of *contact and impulse*. But, *What* (it may be asked) *has now become of this doctrine of contact and impulse*, so long established and so consecrated in the opinions of natural philosophers? The answer is, that it is now universally acknowledged, by men of science, to be false and groundless *in all the ordinary cases in which it was believed to have existed*; and it is NOT KNOWN to be true in any case whatever. Had not, indeed, the natural prejudice of the species been too strong for the control of reason in time past, there can be no doubt that the *contraction and the bending of metals*, (without requiring any other evidence or consideration) ought to have led mankind to reject the notion of SOLIDITY, *the characteristic quality of defined dead matter*.

It is now known and undisputed, on all sides, that a pressure of less than about eight hundred pounds weight cannot bring a square inch of the body of a man, into what is called *physical contact* with any other body. Mankind, therefore, are certainly deceived, when they think that they *touch matter*. What, then, becomes of the *supposed fundamental law of human belief*, by which men, upon

this very supposed but unreal fact alone, assume the existence of matter?

Neither the ancient believers in matter, nor yet such modern Apostles of Materialism as Hobbes and Spinoza, perhaps, ever doubted the doctrine of *touch or contact*. It was natural, therefore, and defensible in *them* to believe in the existence of matter. But can it be defensible in the philosophers of the present age, to preach this slavish subjection to a prejudice, after it has been universally acknowledged, that *to a very great extent, and so far as we know*, it is found to be void of truth; which, certainly, leaves a strong presumption that it is *void of truth altogether*; even without taking in such conclusive evidences as the occasional contraction of the most dense substances.

The proofs, however, of the non-existence of matter, I must here remark, will have to be distinguished as being of two essentially different kinds. One of these is, that what mankind have, until of late years, taken for SOLIDITY, is found to be NOT SOLIDITY: this proof is fully recognised in *physical science*, and has been touched upon here *only incidentally*. The other (which will be the proper object of analysis in the sequel) is, *that the EXTENSION which is vulgarly taken for the Extension of MATTER, is in reality the extension of OUR OWN MINDS.*

Upon this occasion it is important to remark, how inconsistently Professor Stewart has reasoned,

in what he has advanced upon the present subject; which occupies a very considerable part of the Second Volume of his Elements.

In Chap. 1. Sect. 3. of that Work, in which place he adverts to “The argument from universal consent on which so much stress is laid by the “ancients”—(‘This the Greek says, and this the ‘barbarian says, and the inhabitant of the Con- ‘tinent, and the Islander; and the wise, and the ‘unwise;’) he continues his observations thus.

“It cannot be denied, that, against this sum-  
 “mary species of logic, when employed without  
 “any collateral light, as an infallible touch-stone of  
 “philosophical truth, a strong objection immedi-  
 “ately occurs. By what test (it may be asked) is  
 “a principle of common sense to be distinguished  
 “from one of those prejudices to which the whole  
 “human race are irresistibly led in the first in-  
 “stance by the constitution of their nature? If no  
 “criterion of truth can be pointed out but univer-  
 “sal consent, may not all those errors which Bacon  
 “calls *idola tribus* claim a right to admission among  
 “the incontrovertible axioms of science? And  
 “might not the popular cavils against the suppo-  
 “sition of the earth’s motion, which so long ob-  
 “structed the progress of the Copernican system,  
 “have been legitimately opposed, as a reply of pa-  
 “ramount authority, to all the scientific reason-  
 “ings by which it was supported?”

Upon reading this passage; Are we not strongly called upon, to mark how powerfully and conclusively it turns to the demolition of Mr. Stewart’s

own argument for the existence of a material world? Will it, for a moment, be said, that we have any "*collateral light*," (beside our natural prejudice) which can bring the belief of a material world *within the exception* which he has made from the general rule? Has not Dr. Reid himself conclusively acknowledged, that the belief in a material world "*disclaims the authority of reason?*" Or, Will Professor Stewart continue, in his future Editions, to retain that passage, wherein he tells the world that Reid's meaning has been "*grossly misapprehended;*" and that Reid "*appeals to reasoning, and to reasoning alone,*" in his controversy with Berkeley upon this subject?

Mr. Stewart appears, indeed, to lean, for support, upon a criterion of a *first truth* suggested by Father Buffier, namely, "That its practical influence should extend even to those individuals who affect to dispute its authority." But this, I must observe, is no other than a deplorable sophism, when attempted to be applied to the belief of a material world; and I cannot help adding, that this sort of misconception appears to me to pervade what Mr. Stewart has advanced on the subject, in this part of his work, in a very surprising degree.

It may serve to give the reader a clear apprehension of the merits of the following discussion, to observe, in this place, that the denial of a MATERIAL world, is *not a denial of an EXTERNAL world*, but is a *vastly different thing*. The difference between these two conceptions will be fully

illustrated in the course of this section. At present, all that is requisite for me to observe farther, with regard to it, is, that neither the Hindoo system nor even that of Berkeley at all denies the existence of an EXTERNAL WORLD; And, likewise, that my own view of the subject, which is vastly foreign to that of Berkeley, and perhaps does not coincide exactly with that of the Hindoo philosophy, recognises AN EXTERNAL world in the fullest extent.

If Mr. Stewart, therefore, had only asserted, that every man who pretends, in his speculations, to deny the existence of AN EXTERNAL world, nevertheless believes it in his practice; he would have asserted a first truth according to the criterion of Buffier. But if he meant to imply, (as his whole reasonings throughout leave no doubt he did,) that a belief in AN EXTERNAL world is necessarily a belief in A MATERIAL world, he has confounded two things that are as different from each other as light and darkness; a misconception which, there is reason to think, has been very prevalent in the world, but which one would not expect to be entertained by a philosopher of such eminence.

As an evidence, however, that this has been done in the present instance; I remark the following observation of Mr. Stewart: "Had Copernicus  
" not only asserted the stability of the Sun, but,  
" with some of the Sophists of old, denied any  
" such thing as *motion* existing in the universe,  
" his theory would have been precisely analogous  
" to that of the non-existence of *matter*; and no  
" answer to it could have been thought of more per-

“ tinent and philosophical, than that which Plato  
“ is said to have given to the same paradox in the  
“ mouth of Zeno, by rising up and walking before  
“ his eyes.”

I have no doubt that my judgment will suffer, here, in the opinion of Mr. Stewart, when I hazard the avowal of an intention to argue, in the sequel, as a matter of demonstrative evidence, that the laugh, in this case, must turn against Plato, in so far at least, that, *although there be motion in the universe, it can never be perceived by us.* But, whether this fact shall be established or not, I confidently venture to affirm that there is a vast and infinite difference between a *denial of motion in the universe,* and a *denial of the existence of matter.* For, if it should be rigidly demonstrated, as I think it will, that we *never can perceive motion* ; it will nevertheless remain, not only that we shall act upon a *belief in motion,* but that we shall *also legitimately infer its existence from our reasonings.* But, contrary to any analogy of this, *if the existence of matter should be logically disproved,* the philosophical part of mankind will then *reject the belief of MATTER, both in speculation and in PRACTICE* ; and all that they will *retain,* upon this subject, will be an irresistible belief, NOT IN MATTER, but in AN EXTERNAL WORLD OF SPIRITUAL BEINGS AND THEIR ENERGIES ; which energies must, in their operation, have the *same effect* upon us that the qualities of matter could have if they existed.

The truth, then, is, that, “ Had Copernicus not  
“ only asserted the stability of the Sun, but denied  
“ any such thing as motion in the universe ;” his

theory would *have been precisely analogous to that of a denial of an EXTERNAL WORLD*; but it would, certainly, *not* have been in the smallest degree analogous to a denial of a MATERIAL WORLD.

I confess, I entertain a confident hope, that the distinction which I have now pointed out, and the farther illustration of it which will be submitted in the course of the section, will place the sophistry of Mr. Stewart's reasonings upon this subject in a most satisfactory light, and will clear the way completely for the speculation which is to follow in the next Chapter.

In a former part of the same Section, this author has a passage, which appears to me to be another striking instance of the same kind of sophistry. He says—"The paramount authority of common sense or common reason of mankind, being equally recognised by all parties," (Surely, what Mr. Stewart, Dr. Reid, and Dr. Beattie, have called common sense, has NOT been recognised, as paramount, by *all parties*) "all that remained for examination was,—whether the belief of the existence or that of the non-existence of the material world, was sanctioned by this supreme tribunal. For ascertaining this point, nothing more was necessary than an accurate analysis of the meaning annexed to the word *existence*; which analysis would have at once shown, not only that we are irresistibly led to ascribe to the material world all the independent reality which this word expresses, but that



“ it is from the material world that our first and  
 “ most satisfactory notions of *existence* are drawn.”  
 “ The mathematical affections of matter (extension  
 “ and figure,) to which the constitution of the mind  
 “ imperiously forces us to ascribe existence, not  
 “ only independent of our perceptions, but ne-  
 “ cessary and eternal, might more particularly  
 “ have been pressed upon Berkeley, as proofs how  
 “ incompatible his notions were with those laws of  
 “ belief, to which the learned and the unlearned  
 “ must in common submit.”

Throughout the whole of this passage, as in many other places, the very thing in dispute (*the reality of matter*) is over and over assumed as if all parties were agreed with regard to it; and it is curiously asserted, that the controversy is to be settled by an accurate analysis of the import an-

<sup>1</sup> Has not Mr. Stewart shown, from a supposed case, in the 1st. Vol. of his Elements, Chap. 1. Sect. 4, “ that, even on the sup-  
 “ position that certain impressions on our organs of sense are ne-  
 “ cessary to awaken the Mind to a consciousness of its own exist-  
 “ ence; yet all this might have happened, without our having  
 “ any knowledge of the qualities, or even of the existence, of a  
 “ material world?”—And, instead of the notion of our existence  
 being drawn, properly speaking, from the *material world, at all*;  
 Has not Mr. Stewart, in the same place, and in various other parts  
 of his writings, insisted that “ *The moment a sensation happens, a*  
 “ man must necessarily acquire the knowledge of two facts at  
 “ once; that of the existence of the *sensation*, and that of his  
 “ *own existence, as a sentient being?*” How, then, does this author,  
 in the above passage, assert, that, “ *it is from the MATERIAL*  
 “ *WORLD that our first and most satisfactory notions of exist-*  
 “ *ence are drawn?*”—Can any contradiction be more manifest?

nexed to the word *existence*, which would at once show that we ascribe to matter all the *independent reality* which this word expresses. Thus it is made to appear, that it is *not matter*, but only its *independent existence* that is in dispute. I do not pretend to understand the distinction which is herein meant to be implied : but I will venture to believe that a more glaring mass of sophistry than the whole passage comprises is not often to be met with.

In the close of it, for one instance, it is first *arbitrarily assumed* that extension and figure are mathematical affections of MATTER : and then our being forced to ascribe to these *an existence independent of our perceptions, is appealed to, as a proof of the EXISTENCE of matter*. Can it possibly be expected that men will prostrate their understandings to a continual repetition of such gratuitous assumptions as these? *Who has proved that extension is an affection of MATTER, rather than of MIND?* Is not this the very question in dispute? The Hindoo system (and that view also which I propose to follow out) asserts the *independent reality of external space*; the belief of whose existence, independent of our perceptions, is certainly forced upon us : but, undeniably, this belief is as *compatible with the supposition that space is filled only with MIND and ITS ENERGIES*, as that it is filled with MATTER *and ITS QUALITIES*; and, in order to ascertain which of these two suppositions is founded in truth, we must resort to very different arguments.

## 2.

*Of a Belief in the continuance of the Laws of Nature.—  
No argument in favor of a Material World.—  
If coupled with an assumption of the existence of  
Matter, leads directly to Atheism.*

## 1.

The views which have been entertained by Professor Stewart, of the foregoing subject, being continued upon more advanced ground than that of his Predecessor; and some of his reasonings, with regard to it, appearing to superficial observation, to bear with very considerable moment upon the question concerning the existence of a material world; I am under the necessity, before I quit the subject, to examine the merits of what he has farther superadded to the reasonings of Dr. Reid upon this head.

For this purpose, therefore, I quote the following passages from his Philosophical Essays.

He commences the Second Chapter of his Second Essay, with saying, that “Reid’s account of the existence of matter, although correct so far as it goes, does not embrace all the circumstances of the question.” This, together with the subsequent matter which he advances upon the subject, I may observe by the way, is one of the many instances of his manner of *enforcing the doctrine that it is unphilosophical to argue either against or in favor of a material world.* Four or five pages

farther on, however, he expresses himself as follows.

“ In treating of a very different subject, I had  
 “ occasion, in a former work, to refer to some phi-  
 “ losophical opinions of Mr. Turgot, coinciding  
 “ nearly with those which I have now stated.  
 “ These opinions are detailed by the author, at con-  
 “ siderable length, in the article ‘ existence’ in the  
 “ French Encyclopédie ; but a conciser and clear-  
 “ er account of them may be found in Condorcet’s  
 “ discourse prefixed to his Essay, On the applica-  
 “ tion of analysis to the probability of decisions  
 “ pronounced by a majority of votes. From this  
 “ account it appears that Turgot resolved ‘ our  
 “ ‘ *belief of the existence of the material world into*  
 “ ‘ *our belief of the continuance of the laws of nature;*’  
 “ or in other words, that he conceived our belief of  
 “ the former of these instances, to amount merely  
 “ to a conviction of the established order of physi-  
 “ cal events, and to an expectation that, in the  
 “ same combination of circumstances, the same  
 “ event will recur. It has always appeared to me,  
 “ that something of this sort was necessary to com-  
 “ plete Dr. Reid’s speculations on the Berkeleian  
 “ controversy.” &c.

After some continuation of this passage, Mr. Stewart adds, “ To myself the difficulty appears  
 “ to resolve itself, in the simplest and most philo-  
 “ sophical manner, into that law of our constitu-  
 “ tion to which Turgot, long ago, attempted to  
 “ trace it. If this conclusion be admitted, our  
 “ conviction of the permanent and independent

“existence of matter” (MATTER) “is but a particular case of a more general law of belief extending to all other phenomena. The generalisation seems to me to be equally ingenious and just; and while it coincides perfectly in its spirit and tendency with Reid’s doctrine on the same point, serves to render that doctrine at once more precise and more luminous.”

From the triumphant tone in which the above passages are expressed, there can be no doubt that Professor Stewart advanced them as containing one of the most luminous and happy conceptions of modern philosophy, in support of the assumption of a material world. They seem, in his opinion, to consummate the glory of Dr. Reid, upon the great question at issue; and, to leave us nothing to desire. From the imposing attitude which is thus assumed, there can be little question, that, in the opinion of many of Mr. Stewart’s readers, they have appeared to be unanswerably conclusive. The result of the present discussion, however, I trust, will furnish an impressive lesson to such persons as are but slightly acquainted with the subject, how unsafe it is to trust to specious assumptions and the authority of great names. At least, I hope not to fail in satisfying my readers, that it is a mere sophism to attempt to bring in the suggestion of Turgot, to support the reasoning of Dr. Reid in favor of a material world.

In the first place, however, I am to observe, that, if the supposition be made, that our reliance

on the existence of a material world is a fundamental law of human belief, I shall follow out this supposed law to consequences which have been very little anticipated by Mr. Stewart. But I shall postpone this consideration, to the more immediate one.

Supposing, therefore, that our belief in the existence of an *external* world resolves itself into a belief in the continuance of the laws of nature; I ask, Upon what authority has Mr. Stewart assumed that we are therefore to believe in the existence of MATTER? I humbly conceive that a more unwarranted assumption is not any where to be found, than this one.

The laws of nature, it is well known, are nothing more than a continued repetition of similar facts, in similar circumstances. These facts, themselves, are nothing but changes of phenomena. The existence, or continued existence, of these changes, doubtless, implies the continued existence of *some cause* which occasions them. But, I would ask, By what effort of thought can any one discover, *from this datum*, any reason whatever, which can incline him, in the slightest degree, toward a belief that this cause is *a dead material substance*, rather than A LIVING SPIRITUAL ONE?

The specious manner in which Professor Stewart has assumed, that the conclusion of Turgot is a decisive evidence of the existence of "MATTER," is manifestly of a nature to captivate the opinion of a large proportion of his readers, and to induce

them to yield an implicit confidence in the judgment which he has formed of it; and, among those who may so lend their assent, there may, in all probability, be some who may, in the course of their lives, turn their attention seriously to philosophical speculations. In this, and other such cases, if the judgment in question be grounded on sophistry, it becomes of essential importance to point out its fallacy in the clearest way possible. I am therefore urged to solicit the reader's attention to the following exposition.

It is altogether deplorable, to what a degree the doctrine of the non-existence of a material world has been misunderstood, even by the learned part of mankind, in this quarter of the globe. As for persons of any other description; it is impossible that they should yield their assent to a proposition, the nature of which they cannot so much as comprehend, in the abstract and unexplained terms in which it is usually put.

When an ordinary person is told, in the language of Berkeley, that the chairs, the tables, the horses and the carts, which he perceives, are nothing but *ideas in his own mind*; he internally blesses his lot, in having been endowed with good wholesome sound sense, which preserves him from being invaded by any such pitiable chimeras.—Horses and carts, nothing but *ideas*? The thing is too much for any cool clear headed man, who is quite sure that he knows the taste of his bottle of wine, from the

*idea* he has of the same thing when he is not drinking it.

The case, however, must be considerably altered, when it is explained to any such person, that, under the term *IDEA*, Berkeley and all other modern philosophers comprehend not only the *thought* of the taste of wine, but also the *very sensation or taste* of wine, itself. In other and more general terms, we are to observe, our *IDEAS*, which are of a great variety of species, comprehend our *most vivid* and *most agonising* *SENSATIONS*, as well as our recollections of these, and all our lightest or most shadowy thoughts.

When, therefore, a man *looks* at a bottle of wine, he has *a sensation*, (which is *an idea*) of *a dark color*; which sensation (it will be demonstrated in its proper place) is all that he calls *seeing his bottle*. When he grasps it, in his hand, he has *a sensation of touch*; which is all that he calls *feeling his bottle*. And when he takes some of the contents, in his mouth, he has *a sensation of taste*; which is all that he calls *tasting his wine*. The *color*, the *touch*, and the *taste*, moreover, *all which are mere sensations*, he *combines together*, into *a unity of object in his imagination*, as the several qualities of one same substance; and thus he forms the *complex idea of wine*: to which, if he be a man of any information, he may add some ideas of its various medicinal and other properties.

In this case, accordingly, I confidently apprehend, the Berkeleian may challenge any person to show that a *PERCEIVED* bottle of wine is any thing else



than an assemblage of sensations in the mind of him who perceives it. The great fault of the system of Berkeley, therefore, (besides his denial of Space) consists in this, that, instead of recognising our *sensations* for *affections* or *certain states of our mind*, superinduced by the ENERGIES of some UNPERCEIVED *external Power*, he supposed these sensations to be *permanently-existing detached beings*, which flit, like swallows, into and out of our mind;— a supposition which, besides its revolting absurdity, leaves us entirely at a loss to conceive how these ideas are either *produced* or *regulated*, by the Great Mind which *must* be supposed to be, in some way or other, their Source and Governor.

How simple and beautiful is it, in this case, to turn our attention, upon the other hand, to the vastly different nature of the Hindoo system; which conceives the Creator to fill all space, and, by the Energies of his Omnipotent Power, to excite in our minds, from time to time, all those sensations, affections, or estates, of *color*, of *touch*, and of *taste*, which we, combining together, in our reason and imagination, contemplate as being *individual complex wholes*, of various kinds: while we are beneficently deceived into a belief, that they are things *without*, and at *various distances from us*?

This explanation, it is hoped, may serve to show, that ordinary persons are under a most profound and certain mistake, when they imagine (as they invariably do) that the things we perceive, if supposed to be in the mind, can have *no reality of ex-*

*istence.* The *taste* of a cherry, and the *pain* of the amputation of a limb; are not only *as vivid* and *as strong*, but they are *identically the very same*, whether we suppose the System of Berkeley, the Hindoo System, or the Vulgar Opinion, to be that which really exists in nature. And a man, who should run under a cart wheel, would be as really crushed, agonised, and disjointed, upon any one of these schemes, as upon either of the other two. The truth of this exposition is unanimously acknowledged, by all persons who understand the subject; although sufficient attention has not been paid, by writers, to explain the thing in a popular manner, so as to remove the very general misconception which is entertained with regard to it.

In an enlightened and inquisitive age, like the present, it may be expected that the general ignorance concerning this momentous fact must soon give place, to a knowledge more suitable to the other acquisitions of the day. And, especially, it may be hoped, that the learned part of the community will be attracted by a subject which has suffered so deplorably from that general neglect and incredulity which has hitherto prevailed, with regard to it, not only among the great bulk of the reading community, but even among readers of a higher description.

To return, now, to the afore-mentioned assumption of Professor Stewart; It is quite clear that *a continuance of the laws of nature*, must be as much a reality

upon the supposition that all our perceptions are caused by *the energies of a spiritual substance*, as upon that of their being caused by the modifications and changes of MATTER. Bishop Berkeley would have been as ready to suscribe to the conclusion of Turgot as Mr. Stewart has been, provided that conclusion had been explained, or modified, to regard only the existence of AN EXTERNAL SPIRITUAL world; and all that he would have objected to, would have been *its perversion* to assume the existence of A DEAD MATERIAL world.—That Professor Stewart has gratuitously perverted it, and that his assumption is wholly unsupported by any logical foundation, I will venture to affirm. And I may with confidence assert, that our belief in the continuance of the laws of nature, whether it be a law of the mind or not, is *not at all applicable, one way or the other*, to the inquiry whether the external world is MATERIAL or IMMATERIAL. I must therefore, in the most express terms, protest against the use which Mr. Stewart has made of the suggestion of Turgot; as being an arbitrary assumption, which, from its speciousness and its exulting tone, there is reason to fear, might otherwise prove as destructive to the interests of sound philosophy, as it is certainly unfounded in itself.

## 2.

The remaining consideration of the present subsection, is one which, I imagine, will be admitted to be of some importance, on account of the con-

sequences which it involves, whichever side of the subject be embraced.

From our knowledge of analogous facts, there can be no doubt, that, if a child were but once hit by a stone, it would, upon the very next approach of a similar visible object, expect a similar painful sensation. If a second instance occurred, however, with a blown bladder, instead of a stone, and, consequently, no hurt were to follow upon a stroke received from this object, the result of the approach of any *third instance* would be a degree of *scepticism or doubt* of the power of the object to produce pain. If, then, a third experiment were tried, with a visible lump, which, to the child's apprehension, appeared to be a stone, but which, upon contact, proved to be in reality nothing more than a mass of froth; the consequence would be, that, in any *fourth instance*, the expectation of *hurt*, and even the *notion of solidity*, would be left out of the child's imagination, in great part, or perhaps altogether. Thus the notion of *solidity or of resistance*, is attached by us to all bodies only through the teaching of *induction*; and this a *slow*, and in some cases perhaps a *very fluctuating induction*.

The continual repetition of instances of contact, with hard and soft bodies, however, and a course of unavoidable observation, soon bring every human being to a conviction, that similar objects, in similar circumstances, are followed by uniform results. Let it therefore be supposed, that, from experience, we acquire a *confident belief in the con-*

TINUANCE of the laws of nature : and let it be fully assumed, that this belief is founded in an *original suggestion of the mind* that an object will in future affect us in the same way that it has done before.

Having, therefore, once assumed the continuance of the laws of nature through the course of *to-morrow*, precisely as they exist in our experience *to-day* ; I imagine it must be very difficult for us to assign any logical reason why we should believe that they will *ever cease to exist* ; for it must be absurd to talk of a belief in the continuance of the laws of nature, if we can at the same time believe that they may not exist the next hour ?

If any one should attempt to escape this dilemma, by supposing that we believe in the permanency of the order of external events under a *qualification*, namely, that the DEITY may put an end to this order, whenever it shall please Him ; it must be ridiculous to talk of any such conjecture as this, as being A LAW OF BELIEF. Every law must point some particular way. A law, therefore, which leaves us permission to go directly and instantly in the face of it, can be no law at all.

As the actual fact really is, in human thought, I grant we have a confident expectation of the continuance of the laws of nature ; but if this be assumed for a *law* of the mind, I conceive it manifestly forbids the supposition that the laws of nature can ever fail, to all eternity.

If this view of the subject be admitted, its consequences are most important ; because, if it be a

law of our constitution to believe in the continuance of the laws of nature during the *eternity to come*; this will undeniably involve an obligation to believe that they have existed during the **ETERNITY PAST**; since, *whatever can have no end, can never be supposed to have had a beginning*. And thus, by a very short and demonstrative process, the assumption of a *belief in the permanence of the order of external events, if the subjects of this order be supposed to be composed of MATERIAL SUBSTANCE, leads directly to ATHEISM*.

It is here to be remarked, that the result of such a law of the mind, *when coupled with a belief in matter*, is manifestly quite congenial with the opinions of many of the French Philosophers: But we cannot suppose it to be so to the views which are cherished by Professor Stewart.

It is now, on the contrary, to be suggested, how vastly different a result, from that above-mentioned, arises to our view, when a belief in the continuance of the laws of nature *is coupled with an admission that these laws are no other than a regulation of the exerted energies of a UNIVERSAL SPIRITUAL POWER* which is commensurate with the whole of infinite space, and which thus uniformly orders these energies, to the great end, that inferior spirits should thereby be enabled to *anticipate the future*, and govern their proceedings for the present from an experience of the past.

The bare suggestion of such a view, must, doubt-

less, stimulate every deep reflecting mind, and even every mind that is at all actuated by a liberal curiosity, to examine any evidences which may be proposed, as being of a nature to authorise the admission of it as a reality, upon the basis of legitimate science.

At present, all that I desire to assert upon the subject immediately before the reader, is, that a belief in the continuance of the laws of nature, *if assumed for a fundamental law of human belief*, is a subject either of a most welcome or a most inauspicious aspect, according as it is joined with *a belief in the existence of MATTER*, or with an admission that the external cause of our sensations is a SPIRITUAL AGENT. In the former case, it leads, or rather actually amounts, to sheer Atheism. In the latter, it presents a bulwark against Atheism, which must be the more secure the more we discover the existence of arrangements in nature which promise to render its laws immutable and eternal.

It must be obvious to remark, that the recent discoveries which have been made by Astronomers, which indicate an immutability of the present order of our planetary system, is a matter which bears with very serious moment upon the present subject. Nor need it be said what melancholy results have been produced, in the opinion of those very minds which have made these sublime discoveries;—results arising in consequence of

a conclusion that this eternal order is that of a blind necessity ruling the changes of *unintelligent inert matter*. From this consideration alone, it behoves all those who are at all in the subject, to weigh well the consequences which are likely to follow in the scientific world, according as men shall embrace one side, or the other, of the present question.

If the laws of nature be *immutable*, and be at the same time the ruled Energies of an *Intelligent Being*; we may with confidence hope, that there is an arrangement comprised in them, for the best possible destiny of the intellectual beings which exist under such a system. But if they be the laws of a necessary fate, ruling the phenomena of such a thing as *defined dead matter*, their immutability presents us only with a frightful and distracting prospect, which cannot be contemplated with composure by any mind that is capable of reflection.

I think I could not close the present chapter with any consideration more impressive, than leaving this consequence to operate with its real moment upon the thoughts of my readers.



## CHAPTER II.

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### OF PERCEPTION.

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FROM the nature of that analysis which I propose to submit in the present chapter; it would have been the most desirable way in other respects, to state it's principles as immediately as their requisite illustration would permit. But, owing to the subject being so little generally known, and the opinions of philosophers with regard to it being still so imperfectly understood, I apprehend it to be indispensable that I should previously furnish a comparative summary of the most considerable doctrines which have been advanced concerning it. In the execution of this part of my design, I shall study the utmost possible brevity. But as my purpose, with regard to that part of our constitution which is the subject of the analysis, is to render our views of it as com-

plete as lies in my power, after having made it so peculiarly the object of my research; I conceive it is incumbent upon me to endeavour to leave no material obscurity over the principal re-actions which the incompatible opinions of philosophers exhibit; at the same time that I hope to be able to remove some of the confusion, which is to be found in the animadversions which writers have offered upon the views of each other with respect to it.

If I should ultimately succeed in establishing the principles of the analysis, on that basis upon which I suppose it to rest; I feel persuaded that no competent judge of the subject will deem this preparatory speculation either unimportant or redundant.

Besides this summary; I deem it requisite to occupy two distinct sections, with two other and collateral topics; the one, regarding the *external mere physical occasion of our sensations of colors*; the other, the *essential object of primary perception*. And I farther conceive it expedient, to offer a section immediately introductory of the proposed analysis; for the purpose of stating an account of a particular fact asserted by Proclus and by Barrow, whose concurrent opinions I have, upon a former occasion, found useful to appeal to, in soliciting the general attention to my own views.

## SECTION FIRST.

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OF THE VIEWS WHICH HAVE BEEN ENTERTAINED BY PHILOSOPHERS ON THE SUBJECT OF PERCEPTION.

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## 1.

*Of the Ideal Theory; Of it's various Modifications and it's two different Systems.—Of the Theory of Reid.—It's Sole Foundation an Arbitrary Assumption, disproved by the case of the Youth who was couched by Cheselden.*

IN all ages of the learning of the European World, from that of the earliest speculations of Greek philosophy down to the present time, it has continued to be the greatest desideratum of metaphysical research, to be able to show, upon any scientific or certain ground, what is the nature, and more especially what is the *true place of residence*, of those *portions of figured extension* which appear to us to form the *bases* and the *limits* of our various *sensations of colors*.

The importance of the solution of this problem, may be in some degree understood from what has appeared in the foregoing chapter: but it may upon this occasion be farther remarked, that its real importance is infinitely greater than has usually been supposed, by the Philosophers of ancient Greece, or of modern Europe. Nothing, certainly, is

more hid from ordinary observation, than that *chain*, which, when scientifically applied, is *capable of connecting the nature of our SENSATIONS OF COLORS with the MORAL CONDUCT OF OUR SPECIES*. But, from what is already advanced, it is evident I have in view to insist, that there is in reality such a chain: and I would here propose this fact, for a brief answer to the very natural question that first arises in the mind of every ordinary person, when he opens a book which has our Powers of External Perception for its Subject; namely, What is the *Object or Utility* of such speculations?

It was the opinion of Plato, and has been that of every philosopher from Plato down to Hume, that the extended objects in question are no other than the *proper bases* of our sensations of colors, such as they *obviously appear*, both to the ordinary man and to the philosopher. But it must be confessed, that this opinion has always rested upon no better foundation than that of *obvious appearance*. For, in the first place, it seems to have been very generally supposed, that the affections which we call sensations, are *an order of beings substantially distinct and detached from the mind itself*. And, secondly, an impervious obscurity has always hung over the *process by which we perceive visible figure or boundary line*, through the instrumentality of our sensations.

The earlier inquirers were led to believe, that those phantoms of the mind which we call *red*,

*blue*, and *yellow*, are a sort of *films* continually sent off from the surfaces of bodies, and entering the mind by the channel of sight. And this puerile conceit, refined from time to time by various hypothetical modifications, has prevailed even down to the latest age, under the well-known title of the *Ideal Theory*. This theory of Ideas, moreover, had, until of late, increased in absurdity with it's growth; insomuch, that one of it's modern advocates, and this no less a philosopher than Mr. Hume, went the length of asserting, that *ideas* may be supposed capable of *existing by themselves, without requiring any mind as a subject of inhesion*.

With regard to this scholastic general hypothesis of *loose detached ideas*, whether it be that extreme modification of it which supposes their existence without any supporting mind, or any other variety by means of which the existence of a mind must be thought requisite for their support, it appears at present to be only deserving of the following brief remark, namely, that it is not only totally void of evidence, but that, if the supposition of it be made, it can present us with no means of ascertaining, in the least degree, what is the real nature, or place, of those perceived figures which accompany our sensations of colors; because, if the *sensations of colors, themselves*, be supposed to be things foreign to the thinking subject, it is self-evident that the *figures* which appear along with them must be supposed equally foreign.

Accordingly, therefore, in taking the most cur-

sory view of the Ideal Theory, it is impossible to avoid remarking the surprising degree of oscitancy and absurdity which is the common fault of it's very best advocates; and which renders their speculations, with regard to it, more like what we should expect to be the effusions of the most ordinary persons on the subject, than like the severe investigations of men of science, or the sober reflections of men of learning.

Three conspicuous instances of the truth of this remark may be adduced, in the space of almost as few lines; and the bare mention of these may supply the place of a more extended animadversion. By Mr. Locke, our ideas have been placed sometimes, and indeed for most part, in the mind; but at other times in the *brain*. The Bishop of Cloyne has supposed our ideas to be sometimes in *one* mind, and sometimes in *another*. Mr. Hume had the singularity to suggest, that ideas appear to require nothing for their support, and may therefore be supposed to exist without an inhesion in any mind at all; and yet, by a surprising flight of inconsistency, he himself appropriated to the most vivid classes of these ideas the title of "IMPRES-SIONS,"—a name which manifestly involves the *existence of some Substantive Intellectual Being that is impressed!*

One of those abstractions of mind, during which a person hunts about for any thing and at length finds it in his own hand, is not more ludicrous than this proceeding of Mr. Hume. And yet, it was Hume's Scepticism, in this very case, that

spread alarm among the metaphysicians of the last age, and roused up some of them to a grave refutation of that which had been thus remarkably refuted by it's author, in the very moment of it's utterance.

The Metaphysical School of Reid presents the first systematic opposition which has been offered to the Ideal Theory, considered principally as consisting of the general hypothesis of *loose detached ideas*. Dr. Reid, urged by the danger apprehended from the above-mentioned Scepticism of Hume with regard to the existence of minds, resolved to attack this scholastic fabric: and to him is justly to be ascribed a great part of the credit of bringing it into merited contempt. But justice obliges us to acknowledge, that the labor and ingenuity of this achievement were in part anticipated by the approximation made toward the truth of the matter by Des Cartes, Malebranche, and others. Both these French Philosophers, together with our countryman Hobbes, had ridiculed the conceit of supposing ideas to be films, flying off from the surfaces of bodies and entering the mind by the channels of the senses. And we do not find that Locke ever lent the smallest countenance to any such conceit. It therefore required scarcely a step farther, of sound rationality, to recognise our sensations, and other thoughts or ideas, as being nothing but occasional modifications or affections of the mind itself.

It must be granted, that it requires courage, if not genius, to point out and assert even the most indubitable dictates of reason itself, when the denial of them has been long consecrated and generally respected as an irrefragable truth. There is, even, much merit in logically pointing out, and uniformly insisting upon, a fact of the greatest moment in philosophy, which, to a very great extent, had certainly been *overlooked*, and concerning which the best writers had deplorably *vacillated*. But it is, however, to be observed, agreeably with what I have already remarked in the foregoing chapter, that the fact in question was far from having been *overlooked altogether*.

It is expressly acknowledged, both by Dr. Reid and by his distinguished Successor, that the assertion of the substantial identicalness of our ideas with the mind itself *predominates* in the writings of Locke: although it is worthy of remark, that neither of those philosophers ascribe any merit to Locke for this; evidently because the latter considered certain classes of these ideas to be *extended*. It is, moreover, to be remarked, that Dr. Reid was anticipated in his view of the subject by Anthony Arnauld, who also asserted the identicalness of our ideas with the mind; though it is to be acknowledged that Arnauld, as well as Locke, wavered in opinion.

Besides these instances, (to go no farther) it may be observed, that occasional expressions are to be found in the writings of Malebranche, of Berkeley, and of Hume, (*the most determined advo-*



*cates of loose detached ideas*) which, at unawares, confess the truth of nature with regard to this point.

The historical fact, indeed, is surprising; and, if it were not for the notorious oscitancy and inconsistency which so often occur in the speculations of Idealists, it would be scarcely credible; but certain it is, that the *hypothesis of detached ideas* has always been entertained together with a *concomitant admission of the contrary*, at least with regard to those vivid classes of our ideas which are called sensations. I think it may be rendering essential service to the subject, and must serve to put a reader upon his guard against taking the consistency of any authority upon trust, to state the particular evidence of this fact.

Bishop Berkeley, in his *New Theory of Vision*, Prop. 41, says, that to a man born blind and made to see, "The objects intromitted by sight, would seem to him, (as in truth they are) no other than a new set of thoughts or sensations, each whereof is as near to him, as the perceptions of pleasure or pain, or the most inward passions of his soul." Here, then, we have a just acknowledgment, though at unawares, that our *SENSATIONS OF COLORS* and other such feelings, are *NOT loose detached ideas*, sometimes in one mind and sometimes in another, but are actually "*PASSIONS OF THE SOUL.*"

Perfectly in accordance with this sound doctrine; Malebranche has admitted, that "The things in the mind are its own modifications, its sensations, its imagination, its pure intellections, its

“passions and affections. These are immediately perceived; we are conscious of them, and have no need of ideas to represent them to us.”—I quote this passage from Dr. Reid’s *Essays*, Essay 2, Chap. 13; not having Malebranche’s *Recherche* by me.

In addition to these evidences; it hardly need be repeated, that the “IMPRESSIONS” of *Hume*, and the *Impressions* of ARISTOTLE, are in a complete harmony and co-incidence with the above concessions of Berkeley and of Malebranche.

I have considered it due, both to the subject and to the human understanding, thus to advert to the fact—that a recognition of the identicalness of our ideas with the mind itself, as being *its own proper affections*, originated by no means so lately as the speculations of Dr. Reid. It is, in reality, one of those great truths which nature tells to all men; without, however, furnishing them with any such *constraining*, and at the same time *obvious* proofs of it, as should prevent their being, in the infancy of science, warped out of their belief of it by some sinister accident; and, afterwards, from one generation to another, misled by a deference to authority. It is a sufficient proof of the truth of this, to observe the most zealous and logical advocates of the Ideal Theory occasionally forgetting themselves, and uttering expressions which justify the truth of nature, in manifest contradiction of their own general hypotheses.

The visionary fabrics of detached ideas, which the Idealists, in different ages, have superadded to, or as it were *built over*, the true conclusion in which

they have all concurred as above-mentioned ; present, indeed, in the light of modern science, an impressive proof of the unphilosophicalness, not to say the puerile and ridiculous conceits, with which all pneumatological speculations have been conducted, until within a very late period. The *films* of Epicurus ; The *sensible species* of Aristotle ; The *seeing of all things in the ideas of the Divine Mind*, conceived by Father Malebranche ; The supposition of *ideas being in the brain*, suggested by Des Cartes and embraced by many modern metaphysicians ; The scheme of *detached ideas, residing occasionally in the mind, but existing permanently when not therein*, which was the manifest hypothesis of Berkeley ; And Lastly, The conceit of a *congregation of loose ideas, unconnected by any tie or any mind to support them*, which we owe to the genius of Hume ; All these different *hostile and incompatible* hypotheses, *every one of which, however, agrees to deny the substantial identicalness of our ideas with the mind or thinking subject*, are the various principal modifications under which the Ideal Theory has been presented for the approbation of mankind.

The instance of Aristotle, himself, who entertained the supposition of *sensible species flying off from bodies*, and nevertheless along with this held that the *mind receives the form without the matter of things*, affords a striking and conclusive illustration of the truth of my remark, that the general hypothesis of loose detached ideas has always been maintained in concomitance with a recognition of the identicalness of our sensations with the mind.

And, I apprehend, the exposure of this vast inconsistency brings the subject under the most simple and satisfactory view.

It is time to resume the view of that opposition which has been set up against this multiform and chimerical fabric of ideas, by the School of Reid.

Had Dr. Reid, in his philosophical speculations, only arrested the oscitancy of Locke, with regard to the nature of our primary ideas, and merely asserted, with uniform consistency, the *prevalent and better* doctrine of the latter upon this part of our constitution; the accession which Reid actually brought to the subject would then have been without any alloy. But, unfortunately, a previous scholastic bias, with regard to the supposed nature of the mind, forced Dr. Reid to differ from Locke so far, as to *deny that our sensations* (of color and of touch) *are extended*: which step was, manifestly, a vastly different thing from only denying that these sensations are *loose detached beings*.

By this denial of the extension of our sensations or phantoms of colors, Dr. Reid placed himself in an entirely new situation, and in a most extreme state of opposition, not only to the opinion of Locke, but also, as he himself freely confesses, to every other philosopher, from Plato downward, until the broaching of his own scheme. Moreover, the new doctrine of this philosopher violated the universal apprehension of all ordinary men, if possible, in a still greater degree than it did the united opinions of the learned; for it is expressly acknowledged, both by Reid himself and by his Successor,

that "it is a natural bias in us to conceive white, blue, and yellow, as something spread over the surfaces of bodies."—"Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind." Vol. I. Chap. 1. Sup. 2.

I have cited this last passage for the particular purpose of animadverting upon a very momentous assumption with which it is coupled in the minds of the Scottish Philosophers, and which, indeed, is implied in one of its own terms;—an assumption which, in its want of any foundation in evidence, I must say, too much resembles some others, that have called for more pointed remark from the tranquil and therefore captivating manner in which they are insinuated, especially when proceeding from such high authority.

By the word "*bias*," in this passage, it is meant to signify, that *our sensations of colors are NOT IN REALITY spread out*, although they *appear to us* to be so. And thus it is arbitrarily and most astonishingly assumed, that we are grossly mistaken in the most confident judgments we form upon the phenomena of our own *consciousness*.

All parties, with regard to this subject, are perfectly agreed, that white, blue, and yellow, are purely *phenomena of consciousness*. But, since this is so; I confidently apprehend, it must be quite as easy for any man to be mistaken as to whether a sensation is *in reality white, blue, or yellow*, as for him to mistake whether it is *in reality spread out*.

This is not the place where I propose ultimately

to refute the above-mentioned assumption, which has filled this department of the Philosophy of the Mind with mystery, embarrassment, and fallacy. The Second and Fifth Sections of this Chapter will contain the more full and regular evidence for that purpose. But I shall however, in this place, propose the following question, because I hope to show that it is altogether unanswerable ; while it is the *only* quarter from which the School of Reid appears to have looked for any support from *induction*.—I think, indeed, it cannot fail to prepare the mind of a reader for the result, in the sequel.—To point out the expediency of examining the question at this stage of the subject ; it is to be observed, that the thing in question is the *fundamental assumption* of the philosophy of Reid, and the whole fabric of that philosophy must stand, or fall, with the fate of this assumption.

First therefore, I would ask ; When the young man, who was couched by Cheselden, *first* began to see, Did he thereupon become conscious of phantoms of colors which HE CONCEIVED *to be NOT spread out* ? Or, Did he *fall*, BY DEGREES, *into a BIAS* of conceiving them to be spread out, after nature had, *first of all*, displayed to him white, blue, and yellow, *NOT spread out* ?

It is known that this youth, first of all, conceived the very truth of nature, in so far as to feel convinced that every thing he saw *touched his eye*,

or, more properly speaking, was a *phantom in his own mind*. AFTER this, *by degrees*, he fell into a BIAS and error, (common to the whole species,) under which he conceived all colors to be WITHOUT AND AT A DISTANCE from him. Now the question which concerns the present subject is this ; Did the young man, in the *very first* instance of his being conscious of color, *believe that colors are NOT spread out* ; in the same way that he, *at first*, believed they were NOT *at a distance* ?

If Professor Stewart is not prepared to go the whole length of answering this question in the affirmative ; he has certainly, in this case, used the word "*bias*" in the very face of induction. And, as this Philosopher has, after a lapse of many years, very recently repeated this arbitrary assertion ; I mean in the *Second Volume* of his *Elements*, wherein he observes (Chap. 4. Sect. 1.) that it is by "*a natural bias or association*," that we connect our sensations of color with figure and extension ; I think I cannot be too particular in pointing out the entire want of evidence of this assumption, and, what is still more, the positive and decisive evidence against it.

With this purpose, therefore, I now observe, that the assumption in question is to be regarded as the INVENTION of the *School of Reid*. It is not the assumption of any Sect of philosophers, either ancient or modern ; but is entirely confined to the two eminent writers of the School just mentioned ; unless it can be supposed to lend any strength to

their opinion to add the vague suffrage of Dr. Hutchison, which conveys no definite meaning whatever. It is fortunate, therefore, that it appears not impossible to ascertain what was the *immediate origin* of Dr. Reid's view of the subject. And if I shall be enabled to trace his error with regard to it, to its very source; I conceive the refutation of it must prove the more satisfactory to the reader, and cannot but be interesting to those who may contemplate its future history.

The truth of the matter is, that Dr. Reid, in his *INQUIRY*, which is the first of his publications on the subject and which appeared many years prior to his *Essays*, has used the very language employed by Cheselden, and has expressly referred to that author, with regard to the capability and operation of the organ of sight; and, in so doing, it is in the most conclusive manner evident that he has profoundly mistaken the sense of Cheselden, by construing the words of the latter as being favorable to his views, while they import directly the contrary.

As I have little doubt of being able to satisfy my readers of the truth of this last remark; I am led to conjecture, that, after Dr. Reid had become dissatisfied with the Berkeleian theory, (to which before he had been attached) and when he was casting about, in his own contemplation, to gain such a view of facts as could enable him to controvert that theory, he happened to fall upon the account given by Cheselden of the youth who was couched by him; and, the mind of Reid being then under a strong determination, he was led to put a



construction upon the words of Cheselden, which he never could have done had his imagination been unbiassed. How far I am right in this conjecture, will appear from the following extracts and observations.

In his "INQUIRY," Chap. 6. Sect. 8. Dr. Reid supposes that if the eye of a person were so constituted, that the rays of light coming from any one point of an object were diffused over the whole surface of the retina; "the operation of such an eye " would be precisely similar to that of hearing and " smell; it would give no perception of figure or extension, but merely of color."—"Nor is the supposition we have made" (says he) "altogether imaginary: for it is nearly the case of most people who " have cataracts, whose chrystaline, as Mr. Cheselden observes, does not altogether exclude the rays " of light; but diffuses them over the *retina*, so that " persons see things as one does through a glass " of broken jelly; they perceive the color, but nothing of the figure or magnitude of objects."

This illustration is, in substance, and partly in words, precisely the same as that offered by Cheselden himself. He says, "they can discern " in no other manner than a sound eye can " through a glass of broken jelly, where a great " variety of surfaces so differently refract the light, " that the several distinct pencils of rays cannot be " collected by the eye into their proper foci; " wherefore the shape of an object in such case " cannot be discerned, though the color may."

As neither Dr. Reid nor his Successor has appealed to *any other authority, evidence, or argument*, than that which Reid has thus adduced from the case communicated by Cheselden; and as Reid has brought this case forward in his very first broaching of the subject; and, lastly, as, previously to this, he was a believer in the Berkeleian theory itself; I shall, upon these grounds, leave it entirely to the judgment of the reader, whether it is not warrantable to conclude that it was *this very case* that led to the view which Dr. Reid, upon his revolt from the Berkeleian Theory, adopted. But, be this as it may, I shall now proceed to show the far more important fact of the manifest error into which Dr. Reid fell, in his apprehension of this case.

If we look through a glass of broken jelly, at a man in a blue, a yellow, or a scarlet coat; we shall immediately become *conscious of a sensation of color* of blue, of yellow, or of scarlet, of *some irregular FIGURE*; which sensation we shall, in the popular sense, call the *color of the COAT*; but we shall not be able to perceive the *FIGURE of the COAT*. This is the meaning, *the only meaning*, which Cheselden, or Reid, either did or could annex to their words, when they severally said, that persons laboring under a cataract “*perceive the color but nothing of the figure or magnitude of OBJECTS.*”

By the word *OBJECTS*, it certainly never entered the thought of Cheselden to refer to the *JELLY*; but only to some *OBJECT BEYOND THE JELLY*, some object which we are said to look at *THROUGH the jelly*:

and he was manifestly right in his assertion that we cannot discern the shape of any ULTERIOR OBJECT, *through* any such medium. How a philosopher, like Dr. Reid, could possibly mistake a matter so obvious to remark, can only be accounted for from the state of his mind at the time: but certain it is, he concluded, from Cheselden's account, that a person in a cataract is *conscious of color* without being able to perceive that *this color itself is figured or extended*. In assuming this, it is at the same time most clear and conclusive, that Reid's very language refutes his assumption: and both the language and the facts stated by Cheselden distinctly refute it, as I shall now show.

So far is Cheselden from supposing, for a moment, that *the color we are conscious of*, when looking through a glass of broken jelly, is *not extended*; that, on the contrary, he expressly asserts, that the light is so *differently refracted by "a great variety of surfaces,"* that the several distinct pencils of rays CANNOT BE COLLECTED. Thus, upon the evidence of Cheselden, it is *because of the DIFFUSION OR EXTENSION of color in the mind* that the shape of *any object SEEN THROUGH a cataract cannot be discerned*: for, to say that the rays of color "*cannot be collected,*" is manifestly but another mode of saying that they are *scattered or extended*.

But this decisive language is not that of *Cheselden alone*: for it is equally that of Dr. Reid himself; however strangely he has overlooked it. In the passage already quoted from his Inquiry, he observes that the "*Chrystaline*" of a person la-

boring under a cataract “does not exclude the “ rays of light, but DIFFUSES THEM OVER THE “ RETINA.” Now, What is DIFFUSION, but EXTENSION? And what, but some very overwhelming bias, could have betrayed Dr. Reid into so glaring a contradiction, as that of denying the extension of color in the face of this concession?

There is one other consideration; which, because it is of a distinct nature, and is, even, if possible, still more critical than what has preceded it, I shall state, before I have done with this case. We have the indisputable authority of Mr. Cheselden for the fact, that, when the youth who was couched by him “*first saw*, he was so far “ from making any judgment about distances, that “ he thought all objects whatever touched his eyes “ (as he expressed it) as what he felt did his skin.” Now the use I intend to make of this fact does not regard the *distance of objects*; but regards the *extension of color*. The rigid fact, which is our datum to reason upon in the present case, is, that the youth “*thought all objects whatever TOUCHED “ HIS EYES.*” But, I ask, How could he think that *colors TOUCHED HIS EYES*, if he did not think them EXTENDED? It is a plain and incontrovertible fact, that nothing has a capability of TOUCHING another, but something that is ITSELF EXTENDED. To say that the youth at first thought that colors touched his eye, but that he did not think them extended; would be an assertion, the ridicule of which, we may be satisfied, no philosopher will

ever venture to encounter. TOUCHING is, self-evidently, a property of *extended things only*.

I have thus been at the labor to trace the fundamental assumption of Dr. Reid and of his Successor, to its origin, or to the *only shadow of evidence* to which they have ever attempted to appeal in its support. And, when the magnitude of the consequences is duly weighed, I trust it will not be considered an unimportant labor to have followed into its last recess, and to have critically shewn the fallacious nature of a sophism, which has been the sole support of the most mischievous assumption, short of downright Materialism, that modern philosophy has attempted to force upon the world. These consequences, moreover, will, doubtless, give a sufficient degree of interest to the subject of the following sub-section.

## 2.

*Historical fact of the change of Dr. Reid, from the Idealism of Berkeley to his own Theory.—Astonishing unphilosophicalness of this procedure.*

In the school of Reid, we have an instance of two very enlightened Philosophers, (together, doubtless, with some other intelligent persons who have *imbibed* their principles as points of education,) who are agreed in opinion, not only against an otherwise united world, but also directly in the face of

positive induction, that we ought to reject our most confident judgments with regard to the nature of our *conscious phenomena*, and to ascribe to those phenomena the most opposite nature that can be imagined. The dissent of any two minds, however acute and enlightened, against such odds of opinion, exhibits, it must be confessed, but a very slender opposition. But, it is not to be dissembled, that it presents a very serious fact for philosophy, and a very melancholy subject of reflection for mankind, if it should appear that any two really enlightened, and at the same time *unprejudiced* minds, after having made the subject their particular study during a series of years, have found themselves obliged to report the most obvious phenomena of our consciousness to be of a nature directly the contrary of what these phenomena are found to be by all the rest of the species, unlearned and learned, put together. *Universal Scepticism* could never have desired a more complete triumph, than thus to see the first and most imperative class of human evidences set in array *against itself*.

In a case of so uncomfortable a complexion, therefore, it is fortunate that we are saved from such a state of chaos in philosophy as must otherwise have ensued, by a most remarkable occurrence in the *origin of Dr. Reid's principles*; which fact, as being a matter of vital importance to the opinion which we are to form of his judgment on the present subject, I shall now lay before the reader, together with such observations upon it as it appears indispensably to demand.

As for the subsequent assertion of Dr. Reid's principles, by his distinguished Successor; the whole history of philosophy proves, that there is no young and ductile mind but what must be supposed *liable* to be biassed, and that to a very great degree, by the opinions of a revered philosophical preceptor. If, therefore, it shall be satisfactorily shown that the preceptor, in this case, had given origin to his own principles, only by subjecting his understanding to the most indefensible conditions; we shall then be bound to make a proportionate deduction from the assent, or assertions, of his disciple; however splendid, or solid, the general attainments of the latter may in reality be. Urged by this consideration, I shall proceed to relate, in the history of Dr. Reid's Theory, one of the most extraordinary revolutions in opinion, that has ever been exhibited in the case of any one philosopher.

In the Essays on the Intellectual Powers, Essay 2. Chap. 10., in giving an account of the Berkeleian system, Dr. Reid has expressed himself in the following terms.

“ If I may presume to speak my own sentiments,  
“ I once believed this doctrine of ideas so firmly,  
“ as to have embraced the whole of Berkeley's  
“ system in consequence of it, till finding other  
“ consequences to follow from it, which gave me  
“ more uneasiness than the want of a material  
“ world, it came into my head, more than forty  
“ years ago, to put the question, What evidence

“ I have for this doctrine, that all the objects of  
“ my knowledge are ideas in my own mind ?”

Upon this passage, I shall in the first place offer the collateral remark, that it fully proves Dr. Reid to have had, in the beginning, *no predilection in favor of a material world*; and it shows, therefore, that his whole anxiety was, (as he himself has expressly avowed) to oppose the scepticism of Hume with regard to the *existence of minds*; of which scepticism, Mr. Hume has furnished that remarkable suicide which I have already pointed out.

But with regard to the consideration directly before the reader; I am now to observe, it is probable that most persons who have read the above passage in Dr. Reid's book, have viewed it in no other light than that in which it was undoubtedly meant by its author, that is to say, *as a mere avowal of the particular occasion of his conversion from the Berkeleian system, without at all supposing it to convey any thing which could re-act upon the philosophical judgment by which he was converted*. But, the moment our attention is called to the thing, it cannot fail to flash conviction upon us, that no avowal could have been more unfortunate for the judgment of Dr. Reid, or more fortunate for philosophy, than that in question: for the system of Berkeley is this; That our sensations of color and of touch are the *only extension and figures in nature*;—That it is “ impossible so much  
“ as in thought to separate or abstract color from  
“ extension;” That a man being born blind, and subsequently made to see; “ the objects intromit-



“ted by sight would appear to him (*as in truth they are*) no other than a new set of thoughts or sensations, each of which is as near to him as “the perceptions of pleasure and pain.”

Before I proceed to show how this Berkeleian principle operates upon the soundness of Dr. Reid’s judgment, in his relinquishment of it; I must here observe that, in Professor Stewart’s life of Reid, he informs us, (apparently in the way of extenuation,) that the latter had previously embraced the system of Berkeley (I think the words are “*without examination.*” Now, this proceeding, if it really was so, was only an error common to many speculative men. But it is of vital importance to the opinion we must form of Dr. Reid’s judgment in this matter, to ascertain *in what sense* Mr. Stewart’s apology can possibly be received as true.

To solve this question; I must beg to remind my readers, that the general hypothesis of the Ideal Theory, and especially that of Berkeley, consists of two principal positions; *First*, that ideas are beings substantially detached from the mind in which they occasionally reside; and, *Secondly*, that certain classes of these ideas are the things which we call *extended and figured objects*. Now we can have no hesitation in receiving Professor Stewart’s assertion, as importing that Dr. Reid embraced the hypothesis of LOOSE DETACHED IDEAS “*without examination.*” This, indeed, is not at all surprising, because *ideas* are affections which appear

*to come and go*, (although they certainly do not do so in their *actual identity*;) and any inexperienced person, paying a natural deference to the opinions of learned men in all former ages, may readily be supposed to have taken the scholastic assumption upon trust that ideas are an order of *detached beings*.—But vastly different is the case, when we turn to consider the *other position*: for it is manifestly *impossible* that Mr. Stewart could mean to say, that Dr. Reid, “*without examination*,” received from Berkeley the belief that *sensations of colors are the things we call extended objects*. Dr. Reid had been familiar with his own sensations of colors from his infancy; and, therefore, if he had not *uniformly felt* (like all other men) that *white, blue, and yellow, are spread out*, he would inevitably have recoiled at the very first proposal of Berkeley’s system, as being a monstrous violation of one of the most imperative dictates of *consciousness*.

Dr. Reid never tells us that he had any such struggle, *before he yielded to the BERKELEIAN system*; and it is quite certain that, up to the age at which he embraced the “*whole of that system*,” he felt like all other men, including Berkeley himself, namely, that phantoms of colors, such as red, blue, and yellow, are the extended objects of our visive perception. There cannot be a doubt, that it was **AFTER** his dissatisfaction with the system of Berkeley that he **FIRST** began to suppose our sensations of colors are *not spread out*.

In the act of revolt, therefore, Dr. Reid had two great objects to accomplish, *vastly different in*

*their natures* : The one, was to put the question, *What evidence we have for the existence of loose detached ideas in the mind?* The other, to deprive our sensations of colors of that outspread or extended nature which, both as a Berkeleian and as an ordinary man, he must always, prior to that time have ascribed to them.

It would be altogether nugatory in this place, to object, that BERKELEY *denied the REALITY of extension* : for, although it is true that he did so, it is at the same time certain, he confidently maintained that our sensations of colors and of touch are *the things, and the only things*, which mankind call *extended* : and this is all I would demand of the school of Reid to acknowledge ; for we may trust to the good sense of mankind, to put a proper value upon Berkeley's extravagant denial of the *reality of all extension* ; and we know that the school of Reid itself has sufficiently contemned that extravagance.

What, then, are we to say of the judgment of any person, however respectable his understanding may be in any other case, who, after having lived to the full maturity of a philosophical time of life (like other men) in the firm conviction that his sensations of colors are as truly extended as any thing in the world is extended ; and after having embraced a Theory of Perception *whose BASIS is this very assumption* ; afterwards cashiering his own understanding, as having been guilty of uniform false evidence, and then sets up a new philosophy, upon the

opposite and unheard of assumption that *not one of his sensations has any point or resemblance to any thing like figure or extension?*

To render this proceeding, if possible, still more indefensible; Dr. Reid informs us, not, as would have become an inductive philosopher, that he had been led originally to his change of opinion by having discovered *something new in the nature of the FACTS*; but, on the contrary, that he was perfectly content with Berkeley's system, INCLUDING *the want of a material world*, "until finding other consequences to follow from it, it came into his head to put the question," &c.

It is a well known opprobrium of metaphysical speculations, that men have usually, and upon the most important points of doctrine, brought their *ultimate opinions* to square with their *prior views of consequences*.

It is certainly to be admitted, that a procedure of this kind may take place with the very best intentions, and altogether unwittingly by the philosopher who thus becomes his own deceiver. But, in a case wherein the deepest interests of philosophy and the happiness of mankind are demonstrably at stake, it is a duty incumbent upon us not to spare such an unwarrantable and absurd proceeding, when it can be so satisfactorily made out as I trust the present case has been. And, since a most fallacious system of pneumatology, grounded upon no other foundation than that which has been here exposed, is, with reiterated endeavours, now per-

tinaciously upheld by a diffusion of literary splendor, or at least recommended by the captivating force of its well-merited influence, it becomes absolutely imperative, to exhibit, in its true light, that fatuity of prejudice, which, from one step to another, has led the founder of this Scheme to blow alternately, hot and cold, upon the *most obvious characters of his most obvious sensations*.

Were I at all disposed to indulge, here, in a similar strain to that which Dr. Reid has held in his criticisms on the systems of Berkeley and of Hume; it were a very easy matter to have rendered the foregoing animadversions far more pointed than I have thought fit they should be. At the same time, I deem it well to advert to Dr. Reid's own style; in order that I may not be charged with having treated his philosophical opinions with any undue severity; than which, nothing has been more foreign to my wishes.

### 3.

*Of the Non-reality of Impulse and Contact, as supposed to be favorable to Reid's Theory of Perception.*

Although there has always been a perfect coincidence of opinions, on the subject of perception, between Dr. Reid and Professor Stewart, until that important demur which was started by the last-mentioned writer in his DISSERTATION, published

in the year 1815; it is to be observed that Mr. Stewart has, upon the whole, adopted a much more cautious logic, than was employed by his Predecessor in following out this subject. He no where expressly asserts the non-extension of the mind. And he expressly admits *an intimate connection* between mind and body;—a concession which, although it's importance appears to be entirely overlooked, amounts to as full an acknowledgment of the extension of the mind as could be made by a volume of facts affording each a positive proof of the truth in question; because this *intimate connection* recognises the fact of the mind's *locality*, and locality is a relation to *place*, which is utterly incompatible with the doctrine of unextended mind.

But, to counteract these concessions, Professor Stewart insists upon that gratuitous assumption of Reid which I have already so minutely refuted, namely, that our sensations of Color and of Touch have not any point of resemblance to figure or extension; which assumption virtually affirms the non-extension of the mind; and, consequently, leads directly to an inference of the *existence of a material world*, revealed to our perception in a mysterious and unsearchable manner.

The consideration, however, to which I would here solicit the attention of the reader, is, that of a particular argument which has been skilfully made use of by Mr. Stewart, with a view to give a preponderating verisimilitude to the above-mentioned unfounded assumption of Reid. The matter to

which I now allude will unfold itself in the course of the following observations.

Besides the profound obscurity which has always hung over our philosophical notion of the *relation of causality* ; it is to be observed, that a great change has taken place, (chiefly since Dr. Reid began to write) in the general opinion of philosophers with regard to the *nature of matter or body*, and with respect to the *manner in which one body operates upon another* ; and it is now universally admitted, that, in any of the apparent collisions of bodies, there is no proof of their ever coming into real contact. The result of experiment, moreover, actually proves that real contact *does not* take place, in most of those instances in which it was heretofore supposed to have existed ; and this result goes strongly to support the presumption that no such fact *ever* happens, in any case at all.

This important discovery, both in physics and in pneumatology, one should have expected would infallibly have been seized upon by the professors of the latter science, as a striking and powerful evidence against the existence of any such substance as *dead brute matter*. But the obliquities and resources of the human understanding are wonderful ; and, under a peculiar bias, the above fact has been embraced by the distinguished writer in question, for the very opposite purpose of *upholding the assumption of a material world*.

It is obvious to remark, that the discovery of the non-reality of contact between bodies, took away

that ground, which had all along, previously to this event, appeared to exist, for the concurrent opinions of Locke, Clarke, and Newton, *that the mind receives extended impressions through the medium of IMPULSE*. Accordingly, therefore, Professor Stewart has seized upon this advanced view of the subject, with intent to invalidate the judgment of these philosophers; and has placed it conspicuously in the front of his own speculations, that is to say, in the early part of his First Volume, in which it makes a very principal figure.

This proceeding was certainly judicious, in defence of that doctrine which Mr. Stewart was desirous to uphold; and there can be no question that its specious and imposing appearance has carried persuasion to the minds of a considerable number of intelligent readers. It, in truth, appears, upon the first blush, to be luminously philosophical, to *follow up* what may be called the *negative argument*, (i. e. *men's supposed ignorance of the rationale of any real efficient cause*,) by an appeal to the *positive fact that supposed impulse and contact are mere illusions*;—and, then,—to point to this positive discovery, as an evidence which manifestly knocks away the sole prop or foundation that Newton and other philosophers *supposed they had*, for concluding that the *mind receives extended impressions*.

From the moment that this specious argument is thus plausibly stated, the conception of Locke and of Newton must, in the apprehension of general readers, assume the appearance of an erroneous



and indeed a mere vulgar conceit, fit only to be classed with the pneumatological speculations of the most visionary writers: while the Scheme of Reid, upon the other hand, appears to rise in our view, to an admirable sublimity; having certain and progressive science for its basis, and a supposed most flattering conclusion with regard to the nature of the mind for its result. This supposed result, moreover, is peculiarly of a complexion to prove seductive to human vanity, and to operate upon every class of readers; by placing an essential and infinite difference between the nature of mind and that of a *supposed* inert and corruptible substance: it being all the while deplorably overlooked, that mankind have no rational evidence whatever, and nothing but a mere blind prejudice, in favor of the vulgar opinion that supposed body is dead matter.

I have been desirous to do ample justice to the judgment and ingenuity with which the argument from efficient causality, or rather the argument from certain physical phenomena, has been embraced and wielded by Professor Stewart, with a view to defend the instinctive theory of his Predecessor. And I shall now proceed, I confess with no apprehensions for the result, to show, that a more innocent, or a more irrelevant argument could not possibly have been adduced, than this one in reality is, when attempted to be applied to the ultimate use for which Mr. Stewart has brought it.

The simple and incontrovertible truth of the  
*Hu. Mi.* L

matter is, that an analysis of the fact and phenomena of perception has *nothing at all to do with the external efficient of these phenomena*; nor yet with *any efficient*, nor with any fact, or consideration at all, except those of the constituent elements of perception itself, including the sensations which are subservient to it. It is true, that, for want of having fallen upon any method of analysing the phenomena of perception, Locke, and other philosophers who reasoned in the same manner, have had recourse to the *supposed external efficient of our sensations*, as furnishing a presumptive evidence of the fact that the mind receives extended impressions. And, in so doing, they naturally concluded, agreeably with the universal analogy of extended things, that *body operates upon mind in the same way that one body operates upon another*; which way, *they supposed*, was by *impulse*. But I must repeat here, that, in an analysis of the phenomena of perception itself, no consideration whatever enters into the subject, except *the sensations which are its elements*, and *our own intuitive mental acts* of discerning the relations of contrast between these sensations.

It is unavoidable here, in order to rescue the subject from the otherwise fatal influence of Mr. Stewart's plausible argument; to point out the fact, that, in the species of analysis which was furnished by Locke, or by any other writer, there is *no such thing as a comparison of a sensation of blue with a sensation of yellow*, or *any one sensation with another*, and thence deducing, as a necessary result, *a third*

*phenomenon*, namely, that mental relation of contrast which we call *a visible line*. This, however, I am under the necessity to remark, is the only sort of investigation that can at all be thought to be of the nature of an *analysis of perception*. From this statement, therefore, it becomes plainly manifest, that any argument which Professor Stewart *could* have brought, from the *supposed nature of the EXTERNAL CAUSE of our sensations*, could have had no bearing or application whatever upon such an analysis as I have now adverted to. Neither was it possible that Mr. Stewart could have had any such species of analysis in view, when he advanced his argument from causality. Nothing, therefore, I trust, is more clear, than that the argument of Professor Stewart, in this case, falls entirely to the ground.

It is to be granted, indeed, that, against the argument from efficient causality which was entertained by Locke and his associates in opinion, the argument of Mr. Stewart is applicable; because both parties, in this case, are *equally out of the subject of perception itself*, and both are merely aiming to furnish some true conception of the nature of perception itself, by either investigating or gainsaying the nature of its *supposed external cause*. But, while I grant that Professor Stewart's argument *is applicable* against the view of Locke and of Newton; I do not, however, conceive that it applies with *any efficacy* whatever,

when duly examined ; and I consider it of some importance, in this place, to point out what I apprehend to be it's entire want of cogency.

For this purpose, therefore, I shall *first* observe, that, although it is now, contrary to all former opinion, generally acknowledged that the essence of bodies is not such as admits of real contact or impulse, in any instance with which we are acquainted ; yet, this discovery has *not set philosophers upon denying the extension of bodies*. Then why (I would ask) should this discovery afford any *fresh* reason to deny the *extension of minds* ?

*Secondly* ; I would observe, that, although it is here granted that a greater pressure than any man can exert is not sufficient to bring his hand into *mere physical contact* with any other body ; yet, the slightest application of a seal, to so dull a substance as melted wax, is sufficient to make *an impression upon the wax*, which is so *very like* as to be, to sense, *a fac simile* of that upon the SEAL. Thus the non-reality of the fact of impulse, or contact, does not prevent *correspondent impressions* from being conveyed, *by some means*, from body to body : Then, Why should not *correspondent impressions* be conveyed, *by the same means*, from the *external energies of a spiritual agent*, to our minds, without either impulse or contact ?

Here I must particularly request my readers to observe, that I am not arguing to prove by what sort of external efficiency the mind becomes impressed with its sensations. On the contrary, I am *only showing the inefficacy of the reasoning of Professor Stewart*, when he attempts,

*upon hypothetical ground, to invalidate the hypothetical reasoning of Locke and of Newton: for it is, certainly, as hypothetical in Mr. Stewart to assume that the mind cannot receive extended impressions because contact is exploded, as it was in Locke and Newton to believe in the facts of contact and impulse: and the assumption of Mr. Stewart is an hypothesis which farther labors under the decisive imputation of being contradicted by a most general analogy of nature, certainly known, namely, that of the correspondent impressions made by extended things upon each other.*

In any appeal to external facts, in order to help our conjecture as to whether or not the mind receives impressions from things without; I must here particularly suggest, that the logical question is not properly as to Whether or not impressions made upon bodies are produced by *contact or impulse*, but Whether the impression received by *one* body CORRESPONDS with the particular FORM of the *other*. Now, we find, it uniformly follows, that every body which is hit, or impressed, with a sufficient force, receives *not merely an impression*, but *an impression* of THAT VERY PATTERN which constitutes the form of the impressing body. When such a general result as this, therefore, is *continually experienced*; Can there be a moment's doubt that one of the bodies, in every such case, *actually receives* A PATTERN *from the OTHER*; although we be in total ignorance of the *precise manner* in which this *stamp or character* is

effected? Or, Can it, in the least, weaken our conviction that there is A REAL CORRESPONDENCE between every two extended bodies, when the one imprints any pattern upon the other; although Professor Stewart has called our attention to the discovery that *impulse and contact* are mere chimeras of our imperfect senses?

If the consideration which I have now suggested could derive strength from any attempt at farther illustration; I would beg to remind my readers that the *only evidence* we have of the existence of *other human beings, besides ourselves*, is precisely of the *same genus* with that which we have for the fact that *one body receives CORRESPONDENT impressions from another*. The voices, the persons, and the motions, of *other men*, make *similar impressions* upon our minds, to those which we receive from *our own* voice, and person, and motions; and it is in the CORRESPONDENCY AND SIMILITUDE ALONE (and not upon any supposition of the manner in which the impressions are made) that we recognise, or believe in, the existence of other sensitive and intellectual beings like ourselves.

It follows, I trust, in the most conclusive manner, that, unless Professor Stewart will undertake to assert, that, because *impulse and contact are exploded*, therefore, bodies DO NOT receive correspondent impressions from other bodies; it must be altogether vain to pretend that, for want of contact, our minds cannot be impressed by the energies of any external spiritual agent. And I may conclude this topic by observing, that *the universal fact of correspon-*

*dent impressions, in all the extended things around us*, is a most powerful argument (though not an argument which I here intended to appeal to) in favor of the conclusion that the mind must be impressed in some manner analogous.

