ſometimes enlighten my judgment and rectify my conduct. But the perſons to whom it becomes me to pay particular attention in this reſpect, are not ſuch as may exerciſe any particular magiſtracy, but ſuch, whatever may be their ſtation, as are wiſer or better informed in any reſpect than myſelf.

Caſe of confidence conſidered.

There are two ways in which a man wiſer than myſelf may be of uſe to me; by the communication of thoſe arguments by which he is convinced of the truth of the judgments he has formed; and by the communication of the judgments themſelves independent of argument. This laſt is of uſe only in reſpect to the narrowneſs of our own underſtandings, and the time that might be requiſite for the acquiſition of a ſcience of which we are at preſent ignorant. On this account I am not to be blamed, if I employ a builder to conſtruct me a houſe, or a mechanic to ſink me a well; nor ſhould I be liable to blame, if I worked in perſon under their direction. In this caſe, not having opportunity or ability to acquire the ſcience myſelf, I truſt to the ſcience of another. I chooſe from the deliberation of my own judgment the end to be purſued; I am convinced that the end is good and commendable; and, having done this, I commit the ſelection of means to a perſon whoſe qualifications are ſuperior to my own. The confidence repoſed in this inſtance is preciſely of the nature of delegation in general. No term ſurely can be more unapt than that of obedience, to expreſs our duty towards the overſeer we have appointed in our affairs.

Similar to the confidence I repoſe in a ſkilful mechanic is the attention which ought to be paid to the commander of an army. It is my duty in the firſt place to be ſatisfied of the goodneſs of the cauſe, of the propriety of the war, and of the truth of as many general propoſitions concerning the conduct of it, as can poſſibly be brought within the ſphere of my underſtanding. It may well be doubted whether ſecrecy be in any degree neceſſary to the conduct of war. It may be doubted whether treachery and ſurpriſe are to be claſſed among the legitimate means of defeating our adverſary. But after every deduction has been made for conſiderations of this ſort, there will ſtill remain caſes, where ſomething muſt be confided, as to the plan of a campaign or the arrangement of a battle, to the ſkill, ſo far as that ſkill really exiſts, of the commander. When he has explained both to the utmoſt of his ability, there may remain parts, the propriety of which I cannot fully comprehend, but which I have ſufficient reaſon to confide to his judgment.

Its limitations.

This doctrine however of limited obedience, or, as it may more properly be termed, of confidence and delegation, ought to be called into action as ſeldom as poſſible. Every man ſhould diſcharge to the utmoſt practicable extent the duties which ariſe from his ſituation. If he gain as to the ability with which they may be diſcharged, when he delegates them to another, he loſes with reſpect to the fidelity; every one being conſcious of the ſincerity of his own intention, and no one having equal proof

of that of another. A virtuous man will not fail to perceive the obligation under which he is placed to exert his own understanding, and to judge for himself as widely as his circumstances will permit.

Mischief of unlimited confidence.

The abuse of the doctrine of confidence has been the source of more calamities to mankind than all the other errors of the human understanding. Depravity would have gained little ground in the world, if every man had been in the exercise of his independent judgment. The instrument by which extensive mischiefs have in all ages been perpetrated has been, the principle of many men being reduced to mere machines in the hands of a few. Man, while he consults his own understanding, is the ornament of the universe. Man, when he surrenders his reason, and becomes the partisan of implicit faith and passive obedience, is the most mischievous of all animals. Ceasing to examine every proposition that comes before him for the direction of his conduct, he is no longer the capable subject of moral instruction. He is, in the instant of submission, the blind instrument of every nefarious purpose of his principal; and, when left to himself, is open to the seduction of injustice, cruelty and profligacy.

Subjection explained.

These reasonings lead to a proper explanation of the word subject. If by the subject of any government we mean a person whose duty it is to obey, the true inference from the preceding principles is, that no government has any subjects. If on the contrary

contrary we mean a person, whom the government is bound to protect, or may justly restrain, the word is sufficiently admissible. This remark enables us to solve the long-disputed question, what it is that constitutes a man the subject of any government. Every man is in this sense a subject, whom the government is competent to protect on the one hand, or who on the other, by the violence of his proceedings, renders force requisite to prevent him from disturbing that community, for the preservation of whose peace the government is instituted.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

MORAL PRINCIPLES FREQUENTLY ELUCIDATED BY INCIDENTAL REFLECTION—BY INCIDENTAL PASSAGES IN VARIOUS AUTHORS.—EXAMPLE.

