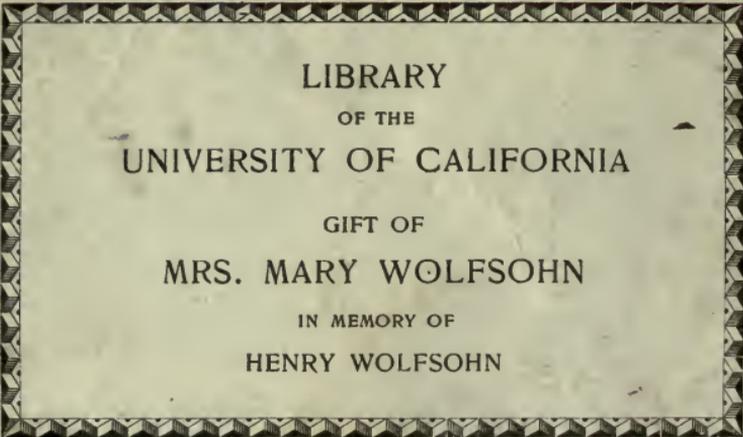


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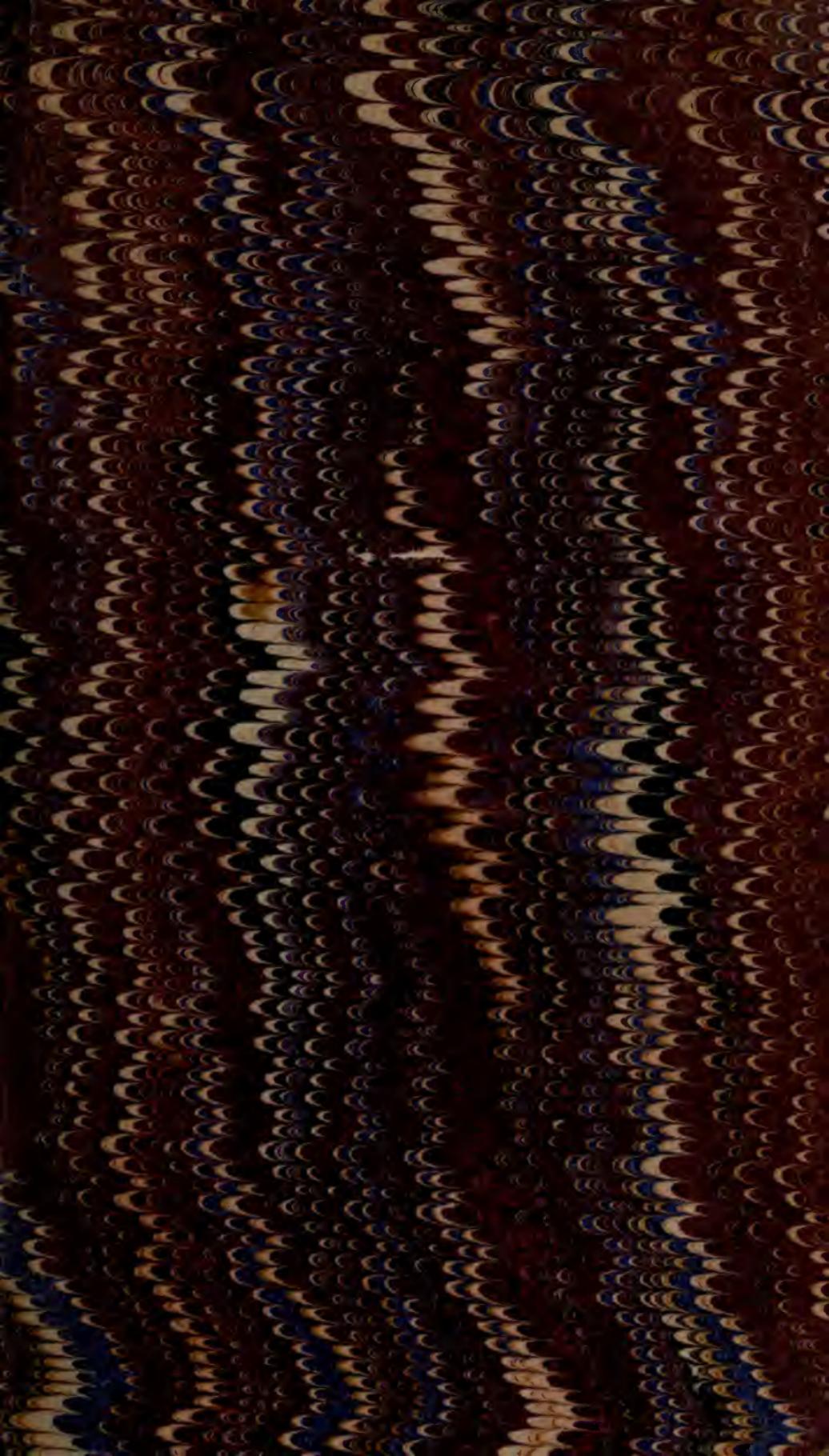




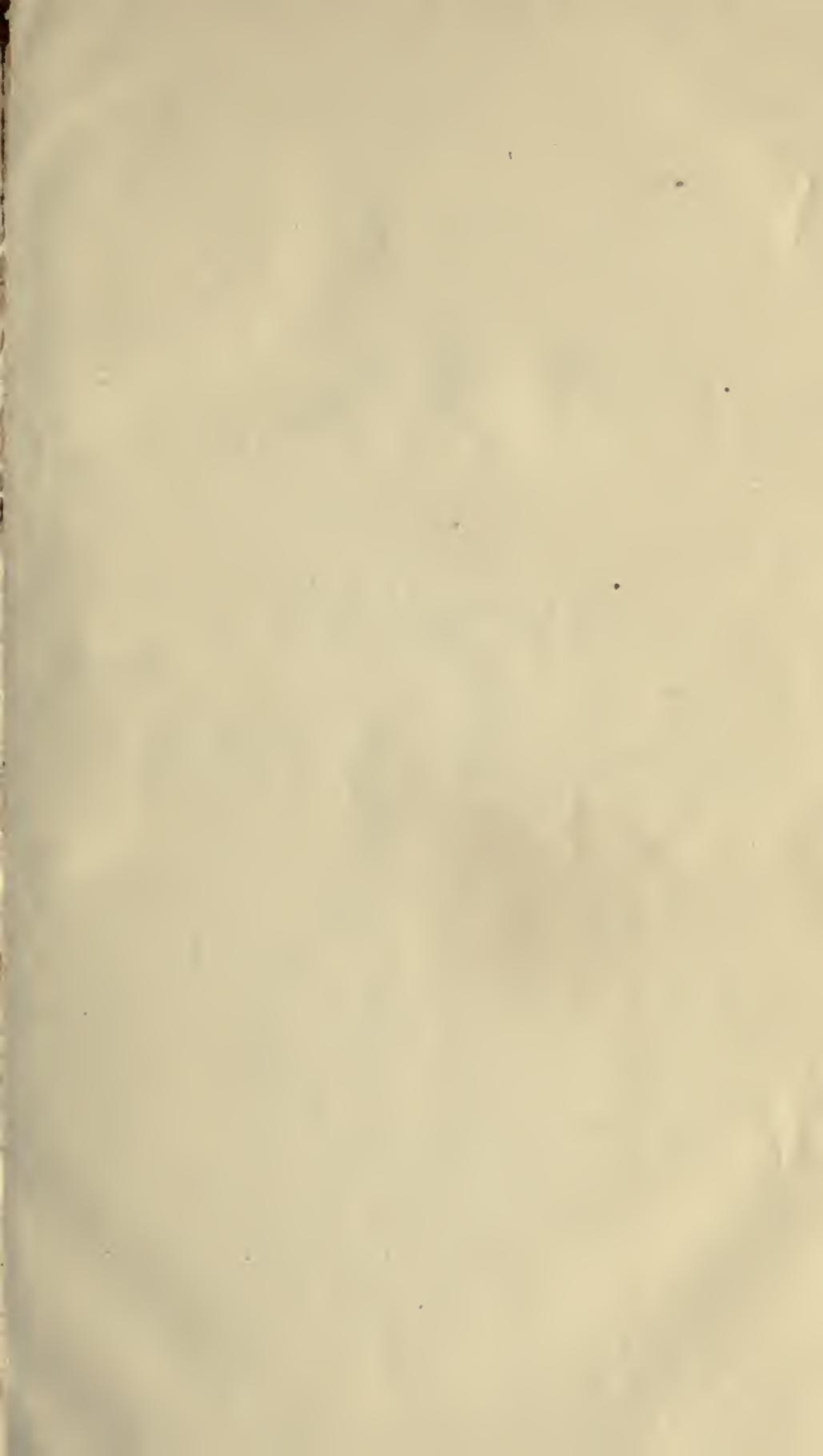
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PHILOSOPHY
OF THE
ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS
OF MAN.

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THE
PHILOSOPHY
OF THE
ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS
OF MAN.

BY
DUGALD STEWART, ESQ. F.R. SS. LOND. & ED.

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VOLUME FIRST.

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PREFACE.

BEFORE proceeding to my proper subject, I may be permitted to say something in explanation of the large, and perhaps disproportionate space which I have allotted in these volumes to the Doctrines of Natural Religion. To account for this I have to observe, that this part of my Work contains the substance of Lectures given in the University of Edinburgh in the year 1792-3, and for almost twenty years afterwards, and that my hearers comprised many individuals, not only from England and the United States of America, but not a few from France, Switzerland, the north of Germany, and other parts of Europe. To those who reflect on the state of the world at that period, and who consider the miscellaneous circumstances and characters of my audience, any farther explanation on this head is, I trust, unnecessary.

The danger with which I conceived the youth of this country to be threatened by that inundation of sceptical or rather atheistical publications which were then imported from the Continent, was immensely increased by the enthusiasm which, at the dawn of the French Revolution, was naturally excited in young and generous minds. A supposed connection between an enlightened zeal for Political Liberty and the reckless boldness of the uncompromising free-thinker, operated powerfully with the vain and the ignorant in favour of the publications alluded to.

Another circumstance concurred with those which have been mentioned in prompting me to a more full and systematical illustration of these doctrines than had been attempted by any of my predecessors. Certain divines in Scotland were pleased, soon after this critical æra, to discover a disposition to set at nought the evidences of Natural Religion, with a professed, and, I doubt not, in many cases, with a sincere view to strengthen the cause of Christianity. Some of these writers were probably not aware that they were only repeating the language of Bayle, Hume, Helvetius, and

many other modern authors of the same description, who have endeavoured to cover their attacks upon those essential principles on which all religion is founded, under a pretended zeal for the interests of Revelation. It was not thus, I recollected, that Cudworth, and Barrow, and Locke, and Clarke, and Butler reasoned on the subject; nor those enlightened writers of a later date, who have consecrated their learning and talents to the farther illustration of the same argument. "He," (says Locke, who has forcibly and concisely expressed their common sentiments,) "He that takes away Reason to make way for Revelation puts out the light of both, and does much the same as if we would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to receive the light of an invisible star by a telescope." *

This passage from Locke brought to my recollection the memorable words of Melancthon, so remarkably distinguished from most of our other Reformers by the mildness of his temper and the liberality of his opinions: "Wherefore our decision is this; that those precepts which learned men have committed to writing, transcribing

* Essay on the Human Understanding, Book iv. chap. 19, § 4.

“ them from the common reason and com-
“ mon feelings of human nature, are to be ac-
“ counted as not less divine than those con-
“ tained in the tables given to Moses ; and
“ that it could not be the intention of our
“ Maker to supersede, by a law graven upon
“ stone, that which is written with his own
“ finger on the table of the heart.”

Strongly impressed with these ideas, I published for the use of my students, in November 1793, a small Manual, under the title of *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, which I afterwards used as a text-book as long as I continued to give lectures in the University. The second part of this Manual contains the same principles, expressed nearly in the same words, with the present publication, in which these principles are much more fully expanded, illustrated, and defended.

My attention was thus imperatively called to this part of my course in a greater degree than to any other, by the aspect of the times when I entered upon the duties of my office as Professor of Moral Philosophy. And it gives me heartfelt satisfaction to believe, that, in consequence of the more general diffusion of knowledge among all ranks of people, such discussions are now become much less neces-

sary than they seemed to me to be at that period. In this belief I am confirmed by the eagerness with which the "Library of Useful Knowledge" has been welcomed by that class of readers for whom it is more peculiarly intended. In the admirable Preliminary Treatise on the Objects, Advantages, and Pleasures of Science, it is said, "The highest of all our gratifications in the contemplation of science remains: We are raised by it to an understanding of the infinite wisdom and goodness which the Creator has displayed in all his works. Not a step can we take in any direction without perceiving the most extraordinary traces of design; and the skill everywhere conspicuous, is calculated in so vast a proportion of instances to promote the happiness of living creatures, and especially of ourselves, that we can feel no hesitation in concluding, that, if we knew the whole scheme of Providence, every part would be in harmony with a plan of absolute benevolence."* The same tone has been caught wherever the subject admitted of it by the authors of the subsequent numbers. It is not often (if ever) that those who do not enjoy the advantages of a liberal education have been thus addressed; and

* Page 47.

the promptitude with which the labouring classes have availed themselves of this means of instruction is the best proof how congenial its spirit is to their plain good sense and unperverted feelings; and how well-founded is the saying of Cicero, that “the natural food of our minds is the study and contemplation of Nature.”*

I cannot conclude this Preface without expressing the satisfaction I have felt in observing among the more liberal writers in France a reviving taste for the Philosophy of the Human Mind. To this no one has contributed more than M. Victor Cousin, so well known, and so honourably distinguished, as the object of Jesuitical persecution; a persecution which appears to have followed him beyond the limits of his own country. To him the learned world is indebted not only for his own very valuable writings, but for a French translation, accompanied with notes, of the whole works of Plato; for an edition of the works of Proclus, the Platonic Philosopher, from a Manuscript in the Royal Library of Paris; † and, last of all, for a com-

* Est Animorum ingeniorumque nostrorum naturale quoddam quasi pabulum consideratio contemplatioque naturæ. Acad. Quæst. L. iv. xli.

† Procli Philosophi Platonici Opera, e codd. MSS. Biblioth.

plete edition of the works of Descartes,—a most important publication in the present state of science in France. M. Royer Collard, whose great talents have long been zealously devoted to the same pursuits, has, if I am not misinformed, already made considerable progress in a translation of Dr Reid's Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man,—a report to which I give the more credit, from the account of his previous studies given by a most respectable writer, M. Jouffroy, in a work which appeared at Paris in 1826. “Trahié par ses consequences et par sa
 “ propre méthode, la philosophie de Condil-
 “ lac fut mise en question par un certain nom-
 “ bre d'esprits distingués, et enfin soumise
 “ à une discussion publique par M. Royer
 “ Collard. Dans les trois années de son en-
 “ seignement, ce savant Professeur, qui n'est
 “ plus pour la France qu'un grand Citoyen,
 “ démontra, contre la doctrine de Condillac,
 “ ce que Reid avoit démontré contre celle
 “ de Locke ; et en adoptant la méthode ex-
 “ périmentale de l'école de la sensation,
 “ prouva que cette école avoit été infidèle à

Reg. Parisiensis, tum primum edidit, versione Latinâ et Commentariis illustravit Victor Cousin, Professor Philosophiæ in Acad. Parisiensi.

“ cette méthode. M. Cousin acheva ce que
 “ M. Royer Collard avoit commencé. * * * *
 “ L’enseignement de ces deux illustres Pro-
 “ fesseurs devoit porter ses fruits, et il les a
 “ portés. Dans l’esprit de ceux qui ont as-
 “ sisté à leurs leçons, il ne reste pas un doute
 “ sur la direction que doivent suivre les re-
 “ cherches philosophiques.”

And here may I be pardoned for gratify-
 ing a personal feeling, by mentioning the
 pleasure which I have lately received from a
 perusal of the very elegant translation by M.
 Jouffroy of my *Outlines of Moral Philoso-
 phy*, preceded by a long introduction full of
 original and important matter. This pub-
 lication, together with the space occupied in
 the *Fragmens Philosophiques* of M. Cousin by
 large extracts from the same work, comprising
 nearly the whole of its contents, encourage me
 in the hope, that the volumes I now pub-
 lish, which may be considered as a Comment
 on the Ethical part of my *Outlines*, may per-
 haps find a few who will not only read but
 study them with attention, (for a cursory
 perusal is altogether useless), in some other
 countries as well as my own.

Kinneil House, April 16, 1828.

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THE HISTORY OF THE

The first part of the history of the world is the history of the human race. It is a history of the progress of the human mind, and of the development of the human soul. It is a history of the human race, and of the human mind, and of the human soul. It is a history of the human race, and of the human mind, and of the human soul.

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ERRATA.

VOL. I.

P. 5, line 14 from bottom, *for leads read lead.*

P. 96, line 7 from the top, after the word exist insert a comma.

VOL. II.

P. 231. After the words, "that our future condition will be not wholly different *in kind* from what we have already experienced," insert the following foot note:

The same idea occurs in Milton, who seems to have thought the conjecture not improbable, however different from the common belief of the world.

What if earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven and things therein,
Each to other like more than on earth is thought?

Par. Lost, Book v.

P. 247, line 9 from the bottom, *for those read that.*

P. 409, line 13 from the top, *for inefficiency read inefficacy.*

P. 491, line 8 from the bottom, *for paracédé read a précède.*

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THE
PHILOSOPHY
OF
THE ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS
OF MAN.

INTRODUCTION.

IN my former work on the Human Mind I confined my attention almost exclusively to Man considered as an *intellectual being*; and attempted an analysis of those faculties and powers which compose that part of his nature commonly called his *intellect* or his *understanding*. It is by these faculties that he acquires his knowledge of external objects; that he investigates truth in the sciences; that he combines means in order to attain the ends he has in view; and that he imparts to his fellow-creatures the acquisitions he has made. A being might, I think, be conceived, possessed of these principles without any of the active propensities belonging to our species, at least without any of them but the principle of curiosity;—a being formed only

for speculation, without any determination to the pursuit of particular external objects, and whose whole happiness consisted in intellectual gratifications.

But, although such a being might perhaps be conceived to exist, and although, in studying our internal frame, it be convenient to treat of our intellectual powers apart from our active propensities, yet, in fact, the two are very intimately, and indeed inseparably, connected in all our mental operations. I already hinted, that, even in our speculative inquiries, the principle of curiosity is necessary to account for the exertion we make; and it is still more obvious that a combination of means to accomplish particular ends presupposes some determination of our nature, which makes the attainment of these ends desirable. Our active propensities, therefore, are the motives which induce us to exert our intellectual powers; and our intellectual powers are the instruments by which we attain the ends recommended to us by our active propensities:

“Reason the card, but passion is the gale.”

It will afterwards appear, that our active propensities are not only necessary to produce our intellectual exertions, but that the state of the intellectual powers, in the case of individuals, depends, in a great measure, on the strength of their propensities, and on the particular propensities which are predominant in the temper of their minds. A man of strong philosophical curiosity is likely to possess a much more cultivated and inventive understanding

than another of equal natural capacity, destitute of the same stimulus. In like manner, the love of fame, or a strong sense of duty, may compensate for original defects, or may lay the foundation of uncommon attainments. The intellectual powers, too, may be variously modified by the habits arising from avarice, from the animal appetites, from ambition, or from the benevolent affections; inso-much that the moral principles of the miser, of the elegant voluptuary, of the political intriguer, and of the philanthropist, are not, perhaps, more dissimilar than the acquired capacities of their understandings, and the species of information with which their memories are stored. Among the various external indications of character, few circumstances will be found to throw more light on the ruling passions of individuals than the habitual direction of their studies, and the nature of those accomplishments which they have been ambitious to attain.

When Montaigne complains of "the difficulty he experienced in remembering the names of his servants; of his ignorance of the value of the French coins which he was daily handling; and of his inability to distinguish the different kinds of grain from each other, both in the earth and in the granary;" * his observations, instead of proving the point which he supposed them to establish, (an original and incurable defect in his faculty of memory,) only afford an illustration of the little interest

* Montaigne's Essays, Book II. Chap. xvii.

he took in things external, and of the preternatural and distempered engrossment of his thoughts with the phenomena of the internal world. To this peculiarity in his turn of mind he has himself alluded, when he says, "I study myself more than any other subject : This is my metaphysic ; this my natural philosophy." A person well acquainted with the peculiarities of Montaigne's memory, might, I think, on comparing them with the general superiority of his mental powers, have anticipated him in this specification of the study which almost exclusively occupied his attention. *

Helvetius in his book *de l'Esprit*, (a work which, among many paradoxical and some very pernicious opinions, contains a number of acute and lively observations,) has prosecuted, with considerable success, this last view of Human Nature, and has collected a variety of amusing facts to illustrate the influence of the passions on the intellectual powers.

* The following remarks of the learned and ingenious Dr Jortin are not unworthy of the attention of those whose taste leads them to the observation and study of character.

"From the complexion of those anecdotes which a man collects from others, or which he forms by his own pen, may, without much difficulty, be conjectured what manner of man he was.

"The human being is mightily given to assimilation, and, from the stories which any one relates with spirit, from the general tenor of his conversation, and from the books or associates to which he most addicts his attention, the inference cannot be far distant as to the texture of his mind, the vein of his wit, or, may we add, the ruling passion of his heart."
—Jortin's Tracts, Vol. I. p. 445.

“ It is the passions,” (he observes,) “ that rouse the soul from its natural tendency to rest, and surmount the *vis inertiae* to which it is always inclined to yield ; and it is the *strong* passions alone that prompt men to the execution of those heroic actions, and give birth to those sublime ideas which command the admiration of ages.

“ It is the strength of passion alone that can enable men to defy dangers, pain, and death.

“ It is the passions, too, which, by keeping up a perpetual fermentation in our minds, fertilize the same ideas, which, in more phlegmatic temperaments, are barren, and resemble seed scattered on a rock.

“ It is the passions which, having strongly fixed our attention on the object of our desire, leads us to view it under aspects unknown to other men ; and which, consequently, prompt heroes to plan and execute those hardy enterprises which must always appear ridiculous to the multitude till the sagacity of their authors has been evinced by success.” *

To this passage, which is, I think, just in the main, I have only to object, that, in consequence of the ambiguity of the word *passion*, it is apt to suggest an erroneous idea of the author’s meaning. It is plain that he uses it to denote our active principles in general ; and, in this sense, there can be no doubt that his doctrine is well founded ; inasmuch

* De l’Esprit, Discours iii. Chap. vi.

as, without such principles as curiosity, the love of fame, ambition, avarice, or the love of mankind, our intellectual capacities would for ever remain sterile and useless. But it is not in this sense that the word *passion* is most commonly employed. In its ordinary acceptation it denotes those animal impulses which, although they may sometimes prompt to intellectual exertion, are certainly on the whole unfavourable to intellectual improvement. Helvetius himself has not always attended to this ambiguity of language ; and hence may be traced many of the paradoxes and errors of his philosophy.

To these slight remarks it may not be useless to subjoin an observation of La Rochefoucauld, which is equally refined and just ; and which, in its practical tendency, calls the attention to a source of danger in a quarter where it is too seldom apprehended. “ It is a mistake to believe that none but the
“ violent passions, such as ambition and love, are
“ able to triumph over the other active principles.
“ Laziness, as languid as it is, often gets the maste-
“ ry of them all ; overrules all the designs and ac-
“ tions of life, and insensibly consumes and destroys
“ both passions and virtues.”

From the foregoing observations it appears, that, in accounting for the diversities of genius and of intellectual character among men, important lights may be derived from an examination of their active propensities. It is of more consequence for me, however, to remark at present the intimate relation which an analysis of these propensities bears

to the theory of morals, and its practical connection with our opinions on the duties and the happiness of human life. Indeed it is in this way alone that the light of nature enables us to form any reasonable conclusions concerning the ends and destination of our being, and the purposes for which we were sent into the world : *Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur.** It forms, therefore, a necessary introduction to the science of ethics, or rather is the foundation on which that science rests.

In prosecuting our inquiries into the Active and the Moral Powers of Man, I propose *first*, to attempt a classification and analysis of the most important principles belonging to this part of our constitution ; and, *secondly*, to treat of the various branches of our duty. Under the former of these heads, my principal aim will be to illustrate the essential distinction between those active principles which originate in man's rational nature, and those which urge him, by a blind and instinctive impulse, to their respective objects.

In general, it may be here remarked, that the word *action* is properly applied to those exertions which are consequent on volition, whether the exertion be made on external objects, or be confined to our mental operations. Thus we say the mind is active when engaged in study. In ordinary discourse, indeed, we are apt to confound together ac-

* Persius, Sat. iii. l. 67.

tion and motion. As the operations in the minds of other men escape our notice, we can judge of their activity only from the sensible effects it produces ; and hence we are led to apply the character of activity to those whose bodily activity is the most remarkable, and to distinguish mankind into two classes, the active and the speculative. In the present instance, the word *active* is used in its most extensive signification, as applicable to every voluntary exertion.

According to the definition now given of the word *action*, the primary sources of our activity are the circumstances in which the acts of the will originate. Of these there are some which make a part of our constitution, and which, on that account, are called Active Principles. Such are hunger, thirst, the appetite which unites the sexes, curiosity, ambition, pity, resentment. These active principles are also called powers of the will, because, by stimulating us in *various* ways to action, they afford exercise to our sense of duty and our other rational principles of action, and give occasion to our voluntary determinations as free agents.

The study of this part of our constitution, although it may at first view seem to lie more open to our examination than the powers of the understanding, is attended with some difficulties peculiar to itself. For this various reasons may be assigned ; among which there are two that seem principally to claim our attention : 1. When we wish to examine the nature of any of our intellectual

principles we can at all times subject the faculty in question to the scrutiny of *reflection*; and can institute whatever experiments with respect to it may be necessary for ascertaining its general laws. It is characteristic of all our operations, purely intellectual, to leave the mind cool and undisturbed, so that the *exercise* of the faculties concerned in them does not prevent us from an analytical investigation of their theory. The case is very different with our active powers, particularly with those which, from their violence and impetuosity, have the greatest influence on human happiness. When we are under the dominion of the power, or, in plainer language, when we are hurried by *passion* to the pursuit of a particular end, we feel no inclination to speculate concerning the mental phenomena. When the tumult subsides, and our curiosity is awakened concerning the past, the moment for observation and experiment is lost, and we are obliged to search for our facts in an imperfect recollection of what was viewed, even in the *first* instance, through the most troubled and deceitful of all *media*.

Something connected with this is the following remark of Mr Hume: "Moral philosophy has this
 " peculiar disadvantage, which is not to be found
 " in natural, that, in collecting its experiments, it
 " cannot make them purposely, with premeditation,
 " and after such a manner as to satisfy itself con-
 " cerning every particular difficulty that may arise.
 " When I am at a loss to know the effects of one

“ body upon another in any situation, I need only
 “ put them in that situation, and observe what re-
 “ sults from it. But should I endeavour to clear
 “ up, after the same manner, any doubts in moral
 “ philosophy, by placing myself in the same case
 “ with that which I consider, ’tis evident, that this
 “ reflection and premeditation would so disturb the
 “ operation of my natural principles, as must ren-
 “ der it impossible to form any just conclusion from
 “ the phenomenon. We must therefore glean up
 “ our experiments in this science from a cautious
 “ observation of human life, and take them as they
 “ appear in the common course of the world, by
 “ men’s behaviour in company, in affairs, and in
 “ their pleasures.”*

2. Another circumstance which adds much to the difficulty of this branch of study, is the great variety of our active principles, and the endless diversity of their combinations in the characters of men. The same action may proceed from very different, and even opposite motives in the case of two individuals, and even in the same individual on different occasions ;—or, an action which in one man proceeds from a single motive, may, in another, proceed from a number of motives conspiring together and modifying each other’s effects. The philosophers who have speculated on this subject, have in general been misled by an excessive love of simplicity, and have attempted to explain

* Treatise of Human Nature, Vol. I. pp. 9, 10. 1st edition.

the phenomena from the smallest possible number of data. Overlooking the real complication of our active principles, they have sometimes fixed on a single one, (good or bad, according as they were disposed to think well or ill of human nature,) and have deduced from it a plausible explanation of all the varieties of human character and conduct.

Our inquiries on this subject must be conducted in one of two ways, either by studying the characters of other men, or by studying our own. In the former way, we may undoubtedly collect many useful hints, and many facts to confirm or to limit our conclusions; but the conjectures we form concerning the motives of others are liable to so much uncertainty, that it is chiefly by attending to what passes in our own minds that we can reasonably hope to ascertain the general laws of our constitution as active and moral beings. ✓

Even this plan of study, however, as I already hinted, requires uncommon perseverance, and still more uncommon candour. The difficulty is great of attending to any of the operations of the mind; but this difficulty is much increased in those cases in which we are led by vanity or timidity to fancy that we have an interest in concealing the truth from our own knowledge.

Most men, perhaps, are disposed, in consequence of these and some other causes, to believe themselves better than they really are; and a few, there is reason to suspect, go into the opposite extreme, from the influence of false systems of philosophy

or religion, or from the gloomy views inspired by a morbid melancholy.

When to these considerations we add the endless metaphysical disputes on the subject of the will, and of man's free agency, it may easily be conceived that the field of inquiry upon which we are now to enter abounds with questions not less curious and intricate than any of those which have been hitherto under our review. In point of practical importance some of them will be found in a still higher degree entitled to our attention.

In the further prosecution of this subject, I shall avoid, as much as possible, all technical divisions and classifications, and shall content myself with the following enumeration of our Active Principles, which I hope will be found sufficiently distinct and comprehensive for our purposes.

1. Appetites.
2. Desires.
3. Affections.
4. Self-love.
5. The Moral faculty.

The three first may be distinguished (for a reason which will afterwards appear) by the title of *Instinctive or Implanted Propensities*; the two last by the title of *Rational and Governing Principles of Action*.*

* In the above enumeration I have departed widely from Dr Reid's language. (See his *Essays on the Active Powers*, Essay 3d, Parts 1st, 2d, and 3d.) This great philosopher, with whom I am always unwilling to differ, refers our active principles

to three classes, the Mechanical, the Animal, and the Rational ; using all these three words with what I think a very exceptionable latitude. My reasons for objecting to the use he makes of the words animal and rational will appear in the sequel. On this occasion I shall only observe, that the word *mechanical*, (under which he comprehends our *instincts and habits*) cannot, in my opinion, be properly applied to any of our active principles. It is indeed used, in this instance, merely as a term of distinction ; but it *seems* to imply some theory concerning the nature of the principles comprehended under it, and is apt to suggest incorrect notions on the subject. If I had been disposed to examine this part of our constitution with all the minute accuracy of which it is susceptible, I should have preferred the following arrangement to that which I have adopted, as well as to that proposed by Dr Reid. 1. Of our *original* principles of action. 2. Of our *acquired* principles of action. The original principles of action may be subdivided into the *animal* and the *rational* ; to the former of which classes our *instincts* ought undoubtedly to be referred as well as our *appetites*. In Dr Reid's arrangement, nothing appears more unaccountable, if not capricious, than to call our appetites *animal* principles, because they are common to man and to the brutes ; and, at the same time, to distinguish our *instincts* by the title of *mechanical* ;—when, of all our active propensities, there are none in which the nature of man bears so strong an analogy to that of the lower animals as in these instinctive impulses. Indeed, it is from the condition of the brutes that the word *instinct* is transferred to that of man by a sort of figure or metaphor.

Our *acquired* principles of action comprehend all those propensities to act which we acquire from habit. Such are our artificial appetites and artificial desires, and the various factitious motives of human conduct generated by association and fashion. At present, it being useless for any of the purposes which I have in view to attempt so comprehensive and detailed an examination of the subject, I shall confine myself to the general enumeration already mentioned. As our appe-

tites, our desires, and our affections, whether original or acquired, stand in the same common relation to the Moral Faculty, (the illustration of which is the chief object of this volume,) I purposely avoid those slighter and less important subdivisions which might be thought to savour unnecessarily of scholastic subtilty.



BOOK FIRST.

OF OUR INSTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF ACTION.

CHAPTER FIRST.

OF OUR APPETITES.

THIS class of our Active Principles is distinguished by the following circumstances.

1. They take their rise from the body, and are common to us with the brutes.
2. They are not constant but occasional.
3. They are accompanied with an uneasy sensation, which is strong or weak in proportion to the strength or weakness of the appetite.

Our appetites are three in number, hunger, thirst, and the appetite of sex. Of these, two were intended for the preservation of the individual; the third for the continuation of the species; and without them reason would have been insufficient for these important purposes. Suppose, for example, that the appetite of hunger had been no part of our constitution, reason and experience might have satisfied us of the necessity of food to our preservation;

but how should we have been able, without an implanted principle, to ascertain, according to the varying state of our animal economy, the proper seasons for eating, or the quantity of food that is salutary to the body? The lower animals not only receive this information from nature, but are, moreover, directed by instinct to the particular sort of food that is proper for them to use in health and in sickness. The senses of taste and smell, in the savage state of our species, are subservient, at least in some degree, to the same purpose.

Our appetites can, with no propriety, be called *selfish*, for they are directed to their respective objects as ultimate ends, and they must all have operated, *in the first instance*, prior to any experience of the pleasure arising from their gratification. *After* this experience, indeed, the desire of enjoyment will naturally come to be combined with the appetite; and it may sometimes lead us to stimulate or provoke the appetite with a view to the pleasure which is to result from indulging it. Imagination, too, and the association of ideas, together with the social affections, and sometimes the moral faculty, lend their aid, and all conspire together in forming a complex passion, in which the animal appetite is only one ingredient. In proportion as this passion is gratified, its influence over the conduct becomes the more irresistible, (for all the *active* determinations of our nature are strengthened by habit,) till at last we struggle in vain against its tyranny. A man so enslaved by his animal appetites exhibits

humanity in one of its most miserable and contemptible forms.

As an additional proof of the misery of such a state, it is of great importance to remark, that, while habit strengthens all our *active* determinations, it diminishes the liveliness of our passive *impressions*;—a remarkable instance of which occurs in the effects produced by an immoderate use of strong liquors, which, at the same time that it confirms the active habit of intemperance, deadens and destroys the sensibility of the palate. In consequence of this law of our nature the evils of excessive indulgence are doubled, inasmuch as our sensibility to pleasure decays in proportion as the cravings of appetite increase.

In general, it will be found, that, wherever we attempt to enlarge the sphere of enjoyment beyond the limits prescribed by nature, we frustrate our own purpose.

A man so enslaved by his appetites may undoubtedly, in one sense, be called *selfish*; for, as he must necessarily neglect the duties he owes to others, he may be presumed to be deficient in the benevolent affections. But it cannot be said of him that he is actuated by an inordinate *self-love*, (meaning by that word an excessive regard to his own happiness,) for he sacrifices to the meanest gratifications all the noblest pleasures of which he is susceptible, and sacrifices to the pleasure of the moment the permanent enjoyments of health, reputation, and conscience. This is true even when the desire of

gratification is combined with the original appetite ; for no two principles can be more widely at variance than the desire of gratification and the desire of happiness.

Of the errors introduced into morals, in consequence of the vague use of the words selfishness and self-love, I shall afterwards take notice. What I wish chiefly to remark at present is, that in no sense of these words can we refer to them the origin of our animal appetites ; and that the active propensities comprehended under this title are ultimate facts in the human constitution.

Besides our natural appetites we have many acquired ones. Such are our appetite for tobacco, for opium, and for other intoxicating drugs. In general, every thing that stimulates the nervous system produces a subsequent languor, which gives rise to a desire of repetition.

The universality of this appetite for intoxicating drugs is a curious fact in the history of our species. " It seems" (says Dr Robertson) " to have been one of the first exertions of human ingenuity to discover some composition of an intoxicating quality ; and there is hardly any nation so rude, or so destitute of invention, as not to have succeeded in this fatal research. The most barbarous of the American tribes have been so unfortunate as to attain this art ; and even those who are so deficient in knowledge as to be unacquainted with the method of giving an inebriating strength to liquors by fermentation can accomplish the

“ same end by other means. The people of the is-
“ lands of North America and of California used
“ for this purpose the smoke of tobacco, drawn up
“ with a certain instrument into the nostrils, the
“ fumes of which ascending to the brain, they felt
“ all the transports and frenzy of intoxication. In
“ almost every part of the new world the natives
“ possessed the art of extracting an intoxicating li-
“ quor from Maize, or the Manioc root, the same
“ substances which they convert into bread. The
“ operation by which they effect this nearly resem-
“ bles the common one of brewing, but with this
“ difference, that, instead of yeast, they use a nau-
“ seous infusion of maize or manioc chewed by their
“ women. The saliva excites a vigorous fermenta-
“ tion, and in a few days the liquor becomes fit
“ for drinking. It is not disagreeable to the taste,
“ and, when swallowed in large quantities, is of an
“ inebriating quality. This is the general beve-
“ rage of the Americans, which they distinguish by
“ different names, and for which they feel such a
“ violent and insatiable desire, as it is not easy
“ either to conceive or describe.”*

Many striking confirmations of this remark occur in the voyages of Cook and of later navigators.

Our occasional propensities to action and to repose are, in many respects, analogous to our appetites. They have indeed all the three characteristics of our appetites already mentioned. They

* History of America, Vol. I. p. 396. 4to Edition.

are common, too, to man and to the lower animals, and they operate, in our own species, in the most infant state of the individual. In general, every animal we know is prompted by an instinctive impulse to take that degree of exercise which is salutary to the body, and is prevented from passing the bounds of moderation by that languor and desire of repose which are the consequences of continued exertion.

There is something also very similar to this with respect to the mind. We are impelled by nature to the exercise of its different faculties, and we are warned, when we are in danger of overstraining them, by a consciousness of fatigue. After we are exhausted by a long course of application to business, how delightful are the first moments of indolence and repose! *O che bella cosa di far niente!* We are apt to imagine that no inducement shall again lead us to engage in the bustle of the world: but, after a short respite from our labours, our intellectual vigour returns; the mind rouses from its lethargy "like a giant from his sleep," and we feel ourselves urged by an irresistible impulse to return to our duties as members of society.

The active principles already mentioned are common to man and to the brutes. But besides these the latter have some instinctive impulses of which I do not know that there are any traces to be found in the human race. Such are those *antipathies* which they discover against the natural enemies of their respective tribes. It is probable, I think, that

their existence is guarded entirely by their appetites and antipathies ; for the desire of self-preservation implies a degree of reason and reflection which they do not appear to possess. Even in the case of man this desire is probably the result of his experience of the pleasures which life affords ; and, accordingly, (as Dr Beattie very finely remarks,) Milton has, with exquisite judgment, represented *Adam*, in the first moments of his being, as contemplating, without anxiety or regret, the idea of immediate annihilation.

“ While thus I call’d and stray’d I knew not whither
 “ From where I first drew air, and first beheld
 “ This happy light, when answer none return’d,
 “ On a green shady bank profuse of flowers
 “ Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep
 “ *First* found me, and with soft oppression seiz’d
 “ My drowzied sense ; UNTRUBLED though I thought
 “ I then was passing to my former state
 “ Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve !”



CHAPTER SECOND.

OF OUR DESIRES.

OUR Desires are distinguished from our Appetites by the following circumstances :—

1. They do not take their rise from the body.
2. They do not operate periodically after certain intervals, nor do they cease after the attainment of a particular object.

The most remarkable active principles belonging to this class are,

1. The Desire of Knowledge, or the principle of Curiosity. *
2. The Desire of Society.

* I have already remarked, (see note p. 12,) that in this part of his work Dr Reid has used some terms with an undue latitude. Of this a very remarkable instance occurs in the use he has made of the adjective *Animal*; in consequence of which he has been led to rank among our *animal* principles of action (that is, among the active principles common to man with the brutes,) not only the desire of knowledge and the desire of esteem, but pity to the distressed, patriotism, and other benevolent affections.

3. The Desire of Esteem.
4. The Desire of Power, or the principle of Ambition.
5. The Desire of Superiority, or the principle of Emulation.

SECTION I.

The Desire of Knowledge.

The principle of curiosity appears in children at a very early period, and is commonly proportioned to the degree of intellectual capacity they possess. The direction, too, which it takes is regulated by nature according to the order of our wants and necessities ; being confined, in the first instance, exclusively to those properties of material objects, and those laws of the material world, an acquaintance with which is essential to the preservation of our animal existence. Hence the instinctive eagerness with which children handle and examine every thing which is presented to them ; an employment which we are commonly apt to consider as a mere exercise of their animal powers, but which, if we reflect on the limited province of sight prior to experience, and on the early period of life at which we are able to judge by the eye of the distances and of the tangible qualities of bodies, will appear plainly to be the most useful occupation in which they could be engaged, if it were in the power of a phi-

osopher to have the regulation of their attention from the hour of their birth. In more advanced years curiosity displays itself in one way or another in every individual, and gives rise to an infinite diversity in their pursuits—engrossing the attention of one man about physical causes—of another about mathematical truths—of a third about historical facts—of a fourth about the objects of natural history—of a fifth about the transactions of private families, or about the politics and news of the day.

Whether this diversity be owing to natural predisposition, or to early education, it is of little consequence to determine, as, upon either supposition, a preparation is made for it in the original constitution of the mind, combined with the circumstances of our external situation. Its final cause is also sufficiently obvious, as it is this which gives rise in the case of individuals to a limitation of attention and study, and lays the foundation of all the advantages which society derives from the division and subdivision of intellectual labour.

These advantages are so great that some philosophers have attempted to resolve the desire of knowledge into self-love. But to this theory the same objection may be stated which was already made to the attempts of some philosophers to account, in a similar way, for the origin of our appetites; that all of these are active principles, manifestly directed by nature to particular specific objects, as their ultimate ends;—that, as the object of hunger is not happiness but food, so the object

of curiosity is not happiness but knowledge. To this analogy Cicero has very beautifully alluded, when he calls knowledge the natural food of the understanding. “Est animorum ingeniorumque nostrorum naturale quoddam quasi pabulum consideratio contemplatioque naturæ.” We can indeed conceive a being prompted merely by the cool desire of happiness to accumulate information ; but, in a creature like man, endowed with a variety of other active principles, the stock of his knowledge would probably have been scanty, unless self-love had been aided in this particular by the principle of curiosity.

Although, however, the desire of knowledge is not resolvable into self-love, it is not in itself an object of *moral approbation*. A person may indeed employ his intellectual powers with a view to his own moral improvement, or to the happiness of society, and so far he acts from a laudable principle. But to prosecute study merely from the desire of knowledge is neither virtuous nor vicious. When not suffered to interfere with our duties it is morally innocent. The virtue or vice does not lie in the desire, but in the proper or improper regulation of it. The ancient astronomer who, when accused of indifference with respect to public transactions, answered that *his* country was in the heavens, acted criminally, inasmuch as he suffered his desire of knowledge to interfere with the duties which he owed to mankind.

At the same time it must be admitted, that the

desire of knowledge (and the same observation is applicable to our other desires) is of a more dignified nature than those appetites which are common to us with the brutes. A thirst for science has been always considered as a mark of a liberal and elevated mind; and it generally co-operates with the moral faculty in forming us to those habits of self-government which enable us to keep our animal appetites in due subjection.

There is another circumstance which renders this desire peculiarly estimable, that it is always accompanied with a strong desire to communicate our knowledge to others; insomuch, that it has been doubted if the principle of curiosity would be sufficiently powerful to animate the intellectual exertions of any man in a long course of persevering study, if he had no prospect of being ever able to impart his acquisitions to his friends or to the public. “*Si quis in cœlum ascendisset*” (says Cicero) “*naturamque mundi et pulchritudinem siderum perspexisset, insuavem illam admirationem ei fore, quæ jucundissima fuisset, si aliquem cui narraret habuisset. Sic natura solitarium nihil amat, semperque ad aliquod quasi adminiculum annititur, quod in amicissimo quoque dulcissimum est.*” * And to the same purpose Seneca : “*Nec me ulla res delectabit, licet eximia sit et salutaris, quam mihi uni sciturus sim. Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illam inclusam teneam, nec*

* De Amicitia.

“enunciem, rejiciam : nullius boni, sine socio, jucunda possessio est.”*

A strong curiosity, properly directed, may be justly considered as one of the most important elements in philosophical genius ; and, accordingly, there is no circumstance of greater consequence in education than to keep the curiosity always awake, and to turn it to useful pursuits. I cannot help, therefore, disapproving greatly of a very common practice in this country, that of communicating to children general and superficial views of science and history by means of popular introductions. In this way we rob their future studies of all that interest which can render study agreeable, and reduce the mind, in the pursuits of science, to the same state of listlessness and languor as when we toil through the pages of a tedious novel after being made acquainted with the final catastrophe.

It would contribute greatly to the culture and the guidance of this principle of curiosity if the different sciences were taught as much as possible in the order of the *analytic* rather than in that of the *synthetic* method ; a plan, however, which I readily admit it is not so practicable to carry into effect in a course of public as of private instruction. Such a mode of education too would be attended with the additional advantage of accustoming the student to the proper method of investigation ; and thereby preparing him in due time to enter on the career of invention and discovery. Nor is this all. It would im-

* Seneca, Ep. 6.

this sentence is 14 pages

press the knowledge he thus acquired, in some measure by his own ingenuity, much more deeply on his *memory* than if it were passively imbibed from books or teachers;—in the same manner as the windings of a road make a more lasting impression on the mind, when we have once travelled it alone, and inquired out the way at every turn, than if we had travelled along it an hundred times, trusting ourselves implicitly to the guidance of a companion.

I am happy to be confirmed in this opinion by its coincidence with what has been excellently remarked on the same subject by Miss Edgeworth in her treatise on Practical Education;* a work equally distinguished by good sense and by originality of thought. The passage I allude to more particularly at present is the short dialogue about *the steam-engine, as improved by Mr Watt*.

SECTION II.

The Desire of Society.

Abstracting from those affections which interest us in the happiness of others, and from all the advantages which we ourselves derive from the social union, we are led by a natural and instinctive desire to associate with our species. This principle is easily discernible in the minds of children long before the

* Practical Education, Vol. I. p. 592 et seq. 4to Edition.

dawn of reason. "Attend only" (says an intelligent and accurate observer) "to the eyes, the features, and the gestures of a child on the breast when another child is presented to it;—both instantly, previous to the possibility of instruction or habit, exhibit the most evident expressions of joy. Their eyes sparkle, and their features and gestures demonstrate, in the most unequivocal manner, a mutual attachment. When farther advanced, children, who are strangers to each other, though their social appetite be equally strong, discover a mutual shyness of approach, which, however, is soon conquered by the more powerful instinct of association." *

*into Mark
down Se
and the
boy -*

In the lower animals too very evident traces of the same instinct appear. In some of these we observe a species of union strikingly analogous to political associations among men: in others we observe occasional unions among individuals to accomplish a particular purpose,—to repel, for example, a hostile assault;—but there are also various tribes which discover a desire of society, and a pleasure in the company of their own species, without an apparent reference to any farther end. Thus we frequently see horses, when confined alone in an inclosure, neglect their food and break the fences to join their companions in the contiguous field. Every person must have remarked the spirit and alacrity with which this animal exerts himself on

* Smellie's Philosophy of Natural History, p. 416.

the road, when accompanied by another animal of his own species, in comparison of what he discovers when travelling alone; and, with respect to oxen and cows, it has been asserted, that even in the finest pasture they do not fatten so rapidly in a solitary state as when they feed together in a herd.

What is the final cause of the associating instinct in such animals as have now been mentioned, it is not easy to conjecture, unless we suppose that it was intended merely to augment the sum of their enjoyments. But whatever opinion we may form on this point, it is indisputable that the instinctive determination is a strong one, and that it produces striking effects on the habits of the animal, even when external circumstances are the most unfavourable to its operation. Horses and oxen, for example, when deprived of companions of their own species, associate and become attached to each other. The same thing sometimes happens between individuals that belong to tribes naturally hostile; as between dogs and cats, or between a cat and a bird.

If these facts be candidly considered, there will appear but little reason to doubt the existence of the social instinct in our own species, when it is so agreeable to the general analogy of nature, as displayed through the rest of the animal creation. As this point, however, has been controverted warmly by authors of eminence, it will be necessary to consider it with some attention.

The question with respect to the social or the

solitary nature of man seems to me to amount to this, whether man has any disinterested principles which lead him to unite with his fellow-creatures; or whether the social union be the result of prudential views of self-interest, suggested by the experience of his own insufficiency to procure the objects of his natural desires. Of these two opinions Hobbes has maintained the latter, and has endeavoured to establish it by proving, that in what he calls the state of nature every man is an enemy to his brother, and that it was the experience of the evils arising from these hostile dispositions that induced men to unite in a political society. In proof of this he insists on the terror which children feel at the sight of a stranger; on the apprehension which, he says, a person naturally feels when he hears the tread of a foot in the dark; on the universal invention of locks and keys; and on various other circumstances of a similar nature.

That this theory of Hobbes is contrary to the universal history of mankind cannot be disputed. Man has always been found in a social state; and there is reason even for thinking, that the principles of union which nature has implanted in his heart operate with the greatest force in those situations in which the advantages of the social union are the smallest. As society advances, the relations among individuals are continually multiplied, and man is rendered the more necessary to man: But it may be doubted, if, in a period of great refinement, the

social affections be as warm and powerful as when the species were wandering in the forest.

Besides, it does not seem to be easy to conceive in what manner Hobbes's supposition could be realized. Surely, if there be a foundation for any thing laid in the constitution of man's nature it is for family union. The infant of our species continues longer in a helpless state, and requires longer the protecting care of both parents, than the young of any other animal. Before the first child is able to provide for itself a second and a third are produced, and thus the union of the sexes, supposing it at first to have been merely casual, is insensibly confirmed by habit, and cemented by the common interest which both parents take in their offspring. So just is the simple and beautiful statement of the fact given by Montesquieu, "That man is born in society, and there he remains."

From these considerations, it appears that the social union does not take its rise from views of self-interest, but that it forms a necessary part of the condition of man from the constitution of his nature. It is true, indeed, that before he begins to reflect he finds himself connected with society by a thousand ties; so that, independently of any social instinct, prudence would undoubtedly prevent him from abandoning his fellow-creatures. But still it is evident that the social instinct forms a part of human nature, and has a tendency to unite men even when they stand in no need of each other's assistance. Were the case otherwise, pru-

dence and the social disposition would be only different names for the same principle, whereas it is matter of common remark, that although the two principles be by no means inconsistent when kept within reasonable bounds, yet that the former, when it rises to any excess, is in a great measure exclusive of the latter. I hinted too already, that it is in societies where individuals are most independent of each other as to their animal wants, that the social principles operate with the greatest force.

According to the view of the subject now given, the multiplied wants and necessities of man in his infant state, by laying the foundation of the family union, impose upon our species, as a necessary part of their condition, those social connections which are so essential to our improvement and happiness. And, therefore, nothing could be more unphilosophical than the complaints which the ancient epicureans founded upon this circumstance, and which Lucretius has so pathetically expressed in the following verses :

- “ Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
 “ Navita, nudus humi jacet, infans, indigus omni
 “ Vitali auxilio, cum primum in luminis oras
 “ Nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit :
 “ Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum est,
 “ Cui tantum in vitâ restat transire malorum.”*

The philosophy of Pope is in this respect much more pleasing and much more solid :

- “ Heaven forming each on other to depend,
 “ A master, or a servant, or a friend,

* Lib. v. l. 223.



- " Bids each on other for assistance call,
 " Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.
 " Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
 " The common interest, or endear the tie.
 " To these we owe true friendship, love sincere,
 " Each home-felt joy, that life inherits here."*

The considerations now stated afford a beautiful illustration of the beneficent design with which the physical condition of man is adapted to the principles of his moral constitution; an adaptation so striking, that it is not surprising those philosophers, who are fond of simplifying the theory of human nature, should have attempted to account for the origin of these principles from the habits which our external circumstances impose. In this, as in many other instances, their attention has been misled by the spirit of system from those wonderful combinations of means to particular ends, which are everywhere conspicuous in the universe. It is not by the physical condition of man that the essential principles of his mind are formed; but the one is fitted to the other by the same superintending wisdom which adapts the fin of the fish to the water, and the wing of the bird to the air, and which scatters the seeds of the vegetable tribes in those soils and exposures where they are fitted to vegetate. It is not the wants and necessities of his animal being which *create* his social principles, and which produce an artificial and interested league among individuals who are naturally solitary and hostile; but, determined by instinct to society, en-

* See on this subject the *Moralists* of Lord Shaftesbury.

dowed with innumerable principles which have a reference to his fellow-creatures, he is placed by the condition of his birth in that element, where alone the perfection and happiness of his nature are to be found.

In speaking of the lower animals, I before observed, that such of them as are instinctively social discover the secret workings of nature even when removed from the society of their kind. This fact amounts in *their* case to a demonstration of that mutual adaptation of the different parts of nature to each other which I have just remarked. It demonstrates that the structure of their *internal* frame is purposely adjusted to that *external* scene in which they are destined to be placed. As the lamb, when it strikes with its forehead while yet unarmed, proves that it is not its weapons which determine its instincts, but that it has pre-existent instincts suited to its weapons, so when we see an animal deprived of the sight of his fellows cling to a stranger, or disarm, by his caresses, the rage of an enemy, we perceive the workings of a social instinct, not only not superinduced by external circumstances, but manifesting itself in spite of circumstances which are adverse to its operation. The same remark may be extended to man. When in solitude he languishes, and by making companions of the lower animals, or by attaching himself to inanimate objects, strives to fill up the void of which he is conscious. "Were I in a desert," (says an author who, amid all his extravagances

and absurdities, sometimes writes like a *wise* man, and, where the moral feelings are at all concerned, never fails to write like a *good* man)—“ Were I
 “ in a desert, I would find out wherewith in it
 “ to call forth my affections. If I could not do
 “ better, I would fasten them upon some sweet
 “ myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress to con-
 “ nect myself to; I would court their shade, and
 “ greet them kindly for their protection. I would
 “ cut my name upon them, and swear they were
 “ the loveliest trees throughout the desert. If
 “ their leaves withered, I would teach myself to
 “ mourn, and when they rejoiced, I would rejoice
 “ along with them.”

The Count de Lauzun was confined by Louis XIV. for nine years in the Castle of Pignerol, in a small room where no light could enter but from a chink in the roof. In this solitude he attached himself to a spider, and contrived for some time to amuse himself with attempting to tame it, with catching flies for its support, and with superintending the progress of its web. The jailor discovered his amusement, and killed the spider; and the Count used afterwards to declare, that the pang he felt on the occasion could be compared only to that of a mother for the loss of a child.*

* In Delille's poem on *the Imagination*, the same anecdote which is here told of the Count de Lauzun is attributed to Pelisson, a celebrated literary and political character in the reign of Louis XIV. who was confined four years in the Bastille, on account of his connection with the disgraced minister *Fouquet*. See end of Chant. VI.

This anecdote is quoted by Lord Kames in his *Sketches*, and by the late Lord Auckland in his *Principles of Penal Law*. It is remarkable that both these learned and respectable writers should have introduced it into their works on account of the shocking incident of the jailor, and as a proof of the pure and unprovoked malice of which some minds are capable, without taking any notice of it as a beautiful picture of the feelings of a man of sensibility in a state of solitude, and of his disposition to create to himself some object upon which he may rest those affections which have a reference to society.

It will be said that *these* are the feelings of one who has experienced the pleasures of social life, and that no inference can be drawn from such facts in opposition to Hobbes. But if they do not prove in man an instinctive impulse towards society prior to experience, they at least prove that he feels a delight in the society of his fellow-creatures, which no view of self-interest is sufficient to explain.

It does not belong to our present speculation to illustrate the importance of the social union to our improvement and our happiness. Its subserviency to both, (abstracting entirely from its necessity for the complete gratification of our physical wants,) is much greater than we should be disposed at first to apprehend. In proof of this, it is sufficient to mention here its connection with the culture of our intellectual faculties, and with the developement of our moral principles. Illustrations of this may be

drawn from the low state in which both these parts of our nature are generally found in the deaf and dumb, and from the effects which a few months' education sometimes has in unfolding their mental powers. The pleasing change which in the meantime takes place in their once vacant countenances, when animated and lighted up by an active and inquisitive mind, cannot escape the notice of the most careless observer, *

* For an additional illustration of the same thing, see a remarkable case of recovery from deafness and dumbness in the history of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris for the year 1703.

A doctrine similar to that which I have now been controverting, concerning the origin of society, was maintained by some of the ancient sophists, and has found advocates in every age among those writers who wished to depreciate human nature, as well as among many who were anxious to represent man as entirely the creature of education and government, with the view of inculcating implicit and passive obedience to the civil magistrate. In Buchanan's elegant and philosophical Dialogue *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, the question is particularly discussed between the two *interlocutors*, of whom the one ascribes the origin of society to views of utility, (meaning by *utility* the private interest or advantage of the individual :)

“ — *Ipsa utilitas, justi prope mater et æqui,*”

Quæ cœtus hominum primum congregavit, ac jussit

“ *Communi dare signa tuba, defendier iisdem*

“ *Turribus, atque unâ portarum clave teneri.*”

In opposition to which doctrine, Buchanan himself, who is the other speaker, contends with great warmth for the existence of social principles in the nature of man, which, independently of any views of interest, lay a foundation for the social

SECTION III.

The Desire of Esteem.

This principle, as well as those we have now been considering, discovers itself at a very early union. In the course of his argument on this subject he touches on most of the considerations which have been stated above.

“ Magnam profecto videtur quibusdam *utilitas* habere vim, ad societatem publicam humani generis et constituendam et continendam. Sed est, nisi fallor, congregandorum hominum causa longe antiquior, et communitatis eorum inter ipsos multo prius et sanctius vinculum. Alioqui, si commodi sui privatim quisque velit habere rationem, vide, ne illa ipsa utilitas solveret potius quam conjungeret humanam societatem.

“ Ea est quædam naturæ vis, non hominibus modo, sed mansuetioribus etiam aliorum animantium indita, ut si etiam absint utilitatis illa blandimenta, tamen cum sui generis animantibus libenter congregentur. At de cæteris in præsentia nihil attinet disputare: homini certe a natura hanc vim tam videmus alte impressam, ut si quis omnibus iis rebus abundet, quæ vel ad incolumitatem tuendam, vel ad voluptatem et animorum oblectationem comparatæ sunt, sine hominum commercio vitam sibi insuavem sit existimaturus. Quin et illi ipsi, qui cupiditate scientiæ, et studio veri investigandi se a turba removerunt, et in secretos abdiderunt recessus, neque perpetuam animi contentionem ferre diutius potuerunt: nec, si quando eam remisissent, in solitudine se continere poterant: sed illa ipsa secreta sua studia libenter proferebant; et velut in communem utilitatem elaborassent, in medium conferebant sui laboris fructum. Quod si quis est, qui om-

period in infants, who, long before they are able to reflect on *the advantages* resulting from the good opinion of others, and even before they acquire the use of speech, are sensibly mortified by any expression of neglect or contempt. It seems, therefore, to be *an original principle of our nature*, that is, it does not appear to be resolvable into reason and experience, or into any other principle more general than itself. An additional proof of this is the very powerful influence it has over the mind,—an influence more striking than that of any other active principle whatsoever. Even the love of life daily gives way to the desire of esteem, and of an esteem which, as it is only to affect our memories, cannot be supposed to interest our self-love. In what manner the association of ideas should manufacture, out of the other principles of our constitution, a new principle stronger than them all, it is difficult to conceive.

In these observations I have had an eye to the

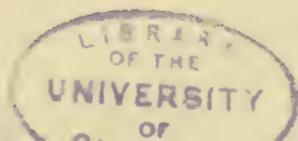
“ nino solitudine capiatur, cœtusque hominum fugiat ac deviet, id magis animi morbo quam vi naturæ, fieri existimo ;
 “ qualem Timonem Atheniensem accepimus, et Corinthium
 “ Bellerophontem ;

“ Qui miser Elæis errabat solus in oris,

“ Ipse suum cor edens, hominum vestigia vitans.”

The foregoing passage seems to me curious, as it shows how completely Buchanan had not only anticipated, but refuted the very far-fetched argument which Hobbes was soon after to draw from his supposed state of nature in support of his slavish maxims of government.

theories of those modern philosophers who represent self-love, or the desire of happiness, as the only original principle of action in man, and who attempt to account for the origin of *all* our other active principles from habit or the association of ideas. That this theory is just in some instances cannot be disputed. Thus, in the case of *avarice* it is manifest that it is from habit alone it derives its influence over the mind; for no man surely was ever brought into the world with an innate love of money. Money is at first desired, merely as the means of obtaining other objects; but, in consequence of being long and constantly accustomed to direct our efforts to its attainment on account of its apprehended utility, we come at last to pursue it as an ultimate end, and frequently retain our attachment to it long after we have lost all relish for the enjoyments it enables us to command. In like manner it has been supposed that the esteem of our fellow-creatures is at first desired on account of its apprehended utility, and that it comes in time to be pursued as an ultimate end, without any reference on our part to the advantages it bestows. In opposition to this doctrine it seems to me to be clear, that as the object of hunger is not happiness but food; as the object of curiosity is not happiness but knowledge; so the object of this principle of action is not happiness, but the esteem and respect of other men. That this is not inconsistent with the analogy of our nature appears from the observations already made



on our appetites and desires ; and that it really is the fact may be proved by various arguments. Before touching, however, on these, I must remark, that I consider this as merely a question of speculative curiosity ; for, upon either supposition, the desire of esteem is equally the work of nature ; and consequently, upon either supposition, it is equally unphilosophical to attempt, by metaphysical subtleties, to counteract her wise and beneficent purposes.

Among the different arguments which concur to prove that the desire of esteem is not wholly resolvable into the association of ideas, one of the strongest has already been hinted at,—the early period of life at which this principle discovers itself—long before we are able to form the idea of *happiness*, far less to judge of the circumstances which have a tendency to promote it. The difference in this respect between avarice and the desire of esteem is remarkable. The former is the vice of old age, and is, comparatively speaking, confined to a few. The latter is one of the most powerful engines in the education of children, and is not less universal in its influence than the principle of curiosity.

The desire, too, of *posthumous* fame, of which no man can entirely divest himself, furnishes an insurmountable objection to the theories already mentioned. It is indeed an objection so obvious to the common sense of mankind, that all the philosophers who have leaned to these theories have employed

their ingenuity in attempting to resolve this desire into an illusion of the imagination produced by habit. This, too, was the opinion of an excellent writer, and still more excellent man, Mr Wollaston, who, from a well-meant, but very mistaken zeal to weaken the influence of this principle of action on human conduct, has been at pains to give as ludicrous an account as possible of its origin. As I differ widely from Wollaston on this point, both in his theoretical speculations, and in the practical inferences he deduces from them, I shall quote the passage at length, and then subjoin a few remarks on it.