There is yet another consideration; which, although it cannot be discussed in this place, appears nevertheless of an importance which at least claims our momentary notice. The matter to which I now allude, is *a doubt*, which I apprehend may justly be entertained, with regard to the *accuracy* of the usual mode of reasoning on the supposed facts of impulse and contact.

Although the fact be admitted, that, in a multitude of cases of collision which come under our actual observation, there is no instance of real contact with any thing SOLID; yet it is manifest that, in all such cases, there is *a uniform point of proximity* requisite, to enable one body to impress, or to move another, by what is called impulse. It would therefore appear, that, so far is the fact of real contact from being exploded, by any positive evidence, that, on the contrary, we ought rather to conclude that, in every such instance, there is *a real contact of THAT SPHERE OF ENERGY which surrounds the one body and that which surrounds the other*. This consideration, if duly followed out, might perhaps be found to reduce the modern doctrine of *non-contact*, to little better than a mere verbal innovation. But the topic is one which lies entirely

out of my subject; and I submit this hint of it, merely to close those animadversions which I could not avoid offering, since it was absolutely necessary to present an effectual barrier against that argument from external efficiency, which Professor Stewart had, with such imposing effect, placed in the advance of his own speculations. Upon the supposed strength of this argument, he has treated the reasoning of Locke and Newton upon the subject, with a severity due only to the most puerile conceits: but I have no hesitation in desiring to share any disgrace which shall be found imputable to their conclusion upon the subject, *when it is duly examined and modified*; and, I confess, I have not the smallest apprehension that the objections founded upon the doctrine of the non-reality of contact will be able, for a moment, to stand against the plain considerations which have herein been opposed to it.



## SECTION SECOND.

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OF THE EXTERNAL GENERIC OCCASION OF OUR SENSATIONS OF COLORS;—AND OF THE GREAT POPULAR DECEPTION WITH REGARD TO THE PLACE OF THESE PHENOMENA.

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### 1.

THE object of the present section, is to remove a universal and deep rooted prejudice, which operates with a very pernicious influence upon the general opinion with regard to the subject of perception; although it does not relate to the act, or phenomena, of perception itself, but regards only the mere physical general occasion of our sensations of colors.

It is universally assumed, not only by writers upon the various branches of physical science, but also by those who take the phenomena of the mind for their subject, that the external general occasion of our sensations of colors is *light reflected from distant objects*. This uniform assumption has vastly contributed to fix that *natural prejudice* of

mankind, by which they are led to conceive that their sensations of colors are the distant things of an external world. It is therefore a matter of essential importance, preparatory to an analysis of perception, to point out this procedure as a most erroneous one, which has unaccountably been suffered to discredit the inductive study of the mind; since there is no fact in natural science more indubitably ascertained, than that light reflected from external objects is only *ONE of several different species*, of a well known *generic occasion* of our sensations of colors;—which general occasion is, certainly, a vastly different thing from the reflected light in question.

It may indeed be considered as a reproach to the philosophy of the mind, that it should be necessary, in the present advanced state of natural knowledge, to point out a fact so obvious to remark as the one now to be insisted upon; but, at any rate, the following mere mention of a few of the most prominent species of the general occasion, ought to be sufficient to prevent any future oversight of this matter; and, I hope, may serve to rescue the subject from a very injurious neglect. In a work such as the present, however, I conceive it to be farther proper to suggest two or three obvious examples of the fact in question; which, therefore, I shall present at the end of the section.

When the organ of vision is acted upon, by light reflected from distant objects,—by blows

or by pressure,—by any of the consequences of dreaming,—or by the various effects of bodily derangement,—the mind then undergoes a set of visive sensations, variously arranged. Such are those beautiful *phantoms or spectres* of which we become *conscious* when we look at a landscape, a rain-bow, a display of flowers, or any other assemblage of objects which we familiarly know by the names of red, white, blue, &c.

When, *owing to collateral evidences*, we judge these residents of our mind to be occasioned by distant objects (which is the ordinary case during our daily intercourse with the world) we then invariably conceive these phantoms to be the distant objects themselves; because, by a profound deception imposed upon us, they *appear* to be a sort of *skin, spread over and adhering to the surfaces of distant things*. But there is no fact in all philosophy concerning which there is a more universal consent, than that red, white, and blue, and all the rest of this beautiful tribe of appearances, are nothing in the world but *occasional modifications or affections of our own minds*. In other words; it is a fact agreed upon, by all contending sects of pneumatologists, as a truth in the last degree incontrovertible, (to use the language of Dr. Reid) that “*appearances of colors are only A SPECIES OF THOUGHT.*”

It is to be regarded as a matter fortunate, in the highest degree, that the certitude with regard to this fact is so complete as we actually find it; be-

cause this *single datum, or fundamental principle*, is the sole basis upon which some of the most momentous conclusions in philosophy are ultimately to rest. It is (with the exception of the *analogous fact of Touch*) the *sole fact* which *immediately connects the world without us with the world within*; and it is from this fact alone (after the nature of our sensations of colors shall be rigorously ascertained, by means of an analysis of their various combinations) that we shall be enabled to draw a legitimate conclusion, as to whether the great external surrounding agent, which excites all our exterior sensations, is of a *material* or a *spiritual nature*.

However certainly it is known, to all those who are in any degree conversant on the subject, that phantoms of colors, which appear to be external and distant things, are in reality nothing but affections of the mind itself; and notwithstanding the important consequences which depend upon this fact; it is nevertheless a truth in nature which has always been so deplorably neglected, even by the learned part of mankind, that it is at this moment a great desideratum to bring it into general notice. The subject is one which ought to claim a most powerful interest on account of its own intrinsic nature, altogether beside its infinite importance; and, if it were not for the consideration of its fate in time past, one should think it could require little labor to recommend it to the general attention. It is however to be re-

corded, as a lesson for the philosophers of posterity, that, long after the Copernican System had completely triumphed over the evidence of sense and the natural prejudice of the species, the residence of colored objects in the mind has remained a fact utterly unknown and unsuspected by the great bulk of the reading world.

Curious indeed it is to remark, that, while the fact under consideration is one of the most magnificent as well as most beneficial contrivances of the known Creation ; yet, this wonderful arrangement of Providence, in all its stupendous grandeur and utility, has hitherto existed in the presence of human ignorance, and has thus continually been LET RUN TO WASTE ; unless we may except the splendid era of the ancient Hindoo Philosophy.

The general apathy on the subject has, even, so astonishingly kept pace with the advancement of the species in other branches of natural knowledge, that the bare mention of the fact, of *red, white, and blue, being no-where except in the mind*, if it should accidentally occur in a company of well educated persons of the present day, would scarcely fail to produce a deeper sentiment of incredulity and contempt, than that with which the same party would listen to a legend of a ghost, or the predictions of a fortune-teller. And a similar ignorance, or at least *oblivion* of the fact, is not unusually to be met with in persons who cannot have been altogether unschooled with regard to it.

It must be confessed, that the general ignorance of the subject is, in a considerable degree, owing

to the brevity and passing terms in which it is usually mentioned by philosophers themselves. For, although all Sects of Pneumatologists equally acknowledge the fact; yet, it is a matter that is scarcely ever dwelt upon, or particularly pointed out, by any writer.

The great truth upon which I am now insisting, is simply this; that all those beautiful scenes and visions, which have, from our earliest infancy to the present hour, delighted our sense and fed our imagination, in a daily variety and succession of *colored appearances*, were in reality an order of beings which existed NOT WITHOUT, but WITHIN OURSELVES. Since this is the case, therefore, Might we not reasonably expect, that every person of a liberal curiosity would be forcibly struck and indelibly impressed, upon being inducted into a knowledge of that NEW WORLD, which bursts upon his intellectual view when he is first told, and the fact is verified to him by the most simple and decisive experiments, that the things which he had all along before taken for the hues and tints of external and distant objects, are in reality nothing but the furniture of his own mind?

It is true, an induction into this vast arcanum of Divine Providence, does not make a man acquainted with ANY OBJECTS EXCEPT those which he knew before: which is one reason why the discovery is usually so little impressive. The only information it affords him, is, that those colored appearances which he had all along contemplated *as the external objects of nature*, are not in the same place, and not of the SAME ESSENCE as he had uniformly sup-

posed. He had always believed them to be the things of a MATERIAL world: but, on the contrary, he now finds that they are beings of A MENTAL WORLD WITHIN HIMSELF. Assuredly, nevertheless, this may, in a very good sense, be called an induction into the knowledge of A NEW WORLD; since it is an introduction to a region; of whose existence no ordinary man has any conception.

The *utility* and the *delight* which we derive from the sense of seeing, has been eloquently descanted upon by our most popular Essayists of the last age; and these topics are, certainly, very fit themes of eulogium and of popular interest.—But it is to be regretted that those writers did not embrace the opportunity, which their talents and era afforded them, to suggest to the understandings, and impress upon the imaginations, of the *reading bulk of the community*, some idea of that wonderful ADAPTATION OF THE MIND, by which it's Beneficent Creator has formed it to be THE PLACE OF COLORS;—a contrivance which renders the *utility* and the *delight* we derive from those appearances an object of far greater wonder and adoration.

From contemplating this arrangement on account of it's intrinsic nature and *immediate utility*; it is a rational transition to contemplate it on account of it's philosophical consequences, or those great truths which it ultimately serves to indicate. The indubitable truth then, is, that a knowledge of the fact that appearances of colors exist no-where except in the mind, is the FIRST STEP which can

ever be taken, toward ascertaining what is the most general nature of that *unperceived surrounding agent* which excites our sensations; which agent has, during all ages of the world, been believed, by the great bulk of mankind, to be *an inert material substance*; but which, in the case of a satisfactory result of the forthcoming speculation, must be concluded to be in reality no other than SPIRIT OR MIND.

Having thus suggested the consideration of the *existence* of the fact under notice, and of its principal application; I shall, previously to offering some concluding observations with regard to it, proceed to supply two or three of the most obvious examples of its reality; although, to some of my readers the statement of any such proofs must be altogether unnecessary.

## 2.

*Experimental Proofs of the fact that Colors are only Affections of Mind.—The Proofs of this Fact open to all Classes of Persons.—It's Importance to the Moral Conduct of the Species.*

If we commence a gentle pressure of the hand, upon the closed eye, we shall presently become conscious of a *field of sensation*; which, at first, is usually of a faint bluish color: And if the pressure be continued, and gradually increased, we shall become farther conscious of a *surface of luminous sensations*, of a bright yellow metallic appearance,



which sensations will *vary*, in *shape* and in *size*, in proportion to the continuance and the strength of the pressure, until, at length, the sense of splendor will equal that of the sun's disk when viewed on a clear day.

This general fact, which depends not upon any nicety or skill in the experiment, is as much the ordinary result of continued pressure upon the closed eye, as that of seeing what we call distant objects is the consequence of looking at them in noon-day light. The fact, therefore, while it furnishes the most decisive proofs that sensations of colors are not dependent upon *light reflected from distant objects*, nor yet upon the *existence* of distant objects in any way whatever, affords us, at the same time, the last degree of certitude that these phantoms of the mind are SPREAD OUT; because we can contemplate these affections for any desired length of time, and we invariably perceive that they have certain *shapes*, and *sizes*, as perfectly manifested as any which we ever discern when our eyes are open. It would, unquestionably, be *as sane* an act to deny that these sensations are *yellow*, or *luminous*, as to deny that they have *extension* and *figure*.

This class of phenomena, of itself alone, if it had been duly attended to, ought certainly to have deterred any philosopher from so hopeless a project, as that of endeavouring to persuade mankind that red, white, and blue, and all other colors, are not extended.

In addition to the class of sensations just now mentioned, may, in a still more important light, be considered that well known appearance, of which we become *conscious* when we press the end of a finger upon the *open eye*. The *concentric circles* which we perceive in any such case, and which, by moving the finger all round the pupil of the eye, may be made to *appear to travel round it* in an opposite direction, are so vivid, that those *other sensations* of colors, which we receive at the same time from looking at external objects, are quite faint in comparison with them. One would think it hardly possible that this familiar experiment, which must be known to most persons, could ever have been made without calling the observer to discern that deception which nature imposes upon us, when it makes us believe that colors are *distant* and *moving* objects.

With regard to this well known phenomenon, I would suggest, for special attention, that it is in a two-fold degree important; because it at once detects two great fallacies whose joint operation has given them irresistible power over the imagination of the species. For we not only confidently believe that colors are *distant* things; but we as confidently believe that they *move about*; which last we must naturally think would be impossible for them to do if they were affections of the Mind. The truth, however, will be shewn, that they *only appear* to move: while it is here rendered indubitable that they are *in the mind*, and not at a distance from it.

In a future speculation I propose to show, upon this ground, that *we never perceive real motion*. The subject is one of some curiosity.

The only other example which I consider it necessary to suggest, in proof of the general fact now under consideration, I shall take from that class of visive sensations which have very unphilosophically been called *accidental colors*,—as if *all colors* were not essentially accidental.

Attach a red wafer, to a sheet of white paper. Look steadfastly at the wafer; and, in a short time, there will be felt a sensation of *a faint light green color*, apparently forming a narrow rim round the edge of the wafer. When this sensation of green has become somewhat vivid; cover the wafer, and direct the eye to any other part of the paper. It will now be found, that the sensation of green will *remain in the mind*, and will be of the *same shape and size* as before, namely, that of a circle a little larger than the wafer: and this phantom will *appear to move about*, as the direction of the eye changes; or, else, to *adhere to any part of the paper* to which the direction of the eye is fixed; until the irritation of the optic nerve has ceased.

Wafers which, from the difference in the texture of their minute parts, are said to be of different colors, will produce *different but correspondent* sensations of colors. This fact, therefore, is a decisive proof, that various sensations of colors are not the result merely of *various kinds of light*, but are, *generically speaking*, the result of *various kinds of*

ACTION UPON THE OPTIC NERVE; which action, (it is fully certified) may be produced by *other sorts* of stimulants, *besides light*.

Such simple and easy experiments as those which have just been suggested, while they are within the reach of every one, and completely expose the popular delusion of believing colors to be *without and at a distance from us*, furnish, at the same time, a proof equally decisive that the phantoms of colors in our own mind, are the *extended and figured things* which we call the bodies of *an external world*. This evidence, indeed, is not at all of the same nature with that analytical process which I all along contemplate, and from which it is duly to be distinguished: but, upon the present species of evidence, every philosopher, from Plato down to Hume, has been fully satisfied that every instance of *color, figure, and extension*, ever perceived by us, is in some way or other *present to the mind itself*; although, to popular apprehension all these appearances seem to be the distant things of an external world. What, then, shall we say, when any enlightened mind has, in the face of such experiments as are here adverted to, been able to work itself up to a persuasion, that our affections of red, white, and blue, are *not spread out*, and have *no more resemblance to extended and figured objects*, "*than the words of a language have to the things which they denote?*"

The truth of the matter is, that, the moment a man is inducted, by such experiments, into the general fact under consideration, he discovers that

his MIND is, *actually, and in the most obvious sense,* a MICROCOSM OR LITTLE WORLD; and he is thus convinced, that what he, perhaps, had before supposed to be merely a visionary flight, or at best but a sublime mystery of Plato and of other ancient Philosophers, is no other than the certain reality of nature. He recognises in his own mind, literally, A MIRROR OF THE SURROUNDING CREATION; the *extension and figures of his own sensations* having, indubitably, a *correspondency*, and what may be called a *precise similitude*, to the *extension and figures of CERTAIN ENERGIES*, which are exerted by some *unknown or unperceived EXTERNAL AGENT*, under certain uniform laws.

Experience certainly proves, that, after a person has been inducted into the fact, of colors being residents of the mind, it requires *intention* to retain this knowledge by means of repeated contemplations; without which it is soon overpowered by the strength of the natural prejudice, and either fades away in the memory altogether, or is remembered with a degree of scepticism or incredulity, spite of all the incontrovertibleness of the proofs by which it is established. The reason of this result is perfectly manifest. The popular delusion, with regard to the place of colors, is *every moment at hand* to impose upon our imagination; and, unless reason or philosophy happen to be upon the watch, the deep rooted fallacy is sure to pre-

vail. Hence the difficulty of bringing this great fact home to popular apprehension.

It may indeed be questioned, whether any number of *Philosophers, themselves*, (unless we may except the ancient Sages of the East) have ever exercised their minds in a *habitual* contemplation of this fact; so as to have enabled them to carry a sense of its existence about with them, in the transaction of their ordinary affairs. But it is, surely, a confession of the imbecility of human nature, that a fact of such magnitude should exist, without the shadow of a doubt, in the knowledge of philosophers; and yet, that they, while they *do know it*, should never, at ordinary times, be able to *think up to it*; and, even, should seldom put themselves upon the discipline of so thinking. It may, however, be safely affirmed, that no man can ever have any thing like a true conception of what sort of constitution his Creator has been pleased to form him, who does not, *sometimes*, recal to his attention the fact that all the colored objects which he ever contemplates are contained only in the scenic region of his own mind.

It is not to be doubted that this fact might be rescued, from that injurious neglect under which it has so long continued to exist. In order to effect this, nothing appears wanting but that the attention both of philosophical and of popular writers, should be directed to give to the public mind a bias toward the subject; and that it should become a matter of public notoriety, like that of

many other great truths in science, the actual knowledge of which is removed from ordinary reach. For the truth of this observation, we need only appeal to cases that are perfectly analogous. Where is there a person now to be found, in the middling classes of society, who in the least disbelieves that the earth revolves about its own axis, and performs a periodical course round the Sun? Yet it is certain, not only that these truths offer the utmost violence to the affirmations of sense; but, also, that not one in a hundred of believers in them can assign *any reason at all* for the creed which they have thus confidently adopted, except the uncontradicted voices of authors on the subject.

How vastly more ought the result to be in favor of promulgating the great truth that *the mind is the Scenic World of our perception?* For, although the affirmations of sense are as strongly violated in this case, as in that of the motion of the earth; yet, every man, by barely *pressing the end of his finger upon the organ of sight*, or by trying any one of a variety of the most simple and easy experiments, may *satisfy his own reason, against his sense*, and thus render his mind *superior to a trust in authority*, with regard to the truth under notice.

It is altogether undeniable, therefore, that the fact of the *microcosmic nature of the Human Mind*, is a truth infinitely more within the reach of the great bulk of the species, than those great truths of the Copernican System which may now be said to be *popularly* established in the world. And

an *ordinary man* might justly feel himself more elevated by the former subject, than by the latter ; because nature has put the evidences of that vast arcanum within *his own* reach, and he may be so far upon a footing with philosophers themselves.

In fine ; The certainty, and the accessibleness to all classes of mankind, of the fact here insisted upon, manifests itself to be of that universal character, which ought to belong to and to distinguish a truth, that is formed (among its other uses) to operate as a great LEVER upon the moral conduct of the Species. At first sight, indeed, nothing so little appears as that there is any chain of causes which can connect the fact of *colors being residents of the mind*, with the *moral bent of the species* : To an ordinary observer, no two things can appear to have less of relation between them than these. But, after the examination of a few forthcoming self-evident propositions, I trust the judgment of mankind will decide, that *All Causes must be Spiritual*. And then, the connection between this belief and moral conduct can be neither doubtful nor obscure.



## SECTION THIRD.

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OF THE ESSENTIAL GENERAL OBJECT OF PERCEPTION.

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THE exercise of our aggregate powers of perception enables us to conceive various notions of things, which are usually supposed to be the qualities of an external inert subject, called matter.

These qualities have been the theme of many and ample discussions among philosophers, both ancient and modern. Perhaps they may now most fitly be defined to be a variety of *energies*, with which certain portions of extended space are unaccountably endowed; by means of which, under certain laws, and in certain circumstances, these particular bulks appear enabled to effect a succession of changes upon each other, and also to excite in our minds those changes or gross thoughts of which we become conscious during the exercise of any of our organs of external sense.

For the purpose which I have at present in view; the only remark that appears necessary to be offered, with regard to these qualities of body, is,

that there is not one of them, singly taken, but whose very genus may be supposed to be annihilated, without annihilating body itself; excepting only the attribute *EXTENSION*, and the necessary result of its finite modification, which is *FIGURE*.

A late ingenious writer went the length of supposing that the *extension itself* of body is annihilable, (without involving any violation of the laws of nature) inasmuch as it is now known that body is to an uncertain extent *compressible*. But, if we were to admit this for a true assumption, we should still have left to us an intuitive certainty, that the *space or matrix* which has once been filled with any quality, is itself incapable of destruction. Whatever else can be annihilated; *IT*, at any rate, must remain, a being necessarily existent.

From this fleeting or destructible nature of all the other objects of our perception, and from the permanent nature of *Extension or Space*, it must be evident that *Extension* (with whatever qualities, energies, or garb, it may at any time be cloathed, by the pleasure of the Omnipotent Being, in order to effect his purposes,) is the *only generic object* about which our understanding can be concerned, especially in any attempt to solve the problem with regard to the most general nature of the mind, or that of the external cause of its sensations. All the other objects of our *primary or immediate perception* are merely *accidental*: This alone is *essential*.

*Extension*, indeed, cannot itself be apprehended except through the medium of *some one* of the

qualities, or energies, with which it is clothed. But, whichever of these qualities shall be chosen : Whether it be in the province of Sight, or in that of Touch : Whether, in the former, it be red, blue, or yellow ; or, in the latter, hot, cold, hard, or soft ; neither of these vehicles, in particular, is essential to perception ; and, when we have selected that which appears best adapted to the purpose of analysis, we have nothing farther to do with any of the qualities of body, whether secondary or primary. It is also to be observed, that the quality we choose is to be regarded, not in itself, but only as a *mere medium*, through which we are to contemplate the phenomena of *extension and figure*, and to ascertain *the relation* or rather the *identicalness* of these phenomena and our own sentient principle or mind.

By thus drawing the line, between what is permanent and necessary and what is only accidental and transient in the subject, we make the first step in the science of perception ; and, in so doing, we are called upon to contemplate, with the deepest interest, that *eternity of nature* which belongs to its *essential object*. We no sooner arrive at a maturity of understanding to be acquainted with the obvious nature of any portion of Extension, than a transcendental suggestion of our intellect imperatively proclaims to us, that this finite expanse is not limited to the small portion of it which we now perceive, nor its existence to the time at which we do perceive it ; but, on the contrary, that its expansion and duration must be produced without end.

This infinite expanse, and matrix of all things, we can conceive, might have been left altogether void of those various energies which we call the qualities of body. But our experience has fully established the fact, that, throughout its whole extent, so far as human observation has reached, and equally in all its most minute recesses, this Space is, literally speaking, A THEATRE OF CAUSES, OR OF PASSING EVENTS. If therefore these events be at all ascribed to the energies of MIND, as their ultimate cause; there does not then appear to be a more logical conclusion, indicated by the phenomena, than that *mental energies demand a theatre of extension for their exercise*. Nor, upon the other hand, can any conceit appear more absurd, than to suppose a power which has *no relation to place*; since this is the same thing as to suppose a power which *operates no where*.

Those writers who have not been able to subscribe to the reality of space, are at least *consistent* in supposing that mental energies have no relation to space. But as for those philosophers *who admit the reality of space, and who recognise a world of successive events caused by the energies of mind, as going on in this real expanse, but who at the same time deny that mind partakes at all of an extended nature*; I cannot help thinking they present us with one of the most revolting assumptions that ever was exhibited under the influence of scholastic prejudice. In siding with a Locke, a Clarke, and a Newton, against such a conceit; we loose sight of the sanction of these illustrious names,

and are only conscious of yielding to an irresistible dictate of the unsophisticated understanding.

With regard to the schism which subsists between philosophers, concerning the reality of space; I shall upon this occasion only remark, that it has always appeared to me to be not only the most groundless, but at the same time the most surprising, of all the disputes of speculative minds; and, that, hopeless as the controversy may seem to be, yet, inasmuch as I humbly conceive there appears a most important oversight, ascribable to the disputants on both sides of the controversy, I have not been discouraged from hazarding a speculation on the nature of space, which will form an appropriate chapter in the sequel.

As for that specific quality, which may be supposed to be the best medium adapted for our apprehension of space or extension, with a view to the solution of the problem of perception; I conceive that the external quality, or energy, which occasions in our minds the *various sensations of colors*, is by far preferable to that which occasions those of *touch*; especially, in so far as regards the perception of *figure or outline*.

In our perception of mere *superficial or field extension*, our sensations of sight and those of touch may perhaps be found equally fit for the purpose. But the latter are far behind the former in that precision, which enables us to discern exquisitely fine

lines between contiguous sensations ; and, as our entertaining the subject with regard to the phenomena of two different senses would only tend to distract attention, I apprehend it to be unquestionably the best way to select sensations of colors for the subject of analysis. At the same time, it may be remarked, that if sensations of touch were chosen ; the solution of their various combinations would only lead to *analogous results* to those which will follow from the intended process.

In adopting sensations of colors, for the subject ; I, in point of fact, only follow the *general* usage of Pneumatologists. But I am led to do this by reasons that are peculiar to the species of analysis which is to be submitted ; namely, *the consideration of breadthless lines*, and *the PRINCIPAL OF RELATION between the phenomena* ; considerations which do not at all enter into any other account of perception.

## SECTION FOURTH.

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OF A PARTICULAR FACT OF PERCEPTION ASSERTED BY  
PROCLUS AND BY BARROW.

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SOME time after I first ventured to lay before the public, in a small evanescent tract upon the subject, a statement of those principles of primary visive perception upon which I am now to insist; it was mentioned to me, that there is a fact asserted by Proclus, which also, I have since found, is unequivocally although very slightly noticed by Dr. Barrow, which, if admitted, involves a distinct collateral proof of the truth of these principles.

The matter which I was then endeavouring to bring to the notice of my contemporaries, being in a peculiar degree foreign to any preceding view of the subject; and the chance of its gaining a ready attention being, upon this and upon various other accounts, very far from encouraging; I was glad to avail myself of such names as those of Proclus and of Barrow, in a republication of the subject;—still in the compass of a small and transient missive, comprising such steps of advance as I had made in it, beyond the general ground suggested in my first work upon the phenomena of the mind, published about ten years since.

I have reason to think that this procedure was fortunate, in attracting the attention of some scientific readers, who might not otherwise have inclined to believe that any thing satisfactory was ever likely to appear in this department of our knowledge.

Besides this use of the authority of these two illustrious geometers; I consider that a brief account of the bearings of the fact assumed by them, will naturally introduce the proposed analysis to the reader in the most simple and obvious manner; and I therefore conceive, that the following statement of these two concurrent authorities, will form the best preface which I could annex to it, even upon the present occasion; although I hope that a sufficient interest has already been excited among some who are conversant on the subject, (aided, I now trust, by circumstances which must lead to its general investigation,) to secure the proximate object I had in view with regard to it.

The fact to which I alluded, is assumed by Proclus, in his Commentaries on the First Book of Euclid's Elements, according to the following translation by Mr. Taylor.

“ We should admit the followers of Apollonius, “ who say, that we obtain the notion of a line when “ we are ordered to measure the lengths alone of “ ways, or walls; for then we do not subjoin either “ breadth or bulk, but only make one distance the “ object of our consideration. But a line may be-



“come the object of our sensation if we behold the  
“divisions of *lucid places* from those which are  
“*dark*, or survey the moon when dichotomised ; for  
“this medium has no distance with respect to lati-  
“tude, but is indued with longitude, which is  
“extended together with the light and shadow.”

With regard to the fact which is thus asserted ;  
I shall first remark, that it does not appear to be  
in any way *proved* by Proclus ; but is only *assumed*  
by him upon the above description. We are, how-  
ever, to observe, that it is at least the assumption  
of a first rate geometer, in the course of a mathe-  
matical commentary ; and therefore it must be taken  
with the utmost rigor, if it cannot be altogether re-  
jected. The same remark is also to be made with  
regard to the notice which is taken of this fact by  
Dr. Barrow. In his *Mathematical Lectures*,  
(Lect. 9.) he observes, that “Almost the same or like  
“attributes belong to lines ; by these are reckoned  
“the distances of things ; according to these are  
“directed the rays of light, the descent of heavy  
“bodies, and all sorts of motion ; by these are dis-  
“tinguished the confines of light and shadow ;  
“about these, at rest, are bodies revolved.”

It is almost unnecessary for me to remark, that  
these two concurrent authorities contradict the  
prevalent opinion of modern mathematicians ; be-  
cause it is sufficiently known that a mathematical  
or breadthless line is not usually supposed to be a  
possible object of sense, or imagination. It is even  
perfectly manifest, by their having pointed out the  
above *particular fact as an exception*, that neither

Proclus nor Barrow in the least conceived the fact possible *in any other case*, except that wherein we discern ‘the *confines of light and shadow.*’ Upon this, however, I am under the necessity to remark, it appears strange that any philosopher, who had once adverted to the fact in the particular case of light and shadow, should not have intuitively discerned, *as a general corollary*, that the *same sole result* must hold, *universally*, in ALL CASES OF A PERCEIVED PROPER LINE WHATEVER, since it is self evident that “*the moon when dichotomised,*” or any other instance of a *lucid* place divided from one that is *dark*, can only produce in our mind *two different and contrasted sensations of colors*, with a *line between them* ; precisely as must always happen when we look at any two contiguous objects of different or contrasted colors.

If any person should choose to deny the truth of the fact in question, even in that limited particular case in which it is asserted by the above-mentioned authorities ; I might, if it were necessary to my purpose, insist upon the matter with perfect confidence. Having been myself originally struck by the fact, and finding it to be *not of a physical but of a mathematical character* ; I was thereupon led to state it in the form of a demonstration, without in the least suspecting that it had ever before been adverted to by any one. If, therefore, any thing in the analysis were required to be founded upon the matter ; it might be done with safety.

But I would here particularly solicit attention to the circumstance, that nothing in the following principles of perception has any dependence whatever upon this fact. On the contrary, whether we suppose a visible line to be altogether breadthless, or to have gross breadth in any desired degree, it is perfectly indifferent to the principle upon which we perceive any such line. So essentially is this the case, that the analysis distinctly recognises no less than *three different species* of visible lines; *two of which species are lines with breadth.*

I have considered this explanation necessary, inasmuch as I found, that some intelligent persons, who, however, have concurred in their judgment with me with regard to the nature of breadthless lines, have appeared to suppose that the *whole essence or strength* of the analysis lies in demonstrating the fact of visible lines being void of breadth;—a misconception to which, perhaps, I incautiously gave rise, myself, by letting the demonstration of this fact form a conspicuous feature in my earlier publications of the subject.

My reason for bringing forward the assumption of Proclus and of Barrow, was not at all as deeming it necessary to maintain what they had asserted, how true soever I apprehend it to be; but was only to show, that both these geometricians had taken such a view of the subject (at least in one particular case) as, *when viewed in another light, and duly followed out*, leads to a discernment of this consequence, namely, that *every visible line is a RELATION between two of our own ideas.*

If it were not for peculiar circumstances, which are adverted to in their proper place; it would be hardly necessary for me to remark, that the particular fact adverted to by these Philosophers, did not suggest to either of them a conception that it was a matter in any way capable of being applied to advance the general subject of perception: which is perfectly manifest from their entire silence with regard to any such consequence, and from the utter oblivion, or neglect, into which the fact observed by them has been suffered to fall, by those who have come after them; insomuch, that no hint of the necessity, or use, of *a variety of colors* in perception, is to be found expressed throughout the whole controversy which has been carried on, during a century past, with regard to this part of our constitution; but many expressions, on all sides, to the contrary.

## SECTION FIFTH.

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### OF THE ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION OF VISIBLE FIGURE OR OUTLINE.

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#### 1.

THE immediate preparatory step to be taken, in order to enter upon the following analysis, is, to lay down the line which divides the province of *Sensation or Consciousness* from that of *Intuition*.

The faculty of Sense, I am here to observe, is vastly less extensive in the field of its objects than has been usually supposed. This faculty, strictly speaking, has cognizance only of such minute or elementary parts of any sensation, (of color for example) as do not admit of any farther *perceptible division*. The faculty of Intuition, on the contrary, is the *dividing*, as it is also the *connecting Power*; and it has for its objects the *relations* perceptible between any two elements of sensation, or between any two other subjects whatever.

As an instance of the very different operations of these two faculties, especially in a case of *visive perception*; suppose we are contemplating a

sensation of color, occasioned by our looking at a red wafer. In this case, according to the universally received doctrine of the subject, we should be said to be *conscious of a sensation of red*. But, contrary to this view of the matter, I must here suggest, that, in point of fact, *Sensation or Consciousness* has only *a part*, and that perhaps the smaller part, in this operation; which, in reality, is a very complex one. For, although *Sense* takes cognizance of *every sensible point*, that goes to make up the whole magnitude of the surface of red, of which we are now conscious; yet *Sense* CANNOT CONNECT *any two of these points together*, and therefore it cannot combine all the points into *one whole or surface of sensation*, such as that we are now contemplating, or such as we contemplate in ordinary, when it is said, in the usual phrase, that we have *a sensation of color*. On the contrary, it belongs to the faculty of *Intuition*, in any such case, to combine all the sensible points of any sensation of color, into one mass or surface; which, in ordinary, is considered to be *a single sensation*, although, in philosophical strictness, it is *an assemblage or congregation of a number of elementary sensations, perfectly resembling one another*, and thus formed into one whole.

This view of the distinct provinces of *Sense* and of *Intuition*, especially in the act of visive perception, leads me to suggest, that the perception of *field extension or mere surface*, although it is effected by the *same two faculties*, and upon the *very same*

*principle*, with those employed in the perception of *figure or outline*, is yet produced under a *very different modification of phenomena*; which, if not explained, might lead any person to suppose that the two kinds of perception are quite of a foreign nature to each other. In the case of apprehending mere superficial extension, we perceive the connection of the elementary parts by our faculty of Intuition, although the surface in question be of ONLY ONE color; as, for example, any patch of the color of *red*. And, herein, the Intuitive faculty performs its office by *distinguishing* that there are *parts beyond parts*, although these parts are not marked out or distinguished from each other by any *variety* of colors, but are only differenced from one another by *peculiarity of place*. But here it becomes self evident, the moment the matter is proposed, that NO ONE UNVARIED *sensation of color* can ever afford us a perception of any FIGURE OR OUTLINE; because, in order to effect this, there must be SOME CONTRAST OF TWO COLORS, one against another.

In a certain refined intellectual sense of the word perception, it may indeed be said that we can perceive figures, or lines, upon any one uniform surface or sensation of color; because our intuitive faculty can discern that every surface *in reality contains* such divisions and elementary scites, although they be not actually marked out. But this is *not perception*, properly speaking; by which last act is meant only the discernment of *an object that is depicted by our sensations*.

There is another consideration to be adverted to here. It having been assumed by the School of Reid, that our sensations of colors are *not in reality spread out* ; I am therefore debarred from assuming the contrary, without proof ; and, although this contrary has, I trust, been already most decisively proved *upon other ground*, yet, I do not choose, *in this place*, to avail myself of any proof except upon the ground of the proposed *analysis*. Hence the reader will perceive the logical necessity I am under, of *first* analysing the perception of FIGURE OR OUTLINE.

When any Philosopher chooses to assume, that red, white, or blue, is not spread out ; he indeed places himself in a direct hostility of opinion to the great bulk of the species, both vulgar and learned : yet, upon this ground he may remain refractory, notwithstanding any force of reasoning that can be brought against him. But, fortunately, the School of Reid, although it has assumed that COLORS are not spread out, has never chosen to assert that OUTLINE OR FIGURE *is not spread out* ; and we are satisfied that the writers of this school will never attempt any such plea. If therefore the present analysis shall establish the fact that *visible figure or outline* is nothing but a *relation of contrast in the mind, between two of our own sensations of different colors* ; we may then venture to hope that the controversy with regard to this subject must be for ever at an end.

From the consideration just now explained ; it is to be observed, that what has here been said



with regard to the perception of *superficial or field extension*, is mentioned only incidentally; and what I have thus observed concerning it, as well as any farther notice which it may require in the sequel, is to be considered as being *subordinate* to the analysis of OUTLINE OR FIGURE.

The preliminary considerations which appeared necessary to be suggested, for the complete understanding of the present analysis of perception, is now before the reader, in the several Sections of the work which have been submitted; and I feel, that, in the extensive mass of matter which was unavoidably requisite for this purpose, I have been obliged to allude to it very repeatedly, before I was enabled to arrive at the statement of it. As, however, I have never intended to mention the thing unnecessarily; I must throw myself entirely upon the consideration of my readers, in this particular.

The following four general facts, together with their various modifications and other involved matter, comprise the analysis itself; upon which I shall only farther observe, that it is, in the present instance, followed out to a much greater extent than was delineated in any of my former publications. It now includes an analysis of the three different special modifications of visible lines: comprising, I believe, all the varieties of which the subject is susceptible: whereas the former statements contained only that of one species, namely, the breadthless line; which last is the

*most ordinary object*, and may therefore be called the *general object*, of perception.

I confess; I would fain hope, that the subject is not now wanting in any essential consideration.

## 2.

### *Of the Four Laws of Primary Vision.*

#### THE FIRST LAW.

This General Fact is, That *no unvaried sensation of color* can ever be accompanied by a perception of *any visible figure, any line, or any point*.

The proof of this proposition necessarily divides itself into *two different kinds*: The *ONE experimental or inductive*: The *OTHER intuitive or mathematical*.

An inductive proof of the fact at any time, *as a thing existing*, is had when we look at any large piece of water, or at the zenith of an unclouded sky: for, in either of these cases, we become conscious of *one unvaried sensation of color*, but have therewith no perception of any figure, any line, or any point; there being no definite object, or termination of any kind, visible in this uniform scene.

The intuitive proof of the *eternal necessity* of the fact, is supplied by the understanding in the moment of our experiencing any instance of the fact itself; for then (if the thing be suggested to our attention) we intuitively discern the *impossibility* of any visible figure, any line, or any point, being ever perceived without the presence of

*some second color.* This truth we discern by the very same faculty, and precisely in the same manner, as that by which we discern any of the axiomatical truths in geometry.

From this first step of analysis, the most careless reader cannot fail to discern, that a law of primary vision is not merely *a law of nature or contingent fact*; but is, at the same time, *both a law of nature*, (like any other physical law) and *a mathematical or necessary truth*. Hence it is plain that the subject of perception, which has all along been taken for a mere *physical subject*, is in reality made up of what have hitherto been considered the two most opposite sciences in nature. It is merely a subject of *physical science* so far as regards our *sensations of colors*; which form the *data* that are subservient to the *act of judgment* which we call PERCEPTION: But, the moment we enter upon the *act of perception itself*, we are actually departed from physical science and have got upon mathematical or demonstrative ground; and every proposition with which we have in future to do, in this analysis, is, strictly speaking, one of those simple theorems called an *axiom*.

If there could arise any cavil, which would in the least affect the subject, with regard to its claim to be called *mathematical*; I might here throw myself into the arms of Proclus and of Barrow. But I prefer to observe, that any cavil of the sort would be altogether nugatory; because it never can for a moment be denied that each of the four laws

of vision is *a necessary truth*;—that its evidence is *not inductive, but intuitive*;—and, that every visible line is purely A RELATION, *either of contiguity or some other sort of locality, between two extended phenomena*. Now all the truths of Geometry are, in like manner, nothing but *relations between definitions of parts of EXTENSION OR SPACE*; and thus, I think, the *generic identity* of the Science of Geometry and the Science of Perception is placed beyond any controversy. Nor could it in the least be denied, that the subject of perception is equally A DEMONSTRATIVE *subject*; even if we chose arbitrarily to assume that it is *not a mathematical one*.

#### THE SECOND LAW.

When any *two different unsoftened sensations of colors* are felt at the same time; they *must meet*, and their meeting is that *local relation of contiguity and contrast* which we call by the name of A VISIBLE LINE.

An inductive proof of this fact is had when we look *at the sea and the sky at the same time*; namely, at that part of each, where they appear to meet or join together, and so form that visible line which we call the *horizon*.

The line which we perceive when we look at the *ridge of any house-top*, as it *appears joined to the sky*, affords another and very familiar instance of the same fact. And, in short, most objects, in ordinary, as they appear to be of different colors, and joined in contiguity with other objects on each

side of them, furnish continual instances of this Second law.

The intuitive discernment of the *eternal necessity* of this fact, is supplied by the understanding in every instant of perceiving the fact itself. For example: Let any one try to *conceive* any two full or unsoftened sensations of colors, at once, such as *a red and a white, or a blue, and a yellow, without conceiving them to present a line of contrast between them*; and he will find this to be utterly impossible. He might as soon conceive a triangle with only two sides.

#### THE THIRD LAW.

When any two different unsoftened sensations of colors are felt at the same time, and are so disposed that one of them *surrounds or embraces* the other; their common line of meeting must return into itself and so enclose a space; by doing which it must form what is called A SUPERFICIAL FIGURE, such as a *circle, a square, a triangle, or any more irregular shape.*

An inductive proof of this fact is had when we look at the *moon*, surrounded by the azure color of the sky. For, in this case, we become conscious of two different unsoftened sensations of colors at the same time, namely, a sensation of *silver white* surrounded by a sensation of *azure*; and the common line of their meeting returns into itself, by

which it forms that *circular figure* which ordinary persons take for the identical outline of the external moon.

The intuitive discernment of the *necessity* of such a result, is supplied, as in the former cases, by the understanding itself; which perceives that it never can happen otherwise.

This Third law is, manifestly, no other than a mere modification of the *Second One*. For in both, alike, we perceive any visible line upon the very same general principle. And the only difference between the two laws is, that one of them comprehends *only such lines as do not return into themselves*, and consequently which can form only what may be called *an element* of figure, *not complete figure itself*; whereas the other law is that more perfect modification of the general fact, by which is formed *any complete superficial figure*, such as we usually contemplate under the name of an *object*.

It becomes manifest here, that it is upon the common principle, of the Second and Third laws, that we perceive every visible line, or figure, which the mind ever apprehends, at any time.

It proves at the same time manifest, in the highest degree, that, since two different sensations of colors are necessary for the production of every visible line; it is NOT COLOR, *but* CONTRAST that is the ESSENCE of every such line: or, in other

words, it is plain that a visible line is nothing but *a relation of locality* between two of our own sensations.

Hence it is evident, upon one hand, that a visible line is *not an object of sense*, as was thought by Berkeley, and by Hume, and by all the advocates of the Ideal Theory in general: And neither, upon the other hand, is the perception of a line supplied to us *unaccountably and unsearchably*, as is asserted by the School of Reid: But, contrary to both those schemes, a line, as I have already said, is *a Relation* between two of our own Ideas; and it is discerned by a legitimate act of intuition, of the very same nature with that judgment which we form when we say that a whole is greater than any of its parts, or that any one thing is not another.

The simple truth is, that, when a man DISTINGUISHES OR JUDGES between *a blue* and *a yellow*, or between *a black* and *a white*, he PERCEIVES A LINE;—and, when he makes no such JUDGMENT, he NEVER PERCEIVES *any line*. To perceive any line, therefore, is to DISTINGUISH between two Sensations: but the OBJECT of any such distinction can be nothing but *a Relation*; and *Color* is *not a Relation*; neither is any Relation ever perceived *unaccountably*, because it is always discerned by *a legitimate act of the understanding*.

## THE FOURTH LAW.

When any two different sensations of colors are felt at the same time, but are so *softened*, at their nearest edges, as that they *blend into each other* and thus leave *no sensible contrast, where they meet*; in this case they never can be accompanied by a perception of any *figure, or any line*, not even if their *remote parts* should be of the most opposite colors, or black and white.

A proof of this fact is had when we look at the *dawning of day*, either in the morning or in the evening: for in this case we become conscious of two very opposite sensations of colors, the one from the dark part of the sky and the other from that part which is enlightened, without, however, perceiving any thing like *a line of distinction* between the two sensations; which, manifestly, is because the two sensations of colors steal *insensibly* into each other, so that the understanding cannot discern *any relation of contrast*, in any one place.

Various other instances of the same general fact occasionally present themselves, in the objects of nature; although *this sort of object* is vastly less numerous, than that wherein two colors meet abruptly and furnish those relations of contrast which we call *lines*.

This Fourth law affords a striking illustration,



although not any superior evidence, of the general principle upon which all figures, or lines, are perceived. For, in the case of this law, we become conscious of two different sensations of colors at the same time, and yet we have herein A NEGATION of all figure, or line, between them: And thus it is proved, by A NEW KIND OF RESULT, that it is *not sensation of color, nor yet A VARIETY of sensations of colors*, that is the ESSENCE of any *perceived line*; but it is purely A RELATION OF CONTRAST that is this essence.

To say, therefore, that we perceive any visible line, is the same as to say that we perceive *the local arrangement or disposition of any two of our own sensations of colors*.

Finally; We are to recollect, that *our SENSATIONS are IDEAS*. And, thus, to perceive any visible line, or figure, is nothing but to discern a relation between two of our own ideas or actual affections.

From this species of analysis, therefore, it results, as it had done before from various species of evidence of a very different kind, that the common doctrine of Plato and of Aristotle, of Newton and of Locke, is perfectly faithful to the reality of nature. The mind, according to them, receives extended impressions, *in some way or other, from some external unperceived power*; and the IDEA of a circle, or a triangle, which is thus supposed to be impressed upon the mind, *is in reality ITSELF a*

*circle or a triangle.* And, according to the demonstrative propositions now stated, the same holds rigorously true. It remains, then, that the perceiving mind is, in the most obvious and literal acceptance of the phrase, A MIRROR OF THE SURROUNDING CREATION, as it has been called by Plato. And, unless the principles of the present analysis shall be shown to be fallacious, this conclusion, I apprehend, must be subscribed to upon a basis of strict legitimate science, which cannot yield in evidence to any demonstration in geometry.

### 3.

#### *Extraneous Suggestion.*

Before I proceed to enter upon the *several modifications* of the subject of perception, and while the impression of the general form of the analysis is yet fresh in the mind of the reader; there is a very important consideration, of quite a different nature, which I would here suggest to momentary notice: although the thing cannot be prosecuted in this place, but will form a distinct subject of speculation in the subsequent part of the volume. The matter to which I allude, is the following.

It is not merely the Subject of *Perception, alone*, that is affected by the principles of the analysis now submitted: for a change of equal magnitude is thereby produced with regard to the modern doctrine of *Causation, or Real Efficiency.* I deem it, accordingly, of some importance to mention the fact here; both with a view to excite a due curiosity

on the subject, and to prepare the mind of the reader, while the proofs are yet new in his recollection, for that analysis of the subject of **Real Efficiency**, which will occupy a considerable portion of the present work.

At this stage of the subject, therefore, I would merely put the following question: After the statement of the **Four Axioms** or **Necessary Truths** which are herein called **Laws of Vision**; What becomes of the doctrine "that there is no instance "in which we are able to perceive a necessary "connection between two successive events; or "to comprehend in what manner one proceeds "from the other, as it's cause?"

Although I have quoted this doctrine in the words of one particular writer, I desire to be understood as not ascribing it to him exclusively. On the contrary, it is sufficiently known to be the *general, nay the UNIVERSAL* opinion of the subject. I only desire to call the reader's attention, in this place, to the *decisive and vast* extent to which this opinion is refuted by every one of the four general laws of vision.

There is another consideration, to which it appears still more proper to advert in this place. I therefore intimate, that, when it is at any time, in the course of the present analysis, demonstrated, or affirmed, that a visible line is a **RELATION**; it is thereby meant, as must indeed be manifest throughout, that *a line* is a distinct **PARTITION**, that

is, a thing possessing the nature of a *party-wall*, between two colors. But it is here at the same time to be remarked, that this is a vastly different thing from the import of the term *Relation* in the estimation of logicians and philosophers; by whom it is uniformly understood that *Relation* imports *no third thing or real partition between any two Relatives*, but is *only a certain comparative view of two different subjects taken together*; or, in other words, that *Relations* and *Relatives* are convertible terms. The investigation which I propose in the sequel, of the General Subject of *Relation*, in consequence of the great and essential difference of my own views of the subject from that which uniformly obtains, will fully explain what is here alluded to. In the interim, I observe, that I conceive the present analysis of perception is one of the best preparatives that could be, for the apprehension of what I suppose to be the real nature of *Relation*; while it is at the same time to be observed, that, when the reader comes to the subject in question, it will be found far more pregnant with subtilty, as well as with importance, than most persons can imagine until they have gone through an analysis of it's various species.

## SECTION SIXTH.

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OF THE MATHEMATICAL OR DEMONSTRATIVE NATURE  
OF THE SCIENCE OF PERCEPTION.—AND OF THE CON-  
TINUATION OF THE ANALYSIS.

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### 1.

THE most remarkable consideration, by far, of any that appears attached to the knowledge we gain in perception, is that of it's being of a *demonstrative nature*. This character of the subject therefore claims a distinct section, here; although the mention of it has been unavoidably anticipated, in the course of what is already advanced.

It must be sufficiently known, to every person who is in the least conversant on this part of our constitution, that perception has never been supposed to be any other than a *mere physical subject*. Nothing, therefore, one should think, ought more strongly to excite our curiosity, than to find that this continual daily operation, by which we hold intercourse with the things around us, is purely a *repeated discernment of necessary relations between our own ideas*; which, we are to observe, is the generic description of a *mathematical act*.

Of the real nature of this process, I have already

given such illustrations, as I think must be of themselves altogether conclusive. With regard to the Second and Third laws of vision, however, considered as being only two different modifications of one same general fact, I shall offer the following observation, over and above what has gone before.

Suppose the eye of an observer, in traversing the face of the *unclouded heaven*, at length arrives at, and takes in, *some second color*, such as that of the *land*, or of the *sea*. In this case, it is plain, the mind can have no knowledge of the presence of *any second color, except by the very act of* DISTINGUISHING THE SECOND *from the* FIRST; because the words, "*first*" and "*second*," are MERE RELATIVE TERMS, each of which *necessarily implies the present existence of the* OTHER *relative*. This can hardly require illustration, because it is manifest that, in the case of any two *co-existent things*, we could not call one of them by the name of *first*, except in reference to the *presence* of that which we call *second*; nor could we call the other *second*, except in reference to the *first*. Hence it is rigorously shown, that the *very knowledge* that we have two sensations at any time in the mind, CONSISTS IN A DISCERNMENT *of their* CONTRAST. But this discernment of contrast, between any two of our ideas or sensations of colors, is precisely of the same nature with any simple *mathematical act*. For, as in Geometry we cannot contemplate a *whole* and its *part*, without contemplating the *relation of inequality* between this whole and its

part; so in Perception we cannot contemplate a *blue* and a *yellow*, without contemplating the *relation of contrast* between the blue and the yellow.

It is to be granted, indeed, that all necessary or demonstrable truth is *not mathematical* truth. The following, therefore, are some of the grounds upon which I conceive the Science of Geometry and the Science of Perception are generically one and the same Science.

1. The two subjects are identical, not only in the *class of their evidence*, that is in the *self-evident necessity of their truth*; but, also, as I have before observed, in this, that the objects of each, alike, are *Space or Extension and IT'S RELATIONS*. No *specific* difference, therefore, I think, which may exist between them, can affect this generic identity.

2. The Elements of Euclid and the Elements of Perception, are, each alike, made up of *two most different classes of thoughts*. One of these classes contains only *contingent ideas*, which either may or may never arise in any mind. The other class is formed of NECESSARY RELATIONS between these *contingent ideas*.

3. A geometrical axiom is a simple theorem, expressing a necessary relation between some two substantive or defined ideas of space, intuitively perceived, without the intervention of any third idea. Now each of the four laws of vision is such a theorem: The Second law, for instance, affirms

that a visible line is a necessary relation between any two unsoftened sensations of colors ; and our understanding immediately discerns that this must be an eternal result of the data.

4. SENSATIONS OF COLORS must ever be a mere *physical subject* : their existence is contingent, and their evidence merely inductive or experimental. But VISIBLE LINES must ever be a *mathematical or demonstrable subject* : their nature is necessary, provided the data, i. e. *sensations of colors*, exist.

If it should here be said, that our sensations are *actual existences* ; whereas the principles of geometry are mere hypothetical conditions, which imply no existence of the things defined ; I apprehend this, certainly, cannot make against the claims of perception to be considered, generically, as a mathematical subject. If two cubes of matter be supposed to exist ; the actuality of their existence could not affect the necessity of their equality, nor hinder the relation between them from being strictly a mathematical one, provided the cubes were shown to be equal in consequence of any definitions given of them.

Upon the other hand, it is here freely admitted, that the *specific difference* between the subjects of Perception and the subjects of Geometry is very great ; the latter consisting, in general, of precisely defined magnitudes ; while the former do not admit of any such precision, nor are at all concerned with



this kind of measurement. But this specific difference between the two sciences does not at all invalidate the present argument.

Finally, however; If any one should still choose to ground a cavil against the general identity of the two sciences; I leave it, here, as a matter of perfect indifference to the nature and bearings of the present analysis, and as one which *can only affect the strict classification of the subject*: because no person will for a moment deny that the four general laws of vision are expressed by propositions that are, in the most legitimate sense, *demonstrative*. My great object, in the present section, therefore, has not been so primarily to insist upon the *mathematicalness* of the nature of perception, as it has been to *fix the attention* of readers upon the fact that *Perception is NOT A PHYSICAL SUBJECT*. And I apprehend it to have been very requisite to proceed thus, in order to *eradicate that inveterate prejudice*, which has for so many ages been established in the minds of philosophers, namely, that *Perception is merely a branch of PHYSICS*.

After what has been advanced here, I ough indeed perhaps to state, that no specific objection has been started to me, against the claims of the subject to be considered as being generically mathematical. But I have nevertheless anticipated the possibility of a difference of opinion upon this head; and have therefore deemed it expedient to point out *first*, its claims, and *secondly* the perfect

indifference to my views of any objection that *could* be started with regard to it.

The statement of the four general facts of primary vision which was offered in the last section, constitutes the *general form* of the proposed analysis: and it comprises the substance of all that is contained in any account of the subject which I had published prior to the present work. But it is now to be intimated, that there are certain special modifications of the subject of perception; whose specific differences are remarkably contrasted with that one which has already been investigated; and the nature of which involves many important distinctions.

These modifications of the subject, therefore, I shall, in the following sections, proceed to consider; with intent to their forming an integral part of the analysis. In so doing, however, it is proper to observe, that there is *no new general principle* to be introduced or added to those which have gone before. The additional matter is merely an analysis of the subject that displays the *same principles of perception*, operating upon some very *different modifications of the phenomena of colors*; which modifications we are, in many cases, liable to experience, in our intercourse with visible objects; although these cases are not near of such frequent recurrence as those which were contemplated in the general analysis.

The varieties now in question, form, in point of

fact, the most curious and abstruse parts of the whole subject of Perception ; and, I also think, the most interesting. As they are exceedingly deceitful in their first or most obvious aspects ; a right understanding of their real nature is requisite, (among other reasons) in order to prevent our being carried back (in the special cases of perception that are here alluded to) into the general fallacy of the Ideal Theory, by which error the adherents of that Theory uniformly *confounded perception with mere sensation*.

## SECTION SEVENTH.

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THAT VISIBLE LINES ARE OF THREE DIFFERENT SPECIES.—AND, OF THE FIRST SPECIES OF VISIBLE LINE.

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IT was observed, in a foregoing Section, that visible lines are to be recognised as consisting of more than one species. There are, indeed, three different sorts of visible appearance which serve to show the figures of extended objects, and which therefore may be called visible lines; and the specific differences between these are very considerable, insomuch that they each require a distinct investigation, in order adequately to delineate their whole nature. After what I have said of the importance of these modifications of the subject, at the close of the last section, I shall proceed to consider their merits without further preface.

The species of line which appears to claim our earliest notice, is that which forms at once the *most perfect* and *most frequent* object of perception. It consists of such lines as are formed by the *most sudden or abrupt* contrasts, between any two sensations of full or unsoftened colors. It is this species alone which was contemplated in the general analysis that has been already submitted; and, in that statement, I have perhaps sufficiently explained the particular nature of the line in

question. In the present case it may merely be added, that most of the visible bodies in nature are sufficiently *opaque*, to occasion in our minds such *full* sensations of colors, as are requisite to produce a perception of this sort of line. As, for example, when we look at a man, a tree, or a piece of furniture, we perceive the outline or visible figure of any such object only by the co-operation of *the sky, or a wall, or some other general field of color, behind it*; which *field of color* must form a contrast with the *color of the particular object in question*. Now it is perfectly obvious, that most visible bodies in nature are sufficiently opaque, to present contrasts of colors of the *most abrupt or perfect kind*, insomuch as to afford us perceptions of the sort of line here under consideration.

As I apprehend it will sufficiently appear, that the three different species of line, present distinctions which indispensably require a distinct appropriate appellation for each of them; I shall in future refer to this first species under the name of the *proper visible line*.

Proper visible lines, having no color, can have no breadth. This is a general fact upon which, I have already observed, there is nothing whatever to be founded in the principles of perception. Nevertheless, I deem it proper, as forming a fact certainly included in the subject, to re-state, here, that sort of demonstrative proof of the matter which I offered in my original suggestion of it.

A proper visible line cannot have *any one color*; because it is shown, by the *First Law*, that no unvaried sensation of color can have any definite boundary. If therefore a proper visible line have any color, at all; it must be made up, in some way or other, of *two different colors*, because it is proved, by the *Second Law*, that two different concomitant full colors must always occasion a proper line between them. But this last supposition would produce a *double line* between every two visible bodies; which, we know, is manifestly contrary to fact.—If, however, we should, for argument sake, still suppose that a proper visible line is made up of two colors; the absurdity of this becomes evident, because it is plain that each of the supposed lines is only *part of the surface* to which it adheres. Thus, for example, if the *circle of the moon* (as it is called) be taken for our subject; and if we should take any *rim* of her *white surface*, to serve as one element in the *line* which we call her circle; it is plain this rim of white, though it were never so narrow, must be a part of the moon's *surface*; and what is of the nature of surface cannot be that of boundary. The same reasoning will hold if we take any rim from what we call the color of the sky. Hence it is plain, that the proper visible line which we call the circle of the moon can have no color; and, consequently, no visible breadth.

Other demonstrations of this truth, specifically different, but upon the same general principle, might be furnished, if it were of consequence to occupy our farther attention with it.

To attempt to invalidate the above proof upon the ground of the *imperfection of sense*; would only show that any person who undertakes it has not rightly apprehended the terms of the proposition. A **VISIBLE** line, is a line which we **SEE**. To say; therefore, that a **VISIBLE** line has **INVISIBLE** breadth; is a manifest contradiction in terms. A **VISIBLE** line cannot possibly have any quality except those which we **DISCERN IN IT**; and there is no room left for the shadow of a cavil with regard to it. The very thing *assumed in the outset*, is the **VISIBLE CHARACTER** of the line: and, therefore, to attempt to change, or vitiate this datum, by pretending that the line *may have some breadth that is NOT VISIBLE*; would be an absurdity which certainly cannot require any further exposition.

The truth seems to be, that the *imperfection* of the instrumentality of sense, often occasions the *perfection of a visible line*; for it frequently makes **US NOT SEE BREADTH**, in many cases wherein the external line which we look at has in reality some breadth.

For example, when we look at a close joint in a piece of cabinet work, it appears to be a line altogether void of latitude; although in point of fact the joined parts are actually a little separated: But, if we make use of a magnifying power, we shall find that the line has breadth, which becomes very sensible.

It is here to be observed, however, that such external objects as I have just now mentioned, unless the parts be brought actually into physical

contact, are *not of that kind* which ought ever to be taken for the subject of our experiment, in order to ascertain the nature of a *proper visible line*; because *all joints or appositions* of two different bodies, that are *actually separate*, however *near* their parts may otherwise be, are not in themselves *lines*, but are, strictly speaking, *narrow surfaces*.

It is remarkable to observe the very different character displayed by such external objects as are best fitted to occasion a perception of a *proper visible line*, from that which is exhibited by such *narrow or insensible surfaces* as I have just now adverted to. If we look at any single black letter of good print; and observe the *contrast line* formed between the edge of any one of the black letters and the white paper which surrounds it; we shall perceive a line that is manifestly void of breadth. If now we have recourse to a magnifying power, in order to render us sensible of some breadth in this line, (similar to what happens when we use a magnifier to examine any close joint of cabinet work) we shall be surprised and disappointed by finding the perceived line *as breadthless as before*. And, if we augment the magnifying power, the line perceived will not put on any different *general character*. It is to be observed, indeed, that, every time we augment the power of the glass, we shall perceive *a new line*, strictly speaking; because every such augmentation of power occasions in our minds two *new sensations*, namely, a black and a white, that are *more developed* than those of the preceding experiment; and thus, upon every



change of the magnifying power, we shall perceive a line that is, *in its minute features, differently shaped* from those which we saw before : but every one of the lines will present the *same essential general character* of being *perfectly void of breadth*.

Now it is self-evident, that all lines which appear breadthless under *a magnifying power*, must, indisputably, in the most rigorous sense, appear breadthless to the *naked eye*. And thus it is proved, in the most rigid manner, by *experiment*, as it was before by a process of *demonstrative reasoning*, that proper visible lines (as perceived by the natural power of man) are totally void of breadth.

There is yet another consideration to be suggested, before we have done with this species. Proper visible lines are occasioned by two very different classes of objects. One of these classes consists of such sensations of colors as are occasioned by painting, or by any sort of various full coloring, *upon one same surface*; as, for example, by the display of *black letter upon white paper*, or by the contrasted colors of a picture. The other class is made up of such contrasted sensations of full colors as are occasioned *not by stains upon one same surface*, but by *two separate colored bodies, one of which is at a distance behind the other*; such as, when we look at a man, or a statue, whose color appears contrasted with that of a wall that is ten or twenty feet on the other side of it; or, when we perceive a house, or a tree, from the contrast of the color of the sky beyond it.

Now, with regard to these two different classes of objects; it is proper to distinguish, that the one first-mentioned may, with perfect indifference, be supposed to be open to the assertion that their colors *insensibly blend or soften into each other* where they meet together. I have already, I trust, sufficiently shown, that, were this the case, it could make no difference to the *perfection of a perceived line, provided we were not sensible of the blending*; but, as for the *fact itself, of this blending*, I have no objection to suppose that it must actually happen, in every instance wherein two different external colors are diffused over *one same surface*. But what I would here suggest, is, that a very different character is exhibited by the *other class* of objects in question. For, when we look at a man, or a statue, or any such object, as it stands distinguished owing to the co-operation of a *colored wall at a distance behind it*, it is *impossible* to suppose that the colors of the two objects *soften or blend together*, because the objects themselves *do not touch* each other. It becomes manifest, therefore, that no cavil whatever can hold with regard to this class of phenomena.

To this I have only to add; that the perceived lines which are occasioned by our looking at such colored objects as *do not touch each other*, but are *one beyond the other*, are *by far the most numerous class of perceived lines*; and, that it was *this class* that I selected for the subject of analysis, in my original proposal of the subject. I humbly conceive, therefore, that nothing can be more satisfactory than the

evidence that *proper visible lines, of the most perfect class*, are purely void of breadth.

In treating this subject; I have unavoidably indulged the usual phraseology, by which we talk of *perceiving men, and trees, and walls behind them*. It is nevertheless to be observed, that it has been rigorously demonstrated to be impossible to do so in reality. The meaning, therefore, of what has been last advanced, is merely this: that, when we have two different sensations of colors in the mind, occasioned by two external tangible objects which are *situated one behind and at a distance from the other*; we are certain that the different masses or substances of these two bodies *do not blend*, and therefore we have no ground for a moment to *suppose* that the *two different sensations of colors*, which they occasion in us, *can blend*.

It is manifestly impossible, even in a philosophical treatise of the subject, to lay aside the usual phraseology, or to avoid talking of perceived objects as if they were in reality external and distant things. Allowance therefore is to be made by a reader, for every occasion whereon this unavoidably occurs; and he will not upon any such occurrence forget, that this is merely to accommodate the ordinary conceptions of mankind.

## SECTION EIGHTH.

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OF THE SECOND SPECIES, OR IMPROPER VISIBLE LINE.

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IN entering upon the subject of the present Section ; I would observe, that there is not any part of the analysis that appears to demand so attentive a consideration, in order to render us thoroughly acquainted with the general principle of perception, as this one. The matter, however, is readily accessible to every capacity, upon yielding it but a very moderate share of attention ; and the only preliminary remark which it appears to require, is, that the knowledge it conveys is purely *demonstrative*, although all its propositions are of the most simple or elementary kind.

In the outset; I am to suggest, that every visible line, which we ever perceive, possesses two distinct and vastly different characters. One of these is *positive*: The other *merely relative*.

The due distinction of these two natures, in every line, is necessary to prevent the greatest confusion, both in the present subject and in philosophy in general. In the subject of perception, however, it has almost invariably happened that philosophers, no less than the vulgar, have confounded these two characters ; and it is only by the complete exposure of this error that we can ever

arrive at a knowledge of the true nature of a perceived line; especially in any of those cases wherein we perceive a line either of the *Second* or of the *Third species*; both which remain to be described and investigated.

The *First* species of line has already been shown to possess the remarkable character of being *void of breadth*. The *Second* species, on the contrary, of which I am now to treat, is characterised by having *a sensible, and often a very considerable breadth*. It consists in *any stripe of sensation, of any full color*; by which I mean a color that is *not softened at either of its two edges*, where those edges join to any other sensations of colors which happen to be contiguous to the stripe in question.

Thus, for example, the *sensations of black*, of which we become conscious when we look at any of the ink diagrams in *Euclid's Elements*; or the sensations which are occasioned by the red, or black streaks which divide the money columns of an account book; either of these are *LINES of the SECOND Species*. Nor is this species confined to stripes of a limited magnitude; for *any field of sensation of color, whose breadth is only in a very small proportion to its length*, may, for some purposes, be regarded as *a line*.

As this *Second Species* involves some consequences, which render it a very considerable subject of ratiocination; it appears indispensably necessary to distinguish it, as I did the former sort, by an appropriate appellation; and, I imagine,

the name of the *improper visible line* will be found particularly applicable to it.

It is now to be suggested, as a matter which claims our special attention, that the *positive* character of every visible line, is usually more obvious to remark, or more obtrusive upon our notice, than its *relative* character. It is owing to this obtrusiveness of the positive character, (which usurps the place of the relative one in our imagination,) that both the vulgar and the learned have been uniformly imposed upon, so as to have invariably concluded that *every visible line is a mere positive sensation of color*; whereas it has been demonstrated, *with regard to the First Species*, that a perceived line is *purely* A RELATION *between two sensations of colors*; and it is now to be shown to be no less so with regard to the *Second Species likewise*.

I shall not here inquire into the reason, why the positive character of a perceived line is generally more obtrusive upon our notice than its relative character; although I think it would be no difficult matter to account for it. It is sufficient to assume the fact itself; which cannot be denied. At the same time, I do not assume it as a fact which must *always* hold, without exception; but only remark it for one that *has actually prevailed*, in time past, insomuch as to have completely veiled the true nature of perception from the discernment of philosophers; and one which renders the distinction between the positive and the relative character

of a perceived line one of the most important considerations in the whole subject.

With regard to this distinction, therefore, I am first to observe, that, if an ordinary person happen to be discoursing upon the nature of a visible line, he always supposes the *essence* of such a line to consist in some *positive stripe of color*; and he never, for a moment, adverts to the real fact, namely, that any positive stripe of color, *when considered as a LINE*, owes its *relative character not at all to itself*, but entirely to *some other colors perceived on each side of it*. Nor is the subject viewed in any different light, even by men of science, or by pneumatologists themselves. Bishop Berkeley, in his "*New Theory of Vision*," talks of "*a red, and a blue line*;" And, he says, he "*can conceive these both added together, and making one sum*;" by which word, "*sum*," he means *one continued line*. Mr. Hume, likewise, in his "*Treatise of Human Nature*," entertains perfectly similar views of the subject. He supposes no visible line to exist but such as have *color*; and, in one place, he even proposes to distinguish *mathematical points* by assigning a *peculiar color* to each of them. It is thus that philosophers in general have uniformly supposed every visible line to consist in some stripe of color.

The philosophers of the School of Reid are not exempt from the charge of having proceeded in this way; for it is the creed of that School, that it is *impossible to perceive length without breadth*. It is altogether manifest that these philosophers sup-

pose every visible line to consist in *a stripe of color*; because it is their doctrine that a breadthless line is a thing neither *perceivable* nor *imaginable*, but is an object only of *abstract conception*.

The following considerations, I trust, must strike at the root of this long-established fallacy, especially, I mean, in the case of *all broad or colored lines*; for, with regard to such lines as are formed between two full sensations of colors, I apprehend, they, of themselves alone, most completely explode the doctrine that we cannot perceive length without breadth. I grant, indeed, that whenever we perceive any breadthless line, it is an object, *not of sense*, but of our *mathematical intuition*, as truly as is that species of line which we *conceive* when we read Euclid's definition of a line, namely, *length without breadth*. The only difference between the two cases is, that, in the *first*, we ACTUALLY PERCEIVE a breadthless line; and, in the *second*, we ONLY CONCEIVE one, without having the phenomenon depicted in our view.

When we contemplate *any stripe of sensation of color*, in its own *intrinsic positive character*, red, white, or blue, (however *fine* or *narrow* this stripe may be) it is impossible for us, by any effort of logical acumen, to consider it AS A LINE: On the contrary, this object, *viewed in itself*, without taking notice of any appearance on either side of it, cannot involve, nor give rise to, any RELATIVE notion whatever.



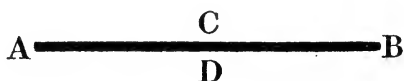
But, upon the other hand, when we contemplate any stripe of sensation of color in the RELATIVE CHARACTER OF A LINE, that is *as something which DIVIDES any one thing from another*, the case becomes so vastly and essentially altered, that now we cannot, by any logical procedure, regard it at all AS A STRIPE OF COLOR ; because, so long as we regard any stripe of color RELATIVELY, we are logically bound to *sink or annihilate its positive character*, and to consider it as being absolutely a *breadthless partition* between the two objects which we conceive it as dividing.

This important principle, therefore, it is here my intention to illustrate.

It is worthy of remark, that the kind of abstraction which I have now suggested, is both acknowledged and practised by philosophers, whenever they would illustrate any mathematical reasoning by the medium of an external diagram. And yet, they have never discerned that the same principle must hold, also, in every instance of *perception* wherein we distinguish between any two objects by means of a broad or colored line. To understand, perfectly, the operation of this principle, must, I conceive, be to understand the most abstruse part of the subject of perception. I therefore suppose it will not be thought too particular to illustrate the subject by the following example.

If we describe a black stripe, upon a sheet of white paper, in the form of the diagram, A B, and then look upon the diagram in question ; we shall

become conscious of a sensation of color, (i. e. of black,) which Bishop Berkeley, and Mr. Hume, as well as every ordinary person, would pronounce to be a *black* LINE. At the same time, however, if we were to challenge any person with regard to the fact, he would doubtless acknowledge, that this object, *considered in itself*, is merely a *positive stripe of black*, and does not involve the notions of any other objects which it divides. It follows, therefore, that, *considered in its positive character*, this black stripe has *nothing of the nature of* RELATION : and, hence, it is *not* A LINE, because every line is a relation, that is a division between some two other things, in respect to which it is a *line*, and the two things so divided are *relatives*, or correlatives.