BOOK III. CHAP. VI. APPENDIX. Moral principles frequently elucidated by incidental reflection:

IT will generally be found that, even where the truth upon any ſubject has been moſt induſtriouſly obſcured, its occaſional irradiations have not been wholly excluded. The mind has no ſooner obtained evidence of any new truth, eſpecially in the ſcience of morals, but it recollects numerous intimations of that truth which have occaſionally ſuggeſted themſelves, and is aſtoniſhed that a diſcovery which was perpetually upon the eve of being made, ſhould have been kept at a diſtance ſo long.

by incidental paſſages in various authors.

This is eminently the caſe in the ſubject of which we are treating. Thoſe numerous paſſages in poets, divines* and philoſophers, which have placed our unalterable duty in the ſtrongeſt contraſt with the precarious authority of a ſuperior, and have taught us to diſclaim all ſubordination to the latter, have always been received by the ingenuous mind with a tumult of applauſe. There is indeed no ſpecies of compoſition, in which the ſeeds of

* "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." Luke, Ch. XII. Ver. 4.

a morality

a morality too perfect for our preſent improvements in ſcience, may more reaſonably be expected to diſcover themſelves, than in works of imagination. When the mind ſhakes off the fetters of preſcription and prejudice, when it boldly takes a flight into the world unknown, and employs itſelf in ſearch of thoſe grand and intereſting principles which ſhall tend to impart to every reader the glow of enthuſiaſm, it is at ſuch moments that the enquiring and philoſophical reader may expect to be preſented with the materials and rude ſketches of intellectual improvement*.

Example.

Among the many paſſages from writers of every denomination that will readily ſuggeſt themſelves under this head to a well informed mind, we may naturally recollect the ſpirited reaſoning of young Norval in the tragedy of Douglas, when he

* This was the opinion of the celebrated Mr. Turgot. "He thought that the moral ſentiments of mankind might be conſiderably ſtrengthened, and the perception of them rendered more delicate and preciſe, either by frequent exercife, or the perpetually ſubjecting them to the anatomy of a pure and enlightened underſtanding. For this reaſon he conſidered romances as holding a place among treatiſes of morality, and even as the only books in which he was aware of having ſeen moral principles treated in an impartial manner." "*M. Turgot penſoit qu'on peut parvenir à fortifier dans les hommes leurs ſentimens moraux, à les rendre plus délicats et plus juſtes, ſoit par l'exercice de ces ſentimens, ſoit en apprenant à les ſoumettre à l'analyſe d'une raiſon ſaine et éclairée. C'eſt par ce motif qu'il regardoit les romans comme des livres de morale, et même, diſoit-il, comme les ſeuls où il eût vu de la morale.*"

Vie de M. Turgot, par M. de Condorcet.

BOOK III. CHAP. VI. Appendix.

is called upon by lord Randolph to ſtate the particulars of a conteſt in which he is engaged, that lord Randolph may be able to decide between the diſputants.

> "Nay, my good lord, though I revere you much,
> My cauſe I plead not, nor demand your judgment.
> To the liege lord of my dear native land
> I owe a ſubject's homage; but even him
> And his high arbitration I reject.
> Within my boſom reigns another lord—
> Honour; ſole judge and umpire of itſelf." Act IV.