“ Men please themselves with notions of immor-
 “ tality, and fancy a perpetuity of fame secured to
 “ themselves by books and testimonies of histori-
 “ ans ; but alas ! it is a stupid delusion when they
 “ imagine themselves *present* and *enjoying* that
 “ fame at the reading of their story after their
 “ death. And beside, in reality, the man is not
 “ known ever the more to posterity, because his
 “ name is transmitted to them : *He* doth not live,
 “ because his *name* does. When it is said Julius
 “ Cæsar subdued Gaul, beat Pompey, and changed
 “ the Roman commonwealth into a monarchy, it is
 “ the same thing as to say the conqueror of Pom-
 “ pey was Cæsar ; that is, Cæsar and the conque-
 “ ror of Pompey are the same thing, and Cæsar
 “ is as much known by the one designation as by
 “ the other. The amount then is only this, that
 “ the conqueror of Pompey conquered Pompey, or
 “ somebody conquered Pompey ; or rather, since

“ Pompey is now as little known as Cæsar, somebody
“ conquered somebody. Such a poor business is
“ this boasted immortality; and such as has been
“ described is the thing called glory among us!
“ The notion of it may serve to excite them who
“ having abilities to serve their country in time of
“ real danger or want, or to do some other good,
“ have yet not philosophy enough to do this upon
“ principles of virtue, or to see through the glories
“ of the world, (just as we excite children by prais-
“ ing them, and as we see many good inventions
“ and improvements proceed from emulation and
“ vanity;) but to discerning men this fame is mere
“ air, and the next remove from nothing, which
“ they despise, if not shun. I think there are two
“ considerations which may justify a desire of *some*
“ glory or honour, and scarce more. When men
“ have performed any *virtuous* actions, or such as
“ sit easy on their memories, it is a reasonable plea-
“ sure to have the testimony of the world added to
“ that of their own consciences, that they have done
“ well. And more than that, if the reputation ac-
“ quired by any qualification or action may pro-
“ duce a man any *real* comfort or advantage, (if it
“ be only protection from the insolence and injus-
“ tice of mankind, or if it enables him, by his au-
“ thority, to do more good to others) to have this
“ privilege must be a great satisfaction, and what
“ a wise and good man may be allowed, as he has
“ opportunity, to propose to himself. But then he
“ proposes it no further than it may be *useful*,

“ and it can be no further useful than he wants it. So that, upon the whole, glory, praise, and the like, are either mere vanity, or only valuable in proportion to defects and wants.” *

It appears from this passage that Wollaston does not consider the desire of posthumous fame as an ultimate fact in our nature, for he proposes a theory to account for it. “ It is,” (says he,) “ a stupid delusion, when men imagine themselves *present* and enjoying that fame at the reading of their story after death.” Mr Smith, too, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, *seems* to think that the desire of a posthumous fame is to be resolved into an illusion of the imagination. “ Men,” (says he,) “ have often voluntarily thrown away life to acquire after death a renown which they could no longer enjoy. Their imagination, in the meantime, anticipated that fame which was thereafter to be bestowed upon them ; those applauses which they were never to hear rang in their ears ; the thoughts of that admiration whose effects they were never to feel, played about their hearts, banished from their breasts the strongest of all natural fears, and transported them to perform actions which seem almost beyond the reach of human nature.” But why have recourse to an illusion of the imagination to account for a principle which the wisest of men find it impossible to

* Wollaston's Religion of Nature delineated, pp. 215, 216, 217. 8th Edit. See Note (A.) at the end of this volume.

extinguish in themselves, or even sensibly to weaken; and none more remarkably than some of those who have employed their ingenuity in attempting to turn it into ridicule? Is it possible that men should imagine themselves *present* and enjoying their fame at the reading of their story after death, without being conscious of this operation of the imagination themselves? Is not this to depart from the plain and obvious appearance of the fact, and to adopt refinements similar to those by which the selfish philosophers explain away all our disinterested affections? We might as well suppose that a man's regard for the welfare of his posterity and friends after his death does not arise from natural affection, but from an illusion of the imagination, leading him to suppose himself still present with them, and a witness of their prosperity.* If we

* The two cases seem to be so exactly parallel, that it is somewhat surprising that no attempt should have been made to extend to the latter principle of action the same ridicule which has been so lavishly bestowed on the former. So far, however, from this being the case, I believe it will be *universally* granted, that where the latter principle fails in producing its natural and ordinary effect on the conduct, there must exist some defect in the rational or moral character, for which no other good qualities can sufficiently atone. "He that careth not for his own house is worse than an infidel." But if this be acknowledged with respect to the interest we take in the concerns of our connections after our own disappearance from the present scene, why judge so harshly of the desire of posthumous fame? Do not the two principles often co-operate in stimulating our active exertions to the very same ends? more especially in those cases (alas! too common,) where the inhe-

have confessedly various other propensities directed to specific objects as ultimate ends, where is the difficulty of conceiving that a desire, directed to the good opinion of our fellow-creatures, (without any reference to the advantages it is to yield us either now or hereafter) may be among the number?

It would not indeed (as I have already hinted) materially affect the argument, although we should suppose with Wollaston, that the desire of posthumous fame was resolvable into an illusion of the imagination. For, whatever be its origin, it was plainly the intention of nature that all men should be in some measure under its influence; and it is perhaps of little consequence whether we regard it as a principle originally implanted by nature, or suppose that she has laid a foundation for it in other principles which belong universally to the species.

How very powerfully it operates, appears not only from the heroical sacrifices to which it has led in every age of the world, but from the conduct of the meanest and most worthless of mankind, who, when they are brought to the scaffold in consequence of the clearest and most decisive evidence of their guilt, frequently persevere to the last, with the terrors of futurity full in their view, in the most solemn protestations of their innocence; and *that* merely in the hope of leaving behind them not a fair, but an equivocal or problematical reputation.

With respect to the other parts of Wollaston's rittance of a respectable name is all that a good man has it in his power to bequeath to his family.

reasoning, that it is only the letters which compose our names that we can transmit to posterity, it is worthy of observation, that, if the argument be good for any thing, it applies equally against the desire of esteem from our contemporaries, excepting in those cases in which we ourselves are personally known by those whose praise we covet, and of whose applause we happen ourselves to be ear-witnesses : And yet, undoubtedly, according to the common judgment of mankind, the love of praise is more peculiarly the mark of a liberal and elevated spirit in cases where the gratification it seeks has nothing to recommend it to those whose ruling passions are interest or the love of flattery.* It is precisely for the same reason that the love of posthumous fame is strongest in the noblest and most exalted characters. If self-love were really the *sole* motive in all our actions, Wollaston's reasoning would prove clearly the absurdity of any concern about our memory. "Such a concern" (as Dr Hut-

* That the desire of esteem, if a fantastic principle of action in the one of these cases, is equally so in the other, is remarked by Pope ; but, instead of availing himself of this consideration to justify the desire of posthumous renown, he employs it as an argument to expose the nothingness of fame in all cases whatsoever.

What's fame ? a fancied life in other's breath,
 A thing beyond us even before our death.
 All that we feel of it begins and ends
 In the small circle of our foes and friends ;
 To all beside as much an empty shade,
 An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead.

Essay on Man, Epistle iv. l. 237.

cheson observes) “no *selfish* being, who had the “modelling of his own nature, would choose to im-
“plant in himself. But, since we have not this
“power, we must be contented to be thus *outwit-*
“*ted by nature into a public interest against our*
“*will.*”*

As to the fact on which Wollaston’s argument proceeds, is it not more philosophical to consider it as affording an additional *stimulus* to the instinctive love of posthumous fame, by holding it up to the imagination as the noblest and proudest boast of human ambition, to be able to entail on the casual combination of letters which compose our name, the respect of distant ages, and the blessings of generations yet unborn? Nor is it an unworthy object of the most rational benevolence to render these letters a sort of magical spell for kindling the emulation of the wise and good wherever they shall reach the human ear.

Nor is it only in this instance that nature has “thus outwitted us” for her own wise and salutary purposes. By a mode of reasoning analogous to that of Wollaston, it would be easy to turn most, if not all, our active principles into ridicule. But what should we gain by the attempt, but a ludicrous exposition of that moral constitution which it has pleased our Maker to give us, and which, the more we study it, will be found to abound the more with marks of wise and beneficent design?

* Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections.

It is fortunate, in such cases, that, although the reasonings of the metaphysician may puzzle the understanding, they produce very little effect on the conduct. He may tell us, for example, that the admiration of female beauty is absurd, because *beauty*, as well as *colour*, is a quality not existing in the object, but in the mind of the spectator ; or, (which brings the case still nearer to that under our consideration,) he may allege that the whole charm of the finest countenance would vanish if it were examined with the aid of a microscope. In all such cases, as well as in the instance referred to by Wollaston, we are determined very powerfully by nature ; in a way, indeed, that our reason cannot explain, but which we never fail to find subservient to valuable ends. For I am far from thinking that it would be of advantage to mankind if Wollaston's views were generally adopted. That the love of glory has sometimes covered the earth with desolation and bloodshed I am ready to grant ; but the actions to which it generally prompts are highly serviceable to the world. Indeed it is only by such actions that an enviable fame is to be acquired.

A strong conviction of this truth has led Dr Akenside to express himself in one of his odes with a warmth which passes perhaps the bounds of strict propriety, but for which a sufficient apology may be found in the poetical enthusiasm by which it was inspired. The ode is said to have been occasioned by a sermon against the love of glory.

“ Come then, tell me, sage divine,
 “ Is it an offence to own
 “ That our bosoms e’er incline
 “ Toward immortal glory’s throne?
 “ For with me, nor pomp nor pleasure,
 “ Bourbon’s might, Braganza’s treasure,
 “ So can fancy’s dream rejoice,
 “ So conciliate reason’s choice,
 “ As one approving word of her impartial voice.

“ If to spurn at noble praise
 “ Be the passport to thy heaven,
 “ Follow thou these gloomy ways ;
 “ No such law to me was given :
 “ Nor I trust shall I deplore me
 “ Faring like my friends before me ;
 “ Nor a holier heaven desire
 “ Than Timoleon’s arms acquire ;
 “ And Tully’s curule chair, and Milton’s golden lyre.”

Having mentioned the name of Milton, I cannot forbear to add, that *he too* has called the love of fame *an infirmity*, although he has qualified this implied censure by calling it *the infirmity of a noble mind*. He has distinctly acknowledged, at the same time, the heroic sacrifices of ease and pleasure to which it has prompted the most distinguished benefactors of the human race.

“ Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
 “ (The last infirmity of noble minds)
 “ To scorn delights and live laborious days.”

I must not dismiss this subject without taking some notice of a theory started by Mr Hume with

respect to the origin of the love of praise ; a theory which applies to this passion even when it has for its object the praise of our contemporaries. “ Of all opinions,” (he observes,) “ those which we form in our own favour, however lofty and presuming, are at bottom the frailest, and the most easily shaken by the contradiction and opposition of others. Our great concern in this case makes us soon alarmed, and keeps our passions upon the watch ; our consciousness of partiality still makes us dread a mistake ; and the very difficulty of judging concerning an object which is never set at a due distance from us, nor is seen in a proper point of view, makes us hearken anxiously to the opinion of others who are better qualified to form opinions concerning us. Hence that strong love of fame with which all mankind are possessed. It is in order to fix and confirm their favourable opinion of themselves, *not from any original passion*, that they seek the applause of others.” *

I think it cannot be doubted that the circumstance here mentioned by Mr Hume adds greatly to the pleasure we derive from the possession of esteem ; but it sufficiently appears from the facts already stated, particularly from the early period of life at which this principle makes its appearance, that there is a satisfaction arising from the possession of esteem perfectly unconnected with the cause referred to by this author. Mr Hume has there-

* Dissertation on the Passions—Essays, Vol. I. p. 202.

fore mistaken a concomitant effect for the cause of the phenomenon in question.

In remarking, however, this concomitant effect, he must be allowed to have called our attention to a fact of some importance in the philosophy of the human mind, and which ought not to be overlooked in analyzing the compounded sentiment of satisfaction we derive from the good opinion of others. Nor is this the only accessory circumstance that enhances the pleasure resulting from the gratification of the original principle. If in those cases where we are somewhat doubtful of the propriety of our own conduct we are anxious to have in our favour the sanction of public opinion,—so, on the other hand, when we are satisfied in our own minds that our conduct has been right, *part* of the pleasure we receive from esteem arises from observing the just views and candid dispositions of others. Nor is it less indisputable, on the contrary supposition, that when, in consequence of calumny and misrepresentation, we fail in obtaining that esteem to which we know ourselves to be entitled, our disappointment at missing our just reward is aggravated, to a wonderful degree, by our sorrow for the injustice and ingratitude of mankind. Still, however, it must be remembered that these are only *accessory* circumstances, and that there is a pleasure resulting from the possession of esteem which is not resolvable into either of them, and which appears to be an ultimate fact in the constitution of our nature.

From the passage formerly quoted from Wollaston it appears that he apprehended the love of fame to be justifiable only in *two* cases. The one is, when we desire it as a confirmation of the rectitude of our own judgments ; the other, when the possession of it can be attended with some real and solid good. But why, I must again repeat, offer any apology for our obeying a natural principle of our constitution, so long as we preserve it under due regulation ?

It is not unworthy of remark, that this principle is one of those with which our fellow-creatures are most disposed to sympathize. With what indignation do we hear the slightest reflection cast on the memory of one who was dear to us, and how sacred do we feel the duty of coming forward in his defence ? Nor is this sympathy confined to the circle of our own acquaintance. It embraces the wise and good of the most remote ages, and prompts us irresistibly to protect their fame from the assaults of envy and detraction. Whatever theory philosophers may adopt as to the origin of this sympathy, its utility in preserving immaculate the reputation of those ornaments of humanity whom mankind look up to as models for imitation is equally indisputable.

I have already said that the desire of esteem is, on the whole, a useful principle of action ; for, although there are many cases in which the public opinion is erroneous and corrupted, there are many more in which it is agreeable to reason, and favour-

able to the interests of virtue and of mankind. The habits, therefore, which this principle of action has a tendency to form are likely, in most instances, to coincide with those which are recommended by a sense of duty. In many men, accordingly, who are very little influenced by higher principles, a regard to the opinion of the world, (or, as we commonly express it, a regard to character,) produces a conduct honourable to themselves and beneficial to society. *

To this observation it may be added, that the habits to which we are trained by the desire of esteem render the acquisition of virtuous habits more easy. The desire of esteem operates in children before they have a capacity to distinguish right from wrong; or at least the former principle of action is much more powerful *in their case* than the latter. Hence it furnishes a most useful and effectual engine in the business of education, more particularly by training us early to exertions of self-command and self-denial. It teaches us, for example, to restrain our appetites within those bounds which decency prescribes, and thus forms us to habits of moderation and temperance. And although our conduct cannot be denominated virtuous so long as a regard to the opinion of others is our only mo-

* Gloria enim solida quædam res et expressa, non adumbrata; ea est consentiens laus bonorum, incorrupta vox bene judicantium de eccellente virtute. Ea virtuti resonat tamquam imago, quæ quia recte factorum *plerumque* comes est, non est bonis viris repudianda.—Cic. Tusc. iii. Cap. ii.

tive, yet the habits we thus acquire in infancy and childhood render it more easy for us to subject our passions to the authority of reason and conscience as we advance to maturity. "In that young man," (said Sylla, speaking of Cæsar,) "who walks the streets with so little regard to modesty, I foresee many Marius's." His idea probably was, that on a temper so completely divested of sympathy with the feelings of others society could lay little hold, and that whatever principle of action should happen to gain the ascendant in his mind was likely to sacrifice to its own gratification the restraints both of honour and of duty.

These, and some other considerations of the same kind, have struck Mr Smith so forcibly that he has been led to resolve our sense of duty into a regard to the good opinion, and a desire to obtain the *sympathy* of our fellow-creatures. I shall afterwards have occasion to examine the principal arguments he alleges in support of his conclusions. At present I shall only remark, that, although his theory may account for the desire which all men, both good and bad, have to *assume the appearance of virtue*, it never can explain the origin of our notions of duty and of moral obligation. One striking proof of this is, that the love of fame can only be completely gratified by the *actual* possession of those qualities for which we wish to be esteemed; and that, when we receive praises which we know we do not deserve, we are conscious of a sort of fraud or imposition on the world.

All fame is foreign but of true desert,
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart.

In farther confirmation of the same doctrine it may be observed, that, although the desire of esteem is often an useful auxiliary to our sense of duty, and although, in most of our good actions, the two principles are perhaps more or less blended together, yet the merit of virtuous conduct is always enhanced, in the opinion of mankind, when it is discovered in the more private situations of life, where the individual cannot be suspected of any views to the applauses of the world. Even Cicero, in whose mind vanity had at least its due sway, has borne testimony to this truth. “ Mihi
“ quidem laudabilia videntur omnia, quæ sine
“ venditione et sine populo teste fiunt: non quo
“ fugiendus sit (omnia enim benefacta in luce se
“ collocari volunt) sed tamen nullum theatrum vir-
“ tuti conscientia majus est.”* So far, therefore, are the desire of esteem and the sense of duty from being radically the same principle of action, that the former is only an *auxiliary* to the latter, and is always understood to diminish the merit of the agent in proportion to the influence it had over his determinations.

An additional proof of this may be derived from the miserable effects produced on the conduct by

* Tusc. Disp. Lib. xi. Cap. 26. The same remark is made by Pliny in one of his epistles, where it is illustrated by one of the most beautiful anecdotes recorded in the annals of our species. See note (B.) at the end of this volume.

the desire of fame, when it is the *sole*, or even the *governing*, principle of our actions. In this case, indeed, it seldom fails to disappoint its own purposes, for a lasting fame is scarcely to be acquired without a steady and consistent conduct, and such a conduct can only arise from a conscientious regard to the suggestions of our own breasts. The pleasure, therefore, which a being capable of reflection derives from the possession of fame, so far from being the original motive to worthy actions, presupposes the existence of other and of nobler motives in the mind. *

Nor is this all ; when a competition happens between the desire of fame, and a regard to duty, if we sacrifice the latter to the former we are filled with remorse and self-condemnation, and the ap-

* What the Roman poet has so finely said of the *regulated influence* which the love of literary applause had on his own mind ought to be the language of every man, into whatever walk of ambition his fortune may have thrown him.

“ Non ego, cum scribo, si forte quid aptius exit,
 “ (Quando hæc rara avis est) si quid tamen aptius exit
 “ Laudari metuam ; neque enim mihi cornea fibra est ;
 “ Sed recti finemque extremumque esse recuso
 “ EUGE tuum et BELLE.”

PERSIUS, *Sat.* I. l. 45.

I need scarcely remind my readers that these are the words of the same writer, who has in other parts of his works, (and I think in perfect consistency with the sentiment expressed in the foregoing lines,) inculcated the severest precepts of the stoical school.

Non si quid turbida Roma
 Elevet, accedas : examenve improbum in illâ
 Castiges trutinâ : NEC TE QUÆSIVERIS EXTRA.

Ibid. l. 5.

plauses of the world afford us but an empty and unsatisfactory recompence; whereas a steady adherence to the right, even although it should accidentally expose us to calumny, never fails to be its own reward. Whether, therefore, we regard our lasting happiness, or our lasting fame, the precept of Cicero is equally deserving of our attention.

“Neither make it your study to secure the applauses of the vulgar, nor rest your hopes of happiness on rewards which men can bestow. Let virtue, by her own native attractions, allure you in the paths of honour. What others may say of you is *their* concern, not *yours*; nor is it worth your while to be out of humour for the topics which your conduct may supply to their conversation.”—“*Neque sermonibus vulgi dederis te, nec in præmiis humanis spem posueris rerum tuarum; suis te oportet illecebris ipsa virtus trahat ad verum decus. Quid de te alii loquantur ipsi videant, sed loquentur tamen.*”*

SECTION IV.

The Desire of Power.

The manner in which the idea of Power is at first introduced into the mind has been long a perplexing subject of speculation to metaphysicians, and has given rise to some of the most subtle disquisitions of the human understanding. But,

* *Somn. Scip. Cap. vii.*

although it be difficult to explain its origin, the idea itself is familiar to the most illiterate, even at the earliest period of life ; and the desire of possessing the corresponding object seems to be one of the strongest principles of human conduct.

In general, it may be observed, that, wherever we are led to consider ourselves as the authors of any effect, we feel a sensible pride or exultation in the consciousness of *power*, and the pleasure is in general proportioned to the greatness of the effect, compared with the smallness of our exertion.

What is commonly called the pleasure of activity is in truth the pleasure of *power*. Mere exercise, which produces no sensible effect, is attended with no enjoyment, or a very slight one. The enjoyment, such as it is, is only corporeal.

The infant, while still on the breast, delights in exerting its little strength on every object it meets with, and is mortified when any accident convinces it of its own imbecility. The pastimes of the boy are almost, without exception, such as suggest to him the idea of his *power*. When he throws a stone, or shoots an arrow, he is pleased with being able to produce an effect at a distance from himself ; and, while he measures with his eye the amplitude or range of his missile weapon, contemplates with satisfaction the extent to which his power has reached. It is on a similar principle that he loves to bring his strength into comparison with that of his fellows, and to enjoy the consciousness of superior prowess. Nor need we search in the

malevolent dispositions of our nature for any other motive to the apparent acts of cruelty which he sometimes exercises over the inferior animals,—the sufferings of the animal, in such cases, either entirely escaping his notice, or being overlooked in that state of pleasurable triumph which the wanton abuse of *power* communicates to a weak and unreflecting judgment. The active sports of the youth captivate his fancy by suggesting similar ideas,—of strength of body, of force of mind, of contempt of hardship and of danger. And accordingly such are the occupations in which Virgil, with a characteristic propriety, employs his young Ascanius.

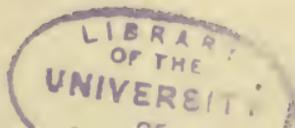
“ At puer Ascanius mediis in vallibus acri

“ Gaudet equo ; jamque hos cursu, jam præterit illos ;

“ Spumantemque dari pécora inter inertia votis

“ Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem.”

As we advance in years, and as our animal powers lose their activity and vigour, we gradually aim at extending our influence over others by the superiority of fortune and station, or by the still more flattering superiority of intellectual endowments, by the force of our understanding, by the extent of our information, by the arts of persuasion, or the accomplishments of address. What but the idea of power pleases the orator in managing the reins of an assembled multitude, when he silences the reason of others by superior ingenuity, bends to his purposes their desires and passions,



and, without the aid of force, or the splendour of rank, becomes the arbiter of the fate of nations!

To the same principle we may trace, in part, the pleasure arising from the discovery of general theorems in the sciences. Every such discovery puts us in possession of innumerable particular truths or particular facts, and gives us a ready command of a great stock of knowledge, of which we could not, with equal ease, avail ourselves before. It increases, in a word, our *intellectual power* in a way very analogous to that in which a machine or engine increases the mechanical power of the human body.

The discoveries we make in natural philosophy have, beside this effect, a tendency to enlarge the sphere of our power over the material universe; first, by enabling us to accommodate our conduct to the established course of physical events; and secondly, by enabling us to call to our aid many natural powers or agents as instruments for the accomplishment of our purposes.

In general every discovery we make with respect to the laws of nature, either in the material or moral worlds, is an accession of power to the human mind, inasmuch as it lays the foundation of prudent and effectual conduct in circumstances where, without the same means of information, the success of our proceedings must have depended on chance alone. The *desire of power*, therefore, comes, in the progress of reason and experience, to act as an auxiliary to our instinctive *desire of knowledge*;

and it is with a view to strengthen and confirm this alliance that Bacon so often repeats his favourite maxim, that *knowledge* and *power* are synonymous or identical terms.

The idea of power is, *partly* at least, the foundation of our attachment to *property*. It is not enough for us to have the *use* of an object. We desire to have it completely at our own disposal, without being responsible to any person whatsoever for the purposes to which we may choose to turn it. "There is an unspeakable pleasure" (says Addison) "in calling any thing one's own. A freehold, though it be but in ice and snow, will make the owner pleased in the possession, and stout in the defence of it."

Avarice is a particular modification of the *desire of power*, arising from the various functions of *money* in a commercial country. Its influence as an active principle is greatly strengthened by habit and association, insomuch that the original desire of power is frequently lost in the acquired propensities to which it gives birth; the possession of *money* becoming, in process of time, an ultimate object of pursuit, and continuing to stimulate the activity of the mind after it has lost a relish for every other species of exertion.*

* Berkeley in his *Querist* has started the same idea.

"Whether the real end and aim of men be not *power*?
 "and whether he who could have every thing else at his wish
 "or will would value *money*?"

To this query the good bishop has subjoined another,

The love of liberty proceeds in part, if not wholly, from the same source ; from a desire of being able to do whatever is agreeable to our own inclination. Slavery mortifies us, because it limits our power.

Even the love of tranquillity and retirement has been resolved by Cicero into the desire of power. “ Multi autem et sunt et fuerunt, qui eam, quam dico, tranquillitatem expetentes, a negotiis publicis se removerint, ad otiumque perfugerint. His idem propositum fuit quod regibus, ut ne quâ re egerent, ne cui parerent, libertate uterentur ; cujus proprium est sic vivere ut velis. Quare, cum hoc commune sit potentiæ cupidorum cum iis quos dixi otiosis ; alteri se adipisci id posse arbitrantur, si opes magnas habeant, alteri, si contenti sint et suo, et parvo.” *

The idea of power is also, *in some degree*, the foundation of *the pleasure of virtue*. We love to be at liberty to follow our own inclinations, without being subject to the control of a superior ; but even this is not sufficient to our happiness. When we are led by vicious habits, or by the force of passion, to do what reason disapproves, we are sensible of a mortifying subjection to the inferior principles of our nature, and feel our own littleness and weak-

which one would hardly have expected from a writer so zealously attached to tory and high church principles.

“ Whether the public aim in every well-governed state be not, that each member, according to his just pretensions and industry, should have POWER ?”

Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.

* De Off. Lib. I. Cap. xx. et xxi.

ness. On the other hand, *he that ruleth his spirit* feels himself *greater than he that taketh a city*. “It is pleasant,” (says Dr Tillotson,) “to be virtuous and good, because *that* is to excel many others. It is pleasant to grow better, because *that* is to excel ourselves. It is pleasant to mortify and subdue our appetites, because *that* is victory. It is pleasant to command our passions, and keep them within the bounds of reason, because this is *empire*.”

From the observations now made, it appears that the desire of power is subservient to important purposes in our constitution, and is one of the principal sources both of our intellectual and moral improvements. An examination of the effects which it produces on society would open views very strikingly illustrative of benevolent intention in the Author of our frame. I shall content myself, however, with remarking, that the general aspect of *the fact* affords a very favourable view of human nature. When we consider how much *more* every man has it in his power to *injure* others than to promote their interests, it must appear manifest that society could not possibly subsist unless the benevolent affections had a very decided predominance over those principles which give rise to competition and enmity. Whoever reflects duly on this consideration, will, if I do not deceive myself, be inclined to form conclusions concerning the dispositions of his fellow-creatures very different from the

representations of them to be found in the writings of some gloomy and misanthropical moralists.

SECTION V.

Emulation, or the Desire of Superiority.

This principle of action is classed by Dr Reid with the affections, and is considered by him as a *malevolent affection*.* He tells us, however, that he does not mean by this epithet to insinuate that there is any thing *criminal* in emulation any more than in resentment when excited by an injury; but he thinks that it involves a sentiment of ill-will to our rival, and makes use of the word *malevolent* to express this sentiment, as the language affords no softer epithet to convey the idea.

I own it appears to me that emulation, considered as a principle of action, ought to be classed with the *desires*, and not with the *affections*. It is indeed frequently accompanied with a *malevolent* affection; but it is the desire of *superiority* which is the *active* principle, and the affection is only a concomitant circumstance.

I do not even think that this malevolent affection is a *necessary* concomitant of the desire of superiority. It is possible, surely, to conceive, (although the case may happen but rarely,) that emulation may take place between men who are

* *Essays on the Active Powers*, pp. 166, 167, 4to Ed.

united by the most cordial friendship, and without a single sentiment of ill-will disturbing their harmony.

When emulation is accompanied with malevolent affection it assumes the name of *envy*. The distinction between these two principles of action is accurately stated by Dr Butler. “ Emulation is “ merely the desire of superiority over others, with “ whom we compare ourselves. To desire the attainment of this superiority by the particular “ means of others being brought down below our “ own level is the distinct notion of *envy*. From “ whence it is easy to see, that the real end which “ the natural passion emulation, and which the unlawful one envy, aims at is exactly the same; “ and consequently, that to do mischief is not the “ end of envy, but merely the means it makes use “ of to attain its end.” * Dr Reid himself seems to have clearly perceived the distinction, although in other parts of the same section he has lost sight of it again. “ He who runs a race,” (says he,) “ feels “ uneasiness at seeing another outstrip him. This “ is uncorrupted nature, and the work of God within him. But this uneasiness may produce either “ of two very different effects. It may incite him “ to make more vigorous exertions, and to strain “ every nerve to get before his rival. This is fair “ and honest emulation. This is the effect it is intended to produce. But if he has not fairness “ and candour of heart, he will look with an evil

* Sermon I. on Human Nature.

“ eye on his competitor, and will endeavour to trip
 “ him, or to throw a stumbling block in his way.
 “ This is pure envy, the most malignant passion
 “ that can lodge in the human breast, which de-
 “ vours, as its natural food, the fame and the hap-
 “ piness of those who are most deserving of our
 “ esteem.” *

In quoting these passages, I would not be understood to represent this distinction between emulation and envy as a novelty in the science of ethics; for the very same distinction was long ago stated with admirable conciseness and justness by Aristotle; whose *definitions*, (I shall take this opportuni-

* Reid on the Active Powers, p. 170. Dr Beattie, in his Elements of Moral Science, after stating very correctly the speculative distinction between emulation and envy, observes with great truth, that it is extremely difficult to preserve the former wholly unmixed with the latter, and that emulation, though entirely different from envy, is very apt, through the weakness of our nature, to degenerate into it. To this remark he subjoins the following very striking practical reflection. “ Let the man,” (says he,) “ who thinks
 “ he is actuated by generous emulation only, and wishes
 “ to know whether there be anything of envy in the case,
 “ examine his own heart, and ask himself whether his friends
 “ on becoming, though in an honourable way, his competitors,
 “ have less of his affection than they had before; whether
 “ he be gratified by hearing them depreciated; whether he
 “ would wish their merit less, that he might the more easily
 “ equal or excel them; and whether he would have a more
 “ sincere regard for them if the world were to acknowledge
 “ him their superior? If his heart answer all or any of these
 “ questions in the affirmative, it is time to look out for a cure,
 “ for the symptoms of envy are but too apparent.”

ty of remarking by the way,) however censurable they may frequently be when they relate to *physical* subjects, are, in most instances, peculiarly happy when they relate to *moral* ideas. “Æmulatio bonum quiddam est, et bonis viris convenit; at invidere improbum est, et hominum improborum; nam æmulans talem efficere se studet, ut ipsa bona quoque nanciscatur; at invidens studet efficere, ut ne alter boni quid habeat.*

Among the lower animals we see many symptoms of emulation, but in *them* its effects are perfectly insignificant when compared with those it produces on human conduct. Their emulation is chiefly confined to swiftness,† strength, or favour with their females. I think, too, among *dogs* we may perceive something like jealousy or rivalry in courting the favour of man. In our own race emulation operates in an infinite variety of directions, and is one of the principal sources of human improvement.

Before leaving the subject, I think it of conse-

* Επεικειες εστιν ο ζηλος, και επεικειων το δε φθονειν φαυλον, και φαυλων ο μεν γαρ αυτον παρασκευαζει δια τον ζηλον τυγχανειν των αγαθων ο δε τον πλησιον μη εχειν δια τον φθονον &c. &c. Aristot. Rhetor. Lib. ii. Cap. xi. The whole chapter is excellent. I have adopted in the text the Latin version of Buhle. See the Bipontian Edition of Aristotle.

† One of the most remarkable instances of this that I have read of is the emulation of the race horses at Rome when run without riders. This emulation is even said to be inspirited by the concourse of spectators.—See Observations made in a Tour to Italy, by the celebrated M. de la Condamine.

quence again to repeat, that, notwithstanding the speculative distinction I have been endeavouring to make between emulation and envy, the former disposition is so seldom altogether unmixed with the latter, that men who are conscious of possessing original powers of thinking can scarcely be at too much pains to draw a veil over their claims to originality, if they wish to employ their talents to the best advantage in the service of mankind.

“ Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
“ And things unknown propos'd as things forgot.”*

In the observations which I have hitherto made upon emulation, I have proceeded on the supposition, that the subject of competition is the personal qualities of the individual. These, however, are not the great objects of ambition with the bulk of mankind, nor perhaps do they occasion jealousies and enmities so fatal to our morals and our happiness, as those which are occasioned by the seemingly partial and unjust distribution of the goods of fortune. To see the natural rewards of industry and genius fall to the share of the weak and the profligate can scarcely fail to excite a regret in the best regulated tempers; and to those who are disposed (as every man perhaps is in some degree) to over-rate their own pretensions, and to undervalue those of their neighbours, this regret is a source of discontent and misery which no measure of external prosperity is sufficient to remove. The feeling, when it does not

* Pope's Essay on Criticism.

lead to any act of injustice or dishonour, is so intimately connected with our sense of merit and demerit, that many allowances for it will be made by those who reflect candidly on the common infirmities of humanity; and much indulgence is due from the prosperous to their less fortunate rivals. So much indeed is this indulgence recommended to us by all the best principles of our nature, and so painful is the reflection that we are even the innocent cause of disquiet to others, that it may be doubted whether the constraint and embarrassment produced by great and sudden accessions of prosperity be not more than sufficient to counterbalance any solid addition they are likely to bring to our own happiness.*

Human life has been often likened to a race, and the parallel holds, not only in the general resemblance, but in many of the minuter circumstances. When the horses first start from the barrier how easy and sportive are their sallies,—sometimes one taking the lead, sometimes another! If they happen to run abreast, their contiguity seems only the effect of the social instinct. In proportion, however, as they advance in their career, the spirit of

* See an admirable passage in Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, (Vol. I. p. 94. et seq. Sixth edition.) "The man who, "by some sudden revolution of fortune, is lifted up all at once," &c. &c.

In Bacon's *Essays* there is an article on *Envy*, abounding with original, and, in the main, just reflections. Even those which are somewhat questionable may be useful in suggesting materials of thought to others.

emulation becomes gradually more apparent, till at length, as they draw near to the goal, every sinew and every nerve is strained to the utmost, and it is well if the competition closes without some suspicion of jostling and foul play on the part of the winner.

How exact and melancholy a picture of the race of ambition ; of the insensible and almost inevitable effect of political rivalship in extinguishing early friendships ; and of the increasing eagerness with which men continue to grasp at the palm of victory till the fatal moment arrives when it is to drop from their hands for ever !

As we have artificial *appetites* so we have also artificial *desires*. Whatever conduces to the attainment of any object of natural desire is itself desired on account of its subservience to this end, and frequently comes in process of time to be regarded as valuable in itself, independent of this subservience. It is thus (as was formerly observed) that wealth becomes with many an ultimate object of desire, although it is undoubtedly valued at first merely on account of its subservience to the attainment of other objects. In like manner we are led to desire dress, equipage, retinue, furniture, on account of the estimation in which they are supposed to be held by the public. Dr Hutcheson calls such desires *secondary* desires, and accounts for their ori-

gin in the way I have now mentioned. “ Since we
“ are capable” (says he) “ of reflection, memory,
“ observation, and reasoning about the distant ten-
“ dencies of objects and actions, and not confined to
“ things present, there must arise, in consequence
“ of our original desires, *secondary* desires of every
“ thing imagined to be useful to gratify any of the
“ primary desires, and that with strength propor-
“ tioned to the several original desires, and the ima-
“ gined usefulness or necessity of the advantageous
“ object.”—“ Thus,” (he continues,) “ as soon as we
“ come to apprehend the use of wealth or power to
“ gratify any of our original desires we must also
“ desire them. Hence arises the universality of
“ the desires of *wealth and power*, since they are
“ the means of gratifying all other desires.” The
only thing exceptionable in the foregoing passage
is, that the author classes the desire of power with
that of wealth ; whereas I apprehend it to be clear,
according to Hutcheson’s own definition, that the
former is a primary desire, and the latter a second-
ary one. Avarice, indeed, (as I already remarked,)
is but a particular modification of the desire of
power generated by the conventional value which
attaches to money in the progress of society, in
consequence of which it becomes the immediate
and the habitual object of pursuit in all the various
departments of professional industry.

The author also of the preliminary dissertation
prefixed to King’s *Origin of Evil* attempts to ex-
plain, by means of the association of ideas, the ori-

gin not only of avarice, but of the desire of knowledge, and of the desire of fame, both of which I have endeavoured to show, in the preceding pages, are justly entitled to rank with the primary and most simple elements of our active constitution. That they, as well as all the other original principles of our nature, are very powerfully influenced by association and habit, is a point about which there can be no dispute; and hence arises the plausibility of those theories which would represent them as wholly factitious. *

* Dr Hartley's once celebrated work entitled "Observations on Man," in which he has pushed the theory of association to so extravagant a length, and which, not many years ago, found so many enthusiastic admirers in England, seems to have owed its existence to the Dissertation here referred to.

"The work here offered to the public," (he tells us himself in his preface,) "consists of papers written at different times, but taking their rise from the following occasion.

"About eighteen years ago I was informed, that the Rev. Mr Gay, then living, asserted the possibility of deducing all our intellectual pleasures and pains from association. This put me upon considering the power of association. Mr Gay published his sentiments on this matter, about the same time, in a Dissertation on the Fundamental Principle of Virtue, prefixed to Mr Archdeacon Law's Translation of Archbishop King's Origin of Evil."

CHAPTER THIRD.

OF OUR AFFECTIONS.

SECTION I.

General Observations.

UNDER this title are comprehended all those active principles whose direct and ultimate object is the communication either of enjoyment or of suffering to any of our fellow-creatures. According to this definition, which has been adopted by some eminent writers, and among others by Dr Reid, resentment, revenge, hatred, belong to the class of our affections as well as gratitude or pity. Hence a distinction of the affections into benevolent and malevolent. I shall afterwards mention some considerations which lead me to think that the distinction requires some limitations in the statement.

Our benevolent affections are various, and it would not perhaps be easy to enumerate them completely. The parental and the filial affections—

the affections of kindred—love—friendship—patriotism—universal benevolence—gratitude—pity to the distressed, are some of the most important. Besides these there are peculiar benevolent affections excited by those moral qualities in other men, which render them either amiable or respectable, or objects of admiration.

In the foregoing enumeration, it is not to be understood that all the benevolent affections particularly specified are stated as original principles, or ultimate facts in our constitution. On the contrary, there can be little doubt that several of them may be analyzed into the same general principle differently modified, according to the circumstances in which it operates. This, however, (notwithstanding the stress which has been sometimes laid upon it,) is chiefly a question of arrangement. Whether we suppose these principles to be all ultimate facts, or some of them to be resolvable into other facts more general, they are equally to be regarded as constituent parts of human nature, and, upon either supposition, we have equal reason to admire the wisdom with which that nature is adapted to the situation in which it is placed. The laws which regulate the acquired perceptions of sight are surely as much a part of our frame as those which regulate any of our original perceptions; and although they require for their development a certain degree of experience and observation in the individual, the uniformity of the result shows that there is nothing arbitrary or accidental in their origin.

The question, indeed, concerning the origin of our different affections, leads to some curious disquisitions, but is of very subordinate importance to those inquiries which relate to their nature and laws and uses. In many philosophical systems, however, it seems to have been considered as the most interesting subject of discussion connected with this part of the human constitution.

Before we proceed to consider any of our benevolent affections in detail, I shall make a few observations on two circumstances in which they all agree. In the *first place*, they are all accompanied with an agreeable feeling; and, *secondly*, they imply a desire of happiness or of good to their respective objects.*

I. That the exercise of all our kind affections is accompanied with an agreeable feeling will not be questioned. Next to a good conscience it constitutes the principal part of human happiness. With what satisfaction do we submit to fatigue and danger in the service of those we love, and how many cares do even the most selfish voluntarily bring on themselves by their attachment to others! So much indeed of our happiness is derived from this source, that those authors whose object is to furnish *amusement* to the mind avail themselves of these affections as one of the chief vehicles of pleasure. Hence the principal charm of *tragedy* and of every other

* See Reid on the Active Powers, p. 144. 4to Edition.

species of pathetic composition. How far it is of use to separate in this manner “the *luxury of pity*” from the opportunities of active exertion may perhaps be doubted. *My own* opinion on this question I have stated at some length in the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*.*

Without entering, however, in this place into the argument I have there endeavoured to support, I shall only remark at present, that the pleasures of kind affection are by no means confined (as men of loose principles are too apt to flatter themselves) to the virtuous part of our species. They mingle also with our criminal indulgences, and often mislead the young and thoughtless by the charms they impart to vice and folly. It is indeed from this very quarter that the chief dangers to morals are to be apprehended in early life; and it is a melancholy consideration to add, that these dangers are not a little increased by the amiable and attractive qualities by which nature often distinguishes those unfortunate men who would seem, on a superficial view, to be her peculiar favourites.

Nor is it only when the kind affections meet with circumstances favourable to their operation that the exercise of them is a source of enjoyment. Contrary to the analogy of most, if not of all, our other active principles, there is a degree of pleasure mixed with the pain even in those cases in which they are disappointed in the attainment of their

* Vol. I. Chap. vii Section v.

object. Nay, in such cases it often happens that the pleasure predominates so far over the pain as to produce a mixed emotion, on which a wounded heart loves to dwell. When death, for example, has deprived us of the society of a friend, we derive some consolation for our loss from the recollection of his virtues, which awakens in our mind all those kind affections which the sight of him used to inspire; and in such a situation the indulgence of these affections is preferred not only to every lighter amusement, but to every other social pleasure. *Heu quanto minus est cum reliquis versari quam tui meminisse!* The final cause of the agreeable emotion connected with the exercise of benevolence in all its various modes was evidently to induce us to cultivate with peculiar care a class of our active principles so immediately subservient to the happiness of society. *

II. All our benevolent affections imply a desire of happiness to their respective objects. Indeed it is from this circumstance they derive their name.

The philosophers who have endeavoured to resolve our appetites and desires into self-love have

* See Lucan's picturesque and pathetic description of the behaviour of Cornelia when she retired to the hold of the ship to indulge her grief in solitude and darkness after the murder of Pompey.

“ Caput ferali obduxit amictu,

“ Decevitque pati tenebras, puppisque cavernis

“ Delituit; sævumque arcè complexa dolorem

“ Perfruitur lacrymis, et amat pro conjuge luctum, &c. &c.

Pharsalia, Lib. ix. v. 109.

given a similar account of our benevolent affections. It is evident that this amounts to a denial of their existence as a separate class of active principles ; for when a thing is desired not on its own account, but as instrumental to the attainment of something else, it is not the desire of the *means*, but that of the *end*, which is in this case the principle of action.

In the course of my observations on the different affections, when I come to consider them particularly, I shall endeavour to show that this account of their origin is extremely wide of the truth. In the meantime it may be worth while to remark in general, how strongly it is opposed by the analogy of the other active powers already examined. We have found that the preservation of the individual and the continuation of the species are not entrusted to self-love and reason alone, but that we are endowed with various appetites which, without any reflection on our part, impel us to their respective objects. We have also found, with respect to the acquisition of knowledge (on which the perfection of the individual and the improvement of the species essentially depend,) that it is not entrusted solely to self-love and benevolence, but that we are prompted to it by the implanted principle of curiosity. It farther appeared, that, in addition to our sense of duty, another incentive to worthy conduct is provided in the desire of esteem, which is not only one of our most powerful principles of action, but continues to operate in full force to the last mo-

ment of our being. Now, as men were plainly intended to live in society, and as the social union could not subsist without a mutual interchange of good offices, would it not be reasonable to expect, agreeably to the analogy of our nature, that so important an end would not be entrusted solely to the slow deductions of reason, or to the metaphysical refinements of self-love, but that some provision would be made for it, in a particular class of active principles, which might operate, like our appetites and desires, independently of our reflection? To say this of parental affection or of pity is saying nothing more in their favour than what was affirmed of hunger and thirst, that they prompt us to particular objects without any reference to our own enjoyment.

I have not offered these objections to the selfish theory with any view of exalting our natural affections into *virtues*; for, in so far as they arise from original constitution, they confer no merit whatever on the individual any more than his appetites or desires:—at the same time (as Dr Reid has observed,) there is a manifest gradation in the sentiments of respect with which we regard these different constituents of character.

Our *desires* (it was formerly observed) although not virtuous in themselves, are manly and respectable, and plainly of greater dignity than our animal appetites. In like manner it may be remarked that our benevolent affections, although not *meritorious*, are highly *amiable*. A want of atten-

tion to the essential difference between the ideas expressed by these two words has given rise to much confusion in different systems of Moral Philosophy, more particularly in the systems of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

As it would lead me into too minute a detail to consider our different benevolent affections separately, I shall confine myself to a few detached remarks on some of the most important.

The *first* place is undoubtedly due to what we commonly call *natural affection*, including under the term the affections of parents and children, and those of other near relations.

SECTION II.

Of the Affections of Kindred.

The parental affection is common to us with most of the brutes, although with them it is variously modified according to their respective natures, and according as the care of the parent is more or less necessary for the preservation and nurture of the young. Cicero remarks that this is no more than might have been expected from that beneficent providence everywhere conspicuous in nature. “Hæc inter se congruere non possunt, ut
“natura et procreari vellet et diligi procreatos non
“curaret.”*—“Commune animantium omnium est

* De Finibus, 3.

“ conjunctionis appetitus, et cura quædam eorum
 “ quæ procreata sunt.” *

When I ascribe parental affection to our own species, I do not mean to insinuate that there is any foundation for those stories which poets have feigned of particular discriminating feelings which have enabled parents and children, after a long absence, or when they have never met before, mutually to recognize each other. The parental affection takes its rise from a *knowledge* of the relation in which the parties stand, and it is very powerfully confirmed by *habit*. All that I assert is, that it results naturally from that knowledge, and from the habits superinduced by the relation which the parties bear to each other ; in which sense it may be justly said, (to adopt a beautiful and philosophical expression of Dr Ferguson’s,) that “ natural affection springs up in the soul as the “ milk springs in the breast of the mother.” † Accordingly, it operates, in a great measure, independently of reflection and of a sense of duty. Reason, indeed, might satisfy a man that his children are particularly entrusted to his care, and that it is his duty to rear and educate them ; as reason might have induced him to eat and drink without the appetites of hunger and thirst ; but reason cannot create an affection any more than an appetite : And, considering how little the conduct of mankind is in general influenced by a sense of duty,

* De Offic. I. 4.

† Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. I. p. 31.

there are good grounds for thinking, that, were not reason in this case aided by a very powerful implanted principle, a very small proportion out of the whole number of children brought into the world would arrive at maturity.

How much this affection depends upon *habit* appears from this, that, when the care of a child is devolved upon one who is not its parent, the parental affection is, in a great measure, transferred along with it. "This," (as Dr Reid observes,) "is plainly the work of nature, and is an additional provision made by her for the continuation and preservation of the species."

The parental affection, as we have hitherto considered it, is common to both sexes; but it cannot, I think, be denied, that it is in the heart of *the mother* that it exists in the most perfect strength and beauty. Indeed I do not think that those have gone too far who have pronounced "*the heart of a good mother to be the master-piece of nature's works.*"* There is no form, certainly, in which humanity appears so lovely, or presents so fair a copy of the Divine image after which it was made.

Nor are these affections of parent and child useful solely for the preservation of the race. They form the heart in infancy for its more extensive social duties, and gradually prepare it for those affections which constitute the character of the good citizen; not to mention that, in every period

* See Marmontel, *Leçons sur la Morale*, p. 132, et seq.

of life, it is our private attachments which furnish the most powerful of all incentives to patriotism and heroic virtue. Nothing, therefore, could be more unphilosophical than the opinion of Plato, that the indulgence of the domestic charities unfitted men for the discharge of their political duties; an opinion which he carried so far as to propose, that, as soon as a child was born, it should be separated from its parents, and educated ever after at the expence of the public. It has been often observed that persons brought up in foundling hospitals have seldom turned well out in the world; and although I doubt not that various splendid exceptions to this proposition may be quoted, I am inclined to think, that, if the special accidents connected with these exceptions were fully known, they would be found, instead of invalidating, to confirm the general rule. One thing, at least, is obvious, that, in that best of all educations which nature has provided for us in the ordinary circumstances of our condition, it formed an important part of her plan to soften the heart betimes amid the scenes of domestic life; and, accordingly, it is under the shelter of these scenes that all the social virtues may be seen to shoot up with the greatest vigour and luxuriancy. Even the sterner qualities of fortitude and bravery, so far from being inconsistent with a warm and susceptible heart, are almost its inseparable attendants, insomuch that we always *expect* to find them united. How true, in this respect, to all the best feelings of our nature,

is the beautiful story recorded of Epaminondas, that, after the battle of Leuctra, he thanked the gods that his parents still survived to enjoy his fame!

It is remarked by Dr Beattie that Homer and Virgil, the most accurate of all observers, and the most faithful of all painters of human character, always unite the domestic attachments with the more splendid virtues of their heroes. The scene between Hector and Andromache, and the interview between Ulysses and his father after an absence of twenty years, are pronounced by the same excellent critic to be the finest passages in the Iliad and Odyssey. He observes farther, that, in the portrait of Achilles, his love to his parents forms one of the most prominent and distinguishing features, and that "this single circumstance throws "an amiable softness into the most terrific human "personage that was ever described in poetry." How powerful a charm the Æneid derives from the same source it is needless to mention, as it is the chief ground-work of the interest inspired by the whole texture of the fable. In no instance is it more affecting than in the address of Euryalus to Nisus before they set out on their desperate expedition by night; and, I believe, few will deny that the pious concern which he expresses for his aged parent in that moment of approaching peril accords perfectly with the gallantry of his spirit, and interests us more than any thing else in his fortunes.

“ Contra quem talia fatur

“ Euryalus : me nulla dies tam fortibus ausis

“ Dissimilem arguerit ; tantùm fortuna secunda,
 “ Haud adversa cadat : sed te super omnia dona,
 “ Unum oro : Genetrix Priami de gente vetustâ
 “ Est mihi, quam miseram tenuit non Ilia tellus,
 “ Mecum excedentem, non mœnia regis Acestæ :
 “ Hanc ego nunc ignaram hujus quodcunque pericli est
 “ Inque salutatam linquo nox, et tua testis
 “ Dexterâ, quòd nequeam lacrymas perferre parentis.”
 “ At tu, oro, solare inopem, et succurre relictâ.
 “ Hanc sine me spem ferre tui ; Audentior ibo
 “ In casus omnes. Percussa mente dederunt
 “ Dardanidæ lacrymas : ante omnes pulcher Iulus,
 “ Atque animum patriæ strinxit pietatis imago.”

I shall conclude this section in the words of Lord Bacon. “ Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants, but not always best subjects, for they are light to run away, and almost all fugitives are of that condition. For soldiers, I find that the generals in their hortatives commonly put men in mind of their wives and children ; and I think the despising of marriage among the Turks maketh the vulgar soldiers the more base. Certainly, wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity ; and single men, though they be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust ; yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hard-hearted, because their tenderness is not so often called upon.” *

* Bacon's Essays.



SECTION III.

Of Friendship.

Friendship, like all the other benevolent affections, includes two things, an agreeable feeling, and a desire of happiness to its object.

Besides, however, the agreeable feeling common to all the exertions of benevolence, there are some peculiar to friendship. I before took notice of the pleasure we derive from communicating our thoughts and our feelings to others; but this communication prudence and propriety restrain us from making to strangers; and hence the satisfaction we enjoy in the society of one to whom we can communicate every circumstance in our situation, and can trust every secret of our heart.

There is also a wonderful pleasure arising from the sympathy of our fellow-creatures with our joys and with our sorrows, nay, even with our tastes and our humours; but, in the ordinary commerce of the world, we are often disappointed in our expectations of this enjoyment; a disappointment which is peculiarly incident to men of genius and sensibility superior to the common, who frequently feel themselves "alone in the midst of a crowd," and reduced to the necessity of accommodating their own temper, and their own feelings, to a standard borrowed from those whom they

cannot help thinking undeserving of such a sacrifice.

It is only in the society of a friend that this sympathy is at all times to be found ; and the pleasing reflection that we have it in our power to command so exquisite a gratification, constitutes, perhaps, the principal charm of this connection. “ What “ we call affection,” (says Mr Smith,) “ is nothing “ but a habitual sympathy.” I will not go quite so far as to adopt this proposition in all its latitude, but I perfectly agree with this profound and amiable moralist in thinking, that the experience of this sympathy is the chief foundation of friendship, and one of the principal sources of the pleasures which it yields. Nor is it at all inconsistent with this observation to remark, that, where the ground-work of two characters in point of moral worth is the same, there is sometimes a contrast in the secondary qualities, of taste, of intellectual accomplishments, and even of animal spirits, which, instead of presenting obstacles to friendship, has a tendency to bind more strongly the knot of mutual attachment between the parties. Two very interesting and memorable examples of this may be found in Cuvier’s account of the friendship between Buffon and Daubenton, and in Playfair’s account of the friendship between Black and Hutton.

I do not mean here to enter into the consideration of the various topics relating to friendship which are commonly discussed by writers on that subject. *Most* of these, indeed I may say *all* of

them, are beautifully illustrated by Cicero in the Treatise *de Amicitia*, in which he has presented us with a summary of all that was most valuable on this article of ethics in the writings of preceding philosophers; and so comprehensive is the view of it which he has taken, that the modern authors who have treated of it have done little more than to repeat his observations.

One question concerning friendship much agitated in the ancient schools was, “whether this connection can subsist in its full perfection between more than two persons?”—and I believe it was the common decision of antiquity that it *cannot*. For my own part I can see no foundation for this limitation, and I own it seems to me to have been suggested more by the dreams of romance, or the fables of ancient mythology, than by good sense or an accurate knowledge of mankind. The passion of love between the sexes is indeed of an exclusive nature; and the jealousy of the one party is roused the moment a suspicion arises that the attachment of the other is in any degree divided; (and by the way this circumstance, which I think is strongly characteristic of that connection, deserves to be added to the various other considerations which show that monogamy has a foundation in human nature.) But the feelings of friendship are perfectly of a different sort. If our friend is a man of discernment, we rejoice at every new acquisition he makes, as it affords us an opportunity of adding to our own list of worthy and amiable individuals,

and we eagerly concur with him in promoting the interests of those who are dear to his heart. When we ourselves, on the other hand, have made a new discovery of worth and genius, how do we long to impart the same satisfaction to a friend, and to be instrumental in bringing together the various respectable and worthy men whom the accidents of life have thrown in our way!

I acknowledge, at the same time, that the number of our attached and confidential friends cannot be great, otherwise our attention would be too much distracted by the multiplicity of its objects, and the views for which this affection of the mind was probably implanted would be frustrated by its engaging us in exertions beyond the extent of our limited abilities; and, accordingly, nature has made a provision for preventing this inconvenience, by rendering friendship the fruit only of long and intimate acquaintance. It is strengthened not only by the acquaintance which the parties have with each other's personal qualities, but with their histories, situations, and connections from infancy, and every particular of this sort which falls under their mutual knowledge forms to the fancy an additional relation by which they are united. Men who have a very wide circle of friends without much discrimination or preference are justly suspected of being incapable of genuine friendship, and indeed are generally men of cold and selfish characters, who are influenced chiefly by a cool and systematical regard to their own comfort, and who value the

social intercourse of life only as it is subservient to their accommodation and amusement.

That the affection of friendship includes a desire of happiness to the beloved object it is unnecessary to observe. There is, however, a certain limitation of the remark which occurs among the maxims of La Rochefoucauld, and which has been often repeated since by misanthropical moralists, "That, in the distresses of our best friends, there is always something which does not displease us." It may be proper to consider in what sense this is to be understood, and how far it has a foundation in truth. It is expressed in somewhat equivocal terms; and, I suspect, owes much of its plausibility to this very circumstance.

From the triumphant air with which the maxim in question has been generally quoted by the calumniators of human nature, it has evidently been supposed by them to imply that the misfortunes of our best friends give us more pleasure than pain.* But this La Rochefoucauld has not said, nor indeed could a proposition so obviously false and extravagant have escaped the pen of so acute a writer. What La Rochefoucauld has said amounts only to this, that, in the distresses of our best friends, the

* It was plainly in this sense that Swift understood it when he prefixed it as a motto to the verses on his own death.

As Rochefoucauld his maxims drew
From nature, I believe them true.
If what he says be not a joke,
We mortals are strange kind of folk.

pain we feel is not altogether unmixed ;—a proposition unquestionably true wherever we have an opportunity of soothing their sorrows by the consolations of sympathy, or of evincing, by more substantial services, the sincerity and strength of our attachment. But the pleasure we experience in such cases, so far from indicating anything selfish or malevolent in the heart, originates in principles of a directly opposite description, and will be always most pure and exquisite in the most disinterested and generous characters. The maxim, indeed, when thus interpreted, is not less true when applied to our own distresses than to those of our friends. In the bitterest cup that may fall to the lot of either there are always mingled some cordial drops,—in the misfortunes of others, the consolation of *administering* relief,—in our own, that of *receiving* it from the sympathy of those we love.

Whether La Rochefoucauld, in the satirical humour which dictated the greater part of his maxims, did not wish, in the present instance, to convey by his words a little more than *meets the ear*, I do not presume to determine.

SECTION IV.

Of Patriotism.

Notwithstanding the principles of union implanted by nature in the human breast, it was plainly

not her intention that society should always go on increasing in numbers. A foundation is laid for a division of mankind into distinct communities, in those natural divisions on the surface of the globe that are formed by chains of mountains, impassable rivers, and the oceans which separate the larger continents; and the same end is farther answered by those principles of enmity which, in the earlier stages of society, never fail to estrange neighbouring tribes from each other, and which continue to operate with a very powerful effect even in periods of knowledge and refinement.

I shall not at present attempt to analyze particularly the origin of these principles of disunion among mankind. I shall only remark, that they do not imply any original malignity in the human heart; on the contrary, they seem to have their source in the social nature of man,—in those affections which attach him to the tribe he belongs to, and to the country which gave him birth. This remark has been so excellently illustrated by Lord Shaftesbury and by Dr Ferguson, that it would be quite superfluous to enlarge upon it here. Contenting myself, therefore, with a reference to their works,* I shall proceed to some other views of the subject, where the field of observation does not seem to be so completely exhausted.

The foundation which nature has laid for a di-

* See Shaftesbury's *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, Part iii. sec. 2, and Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Part i. sec. 4.

versity of languages, of customs, of manners, and of institutions among mankind, adds force to the principles of division and repulsion already mentioned. These circumstances derive their effect, indeed, from the *ignorance* of men, which is apt to mistake a diversity of arbitrary signs and arbitrary ceremonies, for a diversity of opinions and of moral sentiments ; and, accordingly, as society advances, and reason improves, the effect becomes gradually less and less sensible. As the effect, however, is universal among rude nations, and as it is the unavoidable result of the general laws of our constitution when placed in certain circumstances, we may consider it as a part of the plan of Providence with respect to our species ; and we may presume that here, as in other instances, that plan tends ultimately to some wise and beneficent purpose, though by means which appear to us, at first view, to have a very unfavourable aspect. What these purposes are it is impossible for our limited faculties to trace completely ; but even *we*, narrow and partial as our views at present are, may perceive *some* salutary consequences resulting from these apparent disorders of the moral world. I shall only mention the tendency which a constant state of hostility and alarm must have among barbarous tribes to bind and consolidate in each of them apart the political union ; and by strengthening the hands of government to prepare the way for the progress of society. We may add, the exercise which it gives to many of our most important moral principles, and

the powerful stimulus it applies to our intellectual capacities. The discipline is indeed rough, but it is perhaps the only one of which the mind of man, in a certain state of his progress, is susceptible.

If these observations are well founded, may we not presume to offer a conjecture, that, as this final cause ceases to exist in proportion as government advances to maturity, and as the moral causes of hostility among nations (arising from diversity of language and of manners) cease to operate upon men of enlightened and liberal minds, that the tendency of civilized society is to diminish the dissensions among different communities, and to unite the human race in the bonds of amity. The just views of political economy which Mr Smith and some other authors have lately opened, and which demonstrate the absurdity of commercial jealousies, all contribute to encourage the same pleasing prospects; but alas! it is a prospect which the vices and prejudices of men allow us to indulge only in those moments of enthusiasm when our benevolent wishes for mankind, and our confidence in the wisdom and goodness of Providence, transport us from the calamities and atrocities of our own times, to anticipate the triumphs of reason and humanity in a more fortunate age.

In the *Philosophy of the Human Mind* I have remarked, that “there are many prejudices which are found to prevail universally among our species in certain periods of society, and which seem to be essentially necessary for maintaining

" its order in ages when men are unable to com-
 " prehend the purposes for which governments are
 " instituted. As society advances these prejudices
 " gradually lose their influence on the higher clas-
 " ses, and would probably soon disappear altoge-
 " ther, if it were not supposed to be expedient to pro-
 " long their existence as a source of authority over
 " the multitude. In an age, however, of universal
 " and unrestrained discussion, it is impossible that
 " they can long maintain their empire; nor ought
 " we to regret their decline, if the important ends
 " to which they have been subservient in the past
 " experience of mankind are found to be accom-
 " plished by the growing light of philosophy. On
 " this supposition a history of human prejudices,
 " in so far as they have supplied the place of more
 " enlarged political views, may, at some future pe-
 " riod, furnish to the philosopher a subject of spe-
 " culation no less pleasing and instructive than
 " that beneficent wisdom of nature which guides
 " the operations of the lower animals, and which,
 " even in our own species, takes upon itself the
 " care of the individual in the infancy of human
 " reason." *

The remarks which have been now made on the
 sources of disunion and hostility among mankind
 in the earlier periods of society, and on the final
 causes to which this constitution of things is sub-
 servient, afford one remarkable illustration of the

* Vol. I. pp. 274, 275, 6th Ed.



conjecture which I have hazarded in the foregoing passage.

Before proceeding to consider the affection of patriotism, it was necessary to turn our attention for a moment to the principles of disunion in our species, as the idea of patriotism proceeds on the supposition, that mankind are divided into distinct communities, with separate, if not with rival and hostile interests.

The exciting causes of patriotism (abstracting from all considerations of reason and duty) are many. We are formed with so strong a disposition to associate with, and to love our own species, that the imagination lays hold with eagerness of every circumstance, how slight soever, that can form a bond of union ; a common language, a common religion, common laws, even a common appellation,—not to mention the prudential considerations of common enemies and a common interest. The feelings which these uniting circumstances inspire attach us even to the *territory* which our fellow citizens inhabit, by the same law of *association* that endears to us the spot where a friend was born, or the scene where we have enjoyed any social pleasure ; and thus the imagination forms to itself a complex idea of countrymen and country, which impresses every susceptible heart with irresistible force. In perusing the history of either, how remote soever the period it describes may be, we feel an interest which no other narrative inspires. We sympathize with the fortunes of those

who trod the same ground that we now tread, and we appropriate to ourselves a share of the glory they acquired by their bravery and virtue. “When the late Mr Anson (Lord Anson’s brother) was on his travels in the east, he hired a vessel to visit the Isle of Tenedos. His pilot, an old Greek, as they were sailing along, said with some satisfaction, ‘ ’Twas there our fleet lay.’ Mr Anson demanded *what fleet?*—*What fleet!* (replied the old man, a little piqued at the question,) why, our Grecian fleet at the Siege of Troy.” This anecdote (which I borrow from the Philological Inquiries of Mr Harris,)* naturally excites a smile; but it is, at the same time, so congenial to feelings inseparable from our constitution, that its effect seems to me to border on the pathetic, and I presume there are few who have read it without some emotion.

It is not a little remarkable, with respect to this natural attachment to the scenes of our infancy and youth, that it is commonly strongest among the inhabitants of barren and mountainous countries. This would appear to indicate that it is produced less by the recollection of agreeable physical impressions than of *moral* pleasures,—pleasures which probably derive an additional zest from the absence of those interesting or amusing objects which dissipate the attention by inviting the thoughts abroad. Where nature has been sparing in her external bounty, men become the more dependent for their

* Harris’ Works, Edited by his son the Earl of Malmesbury, Vol. II. p. 462.

happiness on internal enjoyment, and it is thus that the storms and gloom of winter give a higher relish to the pleasures of society. Perhaps, too, the thin and scattered population of such countries may contribute something to the romantic enthusiasm of the domestic and private attachments, as it is certain that the opposite extreme of a crowded and busy population seldom fails to extinguish all the more ardent social affections. Among the inhabitants of Europe this attachment to home is said to be the most remarkable in the Swiss and the Laplanders, who, when removed to a distance from their native scenes, are subject to a particular species of despondency, to which medical writers have given the name of *Nostalgia*. It is thus described by Haller, who was himself a native of Switzerland, and who, in some of his poetical pieces, composed during the period of his academical studies in Holland, has sufficiently shown that his own heart was not proof against its influence.