But if, upon the other hand, we contemplate the same black stripe, A B, in the *relative character of a line* which *divides* the *superior white surface* C from the *inferior white surface* D ; the sensation of black now *loses its positive character*, and is transformed, in our contemplation, into an object that is *purely a relation* ; from which moment we have nothing at all to do with its *color*, or *breadth*, any more than if it absolutely had none. So long as we view the positive black stripe only in the relative character of a *line*, that is *as a division* between the two white surfaces, we must *sink or annihilate its color or breadth*, in our con-

temptation, upon the same principle that we *sink the distance between any two parallel lines* when, for the purposes of demonstration, we consider them *as one same line*.

From this single example; I trust it is conclusively manifest, that, when philosophers talk of *a red, or a blue line, or a line of any other color*, they talk like the vulgar; and when they introduce this popular language, *and the conceptions which suggest it*, into a philosophical treatise of Perception, they let loose the most erroneous conceits and fill the whole subject with confusion. In popular discourse, indeed, it will always be natural and allowable to talk of a red, or a black line: but certain I think it is, that, to talk of *any colored line in a treatise of Perception*, is to the full as illogical and absurd as to talk of *a colored line in Geometry itself*.

Here another opportunity is afforded us of remarking, how essentially the subject of perception is a mathematical subject. The universal assumed distinction between a mathematical line and a perceived line, is, that the latter must have *some breadth*, while the former has *not any*: But we have just discerned, from the above illustration, that, *when taken in a strict logical view*, it is *impossible for ANY perceived line whatever to have any breadth*; because, even in the case of improper lines, which consist in a positive stripe of color, and therefore *have some breadth* in themselves, considered *intrinsically as phenomena*, we are under a rigorous necessity to *annihilate* the consideration

of their color and breadth together, and to contemplate them as being absolutely breadthless.

As the nature of the Second Species of line is of essential importance to the subject; I hope those readers who may have completely apprehended my meaning from the foregoing illustrations, will not deem the following one redundant.

In every perception of any two adjacent *fields of color*, considered as divided from each other by a *broad or colored line*, and, consequently, as being *correlative and collateral spaces*, we must proceed upon the very same principle as when we contemplate any ink diagram of a circle, having a *black stripe* drawn across it, through its centre, to represent a diameter.—In any such case, we *abstract from the breadth of the black stripe*, and contemplate it only as a mathematical or breadthless line, dividing the two correlative semicircles from one another: In other words, we *sink or annihilate* both the color and the breadth of the black diameter, and regard it as having neither of those qualities. But, in like manner, in any case of *perception*, wherein we contemplate a stripe of color considered as a *mere division* between any two other colored objects, we must sink or annihilate the color and the breadth of the dividing line; because the breadth or color of this line can have no more to do with *its relative character* when it forms a distinguishing line between any two objects of *perception*, than it can have when it divides two semicircles, or any other two mathematical subjects. The character of the LINE, in each of the

two cases, *is equally and purely* that of a relation or partition ; and the same reasoning that applies to the one, must apply to the other one also.

If there be any person to whom this reasoning appears inconclusive ; I would request him, instead of the foregoing example, of a circle and its diameter, to suppose the particular subject of our reasoning were *a circular cake*, with a knife laid across it, in the act of dividing it into *two equal parts*. In this case, there is no person who could entertain a moment's doubt that the division would be equally just, whether the knife had *a thin blade* or *a thick one*. The real truth is, that every spectator of this operation would (without in the least attending to his own intellectual proceeding in the business) *abstract from the thickness of the knife*, whether it were a thick blade or a thin one ; and he would regard this instrument, (which is now serving as a dividing line between the two parts of the cake,) as being *absolutely a breadthless one*.

In this case we are to observe, that the *thickness* of the knife, (the *color of whose back* we are supposed to be now viewing,) is its POSITIVE character ; and its being the *divider of the cake* into two equal parts is its RELATIVE character. Thus it becomes impossible not to discern, that, in regarding *any phenomenon whatever* AS A LINE, we are always *under a logical necessity to annihilate its positive character*.—The moment we forget this, and regard any stripe of color *in itself, as a positive color or breadth*, we have LOST IT AS A LINE ; and, thus

considered, it has *no longer a relation to any object around it.*

It is curious to remark, that, in any such case of *perception*, as that last supposed, the intellectual procedure of a clown, or a child, is completely of one identical sort with that of a philosopher in the boasted process of *mathematical abstraction*;—a process which is usually, by the best writers, considered to be so very difficult to be apprehended by a beginner in geometry, that it has been mentioned as a fault, in the teachers of that science, to attempt to explain this arcanum in the outset. The only difference between the two cases is, that, in the Science of GEOMETRY the philosopher *knows how he ABSTRACTS*; but, in that of PERCEPTION the clown and the philosopher are equally inattentive to the PRINCIPLE upon which they PERCEIVE.

It is here that I redeem the pledge which was given in the foregoing part of the analysis; namely, that there is nothing in the principles of perception that has any dependence upon the fact that we perceive *lines void of breadth*. The illustrations which have been offered in the present Section, of the nature of the *Second Species* of visible line, renders it in the fullest manner conclusive, that, if we never perceived objects by any other medium than that of *broad or colored lines*, the relative nature of a line, and the intuitive principle upon which we

perceive it, must be precisely the same as it is in the case of *breadthless lines themselves*.

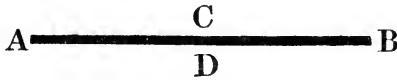
An act of perceiving *any visible line*, is, universally, an act of intuitively discerning SOME LOCAL CONTRAST *between two sensations of colors*. Therefore, provided the mind be supplied with any two sensations, of a nature to produce such a contrast; it can be of no consequence to the *general character of the result*, whether this contrast be a *simple and perfect one*, or a *complex and imperfect*. This will be farther illustrated, when I come to consider the *Third Species or Blending Line*. In the mean time, we in the clearest manner discern the essential principle of a line, which is purely that of RELATION; which principle can never be changed, or altered, by any *modification of the phenomena*.

In appropriating the name of the *Improper Line*, to the species now under consideration, there is a reason, over and above its having breadth; which reason it may be proper to explain here.

The real fact of the case, when strictly taken, is, that any stripe of full unsoftened color presents to the mind, altogether, *not one broad line only*, but TWO COMPLETE BREADTHLESS LINES *and a STRIPE BETWEEN THEM which serves of itself for a third line*; making, in the whole, a very complex object.

Thus, for example, if the black stripe of sensation occasioned by our looking at the ink line A B, be considered *as a line* which divides the space C from the space D; this stripe actually forms

*two breadthless lines of contrast with the white paper, besides its own black breadth.*



For the *line of contiguity* between the *superior edge of the black stripe* and the adjoining white of the paper (C) is *one breadthless line*; and the *line of contiguity* between the *inferior edge* of the black stripe and the adjoining white (D) is *another breadthless line*; and, besides both these distinct and separate lines, we have *the black stripe itself*. Hence the black stripe is a phenomenon which, if *taken in gross* to serve for A LINE, is a very complex object, and is *in a high degree* AN IMPROPER LINE. Its complexness, however, is *reformed by the mind*, (as I have already fully explained) in the act of perception; without our attending to the logical procedure which we thus adopt; for, by a real and legitimate act of abstraction, we sink or annihilate the consideration of the black stripe which is between the two breadthless lines, and we bring these two breadthless lines into *a perfect ideal congruity, as one same breadthless line*.

It can hardly be necessary to observe, that the whole of the foregoing reasoning applies only to lines *considered as dividing one body or object from another* COLLATERAL ONE. If a line be in any case contemplated *lengthwise*, AS A RELATION OF DISTANCE between any two bodies or objects,



the principle under consideration does not operate at all: for in such cases, it is obvious, we *are not to sink the distance*. Any case of *distance*, however, is not a case of *mere distinction of objects*; and therefore it does not fall within the scope of the present subject. I have pointed it out, in this place, only to prevent any possible misconception with regard to it.

Upon this occasion it may not be superfluous to remark, that, comparatively speaking, we very seldom perceive objects by the medium of the *broad full-colored line*; although we certainly do so sometimes. The reason why I have deemed so full an analysis of this species of line requisite, is, because philosophers have uniformly supposed that it is *the only kind of visible line in nature*. My object, therefore, has been to show, first, from the section which went before, that the far greater number of visible lines are of a very different species from this; and, secondly, in the present section, that, even in those few cases wherein the broad full-colored line occurs, the principle of perception is *not that of SENSATION*, but is that of *RELATION AND DISTINCTION*, as truly as it is the case of the breadthless line itself.

To conclude; The investigation of the nature of the Second Species of line is not the less important, although it but seldom occurs in the ordinary business of perception; because it is in this species that we most clearly discern the *identity of procedure* of the *ordinary perceiver* and the *mathema-*

*tician.* When a farmer is comparing the different aspects of two corn-fields, which are separated by a foot-path, a rivulet, or a carriage-road; he proceeds precisely in the same manner as a geometer over a diagram. He heeds neither the breadth, nor the color, of the *road, or intervening object*; whether it be narrow, or wide, or green, or blue, or yellow; because he views it only as *a mere dividing line or relation of contrast* between the two fields, considered merely as *two different objects*. He therefore sinks or annihilates the breadth of the road altogether, in his contemplation; and considers the two fields *only by the contrast of their own colors*, as completely, as if they had been *actually contiguous or without any road, or rivulet, at all between them*. Thus, *ordinary perception*, in every instance of an *improper or broad full-colored line*, is no other than *mathematical abstraction*.

## SECTION NINTH.

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OF THE THIRD SPECIES, OR IMPERFECT VISIBLE LINE.

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### 1.

IN proceeding to consider the third and last species of visible line; I observe, that it presents us with some very interesting peculiarities, when compared with the two other sorts; and such as throw much additional light upon the general subject of perception.

The species of which I am now to treat, consists of *such stripes of color as are not full at their edges, but which, on the contrary, soften on either side, and so blend into any other colors which happen to be next them.* A very complete and striking instance of this sort of line, is perceived in the sensations we experience when we look at a *rain-bow*; which, by reason of the softening of its various stripes of color, forms itself into several *collateral curves or arches.*

This species of line presents us with a very different character from that which was considered in the last section; because *a softened or blended line* is not only an *improper line* owing to its having breadth, but, in addition to this, it is *also an imperfect line*, since its edges are not defined, and it

never can present any *precise distinction* between any two adjacent objects. This, I apprehend, must warrant the appellation by which I have here ventured to distinguish it.

Although the imperfect line is of much less frequent occurrence than the line of the *First species*; it is, however, to be recognised as being a very frequent and familiar object of perception. It is also to be observed, that, although the blended line is vastly less defined, and therefore less beneficial or useful in distinguishing the boundaries of objects, than the proper line, first described, yet it serves tolerably well to display the situations of things, for ordinary purposes.

With regard to the principle of perception, of this species of line; the very same general reasoning holds, which was used with respect to lines of the *Second Species*: That is to say, the breadth of any stripe of color must be *annihilated, in our contemplation*, every time we consider such stripe in the relative character of a line between any two other objects. Thus, for example, if we suppose a rainbow, consisting of three stripes,—a red,—a blue,—and a yellow; and if we choose to regard the *middle or blue stripe* as a line which divides the *red* from the *yellow*; we must, in this case, *annihilate all consideration of the blue and of its breadth*, and must, by a logical fiction of the understanding, consider the red and the yellow as being separated by *nothing but a breadthless line*.

It is to be observed, indeed, that, in carrying

this experiment into practice, the blending of the colors will render it impossible for us to divide the red from the yellow with any thing like *precision, even in idea*. But, nevertheless, I observe, that *this is the principle* upon which we must proceed.

After the repeated illustrations which I have offered of the subject; I apprehend that any addition to them would be altogether superfluous. I shall only add, therefore, that, every time we proceed upon this principle of perception, we shall treat the subject rationally and justly; and, every time we omit to take note of this logical process of natural abstraction, we shall, from the mere teaching of nature or experience, *perceive things equally well*; but we shall not, in the latter case, *have any rational conception* of the PRINCIPLE upon which we *do perceive*. Accordingly, we find, that, from neglect of the procedure of the understanding in the act of perception, most philosophers, in time past, have come to the conclusion that *perception* is nothing but *mere sensation*: While, upon the other hand, one particular school, justly discontented with this conclusion, has been driven to start a doctrine that the *perception of figure or outline* is supplied to us, distinctly indeed from *sensation*, but *unaccountably and unsearchably* by an *inspiration* of the Deity!

In this place it is easy to anticipate, that there may be some readers, who may think it a fair opportunity to suppose, that, if we can perceive as well without knowing the principle upon which we

proceed, as we can when we do know it, it must be a useless labor to investigate the nature of perception, at all. But those who are in the least informed on the matter, need not be reminded, that the subject of perception is investigated here, not primarily for its own sake, but on account of its momentous bearings upon some of the most important questions in philosophy. It may here, however, be remarked, that an investigation of this subject, in that character which it is now shown to possess, namely, as *belonging to the CATEGORY of RELATION*, of which it forms one of the several great species, is a matter, of itself, of an extent of importance which can only be appreciated after the investigation of the subject of causality in the sequel.

## 2.

It has already been remarked, that the blended or imperfect line is of less frequent occurrence, and also of less precision and utility, than the proper or breadthless line. But, as if to compensate for this, it is to be observed, that the peculiar nature of the blended line is of much curiosity and of very considerable importance in a philosophical view. In the course of the following observations, I shall endeavour to explain this peculiarity.

FIRST, It is to be remarked, that, in every instance in which we perceive *a proper or breadthless line*, and in every instance in which we perceive *a full colored line*, we must perceive **A NEGATION of sensation of color, between some two colors.** For

example, when we look at the moon, surrounded by the sky, we become conscious of two sensations of colors, namely, *a white* and *a blue*; and we perceive that the line formed between them consists in A NEGATION of *all color*. And, in like manner, when we look at any *full stripe of color*, in the relative character of a line, we perceive, (as has been already illustrated by a diagram in the last section) *two different breadthless lines*, each of which is A NEGATION OF *color*. Such (I repeat) is the general fact, in the case of both the *First* and the *Second species* of visible line.

SECONDLY. But in the case of the *Third Species* or *blended line*, I am now to observe, the case is essentially different from that of either of the two former ones. If we look at any blended line, such, for example, as the *middle stripe of a rain-bow*, considered as dividing the different colors that are on each side of it; we shall in this case experience NO NEGATION of *sensation of color* between the two *outside colors*: For, the thing we call the *middle stripe*, is *a sensation of color*; and the stripes which appear one on each side of it, are *sensations of colors*; and, in like manner, the *blendings of the stripes into each other*, are equally *sensations of colors*; and, thus, there is *not one spot, or point, of DISCONTINUITY of sensation of color* in the whole scene or subject.

The conclusions and philosophical general views to which we are directly led by these phenomena of blended lines, as now explained, are very important; especially if their aid be supposed to be

wanted, in the controversy as to whether or not we perceive the identical external objects of a world beyond us. And, however conclusive, and indeed redundant, the foregoing series of proofs (first and last) indisputably appear; yet I should consider it an injustice to the subject, to omit the notice of so curious and so decisive an additional proof, as that which we have in the phenomena of blended lines. I shall, therefore, now apply these phenomena, as a farther and distinct refutation of Dr. Reid's Theory of Perception.

FIRST, with this purpose, I am to observe, that Dr. Reid, either in consequence of, or at least subsequent to, the same conception which was fallen upon originally by Dr. Hutcheson of Glasgow, assumed that *figure* is "more properly *an idea accompanying sensations of sight and of touch*, than "sensations of either of those senses." With regard to this discovery of Hutcheson; it is admitted by Professor Stewart, that he did "not appear to have "been at all aware of the importance of the criticism on which he had stumbled."—"The fact is" (says Mr. Stewart) "as I shall have occasion to "show in another Essay, he had anticipated the "very instances which were afterwards appealed "to by Dr. Reid, as furnishing an *experimentum crucis* in support of his own reasonings against "the ideal theory."

From this it appears, that both Hutcheson and Reid, in the course of their speculations, had discerned the fact that *perceived figure is, in some way*



or other, SOMETHING ELSE besides sensation OF COLOR ; but it is equally manifest, that neither of them could in the least make out WHAT IT IS, or HOW it is perceived. All that Dr. Hutcheson observed, was the vague general fact, *that figure is not a sensation of color.* And it is sufficiently known that Reid maintained the assumption, that the perception of figure is supplied to us *unaccountably*, and *unsearchably*, along with a sensation of color.

It is, moreover, equally curious and conclusive to observe, in what way Dr. Reid made use of his, or rather of Hutcheson's discovery, to make it serve for "an *experimentum crucis* in support of his own "reasonings against the Ideal Theory." I shall therefore here submit the matter, in the words of the parties themselves ; which, for the sake of including the views of *all parties*, I shall extract from the Philosophical Essays of Professor Stewart. In his Note E, at the end of that work, he has criticised the subject in the following terms.

"This argument of Berkeley is very clearly and "concisely put by Reid." "If we have any knowledge of a material world, it must be by the 'senses : but *by the senses we have no knowledge, but 'of our sensations only ;* and our sensations, which 'are attributes of *Mind*, can have no resemblance 'to any quality of a thing that is inanimate.'

"It is observed by Dr. Reid," (says Mr. Stewart) "that the only proposition in this demonstration, which admits of doubt, is, that by our "senses we have the knowledge of our sensations

“only, and of nothing else. Grant this, and the conclusion is irresistible.”

I have quoted these passages to show, in the most conclusive manner, that the *sole argument* which Dr. Reid thought he had become possessed of, and which he conceived to be of such powerful efficacy, for the demolition of the Ideal Theory, was the fact *that perceived figure is SOMETHING ELSE besides sensation*. Now the following considerations are intended to show, how utterly powerless and innocent this argument is, for the purpose for which Dr. Reid brought it.

In the FIRST place it is granted, and indeed it has been the object of an appropriate section of this chapter to show, that visible lines of the *First Species* are void of color, and therefore void of breadth; and, as such, it is plainly manifest that this species of line, even in its positive character as a phenomenon, is *something else besides a sensation OF COLOR*. One would think, therefore, if there were not decisive reasons to the contrary, that Dr. Reid had adverted to what has herein been called the *First Species of visible line*.<sup>1</sup>—But, supposing him

<sup>1</sup> I have been willing to suppose, that Dr. Reid had adverted to the existence of breadthless visible lines: but the whole context of his writings prove this to have been impossible. For it is a conspicuous feature in the writings both of Dr. Reid and of his Successor that a breadthless line is *not an object either of sense or of imagination*. Had Dr. Reid in the least adverted to the phenomena of breadthless lines; it is impossible he could have

for the moment to have done this; the assumption he held, in common with Dr. Hutcheson, is still profoundly erroneous, even with regard to the species of line in question: because I have no hesitation in affirming that a breadthless line, considered merely in its *positive character, as a phenomenon depicted to the mind, must be admitted to be of the nature of a sensation, although it is not a sensation of COLOR.*

It is impossible to deny that every breadthless visible line displays a *positive phenomenon* to our view, as truly so as if it were a *stripe of color itself*. A breadthless line, therefore, *when considered only as a phenomenon*, although it is A NEGATION of sensation of COLOR, is NOT A NEGATION OF SENSATION: On the contrary, *in virtue of its being a phenomenon or depicted line of contrast* between some two colors, it possesses the nature of A SENSATION OF A PECULIAR CLASS; in a manner analogous to that in which *black or darkness*, which taken by itself is a *negation of sensation of color*, nevertheless impresses us with a *positive sensation every time we become conscious of it*

missed perceiving that A VARIETY of colors is necessary for the perception of every line, and that the perception of a line is nothing but a discernment of A RELATION OF CONTRAST. But the truth is, that it never entered the conception of Reid that any VARIETY of colors is requisite for the perception of a line. On the contrary, nothing is more clear or complete than the total absence of any hint, either in his writings or in those of Professor Stewart, that *more colors than one* are requisite for an act of perception; always excepting the recent demur started by Mr. Stewart, in his "DISSERTATION," published in the year 1815.

*in the presence of any color.* It was from having adverted to this nature of the fact, that, in my first publication on the Phenomena of the Mind, I ventured to suggest that *figure appeals to our consciousness in a peculiar way.*

The logical distinction to be made in this case, is, that every perceived line possesses, as was already remarked, two essentially different characters: *The one positive; The other merely relative.* Every line, *considered AS A LINE,* is merely a relative thing: but every line is a positive thing when it is considered *as a mere phenomenon.* As a *mere phenomenon,* therefore, a breadthless line is a *phenomenon of SENSE,* as truly as can be said of any sensation of color: but, as viewed in the relative character of *a line,* a breadthless line, *as well as every other sort of line,* is *purely an OBJECT OF INTELLECT;* for *its very existence, IN THE CHARACTER OF A LINE,* consists in its being viewed *as dividing and connecting some two other things, and as being in all other respects ANNIHILATED in our conception.*

SECONDLY. But, although what has just now been advanced is, I trust, altogether conclusive against the opinion of the School of Reid *that by our senses we have SOMETHING ELSE besides sensations;* I am farther to observe, that what is yet to follow must place the real merits of the subject in a still more conspicuous light.

The fact is, that, while it is here sufficiently conceded that the First Species or proper visible line, considered in itself as a mere phenomenon, is

*not a sensation of COLOR*; we are at the same time to observe, that *our perceiving objects by the medium of the First Species of line is NOT ESSENTIAL, but is MERELY ACCIDENTAL*; neither is it *uniform*, but *only occasional*. In a very considerable proportion of instances, we perceive objects by the modification of the broad or colored line. And *it might* have been, that we had never perceived by any other medium.

I have already pointed out the fact, that we perceive the figures of the several distinct arches of a rain-bow although there is *not a single point of discontinuity of sensation of color* between any two of those arches. The *whole scene* of what we call a rain-bow, even if it were to consist of a thousand arches, apparently covering all the vast expanse of the sky, must, in the most rigorous sense of the phrase, be no other than *one varied complex mass of sensations of colors* in the mind of the spectator. This mass of sensations, moreover, can only be spoken of in the plural number on account of the **VARIETIES** which it displays in its different parts; because, *in virtue of its CONTINUITY*, it is, strictly speaking, **ONLY ONE SURFACE OF SENSATION**: It is made up, indeed, of *parts beyond parts*; but its parts have no other sort of *severalty* than that of the parts of space itself. Thus is the **MICROCOSMIC nature of the mind** proved, by the most decisive species of experiment; and we in the clearest manner discern that it is *entirely in virtue of the CONTRASTS* which our *sensations* present to our *understanding*, and to the *various directions or arrangements* of these sensations

and contrasts, that we are enabled to contemplate any of the *phenomena of sense* in that *relative character* which we call **OUTLINE OR FIGURE**.

It being thus rigorously shown, that we do actually, in certain cases, perceive *whole assemblages of adjacent objects without any discontinuity of sensation of color*; to this it is now to be added, that, so far is this from being a singular, or a rare case, that, on the contrary, a very large proportion of all visible objects are perceived solely under this modification of the phenomena.

Not only do we perceive the sun, and the moon, very often in this way, which must happen every time they are seen through a cloud; but it may be observed, in general, that all visible bodies which we ever perceive through a fog, or through any other dense medium, are perceived through the instrumentality of *blended lines*, in the same way that we perceive the different arches of a rain-bow.

Nor is this all:—For it is farther to be observed, that almost all persons whose eyes are in the least defective, either from age or from any other accident, must see objects through the instrumentality of blended lines, when they do not use spectacles.

Thus it is indisputably manifest, that a very large proportion of all perceived lines, or figures, discerned by sight, are, in their positive character as phenomena, no other than *blended lines or sensations of colors, strictly speaking*.

From what has now been advanced; it becomes plainly evident, that, if it had pleased our Omnipotent

tent Creator, things *might have been* so constituted that we could have perceived visible objects by *no other medium* than that of the *blended line* ; in the very same manner that we now actually perceive the different stripes of a rain-bow. There, certainly, need have been *no such thing in the world*, as a *perceived line consisting in* A NEGATION OF COLOR.

It is, obviously, owing to the *sensible opacity* of most visible bodies, that we perceive *breathless visible lines* ; and, therefore, our perceiving such lines appears to be *purely accidental*. It is, however, an accident that is extremely useful, as well as delightful to us, in a great variety of cases. Without the capability of discerning this exquisite species of line, the ingenuity and progress of mankind would have been vastly impeded, both in the arts and the sciences ; and the pleasures we derive from the symmetry of visible objects would have been greatly curtailed. It is nevertheless to be admitted, upon the other hand, that, for all the purposes of mere animal existence, the perception of objects by blended lines would have answered very sufficiently. It *might have been*, that, every time any human being opened his eyes, he could have perceived nothing but *one continued scene of sensation of color*, varied in its different parts, but *without any one point of discontinuity* throughout the whole ; and in this way he might have perceived the various scenes of town and country, fleets and armies, land and water, in short, the whole world around him, upon the very same principle that we now frequently perceive

the different curves of a rainbow, or a halo round the moon.

I trust ; it may now, on the most conclusive ground, be asked, What becomes of the assumption of Hutcheson and of Reid, (IN THE SENSE MEANT BY THEM) that “figure is more properly “an idea accompanying sensations of sight and “touch, than a sensation of either of those senses?” If, *by figure*, they could have meant that positive phenomenon in itself which we perceive between every two full colors, or in other words a breadthless line ; I have shown, in the most rigorous manner, that this phenomenon is A SENSATION occasioned by sight, although *not a sensation of COLOR*. And, as for a figure or line, *considered logically in its relative character*, it is, in the highest degree manifest that Dr. Reid never thought of it, one way or the other. Such phrases, as *variety of colors,—relation of contrast,—relation of contiguity,—and other such terms,—which must be continually made use of* when we treat of visible lines, or figures, in their proper relative character ; are not to be found in the speculations of Dr. Reid. I confess, therefore, that I am utterly unable to conjecture what sort of idea Reid could have had in contemplation, when he supposed that figure is *not a sensation of sight, but AN IDEA accompanying a sensation of sight*. Whatever his conception of this matter was ; I confidently hope that no doubt can remain with regard to the real merits of the subject.



To prevent any possible misconception here, I must not omit to observe, that, whether a breadthless line shall be admitted to be in itself a sensation, or not a sensation, is a matter altogether indifferent to the nature and results of the analysis of perception. I have pointed out what I conceive to be the true nature of this phenomenon; and I have inquired how far it could have been this phenomenon that either Hutcheson or Reid could have had in view, in their speculations: but it is a matter entirely the same to my own views, whether a breadthless line be admitted to have the farther character of a *peculiar kind of sensation* (as I esteem it to have,) or to be *only* A RELATION between, *and efficiently caused by, two sensations of colors*. All that I insist upon, first and last, is, that, *in itself*, whatever else it is, it is a *phenomenon*; and, that it is *only the* ACT OF OUR INTELLECT that views it AS A LINE OR RELATION *between two other things*.

The *essential object* of the latter part of this Section has been to show that we *very extensively do, and might altogether, perceive visible objects without breadthless lines*, that is to say from our *sensations alone*; and, hence, to demonstrate, rigorously, by this peculiar mode of analysis, that *we never perceive any external object*.

## SECTION TENTH.

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THAT ALL LINES WHATEVER, MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL, AND MORAL, ARE OF ONE SAME GENERAL NATURE:— THAT NO EXTENDED OBJECT IN NATURE HAS ANY FIGURE *EXCLUSIVELY* ITS OWN.

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ALTHOUGH the act and phenomena of what is called External Perception has been so copiously treated in the foregoing Sections ; I am nevertheless desirous to suggest the following enlarged view of the subject, because it places the nature of it in somewhat a new light, and connects, or, strictly speaking, *identifies* it with another and more general object of science. Besides the consequence of contemplating the subject from this point of view ; I conceive it not improbable it may, to some minds, convey a more lively, if not a more clear apprehension of its real nature, than any thing that has yet been advanced with regard to it.

The consideration which I would here call to the attention of the reader, is simply this, that the appellation of *a line*, which obtains in all the three great departments of science, the physical, the ma-

thematical, and the moral, is of *one same general import in all of them*, namely, that of A RELATION *between some TWO OTHER SUBJECTS.*

The proper signification of the word *line*, is that of a *partition or division* between some two other things. In the science of geometry, (in which we are first to consider it) this relation, when taken in its most elementary nature, must be viewed in two different general characters, namely, as a *relation of distance* between some two *points*, and otherwise as a *lateral relation of contiguity* between two *surfaces*. With regard to these two general characters, I am to observe, that a line is usually DEFINED *only in the first of them*; but it *cannot be CONCEIVED* except in the *last*. A mathematical line, therefore, in that view under which we must *conceive* it, is a *lateral relation*, of the very same species with a sensible line, (whether tangible or visible) by means of which we perceive or distinguish between any two contiguous extended objects.

From what has been now said, we are led to discern that *any two contiguous bodies can have ONLY ONE LINE OR BOUNDARY common between them both*: Or, in other words, *NO ONE of any two contiguous bodies, or objects of perception, can have any outline, next the other, EXCLUSIVELY ITS OWN*. Moreover, I am to observe, that every body or extended object in nature, *when it is not contiguous to another body, must be contiguous to Space*: and thus

we discern that *neither any extended body, nor yet any limited space, can have any figure EXCLUSIVELY ITS OWN.*

The fact which has been just now suggested, is one which I apprehend is quite contrary to the natural belief of mankind : for there appears reason to think that philosophers, as well as the vulgar, have always supposed every object we perceive, whether by touch or by sight, has an outline or figure exclusively its own. So little did I, at one time, think to the contrary ; that, after I was led to perceive that it is not so in the case of visible objects, I still supposed that every *tangible object* has a figure exclusively its own : but this, I have since discerned, was a premature and an erroneous conclusion. I deem it at present expedient to go into the consideration of this fact, before I proceed farther in the principal subject of the Section.

To illustrate the fact with regard to *visible objects*; it is plain, that when we look at the moon, if we should suppose the moon to be *cut out*, and a round hole to be left in the sky ; the *sky*, where it is thus cut, must exhibit the *very identical figure* which we called that of the *moon*. The moon may be supposed annihilated ; but, if nothing be supposed to rush into its place, *its figure* must remain ; for the figure we call that of the moon does not belong to itself exclusively, but is *common* between it and the surrounding space or sky. In like manner, an animal, a tree, or a house, can have no visible figure exclusively its own ; for its visible figure must be *a common line of contrast* between the *color of*

*the particular object* and any *field of color* behind it ; by means of which, alone, it can be perceived.

In the case of *tangible objects*, this fact is much less obvious than in that of visible ones : but it is not the less certain. When we look at *two separate dice*, at any convenient distance from each other ; we are forcibly struck with a conviction that each of the cubes has a figure exclusive of that of the other ; and we are right in this conclusion. It is this and similar views of the subject that betray us into a mistake with regard to its real nature. For, although each of the dice has a figure exclusive of that of *the other* ; yet neither of them has any figure exclusive of the figure of *that part of SPACE which surrounds it*. If we suppose one of the dice to be annihilated, and nothing to rush into its place ; we shall have the figure of the die still left,—*not merely an equal and similar figure*, but that *very identical figure* which the die possessed ;—because it was not its own figure, *exclusively*, but was *common* between it and the surrounding space, and therefore could not be removed.

To conclude, then, with regard to the present consideration, and in order to leave no obscurity over the subject ; I am to observe, that, when we consider *two separate dice*, as *two visible objects*, we must do this by the medium of *some colored space between them* ; which extent of color forms a *third visible OBJECT*. Now the visible line which divides either of the dice, from the colored space between them, is a line *common* between the die and that

space or color; and the same is to be observed with regard to the other die, also. And, if we should try to conceive the intermediate color between the two dice annihilated, we could do this *only by supposing SOME OTHER COLOR in its place*; for the *visible space*, between the two visible dice, *must be filled by some color*. Thus, in the case of two separate *visible dice*, we readily discern that neither of them can ever have any figure exclusively its own.

But, in the case of *two separate tangible dice*, we are led into error by the following consideration. In treating two dice as objects of *Touch*, we must insert a finger, or a hand, between the two; and thus we find them to be completely insulated and independent of each other: We thereupon conclude, that each of them has a figure exclusively its own. But, all this while, we are treating the two dice *only in relation to our own members*; and *not in relation to THEIR PLACES IN THE UNIVERSE*. When we handle either one of these two cubical masses, or any other bodies whatever, our *hands, or fingers, are occupying that Space* to which alone the figure of the thing we handle has *an essential or necessary relation*. But, whether we handle it or leave it at rest, the necessary truth is, that its figure is not exclusively its own, but is only *a relation common* between it and the surrounding space.

What has been now advanced, I am to observe, is *not inductive*, but *demonstrative* reasoning: it is not merely an induction of what *has been*, but is a

deduction of what *must be*. And thus it is shown, that no extended object in nature, whether it be visible or tangible, can ever have *any figure exclusively its own*. This, in point of fact, is only another view and expression of the universal nature of what is called external perception; namely, that EVERY PERCEIVED LINE is *nothing but* A NECESSARY RELATION *between some two of our ideas*.

In the first publication in which I suggested the general principle of the foregoing analysis; I solicited the reader's notice to the fact now under consideration, *so far as regards visible objects*. What has been now added with regard to tangible objects, was wanting to complete the view of it.

Having adverted to the universal and purely relative nature of all lines in mathematical and in physical science; and shown, that, in both these sciences, alike, every line is *a necessary relation between our own ideas*; hence, that its evidence is strictly demonstrative; I now proceed to suggest the existence of the very same principle in morals, and propose to run a parallel between the two.

As we can never perceive a visible line from the presence of *any one unvaried color*; so we can never conceive either good or evil conduct from contemplating *any one course of actions*. We must have a knowledge (either from experience or from definition) of *two different kinds of positive action or conduct*, before we can discern that they cause a

*line between them*, in regard to which we call the one conduct good, and the other evil.

As for the use of the word, *line*, in morals ; it is manifestly a figurative expression, arising from a *repetition of acts of one kind*; which acts, being concatenated together through *a line of time*, in our estimation of the moral character of the actor, is, from an obvious analogy, called *a line of conduct*. The *parts* of this line, are the distinct acts of the agent ; and in each of them, severally taken, we discern *an actual point of contrast* between it and *our imagination of its opposite*: Otherwise we could not make out any such act to be either *virtuous* or *vicious*. Thus it becomes manifest, that a line between *blue* and *yellow*, and a line between *good* and *evil*, are of ONE SAME GENUS, namely, that of A RELATION between some two things. Each, alike, is an object of our intuitive faculty ; and they are both perceived in the same way, generally speaking.

I am not offering this suggestion with a view to throw any light on the nature of *moral* relations ; but, rather, to receive back a reflected light from them, in case it could be supposed yet wanting, or at all useful, in settling the nature of *visible lines*. It is already sufficiently obvious, that moral actions are objects of our *intellect or intuitive discernment only*; and, I suppose it to be known that they cannot be discerned except in a contemplation of their contrasts with actions of an opposite nature. It is equally manifest, that the *relation or line between good and evil conduct can be neither good nor evil*. How then has it happened that philosophers have all along supposed, that



*a line between blue and yellow must be either blue or yellow, or of any other color whatever?*

In tracing the analogy between visible lines and moral ones; we are farther to observe, that it does not cease here. It is not only in the various cases of *breadthless lines, or perfect contrasts*, that it holds; but equally in all cases.

There are certain *positive courses of human actions* that answer exactly to those different *positive stripes of colors*, which, when viewed as relations between other colors on each side of them, acquire, in our estimation, the relative character of *a line*. These, therefore, I shall briefly consider.

Many men in society follow a course of actions, some of *less* and some of *greater positive latitude*, which, in an ordinary sense, cannot be viewed as being either good or evil. Such a course is manifestly *a positive object in itself*, as much so as a stripe of full color in our view: but, besides this, we may also make it serve in *a relative character*, by viewing it either as a line of contrast between the vicious conduct of the same person in early life and his virtuous conduct in his old age, or by viewing it as a line of contrast between the virtuous conduct of any one of his species and the vicious procedure of another. As it was in a former Section observed with regard to *improper visible lines*, it is now to be remarked as to *moral lines, also*, that so long as we view any course of human actions *without any thought of its morality at all*, it cannot be viewed as *a line*, any more than we can view any *positive*

*stripe of blue, or yellow, in itself, as a line.* And, upon the other hand, the moment we view any positive course of actions as *a line between good and evil*, we must, by a logical fiction of the mind, *lose sight of its positive nature or breadth*, and must contemplate it as a *breadthless line* between the course of those who do good and that of those who do evil.

Such, and so perfect, is the general analogy between moral lines and visible ones.

What, then, (it may be asked) are the specific differences, between the Lines of Perception, of Mathematics, and of Morals,—since it so plainly appears that the DATA in each of these sciences are *nothing but our IDEAS*, and the REASONING with regard to them is *the SAME*: for in Geometry these data are *definitions of magnitudes*: In Morals they are our *ideas of human actions*: In Visive Perception they are *sensations of colors*: And in all three, alike, our judgments or conclusions regard NECESSARY RELATIONS, *which these data, (so often as they exist) must support between them?*

The *principal* difference in question, appears to me to be simply this: Every VISIBLE LINE is a DEPICTED *relation*: and EVERY MATHEMATICAL LINE is the *perfection of a visible line*: But every MORAL LINE is a relation NOT PICTURABLE.

The great consequence of this difference is, that we never can mistake the relative nature of a *moral line*; we are not in any case embarrassed by referring the perception of a moral act, *as such*, to sense; we infallibly refer its perception to our *in-*

*tellectual faculty alone* ; but, in the case of *visible lines*, the fact of their being *depicted* between the other phenomena of sense has led philosophers uniformly to the erroneous belief that these lines, *considered AS LINES*, are OBJECTS of no faculty of the mind but that of SENSE ; and thus they have never referred the perception of them to a *distinguishing act* of the INTELLECT.

## SECTION ELEVENTH.

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OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE RESULT OF THE  
 FOREGOING ANALYSIS AND THE SPECULATIONS OF THE  
 PREVIOUS CHAPTER.

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### 1.

*The Proofs against the existence of a Material  
 World conclusive from the admissions of contending  
 Philosophers.*

To demonstrate, by a rigorous analysis of the combinations of our visive affections, the microcosmic nature of the mind; and thence to deduce, as a direct and legitimate consequence, the conclusion that the great agent of our external excitements, which we call matter, is no other than a spiritual and intelligent substance like our own; have been, I confess, two objects which I have prosecuted, in the present work, with peculiar expectation. At length, the evidences, both inductive and demonstrative (for they are of both kinds) which I had to offer in proof of the fact first mentioned, are now before my readers;—and it remains only to connect this fact with the momentous conclusion to be deduced from it.

With this view, therefore, and previously to my pointing out that unanimity of opinion which fortu-

nately exists among Philosophers with regard to the *connection*, in our own quarter of the Globe; I would once more endeavour to shake the popular prejudice on the subject, by calling the reader's attention to the great prevailing tenet of that ancient philosophy which indisputably possesses very high claims to our consideration.

At a period long antecedent to the Greek philosophy of matter, and at a time so remote that we have no clue to guide us even to a conjecture concerning the degree of its antiquity, mankind had, indisputably, attained lights in general science the remaining evidences of which astonish the moderns at this day. Moreover, it expressly appears to have been the most confident and general of all their conclusions in that primitive era of science, at least with regard to *real existences*, that the *notion of matter is a mere popular delusion*, and that *all without us is nothing but spiritual substance and agency*.

We have not indeed the least remaining guide to a conjecture, *by what steps* those ancients were led to so sublime a conclusion. But when we duly consider the extent of their general attainments, it would be betraying the most slavish subjection to our natural prejudices, not to confess, that so established a tenet, among a people so enlightened, has very strong claims upon our attention.

In this place, therefore, I would again particularly remark, what I have alluded to in the introductory chapter of the volume, namely, that it is manifestly unphilosophical to appeal the present

subject to the *ordinary apprehension* of mankind; the sole tribunal to which Dr. Reid and Professor Stewart have severally consigned it. Would either of these philosophers (it may be asked) have for a moment submitted to appeal the *Copernican System* to the *ordinary apprehension of mankind*?—Certainly not.—Then, upon what principle of reason can they possibly assert, that *the question concerning a material world* ought to be decided by a tribunal to which they would not consent to appeal that of the great order of visible creation?

I certainly do not expect that the claims of the subject will be decided, in the estimation of any truly scientific and unbiassed mind, by an appeal to authority. But, considering the general state of knowledge on the subject, an appeal to such an extent of authority as the history of the species holds out directly in favor of our views, must doubtless be of weight in the general estimation. In this case, therefore, I must insist, and I think it is a truth of the most obvious certainty, that the *only philosophical procedure*, in an investigation of the question concerning a material world, is to appeal AGAINST *the ORDINARY apprehension of mankind*, to the *whole TENOR of PHILOSOPHICAL apprehension*.

If such a logical proceeding, as this, be instituted; let us particularly observe, what would be the consequence. The attempt of Berkeley, in this case, (however faulty in its means) must be acknowledged to be so far from being extravagant or singular in its proposed *end*, that, if we could collect all the suffrages of philosophers, it is rather

probable that Berkeley would have the *majority on his side*; deducting only for such peculiar errors as belong to his Theory alone, and do not at all affect the views he held in common with the Hindoo philosophy.

While, therefore, the views which I have entertained in the foregoing analysis are to be most widely distinguished from the principles of Berkeley; and while I do not know whether they coincide precisely with the Hindoo tenet; I shall conclude these remarks by observing, that, instead of its being philosophical to treat the ultimate aim of Berkeley with the contemptuous epithet of *reverie*, or *chimera*; that charge betrays a view of the subject astonishingly narrow, and unlike what we might have expected, from a mind which had been continually exercised in the most sublime speculations of philosophy and the most elevated conceptions of the constitutions of nature.—The sentence which Professor Stewart has pronounced, upon the attempt of Berkeley, I must observe, is no more countenanced by the *most sublime of the GREEK PHILOSOPHERS*, than it is by the far more weighty sanction of the whole HINDOO race. By *excluding this vast amount of philosophical suffrages*, therefore, as if it had never existed; and by stigmatising the attempt of Berkeley to disprove the existence of a material world, as a wild or visionary scheme; Mr. Stewart has certainly fallen into one of the most signal acts of philosophical injustice that the history of the subject affords.

It is not, however, from ancient, or from any other authority, that I shall draw the *final and conclusive* suffrage on the side of my own views; for I shall derive this from those very philosophers, themselves, whose general doctrine has herein been controverted.

It is unnecessary, and even impossible, to require a more decided or conspicuous assent, than that which has been severally expressed by the philosophers of the School of Reid, to the assumption that *nothing can resemble a sensation but an affection of some other mind*. This, indeed, has been no less than the *watch word* of the writers of that School: And nothing has been more openly avowed than the assent of those writers to the conclusion, that, *if our sensations be proved extended, there is no support whatever for the assumption of a material world*. These philosophers, therefore, *cannot go back: they cannot unsay what they have said*; nor can we suppose them to wish to do so, to the sacrifice of truth. Prejudice may hang back from the consequence; but it can only present a humiliating spectacle of human weakness if men should refuse to yield even to *their own* reasoning, when it is shown to run counter to their natural bias.

It can hardly be necessary to repeat, here, the very terms of concession which have been made use of by the writers in question: but the infinite moment of the subject at issue may render it a



due precaution.—These expressions are to be found; in the most ample extent, in the various extracts which I have already had occasion to give from the writings of those authors; and they amount to a continual repetition of the following judgment, which has been successively asserted, with one consent, by Bishop Berkeley, by Dr. Reid, and Professor Stewart.

“As there can be no notion or thought but in a thinking being, so there can be no sensation but in a sentient being. Nothing can resemble a sensation, but a similar sensation in the same or in some other mind. To think that any quality in a thing inanimate can resemble a sensation is absurd and a contradiction in terms.”

This truth being thus placed beyond the reach of controversy; it requires no long chain of reasoning to bring us to a conclusion for, or against, the existence of a material world. ONLY PROVE (says the School of Reid) *that our sensations are EXTENDED*; and then the controversy will be for ever at an end: for, in this case, it must be admitted that EXTENSION, whether perceived or not, can be only an attribute of MIND.—Now, the whole foregoing analysis of the combinations of our sensations in the phenomena of perception, has been submitted as forming a series of proofs both inductive and demonstrative; that our sensations are in reality extended. And I trust, after the free concession which has been made by Professor Stewart, in his DISSERTATION already referred to, wherein he expressly grants that *A VARIETY of colors is ne-*

*cessary to the act of perceiving visible outline or figure*, there can be little presumption in avowing that I do not anticipate any objection against the principles of the analysis, since Mr. Stewart has, upon the most mature deliberation, identified his own judgment of the matter with its FUNDAMENTAL AXIOM; which certainly involves the other three necessary laws of perception.

There is indeed nothing that I could, for the interest of philosophy, more strongly impress upon the attention of my readers, than the remarkable and complete dereliction of Dr. Reid's Theory, on the part of Mr. Stewart, in that Demur to which I have here again felt obliged to refer. When a philosopher has expressly acknowledged that it is "self-evident" (such is the demonstrative language made use of) that A VARIETY of colors is necessary for the perception of outline or figure; it may surely be asked, What becomes of the assumption which is repeated through all the five editions of Professor Stewart's Elements, namely, that "*it is just as difficult to explain how our perceptions are obtained by this means,*" (i. e. the means of our sensations) "*as it would be upon the supposition that the mind were all at once inspired with them without any concomitant sensations whatever?*"

Can such a glaring contradiction as this be too strongly pointed out, or too often called to our remembrance, when the doctrine which it so remarkably explodes is *still held up* with an arrogation of superior authority, as if no such fatal sentence had been self-pronounced by its author against it?

I am far from exulting in being able to hold up so decisive a refutation at the expence of the consistency of the philosopher who has furnished it: but, on account of what is at stake, I do indeed exult; because I have felt, (and I am not singular in the sentiment) that the School of Reid has availed itself of its well-merited literary influence, to deal forth to the world, upon unusually vantage ground, the most arbitrary and unfounded assumptions, pregnant with deep and unceasing calamity to the human species;—assumptions which I never for a moment doubt the writers of that School believed to be founded in truth and pregnant with good; but which I confidently trust are shown to be utterly untrue, upon evidences which, when duly examined, cannot fail to give an entirely new turn to the current of philosophical Opinion.

## 2.

*The Proofs against the Existence of a Material World are of two different Kinds.*

Although the conclusion of the spiritual nature of all external agency, has thus been legitimately deduced by the consent of philosophers from the fact of the extended nature of our sensations; there is yet to be added a consideration which I think must be viewed as very far from being unimportant, in a strict logical view of the subject. The matter to which I now allude, is, that I apprehend the proofs against the existence of a material world

are of *two distinct kinds*, and rest upon *foundations essentially different*.

The proof which has already been insisted upon, rests upon the judgment that a sensation cannot be resembled by any quality of an inanimate subject: From which it follows, that, our sensations being extended, extension, wheresoever it exists, must be a quality of mind.

The other proof, which I would now suggest for the consideration of the reader, rests upon a very different basis, namely, that of the SUFFICIENT REASON. It consists in this: Since it is proved that the mind of every man is, literally speaking, *a Microcosm or little World, in which extended things are stretched out and exhibited for all his requisite purposes; therefore, there could be NO USE* for the existence of a world of inanimate substances, and, hence, it would be absurd to *suppose* the existence of any such thing.

With regard to this Second Kind of proof; I particularly request to remark, that I have not suggested it here as a matter hitherto overlooked. On the contrary, the suggestion has been made by different writers, although it has not been appreciated by philosophers in general, that the purposes of a material world being proved to be served by other means must *of itself alone* remove all ground for assuming its existence. The only thing which I desire to point out in this place, is, that, AS A PROOF, *it rests upon essentially a DIFFERENT BASIS* from that of the judgment that whatever is extended must be mind. In consequence there-

fore of its being, as a proof, thus independent of the other, I conceive it must be admitted to be of great logical importance; especially when we consider the infinite moment of the thing proved.

To illustrate the matter; I observe, for example, that if any speculative person were, from a peculiar bias, to assert, perversely, that he does not assent to the judgment that a sensation cannot resemble any quality of an inanimate thing; his opinion in this case would be subjected, indeed, to the condemnation of those otherwise contending philosophers who have united in that judgment: but, however, he *might* still retain his conceit, at all hazards; and he might possibly find some other refractory persons of his opinion. But if he should, upon this hardy assumption, attempt still to palm upon us that of the *existence of matter*; we have only, in order to dash his presumption, to bid him have his own way with regard to the argument from *resemblances*; and, then, to point out to him, distinctly, *the proof from the SUFFICIENT REASON*, namely, that *our sensations being strictly proved to be extended*, and therefore to be *SUCH AS ANSWER ALL THE PURPOSES of supposed matter*, it becomes plainly absurd to assume the existence of any such thing *as matter*. No Philosophers, in the present day, will for a moment suppose the existence of a material world, unless he can also suppose some useful purpose which its existence could serve.

The fact of the *extension of our sensations* (of color and of touch) is certainly the sole consideration in

which *both* the above-mentioned proofs against the existence of a material world have their *common root*. But each of them branches out immediately from this root, as a distinct direct and legitimate inference; and I presume, with confidence, that there cannot be a doubt of their complete independence upon each other, insomuch that we may conclusively rest upon *either of them, without a thought of the other*. I trust, therefore, that when the importance of the subject is considered, it will be esteemed a matter of no light moment that we have two inferences, so logically independent of each other, whereupon to ground our conviction of the most interesting and desirable of all the truths which are likely to be attained by man in his present state.

### 3.

It may be presumed that there is no sound philosopher, who, after having discharged himself of the natural prejudice of the species, will for a moment assert that there is any foundation for assuming the existence of a material world when it has been previously admitted that all the extended objects we perceive are the affections of our own minds: there is in this case no logical road, whereby the understanding can turn toward any other conclusion than that of the spiritual nature of external agency. This has been in the fullest manner conceded by the philosophers whose general doctrines have herein been controverted. But the fact really is, that mankind are universally immers-

ed in the grand deception of believing in appearances that are not real ; and it requires attention, and even discipline, to get the better of our natural prejudice upon the subject. In this case, therefore, I am tempted to suggest what may perhaps be of service in counteracting the habitual error in question.

FIRST, Every person who is in doubt upon the subject, may call to mind that they are the very same extended things which he has all along inveterately believed to be both EXTERNAL things and INANIMATE ones. But it has been proved in the most rigorous manner that the extended things in question are NOT EXTERNAL : Then, Upon what ground can he hesitate to believe that they are NOT INANIMATE ? His prejudice is shocked in the one case, as much as in the other ; but, certainly he cannot suffer his reason to yield to it in the one case ; then, Why should it yield in the other ?

An ordinary person, *if he can reason the matter*, must be *more* confident that perceived objects are *external*, than that they are *inanimate* ; because it is *only from supposing perceived things to be EXTERNAL* that he can *logically* conclude them to be INANIMATE. This consideration is of great real importance, inasmuch as it shows so conspicuously that the conclusion, as to animate or inanimate, *depends entirely* upon the fact whether *perceived objects are IN, OR OUT OF the mind* ; and therefore, unless the proofs of the existence of perceived objects in the mind can be successfully controverted, it must be vain for our natural pre-

justice to warp us to the fallacy of still continuing to believe that perceived things are inanimate, except indeed we be content to forego every pretension to rationality in the matter.

The momentous conclusion in question we cannot reject when we listen to the voice of reason : And, if we yield to the mere force of our prejudice, we only let ourselves down to the level of untaught man, by indulging the mere vagary of our imaginations. Whoever proceeds in this way, can have no pretension to the name of a philosopher.—If, indeed, any valid objection shall be laid against the evidence of the analysis whereupon the proofs rest ; this will justify the refusal of our assent. But, without this, we have only left the alternative to act like men, or act like children ; that is, to hold by the verdict of our *reason*, or still to hug our natural *prejudice*, merely because we have been long nursed by it, and are grown to a habitual and pitiable desire of it.



## CHAPTER III.

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### OF JUDGMENT AND RELATIONS.

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#### SECTION FIRST.

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##### OF JUDGMENT AND ITS OBJECTS, IN GENERAL.

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It has been justly observed, that the various operations of the mind appear, upon a first view of them, to be so infinitely numerous, diversified, and intricate, that it threatens to be an impossible task to unravel and arrange them; but that upon a closer examination the prospect clears up, and we find all these operations are reduceable under a comparatively small number of faculties, whose different natures admit of being investigated and described. The truth of this remark will conspicuously appear, in the course of the present chapter, from the vast extent of province which will be found under the jurisdiction of one single faculty.

To that Intellectual Power by which we discern the *Relations between Things*, the name of *Judgment* has very properly been appropriated. A simple description of the primary and most general operations of this faculty, therefore, and of its general extent of province, is the first consideration which I would in this place suggest for attention.

In advancing from the *mere sensitive* part of our constitution, to consider that which properly claims the title of *intellectual* ; we are called upon to recognise this superior department of the mind as consisting in the two correlative acts of *distinction* and *comparison* ; and it will be found, that a very large proportion of the whole business of the understanding consists in various modifications of these two acts.

From these two combined operations, results a *third* one ; which is a *discernment of the precise RELATION* existing between any two thoughts, or things.

It seems to be a question of some difficulty, which of the two operations, whether *distinction* or *comparison*, must have been prior in the order of our ideas. But, for the purposes I have in view, it could be of no utility to embarrass the subject with any consideration of this question.

With regard to the extent of the province of *RELATION* ; it may be said to resemble that universal immaterial bond, which every where *connects*, while it also *divides*, the supposed elementary par-

ticles of material body, as they are said to be scattered throughout the expanse of creation. In every instance in which we *compound* any of our ideas, and in every instance in which we *abstract from* them, as well as in all those cases which in the ordinary sense are called *perceptions of relations*, the mind must proceed by acts of *distinction and comparison*, and the *greater part* of the complex object which it operates upon, in any such case, is made up of relations.

We can neither apprehend any complex object of perception, or thought; nor divide, by abstraction, any two parts of a complex object; nor in thought *connect, divide, or conceive*, any two points of space, or of time, by any other means than by an act of *comparison*; of which act, **RELATION** is the **OBJECT**. We can have *neither reasoning, nor imagination, nor memory, nor simple apprehension, nor even sensation itself* (such as we in ordinary experience it), without an exercise of the act of comparison; because it can be clearly demonstrated that the whole *web or tissue* (so to speak) of every object, of each of the above-mentioned different operations, is made up of *a texture of Relations*, which *divide*, while they *also hold together*, the *positive elements* of the object.

It will serve, remarkably, to illustrate the truth of these observations; and, at the same time, to introduce a certain species of objects into its proper place or category in the universe of things, to note here, that all our innumerable **PERCEPTIONS**

*of outlines or figures* are nothing but *legitimate OPERATIONS OF OUR JUDGMENT*; every moment comparing, or contrasting, the various sensations of which we are made conscious; and therefrom discerning their *extended and local Relations, between themselves*.

In the phenomena of Visible Lines, we have an infinitely numerous class of Relations, in addition to the many other species which logicians and philosophers have recognised; and, from the extent which is occupied by this class alone, the whole visible world proves to be, in great part, a texture of Relations.—So true is this; that, agreeably with what I have in a former place remarked, the foregoing *Chapter of PERCEPTION* ought, strictly speaking, to have formed only a *Section* of the present *Chapter of RELATION*: And I here particularly point it out for remark, that I have divided the subject for no more logical reason, than that of a view to prevent those consequences, in the mind of a reader, which would be likely to follow from bringing so vast a field of inquiry under one nominal head.

In the case of *simple apprehension*; it has not been supposed by logicians that Judgment has any thing at all to do. By suggesting, and briefly illustrating the contrary of this opinion; I shall at the same time show, that our rational faculty must necessarily be employed in *every other* species of thought, unless it be in some particular cases of

sensation. With this view, therefore, I now observe, that when we either perceive, or call up in our imagination, any object, such for example as *a horse*; we can recognise this object *only by discerning* that its different parts *support similar relations* between themselves, to those which we have before discerned in an animal of that species. If it were at any time to happen, that, on our being desired to call up the conception of a horse, our imagination should present us with the figure of an animal with its head and limbs supporting *different relations* between themselves, from those which we have been used to contemplate as the relations of the parts of a horse; we should immediately be struck by this *new arrangement* OF PARTS, and should tacitly, *in our Judgment*, DENY that the object we now apprehend is *a horse*.

Hence it is plain, that *all simple apprehension*, generally speaking, comprehends *a discernment or Judgment* of the *Relations* between the parts of the object, or scene, apprehended.

The fact now suggested, however, does not appear to argue against the usual assumption of logicians, that Judgment regards only *truth* and *falsehood*; because, as I have already in part observed, every instance of simple apprehension involves *a tacit affirmation*, or *denial*. The operation of the Judgment in any case of simple apprehension, or conception, strictly speaking, can be nothing different, in this respect, from what it is in a case of actual perception itself. Now, if any person were to tell another that he will show him a horse, and

were thereupon to direct his attention to some animal possessing a very different structure or relation of parts ; the moment that the *strange relations* became apparent to the beholder, he would, without any regard to color, or size, *tacitly deny* that the animal he perceives is a horse ; and no expressed form of words could make this denial more complete in the mind of the person himself.

Thus, the apprehension of every object of thought whatever, that has in it *any degree of perceptible complexness*, can be effected only through an exercise of our Judgment in an act of discernment ; which act must involve either affirmation or denial.

It was already suggested, in the foregoing Chapter, that the *province of Consciousness* is of far less extent, *in the field of its present objects*, than has been generally supposed. A sensation of color, so minute as that we could only conceive it to be divisible into *two sensible points*, cannot be perceived without an exercise of Judgment. Such a sensation, (and of course any larger one,) is *not an object of sense*, strictly speaking ; because, in order to perceive it, the two sensible points of color must be connected together by an intuitive act of our Judgment, which Faculty alone can take cognizance of the *bond of Relation* which subsists between them.

This last example may help to show us, both the *vast extent* and the *minuteness of operation* of the faculty of Judgment ; and, also, the *commensurate extent of the Predicament or Category of RELATION*.

It has been justly remarked by philosophers, that we think through the medium of *words*. But I believe it has not been adverted to by any writer, that, to a great extent, we also think through the medium of *colors*. Not only is this the case with regard to the general intercourse which we hold with the objects or scenes immediately around us ; but it is equally so in all cases of our apprehension of the facts of history, or of the creations of fiction. We *invariably think by depicting the scenes and the actions*, either of the fact, or of the drama, *in colors, in our imagination*. Persons who have not possessed the faculty of vision are alone to be excepted from this remark. This consideration is deserving of farther notice. I barely suggest it here as an additional illustration of the extent or universality of the operation of the faculty of Judgment, in its acts of distinction and comparison ; because all scenery is in great part a tissue of relations.

## 2.

It will serve to afford a clearer notion of the present subject, to compare the view which I have now taken of it, with that account which has been given of it by Dr. Reid ; who has furnished a particular description of the faculty of Judgment, with an eye to the doctrines of preceding writers.

In the First place, therefore, I observe, that this author holds, with most other writers on the sub-

ject, that Judgment has nothing at all to do with simple apprehension.' His argument in support of his opinion consists chiefly in this ; that " simple apprehension may be expressed by a word, or words, which make no complete sentence." In answer to this, however, I have already remarked, that, *without tacitly affirming* the relations between the parts of any object, or scene, which we simply apprehend or conceive, we *cannot conceive it at all*.

Agreeably with this, also, it is admitted by Dr. Reid himself, that " there may be judgment which is not expressed:" for he justly observes, that " judgment is a solitary act of the mind, and the expression of it by affirmation or denial is not at all essential to it.

As it is true, notwithstanding, that we can equally conceive two contrary propositions ; and as it is impossible they should both be judged to be true ; Dr. Reid says, " I hold it to be certain that judgment and simple apprehension are two acts of the mind specifically different."

That these two acts are specifically different, I grant ; because the one *distinctly includes* the other. This author, when he takes for his argument the fact that we can conceive two contrary propositions, without passing any judgment upon the truth or falsehood of either of them, altogether overlooks that an exercise of judgment is necessary to enable us *to conceive each of the propositions themselves*. We must distinctly conceive both the *subject* and the *predicate* of every proposition ; and must *judge of*



*the relation between them*; in order to apprehend the proposition, at all.

In another part of the same speculation; Dr. Reid observes, that, "In persons come to years of understanding, judgment must necessarily accompany all sensation, perception by the senses, consciousness, and memory, but not conception."

Now with regard to this passage, I deem it of importance to point out, that the office which its author has ascribed to Judgment, is *altogether foreign* to that which I have in view, when I assert that this faculty is exercised during the operation of all our other faculties, with the exception of some cases of sensation.

When Dr. Reid affirms that *judgment must necessarily accompany perception*; he is very far from intending to affirm that Judgment is then employed in its *legitimate office of comparing two colors together*, and, from thence, *discerning the relation of contrast* between them. On the contrary, all that he means to assert is this; "That I now write upon a table covered with green cloth, is a contingent event, which I judge to be most undoubtedly true. My judgment is grounded upon my perception, and is a necessary concomitant or ingredient of my perception." Essays on the Intellectual Powers. Essay 6.

Hence we clearly observe, it is not for a moment supposed by Dr. Reid, that Judgment performs *any act of discernment of relation*, or *any other operation*, in an act of perception, except

*barely that of judging that we DO perceive, or HAVE perceived.*

Without such an explanation as this, any person, who is not otherwise acquainted with the writings of this author, would naturally be led to conclude, that he ascribes a much more high or legitimate office to Judgment, *in an act of perception*, than he does in reality ; for he talks in more places than one, and that in very imposing terms, of the *exercise of Judgment* in the process of external perception ; although it is sufficiently known to be his general doctrine of the subject (as I shall express it here in the words of Professor Stewart,) “ that it “ is just as difficult to explain how our perceptions “ are obtained by means of our sensations, as it “ would be upon the supposition that the mind “ were all at once inspired with them, without any “ concomitant sensations whatever.”

The office which Dr. Reid in reality ascribes to Judgment in the process of perception, is not only clearly ascertained from what I have already observed, but it may farther be marked out from the fact of his having in one same sentence mentioned Judgment as accompanying “ *perception, all sensation, and consciousness.*” Now I shall not here dispute whether, when we *have a sensation*, we do not also *judge* that we have a sensation ; or whether we, in like manner, do not *judge that we perceive*, and *judge that we remember*. But it is sufficiently manifest that this sort of *second cognizance* (if it be a reality) is all

the office which Dr. Reid ascribes to Judgment, in any act of primary perception; and upon this I must finally observe, that it is *not that legitimate discriminative office* which I ascribe to our great Intuitive Faculty, in its general business of discerning the relations between our own thoughts, or between things in the universe around us.

In fine; It is not my intention to deny that Judgment takes cognizance of SUBSTANTIVE BEINGS, *besides* RELATIONS: And, perhaps, in its proper place, I may be enabled to show that there is something of the nature of relation in every such object. But what I have here principally intended to point out, is, that, in ascribing to our Judgment an office in the operations of sensation, perception, consciousness, and memory, Dr. Reid *has not supposed Judgment to be an OPERATOR*, in any of those processes; but *merely an OBSERVER*, who *notes* the fact after it has taken place, as a thing existing, or that has existed.

As a matter of curiosity; it may be worth while to observe, here, Why Dr. Reid has *excepted conception* from being an object of Judgment. This appears to have been only because Reid denied that we have the scenes of our conception *depicted in the mind*; and therefore he held, that *a thing merely conceived has no existence, not even in idea*. But, surely, when we conceive any thing whatever, that has in it the least degree of *complexness*,

we must *conceive all the relations* between its elements ; whether we suppose it to be a thing existing, or not.

Hence, Every operation of the mind is in great part made up of an operation of JUDGMENT ; and therefore it should seem that, taken in a strict logical view, we cannot treat clearly of any of the *other* faculties of the mind, not even of those which are considered as most original, or primary in order, such as *sensation, perception, and memory*, themselves, *until after* we have discussed the faculty of Judgment. But RELATION *is the Object of* JUDGMENT ; and Relation, in General, is the subject which I propose to investigate in the present Chapter, as being one which, at the same time that it embraces the whole field of human knowledge, if I be not mistaken, requires more than any other in philosophy to have its elementary nature revised and ascertained.

## SECTION SECOND.

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OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE SUBJECT OF RELATION.—AND OF THE STRICTURES OF PROFESSOR STEWART UPON LOCKE'S DOCTRINE OF THE ORIGIN OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

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WHEN we consider the immeasurable extent and importance of the subject of Relation; it appears unaccountable to observe, that there is scarcely any topic, however inconsiderable, which presents so contracted a figure in the writings of modern metaphysicians, as this one.

There are, I believe, hardly any of our most eminent metaphysical writers, with the exception of Locke, who have gone to any length in investigating the *elementary* nature of relation. Dr. Reid has, in one place, about three pages of matter upon this subject, namely, in the First Chapter of his Sixth Essay; and I do not think he has expressed his opinion with regard to its elementary nature, in any other part of his very comprehensive and usually very copious writings. Mr. Hume has a short Section, of about the same length, entitled "Of Relation," being the Fifth Section of his Treatise of Human Nature. These two instances, I apprehend, may serve for a fair specimen of the extent to which the subject has been enter-

tained by the most prominent British writers on the philosophy of the mind, since the appearance of the *Essay concerning Human understanding*.

There is, indeed, a considerable exception to be made from the above general remark, in the writings of Mr. Harris ; who has professed to embody the views of the ancients, with regard to this and other subjects, in concurrence with his own opinions. His speculations on this theme, therefore, I shall have occasion to notice in the sequel ; as well as those of some other writers who have touched incidentally upon it.

One reason of the apparent neglect of the subject, by that class of writers to whom I here particularly allude, may possibly be the apparent *general consent* among logicians with regard to its principles. I shall, however, in the present section, have occasion to show, that a certain existing very profound schism in philosophical opinion, must be referred ultimately to the subject of Relation ; in the course of which reference, the adverse party, in point of fact, must entertain an opinion of relation essentially different from that which has been usually held with regard to it.

The schism to which I have just now alluded, is that which has divided the opinions of philosophers, both ancient and modern, with regard to the *origin and sources of our knowledge*. This subject has been recently entertained by Professor Stewart, in his *Philosophical Essays* ; in which it forms a very conspicuous feature : and his aim, therein, has

been to controvert the doctrine of Locke, with regard to it; and, ultimately, to explode the unfavorable conclusion which has been drawn by many of the French, and indeed of the English writers, upon the subject, as the direct and legitimate consequence of Locke's doctrine.

In the execution of this design, Mr. Stewart has occupied the several Chapters of his First Essay, with a variety of extracts from the early part of Locke's work, and with copious animadversion thereupon. Against these strictures, themselves, I do not intend to offer any present objection. But I am under the necessity of pointing out, here, as a matter of essential importance to the merits of the schism in question, that *any strictures* offered with regard to Locke's doctrine of the origin of our knowledge, so far as that doctrine is contained in the *early part* of his Essay, must have been applied in the wrong place, and must therefore be unavailing; inasmuch as Locke has not, in the early chapters of his work, done any thing more than *assume* the sources of our knowledge, upon *description*; but has confined to his *subsequent chapters on Relation*, the whole show of *analysis*, whereupon he has founded his conclusions with regard to those sources, and whereupon alone, I conceive, any such conclusion can be logically founded.

From the importance of the subject at issue; I am farther obliged to remark, that, as Locke has dealt only in summary assertions, or descriptions, on this head, in the early part of his work; so, likewise, he has been answered by Mr. Stewart, in

assertions still more summary ; without any shew of analytical evidence in support of his assumptions ; or any thing in the nature of a counterpoise to that elaborate analysis which Locke has furnished, as the foundation of his own views.

As for the real merits of the Schism involved ; I have no hesitation in professing, in the outset, to side with that view of it which has been, in general terms, embraced by Mr. Stewart : and, accordingly, I depend, in the following sections, upon the expectation of showing that Locke's analysis and doctrine of Relation are deeply and essentially erroneous. But I humbly conceive that this is to be shown only by another and opposite analysis of the subject.

Supposing a reader to have yielded his assent, (as I believe many readers have done,) to that part of Locke's account of the nature of our ideas which is contained in the *early part* of his Essay, namely, in the *First and Second Chapters* of his *Second Book* (from which and from the *Eighth and Eleventh Chapters*, exclusively, Mr. Stewart has furnished his extracts,) in this case, I apprehend, it would still be impossible for such a reader to retain his first opinion, after having arrived at, and gone through, Locke's analysis of Relation, (which is contained in the *TwentyFifth and following Chapters* of the same Book) *unless* he should also *distinctly yield his assent to the principles of that analysis*.

Manifest as this must appear, the moment it is pointed out ; it is unaccountable to remark, that in the



animadversions of Professor Stewart upon Locke's doctrine of the origin of our knowledge, continued through the whole four Chapters of Mr. Stewart's First Essay, there is not, I believe, the most distant allusion to Locke's analysis of relation; nor is it in the least suggested that any analysis of relation is at all requisite, to furnish a proof of what is the real origin, or sources of our knowledge.

After these observations, the truth of which, I am sufficiently sensible, requires to be substantiated by particular evidence; I must hazard the opinion, not only that Mr. Stewart has attacked the doctrine of Locke in the place where its argument did not consist; but, what is of more consequence, that the attack is made on a part wherein the French writers *have not supposed it to consist*; but, on the contrary, that those writers have derived their unfavorable conclusion, with regard to the origin of our knowledge, immediately from Locke's ANALYSIS OF RELATION.

Of the *general* importance of the subject of Relation, it is altogether unnecessary for me to speak. Nor shall I stop, here, to enumerate the principal bearings which this subject will be found to have, in its special application to various topics in the course of this volume. It may be sufficient for the present to observe, that, in so far as it involves the above mentioned question, it is on this account alone a subject whose importance would justify the intended extent of inquiry. In order, however,

that, upon one hand, I may not be charged with aiming to furnish a desideratum which has been already supplied; and that, upon the other, I should not be thought to have taken an unfair view of what has been advanced on the subject by Professor Stewart, I shall present the following details; in the course of which, independent of the matter of evidence, I hope the subject itself will receive some illustration.

In the First Chapter of his First Essay, as well as in other places, Mr. Stewart assumes, and appears to dwell with stress upon, the *notion of our own existence* and that of our *continued identity*, as being two ideas not derived immediately from consciousness. But the most considerable passage which I find in Professor Stewart's work, in the nature of analysis, or of argument in support of his own opinion on this subject, is to the following effect:

“ Thus, by a mind destitute of the faculty of *memory*, neither the ideas of *time*, nor of *motion*, nor of *personal identity*, could possibly be formed; ideas which are confessedly among the most familiar of all those we possess, and which cannot be traced immediately to consciousness, by any effort of logical subtilty. In like manner, without the faculty of *abstraction* we never could have formed the idea of *number*; nor of *lines*, *superficies*, and *solids*, as they are considered by the mathematician; nor could it have been possible for us to comprehend the meaning of such words as *classes* or *assortments*, or indeed any of

“ the grammatical *parts of speech*, but proper names.  
“ Without the power of *reason or understanding*, it  
“ is no less evident, that no comment could have  
“ enabled us to unriddle the import of the words  
“ *truth, certainty, probability, theorem, premises, con-*  
“ *clusion*; nor any one of those which express the  
“ various sorts of *relation* which fall under our  
“ knowledge.”

Now, with regard to this passage; I must first observe, that if it was Mr. Stewart's intention to *contradistinguish* all the objects expressed by the preceding words which he has particularised, or if he views them as belonging to a different class from “ the various relations which fall under our knowledge;” it is, in my opinion, a distinction without a difference, because, almost the whole of these words (with the exception of *space* and *time*, which signify two disputed subjects) *express nothing BUT relations*. The real amount of the passage, therefore, is little more than this; namely, that, without the faculty of understanding, no comment could help us to unriddle *the import of the various words which express relations*.

Now this, I grant, is a very just assumption. But I must at the same time observe, that this truth had been before as fully asserted by Locke, as it ever can be by any one: for he repeatedly defines relation to be “ *a way of comparing things together*;” and he has, throughout, insisted, that this act, and the perception of its result, that is the perception of *agreements or differences* between things, is in the province of *reason*.

The difficulty of the subject, therefore, consists in ASCERTAINING *in* WHAT WAY our reason operates, in the perception of Relation : *to effect which* would, at the same time, be to ascertain *what the nature of* RELATION ITSELF IN REALITY IS ; which I conceive to be at this moment one of the greatest desiderata in philosophy, notwithstanding the *appearance of general consent* among logicians with regard to it.—There is no doubt that Professor Stewart differs vastly from Mr. Locke with regard to this process of the Mind, as will be shown in the sequel ; although Mr. Stewart has not entered into any investigation, that in the least indicates the precise nature of his particular views with regard to it ; while Locke, on the contrary, has been very minute and explicit in detailing his own views.

In the course of what has been advanced by Professor Stewart with regard to the origin of our knowledge, in the several chapters of the Essay already referred to, he has cited the concurrent opinions of Plato, of Leibnitz, of Cudworth, Harris, and Price ; and, in so doing, it is important to observe the light in which the subject has been viewed by these authorities. In his Third Chapter, Mr. Stewart quotes the opinion of Plato, in the following words : “ it cannot be the powers “ of sense that compares the perceptions of the “ senses and apprehends the general affections of “ things.” Upon this quotation, also, he offers the following remark ; “ To illustrate what he” (Plato)

“ means by the general affections of things, he  
“ mentions, as examples, *identity, number, similitude,*  
“ *dissimilitude, equality, inequality.*”

I have quoted this passage for the purpose of showing *how repeatedly the mind*, in its attempts to trace the origin and sources of our knowledge, is *thrown upon the subject of Relation*, as the *only medium* through which this desideratum is to be obtained. Of the various instances which have been cited by Professor Stewart himself, of notions elaborated, or produced, by the understanding; it has been already shown that they are almost all of them notions of Relation: And here, again, upon an appeal to Plato; we have nothing but another string of instances, every one of which is a mere Relation.

It is not my wish to speak of *Substance* in this place; but I would not, by the foregoing train of reasoning, be thought to deny that *substance and its elements are also objects of understanding*. Upon this occasion, therefore, I would suggest, that, at the utmost, we can only conceive TWO different GENERA of *substance*, namely *body* and *mind*; and, that all differences between minds, (and bodies supposing them to exist,) are distinguished by the *Generic Relation of Severalty*, and by innumerable SPECIFIC RELATIONS between them. It is, therefore, the CATEGORY OF RELATION ALONE, that, like an immense number of rivers and lesser streams, flowing between things, of but one,

or two, different generic substances, divides them into an infinite number of individuals, or separate wholes: And hence it becomes manifest, that RELATION, inasmuch as it INVOLVES ALL DISTINCTIONS, is the GREAT object of understanding, or that which is *continually occupying our thought*; although it be not the SOLE object.

To illustrate this fact; I observe that, when we are transacting business with a number of persons, our thought is very rarely turned upon the *substantive nature* of the individuals which form that number: we seldom think of the *substance* of human *body*, or human *mind*; but we are almost wholly taken up with the *similitudes and differences, of characters, powers, ranks, localities*, and innumerable OTHER RELATIONS, which separate us from all those individuals, and each of them from all the others.

To know these; and other such relations, is to know the Structure of the Universe around us. And the important object of the present chapter, as it was also the object of Locke's analysis of the subject, is to ascertain *HOW we acquire the perception of Relations*, that is, how the reasoning or judging faculty *operates* therein; and, consequently, **WHAT THE GENERIC NATURE OF RELATION *itself in reality is?***

If this view of the subject be admitted; I must beg to observe, that it does not appear to have been a logical procedure, to have pointed out the notions of our *identity, of motion, of number, truth, theorem, conclusion, or any other PARTICULAR SET of relations*, in order to show the sources of our

knowledge; for it is manifest that *the general principle of all relation must be one and the same*; and, if it be our understanding that apprehends any one sort of relation, it must be the understanding that discerns all the others, also. *A general analysis of Relation, therefore, is the only medium through which either the sources of our knowledge, or the nature of its objects, can be ascertained.* And I must here again suggest, what I have already hinted upon this subject, namely, that I conceive there exists in the general contemplation of philosophers some very profound misunderstanding with regard to the *real nature of Relation*. It is under this impression, at least, that I have prosecuted the following speculations.

In order to show that Locke, himself, fully considered his analysis (as contained in the Twenty Fifth and following chapters of his Second Book) as the proper foundation of the doctrine which he advanced upon description in his previous account of the sources of our knowledge; I shall here quote his own express authority.

In a long *Foot Note*, in the *Second Chapter* of his Second Book, he makes answer to a cavil which had been started against a former Edition of his work, by appealing, in several instances, to his *subsequent chapters on Relation*. Thus, in the first instance, he says, “ For general ideas come not “ into the mind by sensation or reflection, but are “ the creatures and inventions of the understand-

“ing, as I think I have shown, and also how the  
 “mind makes them from ideas which it has got  
 “from sensation and reflection; and *as to the ideas*  
 “*of relation*, how the mind forms them, and how  
 “they are derived from, and ultimately terminate  
 “in ideas of sensation and reflection, I have like-  
 “wise shown.”

Again he says, “For I never denied that the  
 “mind can frame to itself ideas of relation, but  
 “have showed quite the contrary in my chapter  
 “about relation.”

After such express and pointed indications, *given in his Second Chapter*, to direct his readers to his *subsequent analysis of relation*, upon which his assumptions had been founded; it cannot for a moment be asserted that Locke's doctrine of the origin of our knowledge, can be either *condemned* or *approved* upon the strength of any thing that he has advanced in the earlier part of his *Essay*; upon which, however, Professor Stewart, in his strictures, has exclusively commented.

But this is not all that I am under the necessity to observe here. For it may be asked, When Locke had repeatedly asserted that it is the UNDERSTANDING *that frames ideas of relation, out of ideas of sensation and reflection*; What additional light does Professor Stewart throw upon the subject, by informing us, in so many words, that “*without the help of REASON (OR UNDERSTANDING)*” “no comment could *help us to unriddle the import*” of certain words, signifying relations? I confess it appears to me that, if Locke had never gone into



any analysis of the subject at all, his above-mentioned simple assumption would have been just as *explicit*, and *might even be supposed to import the VERY SAME MEANING*, as the summary assumption of Mr. Stewart.

There is one passage in Mr. Stewart's writings on the subject, and I think but one, that serves in the smallest degree for a *test or criterion*, to inform us that his view of the process of the mind in the perception of relation, or rather his view of the *nature of relation itself*, is different from that of Locke. It is a passage in the Third Chapter of his First Essay; wherein he observes, that "What Locke calls *agreements* and *disagreements*, are, in many instances, simple ideas, of which no analysis can be given:" Which view of the subject he mentions as being concurred in, or anticipated, by Dr. Price.

This I apprehend to be a very just remark; and, when it is duly followed out, a most important one. It would appear, from the tenor of Mr. Stewart's reasonings in the context, that he grounds his assumption of it upon the simplicity of some of those particular notions which he has expressly enumerated; such as those of *existence*, of *identity*, and of *number*.—But I have been led to conceive that *SIMPLICITY*, and *not COMPLEXNESS*, will be found, from the result of a rigorous analysis, to be the *general character* of our ideas of Relation; and, that *complex relations* will prove to

be so *comparatively few*, as to be marked out for the *exception, not the rule*.

This view of the subject, if it should ultimately be realised, must present a complete opposition to that which results from the whole analysis of Locke ; for, according to *his* principles, it is as impossible there should be such a thing as *a simple idea of relation*, as that we should conceive a square of only three sides.

From this statement, it becomes manifest, inasmuch as Professor Stewart has observed that "agreements and disagreements, are, in many instances, simple ideas," (and as agreements and disagreements are nothing but *relations*) he, *so far*, differs essentially from Locke's account of relation, and assumes that side of the subject which I propose to insist upon. This, I confess, is a circumstance from which I derive no small satisfaction ; because I find my own view of the subject run directly counter to the whole tenor of doctrine upon the subject, both ancient and modern ; unless it may be said that Dr. Reid, also, seems to have viewed the matter in the same light as Mr. Stewart has done. In the analysis which I shall hazard of the subject, it is certainly encouraging to reflect that I must have the assent and support of so distinguished a critic as Professor Stewart ; because I feel pretty confident that if he be right (as I conceive him to be) in the particular instances he has alluded to, the change induced upon the subject cannot be partial : The whole fabric and foundation of the Category of Relation must, in this case,

be shown to be of a different constitution from that which Locke and all other writers, in general, have judged it to possess. The change indeed, which would be thus effected, in our logical view of the universe of things, would be immense. I apprehend at the same time that its evidences are strictly demonstrative.

It appears in this place important to explain, that, when Mr. Stewart assumes that many of our ideas of "*agreements and disagreements* are simple ideas, of which no analysis can be given;" he asserts what I consider to be strictly true, but which, however, conveys *no conception of the operation of the mind* in its apprehension of these ideas.

The fact, as I shall endeavour to show, is, that the mind apprehends ideas of relation (the generality of which I suppose to be *simple ideas*) in a way which may be compared to that of an anatomist who is demonstrating a *gland* in the internal parts of an animal body. The *gland itself* may here be supposed to be *perfectly simple*; but its form and nature can be shown only by *demonstrating the surrounding parts* to which the gland adheres, and which *shape, limit, and support it*, although they form no part of its own structure or essence. Hence, although *relations themselves* be very generally simple; yet, *without an analysis of the combination of subjects that support them*, WE CANNOT DEMONSTRATE that they ARE simple.

Instead of entertaining this view of the subject ;

Professor Stewart has assumed, that, “ In such cases, all that can be said is, that the exercise of a particular faculty furnishes the *occasion* on which, certain simple notions are, by the laws of our constitution, presented to our thoughts; nor does it seem possible for us to trace the origin of a particular notion any farther, than to ascertain what the nature of the *occasion* was, which, in the first instance, introduced it to our acquaintance.” Philosophical Essays, Essay 1. Chap. 2.

For my own part, I humbly think that this passage exhibits an assumption which is equally summary and erroneous. For I shall endeavour to show that *every notion of relation* is demonstrably *as clear and distinct from the notions of the two subjects between which the relation exists*, as the kernel of a nut is from the shell which it inhabits. To say, therefore, that “ In such cases *all that can be said* is, that a particular faculty furnishes the *occasion*” on which the idea of a relation is suggested, must be granted to be profoundly erroneous, if we should be enabled to show *the manner in which the faculty of judgment OPERATES THEREIN*. But I have already confessed the solitariness of my own conception of the subject; and therefore I have only to crave the indulgence of my readers, until I shall be upon the proofs of it.

As for the Origin of the views of Relation now proposed; whatever judgment shall be pronounced upon them, they flow by so natural a

transition from the nature of my speculations on the subject of Perception, that, the moment the connection is pointed out to the reader, he cannot fail to discern the course by which I have proceeded. It has been repeatedly and justly remarked, that our views in one department of science often lead us to new speculations in some other department, with which the former did not at first appear to have any particular connection. It is certain that the subject of Perception, as it has been uniformly viewed by Pneumatologists, has appeared to be altogether foreign to that of Relation. But, having once made it out to be of this nature; the *generalisation or extension of the principles* of this species of Relation, or the prosecution of the analysis through *other species*, becomes a rational transition. In the course of this enlargement of the subject, I have also been led to enter into those views of the Relation of Real Efficiency which will be submitted in the course of this volume; and which, together with the Chapter on Relation in General, form two of the most considerable subjects which I had from the beginning contemplated to offer, in the present undertaking

## SECTION THIRD.

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### OF THE GENERAL NATURE OF RELATION.

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#### 1.

*Of the Opinions of Philosophers with regard to this Subject.*

THERE is hardly any Category, in the universe of things, concerning which logicians and philosophers have entertained so uniform a tenor of doctrine, as that of Relation. The same views of the subject (in point of substance) which were held by Aristotle and his followers, have been retained and exemplified in modern times by Locke, in a very elaborate analysis; and this last appears to have been subscribed to by the generality of subsequent writers, with the exception of those who have derived the same view of the subject more immediately from the Peripatetics.

The amount of this uniform doctrine, (which I shall explain in particulars, in the sequel) is, that Relation consists in *a superinduced character, additional to any substantive quality in each of any two different subjects*, in consequence of these two qualities supporting a *correspondency*, and of their being *compared together*, as being either similar or dissimilar, equal or unequal.

The principal consideration which I would here

point out, with regard to the doctrine in question, is, that *Relation* is not therein considered as any thing other than *Relatives*. When logicians talk of *Relations between things*; they do not thereby at all mean that a *Relation* is any *Third Thing* between two *Relatives*, like a party wall between two gardens, or a hedge row between two fields. On the contrary, *Relation* and *Relatives*, in the estimation of philosophers, are, to all intents and purposes, convertible or synonymous terms. Hence we find, that, although all writers, on every subject, sometimes talk of “*relations between things* ;” it is, however, much more usual to say “the relations *of things*,”—“the relation *of one thing to another*,”—“the relation which one thing *bears to another*,”—or, what any “one thing is *in respect of another*.”

This doctrine of the subject, having been received without contradiction through a long succession of ages, has grown into a mighty fabric of logical assumption; whose extent and operation are commensurate with the whole nature of things: and it must be confessed, that such an extensive unanimity in philosophical opinion challenges a very high degree of respect, and appears almost imperative upon our belief. The charge of presumption, therefore, must, no doubt, lie, with a great appearance of justice, against any expression of general dissent from this creed. But notwithstanding all the deference which I am willing to yield in such a case, and my own proportionate endeavours to shape my conceptions of the subject

accordingly; I find it impossible to reconcile the above-mentioned doctrine to my own apprehension of the nature of things.—To myself, I confess, it has appeared, after the best consideration that I have been able to afford the subject, that **RELATION** *has an essence distinct from RELATIVES*. In other words; I am obliged to think that every Relation is of the nature of a *distinct party-wall* between two Relatives which support it.

As for Relatives, themselves; I suppose them to be those *superinduced or additional characters*, with which any two substantive or positive things are clothed, when we view them as supporting a Relation between them: and the Relation which they support, I suppose to be, at the same time, *a real partition between them*, and (when viewed by a rational intellect) *a bond of correspondency which in one sense holds them together*.

I shall not enter any farther upon the development of my own views of the subject, until I shall have previously stated the particular merits and evidence of the prevailing doctrine. In the interim it may be offered, for a general remark, that a vast change must take place in the constitution of universal logic, if the view which I have here ventured to suggest of Relation should ultimately be substantiated.

With a hope to gain the indulgence of my readers, to grant me their attention in this attempt;



I not only here beg to remind them, that the whole consequence, which I contemplate, must follow from following out that partial admission which has been made by Professor Stewart (of the *simplicity* of many of our ideas of *agreements* and *disagreements*,) and, therefore, that I have this very eminent critic virtually on my side ; but, in addition to this, I would suggest the following observation.

It appears to me, that the subject of *Relation* involves a profound subtilty, that may be compared to one which, during so many ages, continued to shroud, from the acumen and research of philosophers, the real nature of those *Objects* which the mind has in its contemplation when we make use of *general words*. When, therefore, we reflect *how long*, and, even, after certain intervals of emancipation, *how repeatedly*, the philosophical world has bowed its neck to receive the yoke of erroneous opinion by entertaining the absurd doctrine of *General Ideas*, and otherwise of *General Conceptions*; and when we consider, that this absurd doctrine is not yet altogether excluded from the speculations of learned men ; we may perhaps be inclined to caution, in pronouncing with regard to the real nature of *Relation*, (cemented though it be, by time and general consent) provided any set objection be started against it. When also we reflect, that the scholastic doctrine of *General Ideas* was first successfully impeached in the darkness of the middle ages, when its assailants had not many of the advantages which science affords to the logician ; we may, perhaps, be still more inclined to lend our

attention to objections deliberately proposed, against another subject which unquestionably labors under *a subtilty analogous*.

At the same time, however, it may be proper for me to signify, that the analogy in question is by no means so close as to render the nature of relation ultimately doubtful. On the contrary, if I be not mistaken, the nature of this category is strictly and directly demonstrable.

To those, upon the other hand, who may be inclined, at first sight, to suppose that the subject of relation is a plain matter, which involves little or no subtilty; it may be sufficient to quote the opinion which has been expressed with regard to it by no less an authority than Barrow. In his Eighteenth Mathematical Lecture, where he is defending Euclid's definition of *Reason or Proportion*, he offers the following apology: "I beg pardon for spending a little more labor than ordinary in illustrating a thing so difficult to be explained, and well nigh too subtle for the most attentive mind." Now *Reason or Proportion* is nothing but *Relation*: and it is self evident that *the same general nature* must belong to ALL RELATIONS.

While I quote the authority of Barrow, as a most considerable testimony to the subtilty of the subject; I would here particularly warn those who may require it, that the *usual language* of philosophers, in treating of relation, is the most *ambiguous* that is to be found in any department of science.

In the various quotations which I shall have oc-

casión to bring forward, in order to afford a clear statement of the views, or rather the *common view*, of philosophers on the subject; there is hardly a sentence that does not admit of a double interpretation: and, what is more, the *most obvious* import of every such sentence is *usually the erroneous one*. By being fore-armed with this intimation; I conceive, indeed, that any intelligent reader, with the most moderate attention, may clearly discern the real merits of the subject: but, without this, I apprehend, it must be very difficult to avoid being misled by specious and deceitful appearances.

Mr. Locke is to be placed conspicuously at the head of those writers, among the moderns, who have entertained the subject of relation, and who, therefore, has been most prominent in maintaining, that doctrine with regard to it against which I propose to object. His view of the subject, however, is, in substance, altogether identical with that of the Peripatetics; and he has only, by a more particular treatment than has been entered into by any other modern writer, exemplified the doctrine which the ancients had held with regard to it.

A conclusive evidence of the truth of this remark is had in the celebrated assumption of Aristotle, in concurrence with the doctrine of Locke, that there is “*Nothing in the INTELLECT, which was not previously in the SENSE.*”

As, however, the nature of the subject of relation is of infinite importance; I shall, previously to

submitting my own views with regard to it, furnish a statement of several of the most accredited distinct opinions, which have been advanced concerning it.

With this view, I shall first present the reader with the substance of the analysis of Locke. And, distinctly from this will be furnished, that which has been afforded by Mr. Harris ; who, next to Locke himself, has treated the subject in a more elementary way than any writer with whom I am acquainted. Besides this, I shall advert to what has been advanced upon the subject by Barrow, by Hume, and by several other writers.

I have little doubt that what will be furnished from these sources, and from those to which they expressly refer, will contain every thing that is essential to exhibit the whole nature of that doctrine which I am under the necessity to controvert.

As for that view which has been taken of the subject by Dr. Reid ; although it is extremely vague, as well as summary ; I shall notice it particularly. But, if its complexion can be decidedly pronounced upon ; I think it seems to concur with that of Professor Stewart ; and, as such, it leans favorably towards my own views.

### *Doctrine of Locke.*

“When the mind” (says Mr. Locke, Book 2. Chap. 25.) “so considers one thing, that it does  
“as it were bring it to and set it by another, and

“carry its view from the one to the other, this is, as the word imports, relation and respect.”

Agreeably with this account; the author of it, in various places, defines *relation* to be “*a way of comparing two things together.*”

In this place, therefore, it becomes necessary for me to point out the vast difference which appears between the *definitions* given by different authors, of the subject of relation, who, nevertheless, agree in their *reasonings* on the subject;—a difference which, in itself, is a test of the existence of very confused views, and which require therefore to be fully exposed.

According to Mr. Hume, in his “*Treatise of Human Nature,*” “The word relation is commonly used in two senses considerably different, Either for that equality by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination, and the one naturally introduces the other; or for that particular circumstance, in which, even upon the arbitrary union of two ideas in the fancy, we may think proper to compare them. In the common language the former is always the sense in which we use the word relation; and it is only in philosophy that we extend it to mean any particular subject.”

Agreeably with *this* definition; the word relation, whether it be used in the popular or in the philosophical sense, means nothing but *a quality in the things compared*: Whereas, according to the definition of Locke, relation is merely “*a way of*

“*comparing two things together,*” *that is a mere act of the mind.*

The confusion herein exhibited, is of the most extreme degree. To talk of a *quality, or qualities*, in different subjects, as being *a way of comparing these qualities together*, would subject any person to the charge of downright idiotism. Yet, such language would be necessary to reconcile the *definition of Locke* to the *definition of Hume*. And, what is more, such language would be necessary to reconcile the *definition of Locke* to his own REASONING ON the subject; because it will be seen that the whole tenor of *his reasoning* coincides with the *definition of Hume*.

It may indeed, I apprehend, be justly questioned, whether the words *relation and respect* ought not to have been appropriated *exclusively to the act of the mind* in perceiving relation. It is, evidently, with this view of the subject that Locke has *defined* relation. But, throughout his whole *reasoning* with regard to it, he has considered it to be of the very same nature that is ascribed to it by the *definition of Hume*, and by the doctrine of philosophers in general.

APART *from his definition*; Locke’s general doctrine of relation is contained in the 25th and following Chapters of his Second Book; and is repeated, with slight variations of phraseology, to the following effect.

“All the ideas we have of relation, are made up,  
“as the others are, only of simple ideas; and they

“all, how refined, or remote from sense soever  
“they seem, terminate at last in simple ideas.”

Here, in order to ascertain, critically, what is meant by ‘*simple ideas* ;’ it is to be observed, that Locke explains his own meaning, in the same chapter, and in various places, as follows: “relations all terminate in, and are concerned about, those simple ideas, either of sensation or reflection, which I think to be the whole materials of our knowledge.”

Without offering any intermediate comment upon the matter of the above statement; I shall here present the reader with a couple of examples, which Mr. Locke has furnished, in illustration of the doctrine it contains: from which, I think, we may derive a pretty clear view of that doctrine.

“When the word father is mentioned; first, there is meant that particular species, or collective idea, signified by the word man. Secondly, those sensible simple ideas signified by the word generation: and, thirdly, the effect of it, and all the simple ideas signified by the word child. So the word friend being taken for a man, who loves, and is ready to do good to another, has all these following ideas to the making of it up: First, all the simple ideas, comprehended in the word man, or intelligent being. Secondly, the idea of love. Thirdly, the idea of readiness or disposition. Fourthly, the idea of action, which is any kind of thought or motion. Fifthly, the idea

“ of good, which signifies any thing that may advance his happiness. And thus also all moral words terminate at last, though perhaps more remotely, in a collection of simple ideas; the immediate signification of relative words, being very often other supposed known relations; which, if traced one to another, still end in simple ideas.”

From the view which I profess to entertain of the subject; I should, with regard to these two examples, be led confidently to say, that Locke has therein defined the *Relatives*, and *not the Relation*. But it is altogether certain that he meant to define the relation; or, more properly speaking, it is certain that he considered relation and relatives to be but one same thing; and it is equally manifest, that all other philosophers, in general, have entertained the same view of the subject.

Thus it is said by Locke, in the passage just now quoted, “the immediate signification of *relative words*, being very often other supposed *known relations*.”

Again, in §. 3. of the same chapter, he says, “Patron and client are easily allowed to be *relations*, but a constable or a dictator are not so readily, at first hearing, considered as such.”

Now, a constable, or a dictator, is manifestly *a Correlative* to the subjects whom he governs; and, at this rate, *relatives* and *relation* are certainly assumed to be one same thing.

Again, in chapter 25. §. 2. he says, “These and the like *relations*, are expressed by *relative*



“*terms*, that have others answering to them, as “*father and son, bigger and less,*” &c.

I should not have multiplied these instances, (because the meaning of Locke is altogether so indubitable throughout his analysis) if it were not for the infinite magnitude of the subject and for the almost incredible fact which, in my humble opinion, it exhibits, namely, that philosophers in general have always actually thus confounded relation with relatives. But, on this account, I shall perhaps have occasion to notice some other instances of the fact in the writings of Locke, as well as to adduce very sufficient evidences of the same in those other writers whose opinions are to be brought forward.

*Doctrine of Harris, in concurrence with that of Aristotle and the Peripatetics.—Farther concurred in by Hume and by Barrow.*

Mr. Harris has entitled the *Tenth* Chapter of his *Philosophical Arrangements* as follows; namely, “**CONCERNING RELATIVES.**”—And, in a *Foot Note*, at the bottom of the same page, he has deemed it fit to *justify* this title, in the following terms.—“The title of this Arrangement is expressed by a *plural*, and *not a singular*, like quantity and quality, because *all relation is necessarily between TWO.*”

Now it will be admitted, that, to title a head as “**RELATIVES** because **ALL RELATION** is between

two," is to identify the two terms in the most complete manner possible.

With regard to the observation of this author, that "*all relation is necessarily BETWEEN TWO;*" I must here observe, it is one of those ambiguous expressions against which I have already cautioned my readers. It is, moreover, an expression of infinite importance to the subject; and I shall therefore have to notice it repeatedly in the course of the present analysis.—It speciously appears to ascribe to relation that very nature which I apprehend it to possess: but I am to remark that nothing was farther from Mr. Harris than a design to imply any such thing. On the contrary, all that he meant, both in his title and in its justification, was to express the nature of relation *more critically* than he thought it had been done by other writers in general, by *naming it in the PLURAL, inasmuch as NO RELATIVE can exist without a CORRELATIVE*; and all he intended to assert by the words "*between two,*" is this very fact that *relatives* must always be *in pairs*. Of the truth of this remark, which however I think is manifest from what I have already said, the following passage affords a conclusive evidence.

In a Foot Note to page 215, in the chapter already quoted, Mr. Harris says, "Even in the two Pre-dicaments that precede this of *Relatives*, I mean "Quantity and Quality, though they have an existence void of Relation, we cannot say so of their characteristic peculiarities; for LIKE *is a relative term, and so is EQUAL.*"

In this passage, we find, relation is expressly

asserted to be nothing but the *characteristic peculiarities* of things, as distinguished from their *mere substantive nature*; and there is no possible opening left, for supposing that its author considered relation to be any *third thing*, actually existing between two relatives, although he has said that *all relation is necessarily between TWO*.

In another work, namely, in his *Hermes*, (Chap. 9th) he observes, if possible still more explicitly, that “the attribute of QUANTITY passes insensibly into that of RELATION.” Here, then, we find, that RELATION is considered to be nothing but that *superinduced RELATIVE CHARACTER*, which is attached to any substantive or positive subject, merely in consequence of its *co-existence* with some other subject; which superinduced character is, in other words, what we call RELATIVE.

I apprehend this evidence to be altogether complete, with regard to Mr. Harris’s own views.

The definition of Relation furnished by ARISTOTLE, as quoted by Harris, accords perfectly with the view of the subject which has been taken by this author himself—“*Such things as these are said to be relatives, namely, as many as are said TO BE WHAT THEY ARE, by BEING THINGS BELONGING TO SOME OTHER THING, or which, in any other sense, have reference to something else.*”

This definition is evidently a just one, if understood as regarding what I consider to be RELA-

TIVES, *as distinguished* from RELATION: But it is, undoubtedly, intended for a definition of RELATION; Or, rather, it is meant by Aristotle, and understood by Harris, that Relatives and Relation are but one same thing; and therefore a definition of the one is supposed to be a definition of the other also.

We have already seen, that the definition of Relation given by Mr. Hume, is perfectly coincident with the doctrine of all the other authors which I have here quoted. According to him, relation is *not any partition* between things; for it is merely “*that quality in things, by means of which we are enabled to compare them together.*” The suffrage of Mr. Hume, on the side of the prevalent doctrine, is therefore complete.

Of the different authorities which I considered it requisite to cite, in order to furnish an adequate view of the doctrine herein to be opposed; the only one which remains to be brought forward, in this place, is that of Barrow.

This eminent mathematician, in what he has had occasion to say upon the subject, has more expressly identified the term *relatives* with that of *relation*, than any writer yet mentioned. His opinion, therefore, very properly closes the evidence which was here to have been adduced.

“Relation” (says Barrow, after Suidas) “is said of things which are referred to one another, as

“the son to the father, a friend to a friend: for these both relate and are related to one another, and therefore are termed relations.” *Math. Lects. Lect. 18th.*

Again; He quotes, with approbation, the following definition of relation, as that of Aristotle. “The essence of Relations consists in this, that they have themselves in a certain manner, or are in some sort, affected to something.”

Lastly; I shall observe, that, in his Twenty-Seventh Lecture, he appeals, as to approved authority, to the fact, that “a relation is defined to have its whole essence in respect to (or from consideration of) some kind or kinds of being, as distinct from all others.”—And, again, he says, “Logicians have hitherto taught that *Relations are in herent to*, are attributed, and dependent upon, absolute things.”

I have been anxious to multiply the foregoing evidences, not only as requisite to show the unanimity of philosophers, with regard to that doctrine which I am under the necessity to controvert; but also, especially, on account of its subtilty, and because of that ambiguity of language which, I have already repeatedly remarked, is to be observed in almost every thing that is said by writers with regard to it. Thus Mr. Locke frequently expresses himself to the following effect: “Relation is between two things.”—“Relation is a different thing from the thing related.” These;

and other expressions implying the same thing, are often to be met with; and, in their obvious aspect, they appear conclusively to express that very view of relation which I propose to insist upon. But, from what has already been advanced, it must be manifest that the real meaning of all such expressions, as intended by those authors, is entirely different, and in effect opposite to this.

For, in the *First* instance, they evidently mean only that *there can be no* RELATIVE *without a* CORRELATIVE; and in this sense, (as well as in that very opposite sense in which I entertain the expressions) it is to be granted that every relation must be *between two*. And, *Secondly*, when they say that "relation" is a different thing from the thing related," they only mean that the *superinduced character of a relative* is a different thing from the *mere substantive character of that thing in itself* which is called the relative.

I have now, I trust, sufficiently laid open this course of ambiguity, to prevent it from misleading any person who shall have attended to what has been advanced.—But that the phraseology in use, on this subject, is of a most deceptive nature, and that it has actually deceived readers in general, I think there can be no doubt. If I might venture a conjecture upon the subject; I should suppose, that the great unanimity hitherto observable with regard to it has arisen, in part, from this very ambiguity: for I can hardly doubt that many persons, whose minds have not been biased by

scholastic theory, have considered relation to be *a real partition or third thing between two relatives*. It is indeed, I humbly conceive, a truth, in the most rigid degree demonstrable, that the procedure of philosophers, themselves, in their various scientific pursuits, as well as that of ordinary persons in the common business of life, is directly contradictory of the assumption that relation is only *a combination of two relatives*. Such persons, when consulting the different authorities extant on the subject of relation, finding an *apparent* agreement with their own views in such ambiguous expressions as are here adverted to, may naturally, in many instances, have sat down under a persuasion that those logicians have entertained the very same opinion, namely, that *relation is a different thing from the thing related*,—and—that “*relation is only “between two.”*” Owing to this ambiguity, I suppose it not improbable that many speculative minds may have been satisfied; who might otherwise have questioned the received doctrine of the subject.

In a subsequent Section of this Chapter, I propose to consider the view of Relation which was entertained by the very ingenious author of the *Diversions of Purley*: Upon which occasion it will be found that this writer transcends all the preceding ones, in both the explicitness and the confidence with which he considers Relation and Relatives to be perfectly identical. I have postponed the consideration of his view of the subject, only

because it would have been superfluous in this place, and because it will be necessary to animadvert upon it at some length.

## 2.

### *Outline of Objection against the doctrine of Relation which has been stated.*

The general outline which I would propose to be considered, as that of the subject of Relation, is comprised in the following propositions.

1. Every real substantive being, and every element of any such being, is a *primarily-positive thing or subject*, in itself; without regard to any other thing.

2. But in the case of the *co-existence* of any two or more distinct substantive beings, or elements of beings, each of them acquires a character over and above its substantive positive one. This is the character which it possesses in consequence of its *correspondency, of similitude or dissimilitude, equality or inequality*, with any of the other co-existent substantive beings around it; and, in virtue of this *correspondency*, the SUBSTANTIVE POSITIVE THING, or THINGS in question are called RELATIVE, or RELATIVES.

3. But it is self-evident that the *co-existence*, or we may simply say the *existence*, of any *two things*, is absolutely impossible without the intervention of some *third one*; by which partition alone the things in question can be considered AS TWO or DIVERS.

I am aware that an exception is here to be made



for the *supposed* case of the *actual congruence of two things*. But I apprehend it is entirely unnecessary to embarrass our investigation with this case: for, to assume it in the case of *any two mathematical subjects*, is the plainest absurdity imaginable; and, if we must *suppose* it in the case of *spirits*, it is a thing *utterly inconceivable by us*, how any thing should be, *in all its elements, ONE and at the same time TWO DIFFERENT THINGS*. In every other case, my assumption is a self-evident necessary truth, namely, that every two things must have a *real partition between them*; and it is, *strictly speaking, IN VIRTUE OF THIS PARTITION that the SUBSTANTIVE THING on each side of it is called A RELATIVE*.

4. As for what may be farther necessary to be expressed, in this outline of the nature of relation, as consisting in a partition between every two relatives; I would observe, that its *generic name* is DIFFERENCE, or the RELATION OF SEVERALTY.

5. Moreover, it is to be here suggested, as a very important consideration, that RELATIONS are POSITIVE things. Nor is this the less true although they take also a *superinduced relative character*, like that of the positive or substantive things which they divide, and in virtue of that division. This, indeed, is a subtilty in the subject; which, I apprehend, will demand our particular attention. It may, probably, be owing, in part, to this relative nature, which is *additionally* possessed by all partitions between things, that relation has so uniformly been held to be *nothing else* but relatives. But I conceive, and I would here suggest it for

the particular notice of my readers, that we have the most logical ground for distinguishing those *partitions* which I call **RELATIONS**, from **OTHER RELATIVES**, inasmuch as *these partitions, in their positive nature are not primarily-positive things, but are EFFICIENTLY CAUSED* by the existence of the two substantive things which they divide.

This I shall fully illustrate in the sequel ; more especially, because it bears with most extensive operation upon the subject of *real efficiency*.

If, notwithstanding what I have now advanced, it should be misconceived, that, according to my own statement, Relation appears to be nothing but Relatives ; I would particularly repeat that what I have stated does not in the least approximate my views to those of the prevailing doctrine on the subject, inasmuch as a *Relation is, in its PRIMARY character, a real partition between any two things,—a partition caused or strictly created by the co-existence of those things ; and it is only in a secondary and superinduced character that any Relation becomes a RELATIVE.*

As a present test of the truth of this ; it can be only necessary to remark, that, according to what has been above suggested, **RELATION CANNOT, in the sense apprehended by logicians, be between TWO, but must always be between THREE.**

I cannot, I think, be too impressive in repeating that it is not at all my intention to deny that *every Relation is ALSO a Relative* : On the contrary, what I propose to show, is, **FIRST**, that every Relation,

in itself, is a *positive thing*, although it is absolutely brought into existence by the co-operation of **TWO RELATIVES**; and, **SECONDLY**, that it is a *relative thing*, that is a **THIRD RELATIVE**. But, of these two positions, the *principal* one is, that the third kind of Relative, which in its **PRIMARY character** I call a **RELATION**, is in reality brought into existence, that is in the strictest sense of the word **EFFICIENTLY CAUSED**, by some *two substantive beings*, in **CONSEQUENCE OF WHICH** these substantive beings take the character of *Relatives*; and, hence, that **Relatives** never can exist in **COUPLETS**, but *must of necessity exist* in **TRIPLETS**.

The vast and essential difference between the whole subject of **Relatives** (including **Relation**,) as thus suggested and the uniform doctrine of the subject entertained by all the authorities which have been quoted, cannot fail, at first sight, to strike every reader who is in the least conversant on the matter. According to all these authorities, **Relation** is said to be "*only between two things*" in the same sense that *two foils*, *two gloves*, or *two shoes*, (although they have no sensible bond to connect them together) are said to make "a *pair BETWEEN them*." But in these, and all such expressions, it is manifestly not meant to imply the existence of any *partition*, *any bridge*, or *any chain*, which connects two things together; and which chain forms a *distinct object of thought* in the apprehension of the logician.

If there were no other consequence of the view which I have here suggested, than the vast change

which the establishment of it would make in the general opinion with regard to *real efficiency*; this, alone, would be a test of an incalculable difference between the two schemes. But, independent of this, it is self-evident that our logical apprehension of the whole constitution of things in the universe must be essentially different, according as we assume that relation is made up by *a combination of two subjects, or not without a combination of THREE*:

I think, indeed, that I could not solicit the attention of my readers to any subject of greater logical importance than this one.

## SECTION FOURTH.

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OF THE SPECIAL NATURE OF RELATION.—RELATIONS ARE THE CREATURES OF RELATIVES; AND THEY FORM A DISTINCT ORDER OF RELATIVES.

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OF the innumerable different sorts of relation which exists, the specific differences in some of them are very great; insomuch, that they appear, upon a first view, and even after very considerable attention, to present to our notice a set of characters so vastly unlike, that one would not at all incline to suppose they could belong to one same genus.

It is moreover to be observed of this Category, that, by far the greater number of its species exhibit appearances which are extremely deceitful to ordinary observation, and which it appears have even imposed upon the imaginations of philosophers themselves.

As a familiar example of this deceptive nature; it may be asked, What person in ordinary is there, who, upon tracing the *likeness* of any one man, in the countenance of another, in the least doubts that the *resemblance* which he perceives is *a quality residing in the face he contemplates*? Yet I hold it certain that the *relation of resemblance* never dwelt in any

face, nor in any other subject whatever, since it is no other than that *correspondency* which exists BETWEEN some two related subjects.

But while we find an equal degree of subtilty, with that just now adverted to, in most of the different species of relation which fall under our notice ; there are, at the same time, some few other sorts, whose real natures stand so openly and indubitably revealed to the most ordinary observation, that it seems impossible we should be led into any mistake with regard to them : And, inasmuch as all relation must be *generically of one same nature*; by analysing these obvious species, I imagine we shall obtain a general analysis of the whole.

I propose therefore to select two or three examples, of those sorts of relation whose real nature stands the most plainly obvious to demonstration ; and, after having investigated their particular constitution, I would propose to consider them as a standard, to which we should refer all those other species, whose real natures, when viewed apart by themselves, it is very difficult to detect ; especially if our imagination has been previously occupied by the prevalent doctrine of the subject.

After this ; I shall compare the nature of these standard relations, with those particular relations (*or relatives rather*) which have been given as examples by Mr. Locke ; and shall then proceed with the sequel of the investigation.

One of the most remarkable species, and most

fit for our purpose, of any that ever presents itself in our ordinary intercourse with things, is that which has already been very extensively considered in the Chapter of Perception. I mean that relation which is otherwise called a *Visible Line*, in any of its species; but much more obviously in the *first species or breadthless line*, which, therefore, I shall select for our leading example, here.

When we are conscious of any two unsoftened sensations of various colors, such for example as *a blue* and *a yellow*, it has been sufficiently demonstrated, and indeed it is a self-evident necessary truth, that these two phenomena *must EFFICIENTLY CAUSE* that **THIRD PHENOMENON** which we call a visible line: for it is indisputable that the line in question could have had *no existence, except as produced by the CO-OPERATION of the two colors*.

Moreover, the two sensations of colors, themselves, are *substantive or primarily-positive phenomena*; and they become *relative things*, only by being referred to one another, as superior and inferior, right and left, brighter and darker, or, in one word, as being, in some way or other, **CONTRASTS to each other**. But it is plain that any of these relative characters, of the two colors, is derived *not from their own existence, or co-existence, only, but essentially from the existence of that THIRD THING which they have CREATED*, which *lies between them*, and which therefore is properly called **A LINE**. Forexample; the *blue* could NOT be ABOVE the *yellow*, *without being ALSO ABOVE THE LINE* which is neither blue nor yellow, but is a third and very differ-

ent phenomenon: And, in like manner, a *Green* could not be on the LEFT HAND of a *Purple*, without being ALSO *on the left hand of* THE LINE which divides the *Green* from the *Purple*. And thus, in every possible *relation or contrast* between two colors, THE LINE *between them must be a THIRD THING*, of a different nature; *without which third thing* the two colors could not be *relatives to each other*.

If I am not mistaken; this single example, in itself alone, amounts to a complete demonstration, that EVERY RELATION *must be NOT between TWO things, but* must necessarily be between THREE; that is using the phrase "*between two*" in the *improper or illogical sense* in which, I have shown, it is used by Mr. Harris in concurrence with other writers in general, namely, as *being made up by the combination of two subjects*. For I must repeat here, that by these writers it is never meant that relation is *between two, as a fetter is between two prisoners; but* only that relation is *made up by two, as any two similar things are said to make a pair between them*.

There is one step farther, which, it appears to me, this analysis may be carried, in the example in question; beyond which, I think, neither subtilty nor cavil can exist with regard to it: and, as this is certainly a step of a very subtile nature, I would crave particular attention to it; especially, as I suspect it *might*, in the case of some inquisitive



minds, prove the cause of much error with regard to the general subject.

In the case of a perceived line between two colors, as above supposed; if the *blue* be supposed to be **BELOW** the line and the *yellow* **ABOVE** it, it may perhaps by some be thought, that there is a *distinct relation* between the *blue* and the *breadthless line* that is above the blue; and *another distinct relation* between the *yellow* and the *breadthless line* that is below the yellow: and, since it is but *one same breadthless line* that is *common* between the blue and the yellow, owing to which the blue is called *below* and the yellow is called *above*, it may be thought that there are thus *two distinct relations (or partitions of natures)* between every two contrasted colors, and, consequently, that a relation is still shown to be only "*between TWO*" (i. e. *made up of two*) because *the BLUE is one thing* and *the LINE is another*.

To this extent of reasoning, if it should by any one be embraced; I would answer, that, if the matter in question be assumed for a reality, (and I entertain it as such here,) it will nevertheless lead to the very same result with that first demonstrated, namely, to prove (speaking in the sense of writers in general) that *all relation must be between THREE*, that is, must be *a combination of TWO PRIMARY RELATIVES* and *a PRODUCED RELATION* which becomes *A THIRD RELATIVE between them*. For it is plain, that *color itself* is a different thing and even of a different class from *the termination of color*, as much so as *a mathematical*

*surface* is a different thing from the *line which terminates it*: and, if we assume that there is a distinct relation or *partition of natures* between a *color* and the *line* which bounds it, this can only be done by assuming a *difference or contrast* between the COLOR and *its own boundary* LINE; and this *difference or contrast* can be *neither the color nor the line*, but it *must* be assumed as being SOME DIFFERENT THING, *although not a visible thing, between them*. And thus, the assumed relation, including its causal supporters, must be made up by a *combination of* THREE DIFFERENT SUBJECTS, OR OBJECTS, in the apprehension of the logician.

I know not if I may be understood, in what I have said, or am going to say: but I can readily conceive, in the case of *two colors* and *one visible line*, A SERIES of those evanescent relations which I have just now adverted to; in every one of which, it is self-evident, the relation must equally be made up of a *combination of* THREE SUBJECTS.

Those readers who are in the least given to abstruse speculation, will, I hope, have no difficulty in apprehending my meaning, in the subtle distinctions which have been here suggested. But it is not necessary to bestow any trouble upon the matter; as it is not essential for the apprehension of any thing that is to follow, and there is nothing in the sequel which may not be easily understood,

The species of relation which has now been considered, under the familiar name of the Visible Line, may in a more general sense be entitled

A RELATION OF CONTRAST. But, in point of fact, every relation in existence, in its most general character, is *necessarily a relation of contrast of one sort or another*; and, therefore, the whole Category of Relation must come under the analogy of this single example. It is only in consequence of the unanimity of what I take to be erroneous opinion which has always obtained with regard to it, together with the various subtilties which it will be found to contain, and the infinite logical importance of the subject, that it is necessary to prosecute its analysis through a detail of particulars.

The next Relation which I shall select, as an example of the subject, is that of *a mathematical line*. This example, indeed, differs from the former one in little else than in the estimation of philosophers. Like a visible line, it cannot be conceived without conceiving *a surface on each side of it*; between which two surfaces it is *a relation of contiguity*, that is to say, manifestly, *a distinct partition* between the two things which it divides.

The same principles, including the same sort of subtilty, so obviously holds with regard to a mathematical line and a visible one, that I need not dwell long upon the present example.

If we consider either two contiguous colors or two contiguous mathematical surfaces, in the character of *two relatives*; we may say, in the words of Aristotle, that these *relatives* are "*said to be what they are*, BY BEING THINGS BELONGING TO SOME

“OTHER THING ;” and this is the truth : but it is *not the whole*, and far less is it the *logical and precise truth*. If it were *strictly true* ; the uniform assumption of philosophers would also be true, namely, that relation is *between* (i. e. made up of) *two things*. But the strict truth is, that neither the two colors nor the two mathematical surfaces in question can possibly be considered as relatives, *without considering also the LINE* which must necessarily divide and *make relatives of them*. Thus, I apprehend, it is rigorously shown, that all relatives must be *between* (that is *made up of*) **THREE THINGS in combination** : while the **RELATION**, in every case, *is only the MIDDLE THING of the three*.

Thirdly ; The only other example which I shall select, as being requisite for the illustration of the general nature of the subject, is the Relation of *Distance*.

By reason of the distance between any two parallel lines, or two banks of a river, these two positive subjects are called relatives, or correlatives. But the most ordinary persons never confound the *banks* of a river, with the *distance* existing between them.

It is in the case of this example, only, that I shall suggest the existence of a principle, which holds equally and self-evidently in the two former cases and in that of every other relation whatever, namely, that the *distance* between the two banks of a river does NOT “*terminate IN*,” but *only terminates*

AT, each of the two banks. The whole reasoning of Locke, therefore, in his analysis of the subject, falls at once to the ground ; for it is to be observed that all his examples, as well as his express assertions, prove, in the strictest manner, that he supposed *relations to terminate* IN the various qualities of the two correlative subjects.

A mathematical line between two surfaces, does not *terminate* IN, but *only terminates* AT those two surfaces. A degree of a circle does not terminate in either of the degrees on each side of it ; but it terminates *precisely at* the commencement of those two degrees. Nothing can be more mathematically distinct than the *two correlatives* (in any such case) are from the *relation between them*. And the same reasoning that holds good herein, must self-evidently hold in the case of every other relation whatever.

We may, certainly, for a particular purpose, either assume, or measure, a distance, from the centre, or interior, of one body or positive subject, to that of another. But this is not the distance between the *two bodies*; for it is the distance between *two points*, situated somewhere within those bodies. Thus *the distance of a mile*, is not in any case the distance between two *mile-stones*; but it is the distance between *two points*, one of which should be in the centre of each of the mile-stones.

The relation of *distance* is, perhaps, the most obvious of all relations for the purpose of demonstrating, to every capacity, the real nature of relation

in general. Contrary to the uniform doctrine of philosophers; it is self-evident, and can be certainly apprehended by the most ordinary persons, that *distance* between any two things is *not a quality inherent in either of those things*: Nor is this the less certain, though “logicians have hitherto taught “that Relations are *inherent* to absolute things.”

In *every other* relation whatever, it follows, as a general corollary, that the relation between two things cannot be a quality of either of those things, nor yet a quality in each of them: and this also, when it is properly stated, I think, may be rendered obvious to the most ordinary capacity. EVERY RELATION is a relation of CONTRAST. Some species are *depicted contrasts*; and others are *not such*. In those species that are not picturable, the relation is always very obscure and difficult to be distinguished from its relatives; as in the case of all MORAL relations. But in those sorts that are depicted the nature of relation stands very manifest; and of this sort are *all proper distances* and *all visible lines*. If a mere clown were to be asked, Whether the *distance between London and York is either London or York*; he would certainly answer in the negative. And if the most ordinary person were asked, Whether *a contrast between blue and yellow, is either blue or yellow*; I think he would, without any hesitation, answer no.

Assuming, here, that the three examples which I have cited, in order to form a standard of the sub-

ject of relation, have afforded a sufficient demonstration of the general nature of this Category; I shall, as was proposed, proceed to compare the result with those two examples of relation which have been furnished by Mr. Locke, as already quoted; from which comparison, I think, the reader will be able to derive a clear and conclusive view of the merits of the subject.

First, then, It is very clear, that, in the account which he has given of the relation of *father*, Mr. Locke has proceeded precisely upon the same principle, as if, in defining of the relation of *distance* between two towns, or two mile-stones, he had said, “*First* there is meant all those sensible simple ideas, which go to make up the collective idea of one of the two towns, or mile-stones: And, *Secondly*, all those simple ideas which make up the complex idea of the other town, or mile-stone also.”

This parallel is plainly unexceptionable; because, in the relation of *father*, Locke has included all the ideas which go to make up that of the man who is the father, and also all those of the other human being who is the child. And the same sort of procedure is followed in his account of the relation of “*friend*,” as well as in every other example throughout his analysis.

Now it is quite manifest, that, agreeably with this proceeding, if we were to define the relation of distance between the two banks of a river, or between two degrees of the earth’s latitude, we must, in this distance, include the *materials of both the*

*banks*; or, in the other case, *the degrees of latitude on each side* of the distance in question.

Although I have already pointed out that Mr. Locke, in the example which he has given of “*the word father*,” and in every other instance which he has furnished, did not mean to define a *relative*, or *relatives*, as distinguished from *relation*, but that he meant to define *relation itself*, or rather that he uniformly conceived *relatives* and *relation* to be one same thing; yet I deem it of essential importance to remind my readers of this circumstance, that it may not possibly be thought there is any misunderstanding as to his real meaning. As an additional instance of Locke’s doctrine of the subject, the following one may be mentioned. In the 28th Chap. of his Second Book, §. 1.; talking of *Whiter, Sweeter, &c.* he calls them “*these relations*;”—a phrase which affords, of itself alone, a most conclusive proof that he completely confounded *Relations* with *Relatives*. And the same doctrine is in many other places clearly implied, throughout his whole analysis; although it is necessary for a reader to be on his guard therein, as he certainly abounds in ambiguous expressions, and even with whole passages, which, when viewed only in themselves, convey an obvious meaning that is directly opposite.

If a doubt of Locke’s real meaning could have otherwise remained; it would be removed by this general test, namely, that he has *classed ALL ideas*



*of relation as COMPLEX IDEAS*: which he has done, manifestly, *by including* the ideas of each of every two correlatives in the idea of the mere relation between them. According to his views, it is impossible there should be *such thing as a SIMPLE idea of agreement or disagreement*, that is *any simple relation whatever*. He admits of no such class; and it is in this express point, as I have already observed, that Professor Stewart has, to a certain extent, dissented from his doctrine of “*agreements and disagreements*;” which, as I then remarked, certainly *involves* a dissent from Locke’s *whole doctrine* of relations.

## 2.

*Origin of Locke’s View of the Nature of Relation.—Subtilities of the Subject.—These completely overruled by the Generic Principle of Relation.*

As we can never be so completely satisfied with the refutation of any erroneous doctrine, as when we are able to discover the immediate steps which led to that error; it is fortunate that Mr. Locke has furnished us with a clue to his own procedure with regard to the subject of relation, because, by exhibiting this matter, in its true light, I conceive we shall be led to form a very satisfactory conjecture with regard to the procedure of other logicians on this subject.

Locke’s account of the relation of “*Father*,” is deduced immediately from an account which he

had previously given of that of "*Sweeter*." Now this relation of *sweeter*, is one of those species which are of the most deceitful nature; and we shall enter into the most abstruse part of the elementary subject, by examining and ascertaining the true nature of this species. The following extracts, moreover, will furnish us with a very clear view of the judgment which Mr. Locke has formed with regard to it.

"First it is evident" (says he, Book 2. Chap. 25. §. 18.) "that all relation terminates in, and is ultimately founded on, those simple ideas we have got from sensation and reflection; so that all we have in our thoughts ourselves, (if we think of any thing, or have any meaning) or would signify to others, when we use words standing for relations, is nothing but some simple ideas compared one with another. This is so manifest in that sort called proportional, that nothing can be more so; for when a man says, *honey is sweeter than wax*, it is plain that his thoughts, in this relation, terminates in this sensible idea *sweetness*; which is equally true of all the rest."

This example, we are to observe, is evidently meant to be *analytical*: and it is in the highest degree *critical*; for it involves the whole essence of Locke's doctrine of relation. The account he has given of the relation of *father*, and that of the relation of *friend* are, both of them, merely *illustrative*; and, accordingly, they occur *immediately after* the above-mentioned account of the relation of *sweeter*; from which, as I have already said, they are ma-

nifestly and directly deduced. And thus, we find, it is upon the particular instance of the RELATION OF SWEETER, "*as being one of that sort called proportional,*" that Mr. Locke has founded his judgment of "*all the rest.*" Let us, therefore, rigorously examine what is the real nature of the *relation of sweeter.*

In the first place, then, I must venture to affirm, that, "when a man says *honey is sweeter than wax,*" his thoughts (if he proceed logically) DO NOT *terminate in the idea of SWEETNESS.* Upon this essential point, therefore, the subject is at issue; for it is manifest, from what has gone before, that my view, herein, is equally at issue with the judgment of logicians in general as it is with that of Locke.

I am therefore to observe, that the relation of sweeter, like the far greater number of other species of relation, is one of those which *cannot be depicted to the sense, nor in the imagination,* as a relation of distance, or that of a visible line can be. The consequence of this is, that, in the case of any such relation as that of *sweeter,* we are extremely apt to take cognizance of *only the greater and the lesser RELATIVE,* and altogether to overlook the *real partition or difference* which must exist between them;—a partition I say which *must* exist, (however unobserved by us,) with as much certainty and reality as that which must separate every two houses, of stone, or of adamant, in order *to make two of them.*

From the proceeding of Locke, and from the uniform doctrine of logicians, it is manifest that

philosophers, as well as the vulgar, *actually have overlooked* that there is a real partition between every two such *relatives* as those of *a greater and a lesser sweet*. And hereupon we are to observe, that the *whole fate of the Category of Relation* depends upon our being either able, or unable, to show that this oversight is a real fallacy in the subject. In this case, therefore, I must repeat, that our only safe and necessary recourse, is to appeal to those species of relation that are picturable to sense, namely, those which have, in the commencement of this analysis, been proposed for a standard of the subject; from which, I apprehend, we shall be led to the most indubitable and most solid conclusions.

FIRST then, it must be self-evident, the moment it is proposed, that the relation between *a greater and a lesser sweet*, or between the *sweetness of honey* and the *sweetness of wax*, is precisely analogous to a relation between a *brighter* and a *darker color*, of the same species, or between a *very dark red* and a *pale pink*.

But it has been most conclusively shown, in the chapter on Perception, that a relation between two such colors, is *a breadthless visible line*; which, therefore, is *neither one color nor the other*, but is *a real partition between the two*, insomuch that it forms in itself *a distinct phenomenon* in our thought. It must, then, be in the highest degree evident, that *the relation of difference between the sweetness of honey and the sweetness of wax, cannot be the SWEETNESS OF EITHER* of these two substances;

nor yet ANY SWEETNESS AT ALL, because it is merely a *difference or partition between two sweetnesses*, as a line is a partition between two colors.

SECONDLY. It is self-evident that *the generic principle of relation can never fail*, or be wanting, in any single instance of relation, of whatever species. Hence, therefore, it must be impossible to resolve the relation of difference of sweetness between honey and wax, into either the sweetness of the honey or the sweetness of the wax; *unless* we can resolve the relation of *distance* between the two banks of a river, into one or both of these banks themselves.

Such instances as these, I imagine, must preclude every thought of objection. Those relations *called proportional* may, in some instances, confuse or bewilder the imagination; though I shall endeavour to explain by what means they do so, in such a manner as will enable us to discern the fallacy, even in those very instances themselves: but, even, if this could not be discerned at all, or not so as to be apprehended by persons in general, it could not give opening to a moment's doubt when we logically throw ourselves upon the fundamental principle of relation, as demonstrated in the case of lines and of distances.

The phraseology now generally in use with regard to relation, appears to have arisen, partly from the views entertained by philosophers of the subject, and partly for the sake of convenience or

to avoid circumlocution. The latter of these two causes is an obvious source of verbal error ; and, if the views of philosophers have been erroneous with regard to relation itself, here is a double cause of an erroneous phraseology. It will not be thought that I have any view to a change in the usual language with regard to the subject : but it is of essential importance, in such an inquiry as the present, to point out the fallacy which I apprehend it involves.

The truth of the matter, I conceive, is now manifest, that, although, in the foregoing part of this analysis, I have indulged the phraseology of Locke, in treating of the *relations* of *father*, of *friend*, and of *sweeter* ; there actually are *no such relations* as these in existence. The words *father* and *son* are only the names of *two relatives*, which are joined together by *a bond of causality*. If, agreeably with the example of Locke, we call this bond the *relation of father* ; this is as manifestly illogical as if we were to call it the *relation of son* ; for there certainly is but *one simple link* which joins a father to a son, call it by what name we please. This relation, in point of fact, like a vast number of other sorts, *has no name*. If we call it the *relation of Paternity* ; this name expresses the nature of *one of the relatives only*, and omits that of the other ; whereas, in strictness, it should equally indicate both. The impropriation, indeed, appears unavoidable ; but then, the fallacy of the expression must nevertheless be adverted to and held in recollection, in all logical investigations of the subject.

This fallacy of expression obtains in all those innumerable *nominal relations* called *proportional*; such, for example, as greater, lesser, higher, lower, stronger, weaker, and an endless number of other relatives. Now I am here to observe, that relations called *proportional* form the great object of the science of *Geometry*. We may therefore readily imagine, that logicians in general have derived their views of the subject of relation, in most instances, *immediately from those species of relation called proportional*. It has actually appeared that this has been the case with Mr. Locke. And I may here remark, that we trace the very same origin in the views which have been entertained of the subject of relation by Dr. Barrow. Thus, in a quotation already given from this author, we find that he considered "*relations*" to be "*affected to something else*." And it will be seen, in another place, that he uniformly mentions *relation* or *proportion* as being the *affection of A SUBJECT*, thereby meaning *one single subject*. From which it appears that Barrow considered relation to be nothing but that *excess*, or *defect*, which *RESIDES IN any one subject*, as compared with another; that is, like all other logicians in general, he considered either of the *mere relatives* to be the *relation*.

The remarks just now offered, are intended to show *only the origin* of the views of logicians on the present subject: and I think it is pretty evident that this, in general, has happened in those species of relation called *proportional*; whereas, had they commenced their investigations with such relations as may be *depicted to sense*, they could not

have come to the conclusions which they have uniformly adopted. Having premised this, I shall now proceed to consider those relations called proportional, in the last recess of their subtilty; and shall endeavour to render this subtilty evident, in these species themselves.

There is no Relation which appears more fit for our present purpose, than that of *greater*. This relation is of an aspect perhaps still more imposing than that of *sweeter*; because it is a mathematical relation, and, therefore, is usually, one of *some definite proportion*.

If we contemplate a straight line which by supposition is in length *three inches*, together with another straight line that is supposed to be only *two inches*; we shall immediately pronounce that the former is the *greater* of the two: But it is here self-evident that this word, *greater*, is only the *name of the larger relative*, and is not the name of the DIFFERENCE BETWEEN the two relatives; because the *difference* can no more be *greater* than it is *lesser*, for there is *only one difference or distance* between the two related subjects, from which difference one of the subjects takes the name of *greater*, and the other that of *lesser*. To those however, who have not considered the matter except in the usual way, I imagine, it will appear logical to give the following account of any such relation. Since the *relation* between the two lines, is *the difference* between them; and since,



when we have measured off from the greater line *two inches*, (equal to the lesser) we shall still have *another inch remaining of the greater line* ; therefore, this *excess of one inch* IS THE DIFFERENCE between the two lines, and hence the *relation of greater*, in this instance, “is AFFECTED” to the line of *three inches*, that is to say is *an inherent quality of the longer line*, agreeably with the opinion and language of Barrow.

This view of the subject, I am ready to grant, appears, at first sight, to be a very plausible one. It seems, manifestly, to be the real and whole source of that doctrine of relation which uniformly prevails ; and there appears little doubt that it is the *science of mathematics* that we are to consider as being the *source* from which it is derived. But, with all deference, I feel confident that it is nevertheless in reality fallacious.

It was with an eye to the subtilty now in question, that I formerly remarked, that there is a certain *analogy* between the *nature of Relation* and that of the *Objects of General Words*. The latter subject, however, as I shall endeavour to show in an appropriate speculation, admits of rigid demonstration ; by no other means than that of an *argumentum ad absurdum* : Whereas, that of Relation, as we have already seen, admits of *direct* demonstration ; and there is no subtilty in any of its species that can resist the proofs of the real nature of those species, the moment we logically submit them to the *generic principle of relation*, to which they *must all be referred*.

But, here, to resume our analysis ; The strict truth is, that it is NOT EXCLUSIVELY in virtue of the *one inch of excess* in the greater line, that this line is the *greater*. For, if the *other line* did not exist ; and, also, if it were not of *that smaller length* which we in this instance call the *lesser* ; the first line could not be called the *greater*. The larger line therefore is, by reason of its excess, called relatively the greater ; and the smaller line is, because of its defect, called relatively the lesser ; but these two correlative characters *must have been impossible* unless there had been *some real partition of the nature of a DISTANCE between the two lines*, (whether discernable by us or not) as in the case of every other relation : *for the generic constitution of relation can never change*.

If the obscurity of the relation now in question should induce us to argue in the face of this generic principle ; we should quickly be involved in a tissue of absurdities, of which the following is an instance. If, in the case of two lines of different lengths, we assume the RELATION *between them to reside in ONE of these lines* ; we must equally assume it to reside in the *other* : because there can be but ONE relation between the two lines. But, at this rate, every two lines of unequal lengths must support TWO RELATIONS between them ; which is manifestly absurd.

It is plain that between any two lines considered as being of different lengths, there can be but *one single bond of relation between them*. This relation, like a vast number of others, *has no name* ;

and therefore we can *imply its* existence only by *naming one of its relatives*. Nor does this appear to be avoidable ; because there is no possible name that could *express it fairly*. As we look to *one* of the lines, we might call it *greater* : but as we look to the *other*, we should, by the same rule, be under the necessity to call it by the opposite name of *lesser* ; just as we call *a relation of distance* between any two towns or houses, *an ascent* when we look upward, but *a descent* when we look to a place that is below us ; although the relation of distance in this case, is but one simple relation, which ever of the two names be given to it.

It is usual to give to Relations of this last sort the name of either of their Relatives, according to different circumstances. Thus we talk of the "*reciprocal relations*" of *Buyer*, and *Seller* ; as if there were *two different relations* in every exchange of property. But there are certainly no such RELATIONS as *Buyer* and *Seller* ; for the Relation in question is BARTER ; and it happens to be one of those that have an appropriate *neutral* appellation, which must prevent a moment's hesitation concerning its real nature. When we say that *one man has bought A HORSE for FIFTY POUNDS ; What is this, but saying that the other has bought FIFTY POUNDS for A HORSE ?*

If we take a rule of two feet long, and place beside it another of only one foot ; and if we would ascertain the relation of *difference in length* which exists between the two ; then, looking to the rule of two feet, we should naturally say, that *the*

*difference* between the two separate lengths lies in the *one foot of excess* which is a part of the longer rule; and this would be true in one sense, and for all *practical* purposes. But, viewing the matter in a strict logical light, this would certainly be fallacious: because, if the shorter rule were a foot longer, *there would then be NO DIFFERENCE AT ALL* between the two separate lengths; and thus it is strictly evident that *the difference of length* between a rule of two feet and a rule of one foot, resides no more in the former rule than it does in the latter; that is, *it does not reside in either of them*, although I believe it would be very difficult to gain a distinct view of it.

Our not being able to gain a clear and distinct positive view of the relation in question, cannot for a moment affect our conclusion with regard to the certainty of its existence; because, not only has it been shown to be absurd to suppose it to reside either in the greater rule or in the lesser one; but, also, it had previously been placed beyond controversy that *the generic nature of relation necessarily is that of a real partition between every two relatives*, and, therefore, to suppose any one instance to the contrary, would be to suppose the most manifest absurdity. But, over and above this assurance, I think we gain a glimpse of the thing in question, in some particular cases. Thus there is, as I hinted in a former section, *a relation* not only between every two colors, but there is also a certain relation, although a very subtle one, between *any full color* and the *line* which parts it from

another color. We cannot call this minute relation a visible line, because a visible line is one of the two relatives which support it; and all that we can say of it is, that it certainly is a positive relation between *a color* and *its own boundary line*. It is much more obscure than a relation of contrast between two colors, depicted to sense; that is, it is much more obscure than *a visible line*; but it is not so obscure as the partition which forms any relation between *a greater line* and *a lesser one*. From this view of the evanescent or obscure relation between a color and its own boundary line; I think we gain a step towards conceiving some positive notion of the nature of the *partition* which forms the most obscure of those relations called proportional. And, as for the *real existence* of such a partition, in every proportional relation, whether we are able to discern this partition or not; I apprehend this to have been demonstrated, to the most conclusive extent, by the *general principles* of the subject.

From the result of the whole foregoing reasoning; I am led to conclude, that every relation whatever, is analogous to a relation of DISTANCE between any two relative subjects which cause or support it; excepting only the relation of *equality*, under which is included the relation of *perfect similitude*. The relation of equality and that of perfect similitude I conceive to be analogous to a relation of CONTIGUITY; which is the nearest that any two

relatives can approach each other : because, if we should attempt to bring them *one step nearer*, we should reduce the *two related* subjects to *one same thing* by destroying their relation of severalty, that is destroying all relation between them, since a thing cannot be related to itself.

### 3.

*Actions are Relations.—This Species one of the most obvious tests of the Nature of Relation.*

Having rigidly examined those species of relation which from their subtilty present a difficulty to the imagination, although they are clearly demonstrated to have a real distinct existence in reason ; I have reserved, for the close of the analysis, one great species, which I think must be much more than sufficient to dispel, in every understanding, any mist that can be cast over the most obscure part of the subject.

The two species of relation which I, in the first instance, selected to serve for a standard of the subject, namely, *visible lines* and *relations of distance*, are, in point of prominence and precision, perhaps the most remarkable and every way the most fit for the purpose intended. But there is a genus of relation, comprehending an endless number of species ; which, in point of *distinctness of the Relation beside its Relatives*, are not at all less clear, although they may be less prominent, than either visible

lines or relations of distance. This genus, of itself alone, presents so plain and conclusive a refutation of the prevalent doctrine of the subject, that it might have saved the trouble of every other consideration; and nothing appears more unaccountable, than that the matter in question could possibly have been overlooked by logicians, as it certainly appears to have been.

The fact is simply this;—ACTIONS are RELATIONS, and NOTHING BUT RELATIONS.

In the proposed chapter on *Necessary Connection*; I shall distinctly show, from express authorities, that logicians have not at all considered actions as being relations. By this I do not mean to say it is denied that actions *imply* relations, that is, are related AS ATTRIBUTES of some SINGLE being who is understood to be the ACTOR. But what I shall distinctly show, is, that actions have never been supposed to be *relations or real partitions between some TWO BEINGS*, each of which has an equal share in the support of this PARTITION; which, I shall insist, is the only thing that can be called ACTION. That all actions are purely relations *between TWO SUBJECTS*, and nothing else, I will venture to believe is one of the most self-evident truths in nature the moment our attention is directed towards it: and this genus of relation is attended by the advantage of being exhibited in the clearest manner, distinct from the two relatives which cause or support it. When two combatants engage in battle, and strike their weapons against each other; this is *action*, mutually between the two, and this action is purely

a relation: but this is not the sense in which the word *action* is ever defined or understood by logicians. It is true that the most ordinary persons, any more than logicians, never fall into such a mistake as that of confounding *a stroke* with *the striker*. But the universal error is, that the action is always referred to the *striker alone*, as being *his proper attribute*; while the person who supports the other side of the relation, and is called the *sufferer*, is in reality, in *a logical view* of the matter, *as much an actor* as the former.

In the place already referred to, I shall show that Mr. Locke did not consider action to be relation. If he had; it ought especially to have prevented his defining the relative instead of the relation in the instance of a friend: for *all friendship is action*, (either of body or of mind) *between two persons*. The relation between a father and a son may mislead the imagination, partly because it has *no name* to indicate its distinct existence: but the relation of *friendship* HAS *a name*, clearly expressive of the difference between this relation and its supporting relatives, and therefore it is the more surprising that this should not have led Mr. Locke to a different conclusion. The relation of father, however, is, in point of fact, *a relation of action*; for a man is called a father only because, by his act, he has *befathered, begot*, or in one sense *made* another human being, who is as much a co-efficient of that act as the father himself!

It is a characteristic advantage of *relations of action*, that, generally speaking, *they all have proper*



*names*, distinct from the names of the relatives which cause or support them. In this respect they differ remarkably from *proportional relations*; the greater number of which, as has already been seen, have not any distinctive name, except the *generic name of difference or severalty*, which is seldom attended to.

The relation of *equality*, indeed, is a relation of proportion which has a name, distinct from that of its supporting relatives. All other relations of proportion come under the generic name of *inequality*. But, since *equality* is a different thing from *an equal*; it follows, by parity of reasoning, that every relation of inequality must be a different thing from its two supporting relatives which we call the greater and the lesser.—The same reasoning must hold with regard to relations of *perfect similitude* and of all degrees of *dissimilitude*.

IN FINE, THEN ; The grand distinction between RELATIONS and RELATIVES is, that RELATIVES are *adjective or superinduced characters* acquired by SUBSTANTIVE THINGS, or by things considered as SUBSTANTIVES, which additional character they acquire from the mere fact of their EXISTING AT THE SAME TIME, i. e. simply from their CO-EXISTENCE. Whereas RELATIONS, on the contrary, are PARTITIONS between Substantive Things, or between Things considered as Substantive. Thus RELATIONS and RELATIVES, in their vastly distinct

natures, together make up the Whole Universe of Things. And as it is self-evident that *not only every two individual wholes, but also every two primary elements of all the wholes in nature, must have one of those Partitions called a Relation between them, without which they could not be two or divers things, or elements, but must all be absolutely one same numerical thing*; it follows that ONE HALF of the whole Universe is made up of PARTITIONS OR RELATIONS.