“ *Nostalgia* genus est mœroris subditis reipublicæ meæ familiaris, etiam civibus, a desiderio nati suorum. Is sensim consumit ægros et destruit, nonnunquam in rigorem et maniam abit, alias in febres lentas. Eum spes sanat. Etiam animalia consuetâ societate privata, nonnunquam deperunt, et ex pullis amissis etiam lutræ maris Kamtchadalensis. Sic ex amore frustrato lenta et insanabilis consumptio sequitur, quod Angli *cor ruptum* vocant.” *

* Elem. Physiol. Lib. xvii. Sect. 2. § 5.

We are informed by another medical writer, (Sauvages) that he has known this disorder in the son of a common beggar, who could scarcely be said to have any home but the streets and public roads. *

Thus every good his native wilds impart
 Imprints the patriot passion on his heart.
 And even the ills that round his mansion rise
 Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
 Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
 And dear that hill that lifts him to the storms.
 And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
 Clings close and closer to its mother's breast,
 So the loud tempest and the whirlwind's roar
 But bind him to his native mountains more.

The sources of patriotism hitherto mentioned arise chiefly from the *imagination* and from the *association of ideas*, and have little or no connection with our rational and moral powers. They presuppose, indeed, sensibility, social attachment, and force of mind, but they do not necessarily imply reflection or a sense of duty. They are the natural result of our constitution when placed in certain circumstances; and hence, though not coëval with our birth, nor after their appearance unsusceptible of analysis, the affection they produce, in so far as it arises from *them* without the co-operation of any other motive, may be considered as a *blind impulse*, analogous in its operation to those desires and appetites which have been already mentioned. This

* Nosologia Methodica.

affection may be called, for the sake of distinction, Instinctive Patriotism.

The circumstances which have been enumerated as the sources of instinctive patriotism operate with peculiar force in small communities, where the extent of the territory and the body of the people falling under the habitual observation of every citizen, present more definite objects to the imagination, and affect the heart more deeply than what is only conceived from description. *Here*, too, the individual feels his importance as an active member of the state, and the consciousness of what he is able to do for its prosperity contributes powerfully to promote his patriotic exertions.

In an extensive and populous country the instinctive affection of patriotism is apt to grow languid among the mass of the people, and therefore it becomes the more necessary to impress on their minds those considerations of reason and duty which recommend public spirit as one of the principal branches of morality. What these considerations are I shall afterwards endeavour to point out in treating of the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures. At present I shall only remark, that, as instinctive patriotism decays, so rational patriotism acquires force in proportion to the extent of territory and to the multitude of fellow-citizens it embraces; in other words, in proportion to the magnitude of that sum of happiness which it aspires to secure and to augment.

Such considerations, however, can have weight

only with men whose sense of duty is strong ; and as, unfortunately, this is not the case with a great proportion of mankind, it is of the utmost consequence, in every state of society, to cherish as much as possible the instinctive affection of patriotism, and to counteract those causes that tend to extinguish it. For this purpose nothing is more likely to be effectual than to diffuse a general taste for historical and geographical reading. A peasant who has never extended his thoughts beyond his own province, and who sees everything flourishing and happy around him, is apt to consider the enjoyments he possesses as inseparable from the human race, and no more connected with any particular system of laws than the advantages he derives from the immediate bounty of nature. It is the study of history and geography alone that can remove this prejudice, by showing us, on the one hand, the narrow limits within which the political happiness of our species has hitherto been confined ; and, on the other, the singular combination of accidental circumstances to which we are indebted for the blessings we enjoy. This effect of history indeed tends rather to cherish *rational* than *instinctive* patriotism ; but it operates also wonderfully on the latter affection, by leading us to contrast our own country and countrymen with other lands and other nations, and thereby presenting a more definite and interesting object to the imagination and to the heart. When, from the transactions of past ages and of foreign lands, we return to what is near and familiar, we are

affected somewhat in the same manner as if we met with a fellow-citizen in a distant country. Absence from home never fails to endear it to a mind possessed of any sensibility. The extent of our country, too, seems to diminish to our intellectual eye in proportion as the object recedes from us, and we feel a sensible relation to what we before regarded with complete indifference. The natives of the same county in Scotland feel towards each other a partial predilection when they meet in the metropolis of Great Britain; and the circumstance of being born in this island forms a tie of friendship between individuals in the other quarters of the globe. The study of history operates somewhat in the same manner, though not perhaps in the same degree. By transporting us in imagination over the surface of this planet, and by assembling before our view the myriads who have occupied it before us, it serves to define to our thoughts more distinctly the particular community to which we belong, and strengthens the bond of relationship that unites us to all its members.

I shall only add further on this subject, that, when the extent and population of a country are so *very* great as to give it a decided pre-eminence among neighbouring nations, it has a tendency to produce, (partly by interesting the vanity, and partly by dazzling the imagination,) an attachment to *national glory*, which operates both on the vulgar and on men of better education, in a way extremely analogous to the instinctive patriotism felt by the mem-

ber of a small community. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the national character of the French prior to the late Revolution, nor does it seem to have altered in this respect since that event, if we may judge from the indignation with which the idea of a confederate republic has always been received. A feeling of the same kind may be traced in various expressions employed by Livy in the preface to his Roman History. “Utcunque erit, ju-
 “vabit tamen rerum gestarum memoria principis ter-
 “rarum populi, pro virili parte, et ipsum consuluisse;
 “et si in tanta scriptorum turbâ mea fama in obscu-
 “ro sit, nobilitate ac magnitudine eorum qui nomini
 “officient meo me consoler. Res est præterea et
 “immensi operis, ut quæ supra septingentesimum
 “annum repetatur, et quæ ab exiguis profecta ini-
 “tiis eo creverit, ut jam magnitudine laboret sua:
 “et legentium plerisque haud dubito, quin primæ
 “origines proximaque originibus, minus præbi-
 “tura voluptatis sint, festinantibus ad hæc nova,
 “quibus jam pridem prævalentis populi vires se ipsæ
 “conficiunt.” The very danger which such an em-
 pire was exposed to from its enormous magnitude,
 and from the seeds of destruction which it carried
 in its bosom, seems to heighten the patriotic affec-
 tion of the historian, by awakening an anxious so-
 licitude for its impending fate. The contrast be-
 tween this feeling of national pride, and a melan-
 choly anticipation of those calamities to which na-
 tional greatness leads, gives the principal charm to
 this exquisite composition.



SECTION V.

Of Pity to the Distressed.

As the unfortunate chiefly stand in need of our assistance, so there is provided in every breast a most powerful advocate in their favour; an advocate, to whose solicitations it is impossible even for the most obdurate to turn always a deaf ear. The appropriation of the word *humanity* to this part of our constitution affords sufficient evidence of the common sentiments of mankind upon the subject.

“ Mollissima corda

“ Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,

“ Quæ lacrymas dedit. Hæc nostri pars optima sensûs.

————— “ Separat hoc nos

“ A grege mutorum. *

The general principle of benevolence, or of good will to our fellow-creatures, (of which I shall treat afterwards, when I come to consider our Moral duties,) as it disposes us to promote the happiness of others, so it restrains us from doing them evil, and prompts us to relieve their distresses. The office of compassion or pity is more limited. It impels us to relieve distress; it serves as a check on resentment and selfishness, and the other principles which lead us to injure the interests of others; but it does

* Juv. Sat. 15.

not prompt us to the communication of positive happiness. Its object is to *relieve*, and sometimes to *prevent*, suffering ; but not to augment the enjoyment of those who are already easy and comfortable. We are disposed to do this by the general spirit of benevolence, but not by the particular affection of pity.

The final cause of this constitution of our nature is very ingeniously and happily pointed out by Dr Butler in his second sermon on *Compassion*. This profound philosopher observes, that “ supposing men to
“ be capable of happiness and of misery in degrees
“ equally intense, yet they are liable to the latter during longer periods of time than they are susceptible
“ of the former. We frequently see men suffering
“ the agonies of pain for days, weeks, and months
“ together, without any intermission, except the
“ short suspensions of sleep,—a stretch of misery to
“ which no state of high enjoyment can approach
“ in point of duration. Such, too, is our constitution, and that of the world around us, that the
“ sources of our sufferings are placed much more
“ within the power of other men than the sources
“ of our pleasures, so that there is no individual,
“ (however incapable he may be to add to the happiness of his fellow-creatures,) who has it not in
“ his power to do them great and extensive mischief. To prevent the abuse of this power when
“ we are under the influence of any of the angry
“ passions, by means of a particular affection tending to check the excess of resentment, was there-

“ fore of more consequence to the comfort of hu-
 “ man life than it would have been to superadd
 “ to the general principle of good will a particular
 “ affection prompting to the communication of posi-
 “ tive enjoyment. The power we have over the
 “ misery of our fellow-creatures being a more im-
 “ portant trust than our power of promoting the
 “ happiness of those already comfortable, the for-
 “ mer stood more in need of a guard to check its
 “ excesses than the latter of a *stimulus* to animate
 “ its exertions. But farther, as it is more in our
 “ power to *communicate* misery than happiness, so
 “ it is more in our power to *relieve* misery than to
 “ superadd enjoyment. Hence an additional rea-
 “ son for implanting in our constitution the affec-
 “ tion of compassion, while there is none analo-
 “ gous to it urging us by an instinctive impulse to
 “ acts of general benevolence.”

The final causes of compassion, then, are to pre-
 vent and to relieve misery—to *prevent* misery by
 checking the violence of our own angry passions,
 and to *relieve* misery by calling our attention, and
 engaging our good offices, to every object of dis-
 tress within our reach. The latter is the more
 common and the more important of its offices, at
 least in the present state of society. And it is this
 which I have chiefly in view in the following ob-
 servations.

I have said that compassion calls or arrests our
 attention to the distressed objects within our reach.
 When we are immersed in the business of the

world, or intoxicated with its pleasures, we are apt to overlook, and sometimes to withdraw from scenes of misery. It is the office of compassion to plead the cause of the wretched, or rather to solicit us to take their case under our consideration; for so strong is the sense which all men have of the duty of beneficence, that, if they could only be brought to exercise their powers of reflection on the facts before them, they could scarcely ever fail to relieve distress, when, in consistency with other obligations, it was in their power to do so. One striking proof of this is, that the active zeal of humanity is (*cæteris paribus*) strongest in those men whose warm imaginations present to them lively pictures of the sufferings of others; and that there is scarcely any man, however callous and selfish, whose beneficence may not be called forth by a skilful and eloquent description of any scene of misery. General considerations with regard to our social duties will often have little weight; but if the attention can only be fixed to facts, nature, in most instances, accomplishes the rest. Hence the importance in our constitution of the affection of compassion, which, amidst the tumult of business or of pleasure, stops us suddenly in our career, and reminds us that we have social duties to fulfil;—calls upon us to examine the claims of the helpless, and aggravates our guilt if we disregard its admonition.

Compassion, according to the view now given of it, is an *instinctive impulse* prompting to a particular object, analogous in many respects to the

animal appetites already considered. It is, indeed, one of the most amiable, and one of the most important parts of our constitution; but it is not an object of moral approbation. Our duty lies in the proper regulation of it—in considering with attention the facts it recommends to our notice, and in acting with respect to them as reason and conscience prescribe. It is hardly necessary for me to add, that there are cases in which these inform us that we *ought not* to follow the impulse of compassion, and in which it is no less meritorious in us to resist its solicitations, than to deny ourselves the unlawful gratification of a sensual appetite; and even in those instances in which our duty calls us to obey its impulse, our merit does not arise from the affection we feel, but from doing what our conscience approves of as *right* on a deliberate consideration of the action we are to perform, when examined in all its bearings and consequences.

Notwithstanding, however, the unquestionable truth of this theoretical conclusion, it is nevertheless certain, that a strong and habitual tendency to indulge this affection affords no slight presumption in favour of the worth and benevolence of a character. Whoever reflects, on the one hand, upon its general coincidence with what a sense of duty prescribes; and upon the other, on the nature of those circumstances by which its indulgence is checked and discouraged among men of the world, will, I apprehend, readily assent to the truth of this observation. The poet, perhaps, went a little

too far when he stated as a general and unqualified maxim, *Αγαθοὶ αἰριδακρυεὶς ἀνδρες*; * but, upon the whole, I am inclined to think that this maxim, with all the exceptions which may contradict it, will be found much nearer to the fact than they who have been trained in the schools of fashionable *per-siflage* will be disposed to acknowledge.

The philosophers who attempt to resolve the whole of human conduct into self-love have adopted various theories to explain the affection of pity. Without stopping to examine these, I shall confine myself to a simple statement of the fact, which

* “ Good men are prone to shed tears.”—“ The poets,” (says Mr Wollaston,) “ who of all writers undertake to imitate nature most, oft introduce even their heroes weeping.”—(See how Homer represents Ulysses. *Od. E. 151. 2. 7. 8.*) “ The tears of men,” (the same author finely adds,) “ are in truth very different from the cries and ejulations of children. They are *silent streams*, and flow from other causes, commonly some tender, or perhaps philosophical reflection. It is easy to see how hard hearts and dry eyes come to be fashionable. But for all that it is certain the *glandulæ lachrymales* were not made for nothing.”—(*Religion of Nature Delineated*, p. 258. 8th Edition.)

It is remarked by Descartes, that the tears of children and of old men, (in which both are apt to indulge,) flow from different sources. “ *Senes sæpe lachrimantur ex amore et gaudio. Infantes raro ex lætitia lachrimantur, sæpius ex tristitia, etiam quam amor non comitatur.*”—(*De Passionibus, Secunda Pars, Articulus 133.*) The important facts here described have seldom been remarked; and the statement of them does honour to Descartes as an attentive and accurate observer of human nature in the beginning and towards the close of its history.

statement will at once show how far all of these are erroneous, and will point out the oversight in which they have originated. Whoever reflects carefully on the effect produced on his own mind by objects which excite his pity must be sensible that it is a compounded one; and, therefore, unless we are at pains to analyze it carefully, we may be apt to mistake some one of the ingredients for the whole combination.

On the sight of distress we are distinctly conscious, I think, of three things: *1st*, A painful emotion in consequence of the distress we see. *2d*, A selfish desire to remove the cause of this uneasiness. *3d*, A disposition to relieve the distress from a *benevolent* and disinterested concern about the sufferer. If we had not this last disposition, and if it were not stronger than the former, the sight of a distressed object would invariably prompt us to fly from it, as we frequently see those men do in whom the second ingredient prevails over the third. In ordinary cases the impulse of pity attaches us to the cause of our sufferings; and we cling to it, even although we are conscious that we can afford no relief but the consolation of sympathy;—a demonstrative proof that one at least of the ingredients of pity, (and in most men the prevailing ingredient) is purely disinterested in its nature and origin.

Although, however, this observation seems to me decisive against the theory in question, in whatever form it may be proposed, I cannot omit this opportunity of examining a new modification of the same

hypothesis, which occurs in Mr Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments. The view of the subject which he has taken has the merit of entire originality, and, like all his other speculations and opinions, derives a strong recommendation from the splendid abilities and exemplary worth of the author. I hope, therefore, that the critical strictures upon it which I am now to offer will not be considered as a useless or unseasonable interruption of the discussions in which we are at present engaged.

Before entering on this argument, I shall just mention another hypothesis concerning the origin of compassion, which seems to me to approach more nearly to that of Mr Smith than any thing else I have met with in the works of his predecessors. I allude to the account of *Pity* given by Hobbes, who defines it to be "the imagination or fiction of *future* calamity to ourselves proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity."* In what respect this theory *coincides* with Mr Smith's, will appear from the remarks I am now to make. In the meantime I shall only observe how completely the futility of Hobbes's definition is exposed by a single remark of Butler. "That, if it were just, it would follow that the most fearful tem-

* Descartes has adopted this theory of Hobbes. "Illi qui se valde debiles sentiunt et obnoxios adversæ fortunæ videntur aliis propensiores ad misericordiam, quia sibi repræsentant alienum malum ceu quod sibi quoque queat evenire, et sic ad misericordiam moventur magis ex amore sui quàm aliorum."—De Passionibus, Tertia Pars, Articulus clxxxvi.

“per would be the most compassionate.”* We may add too, that our pity is more strongly excited by the distresses of an infant than by those of the aged, although the former are such as we cannot possibly be exposed to suffer a *second time*, and the *latter* such as we must expect to endure sooner or later, if the period of life should be prolonged to that term, which the weakness of most individuals disposes them to wish for.

The leading principles of Mr Smith’s theory, in as far as it applies to *pity* or *compassion*, are comprehended in the three following propositions. *1st*, That it is from our own experience alone we can form any idea of the sufferings of another person on any particular occasion.

2d, That the only manner in which we can form this idea is by supposing ourselves in the same circumstances with him, and then conceiving how we should be affected if we were so situated.

3d, That the uneasiness which we feel in consequence of the sufferings of another arises from our conceiving those sufferings to be our own.

The *first* of these propositions is unquestionable. Our notions of pain and of suffering are undoubtedly derived, *in the first instance*, from our own experience.

* See an excellent Note on Sermon V. It contains an important hint about *sympathy*, which Mr Smith has prosecuted with great ingenuity.

The *second* proposition is perhaps expressed with too great a degree of latitude. That in order to understand completely the sufferings of our neighbours in any particular instance, it is necessary for us to have been once placed in circumstances somewhat similar to his, I believe to be true, and there can be no doubt that it is frequently useful to us to collect our attention to the distresses of others, by conceiving their situation to be ours; but it does not appear to me that this process of the mind takes place in every case in which we are affected by the sight of misery. When we are once satisfied that a particular situation is a natural source of misery to the person placed in it, the bare perception of the situation is sufficient to excite an unpleasant emotion in the spectator, without any reference whatever to himself. This is easily explicable on the common doctrine of *the association of ideas*.

Nor is this all. The looks, the gestures, the tones of distress, speak in a moment from heart to heart, and affect us with an anguish more exquisitely piercing than any we are able to produce by all the various expedients we can employ to assist the imagination in conceiving the situation of the sufferer.

But, abstracting from these considerations, and granting the second proposition in all its extent, the third proposition is by no means a necessary consequence of it; for, even in those cases in which we endeavour to awaken our compassion for the

sufferings of our neighbour by conceiving ourselves placed in his situation, our compassion is not founded on a belief that the sufferings are ours. So long as we conceive ourselves in distress, we feel a certain degree of uneasiness ; but this is not the uneasiness of compassion. In order to excite this we must apply to our neighbour the result of what we have experienced in ourselves ; or in other words, having formed an idea of what he suffers by bringing his case home to ourselves, we must carry our attention back to *him* before he becomes the object of our pity. Nor is there any thing mysterious or wonderful in this process of the mind. That we are so formed as to expect that the operation of the same cause, in similar circumstances, will be attended with the same result, might be shown from a thousand instances. It is thus, that, having tried a physical experiment on certain substances, I take for granted that the result of a similar experiment, on similar substances, will be the same. It is thus that I conclude with the most perfect confidence, that a wound given to my body in a particular organ would be instantly fatal ; although it is worthy of remark, that in this case I have no direct evidence from experience that the internal structure of my body is similar to those of the bodies which anatomists have hitherto examined. Now, I apprehend, it is in the same manner, that, having once experienced the pain produced by an instrument of torture applied to myself, I take for granted that the effect will be the same when it

is applied to another. In consequence of this application the sentiment of compassion arises in my mind, during the continuance of which my attention is completely engrossed, not about myself, but about the real sufferer.

And indeed, if the case were otherwise, compassion would be ultimately resolvable into a selfish principle, and those men would be most ready to feel the distresses of others who are most impatient of their own. A remark similar to this (as I already observed,) is made by Dr Butler, with respect to a theory of Hobbes, who defines pity to be the fiction of future calamity to ourselves from the sight of the present calamity of another. "Were this the case," (says Butler,) "the most fearful tempers would be the most compassionate." According to Mr Smith, pity arises from the fiction, not of *future*, but of *present* calamity to ourselves. The two theories approach very nearly to each other, and the same answer is applicable to both. *

* So far indeed is it from being true that those who are most impatient under their personal distresses are the most prone to commiserate the sorrows of others, that I apprehend the reverse of this supposition will be found agreeable to universal experience. The most unfeeling characters I have ever known have been men not only tremblingly alive to the slightest evil which affected themselves, but whose whole attention seemed manifestly to be engrossed with their own comforts and luxuries. On the other hand, the nearest approaches I have happened to witness to stoical patience and fortitude under severe suffering have been invariably accompanied with a peculiarly strong disposition to social tender-

In further proof that the distress produced by the sufferings of others arises from a conception that these distresses are our own, Mr Smith mentions a variety of facts which he thinks establish his doctrine with demonstrative evidence. “When we see a stroke aimed and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg, or our own arm, and when it does fall we feel it in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer. The mob, when they are gazing at a dancer on the slack rope, naturally writhe and twist and balance their own bodies as they see him do, and as they feel that they must themselves do, if in his situation.”—“In general,” (he observes,) “that as to be in pain or distress of any kind excites the most excessive sorrow, so to conceive or to imagine that we are in it, excites some degree of the same emotion, in proportion to the vivacity or dulness of the conception.”

The facts here appealed to by Mr Smith are indeed extremely curious, and I do not pretend to explain them. They are not, however, singular facts in our constitution, but belong to that class of phenomena which medical writers refer to what they call sympathy. Gray alludes to this contrast in his Hymn to Adversity :—

“ To each his sufferings ; all are men
 “ Condemn'd alike to groan ;
 “ The feeling for another's pain,
 “ The unfeeling for his own.

call *the Principle of Imitation*.* Of this kind are the contagious effects of hysterics—of yawning—of laughter—of crying, &c. In these last cases Mr Smith would suppose, if he were to apply the same reasoning he uses in analogous instances, that the effect arises from our conceiving ludicrous or sorrowful ideas similar to those by which these emotions are produced. But the primary effect seems to be produced on the body, and the secondary effect on the mind; somewhat in the same manner in which we can excite a sensible degree of the passion of anger in our own breast by imitating the looks and gestures which are expressive of rage. It does not appear to me that this bodily contagion of the expression of passion has any immediate connection with our fellow-feeling with distress. If it had, those would be most liable to it who felt the most deeply for the sorrows of others,—a conclusion which is certainly not agreeable to fact. During the madness of Belvidera, those who are the most powerfully affected by the representation are not the nervous ladies who catch from the actress something similar to a hysteric paroxysm; but they who, retaining their own reason, reflect on the train of misfortunes which have unhinged her mind, and who weep for her madness, not so much as a misfortune in itself, as an indication of that conflict of passions by which

* In the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. III. I have distinguished this law of our nature by the more precise and unequivocal title of the principle of *Sympathetic Imitation*.

it was produced. The effect in the former case depends on a peculiar irritability and mobility of the bodily frame altogether unconnected with any of the moral sympathies or sensibilities of our nature.

SECTION V.

Of Resentment and the various other angry affections grafted upon it, (commonly considered by ethical writers as Malevolent Affections.)

The names which are given to these affections in common discourse are various, *Hatred, Jealousy, Envy, Revenge, Misanthropy*; but it may be doubted if there be any principle of this kind implanted by nature in the mind, excepting the principle of *Resentment*, the others being grafted on this stock by our erroneous opinions and criminal habits.

Emulation, indeed, (which is unquestionably an original principle of action,) is treated of by Dr Reid under the title of the *Malevolent Affections*. But I formerly gave my reasons for classing this principle with the *desires*, and not with the *affections*. I acknowledged, indeed, that emulation is often accompanied with ill-will to our rival; but the malevolent affection is only a concomitant circumstance; and it is not the affection, but the desire of superiority, which can be justly regarded as the active principle.

Nor is this sentiment of ill-will a *necessary* concomitant of the desire of superiority; for there is unquestionably a solid distinction between emulation and envy, the latter of which is a corruption of the former, disgraceful to the character, and ruinous to the happiness of whoever indulges it. In the case of envy the malevolent affection arises, I believe, generally from some error of the judgment, or some illusion of the imagination, leading us to refer the cause of our own want of success either to some injustice on the part of our rival, or to an unjust partiality in the world which overrates his merits and undervalues ours. In both of these cases the desire of superiority generates malevolent affections, by first leading us to apprehend *injustice*, and thus exciting the natural passion of resentment.

Before proceeding to consider this principle of action, it may be proper again to remark, that, when the epithet *Malevolent* is applied to it, that word must not be understood to imply anything criminal, at least so long as resentment is restrained within proper bounds, after having been originally excited by real injustice. The epithet malevolent is used only to express that temporary ill-will towards the author of the apprehended injustice with which resentment is necessarily accompanied till it begins to subside.

One of the first authors who examined with success this part of our constitution, and illustrated the important purposes to which it is subservient,



was Bishop Butler, in an excellent discourse printed among his Sermons. The hints he has thrown out have evidently been of great use both to Lord Kames and Mr Smith in their speculations concerning the principles of morals.

To Butler we are indebted for the illustration of a very important distinction (which had been formerly hinted at by Hobbes) between instinctive and deliberate resentment. Instinctive resentment operates in men exactly as in the lower animals, arising necessarily from any feeling of pain excited by external objects, and prompting us to a retaliation upon the cause of our suffering without any exercise whatever of reflection and reason. It is thus that a child beats the ground after it has hurt itself by a fall, and that we sometimes see a passionate man wreak his vengeance on inanimate objects by dashing them to pieces. This species of resentment, however, subsides instantly, and we are ready next moment to smile at the absurdity of our conduct.

Deliberate resentment is excited only by intentional injury, and therefore implies a sense of justice, or of moral good or evil. It is plainly peculiar to a rational nature, and perhaps it is not very distinguishable from instinctive or animal resentment in the ruder state of our own species. It is observed by Dr Robertson, that “the desire of vengeance which takes possession of the heart of savages resembles the instinctive rage of an animal rather than the passion of a man, and that it

“ turns with undiscerning fury even against inanimate objects.” He adds, “ that, if struck with an arrow in battle, they will tear it from the wound, break and bite it with their teeth, and dash it on the ground.”*

This distinction, too, is much insisted on by Lord Kames in various parts of his writings ; and it is from him that I have borrowed the phrase of *instinctive resentment*, which he has substituted instead of *sudden resentment*, employed by Butler.

The final cause of instinctive resentment was plainly to defend us against sudden violence, (where reason would come too late to our assistance,) by rousing the powers both of mind and body to instant and vigorous exertion. A number of our other instincts are perfectly analogous to this. Such, for example, is the instinctive effort we make to recover ourselves when we are in danger of losing our balance,† and the instinctive dispatch with

* America, Vol. I. pp. 351, 352.

† Although I have followed Dr Reid’s language in calling this an *instinctive* effort, I am abundantly aware that the expression is not unexceptionable. On this head I perfectly agree (excepting in one single point) with the following remarks of Gravesande :

“ Il y a quelque chose d’admirable dans le moyen ordinaire dont les hommes se servent, pour s’empêcher de tomber : car dans le tems que, par quelque mouvement, le poids du corps s’augmente d’une coté, un autre mouvement rétablit l’équilibre dans l’instant. On attribue communément la chose à un *instinct naturel* quoiqu’il faille nécessairement l’attribuer à un art perfectionné par l’exercice.

“ Les enfans ignorent absolument cet art dans les premières

which we shut the eye-lids when an object is made to pass rapidly before the face. In general it will

“ années de leur vie ; ils l’apprennent peu à peu, et s’y perfectionnent, parce qu’ils ont continuellement occasion de s’y exercer ; exercice qui, dans la suite, n’exige presque plus aucune attention de leur part ; tout comme un musicien remue les doigts, suivant les règles de l’art, pendant qu’il apperçoit à peine qu’il y fasse le moindre attention.”—Œuvres Philosophiques de M. S’Gravesande, p. 121, 2de Partie. Amsterdam, 1774.

The only thing I am disposed to object to in the foregoing passage is that clause where the author ascribes *the effort in question* to an *art*. Is it not manifestly as wide of the truth to refer it to *this* source as to a pure instinct ?

The word *art* implies intelligence,—the perception of an *end*, and the choice of *means*. But where is there any appearance of either in an operation common to the whole species, (not excepting the idiot and the insane,) and which is practised as successfully by the brutes as by rational creatures ?

Elephants (it is well known) were taught by the ancients to walk on the tight rope, on which occasions their trunk probably performed the office of a pole. Whoever has seen a peacock walk in a windy day along the branch of a tree must have observed the address with which he avails himself of his tail for the same purpose.

Nothing, however, can place in a stronger light the capacity of the brutes to acquire the nice management of the centre of gravity than the mathematical exactness with which we may daily see horses in the *circus* adjusting the inclination of their bodies to the velocity of their circular speed. Here, indeed, a good deal is to be ascribed to the effects of human discipline, but by far the greater part of the ground-work is laid by nature in the instinctive dispositions of the animal. The acquisition seems to be almost as easy as that of the habits which constitute the acquired perceptions of sight.

In one of the last volumes of Dr Clarke’s Travels there is a

be found, that, as nature has taken upon herself the care of our preservation during the infancy of our reason, so in every case in which our existence is threatened by dangers, against which reason is unable to supply a remedy with sufficient promptitude, she continues this guardian care during the whole of life.

The disposition which we sometimes feel, when under the influence of instinctive resentment, to wreak our vengeance upon inanimate objects, has suggested to Dr Reid a very curious query, Whether, upon such an occasion, we may have a momentary belief that the object is alive? For my own part I confess my inclination to answer this question in the affirmative. I agree with Dr Reid in thinking, that, unless we had such a belief, our conduct could not possibly be what it frequently is, and that it is not till this momentary belief is at an end that our conduct appears to ourselves to be absurd and ludicrous. With respect to infants there are many facts beside that now under consideration which render it probable that their first apprehensions lead them to believe all the objects around them to be animated, and that it is only in

figure of a goat, whom the author saw standing with its four feet collected together on the top of a cylindrical piece of wood of a few inches diameter. Nobody can doubt that the effects of discipline were greatly facilitated in this instance by the natural instincts of the goat, which probably accommodated themselves with very little instruction to the artificial circumstances in which they were forced to operate.

consequence of experience and reason that they come to form the notion of insentient substances. If this be the case, the illusion of imagination which leads us to ascribe life to things inanimate, when we are under the influence of instinctive resentment, may perhaps be owing to a momentary relapse into those apprehensions which were habitually familiar to us in the first years of our existence.

But whatever theory we adopt on the subject, there can be no doubt about the fact, that the final cause of this law of our nature was to secure and guard us against the sudden effects of external injuries in cases where there is not time for deliberation and judgment. With respect to the injuries we are liable to from our fellow-creatures, it secures us farther by its effect in restraining *them* from acts of violence. "It is a kind of penal statute promulgated by nature, the execution of which is committed to the sufferer."*

In man the instinctive resentment subsides as soon as he is satisfied that no injury was intended; and it is only *intentional* injury that is the object of settled and deliberate resentment. The final cause of this species of resentment is analogous to that of the other,—to serve as a check on those men whose violent or malignant passions might lead them to disturb the happiness of their fellow-creatures.

In order to secure still more effectually so very

* Reid.

important an end, we are so formed, that the injustice offered to *others*, as well as to ourselves, awakens our resentment against the aggressor, and prompts us to take part in the redress of their grievances. In this case the emotion we feel is more properly denoted in our language by the word *indignation*; but (as Butler has remarked) our principle of action is in both cases fundamentally the same,—an aversion or displeasure at injustice and cruelty which interests us in the punishment of those by whom they have been exhibited. Resentment, therefore, when restrained within due bounds, seems to be rather a sentiment of hatred against vice than an affection of ill-will against any of our fellow-creatures; and, on this account, I am somewhat doubtful (notwithstanding the apology I have already made for the title of this section) whether I have not followed Dr Reid too closely in characterizing resentment, considered as an original part of the constitution of man, by the epithet of *Malevolent*.

An additional confirmation of this doctrine arises from the following consideration: That, in candid and generous minds, the whole object of resentment is to convince the person who has injured them that he has treated them unjustly,—to show him that he has formed an unfair estimate of their characters and of their talents, and to obtain such a superiority over him in point of *power* as to be able, by a generous forgiveness of his aggressions, to convert his malice into gratitude. In other words, in such

minds the great object of resentment is to correct the faults of the delinquent, and to make a friend of an enemy.

This last observation points out (by the way) the final cause of a very remarkable circumstance accompanying the affection of resentment when excited by an injury offered to ourselves. We desire not only the punishment of the offender, but that we should have the power of inflicting the punishment with our own hand. It is probable that this originates partly in our love of power; but I believe it is chiefly owing to a secret wish of convincing our enemy, by the magnanimity of our conduct, how much he had mistaken the object of his hatred. In the mean and the malicious, the passion of revenge is gratified by any suffering inflicted on an enemy, whether by an indifferent person or by the hand of Heaven.

After all, however, that I have advanced in justification of this part of the human constitution, I must acknowledge that there is no principle of action which requires more pains, even in the best minds, to restrain it within the bounds of moderation. The imagination exaggerates the injuries that we ourselves have received; and mistaken views of human nature, concurring with low spirits or disappointed ambition, lead us to ascribe to our opponents worse motives than those from which they really have acted. We seldom, too, are sufficiently attentive to the situations and feelings of other men, and even where we do make an effort to place our-

selves in their circumstances, it is not every man who is possessed of the degree of imagination requisite for that purpose. Our own sufferings, at the same time, are always present to our view, and force themselves on the notice of the most thoughtless without any effort on their part. And hence it is that an irritability to personal injury is often accompanied with a callousness to the feelings of others, and even with a disposition to put unfavourable constructions on their actions.

In order to check the excesses to which this ungovernable passion is apt to lead us, nature has made a beautiful provision in that sentiment of indignation which the sight of injustice excites in the breast of the unconcerned spectator. This sentiment interests society in general in the cause of the oppressed, and serves to protect the weak against the wrongs of the powerful. As it is not, however, liable to the same excesses with the passion of resentment excited by a personal injury, it sympathizes only with the injured while his retaliations are restrained within the bounds of moderation. When resentment rises to cruel and relentless revenge, unconcerned spectators become disposed to abandon the cause they had espoused, and to transfer their protection to the original aggressor.

It does not follow from this observation that resentment and indignation are two distinct principles; for the whole difference between them may be accounted for from the different views we naturally take of our own wrongs and those of others.

They are both founded in a sentiment of aversion and ill-will excited by injustice, but the one is more apt to pass the bounds of moderation than the other, in consequence of the facts being more strongly obtruded on our notice, and often exaggerated by the heightenings of imagination.

Mr Smith has endeavoured, on the principles now stated, to account for the origin of our sense of justice. The passion of resentment, he thinks, when excited by a personal injury, would set no bounds to its gratification, but would lead us to sacrifice everything to revenge. But, as we find that other men would not go along with us when our revenge ceases to bear any proportion to the original injury, we learn to adjust our retaliations not to our own feelings, but to those of the impartial spectator. Hence the origin of our sense of justice, our regard for which arises from our desire of obtaining the sympathy and the support of society.

I shall afterwards state some objections to this theory, which appear to me unanswerable. In particular, I shall attempt to show, that, so far is our idea of justice from being posterior to the affections of resentment and indignation, and to a comparison between our own feelings and those of other men, that the very emotion of deliberate resentment presupposes the idea of justice, and of what is morally right and wrong. The fact, however, on which the theory proceeds is a most important one, and Mr Smith has had great merit in illustrating it so fully. Lord Kames, in his *Historical Law Tracts*, has

made a happy application of it to explain the origin and progress of criminal law. Which of these two authors first conceived the idea of applying it to *jurisprudence* does not appear to me to be perfectly certain. Both of them have evidently been much indebted in their speculations concerning this part of human nature to the Sermons of Bishop Butler.

I shall conclude this subject at present with remarking, that, as all the benevolent affections are accompanied with pleasant emotions, so all the malevolent affections are sources of pain and disquiet. This is true even of resentment, how justly soever it may be roused by the injurious conduct of others. Here, too, we may perceive a final cause perfectly analogous to that of which I formerly took notice in treating of the benevolent affections. As the pleasant emotion accompanying *these* seems evidently to have been intended as an incitement to us to cultivate and cherish them, so the painful feeling accompanying resentment, and every other affection which is hostile to our fellow-creatures, serves as a check on the habitual indulgence of them, and induces us, as soon as the first impulse of passion is over, and reason begins to reassume her empire, to obliterate every trace of them from the memory. Dr Reid has expressed this last observation with great beauty, and has enforced it with uncommon felicity of illustration. “When we consider that, “on the one hand, every benevolent affection is “pleasant in its nature, is health to the soul and

“ a cordial to the spirits ; that nature has made
 “ even the outward expression of benevolent affec-
 “ tion in the countenance pleasant to every behold-
 “ er, and the chief ingredient of beauty in the *hu-*
 “ *man face divine* ; that, on the other hand, every
 “ malevolent affection, not only in its faulty exces-
 “ ses, but in its moderate degrees, is vexation and
 “ disquiet to the mind, and even gives deformity
 “ to the countenance, it is evident that by these sig-
 “ nals nature loudly admonishes us to use the for-
 “ mer as our daily bread, both for health and plea-
 “ sure, but to consider the latter as a nauseous me-
 “ dicine, which is never to be taken without neces-
 “ sity, and even then in no greater quantity than
 “ the necessity requires.”

After the clear, and, at the same time, cautious
 terms in which Butler, Kames, and Smith have ex-
 pressed themselves concerning *Resentment*, it is sur-
 prising to find some late writers of considerable
 name speaking of the *pleasure of Revenge* as a na-
 tural gratification, of which every man is entitled
 to look forward to the enjoyment ; and which, after
 the establishment of the political union, every man
 has a right to insist upon at the hands of the cri-
 minal magistrate. Such, in particular, seems to be
 the opinion of Mr Bentham, and of his very in-
 genious and eloquent commentator, M. Dumont.
 “ Toute espèce de satisfaction entraînant une peine
 “ pour le délinquant, produit naturellement un plai-
 “ sir de vengeance pour la partie lésée. Ce plaisir

“ est un gain. Il rappelle la parabole de Samson.
 “ C’est le miel recueilli dans la gueule du lion. Pro-
 “ duit sans frais, resultat net d’une opération néces-
 “ saire à d’autres titres, c’est une jouissance à cultiver
 “ comme toute autre ; car le plaisir de la vengeance,
 “ considéré abstraitement, n’est comme tout autre
 “ plaisir, qu’un bien en lui-même. Il est innocent
 “ tant qu’il se renferme dans les bornes de la loi ;
 “ il ne devient criminel qu’au moment où il les
 “ franchit. Utile à l’individu, ce mobile est même
 “ utile au public, ou pour mieux dire nécessaire ;
 “ c’est cette satisfaction vindicative qui délie la lan-
 “ gue des témoins ; c’est elle qui anime l’accusateur,
 “ et l’engage au service de la justice, malgré les em-
 “ barras, les dépenses, les inimitiés auxquelles il
 “ s’expose. C’est elle qui surmonte la pitié publique
 “ dans la punition des coupables

“ Je sais bien que les moralistes communs, tou-
 “ jours dupés de mots, ne sauroient entrer dans
 “ cette vérité. L’esprit de vengeance est odieux ;
 “ toute satisfaction puisée dans cette source est vici-
 “ euse ; la pardon des injures est la plus belle des
 “ vertus. Sans doute, les caractères implacables, qu’
 “ aucune satisfaction n’adoucit, sont odieux, et doi-
 “ vent l’être. L’oubli des injures est une vertu né-
 “ cessaire à l’humanité, mais c’est une vertu quand
 “ la justice a fait son œuvre, quand elle a fourni
 “ ou refusé une satisfaction. Avant cela, oublier
 “ les injures, c’est inviter à en commettre ; ce n’est
 “ pas être l’ami, mais l’ennemi de la société. Qu’-
 “ est-ce que la méchanceté pourroit désirer de plus

“qu'un arrangement ou les offences seroient tous jours suivies de pardon.”*

The observations above quoted from Butler, Kames, and Smith, will at once point out the limitations with which this passage must be understood, and will furnish a triumphant reply to it where it departs from the truth.

* Bentham de la Satisfaction Vindicative. Trad. par Dumont.



BOOK SECOND.

OF OUR RATIONAL* AND GOVERNING PRINCIPLES OF ACTION.

CHAPTER FIRST.

OF A PRUDENTIAL REGARD TO OUR OWN HAPPINESS, OR, WHAT IS COMMONLY CALLED BY MORALISTS, THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-LOVE.

THE constitution of man, if it were composed merely of the *active principles* hitherto mentioned, would, in some important respects, be analogous to that of the brutes. His *reason*, however, renders his nature and condition, on the whole, essentially different from theirs; and, by elevating him to the rank of a *moral agent*, distinguishes him from the

* To various active principles which have been already under our consideration, such, for instance, as the desire of knowledge, the desire of esteem, pity to the distressed, &c. &c. the epithet *rational* may undoubtedly be applied in one sense with propriety, as they exclusively belong to rational beings; but they are yet of a nature essentially different from those active principles of which we are now to treat, and which I have distinguished by the title of *Rational and Governing*. My reasons for using this language will appear from the sequel.

lower animals still more remarkably than by the superiority it imparts to his intellectual endowments.

Of this want of reason in the brutes, it is an obvious result, that they are incapable of looking forward to *consequences*, or of comparing together the different gratifications of which they are susceptible; and, accordingly, as far as we can perceive, they yield to every present impulse. Among the inhabitants of this globe it is the exclusive prerogative of man, as an intelligent being, to take a comprehensive survey of his various principles of action, and to form plans of conduct for the attainment of his favourite objects. He is possessed, therefore, of the power of *self-government*; for how could a plan of conduct be conceived and carried into execution without a power of refusing occasionally to particular active principles the gratification which they demand? This difference between the *animal* and the *rational* natures is well and concisely described by Seneca in the following words: “*Animalibus pro ratione impetus; homini pro impetu ratio.*”*

According to the particular active principle which influences habitually a man's conduct, his character receives its denomination of *covetous*, *ambitious*, *studious*, or *voluptuous*; and his conduct is more or less systematical as he adheres to his general plan with steadiness or inconstancy.

It is hardly necessary for me to remark how much a man's success in his favourite pursuit depends on

* Seneca, II. de Ira. 16.

the systematical steadiness with which he keeps his object in view. That an uncommon measure of this quality often supplies, to a great degree, the place of genius, and that, where it is wanting, the most splendid endowments are of little value, are facts which have been often insisted on by philosophers, and which are confirmed to us by daily experience. The effects of this concentration of the attention to one particular end on the developement and improvement of the intellectual powers in general have not been equally taken notice of. They are, however, extremely remarkable, as every person will readily acknowledge, who compares the sagacity and penetration of those individuals who have enjoyed its advantages, with the weakness and incapacity and dissipation of thought produced by an undecided choice among the various pursuits which human life presents to us. Even the systematical voluptuary, while he commands a much greater variety of sensual indulgences, and continues them to a much more advanced age than the thoughtless profligate, seldom fails to give a certain degree of cultivation to his understanding, by employing his faculties habitually in one direction.

The only exception, perhaps, which can be mentioned to this last remark, occurs in the case of those men whose leading principle of action is VANITY, and who, as their rule of conduct is borrowed from without, must, in consequence of this very circumstance, be perpetually wavering and inconsistent in their pursuits. Accordingly, it will be found that such

men, although they have frequently performed splendid actions, have seldom risen to eminence in any one particular career, unless when by a rare concurrence of accidental circumstances this career has been steadily pointed out to them, through the whole of their lives, by public opinion.

“ Alcibiades ” (says a French writer) “ was a man not of ambition, but of vanity,—a man whose ruling passion was to make a noise, and to furnish matter of conversation to the Athenians. He possessed the *genius* of a great man, but his *soul*, the springs of which were too much slackened to urge him to constant application, could not elevate him, but by starts, to pursuits worthy of his powers. I can scarcely bring myself to believe that a man, whose versatility was such as to enable him, when in Sparta, to assume the severe manners of a Spartan, and, when in Ionia, to indulge in the refined voluptuousness of an Ionian, had received from nature the *stamina* of a great character.” *

To what has been now observed in favour of sys-

* “ Ce n'étoit pas un *ambitieux*, mais un homme *vain* qui vouloit faire du bruit, et occuper les Atheniens. Il avoit l'*esprit* d'un grand homme ; mais son *ame*, dont les ressorts amolis étoient devenus incapables d'une application constante, ne pouvoit s'élever au grand que par boutade. J'ai bien de la peine à croire, qu'un homme assez souple pour être à Sparte aussi dur et aussi sevère qu'un Spartiate ; dans l'Ionie aussi recherché dans les plaisirs qu'un Ionien, fût propre à faire un grand homme.”—(Quoted by Warburton in his note on Pope's Character of the Duke of Wharton.)

tematical views in the conduct of life, it may be added, that they are incomparably more conducive to *happiness* than a course of action influenced merely by occasional inclination and appetite. Lord Shaftesbury goes so far as to assert, that even the man who is uniformly and systematically bad enjoys *more happiness* (perhaps he would have been nearer the truth if he had contented himself with saying that he suffers less misery) than one of a more mixed and more inconsistent character. “It is the thorough profligate knave alone, the complete unnatural villain, who can anyway bid for happiness with the honest man. True interest is wholly on one side or on the other. All between is inconsistency, irresolution, remorse, vexation, and an ague fit,—from hot to cold,—from one passion to another quite contrary,—a perpetual discord of life, and an alternate disquiet and self-dislike. The only rest or repose must be through *one* determined considerate resolution, which, when once taken, must be courageously kept, and the passions and affections brought under obedience to it,—the temper steeled and hardened to the mind,—the disposition to the judgment. Both must agree, else all must be disturbance and confusion.”*

To the same purpose Horace :

“ ————— Quanto constantior idem

“ In vitiis, tanto levior miser, ac prior illo

“ Qui jam contento, jam laxo fune laboret.”†

* Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour, Part iv. sect 1.

† Hor. Sat. vii Lib. ii.

Of the state of a mind originally possessed of the most splendid endowments, but where everything had been suffered to run into anarchy from the want of some controlling and steady principle of action, a masterly picture is drawn by Cicero in the following account of Catiline.

“ Utebatur hominibus improbis multis, et quidem optimis se viris deditum esse simulabat ; erant apud illam illecebræ libidinum multæ ; erant etiam industriæ quidam stimuli ac laboris : flagrabant libidinis vitia apud illum ; vigeabant etiam studia rei militaris : neque ego unquam fuisse tale monstrum in terris ullum puto, tam ex contrariis diversisque inter se pugnantibus naturæ studiis cupiditatibusque conflatum. Quis clarioribus viris quodam tempore jucundior ? quis turpioribus conjunctior ? quis civis meliorum partium aliquando ? quis tetrrior hostis huic civitati ? quis in voluptatibus inquinatior ? quis in laboribus patientior ? quis in rapacitate avarior ? quis in largitione effusior ? ”*

In a person of this description, whatever indications of genius and ability he may discover, and whatever may be the great qualities he possesses, there is undoubtedly some tendency to insanity, which, if it were not the radical *source* of the evil, could hardly fail, sooner or later, to be the *effect* of a perpetual conflict between different and discordant passions. And, accordingly, this is the idea which

* Oratio pro M. Cœlio, Sect. v. and vi.

Sallust seems to have formed of this extraordinary man. "His eyes" (he observes) "had a disagreeable glare; his complexion was pale; his walk sometimes quick, sometimes slow; and his general appearance indicated a discomposure of mind approaching to madness."

I would not be understood to insinuate by this last observation, that in every case in which we observe a conduct apparently inconsistent and irregular we are entitled to conclude all at once, that it proceeds from accidental humour, or from a disordered understanding. The knowledge of a man's ruling passion is often a key to what appeared, on a superficial view, to be perfectly inexplicable. Some excellent reflections on this subject are to be found in the first of Pope's moral essays, where they are most happily and forcibly illustrated by the character of the Duke of Wharton.

" Search, then, the ruling passion : There alone
 " The wild are constant, and the cunning known ;
 " The fool consistent, and the false sincere ;
 " Priests, princes, women, no dissemblers here.
 " This clue once found unravels all the rest,
 " The prospect clears, and Wharton stands confest.
 " Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
 " Whose ruling passion was the lust of praise.
 " Born with whate'er could win it from the wise,
 " Women and fools must like him, or he dies."

* * * * *

" Ask you why Wharton broke through every rule,
 " 'Twas all for fear the knaves should call him fool.
 " Nature well known, no prodigies remain,
 " Comets are regular and Wharton plain."

I have only to add to these observations of Pope, that I believe the inconsistencies he describes are chiefly to be found in the conduct of men whose ruling principle of action is vanity. I already remarked, that while every other principle which gains an ascendant over the rest has a tendency to *systematize* our course of action, vanity has, on the contrary, a tendency to *disorganize* it, leading us always to look abroad for our rule of conduct, and thereby rendering it as wavering and inconsistent as the opinions and fashions of mankind. Where vanity, therefore, is the ruling passion of any individual, a want of system may be regarded as a necessary consequence of his general character.

From the foregoing considerations it sufficiently appears how much the nature of man is discriminated from that of the brutes, in consequence of the comprehensive view which his reason enables him to take of his different principles of action, and of the deliberate choice he has it in his power to make of the general plan of conduct he is to pursue. There is another, however, and a very important respect, in which the rational nature differs from the animal, that it is able to form the notion of *happiness*, or of what is good for it upon the whole, and to deliberate about the most effectual means of attaining it. It is owing to this distinguishing prerogative of our species that we can avail ourselves of our past experience in avoiding those enjoyments which we know will be succeeded by suffering, and in submitting to lesser evils which we know are to be

instrumental in procuring us a greater accession of good. “Sed inter hominem et belluam” (says Cicero) “hoc maximè interest, quod hæc tantùm
“quantùm sensu movetur, ad id solum quod adest,
“quodque præsens est, se accommodat, paullulum
“admodum sentiens præteritum aut futurum. Ho-
“mo autem, quoniam rationis est particeps, per
“quam consequentia cernit, causas rerum videt,
“earumque prægressus et antecessiones non igno-
“rat; similitudines comparat, et rebus præsentibus
“adjungit atque annectit futuras; facile totius vitæ
“cursum videt, ad eamque degendam præparat res
“necessarias.” *

It is implied in the very idea of *happiness* that it is a desirable object, and therefore self-love is an active principle very different from those which have been hitherto considered. These, for aught we know, may be the effect of arbitrary appointment, and they have accordingly been called *implanted* principles, or principles resulting from a positive accommodation of the constitution of man to the objects with which he is surrounded. The desire of happiness may be called a *rational* principle of action, being peculiar to a rational nature, and inseparably connected with it. It is impossible to conceive a being capable of forming the notions of happiness and misery, to whom the one shall not be an object of desire, and the other of aversion. †

* De Off. Lib. i. iv.

† From this constitution of the human mind, as at once *sensitive* and *rational*, arise necessarily the emotions of hope and

In prefixing to this chapter the title of *self-love*, the ordinary language of modern philosophy has been followed, as I am always anxious to avoid unnecessary innovations in the use of words. The expression, however, is exceptionable, for it suggests an analogy (where there is none in fact) between that regard which every rational being must necessarily have to his own happiness and those benevolent affections which attach us to our fellow-creatures. There is surely nothing in the former of these principles analogous to the affection of *love*; and, therefore, to call it by the appellation of *self-love* is to suggest a *theory* with respect to its nature, and a theory which has no foundation in truth.

The word *φιλαυτία* was used among the Greeks nearly in the same sense, and introduced similar inaccuracies into their reasonings concerning the principles of morals. In our language, however, the impropriety does not stop here; for not only is the phrase *self-love* used as synonymous with the de-

fear, joy and sorrow. The pleasurable emotion arising from good in expectation is called *hope*, the painful emotion arising from apprehended evil is called *fear*. The words *joy* and *sorrow* are more general, applicable alike to the emotions arising from the *experience* and from the *apprehension* of good and of evil. The interest which our benevolent affections give us in the concerns of others inspire us (more particularly in the case of those to whom we are fondly attached) with emotions analogous to those which have a reference to our own condition.

The laws which regulate these emotions connected with the sensitive nature of man deserve a careful examination; but the subject does not fall under the present part of my plan.

sire of happiness, but it is often confounded (in consequence of an unfortunate connection in their etymology) with the word *selfishness*, which certainly, in strict propriety, denotes a very different disposition of mind. In proof of this it is sufficient to observe, that the word selfishness is always used in an unfavourable sense, whereas self-love, or the desire of happiness, is inseparable from our nature as rational and sensitive beings.

The mistaken notion that vice consists in an excessive self-love, naturally arose from the application of the terms self-love, or *φιλαυτια*, to express the desire of happiness. As benevolence, or the love of mankind, constitutes, in the opinion of many moralists, the whole of virtue, so it was not unnatural to conclude, that the love of ourselves (which this mode of speaking seems to contrast with benevolence) was the radical source of all the vices. And, accordingly, this conclusion has been adopted by many writers, both ancient and modern, “ If we scan ” (says Dr Barrow) “ the particular nature, and search into the original causes of the several kinds of naughty dispositions in our souls, and of miscarriages in our lives, we shall find inordinate self-love to be a main ingredient, and a common source of them all, so that a divine of great name had some reason to affirm, *that original sin* (or that innate distemper from which men generally become so very prone to evil and averse to good) doth consist in self-love disposing us to all kinds of irregularity and excess.” In this passage, Dr

Barrow refers to the opinion of Zuinglius, who has expressly called self-love the original or radical sin in our nature. “ Est ergo ista ad peccandum amore sui propensio, peccatum originale.” *

It is chiefly, however, from some of our English moralists that this notion concerning the nature of vice has derived its authority; and the plausibility of their reasonings on the subject has been much aided by that indiscriminate use of the words *self-love* and *selfishness*, of which I already took notice.

I shall afterwards have occasion to show that vice does not consist in an excessive regard to our own happiness. At present I shall only remark, in addition to what was said above with respect to the distinction between the meanings of the words *self-love* and *selfishness*, that the former is so far from expressing anything blamable, that it denotes a principle of action which we never sacrifice to any of our implanted appetites, desires, or affections, without incurring remorse and self-condemnation. When we see, for example, a man enslaved by his animal appetites, so far from considering him as under the influence of an excessive self-love, we pity and despise him for neglecting the higher enjoyments which are placed within his reach. Accordingly, those very authors who tell us that vice consists in an inordinate self-love are forced to confess that there are some senses of the word in which it expresses a worthy and commendable

* Sermon on Self-Love.

principle of action. “Reason,” (says Dr Barrow,) “dictateth and prescribeth to us, that we should have a sober regard to our true good and welfare; to our best interest and solid content; to that, which (all things being rightly stated, considered, and computed,) will in the end prove most beneficial and satisfactory to us; a self-love working in prosecution of such things, common sense cannot but allow and approve.”—“Τον μὲν αγαθον,” (says Aristotle,) “δει φιλαυτον ειναι.”* And in another passage of the same chapter, “δοξειε δε ο τοιστος ειναι μαλλον φιλαυτος.”

As a farther proof that selfishness is not synonymous with the desire of happiness, it may be observed, that although we apply the epithet *selfish* to avarice and to low private sensuality, we never apply it to the desire of knowledge, or to the pursuits of virtue, which are certainly sources of more exquisite pleasure than riches or sensuality can bestow.

Yet at the darkened eye, the withered face,
The hoary head I never will repine :
But spare, O time ! whate'er of mental grace,
Of candour, love, or sympathy divine,
Whate'er of fancy's ray, or friendship's flame was mine.

Such a wish is surely dictated by the most rational view of our real interest; and yet no man will pretend that it contains anything inconsistent with a generous and heroic mind. Had it been directed to wealth, to long life, or to the preserva-

* Ethic. Nic. Lib. ix. Cap. viii.

tion of youthful beauty and vigour, it would have been universally condemned as selfish and contemptible.

This restriction of the term *selfishness* to a particular class of human pursuits is taken notice of by Dr Ferguson in his *Essay on Civil Society*, and seems to be considered by him as originating in a capricious, or rather in an inconsistent, use of language. “It is somewhat remarkable, that notwithstanding men value themselves so much on qualities of the mind, on parts, learning, and wit, on courage, generosity, and honour, those men are still supposed to be in the highest degree selfish, or attentive to themselves, who are most careful about animal life, and who are least mindful of rendering that life an object worthy of care. It will be difficult, however, to tell why a good understanding, a resolute and generous mind, should not, by every man in his senses, be reckoned as much parts of himself as either his stomach or his palate, and much more than his estate or his dress. The epicure who consults his physician how he may restore his relish for food, and, by creating an appetite, renew his enjoyment, might at least, with an equal regard to himself, consult how he might strengthen his affection to a parent or a child, to his country, or to mankind; and it is probable that an appetite of this sort would prove a source of enjoyment no less than the former.”

Of the difficulty here remarked by Dr Ferguson,

the solution appears to me to be this, that the word *selfishness*, when applied to a pursuit, has no reference to the *motive* from which the pursuit proceeds, but to the *effect* it has on the conduct. Neither our animal appetites, nor avarice, nor curiosity, nor the desire of moral improvement, arise from self-love, but some of these active principles disconnect us with society more than others; and consequently, though they do not indicate a greater regard for our own happiness, they betray a greater unconcern about the happiness of our neighbours. The pursuits of the miser have no mixture whatever of the social affections; on the contrary, they continually lead him to state his own interest in opposition to that of other men. The enjoyments of the sensualist all expire within his own person; and, therefore, whoever is habitually occupied in the search of them must of necessity neglect the duties which he owes to mankind. It is otherwise with the desire of knowledge, which is always accompanied with a strong desire of social communication, and with the love of moral excellence, which, in its practical tendency, coincides so remarkably with benevolence, that many authors have attempted to resolve the one principle into the other. How far their conclusion, in this instance, is a necessary consequence of the premises from which it is deduced will appear hereafter.

The foregoing observations coincide so remarkably with a passage in Aristotle's *Ethics*, that I am tempted to quote it at length in the excellent Eng-

lish translation of Dr Gillies. After stating the same inconsistencies in our language about self-love, which Dr Ferguson has pointed out, Aristotle proceeds thus :—

“ These contradictions cannot be reconciled but
 “ by distinguishing the different senses in which
 “ man is said to love himself. Those who reproach
 “ self-love as a vice consider it only as it appears
 “ in worldlings and voluptuaries, who arrogate to
 “ themselves more than their due share of wealth,
 “ power, or pleasure. Such things are to the mul-
 “ titude the objects of earnest concern and eager
 “ contention, because the multitude regards them
 “ as prizes of the highest value, and, in endeavour-
 “ ing to attain them, strives to gratify its passion
 “ at the expence of its reason. This kind of self-
 “ love, which belongs to the contemptible multi-
 “ tude, is doubtless obnoxious to blame, and in this
 “ acceptation the word is generally taken. But
 “ should a man assume a pre-eminence in exercis-
 “ ing justice, temperance, and other virtues, though
 “ such a man has really more true self-love than
 “ the multitude, yet nobody would impute this af-
 “ fection to him as a crime. Yet he takes to him-
 “ self the fairest and greatest of all goods, and those
 “ the most acceptable to the ruling principle in his
 “ nature, which is properly himself, in the same
 “ manner as the sovereignty in every community
 “ is that which most properly constitutes the state.
 “ He is said, also, to have, or not to have, the com-
 “ mand of himself, just as this principle bears sway,

“ or as it is subject to control ; and those acts are
 “ considered as most voluntary which proceed from
 “ this legislative or sovereign power. Whoever
 “ cherishes and gratifies this ruling part of his na-
 “ ture is strictly and peculiarly a lover of himself,
 “ but in a quite different sense from that in which
 “ self-love is regarded as a matter of reproach ; for
 “ all men approve and praise an affection calculated
 “ to produce the greatest private and the greatest
 “ public happiness ; whereas they disapprove and
 “ blame the vulgar kind of self-love as often hurt-
 “ ful to others, and always ruinous to those who
 “ indulge it.” *

* Aristotle's Ethics, Book ix. chap. viii.

CHAPTER SECOND.

OF THE MORAL FACULTY.

General Observations on the Moral Faculty, tending chiefly to show that it is an original principle of our nature, and not resolvable into any other principle or principles more general.

As some authors have supposed that vice consists in an excessive regard to our own happiness, so others have gone into the opposite extreme, by representing virtue as merely *a matter of prudence*, and a sense of duty but another name for *a rational self-love*. This view of the subject was far from being unnatural; for we find that these two principles lead in general to the same course of action; and we have every reason to believe, that, if our knowledge of the universe was more extensive, they would be found to do so in all instances whatever. Accordingly, by many of the best of the ancient moralists, our *sense of duty* was considered as resolvable into self-love, and the whole of *ethics* was reduced to this question, *What*

is the supreme good? or, in other words, What is most conducive, on the whole, to our happiness? *

That we have, however, a sense of duty, which is not resolvable into a regard to our happiness, appears from various considerations.

(1.) There are, in all languages, words equivalent to *duty* and to *interest*, which men have constantly distinguished in their signification. They coincide in general in their applications, but they convey very different ideas. When I wish to persuade a man to a particular action, I address some of my arguments to a sense of duty, and others to the regard he has to his own interest. I endeavour to show him that it is not only his duty, but his interest to act in the way that I recommend to him.

This distinction was expressed among the Ro-

* The same opinion has been adopted by various philosophers of the first eminence in England, and it has long been the prevailing system on the continent. From the following passage in one of D'Alembert's Letters to the King of Prussia, it appears to have been considered both by the writer and by his royal correspondent as a fundamental principle in morals.

“ Je n'ai pas en effet perdu un moment pour lire cet excellent mémoire; et je puis Sire, assurer à V. M. que je suis absolument de son avis sur les principes qui doivent servir de base à la morale.

“ Si V. M. veut prendre la peine de jeter les yeux sur mes Elémens de Philosophie, elle verra que j'y indique comme la source de la morale et du bonheur, ‘ la liaison intime de notre véritable intérêt avec l'accomplissement de nos devoirs,’ et que je regarde l'amour éclairé de nous mêmes comme le principe de tout sacrifice morale.”—Œuvres Post. du Roi de Prusse, Tom. XIV. p. 99.

man moralists by the words *honestum* and *utile*. Of the former Cicero says, “quod vere dicimus, “etiamsi a nullo laudetur, natura esse laudabile.”*

The *το καλον* among the Greeks corresponds, when applied to the conduct, to the *honestum* of the Romans.† Dr Reid remarks that the word *καθηκον* (*officium*) extended both to the *honestum* and the *utile*, and comprehended every action performed either from a sense of duty, or from an enlightened regard to our true interest. In English we use the word *reasonable* with the same latitude, and indeed almost exactly in the same sense in which Cicero defines *officium*: “Id quod cur factum sit ratio probabilis reddi potest.” In treating of such *offices* Cicero, and Panœtius before him, first points out those that are recommended to us by our love of the *honestum*, and next those that are recommended by our regard to the *utile*.

This distinction between a sense of duty and a regard to interest is acknowledged even by men whose moral principles are not the purest, nor the most consistent. What unlimited confidence do we repose in the conduct of one whom we know to be a *man of honour*, even in those cases in which he acts out of the view of the world, and where the strongest temptations of worldly interest concur to lead him astray! We know that his heart would revolt at the idea of anything base or unworthy. Dr Reid observes that what we call *honour*, con-

* De Offic. Lib. i. 4.

† Reid's Essays on the Active Powers. Essay 3d, Chap. v.

sidered as a principle of conduct, “ is only another “ name for a regard to duty, to rectitude, to propriety of conduct.”* This, I think, is going rather too far ; for, although the two principles coincide *in general* in the direction they give to our conduct, they do not coincide always ; the principle of *honour* being liable, from its nature and origin, to be most unhappily perverted in its applications by a bad education and the influence of fashion. At the same time, Dr Reid’s remark is perfectly in point, for the principle of honour is plainly grafted on a sense of duty, and necessarily presupposes its existence.

Dr Paley, one of the most zealous advocates for the selfish system of morals, admits the fact on which the foregoing argument proceeds, but endeavours to evade the conclusion by means of a theory so extraordinary, that I shall state it in his own words. “ There is always understood to be a difference between an act of *prudence* and an act “ of *duty*. Thus, if I distrusted a man who owed “ me a sum of money, I should reckon it an act of “ prudence to get another person bound with him ; “ but I should hardly call it an act of duty. On “ the other hand, it would be thought a very unusual and loose kind of language to say, that, as “ I had made such a promise, it was *prudent* to “ perform it ; or, that, as my friend, when he went “ abroad, placed a box of jewels in my hands, it

* Essays on the Active Powers, p. 230. 4to Edit.