It may, perhaps, have excited very great surprise in some of my readers, and indeed, I doubt not, its first effect has been that of confident incredulity, when it appeared, in the beginning of the present Chapter, that I supposed One Half of the Universe to have been overlooked by logicians and philosophers, in their never having recognised those Partitions between things which I have called Relations. But, that any such Partitions have never been acknowledged, is a truth which has appeared most irrefragably from the authorities which I have already brought forward; and the same will incidentally have to appear, in a still farther and very remarkable manner, in the next Chapter.— Now, Whether or not there are in the Universe any such Real Partitions as I have been endeavouring to demonstrate in the foregoing analysis, is here submitted to the judgment of those who are given to such speculations. But, if it shall be decided that there really are such things; the Constitution of the Objects of Philosophy must be

vastly different from what it has at any time been supposed.

Confident I am, that **RELATION**, if it *be supposed to include Relatives*, can never be made up of **TWO THINGS**; but it must always be made up of **THREE**.—And this I apprehend to be a test of the real nature of Relation.

## SECTION FIFTH.

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OF THE PRIMARY DIVISIONS OR GENERA OF RELATIONS.  
—OF ACTUAL RELATIONS AND IMPUTED OR HYPOTHETICAL ONES.

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BESIDES the analysis of the subject of Relation, into its proper elements ; there is to be considered, in this Category, a variety of distinctions ; some of which are of great importance.

Over and above the classification of relations into a vast variety of greater and lesser species ; there are indicated, to our apprehension, some other sorts of classification with regard to them. One of these I shall now suggest, as appearing to divide them into *Actual Relations* and *Imputed or Hypothetical Ones*.

*Actual Relations* are, manifestly, those which are produced by the present actual existence of their relatives or causal subjects. *Imputed Relations*, upon the other hand, are those which are caused by *some act*, or circumstance, which *once existed*, but which *no longer* actually exists ; although the *relation* caused by it is *still assumed as existing*.

For example ; The distance between two towns, or two mile-stones, is an *actual relation* so long as the two towns, or mile-stones, themselves continue to exist. But that relation which is said to exist

between a father and a son is *not an actual relation*, although the man who is called the father be still living, together with his son ; because the *act*, which alone constituted the relation, has, long since, ceased to exist. The relation, therefore, between a father and a son is only *an imputed relation*.

It will not be thought, that, by pointing out this distinction, I suppose it in any way affects the reality of moral obligation. On the contrary ; all that is here intended is to suggest the existence of *a logical distinction*, between two different objects of thought ; which, I believe, are usually confounded together.

Imputed Relations comprehend a vast number and variety of species. All relations that are *voluntary or instituted* are manifestly of this kind. The same also may be said of all the relations of consanguinity.

For any purpose which I have at present in view, nothing farther appears to be requisite, with regard to this division of Relations, than merely to suggest its existence.

## 2.

### *Of Real Relations and Fictitious Ones.*

There appears to be another distinction of relations, besides that already considered ; which divides them into *Real Relations* and *Fictitious*

ones. This division is one which involves some very important logical consequences.

In order to suggest the existence of this distinction; I first here assume the fundamental maxim of all reasoning, namely, *That what does not exist can have no property.* This is but a different expression of the axiom, that it is impossible for the same thing, at the same time, to be and not to be. It is, moreover, only a third expression of the very same paramount truth to say, *that what does not exist cannot be either of the two causal supporters of any relation.*

It is one of the most important remarks that can be offered, with a view to the following speculations, that the fundamental maxim of logic just now mentioned, and which is of prior authority to every other, has been most extensively and continually violated by the assumptions of logicians. It is entirely upon the hope of being able to show, conclusively, that this has been the case, that I depend for success in my endeavours to establish some of the most considerable of my views, in the sequel; and, therefore, I would solicit attention to what I conceive to be the fallacious procedure which has been followed with regard to this paramount maxim, in every stage of its operation.

It is certain, from the fundamental principle here asserted, that no relation whatever can exist *unless both the correlatives* which are its supporters *actually exist.* In this assumption, indeed, I am expressly borne out by the consent of logicians and philosophers in general; although they have

deeply violated it, in their views of other subjects. Thus, it is admitted by Mr. Harris, who may be regarded as the voice of the ancients on these subjects, that “the fundamental property of relation, “on which the rest all depend, is the *necessary co-existence of relations*, which always commence *together*, subsist *together*, and cease *together*.”<sup>1</sup> It is at the same time to be observed, in the face of this maxim, that mankind are continually busied about a vast variety of *assumed relations*; in which, either *one* or *both* of the *relatives do not exist*. In every instance in which we compare *what is*, with *what was*; or, in which we compare any two things, both of which once existed, but neither of which exist at present; it is certain we assume a relation which, if set up for a *real one*, is in direct hostility to the most imperative dictate of reason.

From what has now been suggested, it is manifest, that, in every instance of assuming any relation whose relatives do not *both actually* exist, we must proceed by *some fiction of the understanding*. If we were never to succeed in our attempts to discover what the procedure of the understanding really is, in any such case; this could not for a moment enable us to question the authority of the maxim which governs the whole subject, or to doubt that we proceed by *a fiction of some kind*: and yet, I conceive that some of the most important mistakes in philosophy have arisen, solely, from *overlooking the barrier*, and *entertaining the fictions* in question for realities.

<sup>1</sup> PHILOSOPHICAL ARRANGEMENTS, Chap. 10th.

But I do not think it impossible, nor indeed difficult, to account in a very satisfactory manner for the procedure of the mind in the case of Fictitious Relations. And, at the same time, I apprehend there is true logical ground for the procedure ; although *not that ground* which we in ordinary *suppose*, when we assume a relation of this description.

The *Times* and the *Things* that are PAST, HAVE *been* PRESENT, *that is they* HAVE *existed*. And, through the medium of our memory, or of description and of history, we can *represent* them in our imagination. This we do by means of *ideas of them*; which ideas, although they are no longer supposed to be *detached beings floating in the mind*, have been shown by a rigorous analysis to be *real and literal representatives* of the things in question. In other words ; it has been rigorously shown, that all the scenery and objects which we have ever *actually perceived*, like all the actions and scenes which we have depicted in our imagination upon hearing of descriptions or reading of history, are nothing but affections impressed upon our own mind : and it is certain that we *can call up representatives* of these scenes and actions in our mind, at pleasure, or by means of some accident operating by association. Every person must know, that when he calls up the idea of the city of Babylon, or of the person of Alexander, he depicts in his imagination *some visionary form*, which he makes the *representative* of that which no longer exists, or which he never saw.



In this way, therefore, we continually compare representatives in our mind, of things which *have existed* together with any perceived object that *does exist*; or, compare the representative ideas of any *two things* which have existed but have both ceased to exist; and thus we assume a continual succession of *Fictitious Relations*, by a process which is infinitely useful and delightful, and is a truly logical process when it is duly considered, but is a most illogical or *absurd* one if we suppose the relations in question to be *real ones*.

In the course of investigating the nature of one part of our mental constitution, we sometimes find important light thrown upon the structure of some other part. This truth is well exemplified in the subject of relation.

The use to which I intend, in this place, to apply the distinction of real and fictitious relations, is to furnish another distinct refutation of the account which the School of Reid has given of the nature of our ideas.

According to Dr. Reid, when we think of any deceased, or absent person, or of any object that is *not immediately perceived*; we think of *the thing itself*, and not through the medium of any representative of it in our mind. But the principles of relation, which have here been insisted upon, prove this to be utterly impossible: for, in order to render it possible, it must be assumed that relations can

exist without the existence of their supporting relatives, *either in reality or by representative.*

We can contemplate a relation between ancient Tyre and modern London ; although the former no longer exists, and even although we never saw it. But we know, that, in order to contemplate this relation, we must *figure to ourselves some imagination*, whether true or false, of *the ancient city.* To attempt to tell us that we can contemplate any such *fictitious relation*, without having both the correlative subjects (at least by their *representatives*) in *actual existence*; would be to assert that that which has no existence may have some property, which is manifestly absurd.

If it were ever, in a single instance, permitted us to assume any position in science, in defiance of this first of all rational maxims ; it must then be ridiculous to talk of making any distinction between truth and falsehood. *The Science of Relation is the Universal Science.* Arithmetic and Geometry are but two of its branches. If, therefore, we could in any instance assume so enormous a fallacy, as that of a relation or property belonging to a thing which has no existence, *either in reality itself or in some real representative*, there must be an end to every process of rationality, and all logic becomes a chaos of mere dreams.

Perfectly in accordance with this principle, when we think of any thing that is absent, we must of necessity call up, both the form and the colors of that thing in our imagination. This, as I have already observed in another place, is a process so

universal and unavoidable, that it amounts *to our thinking in colors*, as well as in *words*. Now, when we think of a friend who once existed, but who is dead and his body resolved into its original elements, it may be asked, *What* and *Where* can that image be, which represents him in our imagination? Can we here suppose that any strength of prejudice will urge a philosopher to tell us, that in such case we have *no appearance* of our friend before us? Or, will he choose the other horn of the dilemma, and assert that we can think of *our friend's body itself*, which no longer exists and of which therefore it would be absurd and ridiculous to predicate any thing whatever?

Conclusive as this reasoning must be acknowledged, whenever it is urged with regard to things that have *ceased to exist*; it is still probable that persons in general may think it a different case when we are thinking of known things that *do exist*, but *are absent from our view*. This indeed, I apprehend, is the natural or popular view of the subject; and it is certainly favorable to Dr. Reid's conception of it: but it is a view which ought not to have been tolerated by any philosopher; for it is demonstrably a most fallacious one.

When we think of an absent friend; it is usually asked with confidence, *Do we not think of our friend himself*; and will any one attempt to persuade us that we think of him by the medium of *an idea or image*? Have we not a clear conception of our friend, distinct from the perception of his picture

which now hangs up in the room before us? Do we not at this moment think of his pale, or florid countenance; of his black, or blue coat; and of all the other colors and shapes which make up his usual dress and appearance; all which, we are confident, is a different thing, and is even, in many particulars, unlike any picture we have ever seen of him? Such questions as these, at first sight, appear very forcible: they seem to imply what every man must confidently feel, at the moment he is thinking of any absent person; but let us observe what follows, the moment we submit this natural prejudice to the test of philosophic truth.

The real fact, established upon the most decided unanimity of philosophers, is, that our friend's countenance was *never either pale or florid*; that his coat was *never black, nor blue*; and that *no part of his person, or dress, ever had any color at all*. On the contrary, it is most certain that all those phantoms which we call pale and florid, black and blue, and all other phenomena of vision which we have uniformly contemplated *as being qualities inherent in our friend's person, were nothing but sensations in our own mind*.

Concerning this fact there is no dispute. Dr. Reid, himself, any more than any other philosopher, has never attempted to dispute it. Of the truth of this assertion the following extract must be a decisive evidence.—“When a colored body is present” (says Reid) “there is a certain appearance to the eye, or to the mind, which we have called the *appearance of color*. Mr. Locke calls it an idea;

“and indeed it may be so called with the greatest propriety. This idea can have no existence but when it is perceived. It is a kind of thought, and can only be the act of a percipient or thinking being.”

After this decisive concession, it may be asked, What becomes of the popular belief that the faces and apparel of our friends and acquaintance are white, red, and yellow? In other words; What becomes of the confident belief that we perceive men and women; when it is thus incontrovertibly proved that we are cut off from perceiving *these, themselves*, and can perceive only *representative images of them*, in our own sensations?

Dr. Reid falls into both a useless cavil and a sophism altogether unworthy of his genius, with regard to this subject. Although he admits that what he calls the *appearance of color is in the mind*, (which is all that we desire him to grant) he affects to consider the name of *color itself* to belong to the *external cause* of this appearance; and, in order to support his position in this case, he assumes that the *vulgar consider color to be a quality in bodies*. It is true, the vulgar do think so: but this, however, is no other than the profound error by which they confidently believe that colors are *a sort of skins or coverings adhering* to external objects. For a philosopher to intend to say, that the vulgar have any suspicion of the fact that it is owing to the texture of the minute parts of bodies, or to *any occult quality in them*, that they are called

colors, is an assumption which cannot for a moment be endured. Professor Stewart, himself, has felt the necessity of uttering his express dissent from this part of Reid's doctrine.

There is another consideration, which belongs so properly to the present subject, that, in order to complete the proposed refutation of Reid's doctrine, I cannot properly omit the mention of it in this place.

An objection has been started by Dr. Reid, in favor of his own views, which, at first sight, appears to have great force; and, no doubt, it has weighed with persuasive influence with many of his readers. It is the supposition, that, if we either perceive or think of things by the mediation of images or ideas of them, we must certainly have A DOUBLE OBJECT of every thought, that is to say *the immediate idea* of the thing we think of and *the thing itself*. This objection is indeed a very plausible one; and, prior to reflection, we should be apt to pronounce confidently, that, if it existed, it must be productive of confusion in our thoughts. But, that this is an entire fallacy, is proved by the most satisfactory evidence, in our actual experience.

When we see a company of persons in *masquerade*; we must certainly admit that we do not perceive a set of *men* and *women*, but only an assemblage of fanciful COVERINGS. Yet we never for a moment *think* any other than that we are

looking at so many *men* and *women*. It is not silks, and wool, and other such things, that we *think* we are beholding, but we are all the while *conceiving* that we perceive the *persons* who are hid under these coverings. Here then, undeniably, is A DOUBLE OBJECT OF THOUGHT in the case of every individual person we behold; and yet there is *no confusion, nor any mistake whatever* with regard to them.

How the mind or understanding actually manages, to reconcile this *duplicity of almost every object it perceives*, it would be tedious to detail: but it is very explicable; and the fact itself is wholly incontrovertible.—Thus, Although we continually *think* we are beholding our *books*, our *furniture*, and the persons of our *friends and acquaintance*; we should not for a moment deny, if the question were put to us, that we for most part behold only *some covering* of each of these objects. How often do we handle and contemplate objects, which we *think of as being wood, metal, or stone*; when, all the time, we are only touching and looking at *some sort of paint, varnish, or covering*, whose real nature is foreign to that of the thing we *think* we are perceiving?

When we handle any thing with our *gloves on*, such as a sword, a horse, or a saddle; we *never think* that we do not touch any of these objects. But the real truth is, that it is impossible we should touch them, *even in the vulgar sense of the word TOUCH*, because our *glove* is palpably BETWEEN them and us. Now, another certain truth, *in this and*

*in every other instance of perception whatever, is, that OUR SENSATIONS are a sort of primary and natural GLOVES to OUR PERCIPIENT OR MIND; and we never perceive any external objects immediately, but always learn the knowledge of their existence by the mediation of these gloves.*

How momentous do these and all the foregoing decisive evidences become; and how important it is to contemplate them distinctly, each by itself; when we add the consideration that the proofs of the extension of our sensations, and of the micro-cosmic nature of the mind, lead directly, by the most logical inference, to the conviction that all the external excitements or proximate causes of our sensations are nothing but the ORDERED ENERGIES OF SOME INTELLIGENT SPIRITUAL BEING;— a conviction which the vulgar imagination can but slowly admit, but which is the only one that logic or sound philosophy can deduce from the premises or data.

### 3.

#### *Of Simple and Complex Relations.*

IDEAS of Relation have been formally classed by Mr. Locke, in the Twelfth Chapter of his Second Book, as *complex* ideas. And he has nowhere classed any of them as simple ones, with the exception of the idea of unity; which he does not appear to consider as a relation, and concerning which I shall have occasion to remark. He must,



therefore, be considered as having taught that all our ideas of relations whatever, are complex ideas.

This result, indeed, manifestly follows from the general doctrine of relation advanced in his analysis; since, according to the view therein taken, relation is nothing but a pair of relatives, considered with regard to each other; and, consequently, it is as necessarily impossible to conceive a simple relation as to conceive any two things to be one single thing.

If, however, the analysis which I have offered in the foregoing sections shall be admitted as exhibiting the real nature of the subject; we therein find that the complexness of *relatives* does not necessarily cause a complexness of the *relation* which connects them together; and there appears no doubt that very many relations are the most simple objects of thought which the mind can ever contemplate. The doctrine of the contrary, with the *consequences which that doctrine involves*, may, together, be considered as the greatest blot in Mr. Locke's grammar of human thoughts.

With regard to the *simplicity* of our ideas of relation; it may in the first place be observed, that the greater number of them are of a *simplicity more perfect* than that of some other of our ideas which have been always classed as simple ones. It is admitted, by all metaphysicians, that our ideas of *extension* and of *duration* are simple ideas. But, strictly speaking, the simplest idea we can have of either of these things, is an idea made up of

*parts*, or is what Mr. Locke calls *a simple mode*, that is the *simplest degree of a complex idea*. The idea of A RELATION (*i. e. of contiguity*) between any two parts of extension, on the contrary, is *perfectly without composition*; it is impossible to think of dividing it, in any way whatever.

In like manner; the idea of that *nameless relation* which exists between *a cause* and its *effect*, and which has no more proper denomination than that of *causality*, is *perfectly simple*.

Equally, in all those nameless and obscure but real relations or partitions, which are implied when we make use of the words *higher, stronger, richer, taller, better, wiser*, and an endless variety of other such names of relatives, the relation implied is perfectly simple.

It was remarked, in a foregoing section, that all relations whatever are analogous to a relation of DISTANCE, excepting only relations of *equality* and those of *perfect similitude*; both which are analogous to a relation of CONTIGUITY. Now it may be observed, in this place, that a relation of contiguity and a relation of distance are, both of them, very simple things. Hence we may conceive, that a very large proportion of relations are strictly simple subjects. We can conceive a relation of distance *shortened*, as we can conceive the smallest idea of extension still *divided*; but the shorter relation of distance is a relation of distance, just as the smallest extension is still extension. The one, therefore, is altogether as simple as the other.

Independent of this; it is very manifest, that,

as it was the general result of the analysis of Locke to make all relations complex, it must be the result of an opposite analysis to prove that the general nature of these partitions is simple; although special reasons can be shown why *some few* relations must be *complex*.

Thus, while the idea of *existence*, as Professor Stewart has justly remarked, is perfectly a simple idea; the idea of *our continued identity*, which he also mentions as a simple idea, *cannot be strictly simple*, because the latter necessarily involves the idea of *our existence at two different times*. The idea of motion, which has usually been considered as a simple idea, is another of the same kind; because motion must involve an idea of the moving body in *two successive times*. All such relations as these two are necessarily complex: but even these are not more complex than the *simplest idea of extension*, or *duration*; and they have nothing like *that degree* of complexness which Mr. Locke ascribes to our most ordinary ideas of relation; in many of which, according to his account, there are included, perhaps twenty, forty, or one knows not how many, different ideas, as in that of a *father*, and in that of a *friend*, already quoted.

One of the most ordinary or numerous of all relations, is that species called visible lines. Now the perfect simplicity of this relation will never be disputed:—A *line* between black and white, or between blue and yellow, is an object which no one will ever attempt to decompose. We may *annihilate*

a visible line gradually by elements, that is by part after part, of its length ; but this is putting it gradually *out of existence*, and is *not decomposing* it ; for, so long as a particle of it remains, it is *a line*.

Another and a far more extensive species of relations than even that above-mentioned, consists in the innumerable tribe of ACTIONS. But all actions, in general, are perfectly simple relations ; for they admit not any thought of attempting to decompose them. We cannot conceive half of a foot step : nor any fraction of a blow. We cannot resolve *a touch* into elements. Every such act is *either perfect* or else it *cannot exist at all* : It must be simple, because it can have no parts.

Besides our own and all other *corporeal acts*, moreover, all *our thoughts in general are actions*. We therefore discern, that the relations of action, which are all simple in general, are infinitely numerous and of continual occurrence.

I do not apprehend it to be requisite to carry this enumeration to any greater length.

It is here to be observed, upon the other hand, that, although most relations are simple ones, we, in general, do not make use of them simply. On the contrary ; for most part, I think we attend to or employ relations *collectively*. This is an important distinction in the subject, which must not be overlooked.

Thus, for example, there is no such thing as a relation of distance, properly speaking, excepting a

distance between some *two mathematical points* ; which relation, is as simple a thing as any idea of space, or of time, can be. When, therefore, we talk of the distance between any two towns, or two milestones, we can never mean any thing but the distance between *some two mathematical points*; one of which is assumed either at the verge or somewhere within each of the complex relative subjects. But the distance between two towns, or two milestones, *if we regard the WHOLE of the two relative subjects*, is a COLLECTIVE idea of relation, containing *an infinite number of distances*, namely, those which exist between every two points in each of the two subjects.

In like manner, *an action between two armies*, or even an encounter between *two single combatants*, is usually a *number of actions* ; each of which, in itself, is a simple relation, being *a mere blow*, or movement of some sort, in which, each of two parties is a correlative : but the whole battle, taken collectively, is evidently a very complex relation.

Such *collective ideas of relation*, it is manifest, do not go to render the individual relations, contained in them, at all complex.

This appears to be all that is necessary to advance, at present, with regard to the division of relations into simple and complex ones.

## SECTION SIXTH.

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VIEWS ENTERTAINED OF RELATION BY PHILOSOPHERS  
NOT YET CONSIDERED.

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### 1.

*That the French Writers have derived their Judgment of the Origin of our Knowledge from Locke's Analysis of Relation.*

As it was suggested, in the foregoing part of the present chapter, that I conceive Professor Stewart to have labored under a mistake, in considering the erroneous conclusion of the French Philosophers, with regard to the Origin and Sources of our Knowledge, as having been deduced from the *early part* of Locke's Essay; which mistake I attribute to him from the fact of his having quoted only those parts of the Essay here alluded to; I suppose nothing can be more satisfactory, than to draw the evidence of the truth of my opinion, from the account which has been given of the matter by Mr. Stewart himself. I shall therefore, in this place, extract what appears essential for the purpose, from the "PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS."

"The account given by Locke" (says Mr. Stew-

art) “ of the origin of our ideas, which furnished  
“ the chief subject of the foregoing Essays, has, for  
“ many years past, been adopted implicitly and  
“ almost universally, as a fundamental and un-  
“ questionable truth, by the Philosophers of  
“ France.”

Now it is here and all along admitted, that the writers alluded to have derived their erroneous judgment from *some part* of Locke’s Essay. The only question that exists, therefore, is, as to *What particular part* of the Essay has furnished the opinion which those writers have entertained. And the answer to this question, I apprehend, will appear very clearly in the following extracts furnished by Mr. Stewart himself.

“ Every idea” (according to Diderot) “ must necessarily, when brought into a state of ultimate decomposition, resolve itself into a sensible representation, or picture; and since every thing *in* our understanding has been introduced there *by* the channel of sensation, whatever proceeds *out* of the understanding is either chimerical, or must be able, in returning by the same road, to re-attach itself to its sensible archetype.”

Upon the admitted assumption that Diderot derived this doctrine from *some part* of Locke’s Essay; I would here ask, *From what part* could he have derived such notions as those of the “ *ultimate decomposition of ideas,*” except from Locke’s *Chapters on Relation?*

But it is in a passage rendered by Mr. Stewart from the writings of CONDORCET, that we find a full

explanation of the matter in question. This passage runs as follows.

“It is to Aristotle we owe” (says Condorcet) “that important truth, the first step in the science of mind, that *our ideas*, even such as are most abstract, most strictly intellectual (so to speak) have their origin in our sensations. But this truth he did not attempt to support by any demonstration. It was rather the intuitive perception of a man of genius, than the result of a series of observations, accurately analysed, and systematically combined, in order to derive from them some general conclusion. Accordingly; this germ, cast in an ungrateful soil, produced no fruit, till after a period of more than twenty centuries.”

“At length Locke made himself master of the proper clue. He showed that a precise and accurate analysis of ideas, resolving them into other ideas, earlier in their origin, and more simple in their composition, was the only means to avoid being lost in a chaos of notions, incomplete, incoherent, and indeterminate; destitute of order, because suggested by accident; and admitted among the materials of our knowledge without due examination.

“He proved by this analysis, that the whole circle of our ideas results merely from the operation of our intellect upon the sensations we have received; or, more properly speaking, that *all our ideas are compounded of sensations*, offering themselves simultaneously to the memory, and



“after such a manner, that the attention is fixed,  
“and the perception limited to a particular collec-  
“tion or portion, of the sensations combined.”

Upon Mr. Stewart's assumption, all along fully admitted, that Condorcet derived his doctrine of ideas from *some* part of Locke's Essay ; I apprehend it is impossible to desire more conclusive evidence than is furnished by the above passages, that he derived it from those subsequent chapters wherein Locke has furnished his elaborate *analysis of relation*. The doctrine of Condorcet, as thus expressed, is actually *an abridgement of Locke's analysis*.

The commentary which Professor Stewart has offered upon these passages of Condorcet, is so surprising, that I shall here submit it to the reader, with such observations as it appears to me to demand.

“The language of this passage” (says Mr. Stewart, alluding to that just now quoted) “is  
“so extremely vague and loose, that I should  
“have been puzzled in any conjecture about its  
“exact import, had it not been for one clause, in  
“which the author states, with an affectation  
“of more than common accuracy, as the general  
“result of Locke's discussions, this short and sim-  
“ple proposition, that *all our ideas are compounded*  
“*of sensations*. The clause immediately preceding  
“these words, and of which they are introduced  
“as an explanation, or rather as an amendment,  
“certainly seems, at first sight, to have been in-  
“tended to convey a meaning very different from

“ this, and a meaning not liable, in my opinion,  
 “ to the same weighty objection. But neither one  
 “ interpretation nor the other can possibly be re-  
 “ conciled to Locke’s doctrine, as elucidated by  
 “ himself in the particular argument to which he  
 “ applies it, in various parts of his Essay.”

For my own part, I have the misfortune to differ entirely from Mr. Stewart, in the sentence he has thus pronounced upon the construction of Locke’s doctrine by Condorcet. I grant, indeed, that the passage in question, in various parts, is both loose and inflated : but I think it renders the doctrine of Locke, notwithstanding, with much truth.

I may assert, without fear of contradiction, that, according to Locke, *all our ideas of relation are nothing but so many bundles of sensations, external or internal* ; and, that, in the formation of these bundles, REASON has no other part, than that of gathering them together, as a reaper gathers ears of corn, in order to make them up into a sheaf. Thus he expressly says, that “ *all the ideas we have of relation are made up, as the others are, only of simple ideas.*” And he also explains, that, by *simple ideas*, he means *ideas of sensation and reflection*, which mean *external and internal sensations*. Of the truth of this there can be not a moment’s doubt. What other office, then, can *Reason* have in making up those ideas of relation, according to Locke, except that of combining them together in a certain manner?—Now the account of the matter given by Condorcet is perfectly according

to Locke's doctrine, and also perfectly consistent with itself. It says, that, "*our ideas result from the operation of our intellect upon the sensations we have received; or, more properly speaking, that all our ideas are compounded of sensations.*" Herein is no contradiction, nor yet any deviation whatever from the principles of Locke's analysis. As a decisive test of this; let us observe, that, in the particular example of the relation of *father*, as given by Mr. Locke, he presents us with a *compound of all the sensible simple ideas* which go to make up the complex idea of the "*man*" who is the father, and *all the sensible ideas* which go to compose the complex idea "*of the child also.*" What office then, has Mr. Locke left for Reason to perform, in framing the relation of "*father*;" except that very office which Condorcet has ascribed to it?

I leave the matter, as it stands here, entirely for the judgment of my readers; with this only essential and most important remark, namely, that, according both to Locke and to Condorcet, **RELATION** is *not any thing different from RELATIVES; that is, RELATION is not supposed* by either of these philosophers to be **ANY THIRD THING**, *created by and existing between every two RELATIVES*, but is thought to be *merely a certain combined view* which the intellect takes of *two different bundles of its own sensations, substantive or ideas.*

In fine; After observing the *analytical phraseology* which characterizes the various parts of the passages from Condorcet, and which *cannot apply to the early part of Locke's Essay*, but which

breathes the very doctrine of his subsequent *analysis*; I do not apprehend there can be a moment's doubt that the French Philosopher derived his doctrine immediately from the analysis. And, indeed, independent of this decisive evidence of the fact, it would be charging him with having done manifest injustice to Locke, and to the subject, to suppose that he had derived it from his earlier chapters.

If this statement cannot be controverted; it must then unavoidably be admitted, that the several Chapters of Mr. Stewart's First Essay, intended as a criticism upon Locke's doctrine of the *Origin and Nature of our Ideas*, is entirely beside the subject or unavailing. That it has appeared in a very different light, however, to a large number of his readers, I have little doubt; and, if so, it is an example of the influence of literary eminence, in the exhibition of views the real merits of which are understood by very few.

As a *refutation* of Locke's doctrine, apart from its merits as a *criticism*, Mr. Stewart's speculations on the subject contain one very just and important assumption, which has been already adverted to; namely, that "many of those ideas which Locke "calls *agreements and disagreements* are simple ideas, "of which no analysis can be given." But this, I must insist, is *merely an assumption*, on the part of Mr. Stewart, in so many words; for there is not the shadow of any attempt at analytical proof to support it; nor is an analysis of the subject of relation in any shape adverted to, in his strictures

on the subject. In this state of the case, therefore, I suppose it must be sufficiently manifest, that those pneumatologists who have formed themselves upon the tenor of Locke's Essay, and upon the doctrine of his followers, both upon the Continent of Europe and in this Island, can never be expected to change their opinion of the origin and nature of our ideas, owing to the force of any thing contained in the Philosophical Essays. And I therefore apprehend that a refutation of the doctrine of Locke, with regard to this important part of our constitution, was certainly a desideratum, and one which could only have been attained through an opposite general analysis of the subject of relation.

Whether, or not, I have had any success in the foregoing attempt to supply this desideratum; is for my readers to judge. But, whatever shall be the sentence pronounced with regard to it, it was certainly indispensable that I should provide against any criticisms with regard to the *utility of the attempt*, by showing, unanswerably, that it had not been previously supplied; because I expect, that, without this explanation, there might be many persons ready enough to suppose that I have therein attempted a very unnecessary task, *so far as regards the Origin and Sources of our ideas.*

## 2.

*Of Dr. Reid's View of the Subject of Relation  
with reference to Locke's Analysis.*

Very contrary to his usual copious method of treating the various subjects upon which he wrote; Dr. Reid has touched only with extreme brevity upon that of relation in general: and, in so doing, his observations upon it are far from being clear, or decisive.

Toward the end of the First Chapter of his Sixth Essay, he says, "I proposed in the Third place, to consider our notions of the relations of things."

After this very comprehensive proposition, however, he comprises all his discussion of the subject, in the three remaining pages of the chapter;—a fact which it is of importance to remark, in order to show *how little it had been adverted to by this Philosopher*, any more than by Professor Stewart, that the Materialists are not to be met, or confuted, with regard to their erroneous opinion of the Origin and Reality of our Knowledge, upon any other ground than that of *a General Analysis of Relation*.

Yet the brevity of Dr. Reid, upon this subject, is not in my opinion so surprising as the indistinctness with which he expresses himself with regard to it; including his remarkable misapprehension of what Locke has advanced concerning it.

In the place already referred to, Dr. Reid says, "I think Mr. Locke, when he comes to speak of ideas of relation, does not say that they are ideas of sensation or reflection, but only that they terminate in, and are concerned about, ideas of sensation and reflection."

The *First* objection which I have to make with regard to this passage, is, that, although it correctly quotes one sentence in the analysis of Locke; yet, the conclusion which Dr. Reid draws from it, is entirely opposite to the meaning of Locke, in passages that are much more explicit and essential: for Locke expressly says, that "all our ideas of relation are made up of" ideas of sensation and reflection; and, therefore, no force of acumen can enable any one to deny, that, according to him, these ideas are combinations of two different parcels of ideas of sensation or reflection.

*Secondly.* But another and very important objection comes after. For Dr. Reid has, without any sign of disapprobation, or rather with an appearance of *tacit assent*, adverted to the assertion so repeatedly made by Locke, that "all our ideas of relation terminate in ideas of sensation or reflection." Dr. Reid's conciliatory phrase is, that Mr. Locke "only" asserts this.

Now, if the phrase, "terminate in," be taken in a strict scientific sense, (as it must be, or else it is no better than jargon on the present subject) it identifies our ideas of relation with our ideas of sensation or reflection, in the most indubitable manner: and the express assertion of Locke, that "all our

“ ideas of relation *are made up of* ideas of sensation “ or reflection,” leaves not the shadow of a doubt that this was his meaning, in the use of that phrase. Upon the other hand ; if the principles of the foregoing analysis be admitted, *no relation can terminate IN* either of its supporting relatives, any more than a road between two walls can *terminate IN* either of those walls, or than one degree of a circle can *terminate IN* another.

In a word ; whatever Dr. Reid’s opinion was with regard to the origin of our knowledge, it is certain he has not offered any hostility against the general doctrine of relation advanced by Locke ; and, therefore, he has left the French Philosophers, and all other Sceptics with regard to the Origin and Reality of our Knowledge, unopposed by any argument that could have the least chance of effecting a change in their opinions.

What Dr. Reid has expressly said, in favor of the origin of our knowledge, is simply this ; that “ all our notions of relation may more properly be “ ascribed to Judgment, as their source, than to “ any other power of the mind.”

Now this amounts to about the same as is asserted by Professor Stewart, namely, that “ *without “ the use of reason, or of understanding, no comment “ could enable us to unriddle*” certain terms ; which, when examined, prove to be terms expressive of relations.

But we have seen, that quite as much as this has



been expressly asserted, not only by Locke, but also by Condorcet after him; who, notwithstanding, has founded, upon this very doctrine, a conclusion *directly against* the real existence of any object of thought besides our sensations.

The desideratum, in this case, therefore, was not to discover that Reason is employed in the forming of our ideas of relation; for *all philosophers have been agreed* with regard to *this fact*; but it was to ascertain *what was the particular mode* by which our Reason operated therein; and, thence, to discover WHETHER RELATIONS THEMSELVES ARE ANY REAL THINGS, *distinct from our SENSATIONS.*

It will certainly be admitted, that the summary, and even rather dubious sentence of Dr. Reid, already quoted, is not of a complexion to present a bulwark against the result of Locke's analysis of relation; against which, indeed, it is not pointed. And, what is still more unfavorable, is, that Dr. Reid's sentence is founded upon arguments which are in themselves highly exceptionable. The instances he has adduced in support of it, are the following.

“ Another way in which we get the notion of  
“ relation (which seems not to have occurred to  
“ Mr. Locke) is when, by attending to one of the  
“ related objects, we perceive or judge, that it  
“ must, from its nature, have a certain relation to  
“ something else, which before perhaps we never  
“ thought of; and thus our attention to one of the

“ related objects produces the notion of a corre-  
 “ late, and of a certain relation between them.  
 “ Thus when I attend to color, figure, weight, I  
 “ cannot help judging these to be qualities which  
 “ cannot exist without a subject. And, again,  
 “ By attending to the operations of thinking, me-  
 “ mory, reasoning, we perceive or judge, that there  
 “ must be something that thinks”—“ When we  
 “ attend to body, we perceive it cannot exist with-  
 “ out space; hence we get the notion of space  
 “ (which is neither an object of sense nor of con-  
 “ sciousness) and of the relations which bodies have  
 “ to a certain portion of unbounded space, as their  
 “ place.”

It is immediately after this passage, Dr. Reid expresses his opinion, that “ all our notions of re-  
 “ lation may more properly be ascribed to Judg-  
 “ ment, as their source, than to any other power of  
 “ the mind.”

Now, if we accept the word *source*, (in this pas-  
 sage) in the best sense; and if we farther suppose  
 that, by an idea of relation, Dr. Reid meant an  
 idea of *a third thing* distinct between two relatives;  
 (a matter which he has left in the deepest obscurity,  
 but which would co-incide with my own view of  
 the subject,)—it is still to be remarked, as matter  
 both of curiosity and of importance, *how he has*  
*arrived at those instances of relation which he thought*  
*proper to select*; for the foundation of his opinion  
 that *Judgment is their source*.

We are therefore to observe, Dr. Reid imagined,  
 that, in some cases, our contemplation of *one ab-*

*solute subject*, suggests to us *the notion of another absolute subject*, which before perhaps we never thought of, and of *a relation between them*.

I apprehend it is to the honor of Locke's judgment that Dr. Reid had to charge him with not having adverted to this road of arriving at the knowledge of relations; because, if this be a real road to them, I think the whole subject of relation, instead of being a kingdom of demonstrative science, may be called any thing else we please.

The conditional result which I have just now asserted, is already very importantly assented to by the Sceptical followers of Locke, in the case of those very instances which have been selected by Dr. Reid, and in selecting which I think he has been singularly unfortunate. *Body, Mind, and Space*, are the three instances which he has chosen: and it is notorious that both *Mind* and *Space* are denied by Materialists; and *Body* (by which he means *Matter*) is equally denied by the one half of philosophers, taking in those of ancient as well as of modern times. All relations between *Body* and *Mind*, and between either of these and *Space*, are considered by a great proportion of philosophers to be mere chimeras. To have adduced a set of relations whose *real existence* is denied by one half of the philosophical world; and to make these the foundation of a conclusion that Judgment is the source of our ideas of relation, is, surely, not the way to remove difficulties in philosophy.

From the tenor of my foregoing speculations, it

has appeared that I consider the notion of *Body OR MATTER* put entirely out of the question. But with regard to *Mind*; in order that what I have just now said may not be misapprehended, I here intimate that I am led to question very deeply the usual assumption of our best pneumatologists, namely, that *all our knowledge of it is MERELY RELATIVE*. The question, indeed, is one of infinite moment; because, if I have not mistaken a direct deduction which is to be drawn from the foregoing principles of relation, it must be *impossible to have a RELATIVE knowledge of any subject, unless we have had a previous POSITIVE knowledge of ITS GENUS*. This question, therefore, will form a distinct Chapter in the present volume.

### 3.

*Of the Recent Views of Professor Stewart with regard to the Subject of Relation.*

From the remarks which I have already offered with regard to the speculations of Professor Stewart; it has appeared, that he has touched upon the elementary nature of relation with still greater brevity than Dr. Reid himself. This is the case to such an extent, that there is hardly an expression in those parts of his writings already referred to, from which one can draw any certain conclusion as to what are his precise sentiments on the subject; although I have deduced, from his partial remark with regard to *the simplicity of many of our*

*ideas of agreements and disagreements*, that his opinion, when followed out, *must* be essentially hostile to the whole analysis of Locke.

These observations, however, apply only to the views of Professor Stewart *as expressed in his* "PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS." And I am now to remark, that he has touched incidentally upon the subject of relation, in his subsequent work the SECOND VOLUME OF HIS ELEMENTS; the tenor of which had not occurred to my recollection while I was framing the foregoing strictures. These recent views of Mr. Stewart, with regard to this subject, present so remarkable a contrast with that which seems to be implied in the Philosophical Essays; that I feel under the necessity to furnish a specimen of them, here, as a conclusive evidence of the indistinct state of opinion of some of our best logicians upon the subject of relation.

In the Fourth Section of the Fourth Chapter of the Volume referred to, where he is treating of *analogy*; Mr. Stewart has expressed himself in the following manner.

"An additional proof of this is furnished by the following consideration. That a resemblance of *objects or events* is perceived by *sense*, and, accordingly, has some effect even on the lower animals; a correspondency (or, as it is sometimes called, *a resemblance*) of relations, is not the object of *sense*, but of *intellect*, and, consequently, the perception of it implies the evidence of reason."

Now I must observe, that *correspondency* and *resemblance* are only other names for *relation*:

With regard to this, there will be no dispute. Must we really, then, understand it to have been meant by Mr. Stewart, that *only some* relations are OBJECTS OF INTELLECT, and THAT *other relations* are OBJECTS OF SENSE? It would appear so.

If it were possible to construe the passage in question into an oversight; it would be illiberal to criticise it: but it is not an oversight, but a doctrine. The words which I have quoted in *italics*, are thus distinguished in the original; obviously, in order to mark the intention; and the repetition of the same assumption, in the context, leaves not a doubt on the subject.

“An obvious instance of this occurs” (says Mr. Stewart) “when we attempt to compare the bones and joints in the leg and foot of a man with those in the leg and foot of a horse. Were the correspondence in all the *relations* perfectly exact, the *resemblance* between the two objects would be manifest even to sense; in the very same manner that, in geometry, the *similitude* of two triangles is a necessary consequence of a precise correspondence in the relations of their homologous sides.”

Moreover, in the next paragraph, he places “the sensible *dissimilitudes* between things of different species”—in contrast with—“that more remote correspondence which reason or fancy traces between the parts of the one and the parts of the other.”

The indubitable amount of these repeated assertions, is simply this;—that *Reason* discerns *certain*

*remote relations*; but that Reason has nothing to do with perceiving relations between any two resembling objects that are present to our perception, such as a distance between two houses, or a contrast between two colors; these more obvious relations being "PERCEIVED BY SENSE."

Setting entirely aside (for the moment) all the proofs which have been advanced that every relation is the object of reason alone; I must here remark, that, to suppose the Category of Relation to be divided into *two general natures*, insomuch that some of its species are *objects only of REASON*, and others are *objects of SENSE*, is a position which, in despite of the power of words, I cannot for a moment ascribe to a philosopher of Mr. Stewart's eminence. The only question, then, is, how his words can be construed, so as to convey any other meaning?

The matter is not merely dependent upon *any of the phrases* used by him; although even these, of themselves, admit of no double construction, namely, the phrases "*perceived by sense*,"—and—"*the object of sense*." The most insuperable manifestation, consists in Mr. Stewart's having placed *Relations perceived by REASON*, in a state of complete and pointed ANTITHESIS with *Relations perceived by SENSE*.

In a foregoing Section; I have myself distinguished two special relations, as being *picturable*, and being *actually pictured to sense*: and I see no reason to change this phraseology; otherwise, it is manifest, I have still time for so doing. But,

by these phrases, I never meant to assert that those special relations are *perceived* BY *sense*, or that they are at all OBJECTS *of sense*; and my whole context, both before and after, throughout this chapter, must render this perfectly evident. The reason of my applying those phrases, was, that every perceived relation of *distance*, and every *breadthless visible line*, is IN ITSELF a *positive phenomenon*, depicted to *sense*; although it cannot be perceived AS A LINE OR RELATION between two colors, *except by the INTELLECT OR REASON*: But the same phraseology is not in the least applicable to any relation of *resemblance*. According to the example suggested by Professor Stewart, of the relation of correspondency between the leg of a horse and that of a man; it *must* follow, that the *resemblance* between the *two legs of a MAN* is “PERCEIVED BY SENSE,” and is an “OBJECT OF SENSE,” because, it is plain, they support a relation of *perfect similitude*, in our view. But, contrary to this, I confidently affirm, that the relation of *resemblance* between the two legs of a man, (*although this resemblance or relation is a real partition between these two legs*) IS NOT A PHENOMENON OR OBJECT OF SENSE, like a LINE between *two colors*, or like a THIRD COLOR between *two other colors*. On the contrary; this and every other relation of RESEMBLANCE, *between any two objects*, is, as I have already fully insisted, AN OBJECT OF INTELLECT; and it is, in point of fact, one the most difficult to be discerned, DISTINCT FROM THE SUBJECTS WHICH IT DIVIDES, of any relation whatever. I have in the



very outset remarked, that every person, in ordinary, feels confident that a resemblance which he perceives between any two faces *dwells in the face* which he is beholding. And I selected this, as a *special instance* of the deceitful aspect of many sorts of relation. In like manner, I now observe, that, when any person in ordinary is looking at *one* leg of a man, he confidently thinks that a resemblance of the other leg dwells in the one he is contemplating; whereas I insist that it certainly dwells *between* the two legs, and can only be discerned by OUR INTELLECT.

Contrary to that view of the subject which is thus insisted upon; Mr. Stewart has, in his mature view of relation, in the most express terms, placed certain species of this Category in a direct antithesis of generic nature to others;—a position which, if its manifest absurdity be for a moment overlooked, half rebuilds the analysis of Locke, and half establishes the conclusion of the French and other Writers that relations are nothing but certain combinations of ideas of sense.

That the mischief, which must ultimately have resulted from such a view of the subject, urgently demanded to be counteracted; is a fact which, I think, will not for a moment be denied. Or, if that view can be explained in any manner, so as to obviate the objections here suggested; I should be glad, for the sake of consistency in pneumatological speculations, as well as on account of the consequences, to have the matter set in any more favorable light.

# CHAPTER IV.

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## OF THE PHILOLOGY OF RELATION.

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### SECTION FIRST.

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OF THE VERBAL EXPRESSION OF RELATIONS.—OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN WORDS.—AND OF THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF VERBS.

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#### 1.

*Preliminary Matter.—View of Relation entertained by Mr. Horne Tooke.—Never supposes that Relations are Partitions between Relative Subjects.—His consequent View of the Nature of the Verb.*

WITHOUT the use of signs, mankind could have made but very little progress in the acquisition of knowledge. Language is necessary to man, not only for the communication of his thoughts to other individuals of his species, but also to enable him to carry on any general reasoning within his own mind. Among all the objects of human research, however, there is hardly any one that has hitherto proved so refractory, or of incapable of being reduced to the

form of a legitimate and complete system of science, as this. The subject is of the first importance; and there are few desiderata which might be expected to excite a more general interest, than any light let in upon this department of philosophy.

It is observed by Mr. Locke, that, when he began his *Treatise of the Understanding*, and for a long while after, he had no thought that it would have been necessary for him to treat of Words. And yet, when we consider the matter; to treat of Ideas, without treating of the signs by which they are expressed and recorded, would be something like building a city and not providing it with inhabitants; or, rather, like inventing a machine, without explaining the manner in which it might be brought into operation.

Among the diversities of opinion which have obtained upon this subject; it is to be observed, that while most philosophers have supposed language to be an express image of thought, that is to say, have supposed every word, in itself, has the virtue or office of signifying some idea, and that we can convey no idea to any other person except by the expression of some appropriate word;—Others, again, with an appearance of greater acumen, have asserted that language may rather be compared to a set of springs, which, upon being touched, put the wonderful mechanism of our thoughts in operation.

If I might venture an opinion upon the subject, especially at this early stage of my proposed view

of it ; I would hazard the suggestion that there is a medium between these two extremes, the nature of which, I have some hope, may be explained by the tenor of what is to follow.

From this suggestion, and indeed from every view which can be taken of the subject, it is manifest there must be a very close analogy between the *Relations among our Thoughts* and the *Relations among our Words* : And it is certain that if any great or essential error prevail with regard to the former, a co-extensive deviation from the truth of nature must obtain with respect to the latter also.

This consideration leads me to observe, that the result of the foregoing analysis of Relation, if it should be admitted as being founded in the reality of things, presents a very fruitful field of Philological consequences. And I am unavoidably tempted to endeavour to point out the nature and importance of some of these fruits.

When, however, I reflect on the nature of the ground which must be entered upon, and controverted, in order to establish the positions which it will be necessary for me to lay down,—ground which, in the opinion of most readers, may be thought to be rather scholastic than philosophical ; and when I consider the high pretensions, upon that ground, of those who have already contested it without any decisive success ;—I am so sensible of giving an opening to the charge of presumption, that I deem it prudent to entrench myself behind a bulwark, which I trust is more redoubtable from

its solidity than from its apparent elevation; I allude to the preliminary observations which the good sense of some very eminent writers have led them to prefix to their speculations upon Philosophical Grammar.

In the hazard to be encountered, however, I at least anticipate a satisfaction of one kind; namely, that what is to be advanced will find a far greater number of competent Critics, than are immediately to be looked for with regard to some other speculations of the present Volume. If therefore I should be so fortunate as to be able to throw any material light upon a subject the merits of which, to a certain extent, are very generally understood; I hope it may stimulate the curiosity of some readers, who might not otherwise have taken such a direction, to examine whether various topics of the mind, of a seeming abstruse or dubious aspect, may not, upon examination, prove to be as simple to apprehend, and as solid in their logical foundation, as any thing that is to be found in grammar.

One of the writers, to whose sentiments I have above alluded, is the very acute author of the *DIVERSIONS OF PURLEY*; whose opinion of the subject I shall here transcribe, without farther preface. In that ingenious production, which is conducted in the way of Dialogue, One of the parties, in the character of the Dialogist F, and speaking with reference to its author, commences his animadversions in the following strain.

“ He insists, contrary to my opinion, that all

“ sorts of wisdom and knowledge may be ob-  
 “ tained by a plain man of sense ; without what is  
 “ commonly called learning. And when I took  
 “ the easiest instance, as I thought, and the foun-  
 “ dation of all other knowledge, (because it is the  
 “ beginning of education and that in which chil-  
 “ dren are employed,) he declined the proof of his  
 “ assertion in this instance, and maintained that I  
 “ had chosen the most difficult : for, says he,  
 “ though Grammar be usually the first thing  
 “ taught, it is always the last that is understood.”

A little farther on ; the Dialogist B says, “ You  
 “ must then give up one at least of your positions.  
 “ For if, as you make it out, Grammar is so diffi-  
 “ cult that a knowledge of it cannot be obtained by  
 “ a man of sense from any authors in his own lan-  
 “ guage, you must send him to the Greek and La-  
 “ tin authors, for the attainment of it. So true, in  
 “ this science, at least, if not in all others, is that  
 “ saying of Roger Ascham ; that ‘ *Even as a Hawke*  
 “ *fleeth not hie with one winge, even so a man reacheth*  
 “ *not to excellency with one tongue.*’ ”

To this Mr. Tooke himself, in the character of  
 the Dialogist H, replies ; “ On the contrary, I am  
 “ rather confirmed by this instance in my first opi-  
 “ nion. I acknowledge philosophical Grammar  
 “ to be a most necessary step toward wisdom and  
 “ true knowledge. From the innumerable and inve-  
 “ terate mistakes which have been made concern-  
 “ ing it by the wisest philosophers and most dili-  
 “ gent inquirers of all ages, and from the thick  
 “ darkness in which they have hitherto left it, I

“imagine it to be one of the most difficult speculations. Yet I suppose, a man of plain common sense may obtain it, if he will dig for it; but I cannot think that what is commonly called learning is the mine in which it will be found. Truth, in my opinion, has been improperly imagined at the bottom of a well: it lies much nearer to the surface; though buried indeed at present under mountains of learned rubbish, in which there is nothing to admire but the amazing strength of those vast giants of literature who have been able thus to heap Pelion on Ossa.”

Such is the preliminary view of the subject entertained by MR. HORNE TOOKE. And I suppose it will not be denied, by any competent judge, that there is a great deal of truth in it. Nevertheless, I am unable to subscribe to Mr. Tooke's opinion, with regard to what is in reality the *mine* from which a knowledge of Philosophical Grammar is to be obtained. This mine, according to him, is the Original workshop of language. But I would confidently seek for it rather in the foundery of our ideas, that is in the Mind and its Operations. If I should ultimately appear to be warranted in this supposition; the perfection of Grammar cannot be obtained from any research into Etymology; but, on the contrary, it must patiently wait the perfection of the Philosophy of the Mind.

In so far as the original fabricators of language had just ideas; they may indeed be expected to have found suitable expressions for them: and, thus far, Etymology is an *accidental or secondary*

*source* in which we may seek for the Nature and Relations of Words. But nothing has proved more contrary to experience, than that mankind in a rude state have ever had just philosophical notions. How then shall we look for the philosophy of language, where the philosophy of ideas never yet existed? In tracing the original meanings of words, we may find (and even this appears in many cases to be a matter of very uncertain issue) how our forefathers *thought*: but this affords us no ground to assume that they *thought justly*; and, if they did not do this, it is impossible they could have *spoken justly*.

If I be not greatly mistaken, a very remarkable instance of the truth of this reasoning is furnished by Mr. Horne Tooke, himself: and, if so, it is not a little curious, that so striking an example of it should be exhibited by a writer whose acumen had led him, in many respects, so far to transcend his contemporaries, in the science of language. The only strictures, however, which I propose to hazard, upon the speculations of this writer, concern his sentiments on the subject of Relation; and his views of that part of speech which, I hope to be able to show, is the representative of Relation.

The following passages, from the work in question, will furnish the requisite matter for this purpose.

In the *First Volume* of the *DIVERSIONS*, page 396, Mr. Tooke says, “ I could sooner believe  
“ with Lord Monboddo, that there are men with



“ tails, like cats, as long as his Lordship pleases,  
 “ than admit that ‘ *every kind of Relation is a pure*  
 “ *idea of* INTELLECT WHICH CAN NEVER BE AP-  
 “ PREHENDED BY SENSE.’ ”

Again ; In his *Second Volume*, page 499, he expresses himself upon the subject in the following terms.

“ *Relative* has indeed, within my memory,  
 “ by a ridiculous affectation of false and unfound-  
 “ ed accuracy, crept forward into improper use, to  
 “ the exclusion of Relation. Certain precise gen-  
 “ tlemen will no longer permit us to call our kin-  
 “ dred our *Relations*: No,—but our *Relatives*.  
 “ Why? What is the meaning of the termination  
 “ *On*, and the meaning of the termination *Ive*;  
 “ what qualifies the one, and disqualifies the other ?  
 “ They have both appropriate meanings ; without  
 “ the knowledge of which how can these gentle-  
 “ men determine their proper use ? If they say,  
 “ they have not appropriate meanings ; by what  
 “ rule do they prefer one to the other ? They who  
 “ do not take what they find in use, are bound  
 “ to give a reason for it. But these petty foppe-  
 “ ries will pass away of themselves, and when the  
 “ whim is over, we shall all find our *Relations*  
 “ again, as safe and sound as ever.”

Although all the authorities which I quoted in the preceding Chapter, in order to show that Relation and Relatives have uniformly been confounded together as being one same thing, have unquestionably expressed themselves to the full

amount of the doctrine which I there attributed to them; it is certain that not one of them has assumed so triumphant a tone, on the same side, as Mr. Tooke has done in these two passages. His sarcastic treatment, however, of those innocent gentlemen who have made a distinction in their phraseology on the subject, must recoil with a proportionate force upon his own judgment, if the principles of Relation advanced in the foregoing analysis be admitted.

With regard to the *distinction*, indeed, between Relations and Relatives, which, he observes, “*has crept in;*” it appears that those who have adopted it, have not, however, in any instance been guilty of attempting to analyse their own thoughts with regard to it; as may be inferred from the tone in which Mr. Tooke has expressed himself concerning them. The distinction, therefore, seems to have crept into modern phraseology owing to *some* difference actually discerned by the minds of particular persons, between Relatives and Relation, but discerned *not definitely*, or in any manner which could enable them to ascertain the limits which divide these two natures.

If I am right in this conjecture; it may fairly be supposed, that such a *vagueness* in men’s notions with regard to Relation, is a forcible illustration of the truth of Mr. Tooke’s judgment, that a knowledge of Grammar is not to be obtained from what is usually called learning; because I suspect, that the vagueness in question arises from the circumstance of writers, and speakers, in general, having

formed their notions of the Category of Relation upon the *principles of school logic*, which, I have already very fully shown, are directly contrary to the real nature of Relation itself; while the *natural dictates of the understanding*, in its view of things around it, operating together with a general tendency to improvement in our language, has tacitly whispered, to some individuals, a different conception of the nature of Relation from that which scholastic logic has uniformly inculcated.—The probability of this conjecture, however, will be illustrated farther on.

Having ventured thus much in the way of mere surmise; I shall now proceed to hazard an answer to Mr. Tooke's question; namely, Wherein consists the distinction between the imports of the two words, *Relation* and *Relatives*?

## 2.

### *Of the Nature and Use of the Verb.*

The whole foregoing analysis, I would fain hope, presents a conclusive answer to Mr. Tooke's question, so far as regards Relation and Relatives *in themselves*, as things existing in the universe, either in the ideas of our own minds or in things beyond us: and, I confess, I do not anticipate being able to add any thing to the strength of the evidence therein already adduced. But with regard to what appears to have been the *more immediate* object of Mr. Tooke's question, namely, Whether or not any, Or, What GRAMMATICAL distinction

can be made in the VERBAL EXPRESSION of *Relatives*, so as to difference it in reality from the expression of *Relation*; I shall now submit that view of the subject with which I have been impressed in consequence of the general result of my own previous speculations.

FIRST, therefore, I must risk the opinion, that, from want of having any conception of the real nature of Relation itself, the ingenious author of the *Diversions of Purley* has left entirely unexplained, and in the same state of darkness in which it appears to have uniformly rested since the invention of language, the real nature of ONE of the only two essential parts of speech, namely, the VERB.

If I shall be enabled to substantiate this opinion, together with those consequences of it which I here contemplate; it will be found, that, although much light has been thrown upon the subject of Philosophical Grammar by the Philologer of Purley, his Work, nevertheless, walks deplorably lame upon ONE of its two legs;—a fault which, indeed, it would be most unjust to attribute to this author exclusively,—but which is not the less real though it has been shared by all the rest of the species.

Mr. Tooke has set out with assuming, that the only essential parts of speech are the NOUN and the VERB.—All the other words, he considers as abbreviations, for the sake of dispatch. He then shows, that *Verbs* are “*adjectived*,” as well as *Nouns*. And this carries him into a consideration of the

different ways in which Verbs ARE adjectived. But he commences and ends his very ingenious speculations, without entering into any explanation of the nature of the *simple Verb itself*. This, indeed, he confesses, in a very remarkable passage at the close of his work ; wherein he gives a hint that he intended to make that question the subject of a future speculation. There appears, in the outset of his Treatise, a sort of passing description of the use of the Verb ; which I take to be perfectly indicative of the vagueness of his conception concerning its nature. But the passage in which it is contained, as well as that wherein he acknowledges the omission of the subject, will be stated after I shall have in some degree developed my own views with regard to it.

To commence this View ; I assume, in concurrence with Mr. Tooke, that the only essential parts of speech are the *Noun* and the *Verb*. The question, then, which first presents itself, is the following ; namely, WHY are the Noun and the Verb the only two essential parts of Speech : Upon what basis is this assumption founded ?

The answer, I imagine, is simply this ; that *there are only two PRIMARY GENERA or CATEGORIES OF THINGS*, conceivable in the universe ; that is to say *SUBSTANTIVE NATURES*—and *PARTITIONS between them* : which *PARTITIONS* are obviously necessary to give *plurality* to things, and without which they must be not divers but ALL ONE SAME THING.

Assuming this, as the primary constitution of all

things known by us; I am to observe, that *Substantive Natures*; and also their *Inherent Qualities*, which may be considered as being *substantive in a secondary degree*; may, each of them, be viewed also *relatively* in regard to any other things, and hence these Substantives take the superinduced character of **RELATIVE SUBJECTS**: But whether they be regarded in their *primary character of Substantives*, or in their *secondary character of Relatives*, they are, in every case, necessarily *signified only by NOUNS*. But, *utterly contrary to this nature*, I must here suggest, **ALL PARTITIONS** (*that is to say ALL RELATIONS*) between Substantive things *must be signified only by VERBS*, or by a word which defines or modifies a Verb, namely, a *Preposition*.

This last assumption (of the truth of which I have little doubt of being able to satisfy my readers) forms of itself alone a conclusive answer to Mr. Tooke's question, as to *what difference* gentlemen could possibly specify between *Relations* and *Relatives*: for vast and essential that difference must be, when the signification of the two things in question of necessity demands the two most essentially different parts of speech.—But this, I conceive, is only the beginning of difference.

Philologists, in common with Mr. Tooke, have always been foiled in their attempts to ascertain the nature or essential import of the Verb, taken simply by itself. But if it should appear satisfactorily, that Philosophers and Logicians have never conceived the existence of those real Partitions

between things which I venture to believe the Verb will certainly be found to represent; it is perfectly manifest they never could have formed a true conception of the nature of the VERB ITSELF. And as it is manifest from the language which Mr. Tooke has employed concerning it, that he had not the most distant conception of those Partitions between things, as forming real objects of thought; (and, indeed, many classes of them *realities in themselves whether we think of them or not*;) it is perfectly evident he could not reason with precision upon the intrinsic nature of the Verb.—One cannot, indeed, help remarking, in his work, how illogical it appears, to prosecute a long treatise upon the *properties* of the Verb, without pretending to ascertain the nature of the *Verb itself*. Other Philologists and Grammarians have at least made *some* specific estimate of its supposed nature; before they proceeded to reason upon its properties.

To proceed, however, to the evidences of the subject; I here first concur with Mr. Tooke (Vol. 2, page 473,) in opinion, that as “*Case, Gender, Number*, are no parts of the NOUN”—“*So Mood, Tense, Number, Person*, are no parts of the VERB.”

Next; I am to observe, that, with regard to the import of the Verb itself, however our two great English Philologists, TOOKE and HARRIS, differ in some respects; they certainly agree with all other Philologers in this, that the verb imports some-

thing attached, or attributable to, or in some way or other attending upon, SOME ONE agent or subject exclusively. But this (to borrow the impressive language of Mr. Tooke upon another occasion) “*I deny.*”—I must deny that the thing signified by ANY VERB can be ATTRIBUTED TO ANY ONE subject, as signifying either an act, a quality, or an attribute of any sort, of that subject. This, at the same time, I must observe, is of the very last importance: It is *essential and fundamental* in the nature of the Verb; and it will necessarily carry a great part, or ONE HALF OF ALL GRAMMAR UPON ITS SHOULDERS. To support it, therefore, I shall begin with stating the following positions.

1. The VERB, I conceive, is a distinct kind of NOUN, signifying a RELATION between any two Subjects. The Verb, therefore, is, like the thing which it represents, *at once a PARTITION and a BRIDGE OF CONNECTION.* It connects two ordinary Nouns, or Pronouns, considered as a *Nominative* and an *Accusative*.

2. From this nature of the Verb; I must farther suggest, it follows, that if any Verb be expressed simply, that is without being conjoined with a Noun, or Pronoun, in the Nominative Case; it can have no more meaning than a Preposition has that is expressed by itself.

3. Moreover; If ANY Verb be expressed with *only a Nominative Case*; I venture to believe, it will *still have no meaning*, unless there be also an *Accusative Case* either expressed or understood. In other words; I apprehend, no Verb can be con-



ceived, at all, except as signifying both a *logical and a grammatical* BRIDGE between some two subjects; which subjects, in the language of *Relation*, are called a *Relative* and its *Correlative*, but in the language of *Grammar* are styled a *Nominative* and an *Accusative*.

The difference, in the general constitution of Grammar, between this view of the nature of the Verb and that which is uniformly assumed, will be manifest to every person who is acquainted with the subject. In its proper place, however, I shall, as matter indispensable upon such an occasion, adduce evidence from various authorities, to show that it is never supposed that the Verb (when it is supposed to assert) must always assert something of an ACCUSATIVE, by the very same expression in which it asserts any thing of a Nominative. —The cause and the consequences of this vast oversight will appear in the sequel.

The only Verb which can have the smallest pretension to be apprehended, or its signification conceived, with a *Nominative only*; is that which has very improperly been called the *Substantive Verb*. This Verb, namely, AM, or IS, however, signifies purely nothing but EXISTENCE: and existence, I must observe, is nothing but a relation.

The word *existence* is apprehended, by logicians, to signify the ACTUAL BEING OF ESSENCE; which, in other words, means the actual being of a sub-

*stance together with all its inherent qualities.* Thus, Johnson quotes Dr. Watts; "Essence is but "the very nature of any being, whether it be "actually existing or no: a rose in winter has "an essence; in summer it has an existence also." And, upon the same authority, the English Lexicographer explains EXISTENCE to be, "*State of being; actual possession of being.*" From these expositions, without any other argument, (although there *are* other and very conclusive ones too,) it becomes perfectly manifest that there is *an acknowledged difference* between *Essence* and *Existence*: and, since the former of these words indubitably means the *substantive nature* of any thing, without implying its actuality; the latter, certainly, can mean only an ACTUAL RELATION *between that thing and TIME and SPACE.* In other words; When the *essence or nature* of any thing is called into *actual existence*, this means that its essence supports an *actual relation of compenetration, or juxtaposition,* with Time and Space; without which, nothing whatever can be conceived as an actual reality.

As for the old scholastic jargon, concerning things which have no relation to Time, or Space; it has too long disgraced the page of Philosophy. But, at any rate, if there be such things, they form none of the subjects about which the present speculations are at all concerned.

Another argument, of equal force, presents itself in the general structure of language; which would,

of itself alone, prove, conclusively, that Existence means nothing but a Relation. Thus it is universally agreed that the signification of the simple Verb AM, is EXIST. What then (it may be asked) is the signification of the Pronoun I, when it is prefixed as a Nominative to *Am*? The *Pronoun must mean SOMETHING*: and it indubitably means MY SUBSTANTIVE OR ESSENTIAL NATURE. What meaning, then, can possibly remain for the Verb AM to have, as subjoined to the Pronoun I, except to signify *a relation of congruence or compenetration which I support with Time and Space?*

It cannot affect this argument, that Time and Space are two vastly different and independent realities; and, also, that we cannot *comprehend or imagine any actual partition* between these things and any Being which maintains a relation of mutual compenetration with them. For, as Time and Space will be insisted upon, as being absolute realities; and, as we cannot suppose *Time and Space to be the same thing with the substantive Beings* that are in Time and Space; it follows, that we *must infer a LOGICAL relation or partition* between them; and we must, even, in like manner, *infer a logical partition* between TIME itself and SPACE itself; although we *cannot imagine* how these relations are actually sustained.

If any *third* argument, in proof of the fact before us, could be required; we have it in this consideration, namely, that *Identity* is universally acknowledged to be *a Relation*; and it is certain that

*identity* is only a *continued existence*; that is, *Existence* is only a simple modification of the relation of Identity.

Having, I trust, disposed of the pretensions of what has been called the **SUBSTANTIVE VERB**, by showing that it signifies *no substance* whatever, but only *a mere relation*, as does *equally every other Verb*; In other words; having urged that the pretended substantive Verb demands, for its import, to have *Time and Space* for its *Accusative*, while it has the Pronoun *I* for its *Nominative*; I am now farther to observe, that the whole tribe of *other Verbs*, not only the *Active Transitive*, but equally the *Active Intransitive*, and the *Neuter* also, are in a logical sense, and must in a grammatical one, be considered as **BRIDGES** between *two NOUNS, OR PRONOUNS*, and, as such, *cannot be conceived without an ACCUSATIVE*, as well as a *Nominative Case*.

Grammarians assume, that, when we say "Peter runs," the action is necessarily confined to **PETER**, as it *does not pass* from him to any one else: but, that when we say "Peter beats Richard;" the word *beats* denotes an action proceeding from Peter; and, as this action *does pass*, namely, to Richard, the Verb also is *transitive or passing*. Such, uniformly, is the doctrine of the Schools. But, from this doctrine I must venture to dissent most essentially. It involves a two-fold error, of the greatest consequence; and a confusion in the subject, which loudly demands to be unravelled.

With this view I am to observe, in the **FIRST**

PLACE, that, when "Peter runs," he *beats* the GROUND; and, what is more, the GROUND *at the same time* BEATS HIM, as certainly as ever *he* beat Richard.—In their *moral import*, and in their *physical consequences* also, they are, assuredly, two vastly different things, to *beat the ground* and to *beat Richard*. But, I must assert, as a most essential Principle of the subject, that, *in a strict logical or philosophical view*, what is called the PASSIVE subject, in every action, *is always, of necessity*, AS ACTIVE as the other: and I must here accordingly insist, that, when any man *runs, or beats the ground*, the *ground*, in a philosophical sense, *beats him and is AS ACTIVE as he is*.

SECONDLY. In order to point out the other essential error, which I have ventured to suggest, as being involved in the rule of Grammar above alluded to; I must remind my readers, that it was shown, in a Section of the foregoing Chapter, that ALL ACTIONS *are* RELATIONS. In this place I am to add, that ALL RELATIONS are, in a philosophical sense, ACTIONS. And, when I say ACTIONS; it will be observed, agreeably with what I have asserted above, that I mean a thing extremely foreign to what is meant by the word ACTION in the uniform acceptation of Grammarians and Logicians.

Thus, not only is it assumed, that, in what is called an *intransitive act*, the *action is necessarily confined to the Nominative or Agent*, because it is

*supposed* that the action *does not pass* ; (which limitation of the action to the Nominative, I repeat, is a profound and most consequential error, both in logic and in grammar) but, also, when, in the case of what is called *a transitive act*, it is said that the *action does pass* to the Accusative or Patient, there is created another error, of no less magnitude : for the truth is, that *actions never do pass* ; *they bear no analogy, in their nature, to any thing that can pass* from one subject to another. Grammarians, when they talk of a transitive act, and affirm that in this case something *passes* ; mean something that passes like a horse, or a great coat, from one man to another. But I must insist upon my position, that a Verb, of any sort, is only a Noun, signifying *a Bridge* of some kind ; which Bridge *separates or divides*, while it *also connects*, any two subjects, considered as a *Nominative* and an *Accusative* ; and I feel confident that no Bridge can bear an analogy to any thing that *passes, at all*.

Actions, indeed, pass *in one sense* ; that is, they *pass in TIME*. But what I assert is, that actions *never pass in SPACE* ; because they only connect any two Subjects in Space, as a Bridge connects two Banks of a River.

There are two, or three, distinctions to be made here ; which, I think, will serve to illustrate the matter in question.—*First* ; When one man strikes another, I apprehend, *both men*, in a logical sense, are *equally active* ; because each of them supports one end of that Bridge or Action whose name is

*striking* : which *relation* is an actual partition between the two men.—*Secondly* ; If, in consequence of *this striking*, one of the men receive a *wound*, or a *bruise*; this, although indeed it *does NOT PASS*, but is *a thing newly caused or created*, is at least **SOMETHING GOT by the Patient**. But, *Thirdly* ; If the act in question, instead of simple striking, were to consist of *a stone thrown*, or *a horse given*, by the one man to the other ; in this case something *DOES pass* : but we are here to distinguish, as a matter of essential moment, that this something that does pass, is, certainly, a thing **FOREIGN** to the *action* either of hitting or of giving ; and the **ACTION, ITSELF**, in either case, is purely a species of partition and bridge, which both the men equally contribute to support, without any *superior claim* of either of them, in a philosophical sense, to be called the *agent*.

As the grand error of Logicians has been to suppose that **RELATIONS** are **QUALITIES of Things**, instead of recognising them for **PARTITIONS BETWEEN Things** ; So the great error in accredited Grammar which I am here arguing to controvert, and which is no other than the one just mentioned, is that of confounding **ACTIONS** with *mere ENERGIES* ; than which, I have suggested, and must here maintain, no two things can be more distinct. The simple truth, I apprehend, is, that *every ACTION in nature must of necessity be the effect of TWO OPPOSITE ENERGIES*. Each of these **ENERGIES**, I grant, is a **QUALITY** of some **One Subject** : but I

assert that the PARTITION which *must exist* between these Energies, when they are mutually exerted, is NOT A QUALITY, and *does not belong to either of the two Subjects*; but is a *distinct BRIDGE*, which *divides*, while it also connects them. Now the VERB is the WORD whose office it is *simply* to signify those Bridges which we call ACTIONS: and certain I think it is, that, to talk of *active or passive Bridges* must be a manifest absurdity; and no less so, to assume that any Bridge can stand upon ONLY ONE leg, any more than it could upon no leg at all.