“ was *prudent* in me to preserve it for him till he
 “ returned.

“ Now, in what, you will ask, does the difference
 “ consist, inasmuch as, according to our account of
 “ the matter, both in the one case and the other, in
 “ acts of duty as well as acts of prudence, we con-
 “ sider solely what we ourselves shall gain or lose
 “ by the act?

“ The difference, and the only difference, is this,
 “ that, in the one case we consider what we shall
 “ gain or lose in the present world; in the other
 “ case, we consider also what we shall lose or gain
 “ in the world to come.”

On this curious passage I have no comment to offer. A sufficient answer to it may, I trust, be derived from the following reasonings. In the meantime, it will be allowed to be at least one presumption of an essential distinction between the notions of duty and of interest, that there are different words to express these notions in all languages, and that the most illiterate of mankind are in no danger of confounding them together.

(2.) But, secondly, the emotions arising from the contemplation of what is right and wrong in conduct are different both in degree and in kind from those which are produced by a calm regard to our own happiness. Of this, I think, nobody can doubt, who considers with attention the operation of our moral principles in cases where their effects are not counteracted or modified by a combination with some other principles of our nature. In judging,

for example, of *our own* conduct, our moral powers are warped by the influence of self-partiality and self-deceit; and, accordingly, we daily see men commit, without any remorse, actions, which, if performed by another person, they would have regarded with the liveliest sentiments of indignation and abhorrence. Even in *this last case* the experiment is not always perfectly fair; for where the actor has been previously known to us our judgment is generally affected, in a greater or less degree, by our prepossessions or by our prejudices. In contemplating the characters exhibited in histories and in novels, the emotions we feel are the immediate and the genuine result of our moral constitution; and although they may be stronger in some men than in others, yet they are in all distinctly perceivable, even in those whose want of temper and of candour render them scarcely conscious of the distinction of right and wrong in the conduct of their neighbours and acquaintance. And hence probably (we may observe by the way) the chief origin of the pleasure we experience in this sort of reading. The representations of *the stage*, however, afford the most favourable of all opportunities for studying the moral constitution of man. As the mind is here perfectly indifferent to the parties whose character and conduct are the subject of the fable, the judgments it forms can hardly fail to be impartial, and the feelings arising from these judgments are much more conspicuous in their external effects than if the play were perused in the closet; for every species of en-

thusiasm operates more forcibly when men are collected in a crowd. On such an occasion the slightest hint suggested by the poet raises to transport the passions of the audience, and forces involuntary tears from men of the greatest reserve and the most correct sense of propriety. The crowd does not *create* the feeling nor even *alter its nature*, it only enables us to remark its operation *on a greater scale*. In these cases we have surely no time for reflection; and indeed the emotions of which we are conscious are such as no speculations about our own interest could possibly excite. It is in situations of this kind that we most completely forget ourselves as individuals, and feel the most sensibly the existence of those moral ties by which Heaven has been pleased to bind mankind together.

(3.) Although philosophers have shown that a sense of duty, and an enlightened regard to our own happiness conspire in most instances to give the same direction to our conduct, so as to put it beyond a doubt that, even in this world, a virtuous life is true wisdom, yet this is a truth by no means obvious to the common sense of mankind, but deduced from an extensive view of human affairs, and an accurate investigation of the *remote consequences* of our different actions. It is from experience and reflection, therefore, we learn the connection between virtue and happiness; and, consequently, the great lessons of morality which are obvious to the capacity of all mankind could never have been suggested to them merely by a regard to their own

interest. Indeed, this discovery which experience makes to us of the connection between virtue and happiness, both in the case of individuals and of political societies, furnishes one of the most pleasing subjects of speculation to the philosopher, as it places in a striking point of view the unity of design which takes place in our constitution, and opens encouraging and delightful prospects with respect to the moral government of the Deity.

It is a just and beautiful observation of Dr Reid, that “ although wise men have concluded that virtue is the only road to happiness, this conclusion is founded chiefly upon the natural respect men have for virtue, and the good and happiness that is intrinsic to it, and arises from the love of it. If we suppose a man altogether destitute of this principle, who considered virtue as only the means to another end, there is no reason to think that he would ever take it to be the road to happiness, but would wander for ever seeking this object where it is not to be found.”

This observation leads me to remark farther, that the man who is most successful in the pursuit of happiness is not he who proposes it to himself as the great object of his pursuit. To do so, and to be continually occupied with schemes on the subject, would fill the mind with anxious conjectures about futurity, and with perplexing calculations of the various chances of good and evil. Whereas the man whose ruling principle of action is a sense of duty conducts himself in the business of life with

boldness, consistency, and dignity, and finds himself rewarded with that happiness which so often eludes the pursuit of those who exert every faculty of the mind in order to attain it.

Something very similar to this takes place with regard to nations. From the earliest accounts of mankind, politicians have been employed in devising schemes of national aggrandizement, and have proceeded on the supposition, that the prosperity of their own country could only be advanced by depressing all others around them. It has now been shown with irresistible evidence that those views were founded on mistake, and that the prosperity of a country is intimately connected with that of its neighbours; insomuch that the enlightened statesman, instead of embarrassing himself with the care of a machine whose parts were become too complicated for any human comprehension, finds his labour reduced to the simple business of observing the rules of justice and humanity. It is remarkable, that, long before the date of these profound speculations in politics, for which we are indebted to Mr Smith and to the French economists, Fenelon was led merely by the goodness of his heart, and by his speculative conviction of the intimate connection between virtue and happiness under the moral government of God, to recommend a free trade as an expedient measure in policy, and to reprobate the mean ideas of national jealousy as calculated to frustrate the very ends to which they are supposed to be subservient. Indeed I am inclined to think,

that, as in conducting the affairs of private life, “ the integrity of the upright man ” is his surest guide, so in managing the affairs of a great empire, a strong sense of justice, and an ardent zeal for the rights and for the happiness of mankind, will go farther to form a great and successful statesman than the most perfect acquaintance with political details, unassisted by the direction of these inward monitors.

An author, too, in our own country, of sound judgment, and of very accurate commercial information, and who was one of the first in England who turned the attention of the public to those liberal notions concerning trade which are now become so prevalent, acknowledges that it was by a train of reasoning *a priori* that he was led to his conclusions. “ Can we suppose ” (says he) “ that Divine Providence has really constituted the order of things in such a sort, as to make the rule of natural self-preservation inconsistent with the fundamental principle of universal benevolence, and the doing as we would be done by ? For my own part, I must confess, I never could conceive that an all-wise, just, and benevolent being would contrive one part of his plan to be so contradictory to the other as here supposed,—that is, would lay us under one obligation as to morals, and another as to trade ; or, in short, to make that to be our duty which is not, upon the whole, and generally speaking, (even without the consideration of a future state) our interest likewise.

“ Therefore I *concluded a priori* that there must

“ be some flaw or other in the preceding arguments,
 “ plausible as they seem, and great as they are on
 “ the foot of human authority. For though the
 “ appearance of things at first sight makes for this
 “ conclusion, ‘ that poor countries must inevitably
 “ carry away the trade from rich ones, and conse-
 “ quently impoverish them,’ the fact itself cannot
 “ be so.” *

(4.) The same conclusion is strongly confirmed by *the early period of life* at which our moral judgments make their appearance, long before children are able to form *the general notion of happiness*, and, indeed, in the very infancy of their reason. It is astonishing how powerfully a child of sensibility may be affected by any simple narration calculated to rouse the feelings of pity, of generosity, or of indignation, and how very early some minds formed in a happy mould are inspired with a consciousness of the dignity of their nature, and glow with the enthusiasm of virtue. Dr Beattie has beautifully painted these openings of the moral character in the description he gives of the effect produced on his young Edwin by the fine old ballad of the Babes in the Wood.

But when to horror his amazement rose,
 A gentler strain the beldame would rehearse
 A tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
 The orphan babes and guardian uncle fierce. —
 Oh cruel ! will no pang of pity pierce

* Dean Tucker's Tracts on Political and Commercial Subjects.

That heart by lust of lucre sear'd to stone,
For sure if aught of virtue last, or verse,
To latest times shall tender souls bemoan
Those helpless orphan babes by thy fell arts undone.

See where with berries smear'd, with brambles torn
The babes now famish'd lay them down to die ;
'Midst the wild howl of darksome woods forlorn,
Folded in one another's arms they lie,
Nor friend, nor stranger, hears their dying cry,
" For from the town the man returns no more."
But thou who Heaven's just vengeance dar'st defy,
This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore,
When death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy
store.

A stifled smile of stern vindictive joy,
Brighten'd one moment Edwin's starting tear ;
— " But why should gold man's feeble mind decoy,
" And innocence thus die by doom severe ?"—
Oh ! Edwin, while thy heart is yet sincere,
The assaults of discontent and doubt repel ;
Dark even at noon-tide is our mortal sphere,
But let us hope—to doubt is to rebel,—
Let us exult in hope that all shall yet be well.

The reasonings already stated seem to me to furnish a sufficient refutation of the selfish theory of morals, as it is explained by the greater number of the philosophers who have adopted it ; but, before leaving the subject, it is necessary for me to take notice of a doctrine fundamentally the same, though modified in such a manner as to elude *some* of the foregoing arguments,—a doctrine which has been maintained of late by various English writers of note, and which I suspect is at present the prevail-

ing system in that part of the island. According to this doctrine we do, indeed, in many cases approve or disapprove of particular actions without any reference to our own interest *at the time*; but it is asserted that it was views of self-interest which originally created these moral sentiments, and led us to *associate* agreeable or disagreeable emotions with human conduct. The origin of the moral faculty, in the opinion of these theorists, is precisely analogous to that of *avarice*, or of any of our other factitious principles of action. Money, it will not be disputed, is *at first* desired merely on account of its subservience to the gratification of our natural desires; but, in process of time, the association of ideas leads us to regard it as a desirable thing in itself, without any reference to this subservience or utility, and in many cases it continues to be coveted with an increasing passion, long after we have lost all relish for the enjoyments it enables us to purchase. In the same manner, a particular action which was at first approved or disapproved of, merely on account of its supposed tendency with respect to our own interest, comes, in process of time, to be approved or disapproved of the moment it is mentioned, and without any reflection on our part that we are able to recollect. Thus, without abandoning the old selfish principles, they contrive to evade the force of the arguments founded by Hutcheson and others on the instantaneousness with which our moral judgments are commonly pronounced. This, if I am not mistaken, is

the theory of Dr Law, of Dr Hartley, of Dr Priestley, of Dr Paley, and of Dr Paley's great oracle in philosophy, the author of the *Light of Nature Pursued*.

I am ready to acknowledge that this refinement on the old selfish system gives it a degree of plausibility which it did not originally possess, and obviates *one* of the objections to it formerly stated. But it must be remembered that this was not the *only* objection, and that there are several others which apply both to the old and new hypothesis with equal force.

Among these arguments, what I would lay the principal stress on is the degree of experience and reflection necessary for discovering the *tendency* of virtue to promote our happiness, compared with the very early period of life when the moral sentiments display themselves in their full vigour.

In answer to this, it may perhaps be alleged, that when once moral ideas have been formed by the process already described, they are caught by infants from their parents or preceptors by a sort of imitation, and without any reflection on their part. "There is nothing" (says Dr Paley) "which children imitate, or apply more readily, than expressions of affection or aversion, of approbation, hatred, resentment, and the like; and when these passions and expressions are once connected, (which they will soon be by the same association which unites words with their ideas,) the passion will follow the expression, and attach upon the

“ object to which the child has been accustomed to
“ apply the epithet. In a word, when almost every-
“ thing else is learned by *imitation*, can we wonder
“ to find the same cause concerned in the generation
“ of our moral sentiments ?”

The plausibility of this reasoning arises entirely from the address with which the author introduces *indirectly* a most important fact with respect to the human mind ; a fact which, by engrossing the attention of the reader, is apt to prevent his perceiving, on a superficial view, its inapplicability to the point in dispute, or at least its insufficiency to establish in its full extent the conclusion which is deduced from it. That imitation and the association of ideas have a great influence on our moral judgments and emotions, more particularly in our early years, every man must be sensible who has reflected at all on the subject ; and it is a fact which deserves the serious consideration of all who have any concern in the education of youth. But does it therefore follow that imitation and the association of ideas are sufficient to account for *the origin* of the power of moral perception, and for *the origin* of our notions of right and wrong ? On the contrary, the tendency we have in the infancy of our reason to follow in our moral judgments the example of those whom we love and reverence ; the influence of association sometimes in guiding, and sometimes in misleading us in what we praise or blame, *presuppose* the existence of the power of moral judgment, and of the general notions of right

and wrong. The power of these adventitious causes over the mind is so great, that there is perhaps no *particular* practice which we may not be trained to approve of or to condemn ; but wherever this happens, the operation of these causes supposes us to be already in possession of some faculty by which we are capable of bestowing approbation or blame. It is worthy too of remark, that it is only with respect to *particular* practices that education is capable of misleading us ; for even when education perverts the judgment, it produces its effect by employing the instrumentality of our moral principles. In many cases it will be found that it operates by combining *a number* of principles against *one* ; by associating, for example, a number of worthy dispositions and amiable affections with habits which, if divested of such an alliance, would be regarded as mean and contemptible.

To all this we may add, that our speculative judgments concerning *truth* and *falsehood*, as well as our judgments concerning *right* and *wrong*, are liable to be influenced by imitation and the association of ideas. Even in mathematics, when a pupil of a tender age enters first on the study of the elements, his judgment leans not a little on that of his teacher, and he feels his confidence in the truth of his conclusions sensibly confirmed by his faith in the superior understanding of those whom he looks up to with respect. It is only by degrees that he emancipates himself from this dependence, and comes at last to perceive the irresistible force

of demonstrative evidence; and yet it will not be inferred from this that the power of reasoning is the result of imitation or of habit. The conclusion mentioned above with respect to the power of moral judgment is equally erroneous.

The looseness and sophistry of Paley's reasonings on the subject of the moral faculty may be traced to the vague and indistinct conception he had formed of the point in question. In proof of this I shall transcribe his own words from his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*. It is necessary to premise, that he introduces his argument against the existence of a moral sense by quoting a story from Valerius Maximus, which I shall present to my readers in Dr Paley's version.

“ The father of Caius Toranius had been pro-
 “ scribed by the triumvirate. Caius Toranius com-
 “ ing over to the interests of that party, discovered
 “ to the officers who were in pursuit of his father's
 “ life the place where he concealed himself, and gave
 “ them withal a description by which they might
 “ distinguish his person when they found him. The
 “ old man, more anxious for the safety and fortunes
 “ of his son, than about the little that might remain
 “ of his own life, began immediately to inquire of
 “ the officers who seized him, whether his son was
 “ well? whether he had done his duty to the satis-
 “ faction of his generals? That son, replied one of
 “ the officers, so dear to thy affections, betrayed
 “ thee to us; by his information thou art appre-
 “ hended and diest. The officer with this struck

“ a poignard to his heart, and the unhappy parent
 “ fell, not so much affected by his fate, as by the
 “ means to which he owed it.”

“ Now,” says Dr Paley, “ the question is, Whe-
 “ ther, if this story were related to the wild boy
 “ caught some years ago in the woods of Hanover,
 “ or to a savage without experience and without
 “ instruction, cut off in his infancy from all inter-
 “ course with his species, and consequently under
 “ no possible influence of example, authority, edu-
 “ cation, sympathy, or habit, whether, I say, such
 “ a one would feel, upon the relation, any degree of
 “ that *sentiment of disapprobation of Toranius’s*
 “ *conduct* which we feel, or not ?

“ They who maintain the existence of a moral
 “ sense, of innate maxims, of a natural conscience,
 “ that the love of virtue and hatred of vice are in-
 “ stinctive, or the perception of right and wrong
 “ intuitive, (all of which are only different ways
 “ of expressing the same opinion,) affirm that he
 “ would.

“ They who deny the existence of a moral sense,
 “ &c. affirm that he would not.

“ And upon this issue is joined.”*

To those who are at all acquainted with the his-
 tory of this dispute, it must appear evident that the
 question is here completely mistated ; and that in
 the whole of Dr Paley’s subsequent argument on
 the subject, he combats a phantom of his own ima-
 gination. The opinion which he ascribes to his an-

* Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, B. i. Ch. v.

tagonists has been loudly and repeatedly disavowed by all the most eminent moralists who have disputed Locke's reasonings against *innate practical principles*; and is indeed so very obviously absurd, that it never could have been for a moment entertained by any person in his senses.

Did it ever enter into the mind of the wildest theorist to imagine that the sense of seeing would enable a man, brought up from the moment of his birth in utter darkness, to form a conception of light and colours? But would it not be equally rash to conclude, from the extravagance of such a supposition, that the sense of seeing is not an original part of the human frame?

The above quotation from Paley forces me to remark farther, that, in combating the supposition of a *moral sense*, he has confounded together, as *only different ways of expressing the same opinion*, a variety of systems, which are regarded by all our best philosophers, not only as essentially distinct, but as in some measure opposed to each other. The system of Hutcheson, for example, is identified with that of Cudworth, to which (as will afterwards appear) it stands in direct opposition. But although, in this instance, the author's logical discrimination does not appear to much advantage, the sweeping censure thus bestowed on so many of our most celebrated ethical theories has the merit of throwing a very strong light on that particular view of the subject which it is the aim of his reasonings to establish in contradiction to them all.

CHAPTER THIRD.

CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT.—EXAMINATION
OF SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE FOREGOING CON-
CLUSIONS.

IN the preceding observations I have endeavoured to prove that the moral faculty is an original principle of our constitution, which is not resolvable into any other principle or principles more general than itself; in particular, that it is not resolvable into self-love, or a prudential regard to our own interest. In order, however, completely to establish the existence of the moral faculty as an essential and universal part of human nature, it is necessary to examine with attention the objections which have been stated to this conclusion by some writers, who were either anxious to display their ingenuity by accounting in a different manner for the origin of our moral ideas, or who wish to favour the cause of scepticism by explaining away the reality and immutability of moral distinctions.

Among these objections, that which merits the most careful consideration, from the characters of those by whom it is maintained, is founded on the

possibility of explaining the fact without increasing the number of original principles in our constitution. The rules of morality, it has been supposed, were, in the first instance, brought to light by the sagacity of philosophers and politicians; and it is only in consequence of the influence of education that they appear to form an original part of the human frame. The diversity of opinions among different nations with respect to the morality of particular actions has been considered as a strong confirmation of this doctrine.

But the power of education, although great, is confined within certain limits. It is indeed much more extensive than philosophers once believed, as sufficiently appears from those modern discoveries, with respect to the distant parts of the globe, which have so wonderfully enlarged our knowledge of human nature, and which show clearly that many sentiments and opinions, which had been formerly regarded as inseparable from the nature of man, are the results of accidental situation. If our forefathers, however, went into one extreme on this point, we seem to be at present in no small danger of going into the opposite one, by considering man as entirely a factitious being, that may be moulded into any form by education and fashion.

I have said that the power of education is confined within certain limits. The reason is obvious, for it is by co-operating with the natural principles of the mind that education produces its effects. Nay, this very susceptibility of education, which is

acknowledged to belong universally to the race, presupposes the existence of certain principles which are common to all mankind.

The influence of education in diversifying the appearances which the moral constitution of man exhibits in different instances depends chiefly on that law of our constitution which was formerly called the association of ideas; and this law supposes, in every case, that there are opinions and feelings essential to the human frame, by a combination with which external circumstances lay hold of the mind, and adapt it to its accidental situation. What we daily see happen in the trifling article of dress may help us to conceive how the association of ideas operates in matters of more serious consequence. Fashion, it is well known, can reconcile us, in the course of a few weeks, to the most absurd and fantastical ornament; but does it follow from this that fashion could create our ideas of beauty and elegance? During the time we have seen this ornament worn, it has been confined, in a great measure, to those whom we consider as models of taste, and has been gradually associated with the impressions produced by the real elegance of their appearance and manner. When it pleases by itself, the effect is not to be ascribed to the thing considered abstractedly, nor to any change which our general notions of beauty have undergone, but to the impressions with which it has been generally connected, and which it naturally recalls to the mind. The case is nearly the

same with our moral sentiments. A man of splendid virtues attracts some esteem also to his imperfections, and, if placed in a conspicuous situation, may corrupt the moral sentiments of the multitude in the same manner in which he may introduce an absurd or fantastical ornament by his whimsical taste in the articles of dress. The commanding influence of Cato's virtues seems to have produced somewhat of this effect on the minds of some of his admirers. He was accused, we are told, of intemperance in wine; nor do his apologists pretend altogether to deny the charge. "But," (says one of them,) "it would be much easier to prove that intemperance is a decent and respectable quality than that Cato could be guilty of any vice." "Catoni ebrietas objecta est; et facilius efficiet, quisquis objecerit, hoc crimen honestum, quam turpem Catonem."

In general it may be remarked, that, as education may vary in particular cases the opinions of individuals with respect to the objects of taste, without being able to create our notions of beauty or deformity, of grandeur or meanness, so education may vary our sentiments with respect to particular actions, but could not create our notions of right and wrong, of merit and demerit.*

* It is observed by Condorcet in his Eloge of Euler, "That, if we except the common maxims of morality, there is no one truth which can boast of having been so generally adopted, or through such a succession of ages, as certain ridiculous and pernicious errors." The assertion, although not with-

With respect to the historical facts which have been quoted as proofs that the moral judgments of mankind are entirely factitious, we may venture to assert in general, that none of them justify so very extravagant a conclusion; that a great part of them are the effects of misrepresentation; and that others lead to a conclusion directly the reverse of what has been drawn from them. It would hardly be necessary, in the present times, to examine them seriously, were it not for the authority which, in the opinion of many, they still continue to derive from the sanction of Mr Locke.

“Have there not been whole nations,” (says this eminent philosopher,) “and those of the most civilized people, among whom the exposing their children, and leaving them in the fields to perish by want or wild beasts, has been the practice, as little condemned or scrupled as the begetting them? Do they not still in some countries put them into the same graves with their mothers if they die in child-birth, or dispatch them if a pretended astrologer declares them to have unhappy stars? And are there not places where, at a certain age, they kill or expose their *parents* with-

out some foundation in fact, is manifestly expressed by this author in terms too strong and unqualified. I quote it here chiefly on account of the remarkable concession which it involves in favour of *the fundamental principles of morality*;—a subject on which it has been generally alleged by sceptical writers, that our opinions are more liable, than on most others, to be warped by the influence of education and fashion.

“ out any remorse at all? Where, then, are our
 “ innate ideas of justice, piety, gratitude ; or where
 “ is that universal consent that assures us there
 “ are such inbred rules ? ”

To this question of Locke's, so satisfactory an answer has been given by various writers, that it would be superfluous to enlarge on the subject here. It is sufficient to refer, *on the origin of infanticide*, to Mr Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments ;* and, *on the alleged impiety among some rude tribes of children towards their parents*, to Charron *Sur la Sagesse*, † and to an excellent note of Dr Beattie's in his Essay on Fable and Romance. The reasonings of the two last writers are strongly confirmed by Mr Ellis in his Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage, and by Mr Curtis, (afterwards Sir Roger Curtis,) in a paper containing *some particulars with respect to the country of Labradore*, published in the Philosophical Transactions for the year 1773.

In order to form a competent judgment on facts of this nature, it is necessary to attend to a variety of considerations which have been too frequently overlooked by philosophers ; and, in particular, to

* Vol. II. p. 45.

† Liv. ii. Chap. viii. Charron's argument is evidently pointed at certain passages in Montaigne's Essays, in which that ingenious writer has fallen into a train of thought very similar to that which is the ground-work of Locke's reasonings against *innate practical principles*.

make proper allowances for the three following :—

1. For the different situations in which mankind are placed, partly by the diversity in their physical circumstances, and partly by the unequal degrees of civilization which they have attained.
2. For the diversity of their speculative opinions, arising from their unequal measures of knowledge or of capacity; and,
3. For the different moral import of the same action under different systems of external behaviour.

I. (1.) In a part of the globe, where the soil and climate are so favourable as to yield all the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life, with little or no labour on the part of man, it may reasonably be expected that the ideas of men will be more loose concerning *the rights of property* than where nature has been less liberal in her gifts. As the right of property is founded, *in the first instance*, on the natural sentiment, that *the labourer is entitled to the fruits of his own labour*, it is not surprising, that, where little or no labour is required for the gratification of our desires, theft should be regarded as a very venial offence. There is here no contradiction in the moral judgments of mankind. Men feel *there*, with respect to those articles which we appropriate with the most anxious care, as we, in this part of the world, feel with respect to *air, light, and water*. If a country could be found in which no injustice was apprehended in depriving an individual of an enjoyment which he had pro-

vided for himself by a long course of persevering industry, the fact would be something to the purpose. But *this*, we may venture to say, has not yet been found to be the case in any quarter of the globe. That the circumstance I mentioned is the true explanation of the prevalence of theft in the South Sea Islands, and of the venial light in which it is there regarded, appears plainly from the accounts of our most intelligent navigators.

“ There was another circumstance” (says Captain Cook, speaking of the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands,) “ in which the people perfectly resembled the other islanders we had visited. At first on their entering the ship they endeavoured to steal everything they came near, or *rather to take it openly, as what we either should not resent, or not hinder.*” (January 1778.)

In another place, talking of the same people :— “ These islanders” (says he) “ merited our best commendations in their commercial intercourse, never once attempting to cheat us either ashore, or alongside the ships. Some of them, indeed, as already mentioned, *at first* betrayed a thievish disposition ; or rather, they thought that they had *a right* to everything they could lay their hands on ; but they soon laid aside a conduct, which we convinced them, they could not persevere in with impunity.”

In another part of the voyage, (April 1778,) in which he gives an account of the American Indians near King George’s Sound, he contrasts their

notions on the subject of theft with those of the South Sea Islanders. “ The inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, rather than be idle, would steal anything they could lay their hands on, without ever considering whether it could be of use to them or no. The novelty of the object was with them a sufficient motive for endeavouring, by any indirect means, to get possession of it; which marked, that in such cases they were rather actuated by a childish curiosity than by a dishonest disposition, *regardless of the modes of supplying real wants*. The inhabitants of Nootka, who invaded our property, have not such an apology. They were *thieves* in the strictest sense of the word; for they pilfered nothing from us but what they knew could be converted to the purposes of private utility, and had a *real value*, according to their estimation of things.” He adds, that “ he had abundant proof that stealing is much practised among themselves;”—but it is evident, from the manner in which he expresses himself, that *theft* was not *here* considered in the same venial or indifferent light as in those parts of the globe where the bounty of nature deprives exclusive property of almost all its value.*

In general it will be found, that the ideas of rude nations on the subject of *property* are precise and decided, in proportion to *the degree of labour* to which they have been habituated in procuring the

* See also Anderson's Remarks, February 1777, and December 1777.

means of subsistence. Of one barbarous people, (the Greenlanders,) we are expressly told by a very authentic writer, (Crantz,) that their regard to property acquired by labour is not only strict, but approaches to superstition. "Not one of them" (says he) "will appropriate to himself a sea-dog in which he finds one or more harpoons with untorn thongs; nor even carry away drift-wood, or other things thrown up by the sea, *if they are covered with a stone*, because they consider this as an indication that they have already been appropriated by some other person." *

I. (2.) Another very remarkable instance of an apparent diversity in the moral judgments of mankind occurs in the contradictory opinions entertained by different ages and nations on the moral lawfulness of exacting *interest* for the use of money.

* The following passage of Voltaire is perhaps liable to the charge of over-refinement; but it sufficiently shows that he saw clearly the general principle on which the lax opinions of some nations on the subject of theft are to be explained.

"On a beau nous dire, qu'à Lacedémone, le larcin étoit ordonné; ce n'est là qu'un abus des mots. La même chose que nous appellons *larcin*, n'étoit point commandée à Lacedémone; mais dans une ville, ou tout étoit en commun, la permission qu'on donnoit de prendre habilement ce que des particuliers s'approprioient contre la loi, étoit une manière de punir l'esprit de propriété défendu chez ces peuples. *Le tien et le mien* étoit un crime, dont ce que nous appellons *larcin* étoit la punition."—(Voltaire's Account of Newton's Discoveries.) Some of his other remarks on Locke are very curious.

Aristotle, in the first book of his *Politics*, (6th chap.) speaking of the various ways of getting money, considers agriculture and the rearing of cattle as honourable and natural, because the earth itself, and all animals, are by nature fruitful; “but to make money from money, which is barren and unfruitful,” he pronounces “to be the worst of all modes of accumulation, and the utmost corruption of artificial degeneracy. By commerce,” (he observes) “money is perverted from the purpose of exchange to that of gain. Still, however, this gain is obtained by the mutual transfer of different objects; but usury, by transferring merely the same object from one hand to another, generates money from money; and the interest thus generated is therefore called ‘offspring,’ as being precisely of the same nature, and of the same specific substance with that from which it proceeds.”*—Similar

* Gillies’s Translation. The argument of Aristotle is so extremely absurd and puerile, that it could never have led this most acute and profound philosopher to the conclusion it is employed to support, but may be justly numbered among the instances in which speculative men have exerted their ingenuity to defend, by sophistical reasonings, the established prejudices of the times in which they lived, and in which the supposed evidence of the inference has served, in their estimation, to compensate for the weakness of the premises. It is, however, worthy of remark, that the argument, such as it is, was manifestly suggested by the etymology of the word *τοκος* (interest,) from the verb *τικτω*, *pario*; an etymology which seems to imply, that the principal generates the interest. The same idea, too, occurs in the scene between Antonio and Shylock, in the *Merchant of Venice*:

sentiments with respect to *usury* (under which title was comprehended every *premium*, great or small, which was received by way of interest) occur in the Roman writers. "Concerning the arts," (says Cicero, in his first book *de Officiis*,) "and the means of acquiring wealth, which are to be accounted liberal, and which mean, the following are the sentiments usually entertained. In the first place, those means of gain are in the *least* credit which incur the hatred of mankind, as those of tax-gatherers and usurers." The same author (in the second book of the same work) mentions an anecdote of old Cato, who, being asked "What he thought of lending money upon interest?" Answered, "What do you think of the crime of murder?"

In the code of the Jewish legislator, the regulations concerning loans imply manifestly, that to exact a *premium* for the thing lent was an act of unkindness unsuitable to the fraternal relation in which the Israelites stood to one another. "Thou shalt not lend" (it is said) "upon usury to thy brother: usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent."—"Unto the stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury, that the

" If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not

" As to thy friend, (for when did friendship take

" *A breed of barren metal from his friend?*)

" But lend it rather to thine enemy,

" Who, if he break, thou may'st with better face

" Exact the penalty."

“ Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou
“ settest thy hand to, in the land whither thou
“ goest to possess it.”

In consequence of this prohibition in the Mosaic law, the primitive Christians, conceiving that they ought to look on all men, both Jews and Gentiles, as *brethren*, inferred, (partly perhaps from the prohibition given by Moses, and partly from the general prejudices then prevalent against usury,) that it was against the Christian law to take interest from any man. And, accordingly, there is no crime against which the fathers in their homilies declaim with more vehemence. The same abhorrence of usury of every kind appears in the canon law, insomuch that the penalty by that law is excommunication ; nor is the usurer allowed burial until he has made restitution of what he got by usury, or security is given that restitution shall be made after his death. About the middle of the seventeenth century, we find the divines of the church of England very often preaching against all interest for the use of money, even that which the law allowed, as a gross immorality. And not much earlier it was the general opinion both of divines and lawyers, that, although law permitted a certain rate of interest to prevent greater evils, and in compliance with the general corruption of men, (as the law of Moses permitted polygamy, and authorized divorce for slight causes among the Jews,) yet that the rules of morality did not sanction the taking *any interest* for money, at least that it was a very

doubtful point whether they did. The same opinion was maintained in the English House of Commons by some of the members who were lawyers, in the debate upon a bill brought in not much more than a hundred years ago.

I need not remark how completely the sentiments of mankind are now changed upon the subject; inasmuch that a moralist or divine would expose himself to ridicule if he should seriously think it worth his while to use arguments to prove the lawfulness of a practice which was formerly held in universal abhorrence. The consistency of this practice, (in cases where the debtor is able to pay the interest,) with the strictest morality, appears to us so manifest and indisputable, that it would be thought equally absurd to argue for it as against it. *

* A learned gentleman, indeed, of the Middle Temple, Mr Plowden, (a lawyer, I believe, of the Roman Catholic persuasion,) who published, about thirty years ago, a *Treatise upon the Law of Usury and Annuities*, has employed no less than fifty-nine pages of his work in considering the law of usury in a *spiritual view*, in order to establish the following conclusion, "That
 " it is not sinful, but lawful for a British subject to receive legal
 " interest for the money he may lend, whether he receive it in
 " annual dividends from the public, or in interest from private
 " individuals who may have borrowed it upon mortgage, bond,
 " or otherwise." Mr Necker, too, in the notes annexed to his *Eloge on Colbert*, thought it necessary for him to offer an apology to the Church of Rome for the freedom with which he ventured to write upon this critical subject. "Ce que je dis
 " de l'interêt est sous un point de vue politique, et n'a point de
 " rapport avec les respectables maximes de la religion sur ce
 " point."

The diversity of judgments, however, on this particular question, instead of proving a diversity in the *moral* judgments of mankind, affords an illustration of the uniformity of their opinions concerning the fundamental rules of moral duty.

In a state where there is little or no commerce, the great motive for borrowing being necessity, the value of a loan cannot be ascertained by calculation as it *may* be where money is borrowed for the purposes of trade. In such circumstances, therefore, every money-lender who accepts of interest will be regarded in the same odious light in which pawnbrokers are considered among *us*; and “the man who putteth out his coin to usury” will naturally be classed (as he is in the words of Scripture) “with him who taketh a reward against the guiltless.”

These considerations, while they account for the origin of the opinions concerning the practice of taking interest for money among those nations of antiquity whose commercial transactions were few and insignificant, will be sufficient, at the same time, to establish its reasonableness and equity in countries where money is most commonly borrowed for the purposes of commercial profit, and where, of consequence, the use of it has a fixed and determinate value depending (like that of any commodity in general request) on the circumstances of the market at the time. In such countries *both* parties are benefited by the transaction, and even the state is a gainer in the end. The *lenders* of money are frequently

widows and orphans who subsist on the interest of their slender funds, while the *borrowers* as frequently belong to the most opulent class of the community, who wish to enlarge their capital and extend their trade ; and who, by doing so, are enabled to give farther encouragement to industry, and to supply labour and bread to the indigent.

The prejudices, therefore, against usury among the ancient philosophers were the natural result of the state of society which fell under their observation. The prohibition of usury among the Jews in their own mutual transactions, while they were permitted to take a *premium* for the money which they lent to strangers, was in perfect consistency with the other principles of their political code ; commerce being interdicted as tending to an intercourse with idolaters, and mortgages prevented by the indefeasible right which every man had to his lands.

I. (3.) I shall only mention one instance more to illustrate the effects of different states of society in modifying the moral judgments of mankind. It relates to the crime of assassination, which we now justly consider as the most dreadful of any ; but which must necessarily have been viewed in a very different light when laws and magistrates were unknown, and when the only check on injustice was *the principle of resentment*. As it is the nature of this principle not only to seek the punishment of the delinquent, but to prompt the injured person to

inflict the punishment with his own hand, so in every country the criminal jurisdiction of the magistrate has been the last branch of his authority that was established. Where the police, therefore, is weak, murders must not only be more frequent, but are really less criminal, than in a society like ours, where the private rights of individuals are completely protected by law, and where there hardly occurs an instance, excepting in a case of self-defence, in which one man can be justified for shedding the blood of another. And, even when in a rude age a murder is committed from unjustifiable motives of self-interest or jealousy, yet the frequency of the occurrence prevents the minds of men from revolting so strongly at the sight of blood as we do at present. It is on this very principle that Mr Mitford accounts for the manners and ideas that prevailed in the heroic ages of Greece.

But it is unnecessary, on this head, to appeal to the history of early times, or of distant nations. In our own country of Scotland, about two centuries ago, what shocking murders were perpetrated, and seemingly without remorse, by men who were by no means wholly destitute of a sense of religion and morality! Dr Robertson remarks, that “ Buchanan relates the murder of Cardinal Beatoun “ and of Rizzio without expressing those feelings “ which are natural to a man, or that indignation “ which became an historian. Knox, whose mind “ was fiercer and more unpolished, talks of the “ death of Beatoun and of the Duke of Guise, not

“ only without censure, but with the utmost exultation. On the other hand, the Bishop of Ross mentions the assassination of the Earl of Murray with some degree of applause. Blackwood dwells on it with the most indecent triumph; and ascribes it directly to the hand of God. Lord Ruthven, the principal actor in the conspiracy against Rizzio, wrote an account of it some time before his own death; and in all his long narrative there is not one expression of regret, or one symptom of compunction, for a crime no less dishonourable than barbarous. Morton, equally guilty of the same crime, entertained the same sentiments concerning it; and in his last moments, neither he himself, nor the ministers who attended him, seem to have considered it as an action which called for repentance. Even then he talks of *David's slaughter* as coolly as if it had been an innocent or commendable deed.” *

The reflections of Dr Robertson on these assassi-

* The following lines, in which Sir David Lindsay rebukes the murder of his contemporary and enemy, Cardinal Beatoun, deserve to be added to the instances quoted by Dr Robertson, as an illustration of the moral sentiments of our ancestors. They are expressed with a *naïveté* which places in a strong light both the moral and religious principles of that age.

“ As for this Cardinal, I grant,

“ He was a man we well might want ;

“ *God will forgive it soon :*

“ But of a sooth, the truth to say,

“ Altho' the loun be well away,

“ The fact was foully done.”

nations, which were formerly so common in this country, are candid and judicious. “ In consequence of the limited power of our princes the administration of justice was extremely feeble and dilatory. An attempt to punish the crimes of a chieftain, or even of his vassals, often excited rebellions and civil wars. To nobles haughty and independent, among whom the causes of discord were many and unavoidable, who were quick in discerning an injury, and impatient to revenge it; who esteemed it infamous to submit to an enemy, and cowardly to forgive him; who considered the right of punishing those who had injured them as a privilege of their order, and a mark of independency; such slow proceedings were extremely unsatisfactory. The blood of their adversary was, in their opinion, the only thing that could wash away an affront. Where that was not shed, their revenge was disappointed; their courage became suspected, and a stain was left on their honour. That vengeance which the impotent hand of the magistrate could not inflict their own could easily execute. Under a government so feeble, men assumed, as in a state of nature, the right of judging and redressing their own wrongs. And thus *assassination*, a crime of all others the most destructive to society, came not only to be allowed, but to be deemed honourable.” In another passage he observes, “ That mankind became thus habituated to blood, not only in times of war, but of peace; and from

“ this, as well as other causes, contracted an amazing ferocity of temper and of manners.”

II. The second cause I mentioned of the apparent diversity among mankind in their moral judgments is the diversity in their speculative opinions.

The manner in which this cause operates will appear obvious if it be considered, that nature, by the suggestions of our moral principles, only recommends to us particular *ends*, but leaves it to our reason to ascertain the most effectual *means* by which these *ends* are to be attained. Thus nature points out to us our own happiness, and also the happiness of our fellow-creatures, as objects towards the attainment of which our best exertions ought to be directed; but she has left us to exercise our reason, both in ascertaining what the constituents of happiness are, and how they may be most completely secured. Hence, according to the different points of view in which these subjects of consideration may appear to different understandings, there must of necessity be a diversity of judgments with respect to the morality of the same actions. One man, for example, believes, that the happiness of society is most effectually consulted by an implicit obedience *in all cases* to the will of the civil magistrate. Another, that the mischief to be apprehended from resistance and insurrection in cases of urgent necessity are trifling when compared with those which may result to

ourselves and our posterity from an established despotism. The former will of course be an advocate for the duty of passive obedience; the latter for the *right*, and in certain supposable cases for the *obligation* of resistance. Both of these men, however, agree in the general principle, that it is our duty to promote to the utmost of our power the happiness of society; and they differ from each other only on a speculative question of expediency.

In like manner there is a wide diversity between the moral systems of ancient and modern times on the subject of suicide. Both, however, agree in this, that it is the duty of man to obey the will of his Creator, and to consult every intimation of it that his reason can discover, as the supreme law of his conduct. They differed only in their *speculative opinions* concerning the interpretation of the will of God, as manifested by the dispensations of his providence in the events of human life. The prejudices of the ancients on this subject were indeed founded in a very partial and erroneous view of circumstances, (arising, however, not unaturally from the unsettled state of society in the ancient republics;) but they only afford an additional instance of the numerous mistakes to which human *reason* is liable; not of a fluctuation in the judgments of mankind concerning the fundamental rules of moral duty.

III. The different moral import too of the same

material action, under different systems of external behaviour, deserves particular attention, in forming an estimate of the moral sentiments of different ages and nations.

This difference is chiefly owing to two causes: First, to the different conceptions of happiness and misery,—of what is to be desired and shunned,—which men are led to form in different states of society. Secondly, to the effect of accident, which, as it leads men to speak different languages in different countries, so it leads them to express the same dispositions of the heart by different external observances.

III. (1.) Where the opinions of mankind vary concerning the external circumstances that constitute happiness, the external expressions of benevolence must vary of course. Thus, in the fact referred to by Locke concerning the Indians in the neighbourhood of Hudson's Bay, the wishes of the aged parent being different from what we are accustomed to observe in this part of the world, the marks of filial affection on the part of the child must vary also. "In some countries honour is associated with suffering, and it is reckoned a favour to be killed with circumstances of torture. Instances of this occur in the manners of some American nations, and in the pride which an Indian matron feels when placed on the funeral-pile of her deceased husband."*

* Dr Ferguson, Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. II. p. 141.

an action may have to us all the external marks of extreme cruelty, while it proceeded from a disposition generous and affectionate.

III. (2.) A difference in the moral import of the same action often arises from the same accidental causes which lead men, in different parts of the globe, to express the same ideas by different arbitrary signs.

What happens in the trifling forms and ceremonies of behaviour may serve to illustrate the operation of the same causes on more important occasions. “ In the general principles of urbanity, politeness, or civility, we may venture to assert, that the opinions of all nations are agreed; but in the expression of this disposition we meet with endless varieties. In Europe, it is the form of respect to uncover the *head*; in Japan, the corresponding form is said to be to uncover *the foot* by dropping the slipper.* Persons unacquainted with any language but their own are apt to think the words they use natural and fixed expressions of things; while the words of a different language they consider as mere jargon, or the result of caprice. In the same manner, forms of behaviour

* “ Even here” (Sir Joshua Reynolds ingeniously remarks) “ we may perhaps observe a general idea running through all the varieties; to wit, the general idea of making the body less in token of respect, whether by bowing the body, kneeling, prostration, pulling off the upper part of the dress, or throwing aside the lower.”

“ different from their own appear offensive and irrational, or a perverse substitution of absurd for reasonable manners.

“ Among the varieties of this sort, we find actions, gestures, and forms of expression in their own nature indifferent, entered into the code of civil or religious duties, and enforced under the strongest sanctions of public censure or esteem ; or under the strongest denunciations of the divine indignation or favour.

“ Numberless ceremonies and observances in the ritual of different sects are to be accounted for on the same principles which produce the diversity of names or signs for the same thing in the vocabulary of different languages. Thus, the generality of Christians when they pray take off their hats ; the Jews when they pray put them on. Such acts, how strongly soever they may affect the imaginations of the multitude, may justly be considered as part of the arbitrary language of particular countries ; implying no diversity whatever in the ideas or feelings of those among whom they are established.” *

As a farther proof of the impossibility of judging of the general character of a people from their opinions concerning the morality of *particular* actions, we may observe, that, in some of the writings of the ancient moralists, we meet with the most refined and

* See Dr Ferguson's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Vol. II. pp. 142, 143.

sublime precepts blended promiscuously with dissuasives from the most shocking and detestable crimes ; in one sentence, perhaps, a precept which may be read with advantage by the most enlightened of the present times ; and in the next, a dissuasive from some crime which no one now could be supposed to perpetrate, who was not arrived at the last stage of depravity. The following quotations from the ΠΟΙΗΜΑ ΝΟΥΘΗΤΙΚΟΝ, ascribed to Phocylides, * will sufficiently illustrate this remark. I shall transcribe them in a very literal Latin version, and would have endeavoured to bring them within the reach of a still wider circle of my readers by means of an English translation, if the simplicity of expression in the two learned languages had admitted of a literal version into our own tongue.

“ Primum Deum cole, postea verò tuos parentes.

“ Omnibus justa tribue, neque iudicium ad gratiam trahe.

“ Ne abjicias paupertatem, injuste ne iudica personam :

“ Quod si tu male iudicaveris, Deus te postea iudicabit.

“ Mendico statim da, neque cras venire jube,

“ Exulem in domum excipe, et cœcum duc in viam.

“ Naufragorum miserere, quoniam navigatio incerta est.

“ Communis casus omnium ; vita trochus ; instabilis felicitas.

“ Sint in pari honore advenæ cum civibus ;

“ Omnes enim paupertatem experimur vagam,

“ Regioque nullum stabile habet solum hominibus.

* Phocylides, a Greek Poet and Philosopher, flourished about 540 years before the Christian era. The poem, however, which passes under his name, is supposed to have been the work of some writer contemporary with Adrian or Trajan. But this does not render the above quotations the less applicable to our present purpose.

- “ Qui volens injuste agit malus vir est; sed qui ex necessitate,
 “ Non dico prorsus malum; sed institutum examina cujusque.
 “ Infantulis tenellis ne violenter manum corripueris;
 “ Neque mulier conceptum fœtum corrumpat in ventre,
 “ Neque post partum canibus projiciat aut vulturibus lacerandum.
 “ Neque ullus suæ conjugis gravidæ manum afferat.”

After this follow some dissuasives from crimes too shocking to be named; and immediately after the following beautiful maxims.

- “ Tuum ama conjugem. Quid enim suavius et præstantius
 “ Quam si viro consentit chara uxor usque ad senectam,
 “ Et maritus suæ uxori, neque inter eos incidit contentio.
 “ Reverere canos circum tempora, cedeque senibus
 “ Sede et honoribus omnibus; natu verò præstantem
 “ Senem, æqualem patris, paribus cum patre, honoribus venerare.
 “ Servum ne lædas maledictis deferendo apud herum.
 “ Accipe vel a servo, si recte sapiat, consilium.”

I have dwelt very long on this subject, because, if it be painful to be staggered in our belief of the immutability of moral distinctions by the first aspect of the History of Mankind, it affords a ten-fold pleasure to those who feel themselves interested in the cause of morality, when they find, on an accurate examination, that those facts on which sceptics have laid the greatest stress are not only consistent with the moral constitution of man, but result necessarily from this constitution, diversified in its effects according to the different circumstances in which the individual is situated. To trace in this manner the essential principles of the hu-

man frame, amidst the various disguises it borrows from accidental causes, is one of the most interesting employments of philosophical curiosity ; nor is there perhaps a more satisfactory gratification to a liberal mind than when it recognizes, under the superstition, the ignorance, and the loathsome sensualities of savage life, the kindred features of humanity, and the indelible vestiges of that divine image after which man was originally formed. One of the most pleasing facts of this kind that I have met with is mentioned by Sparman, in his Travels through the Southern Parts of Africa, where he had occasion to visit a tribe of men, whom we are accustomed to consider as sunk, by the grossness and brutishness of their manners, to the lowest point in the scale of civilization ; and with this fact, (which I shall state in Sparman's own words, without any comment,) I shall at present dismiss this part of our argument.

“ A Hottentot is rich in proportion to the number of his cattle ; but the richest is clothed, fed, and attended, no better than the poor ; more trinkets of brass, of shells, or of beads ; more fat in dressing his victuals, or in anointing his body ; the honour or advantage of being able to maintain more servants or cowherds. And that which constitutes the distinction of rank in this simple race of men is the divine pleasure of doing good to his fellow-creatures.”

CHAPTER FOURTH.

CONTINUATION OF THE REMARKS ON THE OBJECTIONS STATED BY DIFFERENT WRITERS TO THE REALITY AND IMMUTABILITY OF MORAL DISTINCTIONS, AND TO THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE MORAL FACULTY AMONG MANKIND.

THE doctrines on this subject which I have hitherto been endeavouring to refute, (how erroneous soever in their principles, and dangerous in their consequences,) have been maintained by some writers, who certainly were not unfriendly in their views to the interests of virtue and of mankind. In proof of this, I need only mention the name of Mr Locke, who, in the course of a long and honourable life, distinguished himself no less by the exemplary worth of his private character, and by his ardent zeal for civil and religious liberty, than by the depth and originality of his philosophical speculations. His errors, however, ought not, on these accounts, to be treated with reverence; but, on the contrary, they require a more careful and severe examination, in consequence of the high authority

they derive from his genius and his virtues. And, accordingly, I have enlarged on such of his opinions as seemed to me favourable to sceptical views concerning the foundation of morals, at much greater length than the ingenuity or plausibility of his reasonings in support of them may appear to some to have merited.

To these opinions of Locke Lord Shaftesbury has alluded in various parts of his works with a good deal of indignation; and particularly in the following passage of his *Advice to an Author*. “ One would imagine that our philosophical writers, “ who pretend to treat of morals, should far outdo “ our poets in recommending virtue, and represent- “ ing what is *fair* and *amiable* in human actions. “ One would imagine, that, if they turned their eyes “ towards remote countries, (of which they affect “ so much to speak,) they should search for that “ simplicity of manners, and innocence of behavi- “ our, which has been often known among mere “ savages, ere they were corrupted by our com- “ merce, and, by sad example, instructed in all “ kinds of treachery and inhumanity. ’Twould be “ of advantage to us to hear the cause of this strange “ corruption in ourselves, and be made to consider “ of our deviation from nature, and from that just “ purity of manners which might be expected, espe- “ cially from a people so assisted and enlightened “ by religion. For who would not naturally ex- “ pect more justice, fidelity, temperance, and ho- “ nesty from Christians than from Mahometans or



“ mere Pagans ? But so far are our modern mo-
 “ ralists from condemning any unnatural vices or
 “ corrupt manners, whether in our own or foreign
 “ climates, that they would have *vice* itself appear
 “ as natural as *virtue* ; and, from the worst ex-
 “ amples, would represent to us, ‘ that all actions
 “ are *naturally* indifferent ; that they have no note
 “ or character of good or ill in *themselves*, but are
 “ distinguished by mere fashion, law, or *arbitrary*
 “ decree.’ Wonderful philosophy ! raised from the
 “ dregs of an illiterate mean kind, which was ever
 “ despised among the great ancients, and rejected
 “ by all men of action or sound erudition ; but, in
 “ these ages, imperfectly copied from the original,
 “ and, with much disadvantage, imitated and as-
 “ sumed in common, both by devout and indevout
 “ attempters in the moral kind.”

Besides these incidental remarks on Locke, which
 occur in different parts of Shaftesbury’s writings,
 there is a letter of his addressed to a student at the
 university, which relates almost entirely to the
 opinion we have been considering, and contains
 some excellent observations on the subject.

In this letter Lord Shaftesbury observes, that
 “ all those called *free writers* now-a-days have
 “ espoused those principles which Mr Hobbes set
 “ a-foot in this last age.”—“ Mr Locke,” (he con-
 “ tinues,) “ as much as I honour him on account of
 “ other writings, (on government, policy, trade,
 “ coin, education, toleration, &c.) and as well as I

“ knew him, and can answer for his sincerity as a
 “ most zealous Christian and believer, did however
 “ go in the self-same track, and is followed by the
 “ Tindals, and all the other ingenious free authors
 “ of our time.

“ ’Twas Mr Locke that struck the home-blow ;
 “ for Mr Hobbes’s character and base slavish prin-
 “ ciples of government took off the poison of his
 “ philosophy. ’Twas Mr Locke that struck at all
 “ fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of
 “ the world, and made the very ideas of these (which
 “ are the same with those of GOD) unnatural, and
 “ without foundation in our minds. *Innate* is a
 “ word he poorly plays upon ; the right word, though
 “ less used, is *connatural*. For what has birth, or
 “ progress of the *fœtus* out of the womb, to do in
 “ this case ? The question is not about the time
 “ the ideas entered, or the moment that one body
 “ came out of the other, but whether the constitu-
 “ tion of man be such, that, being adult and grown
 “ up, at such or such a time, sooner or later, (no
 “ matter when,) the idea and sense of order, admi-
 “ nistration, and a God, will not infallibly, inevi-
 “ tably, necessarily spring up in him ?”

In this last remark, Lord Shaftesbury appears to me to place the question concerning *innate ideas* upon the right and only philosophical footing, and to afford a key to all the confusion which runs through Locke’s argument on the subject. The observations which follow are not less just and valu-

able ; but I must not indulge myself in any farther extracts at present.*

These passages of Shaftesbury, in some of which the warmth of his temper has betrayed him into expressions disrespectful to Locke, have drawn on him a number of very severe animadversions, particularly from Warburton, in the preface to his *Divine Legation of Moses*. But although Shaftesbury's personal allusions to Locke cannot be justified, some allowance ought to be made for the indignation of a generous mind at a doctrine which (however well meant by the proposer) strikes at the very root of morality. In this instance, too, it is not improbable that the discussion of the general argument may have added to the asperity of his

* Notwithstanding, however, the countenance which Locke's reasonings against *innate practical principles* have the appearance of giving to the philosophy of Hobbes, I have not a doubt that the difference of opinion between him and Lord Shaftesbury on this point was almost entirely verbal. Of this I have elsewhere produced ample proofs ; but the following passage will suffice for my present purpose. " I would not be mistaken, as if, because I deny an innate law, I thought there were none but positive laws. There is a great deal of difference between an *innate law* and a *law of nature*, between something imprinted on our minds in their very original, and something that we, being ignorant of, may attain to the knowledge of, by the use and due application of our natural faculties. And I think they equally forsake the truth, who, running into the contrary extremes, either affirm an innate law, or deny that there is a law knowable by the light of nature, without the help of a positive revelation."—Locke's Works, Vol. I. p. 44. (Law's 8vo Edit.)

style, by reviving the memory of the private controversies which, it is presumable, had formerly been carried on between Locke and him on this important subject. It is well known that Shaftesbury was Locke's pupil, and also that their tempers and literary tastes were not suitable to each other. In this it is commonly supposed that the former was to blame; but, I presume, not *wholly*. Dr Warton tells us, "that Mr Locke affected to despise poetry, and that he depreciated the ancients; which circumstance," (he adds,) "as I am informed from undoubted authority, was the subject of perpetual discontent and dispute between him and his pupil Lord Shaftesbury."* That Shaftesbury was not insensible to Locke's real merits, appears sufficiently from a passage in his *First Letter to a Student at the University*. "However, I am not sorry that I lent you Locke's Essay, a book that may as well qualify men for business and the world as for the sciences and the university. No one has done more towards the recalling of philosophy from barbarity into use and practice of the world, and into the company of the better and politer sort, who might well be ashamed of it in its other dress. No one has opened a better and clearer way to reasoning."

The theories concerning the origin of our moral ideas which we are now to consider, although they agree in many respects with that of Locke and his

* Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope.

followers, have yet proceeded from very different views and intentions. They also involve some principles that are peculiar to themselves, and which, therefore, render a separate examination of them necessary for the complete illustration of this fundamental article of ethics. They have been distinguished by Mr Smith by the name of *the licentious systems of morals*,—a name which certainly cannot be censured as too harsh, when applied to those which maintain that the motives of all men are fundamentally the same, and that what we commonly call virtue is mere hypocrisy.

Among the licentious moralists of modern times, the most celebrated are, the Duke of la Rochefoucauld, author of the *Maxims and Moral Reflections*, and Dr Mandeville, author of the *Fable of the Bees*. By the generality of our English philosophers, these two writers are commonly coupled together as advocates for the same system, although their views and their characters were certainly extremely different. In the first editions of Mr Smith's *Theory*, he speaks of a licentious doctrine concerning morality, which, he says, "was first sketched by the delicate pencil of the Duke of la Rochefoucauld, and "was afterwards enforced by the coarse but powerful eloquence of Dr Mandeville." In the last edition of that work the name of La Rochefoucauld is omitted, from Mr Smith's deliberate conviction that it was unjust to his memory to class him with an author whose writings tend directly to confound all our ideas of moral distinctions. On this point I

speak from personal knowledge, having been requested by Mr Smith, when I happened to be at Paris some years before his death, to express to the late excellent and unfortunate Duke of la Rochefoucauld his sincere regret for having introduced the name of his ancestor and that of Dr Mandeville in the same sentence.

The Duke of la Rochefoucauld, author of the *Maxims*, was born in 1613, and died in 1680. The early part of his education was neglected ; but the disadvantages he laboured under in consequence of this circumstance, he in a great measure overcame by the force of his own talents. According to Madam de Maintenon, who knew him well, “ he was “ possessed of a countenance prepossessing and interesting ; of manners graceful and dignified ; of “ much genius, and little acquired knowledge.” The same excellent judge adds of him, that “ he was “ intriguing, accommodating, and cautious ; but that “ she had never known a friend more firm, more “ open, or whose counsels were of greater value. “ He loved raillery ; and used to say, that personal “ bravery appeared to him nothing better than folly ; and yet he himself was brave to an extreme. “ He preserved to the last the vivacity of his mind, “ which was always agreeable, though naturally serious.”

In the share which he took in the political transactions of his times, he discovered a facility to engage in intrigues, without much steadiness in the

pursuit of his object. This, at least, is a remark made on him by the Cardinal de Retz, who, in a portrait of him drawn with a masterly, though somewhat prejudiced hand, ascribes the apparent inconsistencies of his conduct to a natural want of resolution. A later writer,* more favourable to his memory, has attempted to account for them with much plausibility, by that superiority of penetration, and that rigid integrity, which all his contemporaries allow to have been distinguishing features in his character; and which, though not sufficient to keep him wholly disengaged from intrigues in a court where everything was put in motion by the spirit of party, rendered him soon disgusted with the pretended patriotism and the selfish politics of those with whom he acted. Accordingly, although he was induced by the force of early connections, and a natural facility of temper, to involve himself during a part of his life in public affairs, and more particularly, to become a tool of the Duchess of Longueville in the cabals of the *Fronde*, his own taste seems to have attached him to a more private scene, where he could enjoy in freedom the society and friendship of a few chosen companions. Towards the end of his life he spent much of his time at the house of Madame de la Fayette, which appears, from the letters of her friend Madame de Sévigné, to have been, at that period, the resort of all persons distinguished for wit and refinement. It was

* M. Suard.

in the midst of this chosen society that he composed his Memoirs of the Regency of Ann of Austria, and also his Moral Reflections and Maxims.

Of these two works the former is written with much elegance, and with a great appearance of sincerity ; but the events which it records are uninteresting in the present age. Bayle, in his Dictionary, gives it the preference to the Commentaries of Cæsar ; but the judgment of the public has not been equally favourable. “ The Memoirs of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld ” (says Voltaire in his account of the writers of the age of Louis XIV.) “ are *read* ; “ but every one knows his maxims by heart.” In fact, it is almost entirely by these *maxims* (which, as Montesquieu observes, *have become the proverbs of men of wit*) that the name of La Rochefoucauld is known ; and it must be confessed that few performances have acquired to their authors a higher or more general reputation. “ One of the works ” (says Voltaire) “ which contributed most to form “ the taste of the nation to a justness and precision “ of thought and expression, was the small collec- “ tion of maxims by Francis Duke of la Rochefou- “ cauld. Although there is but one idea in the “ book, that self-love is the spring of all our actions, “ yet this idea is presented in so great a variety of “ forms as to be always amusing. When it first “ appeared, it was read with avidity ; and it con- “ tributed, more than any other performance since “ the revival of letters, to accustom writers to in- “ dulge themselves in an originality of thought, and

“ to improve the vivacity, precision, and delicacy
“ of French composition.”

That the tendency of these maxims is, upon the whole, unfavourable to morality; and that they always leave a disagreeable impression on the mind, must, I think, be granted.* At the same time, it may be fairly questioned if the motives of the author have in general been well understood, either by his admirers or by his opponents. In affirming that self-love is the spring of all our actions, there is no good reason for supposing that he meant to deny the reality of moral distinctions as a philosophical truth,—a supposition quite inconsistent with his own fine and deep remark, that *hypocrisy is itself a homage which vice renders to virtue*. He states it merely as a proposition, which, in the course of his experience as a man of the world, he had found very generally verified in the higher classes

* Mr Spence, in his *Anecdotes*, ascribes to Mr Pope a remark on La Rochefoucauld, which does no small honour to the poet's shrewdness and knowledge of human nature. I quote it in Spence's words. “ As L'Esprit,* La Rochefoucauld, “ and that sort of people, prove that all virtues are disguised “ vices, I would engage to prove all vices to be disguised vir- “ tues. Neither indeed is true; but this would be a more “ agreeable subject, and would overturn their whole scheme.”— See Spence's *Anecdotes of Men and Books*, Malone's Edition.

The above remark of Pope coincides in substance with a criticism of La Harpe on La Rochefoucauld's maxims.

* Pope here had probably in view *Jacques Esprit*, author of a book entitled *Faussetés des Vertus Humains* (2 Vols. Paris, 1678,) which is said to be nothing more than a dull commentary on La Rochefoucauld's maxims. (Biog. Universelle, Article *Esprit*.)

of society, and which he was induced to announce, without any qualification or restriction, in order to give more force and poignancy to his satire. In adopting this mode of writing he has unconsciously conformed himself, like many other French authors, who have since followed his example,* to a

“ Non seulement cet ouvrage attriste et flétrit l'ame, mais
 “ il a un grand défaut en morale : C'est de ne montrer le cœur
 “ humain que sous un jour défavorable. Il y auroit peut-
 “ être tout autant de sagacité, et sûrement beaucoup plus de
 “ justice à démêler aussi ce qu'il y a dans l'homme de noble
 “ et de vertueux. Croit on que la vertu ne garde pas souvent
 “ son secret tout aussi bien que l'amour propre, et qu'il n'y
 “ ait pas autant de mérite à l'appercevoir ?”—Lycée, Tome X.
 p. 299.

* Thus it has often been said by French writers, that *no man is a hero to his valet de chambre* ; and the maxim, when properly understood, has some foundation in truth. It probably was meant by its original author to refer only to those petty circumstances of temper and behaviour which, without affecting the essentials of character, have a tendency to diminish, on a near approach, the theatrical effect of great men. It has, however, been frequently quoted as implying that there are none whose virtues will bear a close examination ; in which acceptation, it is not more injurious to human nature than it is contrary to fact. How much more profound, as well as more pleasing, is the remark of Plutarch ! “ Real virtue is most loved where it is most nearly seen, and no respect which it commands from strangers can equal the never-ceasing admiration it excites in the daily intercourse of domestic life.”—(Plut. Vit. Periclis.) It is indeed true, that some men, who are admired by the world, appear to most advantage when viewed at a distance ; but, on the other hand, may it not be contended, that many who are objects of general odium would be found, if examined more nearly, not to be destitute of estimable and amiable qualities ? May we not even go farther, and assert that the very

suggestion which Aristotle has stated with admirable depth and acuteness in his Rhetoric. “ Sentences or apothegms lend much aid to eloquence. One reason of this is, that they flatter the *pride* of the hearers, who are delighted, when the speaker, making use of general language, touches upon opinions which they had before known to be true in part. Thus, a person who had the misfortune to live in a bad neighbourhood, or to have worthless children, would easily assent to the speaker who should affirm that *nothing* is more vexatious than to have any neighbours; *nothing* more irrational than to bring children into the world.” This observation of Aristotle, while it goes far to account for the imposing and dazzling effect of these rhetorical exaggerations, ought to guard us against the common and popular error of mistaking them for the serious and profound generalizations of science. As for La Rochefoucauld, we know, from the best authorities, that in private life he was a conspicuous example of all those moral qualities of which he seemed to deny the existence ;*

worst of men have a mixture of good in their composition, and to express a doubt whether human nature would gain or lose upon a thorough acquaintance with the conduct and motives of individuals ?