### 3.

#### *Illustrations of the foregoing Reasoning.*

It may be proper to illustrate the general view of the subject which has now been stated, by some particular examples. And for this purpose I shall begin with stating one of that class which is most unfavorable to the position here asserted, or, at any rate, that is the least obvious to apprehension, namely, the relation which must always be supposed to subsist between any *Substantive Thing* and *any one of its Inherent Qualities*.

Thus when we say that A SENSATION IS *an occasional inherent affection or quality of a MIND*; we, of necessity, consider the mind and the sensation as being, *in a grammatical sense*, two distinct things, *connected by the copula is*. But, although the *mind*, in this case, is usually *considered* as the SUBJECT, and



the *sensation or quality* only as the PREDICATE ; it is certain, that, in a strict philosophical sense, the *mind* is as much *the mind of the sensation*, as *the sensation is the sensation of the mind*. The truth is, that whenever we predicate any quality, (however inherent) of a subject, we of necessity assume and imply *a relation or logical partition* between the subject and the predicate ; which, while it connects them together, *makes two* logical subjects of them.

In *every other* sort of relation, except those essentially intimate ones which subsist between Substances and their Qualities, or between Substantive Beings and Time and Space, the view which I am here insisting upon must be plain to every capacity, and its truth self-evident.

In the relation (as it is called) of *Father*, that is in the relation which is *supported between a father and a child* ; the father is a man who has *befathered* the child, and the child is a human being who, by its existence, has *bechilded* the father. No person will pretend to say that there are *two different relations*, which connect these two Correlative Subjects. The *begetter* and the BEGOTTEN were *equally necessary* to give existence to the relation which they now support between them : and it is impossible to give any meaning at all to the Verb *beget*, without understanding it to have both a Noun in the Nominative case, *and another in the ACCUSATIVE*. We might as well endeavour to imagine a Bridge without any thing to support it.

In like manner ; Constable, or Dictator, is the superinduced relative name of a Subject who supports one side of a certain relation or action between himself and some other persons. The name of this relation, when we look toward HIM, is *governing*; but when we look toward those whom he governs, the *very same relation* is called *obeying*. Each of these names of the *concrete relation*, as it exists, or can exist in nature, however, is, for the sake of convenience, usually *abstracted and generalised* ; and hence we have the *Verbal Nouns* GOVERNMENT and OBEDIENCE OR SUBJECTION. But there is *no such thing in the universe*, as *Government, or Obedience*; although there is a great deal of *governing* and *obeying*. And I assert, agreeably with all that has gone before, that we cannot use either the Verb *Govern* or the Verb *Obey*, without understanding a Noun, or Pronoun, in the Nominative, *and another in the ACCUSATIVE CASE*: so essentially is every Verb the signification of a *Connective Partition or Bridge*; which *cannot be supported* without a Subject, signified by a *Noun, or Pronoun*, ON EACH SIDE OF IT.

It is observed, indeed, by writers, that there are some names of Relatives, which do not suggest their Correlatives. Thus Mr. Locke remarks, that the name of *Constable, or Dictator*, does not obviously suggest its Correlative ; while that of *Patron* infallibly calls up the notion of a *Client*. But this observation is not true to any

extent that can in the least invalidate my present general argument. It is true, we may sometimes hear the name of a Constable, or Dictator, *without heeding or attending to* any Correlative: but if we were to mention such a conceit, as that of Robinson Crusoe having been a Constable, or Dictator, in his Island without inhabitants; the absurdity of the thing could not escape the notice of the most ordinary persons. This instance, then, may serve to show us, that the mind recognises the necessary existence of a Correlative to every Relative; although, under many familiar views of the subject, it may not *heed* that it actually does so. And I assert here, as an AXIOM in LANGUAGE, equal in force or necessity to any axiom in GEOMETRY, that Every Nominative must have a Correlative Accusative, *understood*; and, that every Verb is a Bridge, which can no more be supported *without* BOTH a Nominative and an Accusative, than London Bridge could be supported by only ONE OR NEITHER bank of the Thames.

The mind, indeed, does, in innumerable instances, form for itself what may be called *resting places of absurdity*; and very convenient ones, too: which are deserving of more remark than I have here room to bestow upon them. Thus, we add, and subtract, and multiply, and divide *Numbers*, which we understand to signify no concrete things in existence: And so, in like manner, we may, in many cases, speak of Subjects under Relative characters, *without thinking of their Correlatives*. But,

as no man (not even an advocate of *General Ideas*) will pretend, that *one, two, or ten*, can EXIST, that are not one, two, or ten, *loaves, or fishes, or some other concrete things*; so no man, that is upon his *guard*, will ever pretend that he can think of any Relative Subject that does not refer to some Correlative; nor, I think, will any person, when put upon his guard, assert that he can think of any Nominative Case which does not of necessity demand an Accusative.

The view of the subject which has now been taken, is farther confirmed by the fact, that the SAME Verbs are *either ACTIVE or PASSIVE*, according to which way the mind considers them. Thus, as Dr. Lowth observes, “When the Agent takes the lead in the sentence, the Verb is active, and is followed by the Object: When the Object takes the lead, the Verb is passive, and is followed by the Agent.” Now, I must observe, this would be impossible were not the Verbs in question, *in themselves*, in a strict logical sense, *absolutely neuter*, or were not each of them supported between a Nominative and an Accusative, without any superior claim of either of these last to be the sole supporter of the Verb: for one same Verb cannot possibly have two opposite natures. Thus it is manifest, that a Verb, of whatever sort, is a mere Standing Bridge or Connective Partition, between some two Nouns, or Pronouns.

And here it is necessary to take along with us the observation, that, although Verbs denote Actions ; and, each of the supporters of a Verb is, according to the foregoing view, *equally* ACTIVE ; yet, ACTIONS *themselves* are not ACTIVE. Thus, though Verbs denote actions, it is impossible they should, *as the representatives or signs* of action, be themselves *properly called active*. And hence, the terms, or phrases, *Active Verb* and *Passive Verb*, are absolutely *absurd*, if they be understood as regarding *the nature of the Verbs themselves*; although it is certainly a very proper Grammatical distinction to call them active and passive, in order to *show the posture or direction, of the mind*, in its view of the Nominative and the Accusative.

The distinctions of Active and of Passive Verbs, I conceive, are useful in *Grammar*, in a way analogous to the use of certain terms that are current in the subject of *Relation*. Thus, in the last mentioned subject, we call the *very same relation of distance* by the name of an *ascent* when we are looking from a lower ground upward, and a *descent* when we are looking down : but it would be absurd to suppose that this one relation of distance is two relations, or is of two different natures. It would, however, be just as logical to suppose a relation of distance to be of two opposite natures, or even to suppose it of *a moving or passing nature*, and so to talk of an *ascending* and a *descending* DISTANCE, as to talk of AN ACTIVE or a PASSIVE VERB. Verbs can only signify the EFFECTS of *contending activities*;

they cannot either *be*, or be *significant of*, any things either active or passive, in themselves.

These remarks furnish me an occasion to observe, that the analogy between the *Verb* and a *Bridge* is much more extensive and complete, than may at first sight appear. This, indeed, will be still more minutely evinced in the next Section : but at present I am led to suggest the obvious consideration, that, like a *Bridge*, the *Verb* not only connects two *Nouns* together ; but, while it is itself fixed, unpassing, and neuter, between the two, *it serves our thoughts to pass*, to and fro, from the one *Noun* to the other. And thus, I insist, *Verbs* are those *representatives of RELATIONS*, which, in language, serve our *Intellect* to step from one individual substantive being to another, throughout the whole known universe of things ; *every one of which steps must be made by the Mind upon a BRIDGE OF RELATION ; and cannot be SIGNIFIED to ANY OTHER MIND except by that sort of BRIDGE called a VERB.*

The essential faults which I ascribe to the views of *Philologists* in this case, are, *First*, the assumption that *VERBS* express *ATTRIBUTES* OR *QUALITIES* of things ; each one of them being assigned to *SOME ONE SUBJECT*, in the same sense that we ascribe *any Quality* that is signified by an *Adjective Noun*. And, *Secondly*, that, in consequence of assuming this *generic principle*, *Verbs* are then divided into several different *Species* ; and one sort is assumed to express an *ATTRIBUTE of some Subject called an AGENT* ; and another sort, an *ATTRIBUTE*

of some Subject called a PATIENT. While I hope it is sufficiently shown that no Verb can express an attribute of any single subject whatever.

To conclude ; In order to show here, what has been one of the principal objects of the present Section, namely, that *every Relation* is, in a logical or a grammatical sense, an *Action*; I shall offer an example of one of the most quiescent Relations that can be imagined ; For this purpose I choose the relation of CONTACT.

In ordinary, and even in strict philosophical discourse, we say, “*two things are in contact:*” Thus we signify this relation of contact preposterously by a *Noun*, instead of a *Verb*. But the real truth is, and it ought to be so expressed, that, in all such relations, *taken in concrete as they can alone exist*, each of the two things in question CONTACTS *the other*. I doubt not that many persons will be ready to cry out, here, at what they will at first sight pronounce to be a barbarous expression. But I have only to remind those persons that they continually use a *perfectly equivalent and synonymous expression, or active Verb*, when they say that any *one thing TOUCHES another*. I trust, I need not add any thing more, to prove that CONTACT, *in a grammatical sense, is ACTION*. And I shall only add, that when a man, or any other thing, EXISTS; that thing supports AN ACTION of something *more than CONTACT*; that is an action of COMPENETRATION with Time and Space.

In fine, then; All Relations are Grammatical Actions: While all Actions are not attributes of any one agent; but are necessarily and invariably Connective Partitions or Bridges upheld between SOME TWO agents: And all Relations can be signified by no word except a VERB, or a CONNECTIVE which is the representative of a Verb. Moreover, upon the other hand, all RELATIVE SUBJECTS, that is all SUPPORTERS of Relations, can be signified only by NOUNS, or by the representatives of NOUNS. Hence RELATIVES and RELATIONS form the TWO most different OBJECTS in the Universe: and, accordingly, a similar difference subsists between the TWO SORTS OF WORDS which alone can signify or represent them.

If it should be thought, that, in the course of what has been advanced, or in what is to follow, I have any where fallen into unnecessary repetitions; I would rather incur this charge, than run the least risk of having my meaning misunderstood. At the same time, I may observe, that I have not dealt any thing near so largely in repetitions, as has been done, and perhaps wisely done, for the sake of perspicuity, by the author of the DIVERSIONS OF PURLEY. I may indeed offer it, for a general remark, that what has been advanced by writers upon the subject of Grammar, especially with regard to the nature of the VERB, partakes deeply of an ambiguity and obscurity analogous to what I have in a former



place observed obtains on the subject of Relation ; and which, therefore, I conceive, renders the utmost explicitness necessary, in any speculation upon this subject, in order to avoid leaving room for misapprehension. But of this I shall have occasion to point out some very important instances in the next section.

## SECTION SECOND.

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OF THE FARTHER NATURE AND USE OF THE VERB.

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### 1.

*Grammarians never recognise that every Verb is of the Nature of a Connective Partition or Bridge between a Nominative and an Accusative.*

ACCORDING to what has been advanced in the foregoing Section ; *all VERBS are CONNECTIVES.* Very probably, therefore, it may, at first sight, be supposed by many persons, that I have only been asserting what has been admitted and insisted upon by other writers. It appears necessary in this case to anticipate any such misconception of the matter, and to prevent it from being retained, if it should have *gained admission.*

When Grammarians assert that *Verbs are Connectives*; they certainly mean to affirm that the Verb connects two things together, that is *a subject and its predicate.* But there are two great and essential faults which enter into their view of the nature of the Verb: One of them being immediately involved in their notion of the nature of *Connection*; and the other in their estimation of the nature of a *Predicate.*

FIRST; I am to observe, it has never been recognised by Logicians, (including Grammarians) that every *Connection* in the Universe, at the same time that it is a *Connection*, is also a *Partition* between the things connected. This grand error I have sufficiently pointed out in the analysis of *Relation*; and therefore it requires no additional evidence here. The consequence of this fault, in Grammar, has been, that, when we predicate *any inherent quality* of a Subject, (which we must do by means of the universal copula, *Is*,) it has never been recognised that we are logically bound to infer a *real Partition* or *Bridge* between the subject and its predicate; of which *Partition* the *Verb* is the *representative*. Thus, although Grammarians admit that Verbs are connectives, between a subject and a predicate; yet, from not conceiving any thing like *the true nature of a Connection*, they have not the least conception of the true nature of the thing which the Verb signifies or represents.

SECONDLY. But the other fault which I attribute to Grammarians, in this case, is one which extends the first error to a vast and endless train of grammatical consequences. The fact to which I allude is this; It has never been recognised, that, in the case of *all other Verbs*, except that which connects a subject with any one of its own inherent qualities, the two things which the Verb connects together are *not what are always understood to be meant*, that is, they are *not the NOMINATIVE* of the Verb and *some quality or attribute of*

that NOMINATIVE, but they are the NOMINATIVE of the Verb in question and its ACCUSATIVE.

To illustrate what I now assert ; I observe, for example, that when we say “ *I strike,*”—“ *Man exists,*”—or “ *Peter runs;*”—it would be affirmed, according to the uniform doctrine of the subject, that in every one of these sentences, there *is expressed a connection between a subject and its predicate.* But, against this I must object, that, so far is it from being true, that not one of the expressions in question is a sentence, or has any meaning, strictly speaking, or *can have any meaning until* we either add or understand the name of some *Accusative* to the Nominative and the Verb.

Thus, in order to give any meaning at all to the expressions in question, we must complete the sentence, in some such way as the following :—“ *I strike RICHARD:*”—“ *MAN exists in SPACE AND TIME;*”—“ *PETER runs UPON THE GROUND.*”—These Accusatives are (together with their Nominatives) the real supporter of the Verbs in question because *to strike* is impossible, without striking *something*; and the same may be said of *to run*, and *to exist*, and to *every other act or relation* whatever.

Hence it is manifest, that the true or real office of the Verb, in all cases wherein a man, or a thing, is supposed to support one side of any action, is *not to connect the man, or the thing, with its own energy or quality of partaking in that action*, but it is *to connect the man, or the thing, with SOME OTHER CO-AGENT*, such as *another man, or the ground, or*

any other thing which supports the other side of any action or relation.

THIRDLY; As there can be no other sort of connection, besides that which joins a Subject with its inherent quality, and that which serves as a bond to connect some *two subjects*, in some action or relation; it follows, that I have accounted for every species of connection which the Verb can signify or represent; and it has appeared that in both species, alike, a connection is a real logical *Partition and Bridge*. The consequence is, that there can be no more meaning in any expression of a Nominative and a Verb, without an Accusative, than there can be in the expressions, *one, two, or ten*, without we *either add or understand, loaves, or fishes, or some other things*; which things alone can render the word *one, two, or ten*, significant of any thing.

As, however, the words, "CONNECTIVE" and "CONNECTION," have often a very deceitful appearance in treatises upon Grammar; in which, especially with regard to the Verb, an ambiguity prevails analogous to what obtains in the usual language concerning Relation; I deem it indispensably necessary to point out, very particularly, the meaning which has been attached to those words by the leading authorities on the grammar of our Language; in order to show, distinctly, how vastly they all differ from that view of the nature of the Verb which I am desirous to establish. For this purpose, I shall begin with the view entertained by the learned author of HERMES.

In the Work just mentioned, Mr. Harris ranks the Verb under the head of ATTRIBUTIVES. He commences this head by saying, that “Attributives “are all those principal words that denote Attributives, considered as Attributes. Such, for example, as the words *Black, White, Great, Little, Wise, Eloquent, Writeth, Writing,*” &c.

In another place, page 186, he says, “A Verb “implies both an *Attribute*, and *Time*, and an “*Assertion*. A *Participle* implies only an *Attribute* “and *Time*. And an *Adjective* only an *Attribute*.”

Thirdly; he says, “Grammarians have been led “into that strange absurdity of ranging Adjectives “with Nouns, and separating them from Verbs; “though they are homogeneous with respect to “Verbs, as both denote Attributes.”

It must be quite unnecessary to adduce any other evidence, to show that Mr. Harris supposed every Verb to be some quality or attribute of *some ONE* subject; and that he never conceived Verbs to be Connective Partitions or Bridges between some two Subjects, that is, between a Nominative and an Accusative.

Next, therefore, I shall consider what has been advanced upon this subject by the author of the *DIVERSIONS OF PURLEY*.

In his *First Volume*, page 50, being the only place in which he makes the least attempt to explain the nature of the simple Verb (and which I must observe he does as if without premeditation) he expresses himself as follows.—

FIRST; The Dialogist B says, "I suppose you agree with the common opinion, concerning the words which you have distinguished as necessary to the communication of our thoughts. Those you call necessary, I suppose you allow to be signs of different ideas, or of different operations of the mind."

To this, Mr. Tooke (as the Dialogist H) replies,—“Indeed I do not. The business of the mind, so far as it concerns language, appears to me to be very simple. It extends no farther than to receive impressions, that is to have sensations or feelings. What are called its operations are merely the operations of language. A consideration of *Ideas*, of the *Mind*, or of *Things*, (relative to parts of speech) will lead us no farther than *Nouns* : i. e. to the signs of those impressions, or names of ideas. *The other part of speech, the Verb, must be accounted for from the necessary use of it in communication. It is in fact the communication itself.*”

This passage, (the latter part of which I have distinguished by italics, to mark what especially regards the Verb,) I cannot help observing, exhibits first, with regard to the nature of the MIND, the most deplorable darkness. And, after what I have endeavoured to explain with regard to the nature of that part of speech called the Verb; I must hope that what Mr. Tooke has here said of it, will be judged to be equally void of light. All that appears from his account with regard to it, is, that “The Verb must be accounted for from the neces-

“sary use of it in communication;” and, that “It is the communication itself.” We are, consequently, required to ascertain here, what this writer means by the word “*communication*;” because *communication* is a very ambiguous word, since it means both CONNECTION and ASSERTION.

First, therefore, I observe, that, by communication, Mr. Tooke certainly did not mean a *Bridge* from a Nominative to an Accusative; because I think it is perfectly manifest he meant only a communication, or rather a *transmission*, of the *thought* of one man, to the *mind* of another: which also, we are to observe, is only a *figurative expression*, and is *not literally true*; for no man ever receives the *thought of another*, although any man may have a thought suggested *similar* to that of another.

As Mr. Tooke has furnished us with no other explanation of the Verb, than the short text already quoted; we must confine our reasoning to what it expresses or implies. But I think it quite clear that, when he says the Verb must be accounted for from the necessary use of it in communication; and when he adds that it is in fact the communication itself; he can mean no other than that the Verb is the word which COMMUNICATES TO ANOTHER PERSON *my assertion*, such as that *I exist*,—that *Peter runs*,—or that *Man is mortal*.

I confidently apprehend, that, in the case of these Verbs, Mr. Tooke never contemplated that there is a *distinct LOGICAL BRIDGE* between a *man*



(when he exists) and *Space and Time*;—that there is such another Bridge between *Peter* (when he runs) and the *Ground*; and, also, such another Bridge between *Man* (when he lives) and *Mortality*. And therefore, I feel assured, it was not the opinion of this author, that, without taking in the *Accusative Bank*, it is impossible that any one of those Connectives or Bridges called Verbs can be *either supported or at all CONCEIVED*.

In this view of Mr. Tooke's creed I am borne out by other Commentators; who all admit that this author assumed ASSERTION to be the essence of the Verb: but I have however deemed it fit to show, distinctly, that this was in reality his doctrine.

If therefore there could be the shadow of a doubt left over the doctrine of the Verb which I have here ascribed to Mr. Tooke, from the passage above quoted; I have farther to observe, it must be completely removed from the mind of the most fastidious critic, the moment I remind him that this writer never conceived the existence of RELATIONS, as PARTITIONS between two related Subjects. This circumstance, at once, is a decisive touch-stone of his creed on *both subjects*. He has ridiculed, to the last degree, the notion of distinguishing between Relations and Relatives; and thereby, alone, he has proclaimed his complete darkness with regard to the nature of the word which signifies Relation. It would be a waste of time, therefore, to say any thing farther, in order to show that, by the word *communication*, Mr. Tooke did not mean that VERBS are a sort of BRIDGES, each of which must be understood to have TWO BANKS to support it. But I shall,

nevertheless conclude these observations, by quoting that passage, from the very close of his Work, wherein he clearly manifests his not having made up his mind to any specific form of idea upon the subject.

In the place referred to; the Dialogist F says,—  
 “If you finish thus, you will leave me much unsatisfied; nor shall I think myself fairly treated by you. You have told me that a *Verb* is (as every word also must be) a *Noun*; but you added that it is also *something more*: and that the title of *Verb* was given to it on account of that distinguishing *something more* than the mere *Noun* conveys. You have then proceeded to the simple *Verb* *adjectived*, and to the different *adjectived Moods*, and the different *adjectived Tenses* of the *Verb*. But you have not all the while explained to me what you mean by the naked simple *Verb unadjectived*. Nor have you uttered a single syllable concerning that *something* which the naked *Verb* unattended by *Mood, Tense, Number, Person, and Gender* (which last also some languages add to it) signifies *More* or *Besides* the mere *Noun*.—  
 “What is the *Verb*? What is that differential circumstance which, added to the definition of a *Noun*, constitutes the *Verb*?”

Upon this, Mr. Tooke, (as the Dialogist H) cries out,—“A truce, a truce.”

Hethen signifies, that his “*evening is indeed come*,” but, subjoins a hint, that he intended to avail himself of the clearness of the remaining “*twilight*,” to answer his friend’s very important question,

If the author last considered has been brief and unsatisfactory, in the single passage in which he has attempted to define the Verb; some other leading authorities upon the subject appear to be not less so. Dr. Johnson gives little or no light upon it, one way or the other. Dr. Lowth, upon the other hand, has left his meaning to be drawn from expressions which, when viewed with a critical eye, are involved in that sort of ambiguity to which I have before alluded, and which manifestly betrays an obscurity in any notion that a writer has formed of his subject.

The last mentioned very eminent Grammarian, in his INTRODUCTION, assumes, that “A Verb Active expresses an Action, and necessarily implies an Agent, and an Object acted upon.”—And that—“A Verb Passive expresses a Passion, or Suffering, as the Receiving of an Action; and necessarily implies an Object acted upon, and an Agent by which it is acted upon.” Now, therefore, *in so far as regards Active and Passive Verbs*, one would suppose that this writer entertained the very same view of the generic nature of the *Verb*, as that which I have suggested and insisted upon. But nothing is more manifest than the contrary of this, when we duly examine the other parts of Dr. Lowth’s Introduction.—The formal definition of a Verb given by this great Scholar, (in which definition, also, he has been followed by the most approved teachers) runs in these words.

“A Verb is a *word* which signifies TO BE,—TO DO,—OR TO SUFFER.”

Now, in order to place the difference between the two schemes in a strong and decisive light; I would ask, What would be said if I were to offer a definition of a BRIDGE; and, as such, were to affirm that A BRIDGE signifies TO BE,—TO DO,—OR TO SUFFER?

In this case, I apprehend, it would be perfectly manifest to every reader that I could have in my mind nothing like a true conception of the nature of a Bridge. If therefore I shall be judged as being warranted in the foregoing conclusion that *Verbs* are *Bridges*; it must follow that Dr. Lowth's definition of a Verb cannot be any thing like the nature of the thing which he wished to define.

After pointing out this remarkable difference; it is perhaps altogether unnecessary to adduce any farther evidence, to show that Dr. Lowth never entertained the same view of the Verb that has been herein advanced. But, on account of the importance of the subject, and in order to leave no room for cavil, I subjoin the following assumption of Lowth; in which, I believe he has been followed by all those who have come after him.

“The Verb Active is called also Transitive; because the Action *passeth over* to the Object, or hath an effect upon some other thing: and the Verb Neuter is called Intransitive; because the effect is confined within the Agent, and doth *not pass over* to any Object.”

Now I have already asserted, and shall farther

insist ; that it is *not at all in the nature of Verbs to PASS OVER*, in any case whatever. Verbs are Bridges, which serve *our thoughts to pass over* : but these Bridges cannot *themselves pass*.

Another, and the last instance which I shall here furnish, expressive of the views of Dr. Lowth, is that wherein he says—“ A Verb Noun expresses Being ; or a state or condition of being ; when the Agent and the Object acted upon coincide, and the event is properly neither action nor passion, but rather something between both : as *I am,—I sleep,—I walk.*”

In this passage, I am to observe, it is essential to ascertain, how far its author was warranted in assuming that “ *the Agent and the Object acted upon co-incide.*”

Now, *First* ; when he assumes, as he obviously does, that *I* and my *Existence* co-incide ; I must object, it has been shown at large that this is not true ; because what is called *my existence*, is a *Relation* ; and it *must* be understood as being a *logical partition* between *me* and *Time and Space*.

*Secondly* ; When he assumes that there is a coincidence between *a man* and *sleep*, it is to be answered, in like manner, agreeably to what I have observed in the beginning of the Section, that, when the PREDICATE in any proposition is an *inherent quality* of the SUBJECT, we *must, in a logical sense*, infer a *Partition* between them ; which Partition must be *as real a Grammatical Bridge* between the two, as that which is signified by any

other Verb whatever: even although the Subject and the Predicate do *actually or philosophically co-incide*; as either *a man and space*, or *a man and sleep*, or *a man and his thoughts*.

*Thirdly*; His *other* example exhibits so manifest a proof of the error of his view of the Subject, that I think it comes in most conclusively, here. Thus, when he assumes that, in the Verb "I WALK," the Agent and the Object acted upon co-incide; he can mean no other than that A MAN and the ENERGY which he exerts in walking *co-incide*. Here, then, it is plain, he considers the ACTION of walking to be *only* AN ENERGY, i. e. A QUALITY *inherent or appertaining to the MAN*: whereas, after what has gone before, I trust it will not admit of a moment's doubt, that the ACTION is a PARTITION between the man and the GROUND, and that the Ground is as necessary A SUPPORTER of the action of walking as the MAN is.

Next, and last; I am led to consider a view of the subject which has been taken by a writer who appears to differ, materially, from those who have gone before him; whose opinion would, from the tenor of some of his expressions, seem, at first sight, to co-incide with that which I have advanced. The author to whom I now allude, is the writer of the article *Grammar*, in Rees's ENCYCLOPEDIA. This author assumes, that ASSERTION *does not enter at all into the essence of the Verb*. Thus far, therefore, his opinion ap-

pears to concur with that which I have asserted. He farther assumes, that the essence of the Verb consists in CONNECTION: And in this, also, it would therefore at first sight appear that both our opinions concur.—But, upon examining the manner in which he supposes assertion to be made; it appears that we differ vastly upon this point. And when we ascertain the notion which he attaches to the word CONNECTION; it is manifest he means a thing extremely different from any thing of the nature of a Bridge between two Subjects.

His definition of the Verb is to be collected from the following passages.

“ A Verb is a word borrowed from a thing to express the action of that thing. It implies *connection*, the connection of an agent and its object, or more generally the connection of a cause with its effect. But this connection is not expressed by an independent word but by the *juxtaposition* or the combination into one word of the agent and its object.”

As I shall have occasion, in the sequel, to point out a very different office of the *juxtaposition* or *connection* that is here meant; I notice this, in order that the reader may not be led to confound the two together, which, for reasons that will be explained, it would be very natural to do.

Again; this writer says,—“ Verbs express the operations or active qualities of things; and as the growth of words corresponds with the growth of our ideas; it follows that Verbs originally were the names of things; but by combining them

“ with the personal pronouns, they became, in consequence of the association of ideas, to express “not things, but their operations.”

Now, as it is perfectly manifest that a **BRIDGE** is not any thing like an “*operation or active quality*” of a **BANK**; and that no Bridge is capable of being *borrowed* from a bank of a **RIVER**; it requires no farther evidence to show, that nothing can be more foreign from my view of the Verb than that which is entertained by this writer. And yet, as he says that the Verb “**IMPLIES CONNECTION**;” this, if the matter were not fully explained, might lead any reader with confidence to suppose his meaning to be, that the Verb *implies a Bridge or Connective Partition between two distinct Subjects*.

The fact is, that, by the word *connection*, this author means nothing but a connection between *an agent and an energy or quality in himself, or itself*; as, in a ploughman, the *energy* exerted in using a plough; or, in a man that walks, the *energy* exerted in walking.—He never supposes the Verb **Plough**, or **Walk**, (it should be *Ploughing*, or *Walking*;) to mean *a CONNECTION OR ACTION between A MAN and the GROUND*. This is perfectly conclusive, inasmuch as he supposes that “*Verbs originally were the names of things; but, by combining them with the personal pronoun, they became, in consequence of the association of ideas, to express “not things, but their operations.”*” This view of the subject, I must here observe, is founded upon the great universal, but most erroneous doctrine of



logicians which I have already so particularly pointed out in the analysis of Relation; by which it has been uniformly supposed that an ACTION, OR OPERATION, is a quality of some ONE Agent or Subject: whereas I insist, that every action must have, in a logical sense, TWO AGENTS; and hence, an action of Ploughing, or of Walking, for example, must have, for its agency, both A MAN and the GROUND.

Such ambiguities of expression, as that couched under the word *connection*, not only obtain, but they appear to have been unavoidable, in the general views which have heretofore been entertained by writers with regard to the nature of the Verb; and they are especially to be guarded against, in comparing those views with the account of the nature of the Verb which I have been led to hazard: otherwise, it will sometimes appear, that I am only asserting what has been anticipated by preceding writers, when nothing is more contrary to reality.

In order to throw still farther light upon the notion which the writer now considered attaches to the word *connection*; I quote the following passages.

“If then is be the characteristic or essential  
 “idea of every verb, and if farther, as appears  
 “from facts, the primary idea of is denotes *con-*  
 “*nection*, it follows that not *assertion*, as gram-  
 “marians have hitherto supposed, but *connec-*  
 “*tion*, is that which constitutes every verb. But

“ the connecting Verb itself will not appear *ne-*  
 “ *cessary*, if we judge of its use in the ancient  
 “ languages, the *juxtaposition* of the subject and  
 “ predicate being sufficient to supply its place.  
 “ Thus in the Hebrew, ‘ And Moses said unto  
 “ the Lord—‘ *I not eloquent*’ i. e. ‘ *I am not eloquent.*’—  
 “ And Moses said, ‘ *Who I that I should go unto*  
 “ *Pharaoh ?*’ ”

“ Mr. Harris and other Grammarians, overlook-  
 “ ing the force of *juxtaposition*, and judging of the  
 “ importance of the substantive Verb from its fre-  
 “ quent use in modern speech, have supposed that  
 “ it is absolutely necessary to the existence of lan-  
 “ guage, and that no proposition can be commu-  
 “ nicated without it.”

Now I cannot agree, that “ *Is is the characteris-*  
*tic or essential idea of every Verb;*” although I alto-  
 gether agree with Mr. Harris and other Gramma-  
 rians, in assuming the absolute necessity of the use  
 of the Substantive Verb in the expression of every  
*Adjective Verb* : and I am not in the least weak-  
 ened in my conviction of this necessity, by any such  
 idiom, of any language, as that which this writer has  
 pointed out in the above passage. The same sort  
 of idiom exists also in some modern languages; but  
 they do not in the least affect the matter in  
 question, because they are manifestly ELLIPTICAL  
 EXPRESSIONS. Thus “ *Who I* ” means “ *Who EX-*  
 ISTING *I.* ” And “ *I not eloquent,* ” means “ *I EX-*  
 ISTING *not eloquent.* ” Here the word EXISTING  
 obviously represents AM.

Without *previously understanding* the relation of  
 existence as being supported by the *Speaker* with

*Time and Space* ; it is impossible to *conceive* him to assert *any other act* at all. Mr. Harris has asserted this ; and he has been ridiculed for it, by Mr. Tooke : but I confidently agree with the former. But this primary relation need not be *expressed*, although it must always be implied : nor, upon the other hand, is it to be supposed as *not implied* because it is *not expressed*. I shall have occasion to appropriate a distinct subsection for the purpose of showing, that Verbs in general are expressed elliptically ; and this to a very remarkable extent.

It must be unnecessary to point out any other evidence, to show that the writer in the *Encyclopedia of Rees* differs essentially and totally in his view of the nature and office of the Verb, from the view which I entertain of the subject : but the following observations may however be added. This writer says ;

“ We now proceed to consider briefly the usual division of verbs into *active, passive, and neuter* : and this division of verbs we pronounce to be extremely unphilosophical. And first, as the expression of active qualities is essential to Verbs, there is no such thing as a neuter verb.”

In differing from this author ; I use only the same liberty, which, for the sake of the subject, I have done with regard to the first authorities who have written upon it ; and I can intend him no mean compliment, in considering his opinion among the

number. But it has already appeared that I differ from him so entirely, as not to admit that there is *any other sort of Verb* EXCEPT NEUTER VERBS, *considering the Verb* IN ITSELF: and I must here remark, that he has furnished a complete refutation of his own assumption, by a passage immediately following his assertion that there is no such thing as a neuter verb.

Thus he says, “All active verbs imply passion, and all passive verbs imply action: Hence the one may assume the form of the other without altering its nature.”

I have distinguished the last sentence by *italics*; because I conceive it amounts to a demonstration, that, since the SAME *verb* may be looked upon as either active or passive, “*without altering its nature,*” THAT NATURE *must in itself be* NEUTER. This I have before insisted upon; but the above passage has furnished me with a necessary occasion to repeat it.

Again; he farther observes, that “There are, indeed, verbs which denote *rest*, or the cessation of *motion*; but we cannot use even these without connecting them with positive ideas: and as action is necessary to destroy or support action, we can resolve all apparent neuter verbs into active verbs.”

I have quoted this last passage, only because it exhibits a repetition of the *great and general error of logicians*, wherein they assume that ACTION is a *quality of ONE AGENT*. Here, therefore, I repeat, that ACTION is NOT *necessary (nor possible) to destroy or support ACTION*: although TWO *opposite ENERGIES*

are *certainly necessary to support every ACTION*. I shall insist farther upon this in the chapter of Necessary Connection : but, in the mean time, as it is certain that EVERY ACTION is nothing but ONE SAME RELATION between TWO CORRELATIVE SUBJECTS, it is sufficiently established that it is altogether an absurd expression, although a very usual one, to say that ACTION is supported by ACTION. The truth of nature is, that ENERGY *must be pitted against ENERGY*, in order to produce any one ACTION ; and the ACTION itself is a thing totally INACTIVE. Hence it follows, universally, that the WORD which SIGNIFIES ACTION *must signify a thing that is INACTIVE*, that is A QUIESCENT STANDING BRIDGE *between some TWO ACTIVE BEINGS, or their ENERGIES*.

## 2.

*Of Assertion or Affirmation and Denial.—No Word in Language has the Virtue or Office of asserting.*

The opinion of Philologists that the Verb contains assertion, has been so very general, that hardly any voice appears to have been raised against it. A large proportion of Grammarians suppose assertion to be the very essence of the Verb : While all the others assume that the Verb consists of an assertion and an attribute. I have already expressed my dissent from both of these views of the subject ; I shall therefore state the grounds of my objection.

With this intention ; it appears eligible to pro-

secute the subject under that simile which I have hitherto closely embraced: and, in the FIRST place, therefore, I would ask, If every Verb be a mere BRIDGE, between a Nominative and an Accusative, as I trust has been conclusively shown; How can the bare expression of the name of a Bridge *assert any thing*, either of *that Bridge itself*, or of *either of the two Banks which support it*? If we utter the expression “*Westminster Bridge;*” nobody will pretend that this is any *assertion*, at all. How, then, can it be said that the expression *strike,—run,—or am;—or striking,—running,—or existing;—is an assertion*? But if AM be no assertion; then IS, also, is no assertion, because they are both one same Verb.

SECONDLY. Upon the other hand, it must be granted, that the expression of the Pronoun, *He,—Thou,—or I,—*can be no assertion. These words merely suggest to the hearer *the notion of my,—your,—or his,—Substantive Nature or Essence*, without affirming that this Nature or Essence now actually exists or maintains a relation with Time and Space.

THIRDLY; But if we utter the Pronoun *I* in CONJUNCTION with the simple Verb AM; we have at once AN ASSERTION *of my existence*, universally acknowledged, without dispute or question.

From this short process of reasoning; I conclude, it follows very simply, that assertion is effected *purely by the CONJUNCTION of a Noun, or Pronoun, with a Verb*. And hence it follows that there is NO WORD in language whose virtue, or office, it is to ASSERT.

So far, indeed, is the Verb from asserting any thing; that I must here insist upon what was suggested in the early part of the Chapter, and has since been adverted to, namely, that the Verb, when taken by itself, has *no meaning whatever*, any more than a Preposition taken by *itself*. No person, (not even one of the few remaining advocates of *General Ideas, or General Conceptions*) will pretend that the abstract word *Man*, or *Bridge*, means any thing that *exists*. The abstract word *Bridge*, then, in order to have any signification of *a THING existing*, must always be referred to *some individual CONCRETE Bridge*. But, when we come down to the solid ground of *concretes*, it will be admitted to be impossible to conceive the notion of any *Bridge*, without at the same time conceiving the notion of the *TWO BANKS* which support it; because *A BRIDGE means a CONNECTOR*; and it *can be NO BRIDGE if divested of the CHARACTER of a connector*. In fact, therefore, the word *Bridge* can have *no meaning* if it be divested, in our ideas, of the accompaniment of the *Banks* which it *connects*. But if this reasoning be admitted; *the very same argument must hold true* with regard to *VERBS*: and, hence, to say, "*strike*," or "*run*," without implying both a *striker* and a *STRICKEN*, or both a *runner* and the *GROUND*, would be absolutely to utter a sound without any meaning.—But if a Verb can have *no meaning at all* by itself; it certainly cannot *ASSERT* by itself.

That assertion, therefore, consists *purely in the SILENT CONJUNCTION* of a *Noun*, or *Pronoun*, with a *Verb*; appears to me to amount to demon-

stration. And the only thing that I think remains to be illustrated, is, the *reason why* the mere JUNCTION of the two has this efficacy.

In order to investigate this reason ; I must here first extend a notion, which I have already suggested with regard to the Preposition and to the Verb only. The fact, I conceive, is, (and it is a very important fact,) that even the *Pronoun*, or *Noun, itself*, has no meaning when taken alone.—When we say “*Man*,”—“*Peter*,”—or “*I*,” simply by itself; I would ask, What meaning can possibly be attached to this expression, *before* we have subjoined some such word as *Am*, *Strikes*,—or *Dies*, that is *some* VERB? When we express the Pronoun *I*; the person who sees and hears us knows, *from seeing and hearing us*, that we *exist or hold a relation with that Time and Space*: but he does not learn this from any virtue in the *sound I*.—For, if, instead of the Pronoun *I*, we were to express the Pronoun *He*; this sound could convey no meaning, *unless* it were understood, (*from some recollection*) to indicate some being that EXISTS *or* HAS EXISTED, that is one who holds, or has held, a relation with Time and Space. Hence, I would here suggest, that, *without the subjunction of some* VERB, *either expressed or understood*, no Pronoun, or Noun, can have any meaning whatever, any more than a Verb, or a Preposition could have in the same solitary situation. Thus, if we say, *Man*,—*Peter*,—or *He*;—and to these *actual expressions* we add the *supposed expres-*



sions of “*now exists, or has existed, with Time and Space;*” we shall utter words with meaning: But if we say, Man,—Peter,—or He,—simply, without a Verb either expressed or *understood*, we signify nothing in the Universe. And, I am here to add, or to repeat, that these sounds can have *no meaning as ABSTRACT TERMS, unless they can be solved into a signification of some CONCRETE subjects*; because abstract terms, in their highest pretensions, never refer to any thing that is *supposed to EXIST*.

The general truth which we gain from this reasoning, is, that as, upon one hand, *no Relation* can be conceived, without conceiving two Substantives as Correlative Supporters of that Relation; so, upon the other hand, *no Substantive Thing* can be conceived, without conceiving it to support one side of some Relation, especially the relation of *existence* with Time and Space. And, of course, as it is with THINGS in the Universe, so it must be with the WORDS which signify or express these things. Hence it plainly appears, that neither a VERB nor a NOUN can have any meaning at all, when singly taken; but each of these words derives its meaning, or efficacy, from the circumstance of CONJUNCTION.

After this view of the subject; I confess, it appears to me that the reason of the efficacy of con-

junction, in the case of assertion, is something of the following nature.

When we say "*Man* ;" this suggests a notion of the *essence* of man, without any notion of his actuality : but when we add the Verb "*strikes*," this, (as, *when joined to the sign of man's essence it signifies both the actual existence of a man and an adjective act,*) constitutes ASSERTION. In order to complete assertion, however, it is to be remembered that the *Accusative*, also, must be understood.

Thus assertion appears to me to consist in the mere stringing together of a Nominative, a Verb, and an Accusative ; either in *our expression*, or in *our understanding* : and not at all to reside in *any one* of them.

In other words ; ASSERTION appears to be nothing but A RELATION BETWEEN the Nominative and the Verb ;—to which, also, must be added, that it is a relation between the *Verb* and the *Accusative* : And this alone, I apprehend, *can constitute a complete assertion, sentence, or proposition.*

With a view to illustrate this, by the familiar simile of which I have already made so much use ; I observe, that, while the VERB is a BRIDGE between a *Nominative* and an *Accusative* ; the ASSERTIVE is that *far more minute connection or junction*, first of the *Nominative* and the *Verb*, and next of the *Verb* and the *Accusative*, which correspond to the *two Abutments* of a Bridge with the two Banks of a River.—The truth of this comparison, or the strict juxtaposition of the simile of the Bridge and the Verb, appears farther clearly

from this ; that, according to what I have just now stated, the *complete* expression of *every verb* must involve, *not one, but TWO ASSERTIONS*, precisely as a Bridge must have *two Abutments*, i. e. an Abutment upon *each* of the two Banks of a river : And so, in fact, the thing is ; for it is certain that when we say “ *He strikes,*” (which involves *ONE assertion,*) the Verb *cannot be conceived as existing* without adding the *Accusative He strikes RICHARD*. Now, I apprehend, “ *Strikes Richard*” (coming after “ *He*”) is as much an assertion as “ *He Strikes :*” and thus, strictly speaking, *every expression of a Verb involves TWO DISTINCT ASSERTIONS*.

It will certainly be granted, that, to assert simply that any one *strikes*; is *not the same thing* as to assert that he strikes *Richard, or any other particular object*. And yet, it is impossible to strike, at all, without striking *some particular thing*. Hence I think it will not be denied, that the expression, or at least the *understanding*, of every verb *must involve two assertions*, in the same way as the existence of every Bridge must demand *two abutments*, one upon each of the two banks of the river which runs between.

In this place it may be proper to point out, that the conjunction which has been insisted upon, as having the efficacy or power of *asserting*, is, in point of fact, that *same conjunction or juxtaposition* which has been adverted to by the writer in the article *Grammar*, in Rees’s *Encyclopedia* ; but, the *use, or effect*, which he has ascribed to it, is vastly different from that which I have here supposed.

In the passage first quoted from that writer; he assumes that "*A Verb*"—"implies *connection*."—"But this connection is not expressed by an independent word but by the *juxtaposition* or the combination into one word of the agent and its object." Again, he says, "Verbs were originally the names of things; but, by combining them with the personal pronouns, they became, in consequence of the association of ideas, to express not things, but their operations."

Now all that is implied in these passages is, that a VERB is constituted by the *juxtaposition*, or the combination into one word, of "*a personal pronoun*" with the *name of a thing*; which *silent connection* is assumed to have the power or efficacy of denoting the OPERATION of that thing. But the fact which I have been insisting upon, is, that this very juxtaposition, or silent connection, ASSERTS that an operation EXISTS, or is NOW GOING ON; and does not at all express the NOTION, OR NAME, of that operation. The NOTION of an operation or action, which is the ONLY THING that a simple Verb CAN EXPRESS, is expressed by the Verb itself; as *striking*, or *running* :—but the ASSERTION that the action of striking, or running, NOW EXISTS or is GOING ON (I assert) is indicated by the efficacy of the silent conjunction or juxtaposition of the word *strike*, or *run*, with the Pronoun *I*.

According to the view of this author; the *juxtaposition* of a Pronoun with a Noun, (as "*I Plough*") gives to the *two together* the nature of a VERB. But, according to my opinion, this *juxtaposition* only ASSERTS THE EXISTENCE of the action which

the Verb denotes ; and the VERB *itself* is A WORD, and a SIMPLE WORD, such as, *strike, run, or exist*. And if, instead of these Verbs, we take others, that bear the names of substantive things, such as *Plough, Hand, or Foot*; then, I assert, these VERBS must LOSE *the character of* NOUNS, and must be regarded as being totally different words, that is, as being VERBS, although they are the *very same sounds* under both these denominations.

The difference between the two schemes is vast and essential ; and it cannot be mistaken by any person who will afford it due consideration. At the same time, I am to observe, the author in question has denied that the Verb is Assertion, or even that it *contains* assertion : it follows, therefore, from his own view of the subject, that ASSERTION must be effected by something that is NOT a VERB ; and, certainly, assertion cannot reside in a *Pronoun*, or a *Noun*. I trust therefore, that it follows, in the clearest manner, that the juxtaposition of a Pronoun with a Noun or Name of a thing does not constitute A VERB, but it constitutes ASSERTION. Hence ; the NOUN *Plough* and the VERB *Plough*, although they are both the very same sound, must be regarded as being two essentially different words : And the same must hold good with regard to every other Verb.

Here I am to observe, that the whole of this reasoning appears to be in perfect accordance with the *use, or import, of the particle of* NEGATION.

When we say "*He is*," that is "*He exists*;" this conjunction of the Pronoun and the Verb, manifestly ASSERTS : but if, between these two words, we introduce the *particle* NOT, by saying "He does NOT exist;" we thereby SEVER one end of the *Bridge of Existence* between the *Man* and *Space*, from its *Abutment*, in a way precisely analogous to knocking away the ground from under one end of any other Bridge.

This gives me occasion to remark, that if it should for a moment be thought, that because there is A WORD, namely, NOT, which signifies NEGATION, therefore there must also be a word that signifies ASSERTION ; this mode of reasoning would be entirely fallacious. For it must, upon the very same principle, be affirmed, that, because it requires *a wedge or bulk*, or at least *a real distance of space*, to DISCONNECT the end of a Bridge from the bank of a River; therefore it would require a wedge or bulk, or at least a *space*, to JOIN *them together*.

The rigid truth in this case, is ; and I am desirous not to deny, but to point it out ; that the *junction* or abutment between every Bridge and a bank, is *also a relation or real partition*; because the junction can be no closer than *a contiguity*. But upon this I am to observe, that CONTIGUITY is that sort of partition which exists when *one thing SUPPORTS another* : and, by *connecting* the Verb upon *one side with its Nominative*, and upon the

*other with its Accusative*; we actually SUPPORT the Verb, as a Bridge is supported by its two banks. Thus we GIVE ACTUALITY to a *Verb* by connecting it with its supporters: and *this very act of CONNECTING amounts to ASSERTING*, upon the very same principle that placing a Bridge upon its two Abutments gives IT *existence*: For, any mass of wood, or iron, or other matter, is NO BRIDGE, when it exists any where *except abutted upon two banks*; And any sound, or sign, can be NO VERB, until it is connected with both its *Nominative* and its *Accusative*.

It follows, very rationally, that, in order to *separate any expressed Verb*, from any *Nominative* that supports it, we must introduce that *wedge of negation, the particle NOT*: which *disjoiner*, by causing an actual separation, destroys the Bridge or Verb, and has the farther grammatical or verbal efficacy of *annihilating the very matter of it*. And I hope it is equally satisfactory, that, when any Verb is expressed, *and the wedge of negation is NOT introduced*; the very CONNECTION of the Verb with its supporters amounts to ASSERTION; that is, *the MERE STRINGING TOGETHER of the Nominative, the Verb, and the Accusative, signifies the intention of the speaker to ascribe AN ACTUAL BEING to the ACTION which he EXPRESSES*.

When a man has thrown a tree, or a beam, over a rill of water; and has made it rest upon the two opposite banks; he has thereby furnished a TYPE of a Verb: and, so long as this bridge remains CONNECTED with its banks, I think it may in some

sort be said that the existence of the bridge is **AS-  
SERTED**. But, the moment the **CONNECTION CEASES**,  
the **BEAM** *is no longer a* **BRIDGE**.

If this reasoning be admitted as satisfactory ;  
there is **NO WORD** *in language that signifies* **ASSER-  
TION**.

The view which I have been led to take of the  
nature of **ASSERTION**, is so extremely different  
from that which has been advanced by the author  
of the **DIVERSIONS OF PURLEY** ; and the views of  
this author upon the subject being, I conceive,  
vastly prejudicial to the study of the human mind  
and its operations ; I cannot avoid offering some  
remarks upon his doctrine with regard to it.

I have already shown, that **Mr. Tooke** makes  
the essence of the Verb to consist in asser-  
tion. If there could have been any doubt of the  
matter, after the reasons which I have assigned for  
attributing this doctrine to him ; it would be re-  
moved by the fact of his express denial that asser-  
tion is an operation, or yet the expression of an  
operation of the mind.

He says, that—"The business of the Mind, as  
" far as it concerns language, extends no farther  
" than to receive impressions, that is to have sensa-  
" tions or feelings. What are called the operations  
" of the Mind, are merely the operations of lan-  
" guage. A consideration of *Ideas*, or of the *Mind*,  
" —or of *Things* (relative to parts of speech) will



“lead us no farther than to *Nouns*, i. e. to the signs “of these impressions, or names of Ideas.”

Here then, we find, there is no thought of *Relations*, i. e. *Partitions*, between what he means by Ideas; and, consequently, Mr. Tooke knew of no word that expresses or signifies these Partitions. But, however, as the word which signifies these *necessary party-walls between things* had irresistibly forced itself into all languages, (wherein it stands pre-eminent) namely, the VERB; and as it was therefore necessary for Mr. Tooke, as well as for all other Philologists, to fancy SOME office for the Verb; he could think of no other, than that of its signifying ASSERTION.

As a farther confirmation of this; he blames Locke for leaning towards the opinion of Aristotle, Scaliger, and Port Royal, and for having, “without sufficiently examining their position, too hastily adopted their notion concerning the pretended *Copula Is* and *Is not*.”—He observes, that Locke supposed, with them, that *affirming* and *denying* were operations of the *Mind*; and referred all the other sorts of words to the same source, though if different words had been (as he was willing to suppose) to be accounted for by the different operations of the *Mind*, it was almost impossible they should have escaped the penetrating eyes of Mr. Locke.”

To this reasoning; Mr. Tooke makes his fellow Dialogist, B, put in the following reply; which I cannot help thinking is extremely just.

“By what you have advanced, this matter

*Hu. Mi.*

2 G

“ seems ten times more unsettled than it was before: for you have discarded the differences of *things*, and the differences of *Ideas*, and the different *operations of the Mind*, as guides to a division of language. Now I cannot for my life imagine any other principle that you have left to conduct us to the *Parts* of speech.”

The fact is; Mr. Tooke having boldly asserted that language can be concerned about nothing but our sensations; he consequently admitted of *no Parts of Speech* but what should *express these sensations*, and such others as should express them with *dispatch*. He therefore admitted NOUNS, as the NAMES OF SENSATIONS; and the VERB, as being our ASSERTION OF THE EXISTENCE of these sensations; and he admitted the *adjectiving* of each of these words, under certain modifications, *as abbreviations for the sake of dispatch*: And this, I think, is the sum of his system of language. At the same time, He overlooked the *Partitions between Things*; and he thereby overlooked ONE HALF OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE: which, of course, reduced him to misconceive, most extremely, the nature of that word which nature has forced upon mankind, in spite of their blindness, to signify these Partitions.

To return to Mr. Tooke's strictures upon Locke; In the first place, he appears to have conceived much too high an opinion of Locke's infallibility, when he says that, “ if different words had been to be accounted for by the different operations of the Mind, it was almost impossible they should

“ have escaped the penetrating eyes of Mr. Locke.”

I trust it has been satisfactorily shown, that *assertion is actually an operation of the mind*; because it has appeared that NO WORD in language can *assert*, but that assertion is effected by AN ACT, namely, a PUTTING TOGETHER of a Noun and a Verb. Mr. Locke, therefore, and all those authorities who have held that assertion is an operation of the Mind, were right in this conclusion: but it does not follow, and I hope I have clearly shown that it is not true, that the VERB *Is*, or any other VERB *whatever*, is the sign of assertion. Consequently Mr. Locke and those other authorities were in the same error with Mr. Tooke, when they supposed that assertion is the *essence*, or even that it *enters at all into the nature* of the Verb.

The Verb *Is*, and every other Verb, is certainly A COPULA. It is a copula between a Nominative and an Accusative; without being which, no sound, or sign, can be a Verb. But a COPULA is NOT AN ASSERTION; Or, to speak more rigorously, an EXPRESSED OR SIGNIFIED *copula* is not an assertion; because assertion is that SILENT OR UNEXPRESSED *copula*, not that *joins a Nominative to an Accusative*,—but that forms the *apposition or contiguity* of the *Nominative* and the *Verb*—and which does the like, also, between the *Verb* and the *Accusative*.

If we compare a simple sentence to a *Sleeve Button*; The *two separate expansions* of the button correspond to the *Nominative* and the *Accusative Noun*;—The LINK that connects the two expansions, answers to the VERB; and the *connections or*

*articulations* between the ENDS of the link and the EYE of each button, are analogous to that *silent copula* or *connection* which amounts to ASSERTION.

This simile of the Verb and its two supporters the Nominative and the Accusative, I must observe, is far less correct than that of A BRIDGE, which I have for most part employed, and which I cannot too much commend as conveying my own conception of the nature of the Verb. But the connection of the parts of a Sleeve Button, I imagine, may perhaps afford, to some minds, a more distinct notion of that sort of junction which I conceive amounts to *assertion*, than even the simile of a bridge itself.

### 3.

#### *Verbs never derived from Nouns.*

There appears to be hardly a more confident or more general doctrine entertained by Grammarians, than that VERBS *are derived from* NOUNS. This view I must observe, is the natural fruit of that parent assumption which has been so uniformly received by Philologists, namely, that VERBS *signify the* ATTRIBUTES OF THINGS. The universality of this last doctrine, I have already sufficiently pointed out: but in this place it may not be improper to notice one other approved writer, who I think has expressed the creed in question with more explicit brevity than any author yet mentioned. It is asserted by Dr. Crombie, that, "As

“ Nouns denote the subjects of our discourse, so  
“ Verbs predicate their accidents or properties.”  
This single sentence contains the doctrine of the  
Verb recognised by all parties of Philologists, with-  
out exception ; and upon the truth, or falsehood,  
of this assumption must depend the fact whether  
or not any Verbs are properly derived from Nouns.

Now, as I trust it has been very fully shown  
that Verbs do not denote the accidents or proper-  
ties of things ; so I will with some confidence here  
hazard the assertion, that Verbs are not in any in-  
stance logically derived from Nouns.

When the point in question is duly considered ;  
I think there cannot be a more striking proof of  
the want of philosophical consideration in those  
who have made research into the general nature of  
language, than the assumption which I am now to  
controvert. This assumption, indeed, may be ac-  
counted for from the fact that the nature of Rela-  
tion itself, which thing the Verb signifies, has been  
so profoundly misapprehended : but, the moment  
we recognise the real nature of a Relation, it be-  
comes manifestly impossible that any Verb or re-  
presentative of a Relation should ever be derived  
from the name of either a Substantive or a Rela-  
tive Subject.

To come to the proof of this position ; let it, in  
the first place, be freely granted that the names of  
a great number, or, if we please, the great majority  
of Verbs, are nothing but the names of Substan-  
tive Things, i. e. *simple ordinary Nouns*. Thus,  
“ *To plough,*”—“ *To fan,*”—or “ *To eye,*” comes

from the Noun *Plough*,—*Fan*,—or *Eye*.—But, although it is thus admitted that the names of these Verbs *have come in some way or other* from the Nouns in question ; a moment's consideration may satisfy us that they are no more *derived, properly speaking*, from these Nouns, than our *Ideas of Relation* are derived *properly* from our *Sensations*.

It would be unphilosophical, and absurd, to think of seeking into the Etymology of any language, or of all the languages in the world, for the origin or derivation of a Verb. Let any person, who desires to know what source the Verb *To plough* is derived from, only observe a ploughman at his employment ; and then I would leave it to himself, if he be unbiased upon the subject, whether he can for a moment believe that the name of the ACTION OF PLOUGHING is, in any philosophical sense, derived from the *instrument* used in that action ; or, whether he can believe that the ACTION ITSELF is *not as much, and as originally entitled to* A NAME, as the *instrument* with which it is performed.

If it should here be attempted to be said, as no doubt it would agreeably with the usual doctrine of the subject, that *Ploughing* is AN ATTRIBUTE of a *plough* ; and hence, that the Verb *plough* is certainly and immediately derived from the instrument a *Plough* ; this is that erroneous fundamental assumption, which I all along and here again very confidently deny. PLOUGHING is an ACTION : and this action is a Relation or Partition supported between the instrument a *Plough* and the

*Ground*, Therefore I insist that the Verb *plough*, or *to plough*, (it ought to be *ploughing*) is no more derived from a *Plough* than it is from the *Ground*: and it is not derived from either, except in a remote, or vague sense, as our Ideas of Relation may be, and have very generally been, in a remote and most unphilosophical sense, said to be derived from our sensations.

Thus a Plough, under the hands of the Ploughman, is made to exert an energy against the Ground; and the Ground, at the same time, exerts an energy against the Plough; and these two *opposite energies* cause a certain sort of PARTITION between the *Plough* and the *Ground*, which Partition is either *a contiguity* or *a distance* of some sort; and this PARTITION is that ACTION which bears the name of PLOUGHING. Now this account of the action of Ploughing may be applied to every action in nature; because it will appear, whenever we afford it due consideration, that every action must be a NEUTRAL PARTITION OR BRIDGE between some TWO ENERGIES.

As for the supposition of Philologists, that Nouns were the *original*, and for some time the only sort of words which men knew, or made use of; it seems true, in something like the same extent as the conjecture that Birds were before Eggs, or Eggs before Birds. For certainly, I think, Verbs must have followed upon the heels of Nouns as close, or much closer than generation followed animals, or animals the seeds of generation. To be serious; If we take but a momentary view of the

surrounding visible and tangible creation, it is impossible for us not to discern that all things, in general, are continually in a train of sensible motions or actions. And no thinking man can for a moment fail to perceive, that the **ACTIONS** *between things* are *as important and interesting to our happiness, and even to our existence, and therefore as deeply engage our constant attention, as the THINGS THEMSELVES* that act.—Can there, then, be a moment's doubt, that mankind, in every age and country, must, of necessity, have had *names for ACTIONS, as soon as they had names for the THINGS THAT PERFORM* them?

To these actions, men very naturally gave the same names, (with various modifications) by which they called the *most obvious* of the *two agents* employed in the actions. But they, at the same time, involved the subject in a profound obscurity and confusion, by supposing the **ACTION** to be a **QUALITY OR ATTRIBUTE** of *this ONE AGENT ALONE*, instead of recognising that two agents are employed in every action. And hence comes the supposition that Verbs are derived from Nouns; although, I trust, what has been advanced amounts to a demonstration that they are, and must be, derived **NOT** *from* **NOUNS**, but from **ACTIONS**, each of which is a **PARTITION** *between some two Correlative Nouns*.

Upon the whole; such is the close connection between Substantive Things and their Actions; and such is the importance of actions to us, in our



intercourse with things ; that a moment's consideration must be enough to convince any thinking person, that *Nouns* could no more serve for language without *Verbs*, than *Hands* could serve without *Motions*. And, to suppose that the most ignorant savages could remain, for any time at all, unobservant of the difference between A HAND and A MOTION of that hand ; would be to turn philosophy into a romance. The Verb *Move*, therefore, I suppose, is not derived from the hand, nor from any other substantive ; but it is derived from that *Action*, *Relation*, or *Partition*, which it signifies, namely, *motion*, or more properly MOVING.

It could make nothing against the foregoing reasoning, to say, that, since mankind have all along believed that actions are only attributes of things, therefore, *agreeably with their assumption* Verbs are derived from Nouns.

Because, in the first place, I must object, that, even upon *their assumption*, it appears to me to be unphilosophical, or untrue, to say that Verbs are derived from Nouns, since it must be granted that Verbs are names of *phenomena*, which substantive things do not exhibit *except occasionally*; and, when they *do* exhibit these phenomena, (which indeed they do continually) it is *from the phenomena*, and not from the Substantive Things which exhibit them, that the Verb is *immediately and properly speaking* DERIVED ; although, for convenience, men call the *phenomenon* or *action* by the same name which

they had before employed to denote the Substantive Thing to which *alone* they erroneously refer the action.

But, Secondly ; I hardly need observe, that the object of my speculations, in the present chapter, is so far of the same nature with that of Mr. Tooke, in his work already mentioned, that it is not mere technical or conventional Grammar, but the REASONS of Grammar, that I have been considering. Supposing therefore that it be admitted, according to the notion which mankind have uniformly attached to *action*, that Verbs have been *hitherto* referred to Substantive Nouns, as their source ; Or, supposing that in a *loose and popular sense* it may truly be said that Verbs are derived from Nouns ; I presume it will not for a moment be affirmed that this assumption is true in any *philosophical sense*, or that this loose assumption will be retained in philosophical Grammar, if it shall be admitted that ACTIONS *are* NOT ATTRIBUTES OF SINGLE SUBJECTS, but *are* BRIDGES BETWEEN TWO SUBJECTS ; which are the things that Verbs denote or represent. It would be just as philosophical to say, that, because many philosophers have supposed that our notions of Relation *terminate in* and are *made up of* our sensations ; and that, because it is true in a remote sense that our notions of Relation are a consequence of our sensations ; therefore it is true, in a philosophical or strict sense, that our notions of Relation are derived from sensations, and, that men's thoughts were, for some time, nothing but sensations !

## 4.

*Abuse in the Verbal Signification of Actions, or Relations.*

In the sequel of the Section; I shall hazard some farther remarks with regard to the Verbal expression of Relations. But, previously to this, it appears indicated that I should advert to the idioms or phraseology which appears to have grown out of the views that have been entertained by logicians with regard to the nature of Relation in general.

One circumstance which, I imagine, has contributed largely toward veiling the real nature of Relation from the apprehension of philosophers, is the fact, that, whereas *all actions exist only in CONCRETE*; they have, nevertheless, for the convenience of speech, been *abstracted and generalised*, and so transformed into *fictitious Substantives*; consequently, *signified* by NOUNS, although in their nature, *as they exist*, they cannot possibly be expressed by any word except VERBS. The confusion of ideas which would be likely to result from this procedure, may readily be anticipated: but it would hardly be supposed what fruits of absurdity it has actually produced, in the most approved forms of language.

Preparatory to the evidence of the truth of this observation; I must first remark, that no-

thing is more current in speech, than to talk of *Battle*, of *Motion*, of *Action*, and of *Thought*, as well as of an endless variety of other *Abstract Relations*; whereas it is quite certain that there is no such thing in the universe as *Battle*, or *Motion*, or *Action*, or *Thought*; although there is a great deal of *fighting*,—and *moving*,—and *acting*,—and *thinking*, which are the *Concrete Relations* meant to be signified by the aforementioned *Abstract Nouns*. In like manner, we talk of a *Blow*,—a *Walk*,—a *Ride*,—or a *Race*, and signify each of these things by a *Noun*; although, in reality, it is a mere action or relation, and can only be signified, *according to nature*, by a *VERB*.

That these abstractions and generalisations have a logical foundation in our ideas, and that they are convenient or useful in language, is not here denied: but it is nevertheless to be insisted on that they have been abused, by being *used in too extensive a latitude*.

As an example of that species of abuse to which I at present allude; it may be observed, our most correct and elegant writers, at every turn, inform us that “A BLOW *was* STRUCK,” or “A BATTLE *was* FOUGHT.” What then (it may be asked) is the literal import of either of these sentences? Our reason will inform us, that, either in a *literal* or in a *figurative* sense, A MAN, or AN EMPIRE, may be struck, or an ENEMY may be fought, i. e. *fought with*: but, to talk of *striking a BLOW*, or *fighting a BATTLE*, must be acknowledged, when we afford

it a moment's consideration, to amount to nothing better than mere conventional jargon.

The Participle, (or rather the *Verb*) STRIKING, in this case, signifies a concrete relation of action between some ONE *substantive thing* and some OTHER *substantive thing*; and the word BLOW, although it is here *metamorphosed into a NOUN*, signifies nothing whatever except that *very identical relation* which was *antecedently* expressed by the *Verb* STRIKING. To "*strike a blow*," therefore, is to *strike a strike*; and the sentence amounts only to a deplorable assertion of the actual existence of an action that is *impossible*.

Such a phraseology as this, moreover, does not appear to be necessary; although, as it is established by custom, and is moreover a great favorite with our very best writers, it is not to be supposed that it will ever be discarded. Instead of saying that a BLOW *has been struck*; it is, surely, as convenient, and as elegant too, to say that *an event has taken place*;—*a town has fallen*;—or *a fleet was captured*. And in the room of asserting that a BATTLE *was fought*; it would, doubtless, sound as well to say that the ENEMY *was fought*. Indeed, we, not unfrequently, meet with this propriety of expression; although the other appears to be far more prevalent.

Nor is the phraseology in question confined to such cases as those above mentioned. Thus we talk of *gaining a BATTLE*; when the thing is, from its very nature, absurd and impossible: We may *gain a VICTORY*: but, *to gain a BATTLE* would be

to *gain* a DIFFERENCE ; which in this case was, while it lasted, a *real partition* between the Victors and the Vanquished, and is, in logical strictness, as much to be attributed to the latter as to the former, notwithstanding the *victory* was lost.

We may GAIN a TOWN, or an ADVANTAGE ; or we may GIVE *either* a WOUND or an OVERTHROW : but to say we can *gain* a BATTLE, or *give* a BLOW, is (notwithstanding any sanction of usage) an assertion of nothing but a simple impossibility ; and I think it is not to be disputed that reason, or common sense, is insulted every time any such phraseology is employed.

It is a very just observation of Mr. Tooke, that Grammar, although it is the first thing learned by the child, is the last that is understood by the philosopher. The truth is, that, to the *Child* it is a RITUAL ; which may be graven in his memory, and retained through life, AS SUCH : but the *Philosopher* cannot be content with this ; he looks into Grammar for a system of rational laws, which constitute a body of legitimate Science ; and he then finds two things, namely, a *chaos of matter*, and a vast and deep *difficulty* when he attempts to reduce that chaos to order. Were this not the case, Philologists could not have been so long in the dark with regard to the nature and use of the Verb as they have remained. When a man looks into the Grammar of the English Language ; and attempts to reconcile its rules, its idioms, and its phraseology, to sound reason ; he finds himself utterly foiled. Over and above the *natural* difficulties of Gram-

mar; it would seem, in the art of language, as well as in most other things, that mankind have always preferred the tickling of their sense, to obeying the canons of their understanding. It appears to be in a great degree owing to a predilection for the mere jingle and measure of sounds, that language, instead of exhibiting a rational or consistent system of general rules, presents so large an intermixture of arbitrary and contradictory impositions; which it is impossible to reconcile, or to attend to without offering violation to common sense.

The instances to which I have just now been led to advert, furnish a proof of the truth of these remarks. Not only are the cases in question examples of the grossest violation of reason, in the use of language; but, if we suppose that the infraction of the laws of reason is compensated by the *utility* of the thing; and that, from the absurdity being conventional and understood, no inconvenience can follow; it is farther to be observed, that, in addition to the *absurdity*, we find also the most glaring *inconsistency*, in the fact that this idiom, while it is both tolerated and highly favored in many cases, is condemned with unqualified disgust in a number of others that are precisely parallel to the former.

When a historian, in recording the fate of empires, informs his readers that *battles* have been *fought*, and *blows* have been *struck*; they receive these phrases as appropriate and elegant expressions. But if a clown, coming in from the field, were to exclaim that he had *walked a walk*,

or *shot a shot*; he would be heard with unmixed pity. Can any good reason be assigned, why men feel so differently with regard to two expressions that are perfectly analogous?

It cannot be said, in this case, as it may in some others, that one of the two expressions has *lost its moral character*, while the other has retained it. The common people talk of *striking blows*, and of *fighting battles*, as frequently as their betters; and yet, this has not prevented these absurd expressions from being cherished by the learned; while their *twin-brother-phrases* are held as illegitimate, and are generally scouted, even from the common conversation of the vulgar themselves.

Grammarians, indeed, have not overlooked the *fact* of the toleration of these phrases: but they have noticed it only as a thing that is FIT. Thus it is said, that *Intransitive and Neuter Verbs admit an Accusative of the same or a similar signification; as we RUN a RACE,—We LIVE a LIFE.* Now the abstract or rather the *Verbal Noun*, in this case, certainly does possess the *show or appearance* of a GRAMMATICAL *accusative*: but it does not amount to a LOGICAL *one*; on the contrary, it exhibits only a manifest absurdity, which puts reason to the blush.

We are to observe, here, that the mischief done by this form of expression, is *not merely verbal*: For the truth is, that, while the Verb, *disguised*, is repeated, to form its own accusative, there is at the same time, IN EXISTENCE, *a real accusative* upon which the Verb properly rests.—When we run,



we *must* run upon the *Ground*.—When we live, we *must* live in *Time and Space*.

But if (as was already supposed) it should be said that the convenience of such phrases compensates for their absurdity : then, Why not be *consistent*; and, with equal justice, adopt the whole race of them, by saying, when occasion requires, that we have *shot a shot*,—and *hit a hit*,—and *run a run*? Would it not, agreeably with this, be quite as proper to say that we have *found a find*, as to say that we have *found a purse*? I apprehend it would certainly be *as possible, or as easy* a thing, to *find a find*; as to *strike a blow, or fight a battle*. And I will venture to believe, that the expression to “*fight a battle*,” which is precisely the same as “to *fight an action*,” is not more tolerable in the eye of reason than to KILL A SLAUGHTER, OR MOVE A MOTION.

It will not be supposed that these observations have a view to deny that there is any beauty in the music of language ; or, that I aim them against the due cultivation of a pleasure so justly estimated ; and which, indeed, is so connected with all the refinements of life.—But it is curious and instructive, however, to observe, that while the REASON of language has been sacrificed in a vast extent to its MUSIC, the most affected and most fortunate cultivators of the melody of words, have, in a very remarkable proportion of instances, been found pitiably dead to the ravishing power of *absolute melody*. This phenomenon of the human

mind, although it has been recognised, has not I think been attempted to be accounted for. May we not suppose, that persons in this predicament derive their superior tact and relish of the sounds of concatenated words, from a cause analogous to that which operates in the case of those who acquire an exquisite perception in the gross sense of *Touch*, in consequence of not enjoying the refined sense of *Vision*? The man whose soul thrills with ecstasy at the sounds of absolute melody, may naturally receive the faint comparative melody of mere language as insipid and uninteresting, and may hold it in general contempt: While he that is denied the feeling of absolute melody, may derive scarcely less than delight from the measured murmuring of verse, or the unmeasured but easy flowing undulations of prose composition.

The pleasure which savages take in such music as that of an empty cask, to which they will dance, many hours, with incredible vivacity and perseverance; and, indeed, the general character of musical instruments among barbarous nations; seem to bear out the above supposition.

If the strictures which have been offered in this subsection should be admitted; it may be said of technical Grammar, as Dr. Reid (with much more reason than he was at the time aware of) has said of a belief in the existence of a material world; namely, that "*it declines the authority of reason, and laughs at all the artillery of the logician.*" In amusing my readers, or myself, with these obser-

vations, however, I am merely suggesting what has stood immediately in the way of my subject; and have not made any unnecessary irruption into the regions of the grammarian.

## 5.

*All Verbs expressed elliptically. — Most Verbs used in Complexions, of two, or more, involved in One Expression.*

If the view which I have taken, in the foregoing Chapter, of the subject of **RELATION**, be well founded; I conceive it saves me, in great part, from the charge of any undue presumption in that which I have been led to hazard with regard to its Verbal Signification. But, if this last be admitted; it seems to follow, that all Verbs are complex, or, more properly speaking, that all Verbs are used in *concatenations of two, or more, Verbs together*; with only the exception of that one which has, without any just reason, been called the *Substantive Verb*.

In order to explain this; it would have been requisite to begin by analysing the Substantive Verb itself: but this has already been done, in the foregoing section; and, if the view of it which was there submitted should be deemed satisfactory, the following observation is all that seems to be required in this place.

It appears to have been owing only to Grammarians having overlooked that the indicative conjugation of the Verb, **I AM**, both SIGNIFIES a Noun, or Pro-

*noun* in the Nominative case, and IMPLIES ANOTHER in the ACCUSATIVE, that they can have called this Verb a *Verb Substantive*. But, not only is it certain that what is called the substantive Verb necessarily demands an accusative Noun, or Pronoun, for the very possibility of our conceiving it at all; or giving any meaning whatever to the word AM, BE, or IS; but, more than this, it is manifest, upon a moment's reflection, that to talk of a *substantive verb* is as absurd as to talk of a *cubic circle*; because the Verb, purely in itself, can signify nothing but a *Relation or Partition*; while any Substantive Thing, (although it may be, and always is, in an infinite number of ways a RELATIVE,) can never take the nature of a *Relation or Partition*.

In this place, if not long before, I trust it must be plainly evident, that, in order to understand the nature of the VERB, it was necessary to understand that of RELATION: and, especially, that in order to comprehend the true nature of the *Substantive Verb*, or rather of the *Universal Primary Verb*, it was necessary to recognise *Existence* for a *Relation*, that is to say for a *real logical partition*, (although it is in fact an *actual compenetration*) between *every Substantive Thing* and *Time and Space*. It therefore appears to have been from a uniform mistaken belief that EXISTENCE INCLUDES SUBSTANCE, that men have called the Verb, IS, or AM, by the name of the *substantive verb*.

In my next position; I am borne out by Mr. Harris, in a passage which has been treated with much derision by Mr. Horne Tooke; but

which, nevertheless, I conceive to be one of the most solid maxims, or, rather, the PARAMOUNT MAXIM of reason, throughout all the subjects of logical investigation. In his *Hermes*, page 88, he says, "Previous to every possible attribute, whatever a thing may be, whether black or white, square or round, &c. &c., it must first of necessity EXIST, before it can be any thing else." Upon this ground, I confidently insist, that, EVERY TIME a Subject is intended to have any adjective thing predicated of it, it must be either expressed or understood to EXIST, BEFORE we can predicate any thing else concerning it.

If these observations be well founded; it becomes plain that the primary Verb is *as complete* a verb, in itself, as any other Verb in language; for it cannot be expressed, at all, without an *Accusative*, as well as a *Nominative*, either mentioned or understood. But, if this be the case; it manifestly follows, that, when we use any adjective Verb, whatever, we must use two complete verbs in combination, that is to say the primary Verb and the adjective verb. Thus, if we take the Verb *to strike*, and say, in the indicative mood, *I strike*; this in reality is an elliptical expression, and it means *I, existing in Time and Space, strike*. And, even, when these words are introduced, the sentence can have no meaning until we farther add some Noun, or Pronoun, in the objective case; such as, *I, existing in Time and Space, strike* RICHARD. Here, then, are two complete Verbs, having two distinct Nominatives and two corresponding Accusatives,

*understood*, in order to give any sense to the simple expression "*I strike.*"

The conjugation of the verb *To strike*, if conducted upon this principle, would run as follows.

**I**, existing in Time and Space, strike or do strike Richard,—or the Ground.

**I**, existing in Time and Space, have struck, shall strike, or may strike the Ground.

**Thou**, existing in Time and Space, strike the Ground.

Let him, existing in Time and Space, strike the Ground.

As a particular illustration of the fact that all verbs are very elliptically expressed, in their ordinary use; and, that the full expression of every adjective Verb must involve two, or more complete verbs, according to what I have suggested; I may observe, that upon no other principle can we reconcile such expressions as "**I AM HE,**"—"**THOU art HE,**" &c., wherein *both* the Pronouns are understood to be in the *same case*. In this form of the Verb, it is undeniably signified that the *same thing* is *two things*; and, that these two things have a real relation or partition between them: than which, no greater absurdity can be imagined. But, when we come to reflect upon what in reality EXISTS when any one says "**I AM HE,**" or "**Thou art HE;**" we

readily discern, that, in order to signify what really does so exist, or has existed, it of necessity demands *two* distinct and complete Verbs. When, for example, we say “**THOU art HE;**” we must mean to refer the *same person* to *two different Times*. Thus; “**THOU** that art *now* **EXISTING here, art HE** “ that **EXISTED** at such a *Time and Place.*” Hence the person in question is made into *two Nominatives*, that is into a distinct Nominative for each of the two different Times or Places; and these two Times and Places form two distinct real Accusatives to those two Nominatives: Consequently, the expression “**THOU art HE**” involves two complete Verbs.

But this is not all: For it is both curious and in a logical sense important to observe, that we hardly ever make use of the simple expression, “*I am He,*” or “*Thou art He,*” without *implying four distinct Verbs*, with a regular nominative and accusative understood to every one of them.

We hardly ever mean simply to signify, that a person who is now here, is the same that was in another, or the same place, at another time; because, on the contrary, we usually desire to signify *some ADJECTIVE act, beside his act of existence*, in any Time or Place; by which *adjective act*, we recognise him at each of the two distinct Times or Places. Thus when a person addresses another with the assertion “*Thou art He;*” he may mean to signify, “**THOU** that **NOW** **EXISTEST here, TALKING** “ to the magistrate, **art HE** who **EXISTED** at such a “ *Time and Place, ROBBING* the man.” And, in almost every other case of using the Verb in a similar

way, it is meant to signify **FOUR** *distinct* ACTS,—that is to say *two distinct* ACTS OF EXISTENCE and *two distinct* ADJECTIVE ACTS ; all which, together, of course demand to be expressed, or implied, by four distinct Verbs.

Viewing the subject in this light ; we discern a good reason why the Pronoun which *follows* the Verb, is in the *same case* with the Pronoun which *precedes* it. As it stands EXPRESSED, in the simple sentence “ **THOU art HE** ; ” it is manifestly absurd, because **HE** is, in reality, the *Grammatical Accusative* of the Verb, and yet **HE** is notoriously meant to signify no other being than the Nominative or Subject of the Verb. But the moment we recognise that the sentence “ **THOU art HE** , ” is in reality an *elliptical* expression of **FOUR**, or, in the simplest case, of **TWO VERBS** ; we discern that the Pronoun “ **HE** ” is, as it ought to be, the Nominative of the *Second*, or in some cases of the *Third Verb* : and thus “ **THOU** ” and “ **HE** ” are two Nominatives, of two different Verbs, whose two distinct Accusatives are *to be understood*, although they are not expressed.

Thus it appears remarkably, according to what has been asserted by different writers, that *express* language is so far from being a complete signification of our thoughts or ideas, that it rather resembles a set of springs, which, upon being touched, put the wonderful mechanism of the mind into operation. But it is at the same time manifest, that a great part of language (if we may so speak) is



IMPLIED *and* UNDERSTOOD, *without* being expressed. And those persons who do not so understand it, certainly *do not* THINK *correctly*, either when they hear or when they make use of speech.

## 6.

*Observations on the Simple Form of the Verb.—On Participles, Prepositions, and Adverbs.—Concluding Remarks.*

Grammarians of great eminence are of opinion that the *infinitive* is the form of the SIMPLE VERB. But I have already offered some passing hints to the contrary; and I must dissent from this doctrine, for three reasons. *First*, because the infinitive is not expressed by one word. *Secondly*, because it usually implies *activity*; whereas I have shown that activity cannot possibly enter into the nature of any Verb. *Thirdly*, because the infinitive form of the Verb is, in point of fact, the name of *nothing that EXISTS, or can EXIST, in the Universe.*—I do not object against the infinitive, that it implies neither *Assertion* nor *Time*; because I do not admit that either *Assertion*, or *Time*, or *Mood*, enters at all into the nature of the Verb.

The simple form of the Verb, I am led to conceive, from all the foregoing reasoning, can be no other than the FORM of the PRESENT PARTICIPLE.

This Participle, Mr. Tooke asserts to be the *Simple Verb Adjectived*. But I must suppose, that, when any Participle is viewed as an Adjective, it loses its pretension to the character of a Verb.

The Verb, in its simple form, must be the mere sign of a *concrete Action or Relation*, as *this Action or Relation EXISTS, or CAN EXIST, IN NATURE*: such, for example, as *fighting*, or *running*. The very same *form, or sound*, as that which simply expresses the concrete action and therefore forms the naked Verb, is otherwise entertained as a Participle, because it is then taken to signify an *Adjective Name* of some Substantive Thing, such as the name superinduced upon a person who  *fights, or runs*. Thus we say, a *fighting man*,—or—*a running footman*. This Adjective Name, in these instances, expresses the ENERGY exerted by a Substantive Being, in an act of fighting, or of running; which *energy* is an *attribute* of that *SINGLE Being*: but, in so doing, the word *fighting, or running*, *LOSES the signification of an ACTION*, and therefore loses the character of a *VERB*; because the action of fighting, or of running, like any other action, *cannot be a mere energy or quality of ANY ONE subject*, but is a bridge or partition between some *TWO*. The Participle, certainly, *implies* the existence of the action of fighting, or of running; but it does not *expressly signify* it; all that it expressly signifies, is the ENERGY of the man who supports *one side* of the action or relation of fighting, or of running.

If the prefix, *To*, which is used to express the form of the *Infinitive*, be assumed to mean *Do*,

or **ACT**; then, I conceive, the Infinitive might be made to express the Simple Verb, by the following modification.—*Act striking—Act running—Act fighting—Act existing.*—But I apprehend that the Infinitive, in its usual form, cannot possibly express any action or relation in nature, simply and philosophically.

When we would ascertain what is the simple naked expression of that action or partition between a Nominative and an Accusative which is properly signified by a Verb; I apprehend, the only way to do this, is to *behold the concrete action itself*, AS IT EXISTS in nature, and then observe what name is given to it by the general consent of people using one language. Thus, for example, if we saw a man *running*, or *two men fighting*, and were to ask any Englishman what they are about; he would have no alternative, in his reply, for there is but *one form* of the Verb that can possibly answer this question, and that is the word *running*, or in the other case *fighting*.—**FIGHTING**, and **RUNNING**, then, and **NOT** *to fight* and *to run*, are, in my humble opinion, the simple forms of the two verbs in question: and the same reasoning must hold with regard to every other Verb.

If any person should hope to avoid this consequence, or to refute the present argument, by putting the question in a different form; and, in the case of witnessing a fight, instead of asking the natural and just question *What are those men doing?* were to ask *What is the name of that phenomenon which we now observe?* The answer in this case must

be "A BATTLE,"—or "A FIGHT." This answer, moreover, it must be granted, appears to be the *infinitive mode*, wanting its usual prefix. But the expectation of the person, who should propose this objection, must be instantly quashed by the following consideration. The answer thus given, although it is the usual, or we may say the *grammatical* answer, is not a true one; for it has no foundation in logic or in reason. There certainly neither ever was, nor can be, in the Universe a FIGHT or a BATTLE; although there has been, and may be, a great deal of FIGHTING or BATTLING. The word *Fight*, or *Battle*, therefore, is not the name of any concrete Action or Relation whatever: on the contrary, it is only a mere fiction of logic, whereby all the different concrete acts or relations of fighting are *generalised under ONE NAME*: and, even, the few remaining advocates of the doctrine of *General Conceptions* never assume that the *Object* of any General Term is a thing that EXISTS. But all parties will certainly agree, that *the things which VERBS represent, must be things that HAVE EXISTED, DO EXIST, or CAN EXIST.*

I trust, therefore, that the above reasoning is altogether conclusive, that the *Form* of the *Present Participle* is the *Form* of the *naked simple VERB.*

In this place I am led to notice what has been said upon the subject in question by a writer of very considerable repute, and whose book is furnished with many ingenious remarks;—I

mean Mr. Pickbourn's "*Dissertation on the English Verb.*" In the speculations of this writer, however, or in any thing which he has cited from other authors, I do not find that any ground is taken up that in the least approaches to that which I entertain on the subject. He adopts the opinion of Bishop Lowth, with regard to the general nature of the Verb. In page 163, he expresses himself thus; "Bishop Lowth says, 'A Verb is a *word* which signifies *to be, to do, or to suffer.*' " "This definition I think a very good one." Accordingly, therefore, Mr. Pickbourn adopts the doctrine of *active* and *passive* Verbs. I need say no more to show that our views of the subject are utterly incompatible.

But, although I find no material point of agreement between the views of this author and those I have above suggested; yet there are several passages in his work which I think may be cited to show, that his views ought to have accorded with those in question. One of these is the following.

In page 4; speaking of the Present Participle, he says, "There is a sense in which it may be called the present participle, but none in which it can, with propriety, be called the participle of the present tense or time: for it is equally applicable to all divisions of time. It denotes the gradual progress, or middle, of an extended action, without any regard either to the beginning, or end of it; i. e. it represents an

“action as having already begun, as being in progress, or going on, but as not yet finished. “Thus, yesterday, at ten o’clock, he was *writing* a letter,” &c.

This, I think, is a very just account of the Present Participle: and it is upon this very ground that I esteem it as expressing the naked simple Verb. It embraces no consideration of Time: it contains no Assertion: it implies no Mode: but it simply expresses an ACTION GOING ON. When Mr. Pickbourn talks of an “*extended action*,” I may observe, that *every action in the Universe is an extended action*, for there can be no action that does not occupy *Time*. Now the thing which a simple Verb signifies, or can signify, is nothing but an action AS IT IS GOING ON, AFTER *it has* BEGUN, and BEFORE it has FINISHED.

PREPOSITIONS ARE NOT ONLY CONNECTIVES, but they are also DEFINITIVES, and that of a very high class. PREPOSITIONS *define* VERBS, as ARTICLES *define* NOUNS. In other words; PREPOSITIONS *express* RELATIONS *that are* INVOLVED OR CONTAINED *in the* RELATIONS *expressed by* VERBS.

Prepositions are not so necessary as *Connectives*, as they are as *Definitives*. We often express two sentences of the very same import, the one with a Preposition, and the other without. Thus we say, “I will go to my house;” and, otherwise, “*I will go home.*” In the latter of these two instances, we find no want of a Preposition, *as a connective*; but, from custom, we should find a

want of the Preposition in the other form of the sentence, namely, “*I will go house.*” This shows that the Preposition might be dispensed with as a CONNECTIVE. But we should find it could not be dispensed with as a DEFINITIVE of the Verb. Thus the sentence “*I will go home,*” which is an elliptical expression, requires to have the Verb GO *defined* in some one of the following different ways: I will go TO home,—I will go FROM home,—I will go BY home,—I will go IN home; each one of which Prepositions expresses a very *distinct*, and often *an existing* involved relation, between us and our HOME, with regard to our GOING.

I have, in the beginning, mentioned the Preposition, as being in some sort a representative of the Verb. And here I have explained, that, in point of fact, as Verbs express Primary Relations, so Prepositions express *other Relations, contained within* the former.

ADVERBS appear, in one of their offices, to operate as *Abbreviations*, in *correspondency* with Participles. As, upon one hand, the *Participle*, when used as an Adjective, EXPRESSES ONE of two RELATIVE SUBJECTS which support any Relation, and *implies* the ENERGY of that Subject in the act in question; so, upon the other hand, the *Adverb* EXPRESSES the OTHER *Supporting Subject* of the Relation, and *implies* ITS ENERGY in the act. Thus, when we say “*I will go THERE;*” the word *there* signifies THAT PLACE. Now *that part of Absolute Space* to which

we are going, or rather *some object in that Space*, is the *Accusative or Object* which supports the *other side* of the relation of GOING ; while the *person who goes* supports *one side* of it.

It may be of use to explain, that *in an action of GOING, or of COMING, it is NOT the GROUND* that is the Accusative or that supports ONE side of the relation. In an action of *walking, of running, or of riding*, (some one of which modes we must use in either going or coming) the GROUND is the Accusative which supports one side of the action ; while WE support the other. But GOING, or COMING, is, almost in all cases, a relation or action between US and SOME OBJECT *either ABOVE or BELOW* the ground, but at any rate SOME DISTINCT OBJECT, considered altogether apart from the GROUND itself. Hence any relation of GOING, or COMING, is a vastly different thing, in the apprehension of the logician, from the relation of CONTACT we support with the GROUND during our transit.

IN FINE ; By way of recapitulation, I now observe, *first*, that there are Two, and only Two, *Primary Categories of Things in the Universe, namely, SUBSTANTIVE THINGS and PARTITIONS between them.*—And *Partitions*, (i. e. *Relations*,) when they are viewed as being the SUPPORTERS of OTHER *Relations*, become in a logical sense *themselves Substantive Beings*. Thus *Relations* create and support other *Relations* without end.

I hardly need repeat, that *Partitions* between



Things are *self-evidently necessary*, in order to constitute a DIVERSITY of things in the Universe: for, otherwise, it would not be a world of THINGS, but must be absolutely a world consisting of ONE SAME NUMERICAL THING, in the strict apprehension of the logician. The assumption, therefore, of Partitions between things, is founded upon as stable ground as that of any Axiom in Geometry: and, to deny this, would be the very last stage of absurdity. But PARTITIONS (*which are of innumerable different sorts*) are the things which I have treated under the name of RELATIONS: And hence, of consequence, the view which I have hazarded of Philosophical Grammar; because the one must depend upon the other.—Now the sum of this view is as follows.

1. SUBSTANTIVE THINGS are signified by NOUNS.

2. PARTITIONS are signified by VERBS.

3. The SILENT CONJUNCTION OR APPPOSITION of a *Nominative* with a *Verb*, amounts to ASSERTION.—And the like APPPOSITION of the *Verb* and the *Accusative*, amounts to ANOTHER ASSERTION.—And thus every simple sentence in language involves TWO ASSERTIONS, either expressed or implied.

4. The sign of NEGATION, namely, the Particle NOT, *is a sort of* GRAMMATICAL WEDGE; which, upon being interposed between a Nominative and a Verb, *dissevers them* by destroying that silent apposition which amounted to *assertion*; and thus it DESTROYS ASSERTION.

5. ARTICLES *define* NOUNS.

6. PREPOSITIONS *define* VERBS.

7. ADJECTIVES denote ENERGIES, QUALITIES, or ATTRIBUTES of Subjects: in which office, ADJECTIVES *stand contradistinguished from* VERBS, because VERBS signify nothing but PARTITIONS *between* TWO Subjects.

8. ADVERBS embrace a very mixed office. Some of them only *abbreviate*; and some of them *define*.

9. THE PRESENT PARTICIPLE denotes the simple Concrete Action (*as it exists, or can exist in nature*) which is signified by any Verb: The form of this PARTICIPLE, therefore, expresses the Simple VERB.—The *same word*, when used as an *Adjective*, denotes NOT an ACTION, but *only an* ENER-

GY, that is an attribute of ONE person, (or other subject,) that supports one side of any action.

If the view of the Subject which I have been induced to hazard should be deemed satisfactory ; it will justify the remark which I ventured to suggest in the outset, namely, that Philosophical Grammar, instead of being attainable in the mazes of Etymology, must wait the perfection of the Philosophy of the Mind. The contrast which my own views of the subject present, to those which have been furnished by the learned and very acute author of the *Diversions of Purley*, and no less so to the uniform doctrine of logicians, is so extensive, that it is impossible I should avoid feeling a very deep sense of risk ; especially when I consider the magnitude of the subject and all that rests upon it : for such as the *verbal signification of Relation* must be, such, or at least *analogous* to this, must be the nature of Relation itself. But when I reflect on the nature of the ground of Relation to which I have been led in the foregoing analysis ; I confess it appears to me to be so strong, and so irresistibly indicated to that plain sense to which Mr. Tooke has made his appeal, that I cannot be discouraged from the present statement, by all the weight of authority which appears against it. It is now in the hands of its judges ; and I shall await their sentence with great respect.

I am aware, indeed, that the whole foregoing

view is submitted in the face of a very sweeping condemnation. The following passage appears in a remarkable Foot Note, near the close of the Preface to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. “ Discoveries  
“ in Grammar are not indeed to be looked for.  
“ They are nearly allied to those in Metaphysics;  
“ of which, it has been well observed by one of  
“ the acutest writers of the age, that the very appearance should be rejected as an error, if not  
“ an imposition, upon mankind.”

In my humble opinion, the self-sufficiency of man has seldom been expressed in a more arrogant assumption than that comprised in the passage just now quoted. But, having contributed my endeavours toward throwing some light on the subject, I leave it now to those who are in situations to decide, whether or not any change ought to be introduced into the received doctrines of Grammar;—especially with regard to the nature and use of that Part of Speech which *represents ONE HALF of the UNIVERSE OF THINGS, and therefore constitutes ONE HALF of ESSENTIAL GRAMMAR, namely, the VERB.*

## CHAPTER V.

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### OF SPACE AND ITS RELATIONS.

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#### SECTION FIRST.

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##### OF THE DIFFERENT VIEWS OF PHILOSOPHERS WITH REGARD TO THE NATURE OF SPACE.

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**I**N one sense it may be said, that Space is the Substance of all our thoughts. Without this substratum, it has been rigorously shown, we could not possibly have had any such affections as color, or touch. Space or Extension, therefore, is a *component attribute of our Sentient Principle or Mind*; and, by its forming the basis of our most primary sensations, it is one of the *earliest* objects, if not the very earliest object of our knowledge.

Owing to its being thus far of a substantive nature, Space appears to claim our consideration in this part of the work. The expediency, moreover, of entering into the investigation of it in this place, will be farther evident in the bearings which the subject has upon that of *Necessary Connection*; which I propose to consider in a future chapter.

According to the German Philosopher, **KANT**;

Space and Time are the *Two Forms of our Sensibility*: The *First is the form of our external senses*: The *Second*, that of *all our senses, external and internal*. I am not aware whether Kant has grounded these assumptions upon any species of *analysis*, or whether it is merely that assumption of philosophers in general, from Plato downward, by which they maintained that we are immersed in Space and Time. But it has appeared that it forms the grand proximate object of my own speculations, from the beginning, to show, upon the most rigorous analytical ground, that this is the real fact in nature. The result of my labor on the subject, therefore, altogether concurs with that of the Philosopher above mentioned: and, as this formed the leading character of my earliest speculations on the phenomena of the mind, as well as of those which I have since prosecuted, the co-incidence is the more satisfactory; especially as, from any accounts I have seen of the Philosophy of Kant, I cannot but regard him as having been gifted with great power of thinking; although I do not, by this avowal, intend to identify my own views with those entertained by him, any farther than I may expressly specify.

In the Chapter on Time; I shall have to show, that the doctrine of Kant, with regard to Space and Time being the two forms of our nature, has been completely misapprehended by Professor Stewart, in his strictures on the writings of that Philosopher. But, as this involves some very important considerations with regard to our ideas of

*Time*, it could not with propriety be introduced here.

Before I quit the notice of Kant's Philosophy in this place, however, it is requisite to offer a very material criticism upon his phraseology, in the use of the word "*Form*." The *Form* of a thing, according to Aristotle, who is the inventor of the term, is the *essence* of the thing, that is *the very thing itself*. The Mind, therefore, cannot have, or comprise, *two forms*: Neither could Space and Time, if they were supposed to be one same thing, be the form of the Mind; because *thought also* is necessary, in order to make up its whole essence.—All that can be said upon it, therefore, is, that *Space* and *Time* are COMPONENTS in the *Form of the Mind*; and that, *together with Thought*, they make up the WHOLE FORM OR ESSENCE of the Mind, *so far as we know it*.

The philosophical world is so divided in opinion with regard to the nature of Space, and the weight of talent and of science on each side of this subject is so nearly equal, that the controversy concerning it may be said to be the opprobrium of the human understanding.

What renders this subject the more mortifying to human pretension, is the circumstance, that, however obscure and intractable it is in itself, it does not appear to involve any such dilemma as is to be met with in various other great questions of philosophy. The question concerning *Liberty and Necessity*; The opposite pretensions of

*Materialism* and *Immaterialism*; and other such subjects, involve certain difficulties which ever side of the subject is taken; and we can therefore, in these cases, easily conceive the possibility of a difference in opinion with regard to them. But, with respect to Space, there does not seem to present any such ground of disunion or variance of judgments; and, consequently, it must form a subject of serious anxiety to the truly contemplative mind, if we have in reality no means of solving the problem concerning its real nature.

The discomfiture of reason upon this occasion, is aggravated by the fact that there is even a *Third Party*, or Sect of Philosophers, with regard to the subject; which Sect, although few in number, is yet of no inconsiderable general pretensions in matters of science, and whose doctrine concerning Space, if admitted, would reduce the notions of it entertained by each of the other two great contending parties, to mere chimeras of the imagination.

It cannot fail to introduce, into every considerate or philosophic mind, a train of very uncomfortable reflections, if we are doomed, in our most primary and general conceptions, to be the sport of such illusory conceits as may certainly be affirmed of *two*, out of the *three* doctrines of Space to which I have here alluded.

Previously to submitting that view of the subject which I have been induced to hazard in the present chapter, I shall present a brief account of the three different general doctrines which are extant with



regard to it ;—a measure which I conceive to be the morerequisite, inasmuch as there seems to be a considerable, and indeed a profound degree of obscurity, in the manner in which the subject has been treated by different writers.

By one of the two greater Sects, it is supposed, that *Matter* exists with three dimensions, namely, length, breadth, and depth ; and it is farther considered, that, if any part of matter were removed, there must actually remain behind a VOID MATRIX of the same three dimensions as those of the matter withdrawn.—Moreover, the void so left is conceived to be indestructible ; and it is farther conceived, as a transcendental suggestion and imperative dictate of the understanding, that the space, thus necessarily absolute, is not limited to the size of any finite body, but that it expands, in all directions, to immensity without end.—At the head of this party stand LOCKE, CLARKE, and NEWTON.

By the other great contending Sect, it is supposed, in concurrence with the first, that matter exists with three dimensions. This Sect then divides into two branches : One of which, with the French Philosopher DES CARTES at its head, supposes *matter to be infinitely extended* : The other branch, in which is to be reckoned many philosophers of great name, embraces the opinion of Newton and his party, *in so far as to conclude that matter or body is finite* ; but along with this it supposes, that beyond the extension or place of matter there is *no such thing as Space or Dimension* ;

on the contrary, it is thought by this Sect, that what is called Space beyond matter is nothing more than a *possibility* of the existence of more matter.

The Third Sect, with regard to this subject, supposes that there is *no such thing, at all, as real dimension, (i. e. length, breadth, or thickness)* in the nature of things. On the contrary, it is held by these philosophers, that Space and Extension is a mere chimera of the mind,—a thing of which, according to BISHOP BERKELEY, we have “*no conception by way of mode or attribute, but only by way of idea.*” From their view of the subject; the notion of either Space or Extension is that, above all others, which scoffs at the most indubitable pretensions of the human understanding.—At the head of this Sect, in modern times, stands the acute and celebrated Bishop of Cloyne.

Although I have adverted to the Berkeleian doctrine of Space, as being one of the three general views which philosophers have entertained of the subject; I consider it as being so extravagant and revolting, that I do not propose to enter into any particular refutation of it. Indeed, I think, some parts of the writings of Berkeley, bear internal evidence, of his having derived this conceit from his early scholastic reading with regard to the supposed nature of the Mind, rather than from his own natural conception of things. This doctrine is contradicted, not only by nearly the whole bulk of European philosophers, but equally by the great tenet of the Hindoo Philosophy; with which last,

the doctrine of Berkeley has been confounded in the opinion of most persons, but from which it differs most essentially in this fundamental position. This is a distinction which is always requisite to be kept in recollection, by those who may have been inclined to think, that the views which have been entertained in my foregoing speculations are of the same nature with those of Berkeley.

The preparatory observations which have now been stated, are all that appear to be necessary, previously to going into the nature of the subject itself; which I propose to do in the next section.

## SECTION SECOND.

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### OF THE ACTUAL REALITY OF SPACE.

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#### 1.

#### *Of the Direct Argument for the Existence of Space.*

THERE is a doctrine which makes a great figure in the philosophy of Aristotle, and which has been very fully indulged by the moderns; that has held a vital influence over the views entertained of the nature of Space, by one of the two principal contending Sects with regard to it. The matter to which I now allude, is the doctrine of CAPACITY.

Upon the first broaching of this consideration; I am urged to hazard the opinion, that it has been the source of some very profound mistakes in philosophy. It has, I think, especially, been the cause of keeping alive, if not of originating, the controversy which has divided the philosophical world with regard to the nature of Space. I confess it is with the hope of being able to render this fact conclusively manifest, that I have been tempted to prosecute the present speculation; because, while I profess, in the outset, to be among the number of those who subscribe to the actual reality of Space, I think it is scarcely possible to add any

thing to the strength of the *direct* argument which has been usually brought in its favor.

I shall, however, submit my own direct view of the subject; previously to entering upon the attempt to show, that the opponents of the reality of Space, have been betrayed into a most essential error, in their estimate, by the notion which they have uniformly entertained of the nature of CAPACITY OR POTENTIALITY.

*First*, therefore, with regard to the *direct* argument; It is to be observed, that both the contending sects, now in question, are agreed, that *matter exists with three dimensions*. The actual extension of matter or body, therefore, is a first principle, by general consent.

*Secondly*; I would observe, that as it is impossible to conceive any two mathematical quantities actually in the same place, since this would destroy the *diversity of their being* and render them *actually one same thing*, there is, consequently, no way of conceiving the *equality* of any two mathematical quantities, except by conceiving each of the quantities to occupy the *same space* IN SUCCESSION.

Those who do not at once perceive the force of this reasoning, may find it fully considered in the Mathematical Lectures of Barrow. I shall however assume, that nothing can be more manifestly absurd, than to attempt to conceive two mathematical subjects in the same place. And, upon the

other hand, I apprehend, nothing can afford a clearer notion of *equality*, between any two quantities, than the supposition of their *having filled the same space* ONE AFTER ANOTHER.

Having assumed these two principles; I will now suppose that two cubes of matter have been made to occupy the same place, in succession; and, that the second cube also has been *removed* from this place. In this predicament, I would ask, If I can deny, or for a moment doubt, the *actual reality* of the dimensions of the *empty matrix*, which *has successively received and parted with* the two cubes in question; then, By what suggestion, or warrant of my understanding, can I pretend to believe that the *cubes themselves are extended*?

If it should here be remarked, that I have, in my foregoing speculations, denied the reality of that very *matter* upon which this argument is founded; I would observe, that, in place of it, however, I have rigorously shown the *real extension of our sensations of color and of touch*; and, consequently, it must be concluded that *the ENERGIES of that EXTERNAL POWER* which excites these sensations must be *actually extended*. These energies are, doubtless, exerted *variously in the same place, at different times*: and this, I insist, in reality answers every purpose which could have been served by matter, and its motion, if it had existed.

I shall not attempt to enlarge the *direct* view of the subject which has now been stated. I apprehend the *conception* of Space to be *purely a mathe-*

*matical principle, or axiom.* And, if we can conceive the dimensions of Space to be annihilated, upon the removal of *any substance, or any energy,* which has *once actually filled it;* I do not then see that we have the least security, or evidence, that every axiom in geometry is not a mere chimera.

To the objections which have been brought against the actuality of Space, I shall afford ample consideration in the following sections. But, in the interim, I deem this to be the best place to state one very remarkable consequence, which must follow from denying the matter; and which appears to me to form, of itself alone, a most conclusive evidence of the absurdity of such denial. The consequence now alluded to; will be rendered manifest by the following supposition.

If a carriage should travel upon the high road from London to York; it would equally be granted, by each of the parties in this controversy, that the vehicle has measured about two hundred miles of *actual distance or extension.* But if the earth's atmosphere were to be annihilated; and if a bird were supposed to fly through the void space, from the top of St. Paul's Cathedral to that of York Minster; those who deny the actual reality of space, must also deny that the bird has moved from the spot first mentioned.

Incredible as it may appear, that any such consequence could have been contemplated as that just now adverted to; there can, I think, be no doubt

of the fact ; the evidence of which will be adduced in its proper place, and therefore need not be entered into at present. I have alluded to the matter, in this place, rather as matter of curiosity and of preparation for the subject, than with any other view.

## 2.

### *Of the Objections which have been urged against the actual reality of Space.*

The arguments which have been opposed to the assumption of the actuality of space, appear swelled to a bulky extent, in the writings of different authors : but, in point of fact, they amount, or may be resolved into, one only ; which is all that is necessary to be refuted, in order to establish the subject beyond the reach of controversy. The substance of them all, appears to be fully comprised in that account of Space which has been furnished in the article *Metaphysics*, in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* ; the writer of which is decidedly an opponent of the reality of Space : and I am not aware of any Treatise, in which the reader can find them stated more concisely. I shall therefore examine the arguments which have been advanced by philosophers on this side of the subject, as they have been re-stated in the work in question.

The First argument which it appears requisite to notice, in the place referred to, is that which is



comprised in the following assertion with regard to the nature of space: "It is certainly not a *substance*; neither is it a property, for we have seen that the very notion of it, which leads men to suppose its existence *necessary*, renders it impossible to be a property of the self-existent Being. Is it then nothing? It is in one sense; it is nothing *actually* existing; but it is something *potentially*, for it has the *capacity* of receiving body whenever it shall exist. It is not, and it cannot become any thing itself; but it is that without which nothing corporeal could exist."

With regard to this passage, which, I may observe, is couched in the language of the Author of "ANTIENT METAPHYSICS," and which agrees in general with that of other writers on the same side; I shall here, in the first place remark, that I incline to suspect many readers, and even some writers, have grounded their construction of it upon a certain erroneous import which they have attached to the word *actual*, or *actuality*; and which therefore appears to demand explanation, before I proceed farther in the subject.

If the term ACTUAL be supposed to imply any *power or activity*; and, consequently, if it be imagined that some *active attribute*, such as the property of *resistance*, would be necessary to entitle space to the name of an *actual reality*; it may be of importance to point out, that this is not the view of the subject that has been entertained by the principal oppugners of Space. On the contrary;

those philosophers assert *not only the* INACTIVITY of Space, but *also, AND ESSENTIALLY, its* WANT OF DIMENSIONS, *namely, length, breadth, and thickness.*

I have been led to suggest this distinction, by some expressions which have escaped from very eminent writers on the subject. It is asserted of Space, by Dr. Reid in particular, that "It is so much allied to *nothing or emptiness*, that it seems incapable of annihilation or of creation." At the same time it is to be remarked, upon the other hand, that Dr. Reid appears in the strongest terms to *assert the reality of space*. Thus he says that "Space not only retains a firm hold of our belief, even when we suppose all the objects that introduced it to be annihilated, but it swells to immensity. We can set no limits to it, either of extent or of duration." Presently after, however, he adds the following apparently contradictory assertion. "But it is only an immense, eternal, and indestructible void or emptiness. Perhaps we may apply to it what the Peripatetics said of their first matter, that whatever it is, *it is potentially only, not actually.*"—" *Essays on the Int. Powers, Essay 2. Chap. 19.*"

From the vast oscillancy exhibited in these contradictory passages, we gain a decisive light into the view entertained by Dr. Reid of the subject of Space; which is both remarkable and important in this feature, that he appears, in his conclusion, to *side against the actuality* of Space, but does this, however, not from any doubt that void Space pos-

ASSESSES DIMENSIONS, but merely from the consideration that it is an indestructible EMPTINESS, upon which account alone he supposes it to be "*allied to nothing,*" and to be "*potentially only, and not actually.*"

Now upon the whole of this reasoning I am to observe, that, although Dr. Reid has *in words* pronounced his suffrage that space exists *potentially only, not actually,* he is not at all to be reckoned as being one of that Sect of philosophers who have denied the actuality of Space *by denying that it has DIMENSION,* and against whose view of the subject it is here essential to object. The truth indubitably appears to be, that Reid is *a strenuous advocate for SPACE WITH DIMENSIONS;* and, that he has ascribed to it a mere potential existence, *only from supposing that ACTUALITY implies SOMETHING MORE than is contained in mere DIMENSION.*

Since, therefore, such a view of the subject as this has been entertained by so eminent a philosopher as Dr. Reid; we may be warranted in supposing that some other writers, who have given their suffrage against the actuality of Space, have done so upon the *same fallacious ground;* and it may readily be imagined that a large proportion of readers may have entered into the same conception of the subject.

In order that no doubt should remain, with regard to what is the doctrine of the REAL impugnors of Space; I deem it of importance to furnish the following extracts. In the Notes to Archbishop

King's Origin of Evil ; his learned Commentator, Mr. Law, says of Space, " I cannot possibly frame " any other notion of it, than either, first, as the " *mere negation or absence of matter*; or, secondly, " as the extension of *body*, considered abstractly " or separate from any particular body ; or, third- " ly, as *a subject or substratum* of that same general " extension." To which assumption, after some farther remarks, he adds, with regard to the passage already quoted, that, " to attribute Extension " or Parts to Space, according to the first notion " of it laid down by us, will be the same as to talk " of the Extension or Parts of *Absence, of Privation,* " or of *mere nothing*."

It is upon this, and upon other such passages, in different authors, that I ground my conclusion, that the oppugners of Space, in their arguments on the subject, have involved the absurd consequence, that a bird which should fly from one housetop to another, through void space, would not thereby move from the spot where it first rested, although the two houses themselves should be fixed on earth, and be never so far asunder. And it is here important to remark, that the view of the subject which has been taken by Dr. Reid, although in its verbal expression it appears adverse to the reality of Space, *involves no such absurd consequence as that just now adverted to.*

It is to be regretted, that Dr. Reid's construction of the term *actual*, has made him appear to have given his suffrage against the extension or dimensions of Space, and in favor of its mere *potentiality*;

when he certainly did not intend to have done so. But I hope the exposition of his oversight may have its use, in the case of some of those who have yet to form their judgment on the subject, by putting them upon their guard, that, while dissenting, as they may suppose, from the *actuality* of Space, they may not be merely denying its *activity*, or asserting *only its mere emptiness*, as an objection against its *actual reality*.

To resume, now, the consideration of the argument which is expressed in the passage already quoted from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; I would, in the *First* place, ask, By what evidence has it been decided that Space is "*not a substance?*" I am aware, indeed, that Dr. Clarke has conceded the point, that Space is not a substance: but I am not aware upon what *logical ground* he was warranted in so doing. *Secondly*; I would inquire, How does it appear, that because Space is *necessarily existent*, it "cannot therefore be a *property* of "the Self-existent Being." To me it appears, on the contrary, that the supposition of the necessity of Space, manifestly involves the notion of its having *some* connection with the Self-existent Intelligent Being. I shall not, however, dwell upon these considerations; but merely advert to them, here, as matters which it will be proper to resume in the sequel.

The next argument which I shall consider, is one which I apprehend to be of very inferior importance; and therefore it had better be disposed of, out of the way, that it may not occur to distract the attention after we shall have discussed that which is of greater moment. It is comprised in the following terms.

“ We have a positive idea of space, as well as of  
 “ silence, darkness, and other privations: but to  
 “ argue from such an idea of space, that space  
 “ itself is something real, seems altogether as good  
 “ sense as to say that because we have a different  
 “ idea of *darkness* from that of *light*, of *silence* from  
 “ that of *sound*, of the *absence* of any thing from its  
 “ *presence*; therefore *darkness*, *silence*, and *absence*,  
 “ must be real things. There are therefore ideas,  
 “ and simple ones too, which have nothing *ad extra*  
 “ correspondent to them, no proper *ideatum*, arche-  
 “ type, or objective reality; and we do not see  
 “ why the idea of space may not be reckoned in  
 “ that number.”

The words of the author, from which this argument is derived, are these;—“ To say that *Space*  
 “ must have existence because it has some Proper-  
 “ ties, for instance penetrability or a *capacity* of  
 “ receiving body, seems to me the same as to say  
 “ that *Darkness* must be *something* because it has  
 “ the power or property of receiving *Light*; *Silence*  
 “ the property of admitting *Sound*; and *Absence* the  
 “ property of being supplied by *Presence*.”

I have given the *original* argument here, along with the statement of the *Encyclopedist*, because

I think the nature of the argument itself so manifestly inefficacious. To say, that *light* is received into the PLACE where *darkness was*; that *sound* is admitted into the PLACE where *silence reigned*; and that the PLACE where any thing is *absent* may be occupied by *its presence*; would be perfectly intelligible and just: But to say that DARKNESS RECEIVES *light*; SILENCE ADMITS *sound*; and ABSENCE IS SUPPLIED by *presence*, is asserting what is altogether intolerable in philosophical speculation. By a certain idiom, indeed, used chiefly as a form of prayer, we say “*enlighten our darkness.*” But, with such exceptions, it would not pass current, even in the most ordinary conversation, to talk of *darkness receiving light*, or *silence admitting sound*: And I conclude that nothing but the strength of a *bias* could have occasioned such an argument to be called forth, on the present subject. If, however, any thing should be attempted to be said in its defence; then, it at least follows, that, by parity of reasoning, JOY receives SORROW, —PLEASURE receives PAIN, and all our different *opposite estates of feeling receive each other*; and it is not OURSELVES as substantive beings, nor yet the PLACE where our mind is, that receives any pleasure, or pain, or any other thought whatever.

The manifest truth is, that, instead of there being *any intercourse* between light and darkness, or between any two of the things in question, of *receiving*, or *admitting*, each other; it is certain, on the contrary, that when light comes darkness goes, just as pleasure goes when pain presents itself:

They are *incompatible things* and REPEL, but *do not RECEIVE* each other. But nobody will attempt to say that *Space goes* when *Body comes*; or, that there is any thing *repellant* in the nature of Space and of Body, with regard to each other, even upon the supposition that matter exists.

Space is so nearly allied to the nature of that Body, or that Power, which sensibly occupies it; that all we know of Body is, that *it is SPACE clothed with POWERS*. When these *Powers*, therefore, are present, *Space is not absent*; as darkness and silence are certainly absent, when light and sound are present. There is, consequently, no analogy between the two cases.

There remains but one other argument, to be examined; and this one, in point of fact, constitutes the *sole objection* that has been started, or that can be started, against the actual reality of Space. It is at least the only objection that is deserving of a serious refutation; and the whole fate of the subject undoubtedly depends upon the logical merits which it shall be found to possess, after a rigorous investigation: It is stated in the Work already referred to, in the following words.

“But it is said that, as we cannot conceive  
“Space to be annihilated, it must be some real  
“thing of eternal and necessary existence. If this  
“argument had not been used by writers of great  
“merit, and with the best intentions, we should  
“not have scrupled to call it the most contempti-



“ ble sophism that ever disgraced the page of phi-  
“ losophy. Whatever now has an *actual* existence,  
“ must from all eternity have had a *possible* existence  
“ in the ideas of the Divine Mind. Body, as an ex-  
“ tended substance, has now an *actual* existence;  
“ and therefore it must from eternity have had a *pos-*  
“ *sible* existence in the ideas of the Divine Mind :  
“ but *the possible existence of body* is all that we can  
“ conceive by *Space*; and, therefore, this argument,  
“ upon which so much stress has been laid,  
“ amounts to nothing more than that what has  
“ from eternity been possible, can at no period  
“ have been impossible. It is evident that the  
“ *capacity or potentiality* of every thing existing  
“ must have been from eternity : but is capacity or  
“ potentiality a real being? All the men and  
“ women who shall succeed to the present genera-  
“ tion, to the end of time, have at this moment a  
“ possible existence, nor can that possibility be  
“ conceived as an impossibility : but is it ” (possi-  
“ bility) “ therefore any thing actually existing, either  
“ as a substance or a quality ?”

I have quoted this passage fully, because it exhibits the whole extent and force of the objection to be examined. The writer of it professes, on account of the merits and intentions of the parties, to be *lenient* toward what he calls the *sophistry* of those whom he opposes. If the *general* merits of a writer could claim respect for his arguments, in the present case, it might assuredly be awarded to the Bishop of Carlisle, from whom the writer in the Encyclopedia has borrowed his principal

reasoning. But the imperative claims of philosophy forbid either giving or receiving any grace, or appearance of grace, in the decision of the question we are now engaged in. And, if it were otherwise, it must serve as a striking instance of the force of *bias*, to find a writer tempted to brand an argument of his opponents with the name of "*con-temptible sophism*," who himself, in the same place, has advocated the assertion that "*darkness receives light*," and "*silence admits sound!*"

It now remains to proceed, immediately, to the consideration of the argument from CAPACITY OR POTENTIALITY, as it has been above stated.

If I be not mistaken in the view which I have been led to form of the subject; it will be found, that the controversy which has been kept up, and has appeared to become altogether hopeless with regard to the nature of Space, has been entirely owing to overlooking and violating those transcendental maxims of reason, wherein the principles of all the sciences, and all our knowledge, including even that of logic itself, is founded.

The doctrine of POTENTIALITY has been handed down to us from the Ancients, as a principal feature in the constitution of the School Logic; and it has been received and entertained in the fullest latitude by modern logicians. According to this doctrine, *things exist REALLY which do not exist ACTUALLY*; which means, that all things which *shall exist hereafter HAVE NOW a POTENTIAL EXISTENCE*.

It is against this doctrine, as being the real foundation of the denial of the reality of Space, that I am here first to object.

It was insisted upon, in the Chapter of Relation, that the predicating of any property of any thing that does not ACTUALLY exist, either in *fact* or by *supposition*, is the grossest absurdity and a violation of the first and most indispensable maxim of reason; the least infraction of which must explode the whole fabric of human understanding, and prove it to be nothing but an illusory chaos of thoughts. It is impossible, therefore, to tolerate a single instance of an assumption to the contrary: and, in the present subject, I apprehend, we have a signal instance of the consequence of attempting any such thing. It is of the last importance to a true conception of the nature of Space, that we pay obedience to this paramount maxim.

This being premised; I am here First to observe, it is said, in the passage referred to, that “What has now an *actual* existence, must from eternity have had a *possible* existence in the ideas of the “Divine Mind.”

Now this objection is certainly couched in the orthodox language of the Sect whose view of the subject it exhibits: but it is manifest, the moment we refer it to the imperative maxim already here assumed, that it amounts to a most sheer absurdity. The expression of the fact *ought to have been*, that there *must from eternity* have been a *power in the DIVINE MIND*, to bring into existence, according to his own ideas, every thing that “has now

“an *actual* existence.” And it is a most enormous misapprehension of this principle, to affirm that the things which now exist *had themselves a power of existing before they existed.*

The writers who have fallen into this vast mistake, could not possibly mean to say that *all the future men and women* who shall exist are *nothing but IDEAS in the Divine Mind.* The ideas of them, we may suppose to have existed in that Mind from eternity; but the *men and women themselves, by supposition, do NOT YET exist;* and therefore it is in the plainest manner absurd for a moment to affirm that *THEY have a potentiality or power of future existence.* The **POTENTIALITY OR POWER** of making them exist is purely **A QUALITY OR ATTRIBUTE OF THE DIVINE MIND.**

It is altogether here agreed, that, in order to admit the existence of any future thing, there must from eternity have been *a possibility of its existence.* The only objection I offer, is, that the oppugners of Space have supposed this *potentiality or power* to **BELONG TO THINGS** *which do not yet exist;* whereas, self-evidently, *it must be in SOME BEING* **which ACTUALLY NOW EXISTS,** because what is **NOT IN ACTUALITY** can have **NO PROPERTY.**

From what has been said, it must be in the simplest manner evident, that the oppugners of Space have gone upon the general principle of *attributing quality, power, or potentiality, to assumed beings* **which ARE NOT BEINGS,** and, which, therefore, according to the most imperative law of reason, cannot possibly have any thing whatever predi-

cated of them: by which proceeding, also, these philosophers have, at the same time, *robbed the DEITY*, who exists, of this *Power* of making things exist; although it is undeniable that the power to make future men and women, and all other things, can exist only in *HIM*, as a Being who *NOW IS*.

But the error which has now been pointed out, is not all that has constituted that view of the nature of Space which has been taken by its oppugners. For, after having attributed *potentiality or capacity* to things that do not exist; they attempt a compensation for this error, by another one, not less essential and manifest, in *denying* that capacity is *any real thing*.

Thus it is said of Space; that it "is nothing actually existing, but it is something potentially, for it has the capacity of receiving body, whenever it shall exist."—But, upon this, it is asked; "*Is possibility, therefore, any thing actually existing, either as a substance or a quality?*"

Now, I am to observe; the whole issue of this controversy depends upon the validity of the answer which shall be given to this last question: for every other doubt with regard to it, I trust, is removed by considerations equally simple and decisive. In the next sub-section, therefore, I shall investigate the nature of Potentiality; and, from thence, shall submit my ultimate conception of the nature of Space.

## 3.

*Of the Nature of Possibility, Potentiality or Capacity.—That it is a Quality of a Being Actually Existent.—The Actual Reality of Space the necessary result of this Principle.*

The doctrine of CAPACITY, from which the unfavorable view of the nature of Space has been derived, forms, as I remarked in a former place, a conspicuous figure in the logic of Aristotle : and, when we notice the following, among the collateral fruits of this doctrine, we need not be surprised at that which it has produced with regard to the subject in question.

The opinion of the Stagirite with regard to the nature of the *Human Mind*, has been commented upon with consent by Mr. Harris, in his “PHILOSOPHICAL ARRANGEMENTS,” Chap. 17. page 415. in the following words ;

“*The Human Intellect is pure unmixed CAPACITY, as a sheet of fair writing paper is pure unmixed, untainted WHITENESS. The pure unmixed character of the intellectual capacity, renders it fit for every object of comprehension, as the pure unmixed character of the paper, makes it adequate to every specific writing.*”

When we find such an account of the *Human Intellect* advanced by the acknowledged Prince of Ancient Philosophers, and asserted by Writers of erudition and genius in our own time ; we cannot be surprised that *Space* should have been

subjected to the same regimen. With regard to the doctrine contained in the above passage, therefore, I am here to observe, that any philosopher who shall assume that the *Human Intellect is pure unmixed CAPACITY without a SUBJECT OF INHESION*, can certainly make no more adequate atonement for such an absurd assertion, than that of illustrating his argument by the simile of “*a sheet of paper,*” and assuming that this PAPER is “*pure unmixed, untainted WHITENESS.*”

Every body knows, that “*a sheet of fair writing PAPER*” IS NOT “*pure whiteness;*” but, on the contrary, is *something else* in which the QUALITY of exciting WHITE resides. What then, follows; but that, since *whiteness is a quality and must have some SUBJECT OF INHESION*; so also is *Intellect*?

I hope it will not be supposed, that I would have entered into any refutation of such an assumption, as that the *Human Intellect is pure unmixed capacity*, if this refutation had not been so remarkably furnished in the assumption itself, in a manner which I hope must have a decisive effect even upon the most prejudiced minds, *in its bearing upon the Subject of Space*; for which purpose alone I have brought it forward here.

While I am adverting to this consideration, however, I will venture to believe that hardly any of the assumptions of Aristotle have been so pregnant with absurdity and confusion, as his doctrine of POTENTIALITY OR CAPACITY.

If, indeed, it be supposed to be the meaning of the passage in question, that *Intellect is a pure un-*

*mixed capacity*, INHERENT IN A SUBJECT MIND, *previously to its being occupied with knowledge*; I should be ready to subscribe to this doctrine; and it would involve every thing that I intend to prove with regard to the nature of Space. But the illustration of this passage furnished by the author of the *Philosophical Arrangements*, and the arguments we have seen advanced by the opponents of Space, (not to mention some collateral evidences which I yet propose to bring forward,) may satisfy any person, that it is the assumed doctrine that CAPACITY *is a thing that* CAN EXIST BY ITSELF, WITHOUT A SUBJECT OF INHESION! Space, it is said, for example, is *something potentially*, because it has a capacity of receiving body when it shall exist: but it is asked, “*Is possibility*” (i. e. *capacity or potentiality*) “*any thing really existing, either as a substance or a quality?*”

Now the only thing that remains to be done, in order to complete the view which I intended to take of the subject, is to furnish, not only from the simple and imperative dictate of reason, but also expressly *from the admissions of Mr. Harris and of Aristotle themselves*, that CAPACITY *is a QUALITY and necessarily requires* A SUBJECT OF INHESION. From which it must follow, that Space, according to the most determined of its opponents, *must be recognised AS AN ACTUAL SUBJECT, in which the capacity of receiving body RESIDES.*

In his HERMES, Chap. 8. Mr. Harris expresses



his general opinion of the nature of *Capacity* in the following terms; which, we are to observe, are manifestly contradictory of what have been already quoted upon the same subject from his PHILOSOPHICAL ARRANGEMENTS; but the real merits of which cannot be affected by this circumstance.

“All the above *Qualities* have not only their  
 “*Completion*, but their *Capacity*. Thus not only  
 “the grape when complete (that is to say mature)  
 “possesses a delicious flavour; but there is a  
 “*Capacity* also to produce it, residing in a simple  
 “grape-stone. Even in *artificial* substances, there  
 “are in like manner *Capacities* of explosion; as in  
 “a musical instrument that of rendering harmony.  
 “If leaving these *artificial* and *vegetable* substan-  
 “ces, we go still higher; we shall in *Animals* find  
 “*Capacities*, commonly known by the name of  
 “*Instincts*, to which the frame of every species is  
 “peculiarly accommodated.”

Now the truth of the whole of this passage is self-evident and manifest to the meanest understanding; and it is self-evidently incompatible with any supposition that a Capacity can *exist by itself*, without any subject of inhesion, as the *Capacity of Space* is supposed to do by those who deny its actual reality. Mr. Harris, in the course of his enumeration of capacities, never thought of the CAPACITY OF NOTHING; which he ought to have done, if it be true that while “*Space has the capacity of receiving body*,” it is ITSELF NOTHING but this very capacity.

In another place, namely, in his *Philosophical Ar-*  
*Hu. Mi.*

*rangements*, Mr. Harris has farther quoted ARISTOTLE'S own opinion of the nature of Capacity, in the following words. "CAPACITY OR POWER is not a "simple term of one meaning only, but there is one "sort, when we say of a child, he has a capacity "to be a military leader; another, when we say "it of a man who is in complete maturity." This is manifestly just: But, in each case, *it assumes capacity to have a subject of inhesion*; and it does not imply any thing of A CAPACITY OF NOTHING to become, or to receive any thing; and we may be assured, that the insanity of supposing any such thing will never be denied by any person who is put on his guard concerning it.

I trust the absurdity of supposing the *mere potentiality of Space* is rendered too glaring, by the considerations last urged, to admit of its receiving additional strength from any other argument that could be suggested. And, if so; *the ONLY OBJECTION OF A LOGICAL SHOW OR ASPECT, which has ever been brought against the imperative force of the DIRECT argument for the actual reality of Space, is done away upon that very logical ground which it had assumed for its supposed foundation.* Should this be admitted; logicians must then be compelled, upon this ground, to admit that SPACE WITH ITS DIMENSIONS ACTUALLY *and necessarily exists*; and that, *thus actually existing, it has A CAPACITY of receiving either BODIES OR ENERGIES, whenever they shall exist.*

## 4.

*Collateral Remarks on the Absurdities of the Argument against the Actuality of Space.*

As the solution of the problem with regard to the real nature of Space is of infinite importance, even to the pretensions of the Human Understanding; it cannot but be interesting, and perhaps may be of some moment in the influence it may have upon opinion in particular instances, to take into consideration what I am now going to advert to, collaterally, as being the views entertained of the subject by some other writers who have especially engaged in it, besides those already mentioned.

The *real* opponents of the actuality of Space, (among whom, I may repeat, is not to be reckoned Dr. Reid) are very satisfactorily at variance among themselves with regard to its real nature;—a mark of insolidity in their reasonings, which is not to be found among those who have asserted its actual existence.

The author of *ANTIEN*T METAPHYSICS (himself one of the most conspicuous impugners of the actuality of Space) has very justly animadverted upon the views of Mr. LEIBNITZ, (who is another leader on the same side) in the following terms.

“ Mr. Leibnitz asserts that *Space* is nothing else

“ but the order of things existing, as *Time* is the  
 “ order of things in succession. This erroneous  
 “ notion of Space has led Mr. Leibnitz to the ab-  
 “ surdity of saying, that, supposing the whole sys-  
 “ tem of the visible world to be moved out of the  
 “ place which it presently occupies, into some  
 “ other portion of Space beyond the limits of this  
 “ universe, still it would be in the same place  
 “ provided the order and arrangement of the bo-  
 “ dies, with respect to one another, was continued  
 “ the same.” *Book 4. Chap. 2.*

Upon this criticism by Lord Monboddo, it is to be observed, that the position of Leibnitz carries its own contradiction so manifestly within itself, that it affords the fairest possible mark for refutation. Yet it is the assumption of a writer who has branded Space with the opprobrium of being “ *the IDOL of the English Philosophers.*”

By this remark, I by no means intend to detract from the just and great pretensions of Mr. Leibnitz, as a Philosopher. On the contrary, I esteem the extent of his general pretensions, as forming, of itself alone, a strong argument against his view of the nature of Space, when it could not prevent his falling into such a manifest contradiction upon the subject.

But, having adverted to this inconsistency of the German Philosopher; we shall derive ample satisfaction from observing what reasoning has

been advanced by Lord Monboddo, himself, in order to correct the error of Leibnitz.

“The foundation” (says his Lordship) “of the error, both of Dr. Clarke and Leibnitz, upon the subject, appears to me to be this, that they have not known or attended to the distinction which runs through the whole ancient philosophy, betwixt what *actually* exists, and what exists *only potentially*. Every thing existed in this latter way in the Divine Mind, before creation or production.”

Here then, we find, the glaring absurdity of Leibnitz, in consequence of his denial of the actuality of Space, is attempted to be corrected by another philosopher of the same Sect, by throwing into the eyes of mankind the precious dust of the DOCTRINE OF POTENTIALITY; which, he laments, that Clarke and Leibnitz had not known or attended to!

Although the effect of this scholastic dust can be no other than a rational distaste at it; I would however, finally recommend a repetition of the two decisive considerations which render the doctrine of potentiality utterly absurd, *as that doctrine is taught with regard to the nature of Space.*

FIRST. AS I suppose no person will pretend that *men and women*, including their proper spiritual individuality, are *nothing but ideas* of the Divine Mind; it is therefore self-evident that *men and women* cannot exist in the Divine Mind *before* they are *created*: Hence it is absurd, and perfectly puerile, to talk of MEN AND WOMEN AS *existing in the Divine Mind before they are produced*; al-

though we may suppose *ideas or forms* of them to be contemplated by the Deity before he created the THINGS THEMSELVES. SECONDLY. But the most important consideration is, that the POSSIBILITY, CAPACITY, POTENTIALITY, OR POWER, of bringing any thing into actual existence, CANNOT *reside in any thing that DOES NOT ITSELF ALREADY ACTUALLY EXIST*. The Potentiality, therefore, of the existence of *all future* men and women, CANNOT *reside in those men and women themselves*, but must reside in, and can be predicated of, *no Being except the DEITY*, who alone possesses this possibility, or potentiality, or power, or capacity ; call it by which name we please.

It follows, therefore, in the simplest and most conclusive manner, that, since Space is acknowledged on all sides to *have the CAPACITY of receiving body*, this Space must be a *Being actually existing*, which has this CAPACITY as one of its inherent qualities ; I say, this follows, even taking the opponents of Space upon *their own ground* ; for, as to the real existence of Space, as proclaimed in our *direct apprehension of it*, I conceive it to be so imperative, as ought to have prevented all controversy with regard to it.

I shall conclude these collateral observations, with the following extract from the writings of Lord Monboddo ; which, when we consider the quarter from whence it comes, cannot, I think, but be peculiarly impressive.

“ It may be said, that *capacity* of forming ideas  
“ is of itself sufficient to constitute a Soul or In-  
“ tellectual Part. But there is nothing in nature  
“ that consists of capacity merely; for, though  
“ there be many things that have capacities, with-  
“ out having those things *actually* of which they  
“ are capable, there is nothing exists that hath  
“ not something in *actuality* and *energy*; for, if it  
“ wanted that, it would be really nothing.”—“ *An-*  
“ *tient Metaphysics.*” *Book 4. Chap. 2.*

With regard to this passage; the two propo-  
sitions which it contains appear to me to be in  
manifest contradiction of each other. The first  
one appears to assert that very doctrine of the  
Human Intellect which Mr. Harris has asserted  
after Aristotle, and which I consider to be plainly  
absurd. The other accords with the *general* view  
which Mr. Harris has taken of *capacity*; and with  
*sound reason*. With the former proposition, there-  
fore, we have nothing to do, here: but, assuredly,  
one would think, that, when Lord Monboddo  
wrote the latter, he could have had no thought  
that he had opposed the reality of Space upon the  
assumption of its being a MERE POTENTIALITY OR  
CAPACITY of receiving body. His rational and de-  
cisive language, in this latter proposition, is, that  
“ *there is NOTHING IN NATURE that consists of CA-*  
“ *PACITY MERELY;*” and he has thus, in the strong-  
est terms, virtually asserted that SPACE (*since IT*  
HAS A CAPACITY,) *is therefore ITSELF an AC-*  
TUAL REALITY.

## 5.

*Distinct Argument in proof of the existence of Space void of Matter.*

There is yet a consideration to be suggested with regard to the foregoing subject ; which could not have been adverted to in the preceding parts of this Section, without a risk of inducing a confusion in our views of it : which consideration, while it certainly affects the strict propriety of a very usual phrase in the writings of those who assert the reality of Space, at the same time presents a collateral argument of great innate force, in proof of the existence of SPACE VOID OF MATTER.

It is agreed, by both parties in the present controversy, that *Matter* is extended with three dimensions ; and by one of the parties alone, it is denied that Space exists with dimensions beyond the limits of matter. At the same time, it is equally admitted, by both sides, that an OMNIPOTENT BEING *exists*; who possesses a power of *making more matter exist*, if it should please him to will it.

Upon these principles, thus assumed by consent, I apprehend it follows, in the plainest manner, that the *actual reality of Space* VOID OF MATTER must be admitted, even by its opponents themselves ; because I suppose these philosophers will never deny, that, WHERE the existence of MATTER is *possible*, the existence of the POWER which can produce matter must be *actual*.



If so obvious an argument could require any illustration ; I would observe, that both parties in this controversy in the fullest manner admit, that the power of the Deity *is commensurate with and pervades every particle of matter*. They also admit that the Deity has created, and can annihilate matter. If therefore matter be supposed to have existed, and to be *now annihilated*; we, surely, cannot suppose that extent of Space which the Deity *had pervaded* to be annihilated along with it, because this would be to *contract the volume* which the Deity has previously been assumed to have pervaded or filled. If this Power of the Deity continue to exist ; it must certainly *occupy at least as much Space* as it occupied before the annihilation of matter, namely, the same dimensions which the matter possessed. To suppose that the annihilation of the extension of any part of matter, must be attended with the annihilation of the extension of that *commensurate Power which had supported that matter during its existence*; would be the plainest absurdity.

If however there be any persons who have yielded up their understanding, to the scholastic conceit that Mind is a thing which exists, BUT EXISTS NO WHERE ; I would here finally observe, that our judgment of the actual reality of Space does not depend upon any conception we may form upon this head ; because it is already rigorously shown, that Space, *being universally recognised AS A CAPACITY of receiving body, must be a capacity of some SUBJECT that HAD AN ACTUAL EXISTENCE*

BEFORE *it received body*. This may be called the **PHYSICAL argument** for the existence of Space, and the **MAIN argument**; because it concludes all parties. What I have suggested in the present subsection, as an argument from the nature of Omnipotent Power, or Mind, is one which, whatever force it possesses, (and I conceive this force to be irresistible) may have to operate, in some understandings, against a prejudice which it would be vain for reason to attempt to assail; and it is therefore fortunate that the main argument renders it wholly collateral and unnecessary to attack their prepossession upon this ground.

If it be admitted that the extension of our own Sensations has been proved, as the result of a rigorous analysis; it may be hoped that the gross absurdity of supposing any Mind to *exist no where, or to have no relation to place*, must speedily vanish from all philosophical investigations. And, along with this, I apprehend, it is impossible not to observe the appalling difficulties which the assumption of the inextension of the mind has continually heaped upon philosophical speculation, and which would be removed along with that chimera.

From what has been adverted to in this subsection; it would follow, that the ordinary phrase "PURE OR VOID SPACE" is unphilosophical: because no part of Infinite Absolute Space can be unoccupied by the Power of the Deity. Space actually exists with **DIMENSIONS**: *but it can never be EMPTY*.

## SECTION THIRD.

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### OF THE RELATIONS OF SPACE.

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THE manner in which Space or Extension has been treated by writers on the subject, appears in general to be indistinct and erroneous in an extreme degree; I mean with regard to its *Modes* and *Relations*, apart from any consideration of its real existence. This point, therefore, requires being adverted to, before we quit the general subject.

According to the best authors; *proper Space*, that is to say *Bulk or Volume*, is considered to be of the same kind with mere *Linear Extension*; and both these vastly different objects of thought have been confounded together under one name of *Space or Extension*, as being supposed to be genus and species of the same thing.

“Space (says Mr. Locke) considered barely in length between any two things, without considering any thing else between them, is called distance; if considered in length, breadth, and thickness, I think it may be called capacity. The term extension is usually applied to it, in what manner soever considered.”

“Extension and Figure” (says Dr. Reid, in his Second Essay, Chap. 19.) “are circumscribed parts

“ of space, and are the objects of geometry, a  
 “ science in which human reason has the most  
 “ ample field, and can go deeper and with more  
 “ certainty than in any other. But when we at-  
 “ tempt to comprehend the whole of space, and  
 “ trace it to its origin, we lose ourselves in the  
 “ search.”

The latter of these two passages furnishes an impressive occasion for remarking, that metaphysical writers are often supposed, by the general reader, to have expressed themselves very clearly, and perhaps luminously upon a subject, when, in point of fact, they have only darkened it by the most exceptionable statements. Dr. Reid was both a philosopher and a mathematician; and, besides these acquirements, he is with justice considered as having expressed himself very perspicuously upon subjects in general: and yet, I believe, it would be hard to find a passage, in any writer on this subject, that is more pregnant with both error and confusion than the one just now quoted.

In the First place; EXTENSION is *not a circumscribed part of Space*, because extension exists wherever Space exists. “FIGURE,” also, is *not a circumscribed part of Space*; because figure is *no part of Space at all*: it is nothing but a relation between some two or more parts of Space.

Secondly; When Dr. Reid talks of “*tracing the whole of Space to its origin*,” he cannot, I think, be understood according to the import of his expressions; because, the supposition of tracing

SPACE to *its origin* appears to me to be out of the question. I therefore suppose he must have meant only the tracing of our IDEA of Space to its origin ; which is infinitely a different thing from what he has expressed.

If any persons should incline to suppose, that the meaning of Reid may be readily apprehended, in the last case, notwithstanding its exceptionable mode of expression ; I would beg to point out, that this is far from being the case. The fact is, that the expression of Dr. Reid in this instance, by mere accident, *perfectly accords with the Berkeleian doctrine of Space and Extension*; and, therefore, *it might fairly* be construed, from it, that Dr. Reid supposed the "*origin of space*" to be no other than the *origin of our idea of it*. Besides which, we are also to recollect, that Dr. Reid was once a confirmed Berkeleian himself. The expression of Reid, therefore, is not merely vague and illogical, but it is also dangerous, in certainly tending to mislead a reader from that view of Space which Reid himself unquestionably entertained in his mature age, to another one which unhinges the whole fabric of human understanding.

But, to resume my argument ; VOLUMINOUS SPACE and FIGURE are two subjects which are so GENERICALLY *different*, that all the *lines or figures* in the universe, put together, could not be converted into a single element of *Volume*. In mathematical

phraseology, indeed, it is said, that the flow of a point produces a line; the flow of a line, a surface; and the flow of a surface, a solid. But all that the flow of a surface can do, is to *part off* a solid, in our apprehension; which solid existed absolutely and necessarily, and was as complete in itself, *before* we conceived it to be parted off, as afterwards; and the same may be said of surfaces, and lines.

The real nature of the subject, I apprehend is, that SPACE, being really and necessarily existent, is the eternal and necessary cause of the infinite number and variety of RELATIONS which exist between its own parts. But nothing can be more logically distinct, than a substantive reality and the relations between its parts; because the ONE altogether *creates and supports* the OTHER. Of this, however, I shall have to speak hereafter.

If this view of the matter be admitted; it follows that Mr. Locke has treated the subject as that of SPACE *and its* MODES, when, logically considered, it ought to have been treated only as SPACE *and its* RELATIONS: which is a vast error in the subject. And it also appears that Dr. Reid has fallen into the same error.

The thing which Dr. Reid calls "*a circumscribed part of Space,*" under the name of "*figure,*" can be nothing but A RELATION *between two parts of Space.* It seems, indeed, to be altogether overlooked by philosophers, in their general discussions, that *no part of Space can have any figure exclusively its own.* This point I have adverted to in a former chapter. When

we consider a sphere or a cube, even as a mathematical subject; it is *not a complete* view of it, but merely a partial one that is usually taken. The real fact is, that the figure of a cube is no more the figure of that solid which we call the cube, than it is the limit or figure of that part of Space which immediately surrounds or envelops the cube. The name of *figure*, indeed, is loosely given, by Geometricians, to a *whole bulk or solid*, as well as to *its mere limit or boundary*. Thus a Circle, or a Sphere, with its whole contents is called "*a figure*." And it seems to be in this sense that Dr. Reid has used the word figure. But, although this phraseology may be admissible, for the sake of convenience, in mathematical discourse; it certainly is vastly erroneous when we are treating metaphysically of Space and its Relations. *Figure*, in this last case, must be always distinguished from thing figured, as being its mere limit or boundary. Now, thus considered; no solid, nor surface, has any figure but what is *common* between it and the adjoining solid, or surface.