* In several of his maxims, for instance, he is at pains to depreciate the virtue of courage, and speaks of it in a way that might lead a careless reader to suspect that he felt in himself a deficiency of this quality. Yet we learn from his personal enemy, the Cardinal de Retz, that he was extremely brave, “ Il n’a jamais été guerrier, quoiqu’il fut très soldat.”—Mémoires, Tome I. p. 312.

and that he exhibited, in this respect, a striking contrast to the Cardinal de Retz, who has presumed to censure him for his want of faith in the reality of virtue.*

In reading La Rochefoucauld, it should never be forgotten that it was within the vortex of a court he enjoyed his chief opportunities of studying the world, and that the narrow and exclusive circle in which he moved was not likely to afford him the most favourable specimens of human nature in general. Of the court of Louis XIV. in particular, we are told by a very nice and reflecting observer, (Madame de la Fayette,) that “ambition and gallantry were the *soul*, actuating alike both men and women. So many contending interests, so many different cabals were constantly at work, and in all of those women bore so important a part, that love was always mingled with business, and business with love. Nobody was tranquil or indifferent. Every one studied to advance himself by pleasing, serving, or ruining others. Idleness and languor were unknown, and nothing was thought of but intrigues or pleasures.”

In the passage already quoted from Voltaire, he takes notice of the effect of La Rochefoucauld’s maxims in improving the style of French composition.

“Il aimoit a railler,” (says Madame de Maintenon,) “il disoit que la bravoure personnelle lui paroissoit une folie; et il étoit pourtant très brave.”—Letters of Madame de Maintenon.

* “Ses maximes ne marquent pas assez de foi à la vertu.”—Mémoires, Tome I. p. 133.

We may add to this remark, that their effect has not been less sensible in vitiating the tone and character of French philosophy, by bringing into vogue those false and degrading representations of human nature, and of human life, which have prevailed in that country more or less for a century past. Mr Addison, in one of the papers of the *Tatler*, expresses his indignation at this general bias among the French writers of his age. "It is impossible" (he observes) "to read a passage in Plato, or Tully, or a thousand other ancient moralists, without being a greater and better man for it. On the contrary, I could never read any of our modish French authors, or those of our own country, who are the imitators and admirers of that nation, without being for some time out of humour with myself, and at everything about me. Their business is to depreciate human nature, and to consider it under the worst appearances; they give mean interpretations and base motives to the worthiest of actions. In short, they endeavour to make no distinction between man and man; or between the species of man and that of the brutes."*

From this time downwards we may trace the rise and progress of that disposition to *persiflage*, which has been so long characteristical of the higher orders in France, and which, a few years ago, some individuals in our own country were so am-

* Some of the foregoing remarks on La Rochefoucauld are copied from the Preliminary Dissertation to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, by the author of this work.

bitious to copy. In France it seems to have attained to its greatest glory during the gay and unprincipled period of the regency; and ever since it has left sensible effects, not only on the tone of fashionable society, but on the spirit of most philosophical theories. Its principles are too fugitive to be reduced to any system; but fortunately a faithful and lively portrait of it is preserved for the information of posterity in one of the comedies of *Gresset*. The following speech of Cleon in the *Méchant* is an invaluable document for the history of French manners, (now alas! too widely diffused all over the civilized world,) during the greater part of the eighteenth century.

Oh! bon, quelle folie! êtes vous de ces gens
 Soupçonneux, ombrageux? Croyez-vous aux méchans?
 Et réalisez-vous cet être imaginaire
 Ce petit préjugé qui ne va qu'au vulgaire?
 Pour moi, je n'y crois pas, (soit dit sans intérêt,)
 Tout le monde est méchant, et personne ne l'est.
 On reçoit et l'on rend; on est à peu près quitte;—
 Parlez-vous des propos? Comme il est ni mérite,
 Ni goût, ni jugement, qui ne soit contredit,
 Que rien n'est vrai sur rien, qu'importe ce qu'on dit?
 Tel sera mon héros, et tel sera le votre:
 L'Aigle d'une maison n'est qu'un sot dans un autre.
 Je dis ici qu'Eraste est un mauvais plaisant;
 Eh bien! on dit ailleurs qu'Eraste est amusant.
 Si vous parlez et des faits et des tracasseries,
 Je n'y vois dans le fond que des plaisanteries;
 Et si vous attachez du crime à tout cela,
 Beaucoup d'honnêtes gens sont de ces fripons-là.
 L'agrément couvre tout; il rend tout légitime.
 Aujourd'hui dans le monde on ne connoit qu'un crime,
 C'est l'ennui: pour le fuir tous les moyens sont bons.

Il gagneroit bientôt les meilleurs maisons,
 Si l'on s'aimoit si fort : l'amusement circule
 Par les préventions, les torts, le ridicule.
 Au reste chacun parle et fait comme il l'entend ;
 Tout est mal, tout est bien : tout le monde est content. *

From the form in which La Rochefoucauld's maxims are published, it is impossible to attempt a

* In subjoining a prose translation of these exquisite verses, I need scarcely say that I aim at nothing but to convey to the merely English reader a general conception of the drift and substance of the original.

“ Good heavens! what extravagance! Is it possible that
 “ you should belong to that suspicious and jealous tribe who
 “ believe in the existence of *the wicked*? And that your fancy
 “ should realize to itself that phantom which is conjured up
 “ by the low prejudices of the vulgar? For my own part,
 “ to speak impartially, *my* faith does not go quite so far. I
 “ consider every body as bad, and nobody as bad. We all take
 “ and give, so as to balance our accounts pretty equally with
 “ each other. Do you speak of what passes in conversation?
 “ As there is neither merit, nor taste, nor opinion, which does
 “ not furnish matter of dispute,—as there is nothing which can
 “ be pronounced true of anything,—of what consequence is it
 “ what one says? One man shall be *my* hero, and another
 “ shall be yours; the idol of this house is the laughing-stock
 “ of the next. Here, for instance, I say of *Eraste*, that his at-
 “ tempts at wit are dull and pitiful; elsewhere you will find
 “ people that will tell you that they think *Eraste* an amusing
 “ companion. If you talk of the *actions* of men, and are hurt
 “ with their intrigues and duplicity, in *these*, when examined
 “ to the bottom, I see nothing but a fund of entertainment to
 “ myself. And were you to attach to things of this sort the
 “ idea of *crime*, how many respectable men would you be
 “ forced to number with the knaves? To be *agreeable* covers
 “ every fault, or serves as its apology. The only crime now
 “ known is *ennui*, and every thing is good which helps us to
 “ escape from it. Were people to feel any serious attachment

particular examination of them ; nor, indeed, do I apprehend that such an examination is necessary for any of the purposes which I have at present in view. So far as their tendency is unfavourable to the reality of moral distinctions, it is the same with that of Mandeville's system ; and, therefore, the strictures I am now to offer on the latter writer may be applied with equal truth to the general conclusions which some have chosen to draw from the satirical observations of the former.

Dr Mandeville was born in Holland, where he received his education both in medicine and in philosophy. He made his first appearance in England about the beginning of the last century, and soon attracted very general attention by the vivacity and the licentiousness of his publications. One of his first performances was levelled at his own profession. It is entitled, "A Treatise on the Hypochondriac and Histeric Passions, interspersed with Discourses in the way of Dialogue on the Art of Physic, and Remarks on the modern practice of Physicians and Apothecaries." The work, however, by which he is best known, is a poem printed in 1714, with the title of "The Grumbling Hive, or Knaves turned Honest ;" upon which he afterwards wrote remarks, and published the whole at London in 1723. This book was presented by

"to their friends, this evil would soon make its way into the best company ; for the circulation of amusement depends on prejudices, on calumnies, and on absurdities. In short, every body now speaks and acts according to his own humour. All is wrong, all is right, and all the world is equally happy."

the grand jury of Middlesex the same year, and was severely animadverted on soon after by some very eminent writers, particularly by Dr Berkeley, bishop of Cloyne, and by Dr Hutcheson of Glasgow, in his various treatises on ethical subjects.

To the remarks on the Fable of the Bees, the author has prefixed an inquiry into the origin of moral virtue; and it is to this inquiry that I propose to confine myself chiefly in the following strictures, as it exhibits his peculiar opinions concerning the principles of morals in a more systematical form than any of his other writings. In the course of the observations which I have to offer with respect to it, I shall perhaps be led to repeat one or two remarks which were already suggested by the doctrines of Locke. But for this repetition I hope that the importance of the subject will be a sufficient apology.

The great object of Mandeville's inquiry into the origin of moral virtue, is to show that all our moral sentiments are derived from education, and are the workmanship of politicians and lawgivers. "These," (says he,) "observing how selfish an animal man is, and how impossible, in consequence, it would be to retain numbers together in the same society without government, endeavoured to give his selfish principles a direction useful to the public. For this purpose they have laboured in all ages to convince him that it is better to restrain than to indulge his appetites, and to consult the public interest than his own. The engine they employed in working upon him was

“ flattery, which they addressed to vanity, one of
 “ the strongest principles of our nature. They
 “ contrasted *man* with the *lower animals*, and mag-
 “ nified the advantages he possesses over them.
 “ The human race they divided into two classes;
 “ the mean and contemptible, who, after the ex-
 “ ample of the brutes, gratify every animal propen-
 “ sity; and the generous and high spirited, who,
 “ disdaining these low gratifications, bent their
 “ study to cultivate the nobler principles of our na-
 “ ture, and waged a continual war with themselves
 “ to promote the happiness of others. In the case
 “ of men possessed of an extraordinary degree of
 “ pride and resolution, these representations of po-
 “ liticians and moralists were able to effectuate a
 “ complete conquest of their natural appetites, and
 “ a complete contempt of their own *visible* interests;
 “ and even the feeble minded and abject would be
 “ unwilling to rank themselves in the class to which
 “ they really belonged, and would strive to conceal
 “ their imperfections from the world, by their for-
 “ wardness to swell the cry in praise of self-denial
 “ and of public spirit. Such” (says Mandeville)
 “ *was*, or at least *might have been*, the manner after
 “ which savage man was broke; and what we call
 “ the moral virtues are merely the political off-
 “ spring which flattery begot upon pride.”

I shall not insist on the absurdity of supposing
 that *government* is an invention of political wis-
 dom, and not the natural result of man's constitu-
 tion, and of the circumstances in which he is placed.
 This, however improbable, is one of the least ab-

surditities of Mandeville's system. Its capital defect consists in supposing that the origin of our moral virtues may be accounted for from the power of *education*; a fundamental error which is common to the system of Mandeville and that of Locke as commonly understood by his followers, and which I had formerly occasion to refute at great length. I shall not therefore enlarge upon it at present, but shall confine myself to those parts of Mandeville's philosophy which are peculiar to himself.

It appears from the passage formerly quoted, that the engine which Mandeville supposes politicians to employ for the purpose of creating the artificial distinction between virtue and vice is *vanity* or *pride*, which two words he uses as synonymous. He employs them likewise in a much more extensive sense than their common acceptation authorizes; to denote, not only an overweening conceit of our own character and attainments, or a weak and childish passion for the admiration of others, but that reasonable desire for the esteem of our fellow-creatures which, so far from being a weakness, is a laudable and respectable principle.

The desire of esteem, and the dread of contempt, are undoubtedly among the strongest principles of our nature; but in good minds they are only subsidiary to the desire of excellence, nay, they cannot be effectually gratified if they are the first springs of our actions. To be pleased with the applause of others, it is not sufficient to possess the *appearance* of good qualities, we must possess the *reality*. A man of sense and delicacy is never more morti-

fied than when he receives praise for qualities which he knows do not belong to him ; and he is comforted, under the mistaken censures of the world, by the consciousness he does not deserve them. A desire of applause may, without detracting from our merit, mingle itself with the more worthy motives of our conduct ; but if it is the *sole* motive, the attainment of the object will never communicate a lasting satisfaction. *Falsus honor juvat, et mendax infamia terret, Quem, nisi mendosum et mendacem ? **

Vanity, in propriety of speech, denotes a weakness arising from a perversion of the *desire of esteem*. A man is *vain* who values himself on what is unworthy of regard, as the external distinctions of equipage or dress. He, too, is *vain* who wishes to pass in the world for what he really *is not*, and boasts of qualities which he does not possess. We also give the name of *vanity* to that weakness which disposes a man to be pleased with flattery, and which leads him not only to desire the esteem of others, but to place his happiness in public expressions of it. In every case *vanity* denotes a weakness which is carefully to be distinguished from the love of true glory.

Mandeville uses the word to express every sentiment of regard that we feel for the good opinion of others ; and, wherever this regard can be supposed to have had any influence on our conduct, he concludes that *vanity* was our principle of action.

• Hor. Ep. xvi. l. 39.

From these observations, added to those formerly made on Locke, it follows, in the first place, That the whole of our moral sentiments cannot be accounted for from education. 2dly, That, by confounding together *vanity*, and a reasonable regard to the *esteem* of our fellow-creatures, Mandeville has expressed the fundamental proposition of his system in terms so vague and ambiguous as renders it impossible to form a distinct conception of his meaning. And, 3dly, That even this reasonable and laudable desire of esteem cannot be effectually gratified, if it be the sole principle of our conduct; and therefore cannot be *the only* source of our moral virtues.

From the principle of *vanity*, Mandeville endeavours to account for all the instances of self-denial that have occurred in the world. But he is not satisfied with explaining away in this manner the reality of moral distinctions. He endeavours to show that human life is nothing but a scene of hypocrisy, and that there is really little or none of that self-denial to be found that some men lay claim to. In his theory of moral virtue he seems to allow that education may not only teach a man to check his appetites in order to procure the esteem of others, but that it may teach him to consider such a conquest over the lower principles of his nature as noble in itself, and as elevating him still further than nature had done above the level of the brutes. "Those men" (says he) "who have laboured to establish societies endeavoured, in the first place,

“ to insinuate themselves into the hearts of men by
 “ flattery, extolling the excellencies of our nature
 “ above other animals. They next began to in-
 “ struct them in the notions of honour and shame,
 “ representing the one as the worst of all evils,
 “ and the other as the highest good to which mor-
 “ tals could aspire;—which being done, they laid
 “ before them how unbecoming it was the dignity
 “ of such sublime creatures to be solicitous about
 “ gratifying those appetites which they had in com-
 “ mon with the brutes, and at the same time un-
 “ mindful of those higher qualities that gave them
 “ the pre-eminence over all visible beings. They,
 “ indeed, confessed that these impulses of nature
 “ were very pressing; that it was troublesome to
 “ resist, and very difficult wholly to subdue them.
 “ But this they only used as an argument to de-
 “ monstrate how glorious the conquest of them was
 “ on the one hand, and how scandalous on the
 “ other not to attempt it.”

These arguments, it is evident, are addressed to *pride* rather than to *vanity*; and it is worthy of remark, that, though Mandeville never states the distinction between these two words, but, on the contrary, affects to consider them as synonymous, he plainly was aware of the import of both, and sometimes uses the one, and sometimes the other, as best suits his purpose. Thus, in the following passage, if the word *vanity* were substituted instead of *pride*, the impropriety could not escape the most careless reader. “ Such men, as from no other motive but

“ their love of *goodness*, perform a worthy action
 “ in silence, have, I confess, acquired more refined
 “ notions of virtue than those I have hitherto spoke
 “ of, yet even in these (with whom the world has
 “ never yet swarmed) we may discover no small
 “ symptoms of *pride* ; and the humblest man alive
 “ must confess that the reward of a virtuous ac-
 “ tion, which is the satisfaction that ensues upon
 “ it, consists in a certain pleasure he procures to
 “ himself, by contemplating on his own worth ;
 “ which pleasure, together with the occasion of it,
 “ are as certain signs of *pride* as looking pale and
 “ trembling at any imminent danger are the symp-
 “ toms of fear.”

From these passages, however, it is abundantly clear that, in his *Theory of Virtue*, Mandeville admits the possibility of self-denial being exercised merely for the private gratification of the pride of the individual, without any regard to the opinions of other men. But, in his commentary on the Fable of the Bees, he goes much further, and attempts to show that there is really no self-denial in the world, and that what we call a conquest is only a concealed indulgence of our passions. To establish this point, he avails himself of the ambiguity of language. The passion of sex he, in every case, calls lust ; everything which exceeds what is necessary for the support of life, he calls luxury ; and thus confounding the innocent and reasonable gratifications of our passions with their vicious excesses, he pretends to show that there is really

no virtue among men. "There are some of our passions" (says Mr Smith) "which have no other names except those which mark the disagreeable and offensive degree. The spectator is more apt to take notice of them in this degree than in any other. When they shock his own sentiments, when they give him some sort of antipathy and uneasiness, he is necessarily obliged to attend to them, and is from thence naturally led to give them a name. When they fall in with the natural state of his own mind, he is very apt to overlook them altogether, and either gives them no name at all, or, if he gives them any, it is one which marks rather the subjection and restraint of the passion than the degree which it is still allowed to subsist in after it is so subjected and restrained. Thus, the common names of the love of pleasure, and of the love of sex, denote a vicious and offensive degree of those passions. The words temperance and chastity, on the other hand, seem to mark rather the restraint and subjection in which they are kept under, than the degree which they are still allowed to subsist in. When he can show, therefore, that they still subsist in some degree, he imagines he has entirely demolished the reality of the virtues of temperance and chastity, and shown them to be mere impositions upon the inattention and simplicity of mankind. Those virtues, however, do not require an entire insensibility to the objects of the passions which they mean to govern. They on-

ly aim at restraining the violence of those passions so far as not to hurt the individual, and neither to disturb nor offend the society.”

“ It is the great fallacy of Dr Mandeville’s book to represent every passion as wholly vicious, which is so in any degree, and in any direction. It is thus that he treats everything as vanity which has any reference either to what are, or what ought to be, the sentiments of others ; and it is by means of this sophistry that he establishes his favourite conclusion, that private vices are public benefits. If the love of magnificence, a taste for the elegant arts and improvements of human life, for whatever is agreeable in dress, furniture, or equipage, for architecture, statuary, painting, and music, is to be regarded as luxury, sensuality, and ostentation, even in those whose situation allows, without any inconveniency, the indulgence of those passions, it is certain that luxury, sensuality, and ostentation are public benefits, since, without the qualities upon which he thinks proper to bestow such opprobrious names, the arts of refinement could never find employment, and must languish for want of encouragement. Some popular ascetic doctrines which had been current before his time, and which placed virtue in the entire extirpation and annihilation of all our passions, were the real foundation of this licentious system. It was easy for Dr Mandeville to prove, first, that this entire conquest never actually took place among men ; and, se-

“ condly, that, if it was to take place universally, it
“ would be pernicious to society, by putting an end
“ to all commerce and industry, and, in a manner,
“ to the whole business of human life. By the first
“ of these propositions he seemed to prove, that
“ there was no real virtue, and that what pretend-
“ ed to be such was a mere cheat and imposition
“ upon mankind ; and by the second, that private
“ vices were public benefits, since without them no
“ society could prosper or flourish.”

In the passage now quoted from Mr Smith, a reference is made to a favourite opinion of Dr Mandeville's, “ that private vices are public benefits ;” an opinion of which I have not hitherto had occasion to take notice, and which my present subject does not lead me particularly to examine. I shall therefore only remark, in addition to what Mr Smith has said, that, in so far as Mandeville's reasonings on this point have any foundation in truth, they but authorize the following conclusion, that there are cases in which the selfish passions of individuals lead to a conduct useful to society, and in which private vices are rendered sources of public prosperity, by that overruling power which in this, as in many other instances, brings good out of evil.

But although it does not belong to my present subject to examine the truth of this very dangerous maxim, I cannot help remarking its striking inconsistency with the doctrine maintained by the same author in his inquiry concerning virtue. In that

performance the *utility* of what is commonly called *virtue* is uniformly supposed. "Politicians," we are told expressly, "agreed to call everything which, without regard to the public, man should commit to gratify any of his appetites, *vice*, if in that action there could be observed the least prospect that it might either be injurious to any of the society, or even render himself less serviceable to others: And to give the name of *virtue* to every performance by which man, contrary to the impulse of nature, should endeavour the benefit of others, or the conquest of his own passions, out of a rational ambition of being good." How are these definitions to be reconciled with the proposition, "that private vices are public benefits?"

I shall not enter into a more particular examination of Mandeville's doctrines. I cannot, however, leave the subject without observing, that the *impression* which the author's writings produce on the mind affords a sufficient refutation of his principles. It was considered by Cicero as a strong presumption against the system of Epicurus, that "it breathed nothing generous or noble," (*nihil magnificum, nihil generosum sapit*;) and the same presumption will be found to apply with tenfold force to that theory which has been now under our discussion. If there be no real distinction between virtue and vice—if the account given by Mandeville of the constitution of our nature be a just one—why do his reasonings render us *dissatisfied* with our own characters, or inspire us with a detestation and contempt for

mankind? Why do we turn with pleasure from the dark and uncomfortable prospects which *he* presents to us, to the delightful and elevating views of human nature which are exhibited in those philosophical systems which he attempts to explode? It will be said, perhaps, that all this arises from pride or vanity. When we read Mandeville we are ashamed of the species to which we belong; while, on the contrary, our pride is gratified by those sublime but fallacious descriptions of disinterested virtue, with which the weakness or hypocrisy of some popular writers has flattered the moral enthusiasm of the multitude. But if Mandeville's account of our nature be just, whence is it that we come to have an idea of one class of qualities as more excellent and meritorious than another? Why do we consider pride or vanity as a less worthy motive for our conduct than disinterested patriotism or friendship, or a determined adherence to what we believe to be our duty? Why does human nature appear to us less amiable in *his* writings than in the writings of Addison? or whence the origin of those opposite sentiments which the very names of Addison and of Mandeville inspire? We shall admit the fact with respect to the *actual* depravity of man to be as he states it; but does not the impression his system leaves on the mind demonstrate that we are at least formed with the love and admiration of moral excellence, and that virtue was intended to be the law of our conduct? The question concerning the actual attainments of man must not be confounded

with the question concerning the reality of moral distinctions. If Mandeville is successful in establishing his doctrine on the first of these points, the dissatisfaction his conclusions leave on the mind is sufficient to overturn his doctrine with respect to the latter. The remark of La Rochefoucauld, that "hypocrisy itself is an homage which vice renders to virtue," involves a satisfactory reply to all the arguments that have been ever drawn from the prevailing corruption of mankind against the moral constitution of human nature.

It is the capital defect of this system to confound together the two questions I have just stated, and to substitute a satire on vice and folly instead of a philosophical account of those moral principles which form an essential part of our frame. That there is a great deal of truth mixed with the sophistry it contains, I am ready to acknowledge; and if the author's remarks had been thrown into the form of satires, many of them might have been useful to the world, by the light they throw on human character, and by the assistance which individuals may derive from them in examining their own motives of action. Some apology might have been made, in this case, for the colourings which the author's facts have borrowed from his imagination. The object of the satirist is to reform; and for this purpose it may sometimes be of use to exaggerate the prevailing vices and follies of the time, in order to contrast more strongly what mankind *are*, with what they *might* and *ought* to be. But the satirist

who wishes well to his species, while he indulges his indignation against prevailing corruptions, will recollect, that, if his censures are just, they presuppose the reality of moral distinctions ; and while he laments the depravity of the race, and chastises the follies and vices of individuals, he will reverence morality as the *divine law*, and those essential principles of the human frame which bear the manifest signature of the divine workmanship. To attempt to depreciate these can never answer a good purpose. On the contrary, it has a tendency to fill the minds of good men with a desponding scepticism, and to stifle every generous and active exertion ; and if it does not actually increase the depravity of the world, it tends at least to strengthen the effrontery of vice, and to expose the wiser and better part of mankind to the impertinent raillery of fools and profligates.

The following passage from Mr Harris will form no improper conclusion to these observations. The sentiments it contains are equally just and refined, and do much honour to the benevolence of the author.

“ As man is by nature a social animal, good humour seems an ingredient highly necessary to his character. ’Tis the salt which gives the seasoning to the feast of life, and which, if it be wanting, surely renders the feast incomplete. Many causes contribute to impair this amiable quality, and nothing, perhaps, more than bad opinions of mankind. Bad opinions of mankind naturally

“ lead us to misanthropy. If these bad opinions go
 “ further, and are applied to the universe, then they
 “ lead to something worse, for they lead to atheism.
 “ The melancholy and morose character being thus
 “ insensibly formed, morals and piety sink of course;
 “ for what equals have we to love, or what superior
 “ have we to revere, when we have no other objects
 “ left than those of hatred or of terror?

“ Misanthropy is so dangerous a thing, and goes
 “ so far in sapping the very foundations of mora-
 “ lity and religion, that I esteem the last part of
 “ Swift’s *Gulliver* (*that* I mean relative to his
 “ Houyhnhms and Yahoos) to be a worse book to
 “ peruse than those which are forbid as the most
 “ flagitious and obscene.

“ One absurdity in this author (a wretched phi-
 “ losopher though a great wit) is well worth remark-
 “ ing. In order to render the nature of man odious,
 “ and the nature of beasts amiable, he is compelled
 “ to give human characters to his beasts, and beast-
 “ ly characters to his men; so that we are to ad-
 “ mire the beasts, not for being beasts, but amiable
 “ men, and to detest the men, not for being men, but
 “ detestable beasts.

“ Whoever has been reading this unnatural filth,
 “ let him turn for a moment to a *Spectator of Ad-
 “ dison*, and observe the philanthropy of that clas-
 “ sical writer; I may add the superior purity of his
 “ diction and his wit.” *

* Works of James Harris, Esq. Vol. II. p. 582.



CHAPTER FIFTH.

ANALYSIS OF OUR MORAL PERCEPTIONS AND EMOTIONS.

BEFORE proceeding to this extensive and difficult subject, I shall quote a passage from Dr Butler, in which he has combined together, and compressed into the compass of a few paragraphs, all the most important arguments in proof of the existence of the moral faculty which have been hitherto under our review. While this quotation serves as a summary of what has already been stated, it will, I hope, prepare us for entering on the following discussions with greater interest and a more enlightened curiosity.

“ That which renders beings capable of moral government is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensities : so also are we. But, additional to this, we have a capacity for reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought ; and on doing this we

“ naturally and unavoidably approve some actions,
“ under the peculiar view of their being virtuous
“ and of good desert, and disapprove others as vi-
“ cious and of ill desert. That we have this moral
“ approving and disapproving faculty is certain from
“ our experiencing it in ourselves, and recognizing
“ it in each other. It appears from our exercising
“ it unavoidably in the approbation and disapproba-
“ tion even of feigned characters : From the words,
“ right and wrong, odious and amiable, base and
“ worthy, with many others of like signification in
“ all languages, applied to actions and characters:
“ From the many written systems of morals which
“ suppose it, since it cannot be imagined that all
“ these authors, throughout all these treatises, had
“ absolutely no meaning at all to their words, or a
“ meaning merely chimerical: From our natural
“ sense of gratitude, which implies a distinction be-
“ tween merely being the instrument of good and
“ intending it: From the like distinction every one
“ makes between injury and mere harm, which
“ Hobbes says is peculiar to mankind, and between
“ injury and just punishment, a distinction plainly
“ natural, prior to the consideration of human laws ;
“ it is manifest great part of common language and
“ of common behaviour over the world is formed
“ upon supposition of such a moral faculty, whe-
“ ther called conscience, moral reason, moral sense,
“ or divine reason,—whether considered as a sen-
“ timent of the understanding, or as a perception of

“ the heart,* or, which seems the truth, as including both. Nor is it at all doubtful in the general what course of action this faculty, or practical discerning power within us, approves, and what it disapproves. For, as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists, or whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars, yet in general there is in reality an universally acknowledged standard of it. *It is that which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public,—it is that which every man you meet puts on the show of,—it is that which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind, namely, justice, veracity, and regard to common good.*” †

Upon the various topics here suggested, a copious and instructive commentary might be written, but I think it better to leave them in the concise and impressive form in which they are proposed by the author.

The science of ethics has been divided by modern writers into two parts ; the one comprehending the theory of morals, and the other its practi-

* There is here, I suspect, a typographical mistake. Butler, I have no doubt, wrote a *perception of the understanding*, or a *sentiment of the heart*.

† Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue subjoined to Butler's Analogy, 3d Ed.

cal doctrines. The questions about which the former is employed are chiefly the two following: *First*, by what *principle* of our constitution are we led to form the notion of moral distinctions,—whether by that faculty which perceives the distinction between truth and falsehood in the other branches of human knowledge, or by a peculiar power of perception (called by some the moral sense) which is *pleased* with one set of qualities and *displeased* with another? *Secondly*, what is the proper object of moral approbation; or, in other words, what is the common quality or qualities belonging to all the different modes of virtue? Is it benevolence, or a rational self-love, or a disposition (resulting from the ascendant of reason over passion) to act suitably to the different relations in which we are placed? These two questions seem to exhaust the whole theory of morals. The scope of the one is to ascertain the origin of our moral ideas; that of the other to refer the phenomena of moral perception to their most simple and general laws.

The practical doctrines of morality comprehend all those rules of conduct which profess to point out the proper ends of human pursuit, and the most effectual means of attaining them; to which we may add, under the general title of *adminicles*, (if I may be allowed to borrow a technical word of Lord Bacon's,) all those literary compositions, whatever be their particular form, which have for their aim to fortify and animate our good dispositions by delineations of the beauty, of the dignity, or of the utility of virtue.

I shall not inquire at present into the justness of this division. I shall only observe that the words *theory* and *practice* are not in this instance employed in their usual acceptations. The theory of morals does not bear, for example, the same relation to the practice of morals that the theory of geometry bears to practical geometry. In this last science all the practical rules are founded on theoretical principles previously established. But, in the former science, the practical rules are obvious to the capacities of all mankind, while the theoretical principles form one of the most difficult subjects of discussion that have ever exercised the ingenuity of metaphysicians.

Although, however, a complete acquaintance with the *practice* of our duty does not presuppose any knowledge of the theory of morals, it does not therefore follow that false theoretical notions upon this subject may not be attended with very pernicious consequences. On the contrary, nothing is more evident than this, that every system which calls in question the immutability of moral distinctions has a tendency to undermine the foundations of *all* the virtues, both private and public, and to dry up the best and purest sources of human happiness. When sceptical doubts have once been excited in the mind by the perusal of such systems, no exhortation to the practice of our duties can have any effect; and it is necessary for us, before we think of addressing the heart, or influencing the will, to begin with undeceiving and enlightening the understanding. It is for this reason, that, in

such an age as the present, when sceptical doctrines have been so anxiously disseminated by writers of genius, it appears to me to be a still more essential object in academical instruction, to vindicate the theory of morals against the cavils of licentious metaphysicians, than to indulge in the more interesting and popular disquisitions of practical ethics. On the former subject much yet remains to be done. On the latter, although the field of inquiry is by no means as yet completely exhausted, the student may be safely trusted to his own serious reflections, guided by the precepts of those illustrious men who, in different ages and countries, have devoted their talents to the improvement and happiness of the human race.

In this department of literature no country whatever has surpassed our own; whether we consider the labours of the great lights of the English church, or the fugitive essays of those later writers who (after the example of Addison) have attempted to enlist in the cause of virtue and religion, whatever aid fancy, and wit, and elegance, could lend to the support of truth. It is scarcely necessary for me to mention the advantage which may be derived in the same study from the philosophical remains of ancient Greece and Rome,—due allowances being made for some unfortunate prejudices produced or encouraged by violent and oppressive systems of policy. Indeed, with the exception of a few such prejudices, it may, with great truth be asserted, that they who have been most successful in modern times in inculcating the duties

of life, have been the moralists who have trod the most closely in the footsteps of the Greek and Roman philosophers. The case is different with respect to the theory of morals, which, among the ancients, attracted comparatively but a small degree of attention, although one of the questions formerly mentioned (that concerning the *object* of moral approbation) was a favourite subject of discussion in their schools. The other question, however, (that concerning the *principle* of moral approbation,) with the exception of a few hints in the writings of Plato, may be considered as in a great measure peculiar to modern Europe, having been chiefly agitated since the writings of Cudworth in opposition to those of Hobbes ; and it is this question accordingly, (recommended at once by its novelty and difficulty to the curiosity of speculative men,) that has produced most of the theories which characterize and distinguish from each other the later systems of moral philosophy.

It appears to me that the diversity of these systems has arisen, in a great measure, from the partial views which different writers have taken of the same complicated subject ; that these systems are by no means so exclusive of each other as has commonly been imagined ; and that, in order to arrive at the truth, it is necessary for us, instead of attaching ourselves to any one, to avail ourselves of the lights which all of them have furnished. Our moral perceptions and emotions are, in fact, the result of different principles combined together. They involve a judgment of the understanding, and they

involve also a feeling of the heart ; * and it is only by attending to both that we can form a just notion of our moral constitution. In confirmation of this remark, it will be necessary for us to analyze particularly the state of our minds, when we are spectators of any good or bad action performed by another person, or when we reflect on the actions performed by ourselves. On such occasions we are conscious of three different things :

(1.) The perception of an action as right or wrong.

(2.) An emotion of pleasure or of pain, varying in its degree according to the acuteness of our moral sensibility.

(3.) A perception of the merit or demerit of the agent.

SECTION I.

Of the Perception of Right and Wrong.

The controversy concerning the origin of our

* The same remark is made in a passage already quoted from Dr Butler, whose slightest hints are entitled to attention, as they seem to have been all scrupulously and deliberately weighed. " It is manifest great part of common language, and of common behaviour over the world, is formed upon supposition of a moral faculty ; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason ; whether considered as a perception of the understanding, or as a sentiment of the heart, or, which seems the truth, as including both."

moral ideas took its rise in modern times, in consequence of the writings of Mr Hobbes. According to him we approve of virtuous actions, or of actions beneficial to society, from self-love, as we know that whatever promotes the interest of society has on that very account an indirect tendency to promote our own. He further taught, that, as it is to the institution of government we are indebted for all the comforts and the confidence of social life, the laws which the civil magistrate enjoins are the ultimate standards of morality.

Dangerous as these doctrines are, some apology may be made for the author from the unfortunate circumstances of the times in which he lived. He had been a witness of the disorders which took place in England at the time of the dissolution of the monarchy by the death of Charles the First; and, in consequence of his mistaken speculations on the politics of that period, he contracted a bias in favour of despotical government, and was led to consider it as the duty of a good citizen to strengthen, as much as possible, the hands of the civil magistrate, by inculcating the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. It was with this view that he was led to maintain the philosophical principles which have been already mentioned. He seems likewise to have formed a very unfavourable idea of the clerical order, from the instances which his own experience afforded of their turbulence and ambition; and on that account he wished to subject the consciences of men immediately to the se-

cular powers. In consequence of this, his system, although offensive in a very high degree to all sound moralists, provoked in a more peculiar manner the resentment of the clergy, and drew on the author a great deal of personal obloquy, which neither his character in private life, nor his intentions as a writer, appear to have merited.

Among the antagonists of Hobbes, the most eminent by far was Dr Cudworth; and indeed modern times have not produced an author who was better qualified to do justice to the very important argument he undertook, by his ardent zeal for the best interests of mankind, by his singular vigour and comprehensiveness of thought, and by the astonishing treasures he had collected of ancient literature.

That our ideas of right and wrong are not derived from positive law, Cudworth concluded from the following argument: "Suppose such a law to be established, it must either be right to obey it, and wrong to disobey it, or indifferent whether we obey or disobey it. But a law which it is indifferent whether we obey or not, cannot, it is evident, be the source of moral distinctions; and, on the contrary supposition, if it is right to obey the law, and wrong to disobey it, these distinctions must have had an existence antecedent to the law." * In a word, it is from *natural* law that *positive* law derives all its force.

* Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. pp. 334, 335. Sixth Edit.

The same argument against Hobbes is thus stated by Lord Shaftesbury.

“ ’Tis ridiculous to say there is any obligation
“ on man to act sociably or honestly in a formed
“ government, and not in that which is commonly
“ called the state of nature. For, to speak in the
“ fashionable language of our modern philosophy,
“ society being founded on a compact, the surren-
“ der made of every man’s private unlimited right
“ into the hands of the majority, or such as the
“ majority should appoint, was of free choice, and
“ by a promise. Now the promise itself was
“ made in a state of nature, and that which could
“ make a promise obligatory in the state of nature
“ must make all other acts of humanity as much
“ our real duty and natural part. Thus faith,
“ justice, honesty, and virtue, must have been as
“ early as the state of nature, or they could never
“ have been at all. The civil union or confederacy
“ could never make right or wrong if they subsist-
“ ed not before. He who was free to any villainy
“ before his contract, will and ought to make as
“ free with his contract when he sees fit. The na-
“ tural knave has the same reason to be a civil one,
“ and may dispense with his politic capacity as oft as
“ he sees occasion ; ’tis only his work stands in the
“ way. A man is obliged to keep his word. Why?
“ because he has given his word to keep it. Is not
“ this a notable account of the original of moral
“ justice, and the rise of civil government and al-
“ legiance !”

To these observations it may be added, that our notions of right and wrong are so far from owing their origin to positive institutions, that they afford us the chief standard to which we appeal, in comparing different positive institutions with each other. Were it not for this test, how could we pronounce one code to be more humane, more liberal, or more equitable than another? or how could we feel that, in our own municipal regulations, some are consonant and others repugnant to the principles of justice. "Let any one" (says a learned and judicious civilian) "acquaint himself
 "with the sanguinary system of Draco, and then
 "view it as tempered with the philosophy of Solon, and the softer refinements of a better age;
 "let him look with the eye of speculation upon an
 "establishment that directs 'not to seethe a kid
 "in its mother's milk; not to muzzle the ox when
 "he treadeth out the corn; when our brother's
 "cattle go astray or fall down by the way, not to
 "hide ourselves from them; that acquits the betrothed damsel who was violated at a distance,
 "and out of hearing, upon this compassionate suggestion,—for he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save
 "her;' let him reflect, I say, on his own feelings
 "when he considers these different enactments, and
 "then judge how far they agree with the philosophy of Hobbes."*

* Taylor on the Civil Law, p. 159.

Agreeably to this view of positive institutions, Demosthenes remarks, "The laws of a country may be regarded as a *criterion* for estimating the morals of the state, and the prevailing character of the people." I shall quote the passage I allude to in the version of the Latin translator. "Illud igitur vobis est etiam considerandum, multos Græcorum sæpe decrevisse, vestris utendum esse legibus: id quod vobis laudi haud injuriâ ducitis. Nam verum illud mihi videtur, quod quendam apud vos dixisse ferunt: OMNES CORDATOS IN EA ESSE SENTENTIA, UT LEGES NIHIL ALIUD ESSE PUTENT QUAM MORES CIVITATES Danda igitur est opera, ut eæ quam optimæ esse videantur."*

It is justly observed by Cudworth, that the doctrines now under consideration are not peculiar to the system of Hobbes; and that similar opinions have been entertained in all ages by those writers who were either anxious to flatter the passions of tyrannical rulers, or who had a secret bias to atheistic and Epicurean principles.

In confirmation of this remark, he takes a review of the principal attempts that have been made to undermine the foundations of morals, both in ancient and modern times, and interweaves with this history many profound reflections of his own. The following paragraphs contain the substance of this part of his work, and I hope will furnish an

* Taylor, p. 160.

interesting as well as useful introduction to the reasonings I am afterwards to offer in vindication of the reality and immutability of moral distinctions.

“ As the vulgar generally look no higher for the
 “ original of moral good and evil, just and unjust,
 “ than the codes and pandects, the tables and laws
 “ of their country and religion, so there have not
 “ wanted pretended philosophers *in all ages*, who
 “ have asserted nothing to be good and evil, just
 “ and unjust, *naturally and immutably* (φυσει και
 “ ακινητως;) but that all these things were positive,
 “ arbitrary, and factitious only. Such Plato men-
 “ tions,” (in his Tenth Book De Legibus,) “ who
 “ maintained, ‘ that nothing at all was *naturally*
 “ just, but men, changing their opinions concern-
 “ ing them perpetually, sometimes made one thing
 “ just, sometimes another; but whatever is de-
 “ creed and constituted, that for the time is valid,
 “ being made so by acts and laws, but not by any
 “ nature of its own.’ And Aristotle more than
 “ once takes notice of this opinion in his ethics.
 “ ‘ Things honest and just, which politics are con-
 “ versant about, have so great a variety and un-
 “ certainty in them, that they seem to be only by
 “ law and not by nature.’ And afterwards (Lib. 5.
 “ c. 10.) having divided (το δικαιον πολιτικον) that
 “ which is politically just into (φυσικον, *i. e.*) natu-
 “ ral, which has everywhere the same force, and
 “ (Νομιμον, *i. e.*) legal, which, before there be a law
 “ made, is indifferent, but, when once the law is

“ made, is determined to be just or unjust ;’ he
“ adds, ‘ Some there are that think there is no
“ other just or unjust but what is made by law
“ and men, because that which is natural is im-
“ mutable, and hath everywhere the same force,
“ whereas *jura* and *justa*, rights and just things,
“ are everywhere different.’ The latter, therefore,
“ they conceive to be analogous to wine and wheat
“ measures, which vary from place to place, ac-
“ cording to local customs ; the former they com-
“ pare to the properties of *fire*, which produce the
“ same effects in Persia and Greece.

“ 2d, After these succeeded *Epicurus*, the reviv-
“ er of the Democritical philosophy, the frame of
“ whose principles must needs lead him to deny
“ justice and injustice to be natural things ; and,
“ therefore, he determines that they arise wholly
“ from mutual acts and covenants of men, made
“ for their own convenience and utility. Those
“ living creatures that could not make mutual co-
“ venants together not to hurt, nor to be hurt, by
“ one another, could not, for this cause, have any
“ such thing as just or unjust among them. And
“ there is the same reason for those nations that
“ either will not, or cannot make such compacts :
“ For there is no such thing as justice by itself, but
“ only in the mutual congresses of men. Or (as
“ the late compiler of the Epicurean system expres-
“ ses the same meaning) there are some who think
“ that those things which are just are just accord-
“ ing to their proper unvaried nature, and that the

“ laws do not make them just, but only prescribe
 “ according to that nature which they have : But
 “ *the thing is not so.*”*

“ 3d, And since in this latter age the physiologi-
 “ cal hypotheses of Democritus and Epicurus have
 “ been revived, and successfully applied to the solv-
 “ ing of some of the phenomena of the visible world,
 “ there have not wanted some that have endeavour-
 “ ed to vent also those other paradoxes of the same
 “ philosophy, viz. that there is no incorporeal sub-
 “ stance, nor any natural difference between good
 “ and evil, just and unjust, and to recommend the
 “ same under a show of wisdom, as the deep and
 “ profound mysteries of the atomical and corpuscu-
 “ lar philosophy, as if senseless matter and atoms
 “ were the original of all things, according to the
 “ song of old Silenus in Virgil. Of this sort is
 “ that late writer of ethics and politics, who asserts
 “ ‘ that there are no authentic doctrines concerning
 “ just and unjust, good and evil, except the laws
 “ which are established in every city ; and that it
 “ concerns none to inquire whether an action be
 “ reputed just or unjust, good or evil, except such

* It may be proper to mention that Cudworth alludes here to Gassendi, who was at much pains to revive the philosophy of Epicurus, both in physics and morals, rejecting, however, or palliating those parts of it which are most exceptionable. With this philosopher (who appears to have been a most amiable and exemplary man in private life, and who, in learning, was not surpassed by any of his contemporaries,) Hobbes lived in habits of very intimate friendship during his long residence in France.

“ only whom the community have appointed to be
 “ the interpreters of their laws.’

“ In the state of nature (according to him) no-
 “ thing can be *unjust*, and the notions of right and
 “ wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place.
 “ Where there is no common power there is no law ;
 “ where no law no transgression. No law can be
 “ unjust.* Nay, temperance is no more naturally
 “ right, according to this philosopher, than justice.
 “ Sensuality, in the sense in which it is condemned,
 “ hath no place till there be laws.”†

“ 4th, But whatsoever was the true meaning of
 “ these philosophers that affirm justice and injustice
 “ to be only by law, and not by nature, certain it is
 “ that diverse modern theologers do not only serious-
 “ ly but zealously contend in like manner, that there
 “ is nothing absolutely, intrinsically, and naturally
 “ good and evil, just and unjust, antecedently to
 “ any positive command or prohibition of God, but
 “ that the arbitrary will and pleasure of God, (that
 “ is an Omnipotent Being, devoid of all essential and
 “ natural justice,) by its commands and prohibitions,
 “ is the first and only rule and measure thereof.
 “ Whence it follows unavoidably, that nothing can
 “ be imagined so grossly wicked, or so foully un-
 “ just or dishonest, but if it were supposed to be
 “ commanded by this omnipotent Deity, must needs,
 “ upon that hypothesis, become holy, just, and
 “ righteous. For, though the ancient fathers of the

* Leviathan, p. 63.

† Ibid. p. 182.

“ Christian church were very abhorrent from this
 “ doctrine, yet it crept up afterward in the scholas-
 “ tic age, Ockham being among the first that main-
 “ tained that there is no act evil, but as it is pro-
 “ hibited by God, and which cannot be made good
 “ if it be commanded by him. And herein Petrus
 “ Alliacus and Andreas de Novo Castro, with others,
 “ quickly followed him.”

“ Now the necessary and unavoidable consequences
 “ of this opinion are such as these, that to love God
 “ is *by nature* an indifferent thing, and is morally
 “ good only because it is enjoined by his command :
 “ That holiness is not a conformity with the divine
 “ nature and attributes : That God hath no natural
 “ inclination to the good of the creatures, and might
 “ *justly* doom an innocent creature to eternal tor-
 “ ment, all which propositions, with others of the
 “ kind, are word for word asserted by some late
 “ authors. Though I think not fit to mention the
 “ names of any of them in this place, excepting on-
 “ ly one, *Joannes Sydlovius*, who, in a book pub-
 “ lished at *Franeker*, hath professedly avowed and
 “ maintained the grossest of them. And yet nei-
 “ ther he nor the rest are to be thought any more
 “ blame-worthy herein than many others that, hold-
 “ ing the same premises, have either dissembled
 “ or disowned those conclusions which unavoid-
 “ ably follow therefrom, but rather to be commend-
 “ ed for their openness, simplicity, and ingenuity
 “ in representing their opinion naked to the world,
 “ such as indeed it is, without any veil or mask.

“ Wherefore, since there are so many, both philosophers and theologians, that seemingly and verbally acknowledge such things as moral good and evil, just and unjust, yet contend, notwithstanding, that these are not by nature but institution, and that there is nothing naturally or immutably just or unjust; I shall from hence fetch the rise of this ethical discourse or inquiry concerning things good and evil, just and unjust, laudable and shameful, demonstrating, in the first place, that, if there be anything at all good or evil, just or unjust, there must of necessity be something naturally and immutably good and just. And from thence I shall proceed afterward to show what this natural, immutable, and eternal justice is, with the branches and species of it.”

The foregoing very long quotation, while it contains much valuable information with respect to the history of moral science, will be sufficient to convey a general idea of the scope of Cudworth's ethical inquiries, and of the prevailing opinions among philosophers upon this subject, at the time when he wrote. For the details of his argument I must refer to his work. It is sufficient for my present purpose to observe, that he seems plainly to have considered our notions of right and wrong as incapable of analysis, that is, (to use the language of more modern writers,) he considered them as simple ideas or notions, of which the names do not admit of definition. In this respect also his philosophy differs from that of Hobbes, who, as we have al-

ready remarked, ascribes our moral judgments, not to an immediate perception of the qualities of actions, but to a view of their *tendencies*, which we approve or disapprove, according as they appear to be conducive or not to our own interest, or to that of society. Indeed, according to Hobbes, these two tendencies coincide, or rather are the same, for he apprehended that all our zeal for the public good originates in a selfish principle. "Man" (he said) "is driven to society by necessity, and whatever promotes its interest is judged to have a remote tendency to promote his own." Thus he attempts to *account* for our approbation of virtue by resolving it into self-love, and, of consequence, to resolve the notions expressed by the words *right* and *wrong* into other notions more simple and general. This theory I have already endeavoured to refute at some length, and I have only now to add to what was formerly remarked with respect to it, that, if it were agreeable to fact, the words *right* and *wrong* would be synonymous with *advantageous* and *disadvantageous*; and to say that these actions are right which are calculated to promote our own happiness would be an identical proposition.

Cudworth's opinion, on the contrary, led him to consider our perception of right and wrong as an ultimate fact in our nature. Indeed, to those whose judgments are not warped by preconceived theories, no fact with respect to the human mind can well appear more incontestible. We can define the words right and wrong only by synonymous words and

phrases, or by the properties and necessary concomitants of what they denote. Thus,* “we may say “ of the word *right*, that it expresses what we *ought to do*, what is *fair* and *honest*, what is *approvable*, “ what *every man professes to be the rule of his conduct*, what *all men praise*, and what *is in itself laudable, though no man praise it.*” In such definitions and explanations it is evident we only substitute a synonymous expression instead of the word defined, or we characterize the quality which the word denotes by some circumstance connected with it or resulting from it as a consequence ; and therefore, we may, with confidence, conclude that the word in question expresses a simple idea.

The two most important conclusions, then, which result from Cudworth’s reasonings in opposition to Hobbes are these : First, That the mind is able to form antecedently to positive institution the ideas of right and wrong ; and, secondly, That these words express simple ideas, or ideas incapable of analysis.

From these conclusions of Cudworth a farther question naturally arose, how the ideas of right and wrong were formed, and to what principle of our constitution they ought to be referred ? This very interesting question did not escape the attention of Cudworth. And, in answer to it, he endeavoured to show that our notions of moral distinctions are formed by *reason*, or, in other words,

* Reid on the Active Powers, p. 228.

by the power which distinguishes truth from falsehood. And accordingly it became, for some time, the fashionable language among moralists to say that virtue consisted, not in obedience to the law of a superior, but in a conduct conformable to reason.

At the time when Cudworth wrote no accurate classification had been attempted of the principles of the Human Mind. His account of the office of reason, accordingly, in enabling us to perceive the distinction between right and wrong, passed without censure, and was understood merely to imply, that there is an eternal and immutable distinction between right and wrong, no less than between truth and falsehood; and that both these distinctions are perceived by our rational powers, or by those powers which raise us above the brutes.

The publication of Locke's Essay introduced into this part of science a precision of expression unknown before, and taught philosophers to distinguish a variety of powers which had formerly been very generally confounded. With these great merits, however, his work has capital defects, and perhaps in no part of it are these defects more important than in the attempt he has made to deduce the origin of our knowledge entirely from *sensation* and *reflection*. To the former of these sources he refers the ideas we receive by our external senses,—of colours, sounds, hardness, &c. To the latter, the ideas we derive from consciousness of our own mental operations—of memory, imagination, voli-

tion, pleasure, pain, &c. These, according to him, are the sources of all our simple ideas; and the only power that the mind possesses is to perform certain operations of analysis, combination, comparison, &c. on the materials with which it is thus supplied.

It was this system of Locke's which led him to those dangerous opinions that were formerly mentioned concerning the nature of moral distinctions; which he seems to have considered as entirely the offspring of education and fashion. Indeed, if the words right and wrong neither express simple ideas, nor relations discoverable by reason, it will not be found easy to avoid adopting this conclusion.

In order to reconcile Locke's account of the origin of our ideas, with the immutability of moral distinctions, different theories were proposed concerning the nature of virtue. According to one,* for example, it was said to consist in a conduct conformable to *truth*; according to another,† in a conduct conformable to the *fitness of things*. The great object of all these theories may be considered as the same, to remove right and wrong from the class of simple ideas, and to resolve moral rectitude into a conformity with some relation perceived by reason or by the understanding.

Dr Hutcheson saw clearly the vanity of these attempts, and hence he was led, in compliance with the language of Locke's Philosophy, to refer the

* Mr Wollaston.

† Dr Clarke.

origin of our moral ideas to a particular power of perception, to which he gave the name of the moral sense. "All the ideas," (says he,) "or the materials of our reasoning or judging, are received by some immediate powers of perception, internal or external, which we may call *senses*. Reasoning or intellect seems to raise no new species of ideas, but to discover or discern the relations of those received."

According to this system, as it has been commonly explained, our perceptions of right and wrong are *impressions* which our minds are made to receive from particular actions, similar to the relishes and aversions given us for particular objects of the external and internal senses.

That this was Dr Hutcheson's own idea appears from the following passage, in which he endeavours to obviate some dangerous notions which were supposed to follow from this doctrine. "Let none imagine that calling the ideas of virtue and vice perceptions of sense, upon apprehending the actions and affections of another, does diminish their reality more than the like assertions concerning all pleasure and pain, happiness, or misery. Our reason often corrects the report of our senses about the natural tendency of the external action, and corrects rash conclusions about the affections of the agent. But whether our moral sense be subject to such a disorder as to have different perceptions, from the same apprehended affections in an agent, at different times,

“ as the eye may have of the colours of an unaltered object, it is not easy to determine ; perhaps it will be hard to find any instance of such a change. What reason could correct if it fell into such a disorder, I know not, except suggesting to its remembrance its former approbations, and representing the general sense of mankind. But this does not prove ideas of virtue and vice to be previous to a sense, more than a like correction of the ideas of colour in a person under the jaundice proves that colours are perceived by reason previously to sense.”

Mr Hume, whose philosophy coincides in this respect with Dr Hutcheson's, has expressed himself on this subject still more explicitly. “ As virtue is an end, and is desirable on its own account, without fee or reward, merely for the immediate satisfaction which it conveys, it is requisite that there should be some sentiment which it touches; some internal taste or feeling, or whatever you please to call it, which distinguishes moral good and evil, and which embraces the one and rejects the other.”

“ Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and of *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood ; the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice, and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution ; the other has a productive faculty, and, gilding or staining all natu-

“ ral objects with the colours borrowed from inter-
“ nal sentiment, raises, in a manner, a new crea-
“ tion. Reason, being cool and disengaged, is no
“ motive to action, and directs only the impulse re-
“ ceived from appetite or inclination, by showing
“ us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding
“ misery. Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and
“ thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes
“ a motive to action, and is the first spring or im-
“ pulse to desire and volition. From circumstan-
“ ces and relations, known or supposed, the former
“ leads us to the discovery of the concealed and
“ unknown. After all circumstances and relations
“ are laid before us, the latter makes us feel from
“ the whole a new sentiment of blame or approba-
“ tion. The standard of the one, being founded
“ on the nature of things, is eternal and inflexible,
“ even by the will of the Supreme Being. The
“ standard of the other, arising from the internal
“ frame and constitution of animals, is ultimately
“ derived from that supreme will which bestowed
“ on each being its peculiar nature, and arranged
“ the several classes and orders of existence.”

In the passage now quoted from Mr Hume, a slight hint is given of his scepticism with respect to the immutability of moral distinctions ; but, in some other parts of his writings, he has openly and avowedly expressed his opinions upon this important question. The words right and wrong (according to him) signify nothing in the objects themselves to which they are applied, any more than

the words sweet and bitter, pleasant and painful, but only certain effects in the mind of the spectator. As it is improper, therefore, (according to the doctrines of some modern philosophers) to say of an object of taste that it is sweet, or of heat that it is in the fire, so it is equally improper to say of actions that they are right or wrong. It is absurd to speak of morality as a thing independent and unchangeable, inasmuch as it arises from an arbitrary relation between our constitution and particular objects. The distinction of moral good and evil is founded on the pleasure or pain which results from the view of any sentiment or character; and, as that pleasure or pain cannot be unknown to the person who feels it, it follows that there is just so much vice or virtue in any character as every one places in it; and that it is impossible in this particular we can ever be mistaken. *

Before we proceed to an examination of these conclusions, it may be worth while to remark, that they have not even the merit of originality; for we find from the *Theætetus* of Plato, as well as from other remains of antiquity, that the same scepticism prevailed among the Grecian sophists, and was supported by nearly the same arguments. Pro-

* “Were I not afraid of appearing too philosophical, I should remind my reader of that famous doctrine, supposed to be fully proved in modern times, that tastes and colours, and all other sensible qualities, lie not in the bodies but merely in the senses. The case is the same with beauty and deformity, *virtue and vice*.”—Hume’s *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, Edit. of 1784, Vol. I. Note F. p. 544.

tagoras and his followers extended it to all truth, physical as well as moral, and maintained that everything was relative to perception. The following maxims in particular have a wonderful coincidence with Hume's Philosophy. "Nothing is true or false any more than sweet or sour *in itself*, but relatively to the perceiving mind."—"Man is the measure of all things, and everything is that and no other which to every one it *seems* to be, so that there can be nothing true, nothing existent distinct from the mind's own perceptions." This last indeed is mentioned as the fundamental principle of Protagoras's system. Παντων χρηματων μετρον ανθρωπον. Μετρον εκαστον ημων ειναι τωντε οντων και μητα φαινομενα εκασω, ταντα και ειναι. *

With respect to this sceptical philosophy as it is taught in the writings of Hume, it appears evidently, from what has been already said, to be founded entirely on the supposition, that our perception of the moral qualities of actions has some analogy to our perception of the sensible qualities of matter; and therefore it becomes a very interesting inquiry for us to examine how far this supposition is agreeable to fact. Indeed this is the most important question that can be stated with respect to the theory of morals; and yet I confess it appears to me that the obscurity in which it is involved arises chiefly, if not wholly, from the use of indefinite and ambiguous terms.

That moral distinctions are perceived by a sense is implied in the definition of a sense already quot-

* Plato. Theæt.

ed from Dr Hutcheson. "All the ideas, or the materials of our reasoning or judging, are received by some immediate powers of perception, internal or external, which we may call senses. Reasoning or intellect seems to raise no new species of ideas, but to discover or discern the relations of those received."* If this definition be admitted, there cannot be a doubt that the origin of our moral ideas must be referred to a sense; at least there can be no doubt upon this point among those who hold, with Cudworth and with Price, that the words right and wrong express simple ideas. The latter of these authors, a most zealous opposer of a moral sense, (and although one of the driest and least engaging of our English moralists, yet certainly one of the most sound and judicious,) grants that the words right and wrong are incapable of a definition, and considers a want of attention to this circumstance as a principal source of the errors which have misled philosophers in treating of this part of moral science. "'Tis a very necessary previous observation," (says he,) "that *right and wrong denote simple ideas, and are therefore to be ascribed to some immediate power of perception in the human mind.* He that doubts needs only try to enumerate the simple ideas they signify, or to give definitions of them when applied, (suppose to beneficence or cruelty) which shall amount to more than synonymous expressions. From not attending to this, from giving definitions of these

* Illustrations upon the Moral Sense, Section 1.

“ ideas, and attempting to derive them from *deduc-*
 “ *tion* or *reasoning*, has proceeded most of that con-
 “ fusion in which the question concerning the foun-
 “ dation of morals has been involved. There are,
 “ undoubtedly, some actions that are ultimately ap-
 “ proved, and for justifying which no reason can
 “ be assigned, as there are some ends which are
 “ ultimately desired, and for choosing which no rea-
 “ son can be given. Were not this true, there would
 “ be an infinite series or progression of reasons and
 “ ends subordinate to one another. There would be
 “ nothing at which to stop, and therefore nothing
 “ that could at all be approved or desired.”*

It appears from the foregoing passage that Dr Price, as well as Dr Hutcheson, ascribes our ideas of moral distinctions to an immediate power of perception in the mind, and therefore the difference between them turns entirely on the propriety of the definition of a *sense* which Dr Hutcheson has given.

It may be farther observed, in justification of Dr Hutcheson, that the sceptical consequences deduced from his supposition of a *moral sense* do not necessarily result from it. Unfortunately, most of his illustrations were taken from the *secondary* qualities of matter, which, since the time of Descartes, philosophers have been in general accustomed to refer to the mind, and not to the external object. But if we suppose our perception of right and wrong to be analogous to the perception of extension and figure and other *primary* qualities, the

* Price's Review, &c. Section 3.



reality and immutability of moral distinctions seem to be placed on a foundation sufficiently satisfactory to a candid inquirer. That our notions of primary qualities are necessarily accompanied with a conviction of their separate and independent existence was formerly shown; and, therefore, to compare our perception of right and wrong to our perception of extension and of figure, although it may not perhaps be very accurate or philosophical, does not imply any scepticism with respect to the immutability of moral distinctions; at least does not justify those sceptical inferences which Mr Hume has endeavoured to deduce from Dr Hutcheson's language.

The definition, however, of a sense which Dr Hutcheson has given is by far too general, and was plainly suggested to him by Locke's account of the origin of our ideas. The words cause and effect, duration, number, equality, identity, and many others, express simple ideas as well as the words right and wrong; and yet it would surely be absurd to ascribe each of them to a particular power of perception. Notwithstanding this circumstance, as the expression *moral sense* has now the sanction of use, and as, when properly explained, it cannot lead to any bad consequences, it may be still retained without inconvenience in ethical disquisitions. It has been much in fashion among moralists since the time of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, nor was it an innovation introduced by them; for the ancients often speak of a *sensus recti et honesti*; and, in our own language, a *sense of*

duty is a phrase not only employed by philosophers, but habitually used in common discourse.

To what part of our constitution then shall we ascribe the origin of the ideas of right and wrong. Dr Price (returning to the antiquated phraseology of Cudworth) says to the *understanding*, and endeavours to show, in opposition to Locke and his followers, that “the power which understands, or “the faculty that discerns truth is itself a source “of new ideas.”

This controversy turns solely on the meaning of words. The origin of our ideas of right and wrong is manifestly the same with that of the other simple ideas already mentioned ; and, whether it be referred to the understanding or not, seems to be a matter of mere arrangement, provided it be granted that the words right and wrong express qualities of actions, and not merely a power of exciting certain agreeable or disagreeable emotions in our minds.

It may perhaps obviate some objections against the language of Cudworth and Price to remark, that the word *reason* is used in senses which are extremely different : sometimes to express the whole of those powers which elevate man above the brutes, and constitute his rational nature,—more especially, perhaps, his intellectual powers ; sometimes to express the power of deduction or argumentation. The former is the sense in which the word is used in common discourse ; and it is in this sense that it seems to be employed by those writers who refer to it the origin of our moral ideas.

Their antagonists, on the other hand, understand in general, by reason, the power of deduction or argumentation; an use of the word which is not unnatural, from the similarity between the words reason and reasoning, but which is not agreeable to its ordinary meaning. "No hypothesis" (says Dr Campbell) "hitherto invented hath shown that, "by means of the discursive faculty, without the "aid of any other mental power, we could ever obtain a notion either of the beautiful or the good."* The remark is undoubtedly true; and it may be applied to all those systems which ascribe to *reason* the origin of our moral ideas, if the expressions reason and discursive faculty be used as synonymous. But if the word reason be used in a more general sense to denote merely our rational and intellectual nature, there does not seem to be much impropriety in ascribing to it the origin of those simple notions which are not excited in the mind by the immediate operation of the senses, but which arise in consequence of the exercise of the intellectual powers upon their various objects.

A variety of intuitive judgments might be mentioned involving simple ideas, which it is impossible to trace to any origin but to the power which enables us to form these judgments. Thus it is surely an intuitive truth, that the sensations of which I am conscious, and all those I remember, belong to one and the same being, which I call *myself*. Here is an intuitive judgment involving

* Philosophy of Rhetoric, Vol. I. p. 204.

the simple idea of *identity*. In like manner, the changes which I perceive in the universe impress me with a conviction that some cause must have operated to produce them. Here is an intuitive judgment involving the simple idea of *causation*. When we consider the adjacent angles made by a straight line standing upon another, and perceive that their sum is equal to two right angles, the judgment we form involves the simple idea of *equality*. To say, therefore, that reason, or the understanding, is a source of new ideas, is not so exceptionable a mode of speaking as has sometimes been supposed. According to Locke, *sense* furnishes our ideas, and *reason* perceives their agreements or disagreements; whereas, in point of fact, these agreements or disagreements are in many instances simple ideas, of which no analysis can be given, and of which the origin must therefore be referred to reason, according to Locke's own doctrine.

In speaking of the hypothesis of a *moral sense*, I formerly observed that the expression was sanctioned by the example of the ancients. The same authority may be appealed to in justification of the language used by Cudworth and Price, whose ideas on the subject seem indeed to be still more conformable to the spirit of the Greek philosophy. The *το ἡγεμονικον*, for example, so much insisted on by Plato and others, was plainly considered by them as the faculty of reason; *το φυσει δεσποτικον τετεστι το λογιστικον*, says Alcinous de Doctrina Platonis.*

* Chap. xxviii.

In Plato's *Theætetus*, too, Socrates observes, " that
 " it cannot be any of the powers of sense that com-
 " pares the perceptions of all the senses, and appre-
 " hends the general affections of things, and parti-
 " cularly *identity, number, similitude, dissimilitude,*
 " *equality, inequality,* to which he adds *καλον και*
 " *αισχρον*; asserting that this power is *reason*, or
 " the soul acting by itself separately from matter,
 " and independently of any corporeal impressions
 " and passions; and that, consequently, in opposi-
 " tion to Protagoras, knowledge is not to be sought
 " for in sense, but in this superior part of the soul.
 " Μοι δοκει—εδ' ειναι τοιστον εδεν τετοις οργανον ιδιον,—
 " αλλ' αυτη δι αυτης η ψυχη τα κοινα μοι φαινεται περι
 " παντων επισκοπειν—Ομως δε τοσστον γε προβεβηκαμεν
 " ωστε μη ζητειν αυτην (επισημην) εν αισθησει το παραπαν,
 " αλλ' εν εκεινω τω ονοματι, οτι ποτ' εχει η ψυχη, οταν
 " αυτη καθ' αυτην πραγματευηται περι τα οντα. It
 " seems to me, that, for the perception of these
 " things, a different organ or faculty is not appoint-
 " ed,* but that the soul itself, and in virtue of its
 " own power, observes these general affections of all
 " things. So far we have advanced as to find that
 " knowledge is by no means to be sought in sense,
 " but in the power of the soul which it employs,
 " when within itself it contemplates and searches
 " out truth."†

* Plato could not have expressed himself with greater precision had he been arguing against Hutcheson's doctrine of a *Moral Sense*.

† See upon this subject Cudworth's *Immutable Morality*,

The opinion we form, however, on this point, is of little moment, provided it be granted that the words right and wrong express qualities of actions. When I say of an act of justice that it is *right*, do I mean merely that the act excites pleasure in my mind, as a particular colour pleases my eye, in consequence of a relation which it bears to my organ? or do I mean to assert *a truth* which is as independent of my constitution as the equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right angles? Scepticism may be indulged in both cases, about mathematical and about moral truth, but in neither case does it admit of a refutation by argument.

For my own part I can as easily conceive a rational being so formed as to believe the three angles of a triangle to be equal to *one* right angle, as to believe that if he had it in his power it would be *right* to sacrifice the happiness of other men to the gratification of his own animal appetites, or that there would be no *injustice* in depriving an industrious old man of the fruits of his own laborious acquisitions. The exercise of our reason in the two cases is very different; but in both cases we have a perception of *truth*, and are impressed with an irresistible conviction that the truth is immutable and independent of the will of any being whatever.

In the passage which was formerly quoted from Dr Cudworth mention is made of various authors,

p. 100, *et seq.* and Price's Review of the principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals, p. 50, 2d Edit.

particularly among the theologians of the scholastic ages, who were led to call in question the immutability of moral distinctions by the pious design of magnifying the perfections of the Deity. I am sorry to observe that these notions are not as yet completely exploded; and that, in our own age, they have misled the speculations of some writers of considerable genius, particularly of Dr Johnson, Soame Jenyns, and Dr Paley. Such authors certainly do not recollect, that what they add to the divine power and majesty they take away from his moral attributes; for, if moral distinctions be not immutable and eternal, it is absurd to speak of the *goodness* or of the *justice* of God. “Whoever thinks” (says Shaftesbury) “that there is a God, and pretends formally to believe that he is *just* and *good*, must suppose that there is independently such a thing as *justice* and *injustice*, *truth* and *falsehood*, *right* and *wrong*, according to which eternal and immutable standards he pronounces that God is *just*, *righteous*, and *true*. If the mere will, decree, or law of God, be said absolutely to constitute *right* and *wrong*, then are these latter words of no signification at all.”*

In justice, indeed, to one of the writers above-mentioned, (*Dr Paley*,) it is proper for me to observe, that the objection just now stated has not escaped his attention, and that he has even attempted an answer to it; but it is an answer in which he admits the justness of the inference which we

* Inquiry concerning Virtue, Part iii. Sect. 2.

have drawn from his premises ; or, in other words, in which he admits, that, to speak of the moral attributes of God, or to say that he is *just, righteous, and true*, is to employ words which are altogether nugatory and unmeaning. That I may not be accused of misinterpreting the doctrine of this ingenious writer, who on many accounts deserves the popularity he enjoys, I shall quote his own statement of his opinion on this subject. “ Since moral obligation depends, as we have seen, upon the will of God, *right*, which is correlative to it, must depend upon the same. Right therefore signifies *consistency with the will of God.*”

“ But if the Divine will determine the distinction of right and wrong, what else is it but an identical proposition to say of God that he acts right ? or how is it possible even to conceive that he should act wrong ? Yet these assertions are intelligible and significant. The case is this, by virtue of the two principles, that God wills the happiness of his creatures, and that the will of God is the measure of right and wrong, we arrive at certain conclusions, which conclusions become rules ; and we soon learn to pronounce actions right and wrong, according as they agree or disagree with our rules, without looking farther ; and when the habit is once established of stopping at the rules, we can go back and compare with these rules even the Divine conduct itself, and yet it may be true (only not observed by us at the time) that the rules themselves are deduced from the Divine will.”

To this very extraordinary passage (some parts of which I confess I do not completely comprehend, but which plainly gives up the *moral attributes of God* as a form of words that conveys no meaning) I have no particular answer to offer. That it was written with the purest intentions, and from the complete conviction of the author's own mind, I am perfectly satisfied from the general scope of his book, as well as from the strong testimony of the first names in England in favour of the worth of the writer ; but it leads to consequences of the most alarming nature, coinciding in every material respect with the systems of those scholastic theologians whom Dr Cudworth classes with the Epicurean philosophers of old, and whose errors that great and excellent writer has refuted with so splendid a display of learning, and such irresistible force of argument.*

May I be permitted to add to these strictures that it is difficult to explain the following words of Scripture in any other sense than by applying them

* When Dr Paley first appeared as an author, his reading on ethical subjects seems to me to have been extremely limited, and to have extended little farther than to the works of that ingenious and well-meaning but fanciful and superficial writer, Abraham Tucker,* author of *The Light of Nature Pursued*.—(See Dr Paley's Preface.) The political part of Paley's book, although by no means unexceptionable, displays talents so far superior to the moral, that one would scarcely suppose them to have proceeded from the same pen. To his work on Natural Religion I am happy to be able to give unqualified praise.

* Mr Tucker's works were published under the fictitious name of Edward Search, Esq.

to such doctrines concerning the factitious origin of moral distinctions as have been now under our review ?

“ Woe unto them that call evil good and good
“ evil ; that put darkness for light and light for
“ darkness ; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for
“ bitter.” *

SECTION II.

Of the agreeable and disagreeable emotions arising from the perception of what is Right and Wrong in conduct.

It is impossible to behold a good action without being conscious of a benevolent affection, either of love or of respect, towards the agent ; and, consequently, as all our benevolent affections include an agreeable feeling, every good action must be a source of pleasure to the spectator. Besides this, other agreeable feelings, of order, of utility, of peace of mind, &c. come, in process of time, to be associated with the general idea of virtuous conduct.

Those qualities in good actions which excite agreeable feelings in the mind of the spectator, form what some moralists have called the *Beauty of Virtue*.

All this may be applied *mutatis mutandis*, to explain what is meant by the *Deformity of Vice*.

* Isaiah, Ch. v. V. 28.

This view of the moral faculty, which represents it as a species of *taste*, by which we are determined to the love of moral excellence, occurs very frequently in the works of the ancients. But I shall confine myself at present to *one* short quotation from *Cicero*.

“Nec vero illa parva vis naturæ est rationisque, quòd unum hoc animal sentit quid sit ordo; quid sit, quod deceat; in factis dictisque qui modus. Itaque eorum ipsorum, *quæ ad spectu sentiuntur*, nulum aliud animal pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium sentit; *quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandum putat*; cavetque ne quid indecorè, effemenatève faciat; tum in omnibus et opinionibus et factis, ne quid libidinosè aut faciat aut cogitet: quibus ex rebus conflatur et efficitur id, quod quærimus *honestum*; quod, etiam si nobilitatum non sit, tamen honestum sit; quodque verè dicimus, etiam, si à nullo laudetur, naturâ esse laudabile. Formam quidem ipsam, Marce Fili, et tamquam faciem honesti vides; quæ si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientiaë.”*

The same moralists who have applied to virtue and to vice the epithets I have now been endeavouring to define have remarked, that, as in natural objects, so also in the conduct and characters of man-

* De Off. Lib. i. C. iv. v.

kind, there are two different species of beauty ;—the one what is properly called *beauty* in the more limited and precise acceptation of the term ; the other what is properly called *grandeur* or *sublimity*. The former naturally excites love toward the agent, the latter renders him an object of our admiration. To the former class belong the qualities of gentleness, candour, condescension, and humanity. To the latter, magnanimity, fortitude, inflexible justice, self-command, contempt of danger and contempt of death ; those qualities which, as exhibited in the character of *Cato*, formed in the judgment of Seneca a spectacle which Heaven itself might behold with pleasure. “ *Ecce spectaculum Deo dignum, ad quod respiciat Jupiter, suo operi intentus, vir fortis cum mala fortuna compositus.*” Illustrations of this kind abound in those writers who have adopted Shaftesbury’s scheme of morals.

Without deciding at present on the propriety of the expressions *moral beauty* and *moral deformity*, it is of consequence for us to remark, that our perception of the qualities which these words are employed to denote is plainly distinguishable from our perception of actions as *right* or *wrong*. The latter involves a judgment with respect to certain attributes of actions, which no more depend on our perception than the primary qualities of body depend on the informations we receive of them by our external senses, or than the distinction between mathematical truth and falsehood depends on the conclusions of our understanding. The words

beauty and deformity, on the other hand, have always a reference to the feelings of the spectator ; to the delight or uneasiness which particular actions produce on the mind.

Nor are these perceptions distinguishable from each other merely in theory. The distinct operation of each in producing the moral sentiments of mankind is easily discernible by the most superficial observer ; for, although they are always in some degree combined together, yet they are not always combined in the same relative proportions. There are some men who, with *Marcus* in the play, * at the bare mention of successful iniquity, are “ tor-
“ tured even to madness ;” while others, whose judgments with respect to morality are equally sound, possess that steady and dispassionate temper “ which
“ looks on fraud, rebellion, guilt, and Cæsar, In the
“ calm light of mild philosophy.” The rectitude, therefore, of our moral judgments is by no means to be estimated by the liveliness of the impressions which good or bad actions produce on the mind. Indeed, the same circumstances which contribute to the accuracy of the former have in some respects a tendency to weaken the latter. These, like all other passive impressions, are rendered more languid by custom ; † whereas constant exercise and a proper

* Addison’s *Cato*.

† On farther reflection this proposition seems to me somewhat doubtful. Perhaps it may be found that our moral impressions form a singular exception to this general law of our Constitution.

application of our intellectual powers in general are absolutely necessary to guard us against the various errors by which the power of moral judgment is liable to be perverted. The liveliness too of our moral feelings depends much on accidental circumstances; on constitutional temper, on education, on early associations, and, above all, on the culture which the power of imagination has received.

Notwithstanding, however, the reality and importance of this distinction, it has been but little attended to by the greater part of philosophers. The ancients had it in view when they spoke of the *honestum* and the *pulchrum*, the *το δικαιον*, and the *το καλον*; but the moderns seem in general to have overlooked it almost entirely, some of them confining their attention exclusively to the one perception, and some to the other. Clarke, for example, and his followers, neglecting the consideration of our moral *feelings*, have treated of this part of our constitution as if it consisted wholly of a power of distinguishing between right and wrong; and hence their works, how satisfactory soever to the understanding, seldom engage the imagination, or interest the heart. Shaftesbury, on the other hand, and his numerous admirers, by dwelling exclusively on our perception of moral beauty and deformity, have been led into enthusiasm and declamation, and have furnished licentious moralists with a pretence for questioning the immutability of moral distinctions. Even Dr Hutcheson, one of the ablest and most judicious of his disciples, has contented himself with

this partial view of our moral constitution. He everywhere describes virtue and vice by the *effects* accompanying the perception of them, and makes no distinction between the *rectitude* of an action as approved by our *reason*, and its *gratefulness* to the *taste* of the observer, or its aptitude to excite his moral emotions.

Another erroneous conclusion of a very dangerous tendency has been suggested by the doctrines of Lord Shaftesbury's school. Accustomed to define virtue and vice by their agreeable or disagreeable effects on the mind of the spectator, his followers have been led to extend the meaning of these words far beyond their proper signification; and, as virtue forms always an agreeable, and vice a disagreeable object of contemplation, they have concluded that the converse of the proposition was equally true, and that everything that was agreeable or disagreeable in human character or conduct might be properly expressed by the words virtue and vice. Accordingly, Hume, proceeding on the same general principles with Hutcheson, has been led to adopt this very conclusion as a fundamental truth in ethics, and even to introduce it into the definition which he gives of *virtue*, "virtue," according to his theory, "consisting in the possession of qualities which are useful or agreeable to ourselves or to others."* That this definition is erroneous, is sufficiently evident; for nothing can be plainer

* Hume's Essays. London, 1784, vol. ii. p. 319.

than that the words virtue and vice are applicable only to those parts of our character and conduct which depend on our own voluntary exertions. Sensibility, gaiety, liveliness, good humour, natural affection, are a source of pleasure to every beholder, and wherever they are to be found entitle the possessor to the appellation of *amiable*; but in so far as they result from original constitution, or from external circumstances over which he had no control, they certainly do not render him an object of moral approbation.

A farther inaccuracy in the philosophy of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson has arisen from the same source, the application of the epithets virtuous and vicious to the *affections of the mind*. In order to think with precision on this subject, it is necessary for us always to remember that the object of moral approbation is not *affections* but *actions*. The efforts, indeed, we make to cultivate our amiable affections are in a high degree meritorious, because the object of the effort is to add to the happiness of those with whom we associate, and because the effort depends upon ourselves; but the merit in such cases does not consist in the affection, but in the efforts by which it has been cultivated.

The result of the remarks now made on the systems of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson amounts to this, that they do not draw the line sufficiently between constitutional good qualities, and those which are voluntary and meritorious. In common discourse indeed we frequently apply the word virtue

to both, but it is the *last* alone which in strict propriety deserves the name: And, in our own case, it is of great consequence for us to attend to the distinction. In the case of others, as it is impossible for us to draw the line, and as the tendency of our nature is rather to think too unfavourably of our neighbours, it may be the safest rule to consider every action as meritorious which can be supposed, by any reasonable or plausible interpretation, to have probably, or even possibly, proceeded from a virtuous motive. The author of the *Man of Feeling*, among the many beautiful features in the character of *Harley*, has not failed to remark this candid and amiable disposition. “Her benevolence,” (he is speaking of his heroine Miss Walton) “was unbounded. Indeed the natural tenderness of her heart might have been argued by the frigidity of a casuist as detracting from her virtue in this respect, for her humanity was a *feeling*, not a *principle*. But minds like Harley’s are not very apt to make this distinction, and generally give our virtue credit for all that benevolence which is instinctive in our nature.”

In offering these criticisms on the writings of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, I would not be understood to detract from their merits. I am fully sensible of the infinite service they have rendered to this branch of science, by rescuing it from the hands of monks and casuists, and restoring it to its ancient honours. The enthusiasm with which both of them have painted the charms of moral ex-

cellence, while it delights the imagination and exalts the taste, is admirably calculated to lay hold of the generous affections of youth, and to kindle in their breasts the glow of virtue. The *Rhapsody* of Shaftesbury in particular, whatever the blemishes in point of taste (and they are many) which a *critical* reader may find in it, will remain for ever a monument to the powers of his genius, as well as to the purity and elevation of his mind. It is in general free from the reprehensible sentiments which have given so much just offence in some of his earlier publications, and well merits the encomium which Thomson has bestowed on it in his enumeration of the illustrious names which have adorned the literary history of England.

“ The generous Ashley thine ! the friend of man,
 “ Who scann’d his nature with a brother’s eye,
 “ His weakness prompt to shade ; to raise his aim,
 “ To touch the finer movements of the mind,
 “ And with the moral beauty charm the heart.”

Still, however, I must again repeat, that it is chiefly on account of their *practical tendency* that I would recommend these two eminent writers ; and that, in order to guard ourselves against the cavils of sceptics, it is necessary to look out for a more solid foundation to morality than their philosophy supplies.

I must not leave this subject of *moral beauty* without taking some notice of a speculation with respect to it, which formed one of the favourite doctrines of the Socratic school, and which Shaftesbury

and some other modern writers have attempted to revive. In the observations I have hitherto made, I have proceeded on the supposition, that the words *beauty and sublimity* are applied to actions and characters metaphorically, or from an analogy between the emotions which certain moral qualities and certain material objects produce in the mind. *This*, which is certainly the more obvious and the more common doctrine, seems to have been adopted by Cicero in the passage which I already quoted, (—“quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in conciliis factisque conservandum putat.”) And as the opinion we form concerning it has no connection with any of the inquiries in which we have just been engaged, I was unwilling to distract the attention by mentioning any other. The philosophers now referred to have adopted a conclusion directly opposite to this, and have maintained that the words *beauty and sublimity* express, in their *literal* signification, the qualities of mind; and that material objects affect us only by means of the moral ideas they suggest. For my own part I am not prepared to say anything very decided either on the one side or the other, but I must confess that my present views rather incline to the last of these doctrines. The following considerations, in particular, seem to me to have great weight.

It is only in the case of our own minds that we have any direct or immediate knowledge either of

intellectual or moral qualities. In the case of other men we know them only by their external effects ; that is, either by the natural signs of intelligence and sentiment which we read in the countenance, or by the information we derive from artificial language, or by the inferences we draw from their conduct and behaviour. To all these external *effects*, but more particularly to the features of the countenance, we apply the epithet of beautiful. But I believe it will be found that this epithet is applicable to them *only*, or at least *chiefly*, in so far as they are *significant*. Into this question, however, when proposed in general terms, I shall not enter ; nor shall I take upon me positively to say that there is no beauty in certain combinations of complexion and features, abstracted from any particular meaning. It is sufficient for my purpose, if it be granted, that the beauty of the human face consists *chiefly* in its expression ; and about this it is impossible there can be any controversy. The human face, therefore, it would appear, is beautiful, *chiefly* as it presents to our conceptions the qualities of *mind*.

The same observation is applicable very nearly to the material universe in general. The pleasurable emotions it excites in the mind of the peasant or mechanic is extremely trifling ; but to those whose understandings have received such a degree of cultivation as to be enabled to read in it the characters of power, wisdom, and goodness, how sublime, how beautiful does it appear ! Even in the

case of particular objects it may be doubted whether the beauty of order and uniformity does not arise *partly* from some obscure suggestion of design and intelligence. I say *partly*, because, independent of any such considerations, order and uniformity please from the aids they afford to our powers of comprehension and memory. If these observations are well-founded, it will follow that it is *mind* alone that possesses *original and undervived beauty*; and that what we call the beauty of the material world is chiefly, if not wholly, reflected from intellectual and moral qualities; as the *light* we admire on the disc of the moon and planets is, when traced to its original source, *the light of the sun*. The exclamation, therefore, of the poet in the following lines would appear, notwithstanding the enthusiasm which animates it, to be strictly and philosophically just.

“ Mind, mind alone ! bear witness earth and Heaven !
 “ The living fountains in itself contains,
 “ Of beauteous and sublime. Here hand in hand
 “ Sit paramount the graces. Here enthron'd
 “ Celestial Venus, with divinest airs
 “ Invites the soul to never-fading joy.”

If with these doctrines of the Socratic school we combine the fine and philosophical speculations of Mr Alison with respect to the effect of *association*, they will be found to add greatly to the evidence of the general conclusion. Perhaps it may appear to some that the former speculations are resolvable



ble into the latter. This, however, is not the case; for the former relates to *natural signs*; the latter to *arbitrary connections established in the mind by habit*. In the mind of the philosopher (for example) who traces in the universe the signatures of the Divine perfections, the beauties he contemplates cannot, with propriety, be referred to association, any more than the charms of a beautiful face the first time it is seen. But in a mind conversant with poetry, to which every object in nature recalls a thousand agreeable images, a great part of the pleasing effect must be referred to this source. Even here, however, *association* operates in a manner which illustrates and confirms the general theory, inasmuch as it produces its effect by making objects more *significant* than they were before; or, in other words, by rendering them the occasions of our conceiving intellectual and moral beauties, of which they are not naturally expressive.*

Whatever opinion we adopt on this speculative question, there can be no dispute about the fact, that good actions and virtuous characters form the most delightful of all objects to the human mind; and that there are no charms in the external universe so powerful as those which recommend to us the cultivation of the qualities that constitute the perfection and the happiness of our nature.

* See the profound and eloquent reflections with which Mr Alison concludes the first chapter of his admirable *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, p. 62, *et seq.* last Edit.

————— Is aught so fair
 In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
 In the bright eye of Hesper or the morn,
 In nature's fairest forms, is aught so fair
 As virtuous friendship? as the candid blush
 Of him who strives with fortune to be just?
 The graceful tear that streams for others woes?
 Or the mild majesty of private life,
 Where peace with ever-blooming olive crowns
 The gate; where honour's liberal hands effuse
 Unenvy'd treasures, and the snowy wings
 Of innocence and love protect the scene?

* * * * *

Look then abroad through nature to the range
 Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres,
 Wheeling unshaken through the void immense,
 And speak, O man! does this capacious scene,
 With half that kindling majesty dilate
 Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose,
 Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,
 Amid the crowd of patriots; and his arm
 Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
 When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
 On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
 And bade the father of his country Hail!
 For, lo! the tyrant prostrate in the dust,
 And Rome again is free!*

It is no less evident that these two kinds of *taste*, (that for *natural*, and that for *moral* beauty,) if not ultimately resolvable into the same principles, are

* Nobly as this scene is painted by Akenside, he has rather weakened, by his amplifications, the effect of the simple narrative of Cicero. "Cæsare interfecto, statim cruentum altè ex-tollens M. Brutus pugionem, Ciceronem nominatim exclamavit, atque ei recuperatam libertatem est gratulatus."—Cic. Phil. Sec. 12.

at least very nearly allied, or very closely connected; insomuch that every author, who has treated professedly of the one, has been insensibly led to illustrate his subject by frequent references to the other. Hence in poetry the natural and pleasing union of those pictures which recal to us the charms of external nature, and that *moral painting* which affects and delights the heart. The intentions of nature, in thus associating the ideas of the *beautiful* and the *good*, cannot be mistaken. Much, I am persuaded, might be done by a judicious system of education, in following out the plan which nature has herself, in this instance, so manifestly traced; as we find, indeed, *was* done to a very great degree in those ancient schools, who considered it as the most important of all objects to establish such an union between philosophy and the fine arts, as might add to the natural beauty of virtue every attraction which the imagination could give her. Some pleasing illustrations of this idea occur in the poetry of Akenside; and many striking proofs of the practicability of the attempt might be drawn from the examples we daily see of the influence of association in concealing the meanness and deformity of fashionable vices.

In enforcing, indeed, the precepts of practical morality, as well as in conducting the business of general education, the ancients possessed important advantages over us. An unfortunate separation had not then taken place between the active and the speculative professions; nor was philosophy

understood to be merely a fit subject of declamation and dispute for the period of academical instruction, which the experience of real life was soon to efface from the memory. The teachers of moral truth were men who had been themselves engaged in the important concerns of their country, and who ennobled their precepts by the lustre of their own example; and it was from *their* schools—"warm" (as the poet expresses it) "*from the schools of glory,*" that the youth entered on the pursuits of business, or the career of ambition. "Magnus ex hoc usus, multum constantiæ, plurimum judicii juvenibus statim contingebat, in media luce studentibus et inter ipsa discrimina." As for us, since the manners of modern Europe have rendered such a plan of education impossible by relegating philosophy to the shade of monastic retirement, what remains but to avail ourselves of the monuments which these illustrious men have left of their genius and of their virtues; and by exhibiting to youth the precepts of ancient wisdom dignified by the splendour of heroic action, to weaken as far as may be those prevailing and fatal prejudices which lead the dissipated and the thoughtless to apprehend, that, in a conscientious regard to moral obligation, there is anything incompatible with an enlightened understanding or a magnanimous spirit! It is fortunate for this purpose that the common system of education in this country, amidst all its defects, by inspiring the tender mind with a warm admiration of classical genius, has a

tendency to associate in the imagination the noblest lessons of public and private virtue with all that can captivate the heart or delight the fancy. A judicious selection from the classics directed to this particular object of moral instruction, and cleared of all those erroneous maxims which originate in the peculiar manners and policy of antiquity, or in the superstitious opinions of the heathen world, is still an important *desideratum* in our literature.

It would be improper to bring this subject to a conclusion without mentioning the attempt which Mr Hume has made to show, that what we call the Beauty of Virtue is the Beauty of Utility. For a particular examination and refutation of this opinion I shall refer the reader to Mr Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.

Although, however, Mr Smith differs from Mr Hume in thinking that virtue pleases *because* we consider it to be *useful*, he agrees with him that all those qualities which we consider as amiable or agreeable are really useful either to ourselves or to others. In this respect their conclusions coincide with the doctrines of the Socratic school, and afford additional evidence of the beneficent solicitude with which nature allures us to the practice of our duty.

“Do you imagine” (says Socrates to Aristippus) “that what is good is not beautiful? Have you not observed that these appearances always coincide? Virtue, for instance, in the same respect as

“ to which we call it good, is ever acknowledged to
 “ be beautiful also. In the character we always
 “ join the two denominations together.* The beau-
 “ ty of human bodies corresponds, in like manner,
 “ with that economy of parts which constitutes them
 “ good ; and in every circumstance of life the same
 “ object is constantly accounted both beautiful and
 “ good, inasmuch as it answers the purposes for
 “ which it was designed.” †

SECTION III.

Of the Perception of Merit and Demerit.

The various actions performed by other men not only excite in our minds a benevolent affection towards them, or a disposition to promote their happiness, but impress us with a sense of the merit of the agents. We perceive them to be the proper objects of love and esteem, and that it is morally right that they should receive their reward. We feel ourselves called on to make their worth known to the world, in order to procure them the favour and respect they deserve ; and if we allow it to remain secret we are conscious of injustice in suppressing the natural language of the heart.

* Which the Athenians did by the words *καλοκαγαθος* and *καλοκαγαθια*.

† Xenoph. Memorab. Lib. iii. c. 8. (The Translation is Akenside's.)

On the other hand, when we are witnesses of an act of selfishness, of cruelty, or of oppression, whether we ourselves are sufferers or not, we are not only inspired with aversion and hatred towards the delinquent, but find it difficult to restrain our indignation from breaking loose against him. By this natural impulse of the mind a check is imposed on the bad passions of individuals, and a provision is made even before the establishment of positive laws for the good order of society.

In our own case how delightful are our feelings when we are conscious of doing well? By a species of instinct we know ourselves to be the object of the esteem and attachment of our fellow-creatures, and we feel, with the evidence of a perception, that Heaven smiles on our labours, and that we enjoy the approbation and favour of the invisible witness of our conduct. Hence it is that we not only have a sense of *merit*, but an anticipation of *reward*, and look forward to the future with increased confidence and hope. Nor is this confidence weakened, provided we retain our integrity unshaken by the strokes of adverse fortune, but, on the contrary, we feel it increase in proportion to the efforts that we have occasion to make; and even in the moment of danger and of death it exhorts us to persevere, and assures us that all will be finally well with us. Hence the additional heroism of the brave when they draw the sword in a worthy cause. They feel themselves animated with tenfold strength, relying on the succour of an

invisible arm, and seeming to trust, while employed in promoting the beneficent purposes of Providence, “that guardian angels combat on their side.” Although, however, this sense of merit which accompanies the performance of good actions convinces the philosopher of the connection which the Deity has established between virtue and happiness, he does not proceed on the supposition, that on particular occasions miraculous interpositions are to be made in his favour. That virtue is the most direct road to happiness he sees to be the case even in this world; but he knows that the Deity governs by general laws; and when he feels himself disappointed in the attainment of his wishes, he acquiesces in his lot, and looks forward with hope to futurity. It is an error of the vulgar to expect that good or bad fortune is, *even in this world*, to be the immediate consequence of good or bad actions,—a prejudice of which we may trace the influence in all ages and nations, but more particularly in times of superstition and ignorance. From this error arose the practices of *judicial combat*, and of *trial by ordeal*, both of which formerly prevailed in this part of the world, and of which the latter (as appears from the Asiatic Researches) kept its ground in Hindostan as late as 1784,* and probably keeps its

* “In the code of the Gentoo laws mention is made of the “trial by ordeal, which was one of the first laws instituted by “Moses among the Jews. (See Numbers, Chap. v. from the “12th to the 31st verse.) Fire or water were usually employed; but in India the mode varies, and is often determined

ground at this day. Absurd as these ideas are, they show strongly how natural to the human mind are the sentiments now under consideration ; for this belief of the connection between *virtue* and *good fortune* has plainly taken its rise from the natural connection between the ideas of *virtue* and *merit*, a connection which, we may rest assured, is agreeable to the general laws by which the universe is governed, but which the slightest reflection may satisfy us cannot always correspond with the order of events in such a world as we inhabit at present.

I am not certain but we may trace something of the same kind in the sports of children, who have all a notion that good fortune in their games of chance depends upon perfect *fairness* towards their adversaries, and that those are certain to lose who attempt to take secretly any undue advantage.

Pueri ludentes, Rex eris, aiunt,
Si rectè facies. *

Indeed the moral perceptions (although frequently

“ by the choice of the parties. I remember a letter from a man of rank, who was accused of corresponding in time of war with the enemy, in which he says, ‘ Let my accuser be produced ; let me see him face to face ; let the most venomous snakes be put into a pot ; let us put our hands into it together ; let it be covered for a certain time ; and he who remaineth unhurt shall be innocent.’ ”

“ This trial is always accompanied with the solemnities of a religious ceremony.”—(Crawford’s *Sketches of the Hindoos*, p. 298. Ed. of 1790.)

* Horat. Epist. Lib. i. Ep. 1. l. 59.

misapplied in consequence of the weakness of reason and the want of experience) may be as distinctly traced in the mind at that time of life as ever afterwards, when surely it cannot be supposed that they are the result, as some authors have held, of a conviction, founded on actual observation, of the *utility* of virtue.

I shall conclude this subject with again recalling to the attention of the reader a very remarkable fact formerly stated, that our moral emotions seem to be stronger with respect to the conduct of others than our own. A man who can be guilty, apparently without remorse, of the most flagrant injustice, will yet feel the warmest indignation against a similar act of injustice in another; and the best of men know it to be in many cases an useful rule, before they determine on any particular conduct, to consider how they would judge of the conduct of another in the same circumstances. "Do to others as ye would that they should do unto you." This is owing to the influence of self-partiality and self-deceit. Mr Smith has been so much struck with the difference of our moral judgments in our own case and in that of another, that he has concluded conscience to be *only* an application to ourselves of those rules which we have collected, from observing our feelings in cases in which we are not personally concerned. I shall afterwards state some objections to which this opinion is liable.

Were it not for the influence of self-deceit, it could

hardly happen that a man should habitually act in direct opposition to his moral principles. We know, however, that this is but too frequently the case. The most perfect conviction of the obligation of virtue, and the strongest moral feelings, will be of little use in regulating our conduct, unless we are at pains to attend constantly to the state of our own character, and to scrutinize with the most suspicious care the motives of our actions. Hence the importance of the precept so much recommended by the moralists of all ages,—“know yourself.”

These observations may convince us still more of the truth of what I have elsewhere remarked with respect to *sentimental reading*, and of its total insufficiency for forming a virtuous character without many other precautions.* Where its effects are corrected by habits of business, and every instance of conduct is *brought home* by the reader to himself, it may be a source of solid improvement; for although strong moral feelings do by no means alone constitute virtue, yet they add to the satisfaction we derive from the discharge of our duty, and they increase the interest we take in the prosperity of virtue in the world.

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. I. Sixth Edit. p. 524. *et seq.*

CHAPTER SIXTH.

OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

ACCORDING to some systems, moral obligation is founded entirely on our belief that virtue is enjoined by the command of God. But how, it may be asked, does this belief impose an obligation? Only one of two answers can be given. Either that there is a moral fitness that we should conform our will to that of the Author and the Governor of the universe; or that a rational self-love should induce us, from motives of prudence, to study every means of rendering ourselves acceptable to the Almighty Arbiter of happiness and misery. On the first supposition we reason in a circle. We resolve our sense of moral obligation into our sense of religion, and the sense of religion into that of moral obligation.

The other system, which makes virtue a mere matter of prudence, although not so obviously unsatisfactory, leads to consequences which sufficiently invalidate every argument in its favour. Among others it leads us to conclude, 1. That the disbe-

lief of a future state absolves from all moral obligation, excepting in so far as we find virtue to be conducive to our present interest: 2. That a being independently and completely happy cannot have any moral perceptions or any moral attributes.

But farther, the notions of reward and punishment presuppose the notions of right and wrong. They are sanctions of virtue, or additional motives to the practice of it, but they suppose the existence of some previous obligation.

In the last place, if moral obligation be constituted by a regard to our situation in another life, how shall the existence of a future state be proved, or even rendered probable by the light of nature? or how shall we discover what conduct is acceptable to the Deity? The truth is, that the strongest presumption for such a state is deduced from our natural notions of right and wrong; of merit and demerit; and from a comparison between these and the general course of human affairs.

It is absurd, therefore, to ask *why* we are bound to practise virtue. The very notion of virtue implies the notion of obligation. Every being who is conscious of the distinction between right and wrong carries about with him a law which he is bound to observe, notwithstanding he may be in total ignorance of a future state. "What renders "obnoxious to punishment," (as Dr Butler has well remarked,) "is not the foreknowledge of it, "but merely the violating a known obligation."

Or (as Plato has expressed the same idea,) το μεν ορθον νομος εστι βασιλικος.*

From what has been stated, it follows that the moral faculty, considered as an active power of the mind, differs essentially from all the others hitherto enumerated. The least violation of its authority fills us with remorse. On the contrary, the greater the sacrifices we make in obedience to its suggestions, the greater are our satisfaction and triumph.

The supreme authority of conscience, although beautifully described by many of the ancient moralists, was not sufficiently attended to by modern writers as a fundamental principle in the science of ethics till the time of Dr Butler. Too little stress is laid on it by Lord Shaftesbury; and the omission is the chief defect in his system of morals. Shaftesbury's opinion, however, although he does not state it explicitly in his Inquiry, seems to have been precisely the same at bottom with that of Butler. †

With respect to Dr Butler, I shall take this opportunity of remarking, that in his Sermons on Human Nature, in the Preface to his Sermons, and in a short Dissertation on Virtue annexed to his *Analogy*, he has, in my humble opinion, gone farther towards a just explanation of our moral constitution than any other modern philosopher. Without aiming at the praise of novelty or of refinement, he has displayed singular penetration and sagacity in availing himself of what was sound in

* Minos.

† See his Advice to an Author, Part i. Sect. 2, paragraph 1st and 2d.

former systems, and in supplying their defects. He is commonly considered as an uninteresting and obscure writer: but, for my own part, I never could perceive the slightest foundation for such a charge; though I am ready to grant that he pays little attention to the graces of composition, and that the construction of his sentences is frequently unskilful and unharmonious. As to the charge of obscurity, which he himself anticipated from the nature of his subject, he has replied to it in the most satisfactory manner in the preface already referred to. I think it proper to add, that I would by no means propose these sermons, (which were originally preached before the learned Society of Lincoln's Inn,) as models for the pulpit. I consider them merely in the light of philosophical essays. In the same volume with them, however, are to be found some practical and characteristical discourses, which are peculiarly interesting and impressive, particularly the sermons on *self-deceit*, and on *the character of Balaam*; both of which evince an intimate acquaintance with the springs of human action, rarely found in union with speculative and philosophical powers of so high an order. The chief merit, at the same time, of Butler as an ethical writer, undoubtedly lies in what he has written on *the Supreme Authority of Conscience* as the governing principle of human conduct,—a doctrine which he has placed in the strongest and happiest lights; and which, before his time, had been very little attended to by the

moderns. It is sometimes alluded to by Lord Shaftesbury, but so very slightly, as almost to justify the censure which Butler bestows on this part of his writings.

The scope of Butler's own reasonings may be easily conceived from the passage of Scripture which he has chosen as the ground-work of his argument: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves."

One of the clearest and most concise statements of this doctrine that I have met with is in a sermon on the Nature and Obligations of Virtue, by Dr Adams of Oxford; the justness of whose ideas on this subject make it the more surprising that his pupil and friend, Dr Samuel Johnson, should have erred so very widely from the truth. "*Right*," (says he,) "implies *duty* in its idea. To perceive an action to be right is to see a reason for doing it in the action itself, abstracted from all other considerations whatever; and this perception, this acknowledged rectitude in the action, is the very essence of obligation, that which commands the approbation and choice, and binds the conscience of every rational human being."—"Nothing can bring us under an obligation to do what appears to our moral judgment *wrong*. It may be supposed our interest to do this, but it cannot be supposed our duty. For, I ask, if some power, which we are unable to resist, should

“ assume the command over us, and give us laws
 “ which are unrighteous and unjust, should we be
 “ under an obligation to obey him? Should we not
 “ rather be obliged to shake off the yoke, and to
 “ resist such usurpation, if it were in our power?
 “ However, then, we might be swayed by hope or
 “ fear, it is plain that we are under an obligation
 “ to *right*, which is antecedent, and in order and
 “ nature superior to all other. Power may com-
 “ pel, interest may bribe, pleasure may persuade,
 “ but reason only can oblige. This is the only au-
 “ thority which rational beings can own, and to
 “ which they owe obedience.”

Dr Clarke has expressed himself nearly to the
 same purpose. “ The judgment and conscience of
 “ a man’s own mind concerning the reasonableness
 “ and fitness of the thing is the truest and formal-
 “ lest obligation; for whoever acts contrary to this
 “ sense and conscience of his own mind is neces-
 “ sarily *self-condemned*; and the greatest and
 “ strongest of all obligations is that which a man
 “ cannot break through without condemning him-
 “ self. So far, therefore, as men are conscious of
 “ what is *right* and *wrong*, so far they are under
 “ an obligation to act accordingly.”

I would not have quoted so many passages in
 illustration of a point which appears to myself so
 very obvious, if I had not been anxious to counter-
 act the authority of some eminent writers who
 have lately espoused a very different system, by
 showing how widely they have departed from the

sound and philosophical views of their predecessors. I confess, too, I should have distrusted my own judgment, if, on a question so interesting to human happiness, and so open to examination, I had been led, by any theoretical refinements, to a conclusion which was not sanctioned by the concurrent sentiments of other impartial inquirers. The fact, however, is, that as this view of human nature is the most simple, so it is the most ancient which occurs in the history of moral science. It was the doctrine of the Pythagorean school, as appears from a fragment of *Theages*, a Pythagorean writer, published in Gale's *Opuscula Mythologica*.* It is also explained by Plato in some of his dialogues, in which he compares the soul to a commonwealth, and *reason* to the council of state, which governs and directs the whole.

Cicero has expressed the same system very clearly and concisely. “Duplex enim est vis animorum atque naturæ. Una pars in appetitu posita est, quæ hominem huc et illuc rapit, quæ est ὄρεσις Græce, altera in ratione, quæ docet et explanat, quid faciendum fugiendumve sit. Ita fit ut ratio præsit, appetitus obtemporet.” In the following passage this doctrine is enforced in a manner peculiarly sublime and expressive.

“Est quidem vera *Lex*, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude

* *Opuscula Mythologica Physica et Ethica*. Amstel. 1688, p. 688, *et seq.*

“deterreat. Nec erit alia Lex Romæ, alia Athenis,
 “alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes, et
 “omni tempore una lex et sempiterna et immorta-
 “lis continebit; unusque erit communis quasi ma-
 “gister et imperator omnium Deus. Ille hujus
 “legis inventor, disceptator, lator. Cui qui non
 “parebit, ipse se fugiet, ac naturam hominis asper-
 “nabitur; hoc ipso luet maximas pœnas, etiamsi
 “cætera supplicia, quæ putantur, effugerit.”*

It is very justly observed by Mr Smith, (and I consider the remark as of the highest importance,) that “if the distinction pointed out in the forego-
 “ing quotations between the moral faculty and
 “our other active powers be acknowledged, it is of
 “the less consequence what particular theory we
 “adopt concerning the origin of our moral ideas.”
 And accordingly, though he resolves moral appro-
 bation ultimately into *a feeling of the mind*, he nevertheless represents the supremacy of conscience as a principle which is equally essential to all the different systems that have been proposed on the subject. “Upon whatever we suppose our moral
 “faculties to be founded,” (I quote his own words,)
 “whether upon a certain modification of reason,
 “upon an original instinct called a moral sense, or
 “upon some other principle of our nature, it can-
 “not be doubted that they are given us for the
 “direction of our conduct in this life. They carry
 “along with them the most evident badges of their
 “authority, which denote that they were set up

* Fragment. Cic. de Repub. Lib. iii.

“ within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our
“ actions ; to superintend all our senses, passions,
“ and appetites ; and to judge how far each of them
“ was to be either indulged or restrained. Our
“ moral faculties are by no means, as some have
“ pretended, upon a level in this respect with the
“ other faculties and appetites of our nature, en-
“ dowed with no more right to restrain these last,
“ than these last are to restrain them. No other
“ faculty or principle of action judges of any other.
“ Love does not judge of resentment, nor resent-
“ ment of love. Those two passions may be oppo-
“ site to one another, but cannot, with any propriety,
“ be said to approve or disapprove of one an-
“ other. But it is the peculiar office of those facul-
“ ties now under consideration to judge, to bestow
“ censure or applause upon all the other principles
“ of our nature.” *

“ Since these, therefore,” (continues Mr Smith,)
“ were plainly intended to be the governing prin-
“ ciples of human nature, the rules which they
“ prescribe are to be regarded as the commands
“ and laws of the Deity promulgated by those vice-
“ gerents which he has thus set up within us. By
“ acting according to their dictates we may be said, in
“ some sense, to co-operate with the Deity, and to
“ advance, as far as in our power, the plan of Pro-
“ vidence. By acting otherwise, on the contrary,
“ we seem to obstruct in some measure, the scheme
“ which the Author of Nature has established for

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. I. p. 410, 6th Edit.

“ the happiness and perfection of the world, and to
 “ declare ourselves in some measure the enemies
 “ of God. Hence we are naturally encouraged to
 “ hope for his extraordinary favour and reward in
 “ the one case, and to dread his vengeance and
 “ punishment in the other. *

I have only to add farther on this subject at present, that the supreme authority of conscience is felt and tacitly acknowledged by the worst no less than by the best of men ; for even they who have thrown off all hypocrisy with the world are at pains to conceal their real character from their own eyes. No man ever, in a soliloquy or private meditation, avowed to himself that he was a villain ; nor do I believe that such a character as Joseph in the School for Scandal (who is introduced as reflecting coolly on his own knavery and baseness, without any uneasiness but what arises from the dread of detection) ever existed in the world. Such men, probably, impose on themselves fully as much as they do upon others. Hence the various artifices of self-deceit which Butler has so well described in his discourses on that subject.

“ We may defend villainy,” (says Lord Shaftesbury,) “ and cry up folly before the world. But
 “ to appear fools, madmen, or varlets *to ourselves*,
 “ and prove it to our own faces that we are really
 “ such, is insupportable. For so true a reverence
 “ has every one for himself when he comes clearly

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. I. pp. 412, 413, 414, 415.

“ to appear before his close companion, that he had
“ rather profess the vilest things of himself in open
“ company than hear his character privately from
“ his own mouth. So that we may readily from
“ hence conclude, that the chief interest of ambi-
“ tion, avarice, corruption, and every sly insinuat-
“ ing vice, is to prevent this interview and fami-
“ liarity of discourse which is consequent upon
“ close retirement and inward recess.” *

Somewhat to the same purpose it is remarked by a late lively and ingenious, though eccentric writer, (Soame Jenyns,) that “ men’s opinions much oftener
“ proceed from their actions than their actions from
“ their opinions. They act first, and then with
“ great facility reconcile their principles to their
“ conduct; for which reason we find many whom
“ no advantage can induce to do anything which
“ appears to them wrong, but of that many very
“ few who can ever be convinced that anything
“ is wrong from which either pleasure or profit
“ accrues to themselves.”

It is hardly necessary for me to observe, that there is no merit in our moral perceptions but in acting agreeably to them. We commonly, indeed, and justly consider the want of them as a mark of depravity, because we proceed on the supposition that every man has received them from nature, and that it is only by habits of profligacy that they can be eradicated.

How powerful their influence is over the mind

* Shaftesbury’s Advice to an Author, Part i. Sect. 2.

appears remarkably from the general taste for moral novels and for tragedy, and from the enthusiastic rapture with which virtuous sentiments from the stage are uniformly received. "I am a man, and feel an interest in all mankind." (*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.*) It is said by St Augustine, that at the delivery of this sentiment the whole Roman theatre resounded with applause.* We may venture to say that a similar sentiment, well pronounced by an actor, would at this day, in the most corrupted capital in Europe, be followed by a similar burst of sympathetic emotion.

Voyez à nos spectacles

Quand on peint quelque trait de candeur, de bonté,
Où brille en tout son jour la tendre humanité,
Tous les cœurs sont remplis d'une volupté pure,
Et c'est là qu'on entend le cri de la nature. †

"On such occasions," (as a late writer remarks,) "though we may think meanly of the genius of the poet, it is impossible not to think, and to be happy in thinking, highly of the people;—the people whose opinions may often be folly, whose conduct may sometimes be madness, but whose sentiments are almost always honourable and just;—the people whom an author may delight with bombast, may amuse with tinsel, may divert

* See a Note on this line in Colman's translation of the *Self-Tormentor* of Terence.

† *Le Méchant*, Comedie de Gresset.

“ with indecency, but whom he cannot mislead in
“ principle, nor harden into inhumanity. It is
“ only the mob in the side-boxes, who, in the cold-
“ ness of self-interest, or the languor of out-worn
“ dissipation, can hear unmoved the sentiments of
“ compassion, of generosity, or of virtue.”*

* Account of the German Theatre by Henry Mackenzie, Esq. Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Vol. II. Part II. p. 174.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

OF CERTAIN PRINCIPLES WHICH CO-OPERATE
WITH OUR MORAL POWERS IN THEIR INFLU-
ENCE ON THE CONDUCT.

IN order to secure still more completely the good order of society, and to facilitate the acquisition of virtuous habits, nature has superadded to our moral constitution a variety of auxiliary principles, which sometimes give rise to a conduct agreeable to the rules of morality and highly useful to mankind, where the merit of the individual, considered as a moral agent, is inconsiderable. Hence some of them have been confounded with our moral powers, or even supposed to be of themselves sufficient to account for the phenomena of moral perception, by authors whose views of human nature have not been sufficiently comprehensive. The most important principles of this description, are, *1st*, A regard to Character. *2d*, Sympathy. *3d*, The Sense of the Ridiculous. And, *4th*, Taste. The principle of Self-love (which was treated of in a former section) co-operates very powerfully to the same purposes.

SECTION I.

Of Decency, or a regard to Character.

Upon this subject I had formerly occasion to offer various remarks in treating of *the desire of esteem*. But the view of it which I then took was extremely general, as I did not think it necessary for me to attend to the distinction between Intellectual and Moral qualities. There can be no doubt that a regard to the good opinion of our fellow-creatures has great influence in prompting our exertions to cultivate both the one and the other; but what we are more particularly concerned to remark at present, is the effect which this principle has in strengthening our virtuous habits, and in restraining those passions which a sense of duty alone would not be sufficient to regulate.

I before observed, that the desire of esteem operates in children before they have a capacity of distinguishing right from wrong; and that the former principle of action continues for a long time to be much more powerful than the latter. Hence it furnishes a most useful and effectual engine in the business of education, more particularly by training us early to exertions of self-command and self-denial. It teaches us, for example, to restrain our appetites within those bounds which *delicacy* prescribes, and thus forms us to habits of moderation

and temperance. And although our conduct cannot be denominated virtuous, so long as a regard to the opinion of others is our sole motive, yet the habits we thus acquire in infancy and childhood render it more easy for us to subject our passions to reason and conscience as we advance to maturity. The subject well deserves a more ample illustration; but at present it is sufficient to recal these remarks to the recollection of the reader.

SECTION II.

Of Sympathy.

That there is an exquisite pleasure annexed by the constitution of our nature to the sympathy or fellow-feeling of other men with our joys and sorrows, and even with our opinions, tastes, and humours, is a fact obvious to vulgar observation. It is no less evident that we feel a disposition to accommodate the state of our own minds to that of our companions, wherever we feel a benevolent affection towards them, and that this accommodating temper is in proportion to the strength of our affection. In such cases sympathy would appear to be grafted on benevolence; and perhaps it might be found, on an accurate examination, that the greater part of the pleasure which sympathy yields is resolvable into that which arises from the exercise of kindness, and from the consciousness of being beloved.

The phenomena generally referred to *sympathy* have appeared to Mr Smith so important, and so curiously connected, that he has been led to attempt an explanation from this single principle of all the phenomena of moral perception. In this attempt, however, (abstracting entirely from the vague use which he occasionally makes of the word,) he has plainly been misled, like many eminent philosophers before him, by an excessive love of simplicity; and has mistaken a very subordinate principle in our moral constitution (or rather a principle *superadded* to our moral constitution as an auxiliary to the sense of duty) for that faculty which distinguishes right from wrong, and which (by what name soever we may choose to call it) recurs on us constantly in all our ethical disquisitions, as an ultimate fact in the nature of man.

I shall take this opportunity of offering a few remarks on this most ingenious and beautiful theory, in the course of which I shall have occasion to state all that I think necessary to observe concerning the place which *sympathy* seems to me really to occupy in our moral constitution. In stating these remarks, I would be understood to express myself with all the respect and veneration due to the talents and virtues of a writer, whose friendship I regard as one of the most fortunate incidents of my life, but, at the same time, with that entire freedom which the importance of the subject demands, and which I know that his candid and liberal mind would have approved.



In addition to the incidental strictures which I have already hazarded on Mr Smith's theory, I have yet to state two objections of a more general nature, to which it appears to me to be obviously liable. But before I proceed to these objections, it is necessary for me to premise (which I shall do in Mr Smith's words) a remark which I have not hitherto had occasion to mention, and which may be justly regarded as one of the most characteristical principles of his system.

“Were it possible” (says he) “that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he could no more think of his own character, of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face. All these are objects which he cannot easily see, which naturally he does not look at, and with regard to which he is provided with no mirror which can present them to his view. Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behaviour of those he lives with, which always mark when they enter into, and when they disapprove of his sentiments, and it is here that he first views the propriety and impropriety of his own passions, the beauty and deformity of his own mind.”

To this account of the origin of our moral senti-

ments it may be objected, 1st, That granting the proposition to be true, " that a human creature who " should grow up to manhood without any communication with his own species, could no more " think of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments, than of the beauty or deformity of his " own face," it would by no means authorize the conclusion which is here deduced from it. The necessity of social intercourse as an indispensable condition implied in the generation and growth of our moral sentiments, does not arise merely from its effect in holding up a mirror for the examination of our own character ; but, from the impossibility of finding, in a solitary state, any field for the exercise of our most important moral duties. In such a state the moral faculty would inevitably remain dormant and useless, for the same reason that the organ of sight would remain useless and unknown to a person who should pass his whole life in the darkness of a dungeon.

2d, It may be objected to Mr Smith's theory, that it confounds the *means* or *expedients* by which nature enables us to correct our moral judgments, with the principles in our constitution to which our moral judgments owe their origin. These means or expedients he has indeed described with singular penetration and sagacity, and by doing so, has thrown new and most important lights on *practical* morality ; but, after all his reasonings on the subject, the metaphysical problem concerning the primary sources of our moral ideas and emotions will

be found involved in the same obscurity as before. The intention of such expedients, it is perfectly obvious, is merely to obtain a just and fair view of circumstances; and after this view has been obtained, the question still remains, what constitutes the obligation upon me to act in a particular manner? In answer to this question it is said, that, from recollecting my own judgments in similar cases in which I was concerned, I infer in what light my conduct will appear to society; that there is an exquisite satisfaction annexed to mutual sympathy; and that, in order to obtain this satisfaction, I accommodate my conduct, not to my own feelings, but to those of my fellow creatures. Now, I acknowledge, that this may account for a man's assuming the appearance of virtue, and I believe that something of this sort is the real foundation of the rules of good breeding in polished society;* but in the important concerns of life, I apprehend there is something more,—for when I have once satisfied myself with respect to the conduct which an impartial judge would approve of, I feel that this conduct is *right* for me, and that I am under a moral obligation to put it in practice. If I had had recourse to

* This remark I borrow from Dr Beattie, who, in his Essay on Truth, observes, that “the foundation of good breeding is that kind of sensibility or sympathy by which we suppose ourselves in the situation of others, adopt their sentiments, and in a manner perceive their very thoughts.” (P. 38, 2d Edit. Edin. 1771.) The observation well deserves to be prosecuted.

no expedient for correcting my first judgment, I would, nevertheless, have formed some judgment or other of a particular conduct as right, wrong, or indifferent, and the only difference would have been, that I should probably have decided improperly, from an erroneous or a partial view of the case.

From these observations I conclude, that the words *right* and *wrong*, * *ought* and *ought not*, express simple ideas or notions, of which no explanation can be given. They are to be found in all languages, and it is impossible to carry on any ethical speculation without them. Of this Mr Smith himself furnishes a remarkable proof in the statement of his theory, not only by the occasional use which he makes of these and other synonymous expressions, but by his explicit and repeated acknowledgments, that the propriety of action cannot be always determined by the *actual* judgments of society, and that, in such cases, we must act according to the judgments which other men *ought* to have formed of our conduct. Is not this to admit, that we have a standard of right and wrong in our

* Dr Hutcheson, in his *Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, calls *ought* a *confused word*:—"As to that confused word *ought*, &c. &c." (end of Section I.) But for this he seems to have had no better reason than the impossibility of defining it logically. And may not the same remark be applied to the words *time*, *space*, *motion*? Was there ever a language in which these words, together with those of *ought* and *ought not*, were not to be found? *Ought* corresponds with the $\delta\epsilon\iota$ of the Greeks, and the *oportet* and *decet* of the Latins.

own minds, of superior authority to any instinctive propensity we may feel to obtain the sympathy of our fellow-creatures ?

It was in order to reconcile this acknowledgment with the general language of his system that Mr Smith was forced to have recourse to the supposition of “ *an abstract man* within the breast, the representative of mankind and substitute of the Deity, whom nature has constituted the supreme judge of all our actions.”* Of this very ingenious fiction he has availed himself in various passages of the *first* edition of his book ; but he has laid much greater stress upon it in the *last* edition, published a short time before his death.† An idea somewhat similar occurs in Lord Shaftesbury’s Advice to an Author, where he observes, with that quaintness of phraseology which so often deforms his otherwise beautiful style, that “ when the wise ancients spoke of a demon, genius, or angel, to whom we are committed from the moment of our birth, they meant no more than enigmatically to declare, ‘ That we have each of us a patient in ourselves : That we are properly our own subjects of practice : and that we then become due practitioners, when, by virtue of an intimate recess, we can discover a certain duplicity of soul, and divide ourselves into two parties.’ He afterwards tells us, that, “ according as this recess was deep and

* Page 208, 5th Edit.

† See, in particular, Vol. I. p. 321, *et seq.* 6th Edit.

“ intimate, and the dual number practically formed
“ in us, we were supposed by the ancients to ad-
“ vance in morals and true wisdom.”

By means of this fiction Mr Smith has rendered his theory (contrary to what might have been expected from its first aspect) perfectly coincident in its practical tendency with that cardinal principle of the stoical philosophy which exhorts us to search for the rules of life, not *without* ourselves, but *within* : “ Nec te quæsieris extra.” Indeed Butler himself has not asserted the authority and supremacy of conscience in stronger terms than Mr Smith, who represents this as a manifest and unquestionable principle, whatever particular theory we may adopt concerning the origin of our moral ideas. It is only to be regretted, that, instead of the metaphorical expression of “ *the man within the breast*, to whose opinions and feelings we find it of more consequence “ to conform our conduct than to those of the whole “ world,” he had not made use of the simpler and more familiar words *reason* and *conscience*. This mode of speaking was indeed suggested to him, or rather obtruded on him by the theory of sympathy, and nothing can exceed the skill and the taste with which he has availed himself of its assistance in perfecting his system ; but it has the effect, with many readers, of keeping out of view the real state of the question, and (like Plato’s Commonwealth of the Soul, and Council of State) to encourage among inferior writers a figurative or allegorical style in treating of subjects which, more than any other,

require all the simplicity, precision, and logical consistency of which language is susceptible.*

SECTION III.

Of the Sense of the Ridiculous.

Another auxiliary principle to the moral faculty yet remains to be considered,—*the sense of ridicule*, and the anxiety which all men feel to avoid whatever is likely to render them the objects of it. The subject is extremely curious and interesting; but the time I have bestowed on the former article obliges me to confine myself to a very short explanation of the meaning of the word, and of the relation which the principle denoted by it bears to our nobler motives of action.

The natural and proper object of ridicule is those smaller improprieties in character and manners which do not rouse our feelings of moral indignation, or impress us with a melancholy sense of human depravity. In the words of Aristotle the γελοῖον, or the ridiculous, may be defined to be αἰσχος ἀνωδύνον, the deformed without hurt or mischief, or (as he has explained his own meaning) “those smaller faults which are neither painful nor pernicious, but *unbeseeming* ;” and “of which” (he adds) “the proper correction is not *reproach*, but *laughter*.”

* See Note (C.)

In stating this as a general principle with respect to the ridiculous, I would not be understood to assert that everything which is ridiculous implies *immorality*, in the strict acceptation of that word. Ignorance, absurdity in reasoning, even a want of acquaintance with the established ceremonial of behaviour, often provoke our laughter with irresistible force. What is ridiculous, however, always implies some imperfection, and exposes the individual to whom it attaches to a species of contempt, of which (how good-humoured soever) no man would choose to be the object.

Perhaps, indeed, it might be found, on a more accurate analysis of this part of our constitution, that it is not, in such cases, merely the *intellectual* or *physical* defect which excites our ridicule, but the contrast between these and *some moral impropriety or imperfection*, which either conceals the defect from the individual himself, or induces him to attempt concealing it from others; and consequently that the sentiment of ridicule always involves, more or less, a sentiment of moral disapprobation. One thing is certain, that intellectual and physical imperfections never appear *so* ridiculous as when accompanied with affectation, hypocrisy, vanity, pride, or an obvious incongruity between the pretensions of an individual and the education he has received, or the station in which he was originally placed.

Upon this question, however, I shall not at present presume to decide. It is sufficient for my pur-

pose, if it be granted that nothing is ridiculous but what falls short, someway or other, of our ideas of excellence; or, (as Cicero expresses it,) “Locus et
 “regio quasi ridiculi, turpitudine et deformitate
 “quadam continetur.”*

Hence, I think, may be traced a beautiful *final cause* in this part of our frame. For while it enlarges the fund of our enjoyment, by rendering the more trifling imperfections of our fellow-creatures a source of *amusement* to us †, it excites the exertions of every individual to correct those imperfections by which the ridicule of others is likely to be provoked. As our eagerness, too, to correct these imperfections may be presumed to be weak, in proportion as we apprehend them to be, *in a moral view*, of trifling moment; we are so formed, that the painful feelings produced by ridicule, are often more poignant than those arising from the consciousness of having rendered ourselves the objects of strong moral disapprobation. Even the consciousness of being *hated* by mankind is to the generality of men less intolerable than what the poet calls,

“The world’s dread laugh,
 “Which scarce the firm Philosopher can scorn.”

It furnishes no objection to these observations, that the sense of ridicule is not always favourable

* De Oratore, Lib. ii. Cap. 58.

† Gresset has expressed the same idea with a humorous and happy extravagance :

“Les sots sont ici-bas pour nos menus plaisirs.”

to virtuous conduct; and that it frequently tends very powerfully to mislead us from our duty. The same remark may be extended to *the desire of esteem*, and even to *the moral faculty*,—that they are liable to be perverted by education and fashion. But the great ends of our being are to be collected from the *general scope* of the principles of our constitution; not from the particular instances in which this scope is thwarted by adventitious circumstances; and nothing surely can be more evident than this, that the three principles just mentioned were all intended to co-operate together, and to lead to a conduct favourable to the improvement of the individual, and to the general interests of society.

The sense of ridicule, in particular, although it has a manifest reference to such a scene of imperfection as we are placed in at present, is, on the whole, a most important auxiliary to our sense of duty, and well deserves a careful examination in an analysis of the moral constitution of man. It is one of the most striking characteristics of the human constitution, as distinguished from that of the lower animals, and has an intimate connection with the highest and noblest principles of our nature. As Milton has observed, “Smiles from *reason* flow, “To brutes denied:” And it may be added, that they not only imply the power of *reason*, in the more limited acceptation of that word, as applicable to the perception of truth and falsehood; but the moral faculty, or that power by which we distinguish *right* from *wrong*. Indeed they imply

the power of *reason* (in both acceptations of the term) in a high state of cultivation.

In the education of youth, there is nothing which requires more serious attention than the proper regulation of the sense of ridicule; nor is there any instance in which the legislator has it more in his power to influence national manners, than by watching over those public exhibitions which avail themselves of this principle of human nature, as a vehicle of entertainment to the multitude.

SECTION IV.

Of Taste, considered in its relation to Morals.

From the explanation formerly given of the import of the phrases Moral Beauty, and Moral Deformity, it may be easily conceived in what manner the character and the conduct of our fellow-creatures may become subservient to the gratification of Taste. The use which the poet makes of this class of our intellectual pleasures is entirely analogous to the resources which he borrows from the charms of external nature. By skilful selections and combinations, characters more exalted and more pleasing may be drawn, than have ever fallen under our observation; and a series of events may be exhibited in perfect consonance to our moral feelings. Rewards and punishments may be dis-

tributed by the poet with an exact regard to the merits of individuals; and those irregularities in the distribution of happiness and misery, which furnish the subject of so many complaints in real life, may be corrected in the world created by his genius. Here, too, the poet borrows from nature the model after which he copies, not only as he accommodates his imaginary arrangements to his unperverted sense of justice, but as he accommodates them to the *general laws* by which the world is governed; for whatever exceptions may occur in particular cases, there can be no more doubt about the fact, that virtue is the direct road to happiness, and vice to misery, than that in the material world blemishes and defects are lost amid prevailing beauty and order.

The power of moral taste, like that which has for its object the beauty of material forms and the various productions of the fine arts, requires much exercise for its developement and culture. The one species of taste also, as well as the other, is susceptible of a false refinement, injurious to our own happiness, and to our usefulness as members of Society.