The RELATIONS of Space, therefore, form a Subject altogether of a DIFFERENT GENUS from Space itself. These Relations may be said to constitute an immense *Net*, whose meshes enclose and divide all the infinite elementary parts of space; any portion of which, whether greater or lesser, we may conceive to be *parted off*, in order to form a definite subject of ratiocination: but this NET *does not add at all to the magnitude of Space*; and, if it

were possible to conceive it away, this could not diminish the present actual extent of Space.

The bearings and importance of these strictures, will appear farther in the Chapter on Necessary Connection.



## CHAPTER VI.

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### OF TIME.

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### SECTION FIRST.

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PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.—REMARKABLE REFUTATION OF REID'S GENERAL THEORY OF IDEAS, IN HIS PARTICULAR DOCTRINE OF DURATION.

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**T**IME is, certainly, one of the earliest, and is perhaps the most universal, of all the objects of human thought, because it is an essential component element in all our thoughts whatever. The investigation of its nature, therefore, is logically indicated immediately after that of Space.

Previously, however, to entering upon the consideration of Time itself, there is a point, of material importance to our forming a just estimate of the doctrine of philosophers with regard to the general nature of our ideas, which presses for attention, and which therefore I shall introduce at this stage of the subject.

The thing to which I now allude, is a most re-

markable refutation which has been furnished by Dr. Reid, in his *particular doctrine of our idea of DURATION*, of his own *general doctrine of the nature of our ideas*.

In introducing this matter; I am unavoidably led also to notice, by the way, that the doctrine of Kant, with regard to our being essentially immersed in Space and Time, in which position it has already appeared I fully concur, appears to have been completely misapprehended by Professor Stewart, in the account which he has given of the views of the German Metaphysician. I shall therefore commence with the last mentioned of these considerations.

According to Mr. Stewart; the doctrine of Kant is, that "The notion (or intuition) of *Space*, as well as that of *Time*, is not empirical, that is, it has not its origin in experience. On the contrary, both these notions are supposed, or implied, as conditions in all our empirical perceptions: inasmuch as we cannot perceive nor conceive an external object, without representing it to our thoughts as *in space*: nor can we conceive any thing, either without or within us, without representing it to ourselves as *in time*."

"The notions of space and of time, however, although they exist in us *a priori*, are not" (according to Kant) "*innate ideas*. If they are anterior to the perceptions of our Senses, it is only in the order of reason, and not in the order of time.

“They have indeed their origin in ourselves ; but “they present themselves to the understanding “only in consequence of occasions furnished by “our sensations ; or” (in Kant’s language) “by our “*sensible modifications*. Separate from these modifications they could not exist ; and, without them, “they would have remained for ever latent.”

To this doctrine of Kant, the above account of which to the best of my recollection is corroborated by every other which has come in my way, I altogether subscribe ; and I consider “*Kant’s language*” with regard to it, especially in the use of the term “*sensible modifications*,” as being philosophically just.

The School of Reid itself has in the fullest manner recognised our sensations as being our *affections* : And What (it may be asked) is *an affection*, but a *modification* ? I think, also, that Professor Stewart has, by his own usage of it, somewhere recognised the term modification ; although I do not at this moment recollect the place. And, I may observe, that it is expressly entertained by Malebranche ; whose views, upon this part of our constitution, are unexceptionable. I do not therefore suppose that Mr. Stewart could have intended to find fault with the phrase in question.

But the principal matter for our consideration, here, is the *general construction* which Professor Stewart has put upon the above passages.

“The only important proposition” (says Mr. Stewart) “which I am able to extract from this jargon is, that, as *extension* and *duration* cannot be

“ supposed to bear the most distant resemblance to  
 “ any sensation of which the mind is conscious,  
 “ the origin of these notions forms a manifest ex-  
 “ ception to the account given by Locke of the  
 “ primary sources of our knowledge. This is pre-  
 “ cisely the ground on which Reid has made his  
 “ stand, against the scheme of Idealism; and I  
 “ leave it to my readers to judge, whether it was  
 “ not more philosophical to state, as he has done,  
 “ the *fact*, in simple and perspicuous terms, as a  
 “ demonstration of the imperfection of Locke’s  
 “ theory, than to have reared upon it a superstruc-  
 “ ture of technical mystery, similar to what is ex-  
 “ hibited in the system of the German metaphysi-  
 “ cian.”—“ *PHI. ESSAYS, Essay 2. Ch. 2. Sec. 2.*”

Now I am under the necessity to believe, that, in the above construction, Professor Stewart has given to the words of Kant, a meaning the very opposite to that which was either expressed or intended by him; for I conceive it was the most distant thing in the world from the mind of Kant, to assert that “ *extension and duration cannot be* “ supposed to bear the most distant resemblance “ to any sensations of which the mind is conscious.” On the contrary; I would ask, Has not Professor Stewart quoted, *with a peculiar mark of observation*, that our ideas of space and time are said by Kant “ *to have their origin in ourselves, in consequence of* “ occasions furnished by our *sensible modifications;*” and, that, “ *Separate from these modifications they* “ *could not exist?*” Besides this; I may remark, although I think it can hardly be necessary, that

in an account of the Philosophy of Kant just now by me, it is said, under the head of SENSE, that "In every object of nature that presents itself to our view, we distinguish MATTER and FORM. Now as we do not create this matter, it must consequently be *given*; but this necessarily implies that there is in our mind a faculty *capable of receiving the given matter.*"

I confess; the meaning attributed to Kant, by Mr. Stewart, in this instance, has always struck me as being very surprising; insomuch as to have led me, for a long time, to doubt my own view of it, and to refrain from offering any comment upon it. But I submit it here, for the judgment of the reader.

As for the eulogium bestowed by Professor Stewart upon Dr. Reid; I must, in the first place, remark, that "*the ground upon which Reid took his stand*" has been rigorously shown to be altogether fallacious and visionary; inasmuch as our sensations were shown, in their analysis, to be extended things. It was moreover, in point of fact, dark or unphilosophical in Reid to seek for the sources of our knowledge *in the nature of our idea of EXTENSION*; because I trust it has fully appeared that it was to be found only in an analysis of *our ideas of RELATION*. But, Secondly, I am now to observe, that Dr. Reid, *in his particular doctrine of our idea of DURATION*, has furnished one of the most remarkable self-refutations of his doctrine of *our ideas in*

*general*, that was ever exhibited in the writings of any philosopher;—a matter of such importance to the fate of his theory, that, perhaps, I could hardly render any greater collateral service to the subject than by stating it here, as I now propose to do.

I have, indeed, already pointed out this remarkable matter, in one, or more, of the evanescent tracts upon the subject of Perception which I published some years ago. And since it is of a complexion which I conceive does not admit of any controversy, I imagined the philosophical world might have looked for an acknowledgment of it. The thing in question will explain itself in the following animadversions.

In his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, Essay Fifth, Chap. Third, Dr. Reid has expressed his own view of the nature of our idea of Duration, in these words.

“ Mr. Locke draws some conclusions from his  
“ account of the idea of duration, which may serve  
“ as a touchstone to discover how far it is genuine.  
“ One is, that if it were possible for a man awake,  
“ to keep only one idea in his mind without any  
“ variation, or the succession of others, he would  
“ have no perception of duration at all ; and the mo-  
“ ment he began to have this idea, would seem to  
“ have no distance from the moment he ceased to  
“ have it. Now that one idea should seem to have  
“ no duration, and that a multiplication of that *no*

“*duration* should seem to have duration, appears to me as impossible as that the multiplication of “nothing should produce something.”

This stricture of Reid, upon Locke’s doctrine of *our idea of duration*, is so manifestly just, that it is altogether unanswerable. But let us observe what is the consequence.—Simply this, that Dr. Reid’s whole account of the *nature of our ideas in general* is overthrown and destroyed in the most complete and remarkable manner; like an enchanted castle, exploded on the development of a spell. This spell, in the present instance, consists in the fact, that after Dr. Reid had, with great labour and perseverance, first in his *INQUIRY*, and afterwards in his *ESSAYS*, erected his singular view of *our ideas in general* upon the essential principle that *not one of them bears any resemblance either to EXTENSION or to DURATION*; he, in an unlucky hour, in the Chapter above referred to, affirms, upon the most solid foundation, that *EACH of our SINGLE IDEAS must have DURATION*, or, else, that it would be *impossible for any multiplication of them to afford us an idea of duration!*

Whatever depth of impression this extraordinary matter is formed in itself to make, upon the mind of every person who pays the smallest attention to the subject, must however be not a little augmented upon its being here adverted to, that Professor Stewart, no less than Dr. Reid, has altogether overlooked the fatality it contains. The reader has

just seen, in an extract from the writings of Mr. Stewart, that he ascribes to *Kant* the doctrine, that “*extension and duration cannot be supposed to bear the most distant resemblance to any sensations of which the mind is conscious;*” and, that upon this he observes, with undissembled exultation, that “*This is precisely the ground on which Reid has made his stand against the scheme of Idealism.*” Can it then fail to produce the most decisive conviction of the visionary nature of the *General Theory of Reid*; and, equally of that of the view which Professor Stewart, with all the advantage of mature deliberation, has taken of Reid’s Theory; to find Mr. Stewart thus eulogising it, after it had been tumbled from its foundation and broken in shivers by its author himself by a process for which we can find no simile except in the story of the dreamer with his basket of glass?

I certainly am not naturally disposed to treat the speculations of these philosophers with levity; although I might, in this case, cite Dr. Reid himself, as furnishing me with a very full precedent. But when I have to remark, that the thing now stated has been placed in a situation to have been noticed, these five years past; that even public criticism has pointed it out, as a matter which imperatively demanded to be answered; and yet, that candour has not been excited to acknowledge it; I apprehend, every one who has the advancement of general truth at heart will judge, that the matter ought not now to be treated with any lenity. I confess, I place it here before my contemporaries with



a confident expectation, that, operating together with what has gone before, it cannot fail to produce a decisive effect, in turning the course of philosophical opinion, in a direction entirely different from that which has been prescribed for it in this Island, during the greater part of a century.

In closing the statement of this very remarkable affair; indeed, I consider it imperative to put the question:—Will Philosophers who profess to be labouring for the advancement of general knowledge, and for the elevation of the species, ultimately decline to express an open acknowledgment of the important truth thus pointed out, and of its manifest and sweeping *consequences*; Or, Will they *defend* the matter, by denying that Dr. Reid has refuted himself?

## SECTION SECOND.

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### OF THE NATURE OF TIME.

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**ALTHOUGH** Time is a component element in all our thoughts, and we are essentially immersed therein ; it is, nevertheless, the most difficult nature to comprehend of any that falls under our immediate cognizance. The celebrated answer of St. Augustin, when he was asked what Time is, forms the most natural reply to the question upon every occasion.

Time has been always compared to a *stream*, which flows continually, without either beginning or end : but the supposed analogy fails the moment we attempt to compare the two things together. A stream exists both *before* and *after* it has passed any fixed point in its course. But Time *does not* exist in either of these ways. And, to complete the paradox, it can be strictly demonstrated that it never exists in the present interval between the past and the future. Time is a Thing which *ever has* existed, but whose past existence *has ceased*; and, which *ever must exist*, but which existence is *not yet begun* : and it *never possesses any present existence, except by hypothesis*.

That Time is of the nature of A STANCE, OR SUB-STANCE, is what I apprehend to be altogether undeniable : because the only conception we are

able to form of substance, is that of a thing which *supports accidents*; and, certainly, all accidents must have Time for their support, that is for the possibility of their existence.

Time, therefore, instead of being comparable to *a stream*, may be considered as *a STANCE of a peculiar nature*, by which we and all other things are supported;—which stance has neither latitude nor longitude in any direction, but is situated, in one sense, *immediately under things*, and is moreover endowed with this wonderful nature, that, identically considered, *it continually crumbles away AND IS ANNIHILATED*, and is every moment *replaced by a new stance* of the very same kind, which had no existence any where the moment before.

To those philosophers who have supposed Time to be *nothing but a Relation*; it is here to be objected, that, agreeably with the nature shown to belong to Relation in the foregoing analysis, it consists in a distinct *Partition* between some TWO SUBSTANTIVE *things*, which latter, therefore, are necessary to its existence.—What, then, (it may be asked) are the SUPPORTERS of the supposed Relation of Time?—It will not be said that either *energies*, or *phenomena*, or *earths*, or *stars*, are the *supporters* of TIME; because it is manifest that Time supports *them*, and that without IT they could not exist. It is impossible to conceive Time to be dependent upon any thing, or not to be absolute: but if this dependence *could* be, and if Time were to fail; then we, and all our energies, should be as certainly and as immediately

annihilated, as if Space itself were exploded. In what sense, then, can Time be said to be deficient in the nature of *Substance*?

The most important logical consequence which attaches to Time, is the bearing it has upon the *Subject of Relation*. It is upon this account, chiefly, that I propose to enter into any farther treatment of it; and, it is to be observed that this involves some distinctions of a very subtle nature. The following considerations on the subject appear to demand our attention.

It was assumed in the analysis of Relation, in concurrence with the judgment of philosophers, and it is here to be rigidly insisted upon, that *all real relations demand the actual co-existence of their two causal supporters*. From this paramount maxim it manifestly follows, that *the parts of Time can have no relation between them*. The same, also, consequently holds with regard to *motions*, and to *actions* of every kind: It is impossible that their parts can support any real relation between them.

Yet mankind have a strong universal and inveterate prejudice, or belief, that the Relations of Time are as *real* as those of Space itself, or of any thing else whatever; and it may prove no easy matter to eradicate this prejudice. It ought, however, I humbly conceive, to be attempted; and the following suggestions are submitted with this view.

It must certainly be granted, that Time past and Time future are very different things, *individually*

*considered*; but it must at the same time be admitted, that *there can be no partition* between a thing that exists and a thing that *has ceased to exist*, because that which no longer exists can have nothing predicated of it *as existing*. It would be vain, in any case, to attempt to rebel against this primary canon of logic. At the same time it is certain that the parts of Time past no longer exist. How, then, can they possibly support any relation between themselves and present or future Times ?

If it be here asked ; Supposing the partitions of the parts of Time be not real, How then do we confidently view the parts or eras of Time, and likewise the events which successively take place in time, as being *concatenated*, and having the most indubitable real divisions between them ? To this I would reply, that I conceive the divisions in question *are most certainly real in one sense*; but they are *not of that nature* which forms the essence of relations of *Space*; and, therefore, when they are *supposed* to be assimilated to the relations between things which actually co-exist, this can only be done by a *fiction* or *hypothesis*.

In order to show how this may perhaps be brought about ; I would solicit the attention of the reader to what actually passes in his own mind, on many occasions whereon he is contemplating relations of Time between past events. When, for example, we are reading or reflecting upon a series of historical facts ; Do we not often consider this series as being analogous to a long thread, wrought

with a succession of knots, of various sorts, and at various distances, continued throughout its length? And, when we would compare the distance between any two of these knots, Do we not, for the moment, regard them as maintaining in one sense a *co-existence*, (that is a *co-existence in our logical apprehension*) although this fiction or illusion is but evanescent, and in reality we know that they never did both exist at the same time?

In like manner, when we look at the effigies of a line of ancestors, disposed round a room; we often, by a momentary fiction of the mind, reflect on the physical and moral characters of the originals, by comparing them, as we do their pictures, that is to say *in one continued line of supposed co-existence*. It is true, the illusion is momentary, and will not bear examination: but I apprehend it is undeniable that the understanding frequently proceeds in some such way.

That the human mind CAN figure to itself a *line of events*, like a series of co-existent pictures which take up a line of space in our view; is a fact which I think no person will deny: and, since the mind CAN proceed in this way; and the fact of its doing so explains a great difficulty; I apprehend we should be bound to suppose that it *does* follow this fictitious course, even if we should not find it always proceeding in the same manner. Along with this, also, it must be admitted, that a habit of so doing might beget in us a very different notion of the relations of Time, from that which we should have imbibed had we, from the beginning, been philosophically

aware, that since Time is every moment annihilated, it is simply impossible that its parts can ever support any real relation.

The real and general error in the present subject, I conceive is, that, when we think of any past Times, or Events, although we think they are *past*, we do not however advert to the strict fact, which is that they are *not only past but they are ANNIHILATED*: Or, at best, we never think of the *strict* LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES of that annihilation; on the contrary, we view the events in question as being PAST, only in the same sense that an *Inn upon a road is PASSED*; it being all the while in existence, although we have got beyond it.

By means of such representatives, or hypotheses, I suppose, we in imagination create all the Relations of Time; every one of which I conceive to be *fictitious, and not real*.

To attempt to deny this view of the subject, would certainly be to explode the whole foundation of Relative Truth, and to reduce human reason and its objects to one undistinguishable chaos of unmeaning thoughts: for, the moment we affirm a *real property* of a thing that has no existence, (that is, has NO REALITY ITSELF) we utter a most gross and deplorable contradiction, amounting to nothing but absolute jargon.

Upon the other hand; I conceive we are carefully to avoid misapprehending the nature of Time, or of the *Succession of Events*, by supposing that it has no reality.

That events *do succeed* each other, and that there is *an interval between every two of them*, agreeably to the obvious sense or understanding of mankind in general, is a truth which cannot for a moment be questioned. The only difference, therefore, between Relations of Time and Relations of Space, consists in this, that the *parts of Time*, being *continually annihilated* as soon as they have served for the STANCE of things at the moment, no longer exist to claim their due, that is to support one side of a relation or interval between themselves and any other part of succeeding Time. It would be as illogical, therefore, to say that Time, or Succession, *has had* no real existence; as it would be to affirm that a soldier never had any real existence because he has been killed in battle.

As a farther illustration of the consequence of the *annihilation* of time; I may observe, for example, that not only has the whole ERA of the ancient Greek Republics ceased to exist, but also the INTERVAL or *line of distance in time* between that era and the present epoch has ceased to exist. Thus, not only *one of the requisite Substantives or Supports* of the supposed relation of Time between ancient Greece and the present moment is *annihilated*, but also *that very line* which we call the *Relation or Interval between the two Times* IS ITSELF *annihilated*. How absurd, then, would it be to affirm any *real* relation between these two periods? But, assuredly, it would be *no less absurd* to affirm that these times



have not had a real substantive absolute existence, in that order of succession which we in ordinary assign to them.

The nature of Time, considered together with the momentous fact of our being essentially immersed in it, opens a door for a host of subtilities, which, at first sight, or with the help of a warm imagination, might appear to be very formidable: but I humbly conceive they may be found all very innocent, when properly examined.

As a result of the nature of Time, it may be asserted, for example, that we never are either in pain or in pleasure;—that we never think;—and, in a word, that we never *exist*. These, indeed, are very sounding propositions; and what is more, I fear they cannot in logical strictness be denied. But, to console us, we can assert, that ourselves and other things *have existed*, and that *we have thought*. And we have a most logical expectation that *we shall do the like in future*. This, I apprehend, is all that we have to desire, in order to be certified of all the realities about which we are concerned.

It may not be improper to repeat here, what I have suggested in the Seventh Section of the Chapter on Relation, namely, that when upon any occasion I speak of the *existence* of Time, the *existence* of Space, or the *existence* of any other Thing, I do not

use this word in its usual import or acceptation, to signify the *substantive nature*, or what is in ordinary called *the essence* of a thing. On the contrary; I consider *Existence* to be nothing but a *Relation*. Upon the present occasion, therefore, I am to observe, that, in this sense, **SPACE and TIME** exist with each other, that is, each of these *Absolute Substantive Natures* co-operate to support a relation of *congruence or compenetration* between them;—a relation which, indeed, is incomprehensible by our imagination, but which must be inferred as real.

## 2.

With regard to the fact that **Time** is one of the two essential bases of our ideas, or, that *each* of our ideas measures a portion of **Time**; it is so self-evident and indisputable, that it can hardly be necessary to dwell upon any illustration of it. As, however, it has happened that so eminent a philosopher as **Locke** has fallen into a hasty opinion to the contrary, and has thereby misled a large proportion of readers on the subject, it may not be altogether superfluous to advert to the matter, in order to point out the absurdity of his opinion with regard to it.

In the First place, therefore, it may be observed, as a fact which does not admit of question, that every one of our different sensations of **Touch, Taste, Smell, Sound, and Color**, takes up a portion of **Time**. And it is moreover to be re-

marked, that the *shortest ideas* of the different senses, take up *different lengths* of Time: as an example of which, it may be mentioned, for a fact ascertained by actual experiment, that our most rapid sensations of *Sound* measure about 160 to the *Second*, while those of *Color or Sight* are found to amount to nearly 320 in the same interval of Time.

I should hardly have thought it requisite to have touched upon this point, at all, had it not been to show the fallacy of a train of reasoning which has been advanced with regard to it, in our Dictionaries of Science; and which, therefore, may be supposed to have biased the minds of a great many readers on the subject. Those writers who have imbibed the opinion of Locke, that, if we could keep only one single uniform idea in our mind for any length of time, it would appear to us to measure no time at all; have endeavoured to support this opinion by the following argument. “In every train of thought, the appearance of any  
“one idea in the mind, occupies no more of the  
“extension of time, than a mathematical point  
“occupies of the extension of distance. Ten  
“thousand mathematical points added together  
“could make no part of a line, and ten thousand  
“ideas made to coalesce (if that were possible)  
“would occupy no part of that mode of duration  
“which is called time.”

This reasoning, certainly, does ample justice to Locke's view of the subject; and it places its absurdity in a very clear and conspicuous light. For, if each of our ideas occupies only a *mathe-*

*mathematical point of time*, it is self-evident that NO NUMBER of them could amount to a LINE of time, even though they follow distinctly.

Moreover, I must observe, Mathematical points in Space would be impossible, unless there were *an interval of space between every two points*. If, then, our ideas measure only *mathematical points of time*; What is there that measures the parts of time between every two of these points? It is certain we have *some* measure of the parts of time; and it is certain that our ideas are, *in some way or other*, this measure: but, if *each* idea does not measure a part, is it not grossly absurd to suppose that *any number* of ideas can measure a part? When to this is added the actual fact in experience, that *each* of our ideas, *in many different classes of them*, does *sensibly measure* a portion of time; must it not appear that all farther reasoning upon the subject would be words wasted without any occasion.

To conclude, however, I shall observe, that, if for a moment it be supposed that it is the *number* of our ideas, and not each idea in itself, that forms our measure of Time or Duration; this consequence must inevitably follow, namely, that a man who contemplates a hundred sensations of color in the *most rapid succession of the sparks of fireworks*, must think the Time they occupy to be precisely *as long* as that which would be taken up by his *hearing* a hundred of the *most rapid sensations of sound*; whereas it is proved by experiment that the one series must take up twice the time required for the other.

It has already appeared that the judgment of Dr. Reid, with regard to the nature of our notion of Duration, is perfectly concurrent with my own : and I apprehend this to be one of the simplest and safest points in philosophy.

## CHAPTER VII.

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OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXISTENCE  
OF SUBSTANTIVE FINITE BEINGS.

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### SECTION FIRST.

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OF THE KNOWLEDGE WE HAVE OF THE EXISTENCE OF  
OUR OWN SENTIENT SUBJECT.

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**T**HE Scope of the present Chapter, in point of fact, I suppose, involves a refutation of the Scepticism of Hume with regard to the existence of minds. But I consider that Scepticism to have been altogether of so revolting a cast;—to have depended so entirely upon the false and exploded hypothesis of *loose detached ideas*;—and to have been so completely refuted and pointed out to ridicule by Mr. Hume himself, in his selection of the term “**IMPRESSIONS** ;” that I should, certainly, not have deemed it worthy of being the subject of an appropriate speculation. The object of this Chapter, therefore, is, principally, to counteract a notion or opinion which has become very prevalent with our best writers on the subject, with regard to the

**KIND** of Knowledge we have of the mind's existence.

In a foregoing speculation ; it was hinted, that I apprehend we cannot acquire a *relative knowledge* of the existence of any *Substantive Finite Being*, unless we have previously had a *positive or intimate knowledge* of some *one individual* of the SAME GENUS. This view of the subject, if its truth should be ultimately established, must form a very important fact in the natural history of our knowledge.

It has already been insisted upon, that Intuitive Judgment has for its great object the relations between things ; of which things, *absolute substantive individual beings* form the PRIMARY GENERA, or GENUS. The nature of *Relations*, and the manner of our perception of them, having been considered ; it remains to investigate the manner in which we acquire the knowledge or conceptions we have of those *absolute beings* already mentioned, whether real or supposed, which are the causes or supporters of the most primary classes of relations.—From what has been advanced ; it will appear, that, strictly considered, our knowledge of *absolute beings* must take precedence of that of the *relations* which subsist between them ; and, therefore, the former of these two subjects ought to have been treated prior to that which I am now to examine. But I conceive that a very considerable advantage will attend the order of investigation which has been here adopted.

Having mentioned my reason for placing the present chapter out of its proper or logical order ; I proceed to the merits of the subject.

According to the opinion of some of our latest and most eminent metaphysicians, “ all the knowledge we have, either of Matter or of Mind, is “merely relative.”

This assumption I once subscribed to, as an accredited principle : which, also, I think, it must be granted, has a very specious appearance. But, having, in the course of the foregoing speculations, been determined, by the demonstrative nature of the Category of Relation, to have recourse to a more rigorous revise of the maxim that all our knowledge of MIND is merely relative ; I have thence been led to draw a very different conclusion.

If it should ultimately appear, that I am mistaken in that view of the subject which will now be submitted ; One very important consequence, I think, must follow : for, in that case, it must be confessed that the knowledge we *suppose we have*, of the existence of any absolute being that *is not actually a subject of our own consciousness*, is extremely obnoxious to the cavils of Scepticism. The truth of this remark has been manifested in the doctrine of Hume. And I apprehend that the paramount maxim of reason, as it clearly operates in the fundamental principle of all relation, must render the assumption of the *MERE relative knowledge of any absolute being* undeniably absurd ; and must stamp



the character of all such beings, for nothing more real than the objects of a dream or chimera.

I hardly need observe, that a knowledge of the existence of our own mind ;—that of the existence of all other human or finite minds ;—and that of the existence of the Omnipotent or Infinite Mind,—in so far as we can prove this last from arguments *a posteriori*; must all be involved in the consequences of this question.

The course which I propose to adopt in the present speculation, is, to endeavour to show that all the knowledge we have of the existence of *other minds*, besides our own, although it is certainly *relative*, is NOT MERELY *relative*, inasmuch as it is logically drawn from *analogy*, and is, in point of fact, founded upon *a positive or intimate knowledge* which we have of the existence of *our own mind*. Agreeably with this ; it will be argued, that, had we not *a positive or intimate* knowledge of the existence of our own mind, it would have been impossible for us to have acquired *a relative knowledge* of the existence of any other mind : Or, in other words, it is simply impossible for us to acquire A MERE *relative knowledge* of the existence of *any Mind*, or that of *any one of the two SUPPORTERS* of *any RELATION whatever*.

The investigation, I am sensible, will lead to distinctions which are not obvious ; especially, not without affording them an adequate share of attention. But I entertain a sufficient hope, that the reality of these distinctions will bear them through, in the estimation of those who will afford them a

due consideration. I also think they will present us with a view of some part of the structure of our thoughts, with regard to their objects, which will prove far from wanting in curiosity, or interest.

In the First place; it appears proper to state, in a more particular manner than I have yet done, the doctrine here intended to be controverted.

“ According to the common doctrine of our best “ philosophers ” (says Professor Stewart, *Phil. Essays*, Essay 1. Chap. 1.) “ it is by the evidence “ of *consciousness* we are assured that we ourselves “ exist. The proposition, however, when thus stat- “ ed, is not accurately true ; for our existence is “ not a direct or immediate object of consciousness, “ in the strict and logical meaning of that term. “ We are conscious of sensation, thought, desire, “ volition ; but we are not conscious of the ex- “ istence of the mind itself ; nor would it be pos- “ sible for us to arrive at the knowledge of it “ (supposing us to be created in the full possession “ of all the intellectual *capacities* that belong to “ human nature) if no impression were ever to be “ made on our external senses.”

I have already observed, with allusion to the doctrine contained in this passage, that a part of it, at least, is of a very specious aspect. We never know any thing at all of the existence of our own *mind*, except during the existence of our *thoughts or mental affections* : This is certain. But the question, I apprehend, nevertheless still remains, namely, Is

this knowledge *only* MERELY RELATIVE? Is the knowledge we have of the existence of our own mind, during the existence of any sensation, properly speaking “*consequent upon*” the sensation, in any sense which can warrant us logically to affirm that we know the existence of our mind *only from knowing that of the sensation?* Or rather, Do we not know our own existence, during any sensation, from *an intimate immediate knowledge* that we are the SUFFERER OR SUPPORTER of the sensation?

If it must be granted, as I confidently think it must, that, during the existence of any sensation, or thought, we have *an intimate knowledge* that we *suffer or support* that sensation, or thought; I contend, it is absurd to assume that our knowledge of the existence of our own mind is RELATIVE AT ALL. The knowledge we have of our own existence, in this case, must indeed be owned to be *dependent* and *only occasional*: and, therefore, there is, certainly, a good sense in which it may be said that this knowledge is “*consequent upon*” a sensation, or thought: but if we know our own existence (*as suffering beings*) at the *same time* that we know any sensation; and if we have this knowledge of our own existence *intimately*, and *not deduced in the way of inference* from the existence of the sensation, but held *collaterally* with the knowledge of the sensation, and felt *as primarily and as intimately as that of the sensation itself*; it must then be regarded as a most fallacious assumption to affirm that the knowledge we have of the existence of *our own* mind is *merely relative*.

There are several distinct grounds, upon which it may be urged that a fallacious view of the subject has been entertained by those philosophers who have assumed the mere relative knowledge of the existence of our own minds. It will be requisite, therefore, to consider the subject upon each of these grounds.

FIRST; it is to be observed, that the writers in question, (especially those of the School of Reid,) have duly recognised the *identicalness of the mind with its own sensations and other thoughts*. This is a fundamental principle, common to both the speculations of that school and to my own speculations. But, agreeably with this principle, it is an identical proposition that *so far as we know any of our own SENSATIONS POSITIVELY, SO FAR WE KNOW OUR MIND ITSELF POSITIVELY*. I apprehend we may challenge all the powers of human genius to deny the conclusion; after having once granted that our sensations are only certain "STATES" of the mind itself.

To grant, first, that our sensations are *affections or states* of the mind itself;—to say that "*the mind is the sentient being*;"—and, then, to say that we have a *positive knowledge of a SENSATION*, but *only a mere relative knowledge of OUR MIND which we have before assumed to be ONE SAME BEING with that state of it which we call sensation*; amounts to an absurdity so manifest, that I feel confident the propositions cannot both be affirmed.

It is owing to this actual identicalness of sensation or thought with the thinking subject itself, that it is extremely difficult, in the case of ANY ONE *sensation*, to *abstract* either of the two from the other, and make it a *distinct* object of our contemplation. This fact has afforded a ludicrous occasion, for an exquisite master of human nature, to depict the consequence which would follow if we were at any time to be wholly occupied by any one sensation. The dissolute Mariner, in the Play, answers to his own name in the following exclamation :

“ Oh touch me not :—I am not Stephano, but a  
“ cramp.”

From this consequence of the identicalness of our thoughts with our thinking principle, it will be found, that by far the fittest case, for the purpose of investigating the knowledge we have of the existence of our own mind, is any one of those wherein *we discern a Relation* : Because, in order to this act, it is absolutely necessary that we contemplate *some two Substantive Beings*, or two beings *regarded as Substantives*; and, in the act of so doing, we have a *distinct contemplation of ourselves*, that is of our Intellectual Principle, as *the being* who views the two substantives : and, supposing these two substantives to be *two of our own sensations or thoughts*, still, we have equally a clear and distinct view of our thinking Subject, as THE BEING WHO JUDGES BETWEEN these two sensations, or thoughts. Thus,

when I judge between *a blue* and *a yellow*, which are two of my own sensations ; I have the clearest view, and the highest possible certainty, that I myself am A THIRD BEING, distinct from either of the sensations : and if any person were to pretend, at that moment, to tell me that I have *a more intimate or immediate knowledge* of each of the *sensations*, than I have of *myself as the judge between them*, I should deem his assertion not worth a serious consideration.

It is upon this ground, quite independent of the refutation which Mr. Hume has furnished of his own doctrine, that I formerly, in a small tract which involved the subject, had occasion to observe, that the Scepticism of that Philosopher, with regard to the existence of minds, is founded upon the glaring fallacy of an assumption that IDEAS *are to be regarded neither as having any bond of connection between themselves, nor as being connected by the view of any supporting Mind*. Hence, the moment we advert to the fact that our mind is continually employed, literally speaking, *as a judge and umpire between its ideas*; in which judgments, therefore, it is impossible for the perverseness of any bias, to force the most hardy sceptic, to confound the JUDGE with the TWO IDEAS *between which the judgment is made*; all controversy concerning this point must be at an end, and we are left only to wonder at the shallowness of the assumption which once created such alarm in the minds of reflecting men.

The argument now adduced is not offered as original, although it is here somewhat developed :

for, though it forcibly struck myself, as indeed I think it might easily do any person, it is to be found, in substance, in the argument which Plato has made use of for the same purpose.

SECONDLY ; Although I consider the foregoing argument as, of itself alone, conclusive of the fact which I here desire to establish ; it appears that much satisfactory or collateral light upon the subject may be gained, from a comparison of the knowledge we have of the existence of *our own mind*, with that we acquire of the existence of the *minds of other men*.

The knowledge we have of the existence of the minds of those with whom we carry on a daily intercourse, is, undeniably, of the *very first kind* of that which can be called *relative*. Therefore, if it should be shown that there is a *difference* between this knowledge and that we have of our own existence ; philosophers will then be compelled to admit that the latter is **SOMETHING MORE** than a *mere relative knowledge*. If this position were established ; we might then with greater advantage investigate the internal evidence of the *precise nature* of the difference between the two kinds of Knowledge. With this view, therefore, I in the first place propose the following question.

When we are addressing speech, to any other person ; and when we in return attend to the answer of that person, that is, *hear his speech and mark his action* ; Have we, in this case, the

*same sort, or any thing like the same sort of evidence of the existence of his mind, that we had during our speech of the existence of our own ?*

For my own part, I am led so confidently to answer this question in the negative, that I think a contrary judgment will hardly be pronounced by any person of the least degree of reflection. And yet it would be necessary to answer it as confidently in the affirmative, in order to warrant the assumption that all the knowledge we have of Mind is *merely relative*. In assuming this last position; I am altogether borne out by that School whose doctrine I am here under the necessity to controvert. The following is the account of the matter which has been given by Dr. Reid.

“ A third class of natural signs comprehends those which, though we never before had any notion or conception of the thing signified, do suggest, or conjure it up, as it were, by a natural kind of magic, and at once give us a conception, and create a belief of it. I showed formerly, that our sensations suggest to us a sentient being or mind to which they belong.” *Inquiry into the Human Mind. Chap. 5. Sect. 3.*

Here I must stop, for a moment, to deny that our sensations “ *suggest* to us ” a sentient being or mind. I have already freely granted, or intended to grant, that our sensation presents to us the *first occasion* on which we gain a knowledge of the existence of our own mind : but, to say that the sensation *suggests* this knowledge, is no other than a *loose* unphilosophical expression of the fact, or,



in other words, it is not strictly true : On the contrary, it is the *intimate knowledge* which the mind has, *at the moment*, that it is a SUFFERER, that "SUGGESTS" to it the thought that it EXISTS. In the case of a *slight* sensation, such as that of ordinary color, or sound, it is to be observed, we *do not think of suffering*, although we actually DO *suffer* ; but, in the case of a *very painful* sensation, *our knowledge of ourselves*, AS A SUFFERER, will unquestionably be allowed to be *as intimate* as our knowledge of the *sensation* which we suffer. Hence, I know of no more logical assumption than the celebrated enthymeme of Descartes ; "*I think* (*i. e. I feel*), *therefore I* EXIST."

The object of the quotation just now given from the writings of Dr. Reid, however, is to show that he supposes NO DIFFERENCE, between the relative knowledge which he imagines we have of the existence of our own mind, and that of the minds of other men. If, indeed, he supposed *any difference* ; my object would then be attained, upon his own showing ; for it is certain that we have *as high a sort of relative knowledge* of the existence of the minds of other men, as any knowledge that can be called MERELY RELATIVE.

As for the fact that there is a *difference of some sort*, between the two kinds of knowledge which I have here insisted upon ; it appears to have been the opinion of Locke, and of other eminent philosophers since his time : although, I must observe,

the subject is far from having been investigated with rigor, or indeed with any tolerable degree of precision. I shall here quote one or two passages, in order to establish this fact.

It is said by Bishop Berkeley, in his "*Principles of Human Knowledge*," page 89, that "We comprehend our own existence by inward feeling or reflection, and that of other spirits by reason."

I do not quote this opinion, so far as regards our knowledge of *our own* existence, as being at all co-incident with that view which I entertain of the subject; but only to show that Berkeley considered our knowledge of our own existence to be *in some way* different from that which we have of the existence of *other spirits*.

The opinion of Locke is expressed in his *Fourth Book*, Chap. 3, § 21; wherein he says, "As to the Fourth sort of our knowledge, viz. of the real actual existence of things, we have an intuitive knowledge of our own existence; and a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of a God: of the existence of any thing else we have no other but a sensitive knowledge, which extends not beyond the objects of our senses."

Farther on, in § 26, he shows that he had not included our knowledge of the existence of the *minds of other men*, in the above account; and, that he held this knowledge to be in some way contradistinguished from, and dependent upon, the intuitive knowledge we have of our own existence. For he says, "That there are minds or thinking beings in other men as well as himself, every man has

“ a reason, from *their words and actions*, to be satisfied.”

Finally; He concludes the *Ninth Chapter of the same Book*, in these words; “ Nothing can be more evident to us than our own existence: I think, I reason, I feel pleasure and pain; can any of these be more evident to me, than my own existence? If I doubt of all other things, that very doubt makes me perceive my own existence, and will not suffer me to doubt that. For if I know I feel pain, it is evident I have as certain perception of my own existence, as of the existence of the pain I feel: or if I know I doubt, I have as certain a perception of the existence of the thing doubting, as of that thought which I call doubt.”

This reasoning of Locke co-incides so entirely with my own view of the subject, that perhaps I could not offer any stronger assertion of it. I humbly conceive it to be altogether unanswerable. But if this view of the matter be admitted, it must be altogether unphilosophical to assume that we have a positive knowledge of our Sensations or Thoughts, and only *a mere relative* knowledge of Ourselves as *the beings which suffer or support* these thoughts.

Locke, indeed, finishes his Chapter with saying, that “ In every act of sensation, reasoning, or thinking, *we are conscious to ourselves* of our own being; and, in this matter, come not short of the highest degree of certainty.” But, with regard to this, I must object against his judgment; and must concede to the philosophers whose opinion is

herein opposed, that there appears to me to be a great difference between that *consciousness or knowledge* we have of any *sensation, or thought*, and that which we have of *ourselves* AS *the supporting subject* of that thought: although I insist, that *in point of intimacy*, we KNOW the LATTER, *if any thing*, BETTER OR MORE INTIMATELY than we know the FORMER.

It is THIS DIFFERENCE, which, I conceive, has given rise to the supposition that the knowledge we have of the existence of our own mind is *merely relative*. But I confidently hope this latter assumption will have to be regarded as being profoundly fallacious; as it certainly is extremely dangerous, or, rather, decidedly destructive of the solidity or logical foundation of our belief in the existence of our own mind, or in that of any other being, always excepting any reason *a priori*.

## SECTION SECOND.

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### OF THE KNOWLEDGE WE HAVE OF THE EXISTENCE OF OTHER FINITE MINDS.

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IN this Section I would contrast the view which has been taken of the knowledge we have of the existence of our own thinking subject, during any sensation or other thought, with that we gain of the existence of the mind of any other human being at any time; and observe the vast distinction there is between the two.

We never infer the existence of *any other* mind, except as being that Relative Subject which is usually called A CAUSE: And, then, we draw our inference merely upon perceiving some *phenomenon*, which *we suppose* to be an EFFECT. Thus we see a man move in a certain manner; and so perform actions in which we perceive design. We consequently infer the existence of a rational mind, like our own: and the foundation of this inference is merely the recollection of our having acted in a similar manner, upon a similar occasion. But, I would ask, Have we, in this, or in any other such case, the SAME SORT of *evidence* that there exists another rational mind performing certain actions in our view, that we have had of the existence of our own mind while we were engaged in a similar

way? I think, no person will answer this question in the affirmative: And yet, if it be admitted that we have a different and superior evidence of our own existence in such case, from that which we have of the existence of any other person, it must be absurd any longer to assume that all the knowledge we have of the existence of MIND is “MERELY RELATIVE:” for it is acknowledged, by all parties who admit the existence of minds at all, that the knowledge we have of the existence of the minds of *other men*, is the *highest possible kind of mere relative knowledge that can be imagined*. It is considered by Professor Stewart, that this relative knowledge is quite equal, in the certainty of its evidence, to that of *consciousness itself*; which last, he justly observes, has been usually looked upon as being paramount to every other authority.

And, here, if the question were merely, Whether, or not, we can *as safely confide* that another mind is the cause of any perceived action, as we can that our own mind was the cause of a similar action, in similar circumstances? I should be ready to grant, that I think we *may as safely confide*. But, that the evidences, in the two cases, are of DIFFERENT KINDS; and, that we MIGHT, *even, in some cases, be DECEIVED with regard to ONE of them, but NEVER with regard to the OTHER*; is what I apprehend to be a truth altogether incontrovertible: the one being an *inbred, intimate, and immediate knowledge of ourselves, as a being who acts from a motive known with equal intimacy and certainty*; the other, a mere INFERENCE, *founded upon nothing but*

ANALOGY, (although indeed *a very close and familiar analogy*) that is upon a recollection that we ourselves have acted, and always would act, in a similar way. In the case of our own mind; we should know its existence equally well, without ever making *any reference* of its actions to the actions of any other mind: but, I will venture to believe, we never could have conceived such a notion as that of the existence of any other mind, except by comparing certain perceived actions, or phenomena, which we know we have *not* produced, with other phenomena which we are convinced we *have* produced; and, by INFERRING that the former phenomena are EFFECTS OF A CAUSE ANALOGOUS to that which we know produced the latter. Will any person, then, in this case deny that the knowledge we have of our own existence, as Sentient Beings, is antecedent and superior; and, that which we have of the existence of other minds is consequent and inferior?

In order to furnish an illustration of the truth of this reasoning; I repeat the remark, that, although a series of rational actions must be referred to *mind*, and to *reason*, as its cause; yet, we *might* be much mistaken in referring it to any *perceived being* to whom we confidently *ascribe* it. Thus an Automaton exactly imitates the rational actions of a man, in a game of chess. And there can be no dispute as to the possibility that a similar piece of mechanism might be contrived, which should imitate a series of sounds, like those of a rational

speech. Now the energy exerted in such a speech, or action, must indeed be referred to the contrivance or reason of the INVENTOR of the machine: but, certainly, *it would not be a quality of that thing in which it would appear to reside.* In this way, therefore, it is manifest, the Deity might actuate the Bodies of men, although they had no minds within them; and at the same time *without our having any knowledge, or the least suspicion,* of the real fact. But, I ask, Would it be possible to impose this deception upon us with regard to the existence of *our own* minds? Surely, if any thing be certain, we are certain of this, that we know when we are the *voluntary agent*, in the case of any motion of our body, and when we are not so: Of this, we have the same certainty whether we be supposed to be the *real efficient* of our own bodily actions or not. But we can have *no such* certainty in any case of the actions of a body actuated by any other mind. Whence, then, comes this difference; but that we know the existence of our own mind INTIMATELY AND IMMEDIATELY, whereas we know that of any other mind *only from* AN ANALOGICAL INFERENCE drawn from the knowledge we have of our own mind?

In his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, (Essay 5th, Chap. 2.) Dr. Reid has expressed himself upon the present subject in the following terms.

“Indeed the attributes of things is all that we distinctly conceive about them. It is true, we



“conceive a subject to which the attributes belong ;  
“but of this subject, when its attributes are set  
“aside, we have but an obscure and relative con-  
“ception, whether it be body or mind”—“What  
“is it we call mind? It is a thinking, intelligent,  
“active being. Granting that thinking, intelli-  
“gence, and activity, are attributes of mind, I want  
“to know what the thing or being is to which these  
“attributes belong? To this question I can find no  
“answer. The attributes of mind, and particu-  
“larly its operations, we know clearly, but of the  
“thing itself we have only an obscure notion.”

When the opinion asserted in this passage is applied to the imaginary subject called MATTER ; it is a very just one : and so has fared of that subject ; because, since we ourselves are shown to be possessed of that quality of *Extension* which was all along supposed to characterise MATTER, it follows, undeniably, that MATTER must be set down for a chimera. When, also, Dr. Reid’s opinion is applied to OTHER MINDS, *besides our own*, it is at least so far just, that the notion we have of those minds is relative ; but I do not think it *either* “obscure” or *merely relative*,—because *its foundation is in the intimate knowledge we have of the existence of our own mind*. But farther, if Dr. Reid had asked me, concerning my own mind,—“*What the thing is?*” I would have answered, *It is the thing that SUPPORTS my THOUGHTS, and which I call myself*. And, if any man would pretend to tell me that my knowledge of myself, AS THAT SUPPORTER, is only *an obscure notion*, or is

at all more obscure than my knowledge of the thoughts which I do support ; I should revolt from such an outrage of my most internal feeling.

The only kind of objection which I think Dr. Reid, or any advocate of his view of the subject, could have in contemplation, in the question concerning our knowledge of our own existence ; must be from supposing that an *immediate*, or what he means by a *positive Knowledge of our own Sentient Subject*, ought to be like the positive knowledge we have of *a sensation or thought*. But against this I must urge, in the *First* place, that the knowledge we have of *ourselves*, AS A SUFFERER OR SUBJECT, is TOO INTIMATE, or rather TOO WHOLE, to admit of our making OURSELVES *our proper OBJECT*, as we do a *Sensation or other Thought*. And, *Secondly*, It is obvious that every thing which we *can* view objectively, like a sensation, is *only a QUALITY*, and stands manifestly *contradistinguished* from our SUBSTANTIVE BEING. This is freely admitted by Dr. Reid himself ; and, therefore, it would be sinking our substantive nature to the level of one of our qualities, if we *could* take that sort of positive view of our own Subject which this writer observes we cannot do.

Here I am led to remark the affectation of some philosophers, who refuse to apply the word *substance* to the *mind* ; I suppose because, forsooth, it is desired to deny that there is any one point of ANALOGY between MIND and that external agent which has been all along *supposed to be DEAD MATTER*. But, against this affectation I

must urge the undeniable fact, that the *only conception* we have of SUBSTANCE is that of a thing which SUPPORTS ACCIDENTS; and it will not be disputed that *sensations and other thoughts* have as good a claim to the appellation of ACCIDENTS, as any other qualities with which we are acquainted.

From what has been advanced; it becomes evident by what means the mind gets to form its relative notions of things.

In the First place, as I have already observed, it has an ARCHETYPE of the thing to be conceived, in the intimate knowledge it has gained of *one individual of the GENUS in question*: Thus the mind of any man, during the time he is thinking, has an *intimate knowledge of ITS OWN EXISTENCE*, as well as a positive knowledge of the existence of its *sensations or other thoughts*; and it, from time to time, *discerns the relations between its own thoughts and certain phenomena*,—namely, *its own external actions*. Thus possessed of an archetype for its conceptions; the mind is called upon to observe *other and similar phenomena or actions*, which it cannot refer to itself as their cause; and the consequence of this is, that it supplies the notion of a *Correlative Subject, or Supporter of one side of those actions*, from *taking itself and its own actions as a PATTERN*. In this way, the mind, upon attending to any set of rational phenomena, not produced by itself, readily infers the existence of *another*

*mind*, whose existence (to use the language of Dr. Reid) it had “*never before thought of*,” and of which, I will venture to add, it could have had no conception. But this, I assert, it does only from having had *a previous* POSITIVE OR INTIMATE *knowledge of Mind AS A GENUS of thing existing*, in the knowledge it had of its own individual existence.

If we for a moment contrast this view of the subject, with that which has been taken by Dr. Reid; the result I think cannot fail to strike us very impressively.

If, in the first place, we consider his assertion, that the notion of our own mind itself is “*only an obscure notion* ;” we may surely be permitted to ask, *Of what other thing* can we be said to have a *more clear or vivid knowledge* ? And here I am to observe, that both his assertion and our present argument are *limited strictly* to our notion or knowledge of our own mind AS THE SUFFERER OR SUPPORTER *of its thoughts* ; and cannot at all extend to any *consideration* of WHAT OTHER *nature we possess, besides that of* A MERE SUPPORTER OR SUBJECT ; in which case, I think the ground or reasoning which has been asserted on the subject by Mr. Locke, and which I have done little more than endeavour to exemplify by a collateral statement of my own sentiments with regard to it, is altogether solid and unanswerable.

But, Secondly ; With regard to the assumption

that all our knowledge of Mind is "*merely relative*;" I must remark, it has been observed by Dr. Reid himself, that *a relative knowledge of a thing is no knowledge of that thing at all*. Upon this therefore I would ask (I conceive with peculiar effect), Was it Dr. Reid's intention to assert that we have *no knowledge of our own mind at all*? I apprehend it is impossible that his different assertions, when brought together, can lead to any other conclusion. But, if he had viewed the matter in this light; I feel satisfied he would never have furnished Universal Scepticism with such a butt to shoot at.

IN FINE; I may venture to affirm, without fear of contradiction, that (with the exception of any argument *a priori*) we have no knowledge, or notion, of the existence of *any other mind* beside our own, *except from ANALOGY*. And, I may venture with equal confidence to believe, no philosopher will pretend that the knowledge we have of *our own* existence, during any sensation or thought, *is from ANALOGY*. The two kinds of knowledge, therefore, are infinitely different. The phraseology of relative knowledge is this; that *we know* WHAT *a thing* IS, *from what it* DOES. Now, we know what our own mind IS, AS A DOER, OR A SUFFERER, *at the same time and as immediately* as we know WHAT IT DOES: but we NEVER KNOW what ANY OTHER MIND IS, or even so much as *whether it* EXISTS, except from KNOWING *what*

OUR OWN *mind* IS *and what it* DOES, and then INFERRING that certain phenomena, which we see taking place around us, *must be the effects of* SOME POWER ANALOGOUS to that of *our own mind*.

I strongly apprehend, that the difference between these two kinds of knowledge is not only real, but vast. And, if I have been led into repetition with regard to the distinction which has been thus insisted upon, I trust this proceeding will not be thought redundant, because the consequences, whichever way we shall decide, are certainly of the very last importance to the truth or certainty of human knowledge.

## CONCLUSION.

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THE foregoing Subjects having unavoidably extended the Volume to its present size ; and the last Chapter forming, I conceive, the most proper one at which a pause ought to intervene, in the matter which I had from the beginning intended to investigate ; I have thought it expedient to postpone two or three topics, which I had fully designed to introduce in the present publication, and one of which is repeatedly mentioned in the course of it. Of this I have given notice in the preface ; at the same time intimating that the Subjects of the present Volume have *no dependence* upon the matter alluded to : and, since the whole of what was intended could not have been got into any convenient size ; I regret it the less from the nature of what has gone before, and from the consistency which I think will follow if I should be enabled to add, to the Subjects in question, some other speculations which I had distantly contemplated. As it is ; there is much to undergo judgment : none of which I had hazarded upon any former occasion, except a part of what forms the analysis of perception. If therefore I should not be thought, by competent judges, to have succeeded in any

degree in my endeavours after general truth ; I have already risked far too deeply, and the sacrifices have been sufficiently great.

In these circumstances ; I shall not attempt any recapitulation, or comment upon what has gone before, except in the instance of a very few and brief observations.

The First remark which I would impress upon the recollection of my readers ; is with regard to the evidence we have, in the analysis of perception, of the Microcosmic nature of the **HUMAN MIND** : and, hence, the direct legitimate conclusion that *Extension, or Scenic Representation*, wheresoever it exists, must be *an attribute of MIND*. **COLLATE-**  
**RALLY** with which conclusion, and quite *independent of it*, we are also logically bound to embrace this other, namely, that, *all the purposes of a supposed Material World* being manifestly answered by the *Scenic Representations of the Mind itself*, it becomes, upon this distinct ground alone, absurd to assume the existence of a **WORLD OF DEAD MATTER**, for which *no possible USE can be assigned*. These two distinct inferences form, I apprehend, as logical and certain a foundation, as any philosophic mind can require, whereon to rest a full conviction, that the external unperceived cause of our extended sensations is no other than the **ENERGY, or rather the VARIED ENERGIES, OF SOME SPIRITUAL AGENT**. The effects of this last conclusion,



upon the great foundation and sole prop of Atheism, have been pointed out in the beginning of the Volume, and are too manifest to require any remark in this place.

The only other consideration which I would suggest for attention, is the fact of the *transference* of the Subject of Perception, from being all along supposed a mere Physical Subject, to a branch of Demonstrative Science, strictly speaking; and the *consequences* of this fact, from the *nature or stability of the knowledge we have by it*.

To illustrate this; I observe, that almost any Theory in *Physics*, of which we have a knowledge, is liable to be impeached by an *extension* of our physical knowledge: That which appears to be the *real and precise fact* to-day, may possibly be found to be displaced by some farther fact to-morrow. Hence *all Physical Theories*, in every branch of Science, are liable to suffer greater or lesser degrees of *mutation*. But in the case of *Necessary Relations between our Ideas*, such as the Subject of Perception has been shown to be in its analysis, the case becomes infinitely different: for, unless it can be shewn that there is a flaw in any of the *four self-evident propositions* which compose the General Laws of Vision, it is manifest that the *Laws of Perception* are as ETERNALLY IMMUTABLE as the *Elements of Geometry*. Unless, therefore, either of the propositions themselves be found *self-*  
*Hu. Mi.* 2 P

*evidently false*, the matter cannot be supposed liable to any of those mutations which have been, in a greater or lesser extent, the common fate of all physical knowledge.

These observations are not offered at all in disparagement of physical science: but only to place what I apprehend to be an insuperable bar against what would otherwise be a very natural and justifiable surmise with regard to any new theory of Perception, namely, that however well it may appear, it can only have its day, and must, in the course of events, be superceded by some other, which, in its turn, must prove equally mutable. I humbly conceive, that if the Subject of Perception be admitted to its place as a branch of Demonstrative Science, which I confess I have no doubt it must, it cannot then be thought liable to the prophetic forecast which I have here adverted to: And I am led to point this out, on account of the weight of those consequences which must depend upon our having a perfect reliance on it.

I think, I may with expectation point out to every mind that is at all tinctured with science, the infinite difference there is, between having the knowledge we possess of our own nature and expectations founded, like a mathematical theorem, upon a discernment of *necessary relations between our ideas*, and the supposition heretofore invariably entertained of its being derived from a MERE FACT, *exhibited to our imperfect senses*, and always liable to incalculable misconception.

## APPENDIX.

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THE intention of the present article, is to advert to an argument which has been advanced by Dr. Reid, against the reasoning of Hume, with regard to the nature and place of the Objects of our Perception. No proper opportunity has presented itself of noticing this discussion in the course of the foregoing Volume, without going somewhat out of the way: and yet I consider the exposition of its real merits as being requisite, or at least desirable, in order to complete the view which I deemed it necessary to take of the doctrine of Reid previously to the final statement of my own view of Perception.

In the *Fourteenth Chapter* of his *Second Essay on the Intellectual Powers*; Dr. Reid employs eight or ten pages of his work, in a very laboured, and I also think a very surprising attempt, to disprove a simple and conclusive argument of Hume against the assumption of our perceiving external objects. The anxiety which Reid manifests upon this occasion, and some particular expressions which he drops with regard to it, plainly evince that he was much afraid of the effect of the argument of Hume. And the means of defence which he has adopted against it, especially when we reflect that he was a mathematician and ought to have understood the nature of his own reasoning, appear to me to furnish another striking instance of the overwhelming force of prejudice.

In animadverting upon the opinions of Hume, in the place referred to, Dr. Reid says, “ He tells us farther, that philosophy teaches, that the senses are unable to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object. Here, I still require the reasons that philosophy gives for this ; for, to my apprehension, I immediately perceive external objects, and this I conceive is the immediate intercourse here meant. Here I see nothing that can be called an argument. Perhaps it was intended only for illustration. The argument, the only argument follows.”

“ The table which we see, seems to diminish as we remove farther from it ; but the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration : It was therefore nothing but its image which was presented to the mind. These are the obvious dictates of reason.”

The last passage, we are to observe, is the argument of Hume, stated by Reid : And the following is the attempt to refute it, which Dr. Reid has furnished to the world.

“ To judge of the strength of this argument” (says he) “ it is necessary to attend to a distinction which is familiar to those who are conversant in the mathematical sciences, I mean the distinction between real and apparent magnitude.”

He then proceeds to explain that—“ Apparent magnitude is measured by the angle which an object subtends at the eye. Supposing two right lines drawn from the eye to the extremities of the object, making an angle of which the object is the subtense, the apparent magnitude is measured by this angle. This apparent magnitude is an object of sight, and not of touch. Bishop Berkeley calls it visible magnitude.”

This reasoning against the argument of Hume, is maintained by Dr. Reid through several pages, with repeated appeals to *mathematical science*, and in a tone which, to those who do not understand the subject, must certainly appear to be altogether unanswerable ; and the ordinary reader is left only to conclude, that the argument of Hume is swept away by an irre-

sistible power of mathematical truth. But I will venture to believe that the argument of Reid exhibits only an extent of sophistry that is altogether unaccountable, when we consider that the author of it was in reality a mathematician.

In proof of the matter; I am to observe, in the first place, that the phraseology in use with regard to this subject is extremely ambiguous; and that care must be had, to make allowance for this ambiguity. This being understood: the following are what I humbly conceive to be the real merits of the subject.

*First.* The *real magnitude* of any external object, and what is CALLED *its apparent or visible magnitude*, are, certainly, two very different things. The Visible Sun appears to be only a few inches in diameter; while the Sun itself is in reality between eight and nine hundred thousand miles across.

*Secondly.* The visible magnitude or diameter of any body, is MEASURED by an *angle*, agreeably with what Dr. Reid has asserted.

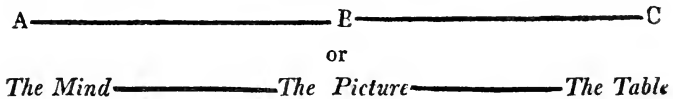
*Thirdly.* But it is a most unfounded assumption to suppose, because we MEASURE any visible magnitude by an ANGLE, (which we do in order to ascertain what *relative size or proportion it bears to any other apparent magnitude*), that therefore we PERCEIVE visible magnitude by an ANGLE. Contrary to this; it is beyond the reach of controversy, that EVERY VISIBLE MAGNITUDE which we ever PERCEIVE, is the REAL MAGNITUDE of a certain AFFECTION of a portion of the optic nerve, at the bottom of the eye. But, because this affection, or picture in the eye, is OCCASIONED by some action of an external distant object, such as the Sun, or a Table, or any other external Body, or Energy, therefore it is CALLED the APPARENT MAGNITUDE of the EXTERNAL OBJECT;—whereas, in reality, it is NOT ANY MAGNITUDE of THAT OBJECT AT ALL, and, indeed, has NO CONNECTION whatever with it.

Among the repeated observations which Dr. Reid urges, in support of his own argument, is the following one. “ Let the  
 “ table be placed successively in as many of these different  
 “ distances, and different positions, as you will, or in them all ;  
 “ open your eyes and you shall see a table precisely of that  
 “ apparent magnitude, and that apparent figure, which the  
 “ real table must have in that distance, and in that posi-  
 “ tion. Is not this a strong argument that it is the real table you  
 “ see ?”

To this argument, however, I offer the following answer. Dr. Reid certainly knew, (if he had recollected) that, while the OUTER OPTIC ANGLE is *subtended* by the EXTERNAL TABLE, there is necessarily an INNER *optic angle* to be *accounted for*; and he must have known that this INNER *optic angle*, (whose size necessarily depends upon that of the OUTER *one*) *subtends a much smaller thing* than is subtended by the outer angle, and that *this smaller thing* is AN IMAGE OR PICTURE of the table marked out upon the BOTTOM OF THE EYE. Now it is self-evident, that, as the table moves farther off, the OUTER *optic angle* must LESSEN ; and, hence, of necessity, the INNER *optic angle* also must LESSEN : because the rays of light which form both the angles in question may be compared to a *pair of sheers* that are partly open ; and, therefore, when one angle is made to lessen, the other of necessity lessens also. In other words ; the REAL MAGNITUDE of the IMAGE OR PICTURE at the bottom of the eye, will be reduced *in proportion* as the rays of light proceed from the external object *with a smaller angle*. What, then, becomes of the *mathematical reasoning* upon which Dr. Reid has laid so much stress, for disproving the argument of Hume ?

There is no philosopher who will for a moment deny, that the SENTIENT PRINCIPLE in Man is *somewhere near the INNER END of the TRUNK OF THE OPTIC NERVE*. And it was known and expressly acknowledged by Dr. Reid, that all objects of Sight have a *picture of themselves* formed upon the *bottom of the eye*, that is upon the *expansion of the Optic Nerve*. These facts being here assumed ; the POSITION of the SEN-

TIENT PRINCIPLE, and the PICTURE *in the bottom of the eye*, and the EXTERNAL OBJECT which occasions this Picture, must be that of three separate things nearly in a straight line; but we must assume them as being strictly in a straight line, because it is certain that by sight the Mind can perceive *only through the line of the Optic Trunk*. Let these three things, therefore, be represented by the following letters, viz.



Now, with regard to this disposition; I would ask any person, How is it possible the *Mind* at A, should perceive the *Real Table* at C, when the *Picture of the Table* stands between them at B and forms an impenetrable CURTAIN which must of necessity *veil* any object at C.?

Besides this conclusive argument from POSITION; I would ask, since it is not denied by Dr. Reid that images of things are formed on the bottom of the eye, Upon what ground could he possibly overlook that the IMAGE must have been intended, by its All-wise Maker, for a USE; and how could he doubt that this use is that of a MEDIUM? If any one thing in the world can be supposed to be meant as the REPRESENTATIVE of another; I imagine it must be admitted that the picture formed in the bottom of an eye is that thing.

The real truth of the matter, I trust, now stands perfectly manifest, that what is CALLED the APPARENT MAGNITUDE of a table, or of any other external object, is nothing but the REAL MAGNITUDE of so much of the surface of the bottom of the eye as is occupied by the *image or picture* which the presence of that external object OCCASIONS. But this reasoning, although I trust it is founded upon the most solid principles; and its result is perfectly true *in so far as to deny the possibility of our ever perceiving ANY EXTERNAL TABLE, or OBJECT*; is

yet *not ultimately true* ; for we have a farther and a most important step to go, beyond this.

The *ultimate* truth is, that we no more perceive any picture that is formed in the bottom of the eye, than we perceive the real table, or other external object that lies at a distance without the eye. The real fact, we know, *must be*, although we know not by what process it happens, that *some action* must take place *through the whole length of the optic trunk*, SUBSEQUENT to the formation of the PICTURE at the bottom of the eye. The Picture, or Image in the Eye, therefore, is never an object of our perception: And all that we ever perceive, in Vision, is *an assemblage of sensations of colors* in the MIND ;—between which colors we intuitively discern certain RELATIONS of CONTRAST and of LOCALITY OR EXTENSION ; and to which *relations* we give the name of *visible figures or outlines*.

WITH regard to the ultimate step just now adverted to, namely, that by which we quit the LAST OPTICAL fact that is known, which is the picture in the bottom of the eye, and find ourselves at once got into the regions of CONSCIOUSNESS ; I am obliged here to remark, that Dr. Reid has animadverted upon the opinions of other philosophers with regard to it, in a manner which evinces a strong wish, (although I think with the most unhappy result,) to show that they have proceeded illlogically.

In the Chapter already quoted ; He says,—“ I know that  
 “ Aristotle and the Schoolmen taught, that images or species  
 “ flow from objects, and are let in by the senses, and strike upon  
 “ the mind ; but this has been so effectually refuted by Descar-  
 “ tes, by Malebranche, and many others, that nobody now pre-  
 “ tends to defend it. Reasonable men consider it as one of the  
 “ most unintelligible and unmeaning points of the ancient system.  
 “ To what cause is it owing that modern Philosophers are prone  
 “ to fall back into this hypothesis,” as if they really believed  
 “ it ? For of this proneness I could give many instances besides  
 “ this of Mr. Hume ; and I take the cause to be, that images in



“ the mind, and images let in by the senses, are so nearly allied,  
 “ and so strictly connected, that they must stand or fall together.  
 “ The old system consistently maintained both: But the new  
 “ system has rejected the doctrine of images let in by the senses,  
 “ holding, nevertheless, that there are images in the mind; and,  
 “ having made this unnatural divorce of two doctrines which  
 “ ought not to be put asunder, that which they have retained  
 “ often leads them back involuntarily to that which they have  
 “ rejected.”

Now, as for the charge which Dr. Reid lays against Hume and others, for supposing that “ The Senses are the inlets through  
 “ which images are received;” I must observe, that, although  
 such expressions occur, this is to be received as a very loose  
 phraseology: for I do not believe that any eminent writer, since  
 the beginning of the last century, ever entertained any such conceit,  
 as that of an image of an external object *travelling into the*  
 MIND, *through the EYE*, like a fish making its way through a  
 water pipe.

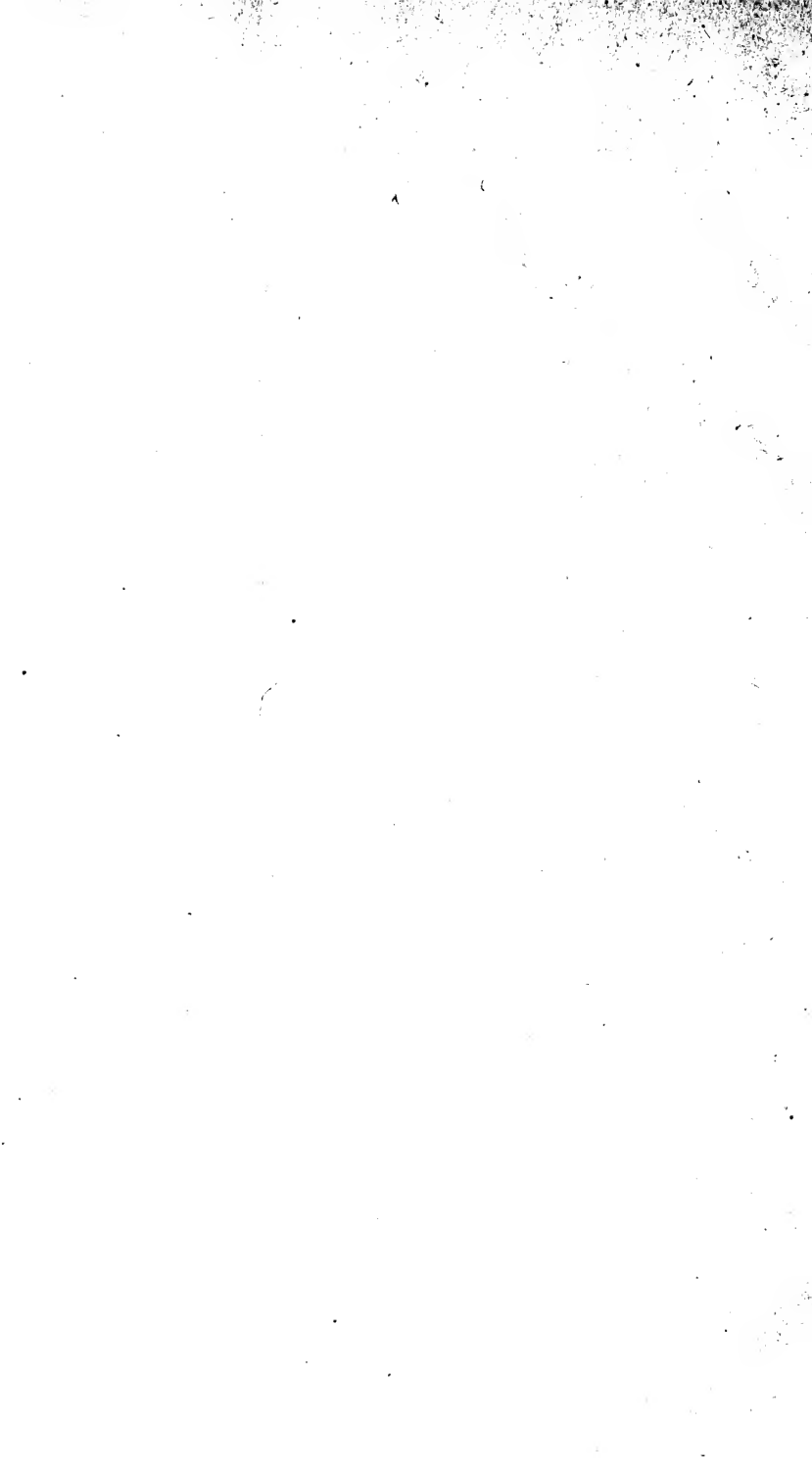
Besides this; I cannot help thinking it was most unfortunate in Dr. Reid, to call it “ *an unnatural divorce,*” to separate  
 the notion of *images being in the mind*, from that of their  
 being *let in by the senses*. For, when we take along with us  
 the fact, now so fully established, that these ideas are NOT *loose*  
*detached images in the mind*, but are *the mind's own impressions*  
*or affections*, it becomes the most natural and logical proceeding  
 that can be, to divorce them from any supposition that they  
 are let in through the channels of the senses. Dr. Reid thought  
 that the two doctrines “ *are so nearly allied, and so strictly*  
*connected, that they must stand or fall together:*”—and that  
 “ *they ought not to be put asunder.*” The truth is, that if *Ideas*  
*or Sensations* be supposed to be LOOSE DETACHED BEINGS,  
 floating in the mind, “ *like fish enveloped in water,*” or “ *con-*  
 “ *tained therein like wafers in a box,*” as was contemplated by  
 the author of “ *The Light of Nature Pursued,*” and indeed by  
 Bishop Berkeley; it must then be supposed that these ideas  
 had *some way of getting into* the mind, because it is admitted,  
 on all sides, that they are *occasioned* by things *from without*

*us*: and, upon THIS assumption, Dr. Reid would indeed be justified in saying that the notion of *images in the mind*, and that of *images let in by the senses*, must stand or fall together. But the moment we recognise that grand fundamental truth which the School of Reid itself has from the beginning labored to bring into universal acknowledgment, and which, also, I have humbly endeavoured to show has been in all ages recognised, even by the advocates of the Ideal Theory themselves,—a truth which indeed has completely triumphed over all the fallacies and errors of that Theory, namely, that our SENSATIONS *are nothing but affections or occasional states of the MIND ITSELF*, it becomes absurd for a moment to suppose that *affections or impressions of this nature* have any connection with a belief of their being *let in through the channels of the senses*.

- Page* 156. For "or" read *of*,  
387 "substantive or ideas" read *or substantive ideas*.  
403 "of" read *so*.  
436 line 21 "supporter" read *supporters*.  
438 19 "to be," read *to signify*.









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