With this false refinement of taste is sometimes connected the peculiar species of misanthropy which is grafted on a worthy and benevolent heart. When the standard of moral excellence we have been accustomed to dwell upon in imagination is greatly elevated above the common attainments of humanity, we are apt to become too difficult and

fastidious (if I may use the expression) in our *moral taste*; or, in plainer language, to become unreasonably censorious of the follies and vices of our contemporaries. In such cases, it may happen that the native benevolence of the mind, by being habitually directed towards ideal characters, may prove a source of real dissatisfaction and dislike towards those with whom we associate. Such a disposition, when carried to an extreme, not only sours the temper, and dries up all the springs of innocent comfort which nature has so liberally provided for us in the common incidents of life, but, by withdrawing a man from active pursuits, renders all his talents and virtues useless to society. A character of this description has furnished to Moliere the subject of the most finished of all his dramatic pieces; and to Marmontel, of one of his most agreeable and useful tales. The former of these is universally known as the masterpiece of French comedy; but the latter possesses also an uncommon degree of merit by the hints it suggests for curing the weaknesses in which the character originates, and by the interesting contrast it exhibits between the *misanthrope* of Moliere, and a man who unites inflexibility of principle with that accommodation of temper which is necessary for the practical exercise of virtue. The great nurse and cherisher of this species of misanthropy is solitary contemplation; and the only effectual remedy is society and business, together with a habit of directing the attention rather to the correction of our

own faults than to a jealous and suspicious examination of the motives which influence the conduct of our neighbours.

Considered as a principle of action, a cultivated moral taste, while it provides an effectual security against the grossness necessarily connected with many vices, cherishes a temper of mind friendly to all that is amiable, or generous, or elevated in our nature. When separated, however, as it sometimes is, from a strong sense of duty, it can scarcely fail to prove a fallacious guide; the influence of fashion, and of other casual associations, tending perpetually to lead it astray. This is more particularly remarkable in men to whom the gratifications of *taste in general* form the principal object of pursuit, and whose habits of life encourage them to look no higher for their rule of conduct than the way of the world.

The language employed by some of the Greek philosophers in their speculations concerning the nature of virtue seems, on a superficial view, to imply that they supposed the moral faculty to be wholly resolvable into a sense of the beautiful; and hence Lord Shaftesbury, Dr Hutcheson, and others, have been led to adopt a phraseology which has the appearance of substituting taste, in contradistinction to reason and conscience, as the ultimate standard of right and wrong.

While on this subject I cannot help taking notice of a highly exceptionable passage which occurs in one of Mr Burke's later publications,—a passage,

in which (after contrasting the polished and courtly manners of the higher orders with the coarseness and vulgarity of the multitude,) he remarks, that “among the former, vice loses half its malignity “by losing all its grossness.” The fact, according to *my* view of things, is precisely the reverse; that the malignant contagiousness of vice is increased tenfold by every circumstance which draws a veil over, or disguises its native deformity. On this argument volumes might be written, and I sincerely wish that a hand could be found equal to the task. At present, I must content myself with recommending it to the serious attention of moralists, as one of the most important topics of *practical ethics* which the actual circumstances of this part of the world point out as an object of philosophical discussion.

From each of the four principles which have now been under consideration unfortunate consequences result, wherever it prevails in the character, as the leading motive to action. Where they all maintain their due place, in subordination to the moral faculty, they tend at once to fortify virtuous habits, and to recommend them, by the influence of amiable example, to the imitation of others.

A partial consideration of the phenomena of moral perception, connected with one or other of these principles, has suggested some of the most popular theories concerning the origin of our moral ideas.

An attention to the moral faculty alone, without regard to the principles which were intended to operate as its auxiliaries, and which contribute, in fact, so powerfully to the good order of society, has led a few philosophers into an opposite extreme, less dangerous, undoubtedly, in its practical tendency, but less calculated perhaps to recommend ethical disquisitions to the notice of those who are engrossed with the active concerns of life.

All the foregoing inquiries concerning the moral constitution of man proceed on the supposition that he has a freedom of choice between good and evil; and that, when he deliberately performs an action which he knows to be wrong, he renders himself justly obnoxious to punishment. That this supposition is agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind will not be disputed.

From very early times, indeed, the truth of the supposition has been called in question by a few speculative men, who have contended that the actions we perform are the necessary result of the constitutions of our minds operated on by the circumstances of our external situation, and that what we call moral delinquencies are as much a part of our destiny as the corporeal or intellectual qualities we have received from nature. The argument in support of this doctrine has been proposed in various forms, and has been frequently urged with the confidence of demonstration.

With the consideration of these metaphysical subtilities, it seems to me improper to interrupt at present the train of our ethical inquiries. And, although I do not by any means go so far as Lord Bolingbroke when he pronounces, that "no one can deny the free will of man *without lying*,"* I trust that I may fairly assume in what follows, the fact of man's free agency as sufficiently established by the evidence of consciousness; referring those who wish to enter more deeply into the controversy to the Appendix at the end of this work.

* "The free-will of man, which no one can deny without lying or denying his instinctive knowledge." Bolingbroke's Philosophical Works, Vol. V. p. 85. The same assertion in substance occurs in various other parts of his writings.

BOOK THIRD.

OF THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF OUR DUTY.

THE different theories which have been proposed concerning the nature and essence of virtue have arisen chiefly from attempts to trace all the branches of our duty to *one* principle of action, such as a rational self-love, benevolence, justice, or a disposition to obey the will of God.

In order to avoid those partial views of the subject, which naturally take their rise from an undue love of system, the following inquiries proceed on an arrangement which has, in all ages, recommended itself to the good sense of mankind. This arrangement is founded on the different objects to which our duties relate. 1st, The Deity. 2d, Our Fellow-creatures. And 3d, Ourselves.



CHAPTER FIRST.

OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT THE DEITY.

As our duties to God (so far as they are discoverable by the light of nature,) must be inferred from the relation in which we stand to him as the Author and the Governor of the universe, an examination of the principles of natural religion forms a necessary introduction to this section. Such an examination, besides, being the reasonable consequence of those impressions which his works produce on every attentive and well-disposed mind, may be itself regarded both as one of the duties we owe to HIM, and as the expression of a moral temper sincerely devoted to truth, and alive to the sublimest emotions of gratitude and of benevolence.

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES
OF NATURAL RELIGION.*Of the Existence of the Deity.*

It is scarcely possible to conceive a man capable of reflection, who has not, at times, proposed to himself the following questions: Whence am I? and whence the innumerable tribes of plants and of animals which I see, in constant succession, rising into existence? Whence the beautiful fabric of this universe? and by what wise and powerful Being were the principles of my constitution so wonderfully adapted to the various objects around me? To whom am I indebted for the distinguished rank which I hold in the creation, and for the numberless blessings which have fallen to my lot? And what return shall I make for this profusion of goodness?—The only return I *can* make is by accommodating my conduct to the will of my Creator, and by fulfilling, as far as I am able, the purposes of my being. But how are these purposes to be discovered? The analogy of the lower animals gives me here no information. They too, as well as I, are endowed with various instincts and appetites; but their nature, on the whole, exhibits a striking contrast to mine. They are impelled by a blind determination towards their proper objects, and seem to obey the law of their nature in yielding to every principle which excites them to action. In my own

species alone the case is different. Every individual chuses for himself the ends of his pursuit, and chuses the means which he is to employ for attaining them. Are all these elections equally *good*? and is there no *law* prescribed to man? I feel the reverse. I am able to distinguish what is right from what is wrong; what is honourable and becoming from what is unworthy and base; what is laudable and meritorious from what is shameful and criminal. *Here*, then, are plain indications of the conduct I *ought* to pursue. There is a law prescribed to man as well as to the brutes. The only difference is, that it depends on my own will whether I obey or disobey it. And shall I alone counteract the intentions of my maker, by abusing that freedom of choice which he has been pleased to bestow on me by raising me to the rank of a rational and moral being.

This is surely the language of *nature*; and which could not fail to occur to every man capable of serious thought, were not the understanding and the moral feelings in some instances miserably perverted by religious and political prejudices, and in others by the false refinements of metaphysical theories. How callous must be that heart which does not echo back the reflections which Milton puts into the mouth of our first parent!

“ Thou sun, said I, fair light,
 “ And thou enlightened earth, so fresh and gay,
 “ Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
 “ And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,

“ Tell, if you saw, how came I thus, how here ;
“ Not of myself ; by some great Maker then,
“ In goodness, as in power pre-eminent ;
“ Tell me how I may know him, how adore,
“ From whom I have, that thus I move and live,
“ And feel that I am happier than I know.”

In this manner, a consideration of the relation in which we stand to God must satisfy us that it is *our duty*, or (to vary our language) that it is *morally right* we should obey *his* will, as manifested by that inward monitor, established by himself as his vicegerent in our breast. Our moral powers give rise to religious sentiments, and these become, in their turn, the most powerful inducements to the practice of morality.

In the course of our argument concerning the moral attributes of God we shall find reason to conclude that our hopes are not limited to this life, and that there is solid ground to expect a farther interposition of Divine power for the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice,—a conclusion which will furnish another very powerful sanction to the laws of morality. I shall treat of the presumptions for a future state under the article of *Natural Religion*, because the moral attributes of the Deity furnish the strongest arguments in support of it. At the same time, the subjects are not necessarily connected. Even absolute atheism cannot destroy entirely the anticipations which bad men have of future punishment, nor would they reason consequentially if it did ; for the same blind

necessity which brought them into this world may carry them into another. Whether it be owing to an overruling intelligence or not, it is a *fact* which nobody can deny, that there are general laws which regulate the course of human affairs, and that even here we see manifest indications of a connection between virtue and happiness. Why may not *necessity* continue that existence it at first gave birth to ; and why may not the connection between virtue and happiness continue for ever ?

Before entering on the following discussions, it is proper for me to take notice, in the first place, of the insuperable difficulties we may expect to encounter in the course of our inquiries ; and, secondly, of the illegitimacy of any inference drawn from this consideration against the certainty of the truths which it is our leading aim to establish. Of the justness of both remarks, no illustration so striking can be produced as the difficulties we have already experienced in our researches concerning the powers of the human understanding ; that part of the universe which of all others would seem to lie the most completely within the reach of our examination : and, accordingly, an argument has been drawn by Locke from this acknowledged ignorance of man concerning his own nature, to moderate the arrogance of his pretensions when he presumes to speculate concerning the attributes of God. “ If you “ do not understand the operations of your own

“ finite mind, that *thinking thing* within you, do
 “ not think it strange that you cannot comprehend
 “ the operations of that Eternal Infinite Mind who
 “ made and governs all things, and whom the hea-
 “ ven of heavens cannot contain.”*

In proof of the existence of the Deity two modes of reasoning have been employed, which are commonly distinguished by the titles of the arguments *a priori* and *a posteriori*; the former founded on certain metaphysical propositions which are assumed as axioms, the latter appealing to that systematic order, and those combinations of means to ends which are every where conspicuous in nature.

The argument *a priori* has been enforced with singular ingenuity by Dr Clarke, whose particular manner of stating it is supposed to have been suggested to him by the following passage in Newton's *Principia*. “ Æternus est et infinitus, omnipotens et omnisciens, id est, durat ab æterno in æternum, et adest ab infinito in infinitum: omnia regit, et omnia cognoscit quæ fiunt aut fieri possunt. Non est æternitas et infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio et spatium, sed durat et adest. Durat semper, et adest

* Locke's Essay, Book iv. Chap. 10, § 19. The same thought occurs in Pascal.

“ L'homme sait si peu ce que c'est que Dieu, qu'il ne sait pas ce qu'il est lui-même; mais autant l'essence d'un Dieu est incompréhensible pour moi, autant son existence m'est intimément évidente. La preuve en est en moi; et comme moi, tout homme porte cette preuve en lui-même.”

“ubique, et existendo semper et ubique, durationem et spatium constituit. * * * Deum summum necessario existere in confesso est: et eâdem necessitate *semper* est et *ubique*.”

The substance of Clarke’s argument is essentially the same, amounting to the following proposition, that “space and time are only abstract conceptions of an immensity and eternity which force themselves on our belief; and as immensity and eternity are not substances, they must be the attributes of a Being who is necessarily immense and eternal.”

“These,” (says Dr Reid,) “are the speculations of men of superior genius; but whether they be as solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of imagination in a region beyond the limits of human understanding, I am unable to determine.” After this candid acknowledgment from Dr Reid, I need not be ashamed to confess my own doubts and difficulties on the same subject.*

* An argument, substantially the same with that of Newton, for the existence of God, is hinted at by Cudworth. *Intell. System*, Chap. v. Sect. 3, § 4. Also by Dr Henry More, *Enchirid. Metaph.* Chap. viii. § 8. See Mosheim’s *Latin Translation of Cudworth*, Tom. II. p. 356, Lug. Batav. 1773.

Dr Price, in the last edition of his *Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*, has attempted to illustrate and enforce Clarke’s argument, by placing it in a light somewhat different from that in which it occurred to the author; but he appears to me, by departing from the language of Clarke and Newton, to have involved their ideas in additional mys-

But although the argument, as stated by Clarke, does not carry complete conviction to my mind, I think it must be acknowledged that there is something very peculiar and wonderful in those conceptions of immensity and eternity which force themselves on our belief. Nay farther, I think that these conceptions furnish important lights in the study of natural religion. For when once we have established the existence of an intelligent and powerful cause from the *works of creation*, we are unavoidably led to apply to him our conceptions of

tery. In the course of this reasoning he observes, that "God is wisdom rather than wise, and reason rather than reasonable." In like manner, (he continues,) "he is eternity rather than eternal, immensity rather than immense, and power rather than powerful." (Review, &c. &c. p. 500, 3d Edit.) The excellent and learned writer seems to have considered this thought as entirely new; but it is to be found in Hobbes's Answer to Bishop Bramhall, where it is quoted from the writings of that prelate. I presume (for I have never seen the bishop's works,) that it is faithfully copied from some one of his publications. "Upon this silly conceit, he (Tho. Hobbes) charges me for saying that God is not just but justice itself, not eternal but eternity itself, which he calleth unseemly words to be said of God...I wish he had considered better with himself before he had desperately cast himself upon these rocks."—(Hobbes's Works, p. 428, Fol. Edit.)

On this point I cannot help agreeing with Hobbes, that, "though all men in the world understand that *the eternal* is God, yet no man can understand that *the eternity* is God, any more than that a wise man and his wisdom are the same; or that any attribute in the abstract is the same with the substance to which it is attributed."—(Ibid. p. 429.)

immensity and eternity, and to conceive him as filling the infinite extent of both with his presence and his power. Hence we associate with the idea of God those awful impressions which are naturally produced by the idea of infinite space, and perhaps still more by the idea of endless duration. Nor is this all. It is from our ideas of space and of time that the notion of infinity is originally derived, and it is thence that we transfer the expression by a sort of metaphor, to other subjects. When we speak, therefore, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, our notions, if not wholly borrowed from space and time, are at least wonderfully aided by this analogy; so that the conceptions of immensity and eternity, if they do not of themselves demonstrate the existence of God, yet necessarily enter into the ideas we form of his nature and attributes. It may be worth while to add, that the notion of *necessary existence* which we derive from the contemplation of space and of time render the same notion, when applied to the Supreme Being, much more easy to be apprehended than it would otherwise be.

Important use may also be made of these conceptions of immensity and eternity in stating the argument for the future existence of the soul. For why was the mind of man rendered capable of extending its views in point of time beyond the limits of human transactions, and in point of space, beyond the limits of the visible universe, if all our prospects are to terminate here?—or why was a glimpse of so magnificent a scene disclosed to a be-

ing, the period of whose animal existence bears so small a proportion to the vastness of his desires? Surely this conception of the necessary existence of space and time, of immensity and eternity, was not forced continually upon the thoughts of man for no purpose whatever. And to what purpose can we suppose it to be subservient, but to remind those who make a proper use of their reason, of the trifling value of some of those objects we at present pursue, when compared with the scenes on which we may afterwards enter; and to animate us in the pursuit of wisdom and virtue, by affording us the prospect of an *indefinite* progression? *

After what I have already said of the argument *a priori*, it will not be expected that I should enter here into a particular illustration of it. Such as wish to examine it with attention may consult Dr Clarke's work on the Being and Attributes of God; the last edition of Dr Price's Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals; and a book published by Dr Hamilton, late Bishop of Ossory, † where, after an historical review of the differ-

* Cicero had plainly the same argument in view when he remarked, "*Nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi sæculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque in maximis ingenii altissimisque animis et existit maximè, et apparet facilè.*"—Tuscul. Disput. Lib. 1. c. xv.

† In the *Bibliotheca Britannica*, published by the late Dr Watt of Glasgow, I find this work ascribed to Hugh Hamilton, author of a Treatise of Conic Sections,* which appeared

* De Sectionibus Conicis. Tractatus Geometricus. In quo, ex Natura ipsius Coni, Sectionum Affectiones facillime deducantur. Methodo Nova. Dublinii, 1758.

ent forms in which the argument *a priori* has been stated by preceding writers, he proposes a new one of his own, more clear, (according to him,) and more conclusive.

But whatever opinion be formed upon the argument *a priori*, all parties must allow that the argument *a posteriori* is more level to the comprehension of ordinary men, and more satisfactory to the philosopher himself. Indeed, in inquiries of this sort the presumption is strongly in favour of that mode of reasoning which is the most simple and obvious.

The existence of a Deity, however, does not seem to be an intuitive truth. It requires the exercise of our reasoning powers to present it in its full force to the mind. But the process of reasoning consists only of a single step, and the premises belong to that class of first principles which form an essential part of the human constitution. These premises are *two* in number. The one is, that every thing which begins to exist must have a cause. The other, that a combination of means conspiring to a particular end implies intelligence.

at Dublin in 1758, and which I remember to have admired many years ago for its originality and elegance. If Dr Watt's information (which is not always to be implicitly relied upon,) be in this instance correct, I cannot help saying that, in my opinion, Mr Hamilton's genius appears to much greater advantage as a geometrician than as a philosopher.

CHAPTER SECOND.

SECTION I.

Of the Foundations of our Reasoning from the Effect to the Cause, and of the Evidences of Active Power exhibited in the Universe.

IT was before observed that our knowledge of the course of nature is entirely the result of observation and experiment, and that there is no instance in which we perceive such a connection between two successive events as might enable us to infer the one from the other as a necessary consequence.

From experience, indeed, we learn that there are many events so conjoined that the one constantly follows the other. It is possible, however, that this connection, though a constant one as far as our observation has reached, is not a *necessary* connection; nay, it is possible, for any thing we know to the contrary, that there may be no necessary connections among any of the phenomena we see; and if there are any such connections existing, we may rest assured that we shall never be able to discover them.

With this principle, when stated in general terms, most people I apprehend will now agree. Nor is the principle a new one, (as has been commonly supposed,) and peculiar to Mr Hume's system. Of this assertion I have produced sufficient proof in a note at the end of the first volume of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, where I have quoted various passages from Hobbes, Barrow, Butler, Berkeley, and others, demonstrating clearly that their notions on the subject were precisely the same with Mr Hume's.* To the list of names there mentioned, perhaps that of Socrates ought to be added, who, as Xenophon tells us in the Memorabilia, blamed the sophists for inquiring *τισιν αναγκαις ἐκαστα γιγνεται τῶν ἕρῶντων*. And he adds, *ἀλλὰ και τες φροντιζοντας τα τοιαῦτα μαραινοντας απεδεικνυεν*. Afterwards he says, *Εθαυμαζε δε, ἐι μη φανερον αυτοις εστιν, ὅτι ταυτα ε̄ δυνατον εστιν ανθρωποις ε̄ρχειν*. †

From this view of the subject, with regard to cause and effect in physics, Mr Hume has deduced an objection to the argument *a posteriori* for the existence of the Deity. After having proved that we cannot get the idea of necessary connection from examining the conjunction between any two events, he takes for granted that we have no other idea of cause and effect than of two successive events which are always conjoined; that we have therefore no reason to think that any one

* For some curious passages to the same purpose, see Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. II. Note (O.)

† Lib. prim. Cap. I. xi. xiii.

event in nature is *necessarily* connected with another, or to infer the operation of power from the changes we observe in the universe.

In consequence of these alarming inferences, a number of Mr Hume's opponents have been led to call in question the truth of his general principles with respect to the relation of cause and effect in natural philosophy. But it has always appeared to me that the defect of this part of Mr Hume's system does not lie in his premises, but in the conclusion which he has deduced from them; and which, I flatter myself, I shall be able to show cannot be inferred from these premises by a legitimate process of reasoning.

Of the objections that have been stated to Mr Hume's premises some are extremely frivolous. Dr Beattie has opposed them by some instances. "There are now" (says he) "in my view two contiguous houses, one of which was built last summer, and the other two years ago. By seeing them constantly together for several months, I find that the idea of the one determines my mind to form the idea of the other; so that, according to Mr Hume's definition, the one house is the cause, and the other the effect."* But Dr Beattie has overlooked one circumstance mentioned by Mr Hume. That author had evidently in his view not co-existent objects, but events succeeding each other in the order of time, for he always ascribes priority to the cause.

* Essay on Truth. Second Ed. p. 332.

The same remark may be made on another instance which Dr Beattie mentions. “Day and night” (says he) “have always been contiguous and successive,—the imagination naturally runs from the idea of the one to that of the other; consequently, according to Mr Hume’s theory, either day is the cause of night, or night the cause of day, just as we consider the one or the other to have been originally prior in time; and its being the one or the other, depends entirely on my imagination.”* Now it is evident that this conclusion never can be formed according to Mr Hume’s theory, for he tells us that when two events are conjoined we affix the idea of causation to that event which happens first in the order of time. But day and night happening alternately, the one cannot be considered as prior to the other, and therefore it is quite impossible that the idea of causation can be affixed to either.

But taking for granted the truth of Mr Hume’s premises, let us consider the accuracy of his subsequent reasoning.

In order to form a competent judgment on this point, it is necessary to recollect, that, according to his system, “all our ideas are nothing but copies of our impressions; or, in other words, that it is *impossible* for us to *think* of any thing which we have not antecedently *felt*, either by our external or internal senses.” Having proved, therefore, that external objects, as they appear to our

* Essay on Truth. Second Ed. pp. 332, 333.

senses, give us no idea of power or of necessary connection, and also that this idea cannot be copied from any internal impression, (that is, cannot be derived from reflection on the operations of our own minds,) he thinks himself warranted to conclude that we have no such idea. "One event" (says he) "follows another, but we never observe any tie between them. They seem *conjoined* but never *connected*. And as we can have no idea of any thing which never appeared to our outward sense or inward sentiment, the necessary conclusion seems to be, that we have no idea of connection or power at all, and that these words are absolutely without any meaning when employed either in philosophical reasonings or common life."

Are we therefore to reject, as perfectly unintelligible, a word which is to be found in all languages, because it expresses an idea, for the origin of which we cannot account upon a particular philosophical system? Would it not be more reasonable to suspect that the system was not perfectly complete, than that all mankind should have agreed in employing a word which conveys no meaning?

With respect to Mr Hume's theory concerning the origin of our ideas, it is the less necessary to enter into particular discussions, as it coincides in the main with the doctrine of Locke, to which I have elsewhere stated some objections, which appear to me insurmountable.* Upon neither theory is it

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. I. p. 94, *et seq* Sixth Ed.

possible to explain the origin of those simple notions, which are not received immediately by any external sense, or derived from our own consciousness, but which are necessarily formed by the mind while we are exercising our intellectual powers upon their proper objects.

These very slight hints are sufficient to show that we are not entitled to dispute the reality of our idea of power, because we cannot trace it to any of the senses. The only question is, if it be certain, that we annex any idea to the word power different from that of constant succession? The following considerations, among many others, prove that the import of these two expressions is by no means the same.

First, then, it is evident, that, if we had no idea of cause and effect different from that of mere succession, it would appear to us *as* absurd to suppose two events disjoined which we have constantly seen connected, as to suppose a change in external objects to take place without a cause. The fact, however, is, that nobody finds it difficult to conceive that two events which are constantly conjoined *may not* be necessarily connected; whereas it may be safely pronounced to be impossible for a person to bring himself for a moment to believe that any change may take place in the material universe without a cause. I can conceive very easily that the volition in my mind is not the efficient cause of the motions of my hand; but can I conceive that my hand moves without any cause whatever? Nay, I can conceive that

no one event in nature is necessarily connected with any other event ; but does it therefore follow that I can conceive these events to happen without the operation of a cause ? Leibnitz maintained that the volitions of the mind were not the efficient causes of the motions of the body ; and compared the connection between them to that between two clocks so adjusted by an artist that the motions of the one shall always correspond with those of the other. Every person of reflection must acknowledge that, however unwarranted by facts this theory may be, it is still possible it may be true. But if Leibnitz had affirmed not only that there was no connection between the two clocks, but that the motions in each went on without any cause whatever, his theory would have been not only unsupported by proof, but absurd and inconceivable.

In the second place, our experience of the established connections of physical events is evidently too limited a foundation for our belief that every change must have a cause. Mr Hume himself, in laying down “ the rules by which to judge of causes and “ effects,” observes, in the *first place*, that “ cause “ and effect must be contiguous in space and time ;” and consequently he apprehended that, according to the general opinion, matter produces its effects by impulse alone.* If, therefore, every change which had fallen under our notice had been preceded

* Treatise of Human Nature, Vol. I. p. 304. See also p. 136.

by apparent impulse, experience might have led us to conclude, from observing a change, that a previous impulse had been given ; or, according to Mr Hume's notion of *a cause*, that a cause had operated to produce this effect. Of the changes, however, which we see, how small a number is preceded by apparent impulse ! And yet, in the case of every change around us, without exception, we have an irresistible conviction of the operation of some cause. I believe it will be difficult to explain, upon Mr Hume's principles, how we get this idea of the necessity of a cause in the case of those phenomena in which impulse has apparently no share.

To this we may add, that children at a very early period of life, when their experience is extremely limited, discover an eager curiosity to pry into the causes of the phenomena they observe. Even the attention of the lower animals seems to be roused when they see a body begin to move, or in general any change begin to take place in external objects.

The arguments which are commonly used to prove the necessity of human actions derive all their plausibility from the general maxim, that every change requires a cause with which it is *necessarily connected*. It is remarkable that this doctrine of the necessity of the will should form part of the same system with the theory of cause and effect which I have now been examining.*

* The same argument for the necessity of the will has been

The question, however, still recurs, in what manner do we acquire the idea of causation, power, or efficiency? But this question, if the foregoing observations be admitted, is comparatively of little consequence, as the doubts which may arise on the subject tend only (without affecting the reality of the idea or notion) to expose the defects of particular philosophical systems.

The most probable account of the matter seems to be, that the idea of causation or of power necessarily accompanies the perception of change in a way somewhat analogous to that in which sensation implies a being who feels, and thought a being who thinks. Is it possible to conceive a person (however limit-

very recently repeated with much confidence by the Comte de la Place in his *Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités*. "Les événemens actuels ont avec les précédens une liaison fondée sur le principe évidente, qu'une chose ne peut pas commencer d'être, sans une cause qui la produise. Cet axiome, connu sous le nom de *principe de la raison suffisante*, s'étend aux actions même que l'on juge indifférentes. La volonté la plus libre ne peut, sans un motif déterminant, leur donner naissance; car si toutes les circonstances de deux positions étant exactement semblables, elle agissoit dans l'une et s'abstenoit d'agir dans l'autre, son choix seroit un *effet sans cause*; * elle seroit alors, dit Leibnitz, le hazard aveugle des Epicuriens."

* The impropriety of this language was long ago pointed out by Mr Hume. "They are still more frivolous who say that every effect must have a cause, because it is implied in the very idea of effect. Every effect necessarily presupposes a cause, effect being a relative term, of which cause is the co-relative. The true state of the question is, whether every object which begins to exist must owe its existence to a cause?"—*Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. I. p. 47.



ed his experience may be) whose curiosity would not be roused by a *change* taking place in the objects around him? and what is this curiosity but an anxiety to know the *cause* of the *effect*? The mere perception of *change*, therefore, in the material universe, seems sufficient to introduce to the mind the ideas of *cause* and *effect*, and to impress us with a belief that this change *could not* have taken place unless there had been some *cause* for it. Such, I apprehend, would be the conclusion of a man wholly destitute of experience, and who was even ignorant of his own power to move at will the members of his body.

It must indeed be acknowledged, that, after having had experience of our own *power*, we come to associate the idea of *force*, or of an animal *nisus*, with that of *cause*; and hence some have been led to suppose that our only idea of *cause* is derived from our bodily exertions. Hence, too, it is that in natural philosophy our language frequently bears a reference to our own sensations. The ideas of *cause*, however, and of *power*, are more general than that of *force*, and might have been acquired although we had never been conscious of any bodily exertion whatever. There is surely no impropriety in saying that the mind has *power* over the train of its ideas, and over its various faculties, as well as over the members of the body.

These observations coincide with the opinion of Dr Reid, who long ago remarked, that, by the constitution of the mind, a beginning of existence, or

any change in nature, suggests to us the notion of a cause, and compels our belief of its existence.

Dr Price also, in treating of the origin of our ideas,* has anticipated me in part of the foregoing doctrine. “What we observe” (says he) “by our external senses is properly no more than that one thing *follows* another, or the *constant conjunction* of certain events. That one thing is the *cause* of another, or *produces* it by its efficacy and operation, we never see. Our certainty that every new event requires some cause depends not at all on experience, no more than our certainty of any other the most obvious subject of intuition. In the idea of every change is included that of its being an *effect*.” †

Upon ‡ this part of the subject, indeed, I write

* See his Review of the Principal Questions in Morals.

† I do not know how to reconcile this passage from Price with another which follows a few pages after. “While we only see one thing constantly following another, without perceiving the real dependence and connection, we are necessarily dissatisfied, and feel a state of mind very different from that entire acquiescence which we experience upon considering Sir Isaac Newton’s laws of motion, or any other instances and facts in which we see the necessary connection and truth.”

‡ This paragraph, and some of the following pages, are copied verbatim from an Essay on the Idea of Cause and Effect, and on the object of Natural Philosophy, which the author read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in the year 1784. The original copy, in the hand-writing of a friend still alive, is at present in my possession. Various other paragraphs in this section are transcribed with some slight altera-

with a good deal of diffidence, because the opinion which I have now stated differs considerably from that of some very ingenious and candid persons with whom I have conversed; who think not only that it is from our own voluntary exertions that our *first* ideas of cause and power are derived, but that we have no idea whatever of these which is not borrowed by analogy from our own consciousness.

One of my friends has amused himself with conceiving in what manner a man, who had never had experience of any animal exertion, would reason concerning the phenomena of the material world, and has been led to apprehend that he would consider the different events he saw merely as *antece-*
de-
ments and *consequents*, without applying to the former in any instance the idea of *causation*.*

I have already hinted that my own opinion is different from this; but I perfectly agree with my friend in thinking that this conclusion does not lead the way to any sceptical consequences. To say that our ideas of power and cause are derived from our own voluntary exertions does not affect the reality of these ideas. And although we should grant that a man, who had never been conscious of any voluntary exertion, could never be led to conceive these ideas, or to comprehend the argument for the

tions from the same manuscript.—See Trans. Roy. Soc. Edin. Vol. I. p. 21.

* I alluded here to my late excellent and illustrious friend Mr Playfair.

existence of a Deity, still that argument would apply *universally* to our species, for without such a consciousness no individual ever did, or could exist. Whatever ideas, whatever principles we are necessarily led to acquire by the circumstances in which we are placed, and by the exercise of those faculties which are essential to our preservation, are to be considered as parts of human nature, no less than those which are implanted in the mind at its first formation.

I am aware that this will not be considered by some as a complete answer to the objection ; and it will still be urged that, if our only ideas of cause and power be derived from our own voluntary exertions, the argument for the existence of a Deity rests merely on an arbitrary association of ideas. We have found from experience that our voluntary exertions are followed by certain changes in the state of external objects, and are accordingly led to suppose, when we see other changes take place, that they have been preceded by some voluntary exertions analogous to those of which we are conscious. I cannot, however, help being of opinion, that the principle which leads us to consider a cause as necessary to produce a *change* in material things is of a kind very different from the association of ideas. The changes which we and the whole human race are able to produce in the state of terrestrial objects are nothing, either in point of number or magnitude, in comparison of those which we see going on both in the earth and heavens, and I may

add in our own bodies, and over which we have no influence. Whence is it then that we connect with *every* change we see the idea of a cause? From the similarity between our own appearance and that of other men, and from the striking analogy between the human race and other animals, I shall admit that the association of ideas alone might lead us to connect the idea of voluntary exertion with animal motion. But whence is it that we associate the idea of a cause with the fall of a stone, with the ebbing and flowing of the sea, or with the motion of the planets? It will be said that, having learned from our own consciousness and experience the connection between voluntary exertion and motion, we have recourse to the supposition of some analogous power or force to *account* for every motion we see. But what is it that leads us to think of *accounting* for these motions? Nothing, I apprehend, but that law of our nature which leads us to infer the existence of a cause wherever a change is perceived.

Some authors have compared this law of our nature to our instinctive interpretation of natural signs.* As we *perceive* the passions and emotions in the minds of others by means of their looks and gestures, so it has been apprehended that every change we observe is accompanied with a perception of *power* or *cause*. This comparison will not be the less just, although we should proceed on the supposition that our first ideas of power and cause

* Reid's Inquiry, Third Ed. pp. 88, 89.

are derived from our own voluntary exertions ; for the case is perfectly analogous with respect to the natural expressions of passion and emotion. No modification of countenance could convey the idea of *rage* to a man who had never been conscious of that passion ; but after having acquired the idea of this passion from his own consciousness, he is able instinctively to interpret its natural expression.

Although, however, there may be some foundation for the foregoing comparison, it is necessary to remark, that our association of the ideas of *change* and *cause* is of a much more intimate and indissoluble nature than our association of any natural sign with the idea signified. Every person must perceive, upon the slightest reflection, that the connection between any sign and the thing signified *may be* merely an arbitrary connection adapted to our particular constitution. Even in the case of hardness we can discover no connection whatever between the external quality and the sensation which suggests it. But, in the case of every change in the state of external objects, or of our own bodies, we not only connect with this particular change the idea of some cause, but we have an irresistible conviction of the *necessity* of a cause. Something not unlike to this takes place with respect to our ideas of space and time. We acquire both originally from our perceptions ; but having once acquired them, we have an irresistible conviction that both space and time are necessary and self-existent.

Having endeavoured to vindicate against the objections of Mr Hume the reality of our notion of power or efficiency, I proceed to examine more particularly the foundation of our belief, that every thing that begins to exist must have a cause. Is this belief founded on abstract reasoning, or is it the result of experience, or is it an intuitive judgment? A variety of attempts have been made to demonstrate the truth of this principle from some general metaphysical axioms; in particular by Hobbes, Clarke, and Locke. Mr Hume, in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, has examined each of their demonstrations, and has shown very clearly that they all take for granted the thing to be proved.

Other philosophers have thought that the principle may be proved by induction, from the particular instances that have fallen under our experience, as we infer from particular facts that cold freezes water, that heat turns it into steam, and that all bodies gravitate to each other.

But this opinion will not bear examination; for the thing to be proved is not a contingent but a necessary truth. It is not that "things which begin to exist commonly have a cause; nor even that they have always been found to have a cause as far as our experience has reached,—but that they *must* have a cause, and that the contrary supposition implies an impossibility."* Now it

* The very acute and ingenious Dr Campbell, although he

is manifest that no induction, how extensive soever, can ever lead to the discovery of a necessary truth ; for experience only informs us of what is, or what has been, not of what must necessarily be ; and the evidence of the conclusion must be of the same nature with that of the premises.

But abstracting from this consideration, and viewing this principle merely as a contingent truth, how is it possible to account, by means of experience, for our belief, that every change in the state of the universe is actually produced by a cause ?

plainly leaned to the supposition that our idea of causation is drawn from experience, acknowledges, nevertheless, that it *seems* to involve the idea of *necessary* connection. “ In the proposition whatever hath a beginning hath a cause, we intuitively conclude from the existence of one thing the existence of another. This proposition, however, so far differs, in my apprehension, from others of the same order, that I cannot avoid considering the opposite assertion as not only false, but contradictory ; *but I do not pretend to explain the ground of this difference.*”—(Phil. of Rhet. Vol. I. pp. 114, 115.) From the last clause it may be inferred, that Dr Campbell thought something was still wanting for the complete elucidation of this subject.

Even some of the philosophers who most confidently reject the application of the word *necessary* to this proposition admit that it involves the idea of *invariable* connection. I should be glad to be informed what distinction they make between the words *invariable* and *necessary*. What idea do we annex to the phrase *necessary conjunction*, but a conjunction which *cannot* be varied ? Experience (it is plain) can only inform us that a conjunction has been found *unvaried* as far as it has been hitherto observed, but how do we infer from this that it is an *invariable* conjunction ?

In every case in which experience informs us that two things are connected, both of them must have fallen under our observation. But the causes of by far the greater number of phenomena we see are perfectly unknown to us, and therefore we never could learn from experience whether they have causes or not. The only instance in which we have any immediate knowledge of an efficient cause is in the consciousness we have of our own voluntary actions, and surely this experience is not sufficient to account for the confidence with which we form the general conclusion.

From the foregoing observations we may infer that this principle is not founded on experience; and it has been shown clearly by Mr Hume that it is not demonstrable by abstract reasoning,—we must therefore conclude that it is either a prejudice or an intuitive judgment.

That it is not a prejudice may be safely inferred from the universal consent of mankind, both learned and unlearned. Mr Hume was the first person who called it in question, and even he frequently relapses unawares into the common conviction. Thus in his *Treatise of Human Nature*: “As to those impressions which arise from the senses, their *ultimate cause* is, in my opinion, perfectly inexplicable by human reason; and it will always be impossible to decide with certainty whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind, or are derived from the author of our being.”

Upon a review of the observations and reasonings already stated in the course of this inquiry, it can scarcely fail to occur to an attentive reader that the word *cause* is used both by philosophers and the vulgar in two senses, which are widely different. When it is said that every change in nature indicates the operation of a cause, the word *cause* expresses something which is supposed to be necessarily connected with the change, and without which it could not have happened. This may be called the *metaphysical* meaning of the word, and such causes may be called *metaphysical* or *efficient causes*.

In natural philosophy, however, when we speak of one thing being the cause of another, all that we mean is, that the two are constantly conjoined, so that when we see the one we may expect the other. These conjunctions we learn from experience alone, and without an acquaintance with them we could not accommodate our conduct to the established course of nature. The causes which are the objects of our investigation in natural philosophy may, for the sake of distinction, be called *physical causes*. *

* In a respectable publication, entitled Introduction to an Analysis of the Principles of Natural Philosophy, by Dr Matthew Young of Dublin, (Robinsons, London, 1800,) I find the following sentence, the meaning of which I am quite unable to conjecture.

“ Causes are either experimental or rational ; experiment
“ is the only standard of experimental causes ; perception of

In the Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind * I have endeavoured to trace the origin of those prejudices which have led philosophers, in every age, to confound together efficient and physical causes ; and I have remarked the extensive influence which this inaccurate employment of terms has had on their physical systems. The ancients, in particular, seem universally to have ascribed a real efficiency to physical causes ; and the same supposition is implied in those expressions, so frequently in use among the moderns, of “ a chain of causes and effects, or of necessary connections existing among physical events.” † Mr

“ the necessary connection of events is the standard of rational causes.” In illustration of this distinction he refers to an Essay by R. Young on the Mechanism of Nature.

* Vol. I. Chap. i. Sec. 2.

† Even in the present times some of the most sagacious of Bacon’s followers show a disposition to relapse into the figurative language of the multitude. “ The chain of Natural Causes,” says Dr Reid, “ has, not unfitly, been compared to a chain hanging down from Heaven ; a link that is discovered supports the links below it, but it must itself be supported ; and that which supports it must be supported, until we come to the first link, which is supported by the Throne of the Almighty.”—(Essays on the Intellectual Powers, 4to Ed. p. 115.) It is difficult to reconcile the approbation here bestowed on the above similitude, with the excellent and profound remarks on the relation of Cause and Effect, which occur in other parts of Dr Reid’s Works. See Essays on the Active Powers, p. 44, and pp. 286, 287, 288. For additional remarks on the same subject, see Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. II. Note (N.)

Hume had, I think, great merit in showing that the province of the natural philosopher is not to trace necessary connections, but constant conjunctions; or, in other words, to trace the general laws which regulate the order of the universe. But in stating this doctrine he unfortunately went into the opposite extreme; and as the ancients had vitiated natural philosophy by busying themselves about efficient causes, so Mr Hume's argument tends, though perhaps unintentionally on his part, to subvert the foundations of natural religion, by affirming that physical causes are the only ones we know, and that the words power, efficiency, and necessary connection, convey no meaning.

If this important distinction between efficient and physical causes be kept steadily in view, Mr Hume's doctrine concerning the relation of cause and effect in physics, so far from leading to atheism, is more favourable to religious belief than the common inaccurate conceptions entertained on that subject; as it keeps the Deity always in view, not only as the first, but as the constantly operating efficient cause in the material world, (either immediately, or by means of some intelligent instruments,) and as the great connecting principle among all the various phenomena which we observe. *

* This was in fact the very conclusion which Malebranche drew from premises strikingly similar to those of Mr Hume. The great error of Malebranche in this inquiry was his extending his theory of *Occasional Causes* from the material to the moral world. For some remarks upon the important con-

As to Mr Hume's metaphysical subtleties on the idea of causation, it seems to me perfectly unnecessary to enlarge farther on the argument, after the solution which he has himself suggested of the doubts and difficulties which have been now under our consideration. This solution, which is in my opinion eminently philosophical and beautiful, and which is more satisfactory to my mind than anything advanced by his adversaries in opposition to his reasonings, I shall transcribe in Mr Hume's own words.

“ Here then is a kind of pre-established harmo-
“ ny between the course of nature and the succes-
“ sion of our ideas ; and though the *powers and*
“ *forces* by which the former is governed be whol-
“ ly unknown to us, yet our thoughts and con-
“ ceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same
“ train with the other works of nature. Custom
“ is that principle by which this correspondence
“ has been effected ; so necessary to the subsistence
“ of our species, and the regulation of our conduct
“ in every circumstance and occurrence of human
“ life. Had not the presence of an object instant-
“ ly excited the idea of those objects commonly
“ conjoined with it, all our knowledge must have
“ been limited to the narrow sphere of our memory
“ and senses ; and we should never have been able
“ to adjust means to ends, or employ our natural

sequences which follow from this error, see First Dissertation prefixed to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, Part ii. p. 170.

“ powers, either to the producing of good or avoid-
 “ ing evil. Those who delight in the discovery
 “ and contemplation of final causes have here am-
 “ ple subject to employ their wonder and admira-
 “ tion.

“ I shall add, for a farther confirmation of the
 “ foregoing theory, that as this operation of the
 “ mind by which we infer like effects from like cau-
 “ ses, and *vice versa*, is so essential to the exist-
 “ ence of all human creatures, it is not probable
 “ that it could be trusted to the fallacious deduc-
 “ tions of our reason, which is slow in its opera-
 “ tions ; appears not in any degree during the first
 “ years of infancy ; and at best is, in every age
 “ and period of human life, extremely liable to er-
 “ ror and mistake. It is more conformable to the
 “ ORDINARY WISDOM OF NATURE to secure so
 “ necessary an act of the mind by some instinct
 “ or mechanical tendency, which may be infallible
 “ in its operations ; may discover itself at the first
 “ appearance of life and thought ; and may be in-
 “ dependent of all the laboured deductions of the
 “ understanding. As nature has taught us the use
 “ of our limbs without giving us the knowledge of
 “ the muscles and nerves by which they are ac-
 “ tuated, so has she implanted in us an instinct
 “ which carries forward the thoughts in a corre-
 “ spondent course to that which she has establish-
 “ ed among external objects, though we are igno-
 “ rant of those *powers* and *forces* on which this re-

“gular course and succession of objects totally depends.”*

I had just observed, before I introduced the foregoing quotation, that if the distinction between *efficient* and *physical causes* be admitted, Mr Hume’s doctrine with respect to the relation between cause and effect in natural philosophy is more favourable to theism than the common inaccurate conceptions which are entertained concerning that relation, as it keeps the Deity always in view as the constantly operating efficient cause in the material world, and as the great connecting principle among all its various phenomena. †

* See in the last edition of Mr Hume’s *Philosophical Essays*, published during his own lifetime, the two sections entitled *Sceptical Doubts concerning the Operations of the Understanding*, and *Sceptical Solution of these Doubts*.

† As a proof of the confusion we are liable to run into in our speculations about *causes*, without a due attention to the ambiguity of the word cause, I shall transcribe a few sentences from Mr Burke’s *Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*; in which he has explicitly assigned to the phrase *efficient cause* the same meaning I annex to the phrase *physical cause*. In consequence of this, he has been led to represent it as the business of natural philosophy to investigate *efficient causes*, while, at the same time, he acknowledges that *ultimate causes* are placed beyond the reach of our faculties.

“When I say I intend to inquire into the *efficient cause* of sublimity and beauty, I would not be understood to say that I can come to the *ultimate cause*.....That great chain of causes which links one to another, even to the throne of God himself, can never be unravelled by any industry of ours. When we go but one step beyond the immediately sensible qualities of things we go out of our depth. All we

But perhaps it may be thought by some that this very conclusion is a sufficient refutation of the

“do after is but a faint struggle, that shows we are in an element which does not belong to us. So that when I speak of cause, and efficient cause, I only mean certain affections of the mind that cause certain changes in the body; or certain powers and properties in bodies that *work* a change in the mind. As if I were to explain the motion of a body falling to the ground, I would say it was caused by gravity, and I would endeavour to show after what manner this power operated, without attempting to show *why* it operated in this manner; or if I were to explain the effects of bodies striking one another by the common laws of percussion, I should not endeavour to explain *how* motion itself is communicated.”

Is it not a more simple and distinct phraseology to give to those causes which the natural philosopher investigates the name of *Physical*, and to apply the epithet *Efficient* (agreeably to its literal import) to what Burke calls *ultimate* causes?

When I first proposed (more than forty years ago) this phraseology to the late Dr Reid, he objected to it that Newton, to whose language he was superstitiously attached, had used the phrases *physical causes* and *efficient causes* as synonymous. If this be the fact, I have no scruple to say, that Newton has been guilty of indefinite and ambiguous expression; and that the observation only furnishes an additional argument in favour of those distinctive epithets I wish to introduce. Had my excellent friend adopted my suggestion, I cannot help thinking that he would have reconciled some apparent inconsistencies which occur in his later publications, and obviated some of the cavils with which he has been assailed by his not always candid opponents.

For various other observations which appear to myself not unimportant on the subject of this section, I beg leave to refer to the Second Volume of the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Chap. iv. Section 1.

supposition from which it is inferred; for how is it possible to conceive that all the events which are constantly taking place in the different parts of the material universe are the immediate effects of the Divine agency?

For my own part, I have no scruple to admit this conclusion in all its extent; for I cannot perceive any absurdity that it involves; and I am happy to find that it is agreeable to the sentiments of some of our best and soundest philosophers. “All things,” (says Dr Clarke,) “that are done in the world are done either immediately by God himself, or by created intelligent beings. Matter being evidently not capable of any laws or powers whatsoever, any more than it is capable of intelligence, excepting only this *one* negative power, that every part of it will always and *necessarily* continue in that state, whether of rest or motion, wherein it at present is. So that all those things which we commonly say are the effects of the natural powers of matter and laws of motion, of gravitation, attraction, or the like, are indeed (if we will speak strictly and properly,) the effects of God’s acting upon matter *continually and every moment*, either immediately by himself, or mediately by some created intelligent being. Consequently there is no such thing as what we commonly call the course of nature, or the power of nature. The course of nature, truly and properly speaking, is nothing else but the will of God producing certain effects in a

“ continued, regular, constant, and uniform manner ; which course or manner of acting being in every moment perfectly arbitrary is as easy to be altered at any time as to be preserved.”*

Although, however, my opinion on this subject perfectly coincides with that of Dr Clarke, I must own that it has not hitherto been the prevailing opinion among the learned, either of ancient or of modern times. Many of the most celebrated theories we meet with in the history both of physics and of metaphysics, have taken their rise from the zeal of philosophers to elude this very conclusion, which appeared to them too extravagant to merit a particular refutation. It was this idea which gave birth to the scheme of Materialism ; to the Plastic Nature of Cudworth ; to the Mechanical Theories of the universe proposed by Descartes and Leibnitz ;

* In speaking of the theory of occasional causes, Mr Hume has committed an historical mistake, which I shall take this opportunity to correct. “ Malebranche,” he observes, “ and other Cartesians, made the doctrine of the universal and sole efficacy of the Deity the foundation of all their philosophy. *It had, however, no authority in England.* Locke, Clarke, and Cudworth, never so much as take notice of it, but suppose all along that matter has a real, though subordinate and derived power.”—Hume’s *Essays*, Vol. II. p. 475. Ed. of 1784.

Mr Hume was probably led to connect, in this last sentence, the name of Clarke with those of Locke and Cudworth, by taking for granted that his metaphysical opinions agreed exactly with those commonly ascribed to Sir Isaac Newton. The above quotation proves that in fact his opinion, in so far as *matter* is concerned, was the same with that of Malebranche.

and to various others equally gratuitous and not less extravagant. As these theories are not yet entirely abandoned by philosophers, a slight review of the most remarkable may be supposed necessary for the complete illustration of this subject; and I shall accordingly allot for that purpose a note at the end of this volume. *

The different hypotheses to which I have now alluded have been adopted by ingenious men in preference to the simple and sublime doctrine which supposes the order of the universe to be not only at first established, but every moment maintained by the incessant agency of one supreme mind,—a doctrine against which no objection can be stated, but what is founded on prejudices resulting from our own imperfections. How far, indeed, the events we see are actually produced by the immediate hand of God, or how far he may avail himself of the instrumentality of subordinate intelligences, it is impossible for us to determine; but of this we may rest assured, that when he chooses to communicate a certain measure of power to any of his creatures, and employs their operation to accomplish the ends of his providence, it is not because he is himself incompetent to the magnitude, or to the multiplicity of the effects which take place in the universe. And, therefore, the consideration of these effects, how astonishing soever they may be, furnishes no argument in favour of the theories which have already been enumerated.

* See Note (D.)

How powerfully the speculations of philosophers on this subject have been influenced by prejudices suggested by the analogy of human nature, appears from various passages both in ancient and modern authors.

In the seventh chapter of the Treatise *De Mundo*, ascribed to Aristotle, the author represents it as unbecoming the *dignity* of the Supreme Being, *αυτεργειν παντα*, “to set his hand to every thing.”—“If it were not congruous in respect of the state and majesty of Xerxes, the great king of Persia, that he should condescend to do all the meanest offices himself, much less can this be thought suitable in respect of God.” Even Mr Boyle, one of the profoundest, and one of the most pious of our English philosophers, seems to have considered it as derogating from the beauty and perfection of the universe, to suppose that the Divine agency is constantly necessary to preserve it in order, or that he is obliged to employ subordinate intelligences to supply the defects of his mechanism. “It seems manifest enough,” (according to him,) “that whatsoever is done in the world, at least where the rational soul intervenes not, is really effected by corporeal causes and agents, according to the laws settled by the Omniscient Author of things.” And elsewhere he observes, “That as it more commends the skill of an engineer to contrive an elaborate engine, so as that there need nothing to reach his ends in it but the contrivance of parts void of understanding, than if it were necessary

“ that ever and anon a discreet servant should be
 “ employed to concur notably to the operations of
 “ this or that part, or to hinder the engine from
 “ being out of order, so it more sets off the wisdom
 “ of God in the fabric of the universe, that he can
 “ make so vast a machine perform all those many
 “ things which he designed it should, by the mere
 “ contrivance of brute matter managed by certain
 “ laws of motion, and upheld by his ordinary and
 “ general concourse, than if he employed from time
 “ to time an intelligent overseer to regulate and
 “ control the motion of the parts.”*—“ What may
 “ be the opinion of others” (says Lord Kames)
 “ with respect to this argument of Mr Boyle I can-
 “ not say, but to me it is perfectly conclusive.
 “ Considering this universe as a great machine, the
 “ workmanship of an intelligent cause, I cannot
 “ avoid thinking it the more complete the less
 “ mending or interposition it requires. The per-
 “ fection of every piece of workmanship, human
 “ and divine, consists in its answering the designed
 “ purpose, without bestowing farther labour upon
 “ it.” †

The notions of the ancient Epicureans concerning the happiness of the Deity, which they thought could not fail to be impaired by the incessant cares and the unremitting exertions of a superintending Providence,

* Inquiry into the Vulgar Notion of Nature.

† Essay on the Laws of Motion, published in the Essays, Physical and Literary, of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh.

plainly took their rise from the same source. They are beautifully expressed in the following verses of *Lucretius*, where, by the way, he has artfully blended various other topics of sceptical declamation not very consistent with each other, or with that just now mentioned.

- “ Nam (proh sancta Deum tranquilla pectora pace,
 “ Quæ placidum degunt ævum, vitamque serenam !)
 “ Quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
 “ Indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas ?
 “ Quis pariter cœlos omnes convertere ? et omnes
 “ Ignibus ætheriis terras suffire feracis ?
 “ Omnibus inque locis esse omni tempore præsto ?
 “ Nubibus ut tenebras faciat, cœlique serena
 “ Concutiat sonitu ? tum fulmina mittat, et ædeis
 “ Sæpe suas disturbet, et in deserta recedens
 “ Sæviat exercens telum, quod sæpe nocenteis
 “ Præterit, exanimatque indignos inque merenteis ?” *

The logical inconsistency of this passage (the poetical merit of which cannot be too much admired,) is sufficiently obvious. For what is it that constitutes the astonishing sublimity of the description ? What but the magnitude and the multiplicity of those physical changes which the poet represents as every moment exhibited to our view ? And it is from this very magnitude and multiplicity in the phenomena that he infers the impossibility of their being produced by God ; first, because such an exertion would disturb the tranquillity of his repose ; and secondly, because it exceeds the limits of his

* *Lucret. Lib. ii. v. 1092.*

power. Surely the *greater the change* the more strongly does it evince the necessity of a cause; nor is it easy to conceive a more extraordinary inference, than to deny that the cause exists, because in degree it passes the bounds of our comprehension.

If the power of God be unequal to the accomplishment of all these wonders, what other name shall we give to the mysterious energy from which they proceed? Grant only the reality of this *energy* or *active power*, and you grant the necessity of *mind* to account for the phenomena of the universe. And farther than this I do not push our conclusions in this part of the argument.*

* Even Horace in his graver moments bestows on the Epicurean system the title of a *mad philosophy*, and acknowledges its effects in unsettling his own mind. It is remarkable that he ascribes the revival of his old stoical impressions to some of those phenomena of nature from which Lucretius draws an opposite conclusion.

Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens,

INSANIENTIS DUM SAPIENTIE

CONSULTUS ERRO : nunc retrorsum

Vela dare, atque iterare cursus

Cogor relictos. Namque Diespiter

Igni corusco nubila dividens

Plerumque, *per purum tonantes*

Egit equos volucremque currum ;

Quo bruta tellus et vaga flumina,

Quo Styx, &c. &c.

Lib. i. Ode xxxiv.

This ode has been considered by Dacier and other critics as an ironical *jeu d'esprit* levelled against the stoical doctrine of Providence. I am glad to find that Dr Copleston, (a very high authority,) in his elegant and philosophical Prelections on

How much more philosophical than the lines just quoted from Lucretius, I may add how much more sublime, is the well-known passage of our English poet!

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That changed through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth as in the ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow's in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.

This passage (as Dr Joseph Warton has remarked) bears a very striking analogy to a noble one in the old Orphic verses, quoted in the treatise *περι κοσμου*, ascribed to Aristotle; * and it is not a little curious

Poetry, pronounces it to be an ode “Sincèro animi ardore et “summa erga Deum pietate insignis.”—Prælectiones Academi- cæ Oxonii Habitæ ab Edvardo Copleston, S. T. B. p. 278.

If (according to the very happy conjecture of the Abbé Gagliani,) this ode is supposed to be merely the introduction to the following one, *O Diva gratum quæ regis Antium*, this union of the two odes will be found to bestow on both, much additional sublimity and beauty. See the *Commentaires Inédits sur Horace*, published in the second volume of the *Mélanges de Littérature* of M. Suard. Paris, 1804.—A spirited translation of the two odes thus combined may be found in the *Lycée of La Harpe*, Vol. II. p. 358, *et seq.*

* “The learned have been much divided in their opinions “concerning this piece.”—See Warton’s *Essay on the writings and genius of Pope*, Vol. II. p. 168, and the authors there cited.

Dr Warton’s own opinion is, “that the *Treatise De Mundo* “ought to be ascribed to Aristotle, notwithstanding the differ-

that the same ideas occur in some specimens of Hindoo poetry translated by Sir W. Jones, more particularly in the hymn to *Narayna*, or the Spirit of God, taken (as he informs us) from the writings of their ancient authors.

Omniscient Spirit, whose all-ruling power
 Bids from each sense bright emanations beam,
 Glows in the rainbow, sparkles in the stream, &c. &c. &c.*

How far indeed the doctrine expressed in these lines is agreeable to truth, (at least in so far as it

“ent form of its composition.” (Ibid.) But he gives no reason for thinking so.

The learned Meiners (*Historia Doctrinæ de Vero Deo*) decides with confidence that Aristotle was not the author of it, and states particularly the grounds of this decision. That this was also the opinion of Dr Parr will be seen from Note (E.)

* The lines above quoted from Pope have been censured by some writers as savouring of *Spinozism*; and the same censure has been extended to various passages in the *Seasons* of Thomson, particularly to the hymn at the end. I suspect strongly that the authors of this criticism have been but slightly acquainted with Spinoza’s writings, otherwise they would never have confounded a system, which goes to the complete annihilation of every religious sentiment, with a doctrine which (although somewhat approaching to it in phraseology) has plainly originated in feelings of deep, if not of mystical devotion. The former tends to explain away the existence of God by identifying him with matter; the latter to give life and expression to matter, by representing every object as full of God.

The same mode of speaking occurs frequently in the Sacred Writings, as when it is said that “in God we live, and move, and have our being.” It is thus also that thunder is called his voice, the wind his breath, and the tempest the blast of his

involves the supposition of the *unity* of God,) we are not yet warranted by any of the reasonings I have stated to pronounce. I would only at present remark the *simplicity* and the *sublimity* of the doctrine,—two recommendations which, on a subject of this nature, furnish no inconsiderable presumptions that the doctrine is true. For how is it possible to conceive that the limited powers of man are able to imagine an order of things more simple and sublime than what exists in reality? Mr Boyle indeed, in the passage formerly quoted from him, represents the supposition of God's incessant agency

nostrils. Upon a subject of this nature, it is impossible to express ourselves in a language which is not more or less metaphorical; but the import of these metaphors must be collected from the scope and spirit of the reasonings with which they are connected. The theory of the *Anima Mundi*, how absurd and dangerous soever, when pushed to its utmost logical consequences, is certainly suggested by one of the most obvious and natural of all analogies—that of our own frame; and therefore it is but fair to put the most favourable construction possible on the views of those who first adopted it. To compare it to the *Pantheism* of Spinoza and his followers betrays a disposition to discredit the noblest passages in the heathen moralists, and may perhaps lead to other inferences, of which *some* of the writers who have given countenance to this comparison are not aware.

Estne Dei sedes nisi terra, et pontus, et aër,
 Et cælum, et virtus? Superos quid quærimus ultra?
 Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.

I pity the man who in these lines can perceive anything approaching to atheism.—(See Dissertation prefixed to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, Part II. pp. 76, 77.)

as detracting from the perfection and beauty of the universe, and appeals to those principles on which we judge of the skill and ingenuity displayed in the structure of a machine. But the illustration is by no means apposite. The intention of a machine is to save labour, and therefore the less frequently the interposition of the artist is necessary, the more completely does the machine accomplish the end for which it was made. These ideas surely do not apply to the works of the Almighty. The multiplicity of his operations neither distract his attention nor exhaust his power; nor can we suppose him reduced to the necessity of abridging their number by calling mechanism to his aid, without imputing to him the imperfections which mark our own circumscribed faculties and dependent condition.



NOTES.

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TABLE

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NOTES.

Note A, P. 45.

THERE is a remarkable coincidence between this passage of Wollaston and the following one from Montaigne's Essays.

“ Let us pry a little narrowly into, and in God's name
“ examine upon what basis we erect this glory and reputa-
“ tion for which the world is turned topsy-turvy : Wherein
“ do we place this renown that we hunt after with so much
“ trouble ? It is in conclusion Peter or William that car-
“ ries it, takes it into his possession and whom it only con-
“ cerns. O what a courageous faculty is hope, that in a
“ mortal subject and in a moment proceeds to usurp infinity
“ and immensity, and to supply her master's indigence at
“ her pleasure with all things he can imagine or desire !
“ Nature has given us this passion for a pretty toy to play
“ withal. And this Peter or William what is it but a sound
“ when all is said and done ? or three or four strokes of a pen,
“ so easy to be varied in the first place, that I would fain
“ know to whom is to be attributed the glory of so many
“ victories, to Guesquin, to Glesquin, or to Guasquin. .
“ The question is, which of these
“ letters ought to be rewarded for so many sieges, battles,
“ imprisonments, and services done to the crown of France
“ by this her famous constable ?”

“ Secondly, these are dashes of the pen common to a
“ thousand people. How many persons are there in all

“races of the same name and surname ! . . . Who
 “hinders my groom from calling himself Pompey the
 “Great ? But after all, what virtue or what springs are there
 “that fixed upon my deceased groom, or the other Pompey
 “who had his head cut off in Egypt, this glorious renown,
 “or these so much honoured flourishes of the pen, so as
 “to be of any advantage to them ?”

Id cinerem, et manes credis curare sepultos ? *

Fontenelle, in his Dialogues of the Dead, (see Dialogue between Berenice and Cosmo II. of Medicis) has taken up the same argument. “Les hommes sont plaisans ; ils ne
 “peuvent se dérober à la mort, et ils tachent à lui déro-
 “ber deux ou trois syllabes qui leur appartiennent. Voilà
 “une belle chicane qu’ils s’avisent de lui faire. Ne vau-
 “droit-il pas mieux qu’ils consentissent de bonne grace à
 “mourir, eux et leurs noms ? Du
 “moins, ce qui peut manquer à nos noms, c’est une mort,
 “pour ainsi dire grammaticale ; quelques changemens de
 “lettres les mettent en état de ne pouvoir plus servir qu’à
 “donner de l’embarras aux sçavans,” &c. &c.

A thought substantially the same with that of Wollaston occurs in Cowley’s ode entitled *Life and Fame*.

Great Cæsar’s self a higher place does claim
 In the seraphic entity of fame.
 He, since that toy his death,
 Does fill each mouth and breath.
 ’Tis true, the two immortal syllables remain ;
 But oh ye learned men explain,
 What essence—substance—what hypostasis
 In five poor letters is ?
 In those alone does the great Cæsar live.
 ’Tis all the conquer’d world could give.

* Cotton’s Translation.

Notwithstanding the merit of these lines, I should hardly have thought it worth while to quote them, if Dr Hurd (a critic of no common ingenuity as well as learning,) had not shown, by his comment upon them, how completely he had misapprehended the reasoning both of the poet and of the philosopher.

“ This lively ridicule” (says Hurd) “ on posthumous fame is well enough placed in a poem or declamation ; but we are a little surprised to find so grave a writer as Wollaston diverting himself with it. In reality” (says he) “ the man is not known ever the more to posterity, because his name is transmitted to them. *He* does not live, because his *name* does. When it is said ‘ Julius Cæsar subdued Gaul,’ &c. &c. the sophistry is apparent. Put Cato in the place of Cæsar, and then see whether that great man do not *live* in his name *substantially*, that is, to good purpose, if the impression which these two *immortal syllables* make on the mind be of use in exciting posterity, or any one man to the love and imitation of Cato’s virtue.”—(Hurd’s Cowley, V. I. p. 179.)

In this remark Hurd plainly proceeds on the supposition, that Wollaston’s *sophistry* is directed against the *utility* of the love of posthumous glory, whereas the only point in dispute relates to the *origin* of this principle, which Wollaston seems to have thought, if it could not be resolved into the rational motive of self-love, must be the illegitimate and contemptible offspring of our own stupidity and folly.

How very different must Cowley’s feelings have been when he wrote the metaphysical ode referred to by Hurd, from those which inspired that fine burst of juvenile emotion which forms the *exordium* to his Poetical Works !

“ What shall I do to be for ever known,

“ And make the age to come my own ?

“ I shall, like beasts or common people, die,

“ Unless you write my elegy.”

* * *

“ What sound is't strikes mine ear ?

“ Sure I fame's trumpet hear.

“ It sounds like the last trumpet, for it can

“ Raise up the buried man.”

Note B. P. 57.

Although no English version can possibly do justice to the conciseness and spirit of Pliny's own language, I shall, for the sake of my unlearned readers, quote the anecdote referred to in the text, in the admirable translation of Mr Melmoth.

“ I have frequently observed, that amongst the noble
 “ actions and remarkable sayings of distinguished persons,
 “ in either sex, those which have been most celebrated have
 “ not always been the most illustrious ; and I am confirm-
 “ ed in this opinion by a conversation I had yesterday with
 “ Fannia. This lady is grand-daughter to that celebrated
 “ Arria, who animated her husband to meet death by her
 “ own glorious example. She informed me of several par-
 “ ticulars relating to Arria, not less heroical than this fa-
 “ mous action of hers, though less taken notice of, which, I
 “ am persuaded, will raise your admiration as much as they
 “ did mine. Her husband, Cæcinna Pætus, and his son,
 “ were both at the same time attacked with a dangerous ill-
 “ ness, of which the son died. This youth, who had a most
 “ beautiful person and amiable behaviour, was not less en-
 “ deared to his parents by his virtues than by the ties of af-
 “ fection. His mother managed his funeral so privately that
 “ Pætus did not know of his death. Whenever she came
 “ to his bed-chamber she pretended her son was better ; and
 “ as often as he inquired after his health, would answer that

“ he had rested well, or had eat with an appetite. When
“ she found she could no longer restrain her grief, but her
“ tears were gushing out, she would leave the room, and
“ having given vent to her passion, return again with dry
“ eyes, as if she had dismissed every sentiment of sorrow at
“ her entrance. The action was no doubt truly noble, when,
“ drawing the dagger, she plunged it in her breast, and then
“ presented it to her husband, with that ever memorable, I
“ had almost said divine expression,—Pætus, it is not pain-
“ ful. It must, however, be considered when she spoke
“ and acted thus she had the prospect of immortal glory
“ before her eyes to encourage and support her. But was
“ it not something much greater, without the view of such
“ powerful motives, to hide her tears, to conceal her grief,
“ and cheerfully seem the mother when she was so no
“ more ?”

Note C. P. 316.

I shall throw together in this note, without much regard to order or connection, a few slight observations on detached passages of Mr Smith's theory. Some of these observations may, I hope, be useful in illustrating more fully certain phenomena referred by him, rather too exclusively, to the principle of sympathy or fellow-feeling.

In proof of the pleasure annexed to mutual sympathy, Mr Smith remarks, (Vol. I. p. 16, 6th Edit.) “ that a man is
“ mortified when, after having endeavoured to divert the
“ company, he looks around and sees that nobody laughs at
“ his jest but himself.” It may be doubted, however, if in this case a disappointed sympathy be the chief cause of his uneasiness. Various other circumstances undoubtedly conspire, particularly the censure which the silence of the company conveys of his taste and judgment, together with the proof it exhibits of their sullenness and want of good humour.

“The pleasure, too, which” according to Mr Smith, (Ibid.) “we receive from reading to a stranger a poem whose effect “on ourselves has been destroyed by repetition,” may be explained without any refinement about *sympathy*, by the satisfaction we always feel in communicating pleasure to another, combined with the flattering though indirect testimony paid to the justness of our taste, by its coincidence with that of an individual whose judgment we respect. The sympathy of an acknowledged fool would certainly be in the same circumstances a source of mortification.

In mentioning these considerations, I do not mean to dispute that there is an exquisite pleasure arising from mutual sympathy; but only to suggest, that Mr Smith has ascribed to this principle solely, various phenomena, in accounting for which other causes appear to be no less deserving of attention.

The versatile and accommodating manners which Mr Smith has so beautifully described in various passages of his *theory* may be assumed from different motives,—in some men from a desire to promote the happiness of those around them; and where this is the case, it is unquestionably one of the most amiable and meritorious forms in which benevolence can appear, and contributes more by its daily and constant operation to increase the comfort of human life, than those splendid exertions of virtue which we are so seldom called upon to make. In other men, in whom the benevolent affections are not so strong, it may proceed chiefly from a view to their own tranquillity and amusement, and may render them agreeable and harmless companions, without giving them any claim to the appellation of *virtuous*. In many it arises from views of self-interest and ambition; and in such men, whatever pleasure we may have derived from their society, these qualities never fail to inspire universal distrust and dislike, as soon as they are known to be the real motives of that pliancy and versatility with which we were at first

captivated. It would appear, therefore, that the accommodating temper, where it is approved as morally *right*, is not approved on its own account, but as an expression of a *benevolent* disposition.

From the combined efforts of the actor and of the spectator towards a mutual sympathy, Mr Smith endeavours to trace the origin of two different sets of virtues. "Upon the effort of the spectator to enter into the situation of the person principally concerned, and to raise his sympathetic emotions to a level with the emotions of the actor, are founded the gentle, the amiable virtues, the virtues of candid condescension and indulgent humanity. Upon the effort of the person principally concerned to lower his own emotions, so as to correspond as nearly as possible with those of the spectator, are founded the great, the awful, and respectable virtues, the virtues of self-denial, of self-government, of that command of the passions which subjects all the movements of our nature to what our own dignity and honour, and the propriety of our own conduct require." If the word *qualities* were substituted for *virtues*, I agree in general with this doctrine. The mode of expression, however, certainly requires correction. "Candid condescension," and "indulgent humanity" are always amiable; and when they really proceed from a disposition habitually benevolent, are with great propriety called *virtues*. "Self-denial and self-government" are always *respectable*, and sometimes *awful* qualities; because they indicate a force of mind which few men possess; but it depends on the *motives* from which they are exercised, whether they indicate a virtuous or a vicious character.

As a farther illustration of the foregoing doctrine, Mr Smith considers particularly the degrees of the different passions which are consistent with propriety, and endea-

vours to show, that in every case it is decent or indecent to express a passion strongly, according as mankind are disposed or not disposed to sympathise with it. “ It is unbecoming, for example, to express strongly any of those passions which arise from a certain condition of the body ; because other men who are not in the same condition cannot be expected to sympathise with them. It is unbecoming to cry out with bodily pain, because the sympathy felt by the spectator bears no proportion to the acuteness of what is felt by the sufferer. The case is somewhat similar with those passions which take their origin from a particular turn or habit of the imagination.”

All violent expressions of such passions are undoubtedly offensive, and good breeding dictates that they should be restrained ; but *not* because the spectator finds it difficult to enter into the situation of the person principally concerned ; perhaps the opposite reason would be nearer the truth. To eat voraciously in the presence of a company who have already dined would be obviously indecent ; but, I apprehend, not so much so as to eat even moderately in presence of one whom we knew to be hungry, and who was not permitted to share in the repast. With respect to *bodily pain*, it appears to me that there is no calamity whatever which so completely interests the spectator, or with which his sympathy is so acute and lively. It is on this account that a steady composure under it, while it indicates the manly quality of self-command, has something in it peculiarly amiable, when we suppose that it proceeds in any degree from a tenderness for the feelings of others. In many surgical operations it is probable that the imagination of the pain exceeds the reality ; and there cannot be a doubt, that where the patient is the object of our love, the sufferings which *he* feels require less fortitude than ours.

“ In the case of the unsocial passions of hatred and resent-

“ment, the sympathy of the spectator is divided between the
 “person who feels the passion and the person who is the ob-
 “ject of it. We are concerned for both, and our fear for
 “what the one may suffer damps our resentment for what
 “the other has suffered. Hence the imperfect degree in
 “which we sympathise with such passions; and the pro-
 “priety, when under their influence, of moderating their
 “expression to a much greater degree than in the case of
 “any other emotions.”

Abstracting from all considerations of this kind, satisfac-
 tory reasons may be given for our listening with caution to
 the dictates of *resentment* when we ourselves are the suf-
 ferers. Experience must soon satisfy us how apt this pas-
 sion is to blind the judgment, and to exaggerate in our es-
 timation the injury we have received; and how certainly we
 lay in matter for future remorse for our cooler hours, if we
 obey its first suggestions. A wise man, therefore, learns to
 delay forming his resolutions till his passion has in some de-
 gree subsided;—*not* in order to obtain the sympathy of
 other men, but in order to secure the approbation of his own
 conscience. If he conceives to himself what conduct the im-
 partial spectator will approve of, it is merely as an expedient
 to divest himself of the partialities of self-love; and when
 he acts agreeably to what he supposes to be, on this occasion,
 the unbiassed judgment of spectators, his satisfaction arises
not from the possession of their sympathy, but from a con-
 sciousness that he has done his best to ascertain what was
right, and has regulated his conduct accordingly.

“Where there is no envy in the case, our propensity to
 “sympathise with joy is much stronger than our propensity
 “to sympathise with sorrow.”

“It is on account of this dull sensibility to the afflictions
 “of others that magnanimity, amidst great distress, always
 “appears so divinely graceful.”

If this were true, would it not follow that the admiration of heroic magnanimity would be in proportion to the insensibility of the spectator?

“ It is because mankind are more disposed to court the favour, to comply with the humours, and to judge with indulgence of the actions of the prosperous than with those of the unfortunate, that we make parade of our riches, and conceal our poverty.”—“ It is the misfortunes of kings alone” (Mr Smith adds) “ which afford the proper subjects for tragedy.”

Of this last proposition I confess I have some doubts, at least to the extent in which it is here stated; and I am inclined to think that in those cases where it holds, it may be easily accounted for on more obvious principles. By far the greater number of tragedies are founded on historical facts; and history records only the transactions of men in elevated stations. But even in *these* tragedies the most interesting personages are frequently domestics or captives. The old shepherd in Douglas is surely a more interesting character than Lord Randolph. And for my own part I am not ashamed to confess that I have shed more tears at some *Tragedies bourgeoises* and *Comedies larmoyantes* of very inferior merit, than were ever extorted from me by the exquisite poetry of Corneille, Racine, or Voltaire.

The fortunes of the great, indeed, interest us more than those of men in inferior stations. But for this there are various causes, independent of that assigned by Mr Smith. 1. Their destiny involves the fortunes of many, and frequently affects the public interest. 2. Their situation points them out to public attention, and renders them subjects of general and daily conversation; and, accordingly, we may remark a curiosity perfectly analogous to that which the history of the great excites, with respect to the biography of all men who have been long and constantly in the view of the world. The

trifling anecdotes in the life of *Quin* or *Garrick* find as many readers as the important events connected with the History of Frederick the Great.

In my Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Smith, I observed, that, according to the learned translator of Aristotle's Ethics and Politics, " the general idea which runs through
" Mr Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments was obviously
" borrowed from the following passage of Polybius. ' From
" the union of the two sexes, to which all are naturally in-
" clined, children are born. When any of these, therefore,
" being arrived at perfect age, instead of yielding suitable
" returns of gratitude and assistance to those by whom they
" have been bred, on the contrary, attempt to injure them
" by words or actions, it is manifest that those who behold
" the wrong, after having also seen the sufferings and the
" anxious cares that were sustained by the parents in the
" nourishment and education of their children, must be great-
" ly offended and displeased at such proceeding. For man,
" who, among all the various kinds of animals, is alone en-
" dowed with the faculty of reason, cannot, like the rest,
" pass over such actions, but will make reflection on what
" he sees ; and, comparing likewise the future with the pre-
" sent, will not fail to express his indignation at this inju-
" rious treatment ; to which, as he foresees, he may also at
" some time be exposed. Thus again, when any one who
" has been succoured by another in the time of danger, in-
" stead of showing the like kindness to this benefactor, en-
" deavours at any time to destroy or hurt him, it is certain
" that all men must be shocked by such ingratitude, through
" sympathy with the resentment of their neighbour, and
" from an apprehension also that the case may be their own.
" And from hence arises in the mind of every man, a cer-
" tain *notion* of the nature and force of duty, in which con-
" sists both the beginning and the end of justice. In like

“ manner, the man who, in defence of others, is seen to
 “ throw himself the foremost into every danger, and even
 “ to sustain the fury of the fiercest animals, never fails to
 “ obtain the loudest acclamations of applause and veneration
 “ from all the multitude, while he who shows a different
 “ conduct is pursued with censure and reproach. And thus
 “ it is that the people begin to discern the nature of things
 “ honourable and base, and in what consists the difference
 “ between them; and to perceive that the former, on ac-
 “ count of the advantage that attends them, are fit to be
 “ admired and imitated, and the latter to be detested and
 “ avoided.’ ”

“ The doctrine,” (says Dr Gillies,) “ contained in this
 “ passage is expanded by Dr Smith into a theory of Moral
 “ Sentiments. But he departs from *his author* in placing
 “ the perception of right and wrong in sentiment or feel-
 “ ing, ultimately and simply. Polybius, on the contrary,
 “ maintains with Aristotle, that these notions arise from
 “ reason or intellect operating on affection or appetite; or,
 “ in other words, that the moral faculty is a compound, and
 “ may be resolved into two simpler principles of the mind.”
 —(Gillies’s *Aristot.* Vol. I. pp. 302, 303. 2d Edit.)

The only expression I object to in the preceding sen-
 tences, is the phrase *his author*, which has the appearance
 of insinuating a charge of plagiarism against Mr Smith; a
 charge which, I am confident, he did not deserve, and to
 which the above extract does not in my opinion afford any
 plausible colour. It exhibits, indeed, an instance of a cu-
 rious coincidence between two philosophers in their views
 of the same subject, and as such I have no doubt that Mr
 Smith himself would have remarked it, had it occurred to
 his memory when he was writing his book. Of such acci-
 dental coincidences between different minds, examples pre-
 sent themselves every day to those, who, after having drawn

from their internal resources all the lights they could supply on a particular question, have the curiosity to compare their own conclusions with those of their predecessors. And it is extremely worthy of observation, that, in proportion as any conclusion approaches to the truth, the number of previous approximations to it may be reasonably expected to be multiplied.

In the instance before us, however, the question about originality is of little or no moment, for the peculiar merit of Mr Smith's work does not lie in his general principle, but in the skilful use he has made of it to give a systematical arrangement to the most important discussions and doctrines of ethics. In this point of view, the Theory of Moral Sentiments may be justly regarded as one of the most original efforts of the human mind in that branch of science to which it relates; and even if we were to suppose that it was first suggested to the author by a remark of which the world was in possession for two thousand years before, this very circumstance would only reflect a stronger lustre on the novelty of his design, and on the invention and taste displayed in its execution.

In the same work I have observed, that, “ in studying
 “ the connection and filiation of successive theories, when
 “ we are at a loss in any instance for a link to complete the
 “ continuity of philosophical speculation, it seems much
 “ more reasonable to search for it in the systems of the im-
 “ mediately preceding period, and in the inquiries which
 “ *then* occupied the public attention, than in detached sen-
 “ tences, or accidental expressions gleaned from the relics of
 “ distant ages. It is thus only that we can hope to seize
 “ the precise point of view in which an author's subject
 “ first presented itself to his attention, and to account to
 “ our own satisfaction, from the particular aspect under which

“ he saw it, for the subsequent direction which was given
“ to his curiosity. In following such a plan, our object is
“ not to detect plagiarisms, which we suppose men of ge-
“ nius to have intentionally concealed, but to fill up an ap-
“ parent chasm in the history of science, by laying hold of
“ the thread which insensibly guided the mind from one
“ station to another.” Upon these principles our attention
is naturally directed on the present occasion to the in-
quiries of Dr Butler, in preference to those of any other au-
thor, ancient or modern. At the time when Mr Smith began
his literary career, Butler unquestionably stood highest
among the ethical writers of England; and his works ap-
pear to have produced a still deeper and more lasting im-
pression in Scotland than in the other part of the island.
Of the esteem in which they were held by Lord Kames
and Mr Hume, satisfactory documents remain in their
published letters; nor were his writings less likely to attract
the notice of Mr Smith, in consequence of the pointed and
unanswerable objections which they contain to some of the
favourite opinions of his predecessor Dr Hutcheson.

The probability of this conjecture is confirmed by the ob-
vious and easy transition which connects the theory of
sympathy with Butler’s train of thinking in his Sermon on
Self-Deceit. In order to free the mind from the influence
of its artifices, experience gradually teaches us (as Butler
has excellently shown) either to recollect the judgments we
have formerly passed in similar circumstances on the con-
duct of others, or to state cases to ourselves, in which we
and all our personal concerns are left entirely out of the
question. Hence it was not an unnatural inference, on the
first aspect of the fact, that our only ideas of right and
wrong, with respect to our own conduct, are derived from our
sentiments with respect to the conduct of others. This ac-

cordingly (as we have already seen) is the distinguishing principle of Mr Smith's theory.*

I have formerly referred to a note in Butler's fifth sermon, in which he has exposed the futility of Hobbes's definition of pity. † In the same note, it is remarked farther by the very acute and profound author, that Hobbes's premises, if admitted to be sound, so far from establishing his favourite doctrine concerning the selfish nature of man, would afford an additional illustration of the provision made in his constitution for the establishment and maintenance of the social union. "If there be really any such thing as the "fiction or imagination of danger to ourselves from sight of "the miseries of others, which Hobbes speaks of, and which "he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of compassion; if "there be anything of this sort common to mankind distinct "from the reflection of reason, it would be a most remarkable instance of what was furthest from his thoughts, namely, of a mutual sympathy between each particular of the "species,—a fellow feeling common to mankind. It would "not indeed be an instance of our substituting others for "ourselves, but it would be an example of our substituting ourselves for others." To those who are at all acquainted with Mr Smith's book, it is unnecessary for me to observe how very precisely Butler has here touched on the general fact which is assumed as the basis of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

In various other parts of Butler's writings there are manifest anticipations of Mr Smith's ethical speculations. In his Sermon, for example, on Forgiveness of Injuries, he expresses himself thus: "Without knowing particulars, I take "upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may "depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offence

* See p. 310 of this Volume.

† Id. pp. 113, 114.

“ is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in
 “ such a peculiar situation, with respect to injuries done
 “ to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as
 “ they really are than our eye can see itself. If we could
 “ place ourselves at a due distance, (that is, be really un-
 “ prejudiced,) we should frequently discern *that* to be in
 “ reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we
 “ now fancy we see to be malice or scorn. From this pro-
 “ per point of view we should likewise, in all probability, see
 “ something of these latter in ourselves, and most certainly
 “ a great deal of the former. Thus the indignity or injury
 “ would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come
 “ out to be nothing at all. Self-love is a medium of a pe-
 “ culiar kind ; in these cases it magnifies everything which
 “ is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens every
 “ thing amiss in ourselves.”

The following passage in Butler's Sermon on Self-Deceit is still more explicit. “ It would very much prevent our
 “ being misled by this self-partiality, to reduce that practi-
 “ cal rule of our Saviour—*whatsoever ye would that men*
 “ *should do to you, even so do unto them*—to our judg-
 “ ment or way of thinking. This rule, you see, consists of
 “ two parts. One is to substitute another for yourself when
 “ you take a survey of any part of your behaviour, or con-
 “ sider what is proper and fit and reasonable for you to do
 “ upon any occasion: The other part is, that you substi-
 “ tute yourself in the room of another ; consider yourself
 “ as the person affected by such a behaviour, or towards
 “ whom such an action is done, and then you would not only
 “ see, but likewise feel the reasonableness or unreasonableness of such an action or behaviour.”

The same idea is stated with great clearness and conciseness by Hobbes. “ There is an easy rule to know upon a
 “ sudden, whether the action I be to do be against the law

“ of nature or not. And it is but this, *That a man ima-*
 “ *gine himself in the place of the party with whom he hath*
 “ *to do, and reciprocally him in his.* Which is no more but
 “ changing (as it were) of the scales ; for every man’s pas-
 “ sion weigheth heavy in his own scale, but not in the scale
 “ of his neighbour. And this rule is very well known and
 “ expressed in the old dictate, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, al-*
 “ *teri ne feceris.*” *

It is observed by Gibbon that this golden rule is to be found in a moral treatise of Isocrates, (in Nicocle, Tom I. p. 93. Edit. Battic.) Ἄ πασχόντες ὑς ἑτέρων οργιζέσθε, ταυτα τοις ἀλλοις μη ποιεῖτε. (See Gibbon’s History of the Decline, &c. Vol. X. p. 191.)

To this note I beg leave to subjoin the following passage, with which, in my Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Smith, I have concluded a slight sketch of the work to which the foregoing observations refer.

“ Such are the outlines of Mr Smith’s theory of Moral
 “ Sentiments, a work which, whatever opinion we may en-
 “ tertain of the justness of its conclusions, must be allowed
 “ by all to be a singular effort of invention, ingenuity, and
 “ subtilty. For my own part, I must confess, that it does
 “ not coincide with my notions concerning the foundation of
 “ morals ; but I am convinced, at the same time, that it con-
 “ tains a large mixture of important truth ; and that, although
 “ the author has sometimes been misled by too great a de-
 “ sire of generalizing his principles, he has had the merit
 “ of directing the attention of philosophers to a view of hu-
 “ man nature, which had formerly, in a great measure,

* Moral and Political Works of Thomas Hobbes, folio edition, London, 1750, p. 46.

“ escaped their notice. Of the great proportion of just and
“ sound reasoning which the theory involves, its striking
“ plausibility is a sufficient proof; for, as the author him-
“ self has remarked, no system in morals can well gain our
“ assent, if it does not border, in some respects, upon the
“ truth. ‘ A system of natural philosophy ’ (he observes)
“ may appear very plausible, and be for a long time gene-
“ rally received in the world, and yet have no foundation
“ in nature ; but the author who should assign as the cause
“ of any natural sentiment some principle, which neither
“ had any connection with it, nor resembled any other prin-
“ ciple which had some such connection, would appear ab-
“ surd and ridiculous to the most injudicious and unexpe-
“ rienced reader.’ The merit, however, of Mr Smith’s per-
“ formance does not rest here. No work, undoubtedly, can
“ be mentioned, ancient or modern, which exhibits so com-
“ plete a view of those facts with respect to our moral per-
“ ceptions, which it is one great object of this branch of
“ science to refer to their general laws, and upon this ac-
“ count it well deserves the careful study of all whose
“ taste leads them to prosecute similar inquiries. These
“ facts are indeed frequently expressed in a language which
“ involves the author’s particular theories. But they are
“ always presented in the most happy and beautiful lights ;
“ and it is easy for an attentive reader, by stripping them
“ of hypothetical terms, to state them to himself with that
“ logical precision, which, in such very difficult disquisi-
“ tions, can alone conduct us with certainty to the truth.

“ It is proper to observe farther, that, with the theoreti-
“ cal doctrines of the book, there are every where interwo-
“ ven with singular taste and address, the purest and most
“ elevated maxims concerning the practical conduct of life ;
“ and that it abounds throughout with interesting and in-
“ structive delineations of characters and manners. A consi-

“derable part of it, too, is employed in collateral inquiries, which, upon every hypothesis that can be formed concerning the foundation of morals, are of equal importance. Of this kind is the speculation formerly mentioned with respect to the influence of fortune on our moral sentiments, and another speculation, no less valuable, with respect to the influence of custom and fashion on the same part of our constitution. *

“The style in which Mr Smith has conveyed the fundamental principles on which his theory rests, does not seem to me to be so perfectly suited to the subject as that which he employs on most other occasions. In communicating ideas which are extremely abstract and subtile, and about which it is hardly possible to reason correctly, without the scrupulous use of appropriated terms, he sometimes presents to us a choice of words, by no means strictly synonymous, so as to divert the attention from a precise and steady conception of his proposition; and a similar effect is in other instances produced by that diversity of forms which, in the course of his copious and seducing composition, the same truth insensibly assumes. When the subject of his work leads him to address the imagination and the heart, the variety and felicity of his illustrations, the richness and fluency of his eloquence,

* I ought to have added, as of still higher moment, the remarks which occur in different parts of his work on the Final Causes of some of our Moral Principles, particularly the general reflections in Part ii. Sect. 2, beginning “In every part of the universe we observe means adjusted with the nicest artifice to the ends which they are intended to produce,” &c.

These reflections, there can be little doubt, (as I have elsewhere observed,) were meant by the author as an indirect refutation of Mr Hume’s Theory of Utility. See *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. p. 501. Third edition.

“ and the skill with which he wins the attention and commands the passions of his readers, leave him, among our English moralists, without a rival.”

Note (D,) p. 366.

The object of this note is to give a slight view of some of the most noted hypotheses which have been formed to account for the active powers exhibited in the universe.

1st. The first is that of *Materialism*, according to which the phenomena of nature are the result of certain active powers essentially inherent in matter.

Of this doctrine there are very early traces in the history of metaphysical science. The oldest philosophers in Phœnicia and Greece, of whom we have any account, appear to have founded their physical systems on three suppositions. 1st, That of a *Vacuum*; 2d, That of *Atoms*; and, 3dly, That of the *Gravity of Atoms*. This doctrine of atoms, (according to Posidonius the stoic, as cited by Strabo and Sextus Empiricus,) was more ancient than the times of the Trojan war, having been taught by Moschus, a Phœnician. There is reason to believe that the more ancient atomists taught * that there were living principles also, which existed before the union of the systems of these elementary corpuscles, and continued to exist after their dissolution; and that they saw the necessity of admitting active as well as passive principles, life as well as mechanism in the system of the universe. In the progress, however, of philosophical speculation among the Greeks this doctrine came to be simplified, and the hypothesis of active incorporeal sub-

* Maclaurin's Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries. Second Edition, p. 26, *et seq.* See also Cudworth's Intellectual System, Book i. Chap. 1.

stances to be rejected. Democritus in particular, and afterwards Epicurus, attempted to account for the phenomena of nature from matter and motion only, and considered gravity as an essential property of atoms, by which they are perpetually in motion, or making an effort to move, and have done so from eternity.

In modern times this doctrine has appeared in various forms. Even some authors, whom it would be most uncandid and unjust to call materialists, have occasionally expressed themselves in a manner too favourable to it. “ Matter, as far as we can discover,” (says Lord Kames) “ is certainly not endued with thought or voluntary motion, and yet that it is endued with a power of motion in certain circumstances appears to me an extreme clear point. Dropping a stone from a high tower, it falls to the ground without any external impulse as far as we can observe. Here is an effect produced which every one who has not studied philosophy will attribute to a *power* in the stone itself. One would not hesitate to draw this conclusion should the stone move upwards; and yet, setting aside habit and custom, it must be evident that a stone can as little move downwards as upwards without a *vis motrix*. And that this is a just as well as a natural way of thinking will appear by analogy. When a man is in motion we readily ascribe the effect produced to a power which he possesses to move his limbs. Why then do philosophers deny to the stone in the act of falling the power of beginning motion, a power which they so readily ascribe to man? If it be objected that man is a being endued with a power of moving himself, and of moving other things, the plain answer is, that these are facts which we learn no other way than by experience, and we have the same experience for a voucher, that a stone set free in the air will move itself. And if it be

“ farther urged that man is a thinking being, the answer
 “ will readily occur, that a power of beginning visible mo-
 “ tion is no more connected with a power of thinking than
 “ it is with any other property of matter or spirit. Nay,
 “ Mr Locke holds that matter may be endowed with a
 “ power of thinking, and supposing this power superadded
 “ to the other properties of matter, it cannot be maintained
 “ that matter would be rendered thereby more or less capable
 “ of beginning or continuing visible motion.” *

In considering the history of philosophical opinions, there is nothing so amusing and instructive as to examine the natural prejudices from which they have taken their rise, and to account for their diversity by the different points of view from which the same object has been surveyed by different observers. By attending to the state of science when a particular philosopher lived, we are sometimes able to catch the precise point from which his views were taken, and to perceive the object under the same aspect which it presented to him. In this manner we obtain a thread to guide us through the mazes of an apparent labyrinth : We systematise a seeming chaos of incoherent notions, and render the history of error and absurdity a source of important information with respect to the natural progress of the human mind.

I have elsewhere mentioned some circumstances which render it probable that children conceive all objects animated, and that they ascribe the changes they see take place in them to an internal power similar to what they experience in themselves. The case is the same with *savages*, who conceive the sea, the earth, the sun, moon, and stars, rivers, fountains, and groves to be active and animated beings. It is remarked by Raynal, that, “ wherever savages see *motion* “ which they cannot account for, *there* they suppose a soul ;

* Essay on the Laws of Motion, published in the Essays Physical and Literary of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh.

“ and that when any piece of mechanism (such as a watch) “ is presented to them, for the first time, in a moving state, “ they are apt to suppose it to be *an animal*.” Such then seems to be the natural and most obvious conclusions of the mind unenlightened by experience and reflection.

The first efforts of philosophical inquiry could not fail to expose the absurdity of these ideas; and in proportion as physical causes came to be discovered, and the mutual connections, and dependencies of phenomena to be ascertained, matter would be gradually stripped of life and intelligence; a suspicion would arise, that connections exist where we are unable to trace them, and that the universe is nothing but a vast machine. Even the active powers which put the machine in motion would, in the progress of speculative refinement, be considered as properties essential to matter, and on the same footing with its extension and figure. Thus *mind*, which was at first supposed to animate every thing, comes, in process of time, to be banished from the universe; and even the phenomena of thought and volition, of which we are conscious, to be ascribed to a certain combination of matter and motion.

The language of the Newtonian philosophy, with respect to some of the qualities of matter, is somewhat apt to encourage in superficial thinkers prejudices which lead to materialism. Thus the words attraction and gravitation seem to express active powers essential to, and inherent in matter, and they have accordingly been severely censured by some of Sir Isaac's adversaries as involving that absurd and dangerous supposition. But whatever objections may be made to the language, it must not be forgotten that Sir Isaac himself employed these words merely to express a fact, and that he was at pains to guard his readers against that very misapprehension of his meaning which has been so often imputed to his philosophy. “ Voces autem attractionis, im-

“pulsus, vel propensionis cujuscunque in centrum, indif-
 “ferenter et pro se mutuo promiscue usurpo; has vires
 “non physicè sed mathematicè tantum considerando. Unde
 “caveat lector, ne per hujusmodi voces cogitet me speciem
 “vel modum actionis causamve aut rationem physicam ali-
 “cubi definire, vel centris (quæ sunt puncta mathematica)
 “vires vere et physicè tribuere; si forte centra trahere, aut
 “vires centrorum esse, dixerò.” *

The scheme of materialism has been so accurately examined, and so fully refuted in a variety of excellent publications, (particularly in Dr Clarke's book on the Existence and Attributes of God,) that a review of the controversy to which it has given rise would be superfluous and tedious, even if I had it in my power to enter upon the discussion without encroaching on more interesting speculations. The following very slight hints will, I hope, be sufficient for my purpose.

That a commencement of motion in a body formerly at rest implies the agency of mind is a proposition involved in the only notions of body and mind that we are capable of forming: Or rather, it is a proposition, the truth of which is known to us in the very same manner in which we know that body and mind exist. As sensation implies a sentient being, and thought a thinking being, so a commencement of motion implies a moving *power*, or, in other words, an *agent*. Our conclusion in these different instances are not the result of experience, but are perceptions of the understanding, (or, in other words, judgments,) necessarily accompanying our apprehension of the facts. In order to be satisfied of this, it is only necessary to consider, that wherever experience informs us of a connection between two things, both of them must have been distinct and separate objects of our

* Definition VIII. at the beginning of Newton's Principia.

knowledge, so that the two may have been compared together, and their connection remarked. To suppose, therefore, that it is from experience we learn that sensation, thought, and a power of beginning motion are attributes of mind, is to take for granted that we have some knowledge of mind distinct from what we have of its attributes; whereas, in point of fact, (as I had formerly occasion to show,) Mind is not a direct object of our knowledge, and our only notion of it is a relative notion suggested by its operations of which we are conscious. Mind, we say, is *that* which feels, which thinks, which has the power of beginning motion; and therefore, the proposition, that sensation, thought, and the power of beginning motion, *are* attributes of mind, is not a fact resting on experience, but a truth involved in the only notion of mind we possess.

It has indeed been asserted by some philosophers that it is from experience alone we know that a power of beginning motion is an attribute of mind; and, of consequence, that the same power *may* belong to matter for anything we can prove to the contrary. Thus, Lord Kames, in a passage already quoted from him, has observed that “ a power of beginning
“ visible motion is no more connected with a power of think-
“ ing than it is with any other property of matter or spirit.” And hence he concludes, that “ it is experience alone, and
“ not any consideration *a priori*, that can determine whether
“ the power of beginning motion belongs either to matter
“ or to mind. That *mind* has the power of beginning mo-
“ tion we know from our own consciousness: And have we
“ not the very same evidence of our experience when we see
“ a stone fall downwards, that a power of beginning motion
“ belongs to the stone?”

To the greater part of this reasoning a sufficient answer may be collected from what has been already advanced; but there is one remark made by Lord Kames which re-

quires a little farther consideration : “ that a power of beginning visible motion is no more connected with a power of thinking than it is with any other property of matter or spirit.” In favour of this observation it must I think be granted, that the power of thinking does not imply a power of beginning motion ; for we can easily conceive beings possessed of the former without any share of the latter. But the converse of the proposition is not equally clear, that a power of beginning motion does not imply a power of thinking. On the contrary, it seems evident that it does imply it, for without thought how could the direction or the velocity of the motion be determined ? A commencement of motion, therefore, it would appear, not only implies an agent, but an agent possessed of the power of thinking.

This conclusion will be strongly confirmed by attending to the motions arising from gravity ; motions which are regulated both in their direction and quantity by circumstances altogether external to the moving body. A stone, for example, dropped in the air falls downwards in the direction of a line tending nearly to the earth’s centre, and the result is the same, in whatever quarter of the globe the experiment is made ; so that the *direction* of the stone’s motion varies in an infinite number of ways, according to external circumstances. If the stone be carried to different heights above the earth’s surface, the accelerating force of its gravity to the earth varies with its distance to the earth’s centre, according to a general rule ;—decreasing, viz. in the same proportion in which the square of the distance increases. The gravity, besides, of one body to another increases both in proportion to its own quantity of matter and to the quantity of matter in the body to which it gravitates. How is it possible to suppose that all this arises from an inherent and essential activity in matter, unless we likewise suppose that every body is not only essentially conscious of the quantity

of matter it contains, but is essentially capable of perceiving the quantities of matter in other bodies, together with their situations and distances? It was not, therefore, without reason that Hobbes, after having ascribed to matter a power of self-motion, supposed that it was also endued with *an obscure sense and perception*; and that it differed only from animated beings in wanting the faculty of memory and organs of sense and motion as perfect as theirs. The doctrine, indeed, is too absurd to require a serious examination; but it is evidently a necessary consequence of the scheme of materialism, and it has accordingly been adopted by various other writers, who had a leaning, either avowed or secret, to the same principles.

2d, It has been supposed that the phenomena of nature result from certain active powers communicated to matter at its first formation.

Thus Mr Derham says, "it hath pleased the Author of all Things to inspirit the particles of matter with a certain active power called gravity;" and in another passage, "this attractive or gravitating power I take to be congenial to matter, and imprinted on all the matter of the universe by the Creator's *fat* at the creation."

Of this doctrine of Derham's it seems to be a sufficient refutation to observe, that if matter be at all inactive it must be essentially inactive, and cannot possibly be rendered otherwise any more than it could continue to be matter after its extension and figure were destroyed.

It is indeed possible to conceive, as some have actually done, a mind connected with every particle of matter,—a supposition which, however unsupported by proof, involves no absurdity nor contradiction. But this is not Derham's supposition; for he plainly understood that the active power of gravity was communicated to the matter itself. His supposition, therefore, is perfectly analogous to Locke's doctrine

about the possibility of superadding to the other qualities of matter *a power of thinking*. Indeed Derham's hypothesis needs that of Locke to make it complete; for how could two bodies adjust their gravitating forces towards each other without a consciousness of their mutual distance?

3d, Somewhat akin to this supposition is that which is implied in the language of those philosophers who ascribe the phenomena of nature to certain *general laws* established by the Deity.

With respect to this language I have elsewhere had occasion to observe that it is entirely metaphorical, and that although it may be convenient from its conciseness, it suggests to the fancy an analogy which is extremely apt to mislead.

As the order of society results from the general rules prescribed by the legislator, so the order of the universe is conceived to result from certain laws established by the Deity. Thus it is customary to say that the fall of heavy bodies towards the earth's surface, the ebbing and flowing of the sea, the motions of the planets in their orbits, are consequences of the *law* of gravitation. In one sense this is abundantly accurate, but it must not be too literally understood. In those political associations from which the metaphor is borrowed, the laws are addressed to rational and voluntary agents, who are able to comprehend their meaning, and regulate their conduct accordingly. But in the phenomena exhibited by the material world, the order we see not only implies *intelligence* in its first conception, but *power* to account for its continued existence; or, in other words, it is the same being who enacts and executes the law. If the word *law*, therefore, be in such instances literally understood, it must mean an uniform mode of acting prescribed to the Deity by himself; and it has accordingly been explained in this sense by the best writers on natural

religion, particularly by Dr Clarke in a passage formerly quoted.

4th, A fourth supposition is that of Dr Cudworth, who ascribes the phenomena of the material world to what he calls a *plastic or formative nature*, or (according to his own definition of it) to “ a vital and spiritual but unintelligent and necessary agent, created by the Deity for the execution of his purposes.” The same observations that were made upon the *second* of the foregoing hypotheses are applicable to this doctrine, which, notwithstanding the high merits of its author, is perhaps the most unphilosophical of any mentioned in this enumeration. It differs, indeed, from that to which I have assigned the *second* place in my arrangement only in this, that it presents the same idea under a form somewhat more mysterious, attempting to conceal its native absurdity under a veil of scholastic words more likely to impose on an unlearned ear.

5th, Dissatisfied with all these doctrines, a late author of genius and learning has made an attempt to revive the *ancient theory of mind*; the only effectual bulwark, according to him, against the materialism and atheism of modern times.

The general principle of this theory is, that every motion is not only produced but continued by *mind*. *Mind*, we are told, is that which moves—body is that which is moved. Every particle of matter, therefore, Lord Monboddo supposes to be animated by different minds. Thus there is one mind which he calls the elemental mind, which is the source of the cohesion of bodies. There is another mind, which is the cause of their gravitation, and so on in other instances. Even in the case of motion produced by impulse he holds that the impulse is only the *occasion* of the motion. The motion is *continued* in consequence of the agency of mind excited by the impulse; for a continued motion

implies a continued activity. The motions of the planets round the sun are not the result of a constant tangential and a constant centripetal tendency, (according to the ideas of Newton and his followers,) but are carried on by minds which animate the planets in a way analogous to that in which the motions of animals are produced. The only difference is this, that he supposes the minds which animate the planets to be void of intelligence, and, as he expresses it, to be merely principles of motion.

Before I proceed to make any observations on this doctrine it may be amusing to turn our attention to the different fancies which have been entertained on the subject by those philosophers who have had a leaning to similar theories. A short account of some of them (sufficiently accurate for our present purpose) is contained in the following passage of *Maupertuis*.

“ Les Egyptiens en firent des dieux (the author is speaking of the stars) et parmi les Grecs les stoïciens leur attribuerent des âmes divines. Anaxagoras fut condamné comme un impie pour avoir nié l'âme du soleil. Cleanthe et Platon furent sur cela plus orthodoxes. Philon donne aux astres, non seulement des âmes, mais des âmes très pures. Origenes étoit dans la même opinion: il a cru que les âmes de ces corps ne leur avoient pas toujours appartenu, et qu'elles viendroient un jour à en être séparées.

“ Avicenne a donné aux astres une âme intellectuelle et sensitive. Simplicius les croit douées de la vue, de l'ouïe, et du tact. Tycho et Kepler admettent des âmes dans les étoiles et dans les planètes. Baranzanus, religieux Barnabite, astronome et théologien, leur attribue une certaine âme moyenne entre l'intellectuelle et la brute. A la vérité, St Thomas, qui dans différens endroits de ses ouvrages, leur avoit accordé assez libéralement des âmes intellectuelles, semble dans son 7me chapitre

“ *contra gentes s’être rétracté, et ne vouloir plus leur donner que des âmes sensibles.*” *

I shall add to this detail a few detached passages from the classical writers, to show how very generally these ideas have prevailed.

“ *Ea quoque (sidera) rectissime,*” (says Balbus the stoic in Cicero,) “ *et animantia esse, et sentire atque intelligere dicantur.*”—(De Nat. Deor. L. ii. xv.)

“ *Probabile est, præstantem intelligentiam in sideribus esse.*”—(Id. ibid. xvi.)

“ *Immissæque feræ sylvis, et sidera cœlo.*”—(Virg. Georg. ii. v. 342.)

“ *Neu regio foret ulla suis animantibus orba,
Astra tenent cœleste solum formæque Deorum ;
Terra feras cepit.*”

(Ovid. Met. i. v. 75.)

Statius represents *Aurora* as driving the stars with a whip.

“ *Tempus erat, junctos cum jam soror ignea Phœbi
Sentit equos, penitusque cavam sub luce paratâ
Oceani mugire domum : seseque vagantem
Colligit ; et moto leviter fugat astra flagello.*”

(Theb. viii. v. 274. †)

Maupertuis himself, in his *Système de la Nature*, † supposes every elementary particle of matter to be endowed not only with a power of motion but with intelligence,—“ *Quelque principe d’intelligence, semblable à*

* Œuvres de Maupertuis, Vol. II. p. 209.

† See Spence’s Polymetis, p. 179.

‡ It may be necessary to caution some of my readers against confounding the *Système de la Nature* of Maupertuis with a book published a few years after with the same title, under the name of Mirabaud, but now universally understood to have been the work of Baron d’Holbach. See second part of the first Dissertation prefixed to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, p. 132.

“ ce que nous appellons désir, aversion, mémoire.”—This performance of Maupertuis was published first in Latin, under the title of a “ Thesis defended at Erlangen in Germany, by Dr Baumann.” It excited a good deal of attention and opposition at Paris, and among its other opposers was the celebrated *M. Diderot*. Maupertuis replied to his objections in form; and it is from this answer alone that I know anything of Diderot’s system. From Maupertuis’s account it appears that Diderot objected to the *Système de la Nature* as favouring materialism, and proposed to substitute in place of it another theory, according to which the elementary particles of matter were supposed to want intelligence, but to be endued with a power of sensation,—“ Une sensation semblable à *un toucher obtus et sourd*.” One can hardly avoid asking with Maupertuis—“ Est-ce sérieusement que *M. Diderot* propose cette différence ?” At any rate, it is surely an object of some curiosity to trace the wanderings of Diderot’s imagination in this metaphysical region, till it appears to have finally settled in an undisguised system of materialism and atheism. After all, some may perhaps think that the question of Maupertuis may not unreasonably be repeated, Est-ce sérieusement que *M. Diderot* propose ce système ?

In the extract from Maupertuis formerly quoted, the name of Kepler is mentioned among those who have given countenance to the supposition of the stars being animated. One very remarkable passage to this purpose occurs in Kepler’s commentaries on the motions of the planet Mars, and it agrees in many respects with the doctrine maintained by the learned author of *Ancient Metaphysics*. The two theories, however, differ in this, that Kepler supposes the minds which animate the planets to be possessed of intelligence, and of powers of perception far superior to ours. “ *Nego*” (says he in one passage) “ *ullum motum pre-*
“ *nem non rectum a Deo conditum esse præsidio mentali*

“destitutum.” And again, “*Hujus motoris manifestum est duo fore munia ; alterum ut facultate polleat transvectandi corporis ; alterum ut scientiâ præditus sit inve- niendi circularem limitem per illam puram auram ætheriam nullis hujusmodi regionibus distinctam.*” (p. 8.) In another part of the same work he seriously gives it as his opinion, that the minds of the planets must have a power of making observations on the sun’s apparent diameter, that they may thereby be enabled to regulate their motions so as to describe areas proportional to the times. “Credibile est itaque, si quâ facultate præditi sint *motores* illi observandæ hujus diametri, eam tanto esse argutiorem quam sunt oculi nostri, quanto opus ejus et perennis motio nostris turbulentis et confusis negotiis est constantior.

“An ergo binos singulis planetis tribues oculos, Keplere ? Nequaquam. Neque est necesse. Neque enim, ut moveri possint, pedes ipsis atque alæ sunt tribuendæ.”

Of these two theories that of Kepler seems to be the more philosophical ; for it is plainly an attempt to bring the phenomena of moving bodies under the class of animal life. When we discover that a motion is produced by an animal we inquire no farther ; for we know from experience that animals have a power of beginning motion ; and if it could have been made appear that the phenomena of the planets were analogous to the motions of living and intelligent beings, the discovery might justly have been regarded as a step gained in the study of nature. The minds, which, according to the other theory, are said to animate the planets, are analogous to nothing of which we have any experience ; nor in this instance does the word *mind* convey to us any more information than the words *attraction* and *gravitation*. They are all names for the unknown cause of a known effect.

What Maupertuis has observed with respect to the hypothesis of a *plastic nature* is equally applicable to that of “principles of motion void of intelligence.”—“Les uns ont

“ imaginés des natures plastiques, qui sans intelligence et
 “ sans matière exécutent dans l’univers tout ce que la ma-
 “ tière et l’intelligence pourroient exécuter.”—“ L’expéri-
 “ ence nous apprend, quoique nous ne puissions savoir com-
 “ ment la chose l’exécute, que des êtres dans lesquels se
 “ trouvent l’intelligence et la matière peuvent agir sur le
 “ corps : Mais l’expérience ne nous apprend point et l’on ne
 “ concevra jamais, comment des substances immatérielles,
 “ sans le concours immédiat de l’Etre tout puissant, le pour-
 “ roient faire. La chose sera encore plus incompréhen-
 “ sible si l’on entend que ces substances immatérielles soi-
 “ ent de plus privées d’intelligence. Car alors non seule-
 “ ment nous n’avons plus d’idée qui puisse nous servir à
 “ expliquer leurs opérations, mais nous n’avons plus même
 “ d’idée qui puisse nous faire concevoir leur existence.” *

To these observations on this theory of mind I have only to add, that in its tendency it agrees perfectly with the scheme of *materialism*. This is undoubtedly not the idea of *some* of its patrons who have flattered themselves with the belief, that if it were generally adopted it would banish materialism and atheism from philosophy.† Nay, one of

* *Système de la Nature*, § 8.

† I would not have dwelt so long on this subject, had not Lord Monboddo himself communicated to me some letters which passed between him and the late Bishop Horsley, in which the learned Editor and Commentator of *Newton*, after bestowing the highest praise on his Lordship’s attempt to revive the ancient Theory of Mind, adds, that if it should draw the attention it deserved, “ it would drive atheists and materialists into holes and corners.” This correspondence I have no doubt still exists, and I trust it will sooner or later be communicated to the public. The only fragment of it which Lord Monboddo has published is to be found in the second volume of his *Ancient Metaphysics*, pp. 357, 358, where Dr Horsley has fairly acknowledged that “ Sir Isaac Newton’s First Law of Motion cannot be defended upon the principles of sound philosophy.”—“ I believe, with the author of *Ancient Metaphysics*, that some active prin-

them has ventured to assert, that whoever calls it in question, must, whether he knows it or not, be an atheist. "Every man" (says the author of *Ancient Metaphysics*) "must of necessity be an atheist, who holds that matter can of itself either begin or continue motion." The justness of this conclusion I cannot admit, even with respect to those who hold the absurd opinion, that matter can of itself *begin* motion; for although the scheme of materialism destroys those arguments for the existence of a Deity which are founded on the beginning of motion, it leaves all those in full force which are founded on the appearances of design in the universe. Admitting, however, that the inference is just, the charge may be fairly retorted on those who support the theory of mind. The materialists hold that matter has a power of self-motion. The other philosophers contend that every particle of matter has a mind or principle of motion united with it. According to both systems there is no necessity for having recourse to the Deity for the

"ciple is necessary for the continuance, as well as for the beginning of motion. I know that many Newtonians will not allow this. I believe they are misled, as I myself have formerly been misled, by the expression, *a state of motion*. Motion is a change; a continuation of motion is a further change; a further change is a repeated effect; a repeated effect requires a repeating cause. State implies the contrary of change; and motion being change, *a state of motion* is a contradiction in terms."

At an earlier period of Dr Horsley's life he seems to have thought differently. His first mathematical publication, if I recollect right, was a pamphlet entitled, the Power of God deduced from the computable instantaneous productions of it in the Solar System. 1767.—At this time, so far from devolving with Lord Monboddo the task of maintaining the planetary motions upon a sort of immaterial machinery, he agreed with Dr Clarke in resolving it into the constant and incessant agency of the Deity; and even went so far as to attempt a calculation of the force exerted by him every instant to preserve the solar system in order.

beginning of motion ; for, according to both of them, there is a power of self-motion in every particle of matter, and the only difference is, that the one system supposes the power to belong to the particle itself, the other supposes that it belongs to a distinct principle, with which it is inseparably united.

As I do not know that this theory of mind has gained many proselytes in modern times, I shall not enter into a more particular examination of it, but shall content myself with remarking the illustration it affords, of the influence of that principle of our nature which has led men in all ages to ascribe the changes that take place in the state of the universe to the operation of powers superior to mere matter.

6th, The last supposition we shall take notice of upon this subject is that of the philosophers who conceive that the universe is a machine formed and put in motion by the Deity ; and that the multiplicity of effects that take place may perhaps have all proceeded from one single act of his power. In this view of the mechanism of the universe, Descartes and Leibnitz agreed, notwithstanding the wide diversity of their systems in other respects.

Of these two philosophers, the former not only affirmed in general terms that the universe is a great machine, of which all the different parts are mechanically connected, but attempted to explain in particular in what manner it might have assumed its present form, and may for ever be preserved by mechanical principles. The whole of space he supposed to be replenished with an ether or dense fluid, and all the phenomena we see to be the effects of impulsion. Thus he accounts for the gravity of terrestrial bodies from the centrifugal force of the ether revolving round the earth, which he imagined must impel bodies downwards, that have not so great a centrifugal force, much in the

same manner as a fluid impels a body upwards that is immersed in it, and has a less specific gravity than it. He pretended to explain the phenomena of the magnet, and to account for every thing in nature from the same principles.

The great argument which Descartes alleged for his system was, that the same quantity of motion is always preserved in the universe, and passes from one portion of matter to another without undergoing any change in the whole; and this he thought was sufficiently proved by the constancy and immutability of the Divine Nature. But with those who attend to facts this metaphysical reasoning will have little weight: And fortunately the facts which disprove it are such as are familiar to every person acquainted with the first elements of physics. In the composition of motion, absolute motion, it is manifest, is always diminished, as in the resolution of motion it is increased. Absolute motion, too, is diminished, in many cases, in the collisions of bodies that have an imperfect elasticity, and in some cases it is increased in the collisions of elastic bodies. To obviate these objections, Leibnitz, (who, as I already said, agreed with Descartes in considering the universe as a machine,) was led to distinguish between the quantity of motion of bodies and the force of bodies. The former he owns is perpetually varying; but the latter, he maintains, remains invariably the same. This new modification, however, of the principle does not render it the more consistent with the phenomena; even although, with Leibnitz, we should measure the force of bodies (not by their simple velocities, but) by the squares of their velocities. If all bodies indeed were perfectly elastic, the principle would possess some plausibility; but it is well known that no such body has hitherto been discovered. When any two bodies meet with equal motions they rebound with less motions, and force is lost in the collision. If the bodies are soft, the force of both is destroy-

ed. It was to reconcile these facts with his general principle that Leibnitz had recourse to his hypothesis of a perfectly elastic fluid, which, according to him, in such cases as I now mentioned, receives and retains the forces of the impinging bodies. But, not to urge that this is a mere hypothesis, invented to answer a particular purpose, how shall the perfect elasticity of the supposed fluid be explained on the known principles of mechanism? And till this is done the Leibnitzian theory of the mechanism of the universe must be allowed to be incomplete.

Beside, however, these objections, which apply particularly to the mechanical explanations of the universe given by Descartes and Leibnitz, there is one which seems to be conclusive, not only against *them*, but against all other attempts of the same kind that can be made. This objection is founded on the vague and indistinct idea of mechanism on which all such attempts proceed. This word properly expresses a combination of *natural powers* to produce a certain effect. When such a combination is successful, a machine once set a going will sometimes continue to perform its office for a considerable time without requiring the interposition of the artist. And hence we are led to conclude that the case may perhaps be similar with respect to the universe when once put into motion by the Deity. But the falseness of the analogy appears from this, that the moving force in every machine is some *natural power*, such as gravity or elasticity; and therefore the very idea of mechanism presupposes the existence of those active powers of which it is the professed object of a mechanical theory of the universe to give an explanation.

Note (E.) p. 372.

The following note, (which was kindly transmitted to me

by Sir James Mackintosh,) contains the opinion of Dr Parr upon the much controverted point, whether Aristotle was really the author of the Treatise *De Mundo*, commonly printed as part of his works. It was, alas ! the last communication I had with that truly learned and excellent person.

“ I told Sir James Mackintosh and Mr Dugald Stewart
 “ that the book *De Mundo* was not written by Aristotle ;
 “ and to such illustrious men I ought to state my reasons
 “ for an opinion so confidently expressed. In my Aristotle,
 “ I have marked other works which I hold to be spurious.
 “ I stated before, and I now state again as the ground of
 “ my opinion, the total want of resemblance to the style of
 “ Aristotle. My sagacious friends will promptly assent when
 “ I tell them, that in the third chapter of the *Liber De*
 “ *Mundo*, the writer mentions the islands of Great Britain,
 “ quite unknown to the Greeks in Aristotle’s time.

“ Ἐν τῷ Ὀκταεῶν νῆσοι μέγισται τε τυγχάνουσιν ἔσαι δύο, Βρεταννικαὶ
 “ λεγόμεναι, Ἀλβιον καὶ Ἰέρην, τῶν προϊσορημένων μείζους, κ. τ. λ.”—
 Aristoteles, pa. 609, *De Mundo*, Cap. III.

“ I suppose Mr Stewart and Sir James to have ac-
 “ cess to Fabricii *Bibliotheca Græca* by Harles. Now, in
 “ Vol. III. pa. 232 and 233, there is much learned matter
 “ upon this work. The title is wrong, for it should be, as we
 “ learn from Stobæus, a letter *περὶ τῶ παντος*. Towards the
 “ close of the addition by Harles and his friends we have
 “ these words :

“ ‘ M. Goerenz, in disp. de libri *περὶ κοσμου*, qui inter
 “ Aristotelis scripta reperitur, auctore, Wittebergæ m.
 “ Aprili 1792, 4. illam sententiam, quæ Aristotelem aucto-
 “ rem respuit, probabiliorem animadvertens, primum exami-
 “ nat dissentientium rationes, tum argumenta alia, ab aliis
 “ ommissa, a Kappio tamen partim adlata et exposita, cogit,
 “ et contra Petatum ac Battersium tela potissimum dirigit.

“ Denique suspicatur, auctorem Aristotelis nomen libro suo
 “ quæstus causa supposuisse, qui eum regi Ptolemæo Phi-
 “ ladelpho pro Aristotelis libro venderet. Quidquid est,
 “ satis evictum esse puto a Kappio et Goerenzio, superiorum
 “ V. D. vestigia prementibus, Aristotelem non fuisse libelli
 “ parentem.’—J. G.

“ You will find that Harles thinks as I do. In pa. 347,
 “ you will find among the editions of parts of Aristotle,
 “ some account of this book De Mundo. Vulcanius says,
 “ the arguments of those who deny the book to be Aristotle’s
 “ are *plumbea*. “ Vulcanius mire laudat” the version of
 “ Apuleius. Now, hear what is said, pa. 232, on this work
 “ of Apuleius, and is said well.

“ ‘ Quum Apuleius libri sui *De Mundo* initio non dicat,
 “ se versionem libri Græci scribere, sed se satis clare condi-
 “ torem illius libri profiteatur, hinc credo, Apuleium verum
 “ esse illius libri auctorem ; Græcum vero textum esse ver-
 “ sionem.’ HEUMANN.

“ I agree with Heumannus, for the matter and the man-
 “ ner suits well the known age of Apuleius. Let me
 “ advert to another subject. Mr Stewart has written
 “ wisely and virtuously upon atheism, direct or indirect. I
 “ agree with him about Spinosà, and I almost agree with
 “ him about Hobbes. But I do earnestly intreat Sir
 “ James and Mr Stewart to bestow great attention to what
 “ is said pa. 377 and 378 of Vol. III. of Fabricius. The
 “ observations and cautions of Harles should be attended
 “ to. I am sure that Sir James and Mr Stewart will
 “ thank me for pointing out these two pages. * * *

“ Dec. 10, 1821.

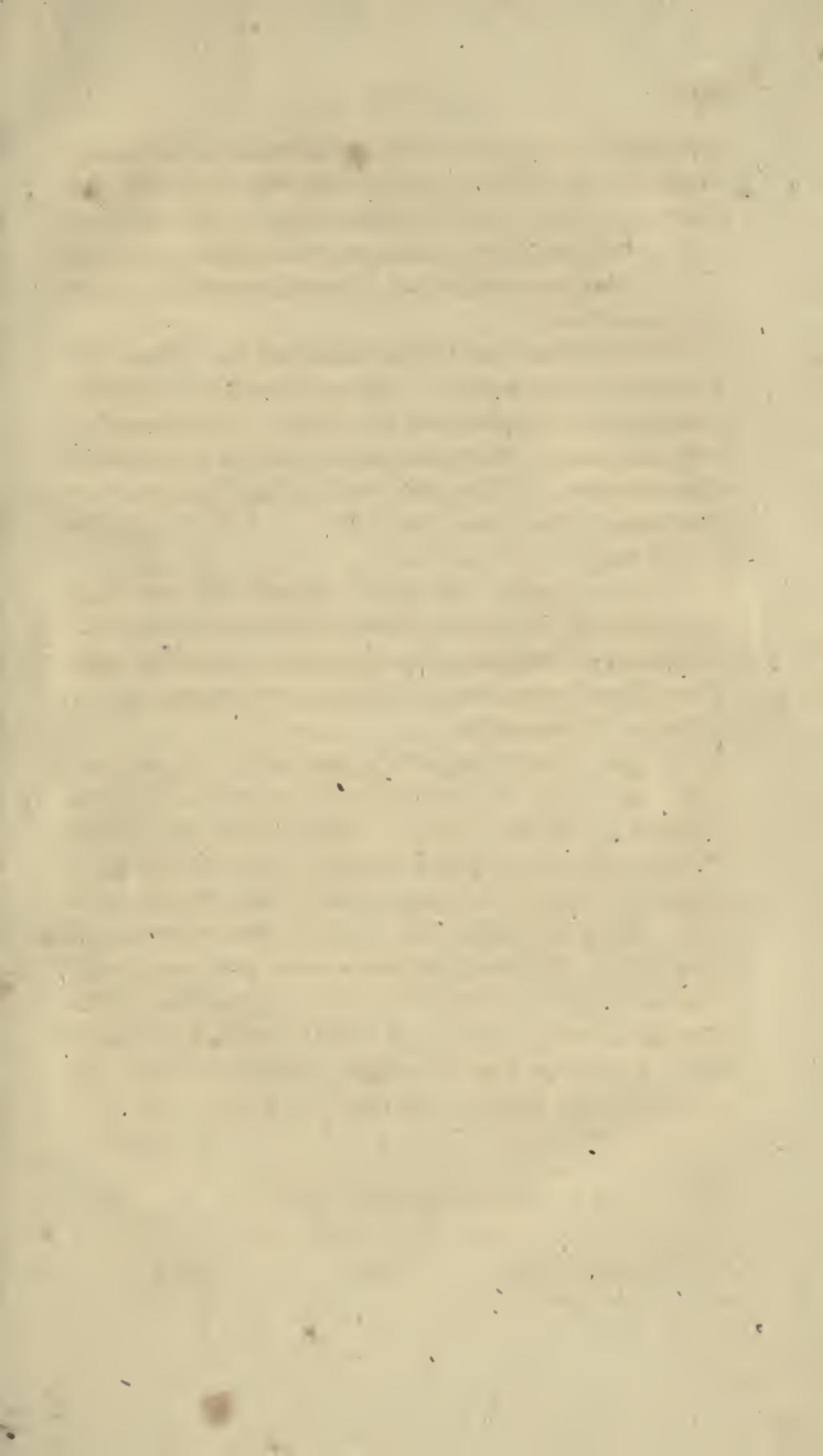
S. PARR.”

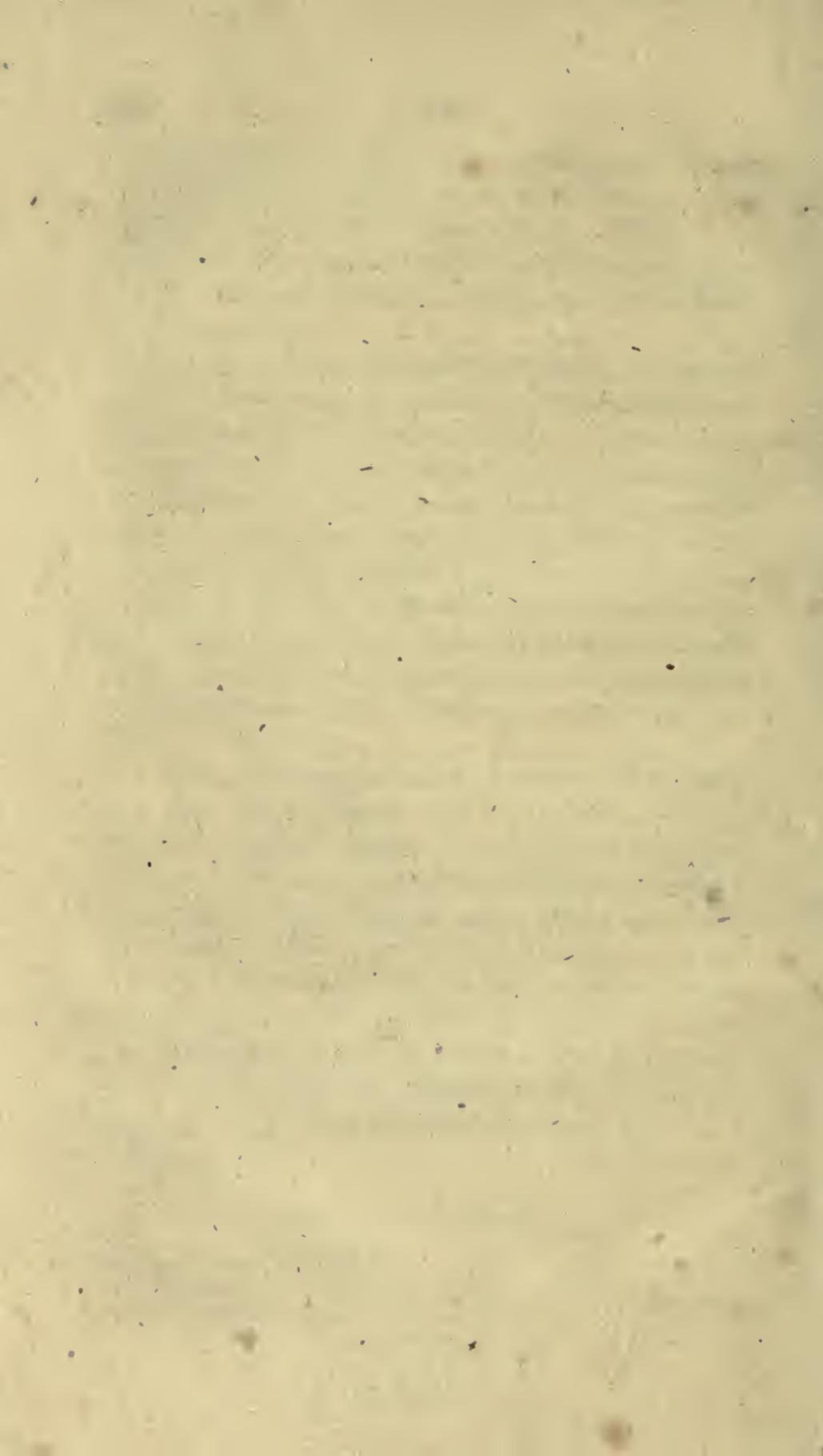
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