Nothing can be more accurate than a conſiderable part of the philoſophy of this paſſage. The term "honour" indeed has been too much abuſed, and preſents to the mind too fantaſtical an image, to be fairly deſcriptive of that principle by which the actions of every intellectual being ought to be regulated. The principle to which it behoves us to attend, is the internal deciſion of our own underſtanding; and nothing can be more evident than that the ſame reaſoning, which led Norval to reject the authority of his ſovereign in the quarrels and diſputes in which he was engaged, ought to have led him to reject it as the regulator of any of his actions, and of conſequence to abjure that homage which he ſets out with reſerving. Virtue cannot poſſibly be meaſured by the judgment and good pleaſure of any man with whom we are concerned.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

OF FORMS OF GOVERNMENT.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF A VARIETY OF FORMS—COMPARED WITH THE ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF A VARIETY OF RELIGIOUS CREEDS.—THAT THERE IS ONE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT PROVED—FROM THE UNITY OF TRUTH—FROM THE NATURE OF MAN.—OBJECTION FROM HUMAN WEAKNESS AND PREJUDICE.—DANGER IN ESTABLISHING AN IMPERFECT CODE.—MANNERS OF NATIONS PRODUCED BY THEIR FORMS OF GOVERNMENT.—GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT NECESSARY.—SIMPLICITY CHIEFLY TO BE DESIRED.—PUBLICATION OF TRUTH THE GRAND INSTRUMENT—BY INDIVIDUALS, NOT BY GOVERNMENT—THE TRUTH ENTIRE, AND NOT BY PARCELS.—SORT OF PROGRESS TO BE DESIRED.

A PROPOSITION that by many political reaſoners has been vehemently maintained, is that of the propriety of inſtituting different political governments ſuited to the characters, the habits and prejudices of different nations. "The Engliſh conſtitution," ſay theſe reaſoners, "is adapted to the thoughtful, rough and unſubmitting character of this iſland race; the

BOOK III. CHAP. VII. Argument in favour of a variety of forms:

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ſlowneſs and complication of Dutch formality to the phlegmatic Hollander; and the ſplendour of the *grand monarque* to the vivacity of Frenchmen. Among the ancients what could be better aſſorted than a pure democracy to the intellectual acuteneſs and impetuous energy of the Athenians; while the hardy and unpoliſhed Spartan flouriſhed much more under the rugged and inflexible diſcipline of Lycurgus? The great art of the legiſlator is to penetrate into the true character of the nation with whom he is concerned, and to diſcover the exact ſtructure of government which is calculated to render that nation flouriſhing and happy." Accordingly an Engliſhman who ſhould reaſon upon theſe poſtulata might ſay, "It is not neceſſary I ſhould aſſert the Engliſh conſtitution to be the happieſt and ſublimeſt conception of the human mind; I do not enquire into the abſtract excellence of that government under which France made herſelf illuſtrious for centuries. I contemplate with enthuſiaſm the venerable republics of Greece and Rome. But I am an enemy to the removing ancient land-marks, and diſturbing with our crude devices the wiſdom of ages. I regard with horror the Quixote plan, that would reduce the irregular greatneſs of nations to the frigid and impracticable ſtandard of metaphyſical accuracy*."

This

* Theſe arguments bear ſome reſemblance to thoſe of Mr. Burke. It was not neceſſary that they ſhould do ſo preciſely, or that we ſhould take advantage of the *argumentum ad hominem* built upon his fervent admiration of the Engliſh

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This queſtion has been anticipated in various parts of the preſent work; but the argument is ſo popular and plauſible to a ſuperficial view, as juſtly to entitle it to a ſeparate examination.

compared with the argument in favour of a variety of religious creeds.

The idea bears ſome reſemblance to one which was formerly inſiſted upon by certain latitudinarians in religion. "It is impious," ſaid they, "to endeavour to reduce all men to uniformity of opinion upon this ſubject. Men's minds are as various as their faces. God has made them ſo; and it is to be preſumed that he is well pleaſed to be addreſſed in different languages, by different names, and with the conſenting ardour of diſagreeing ſects." Thus did theſe reaſoners confound the majeſty of truth with the deformity of falſhood; and ſuppoſe that that being who was all truth, took delight in the errors, the abſurdities, and the vices, for all falſhood in ſome way or other engenders vice, of his creatures. At the ſame time they were employed in unnerving that activity of mind, which is the ſingle ſource of human improvement. If truth and falſhood be in reality upon a level, I ſhall be very weakly employed in a ſtrenuous endeavour either to diſcover truth for myſelf, or to impreſs it upon others.

That there is one beſt

Truth is in reality ſingle and uniform. There muſt in the Engliſh conſtitution. Not to ſay that we ſhall feel ourſelves more at our eaſe in examining the queſtion generally, than in a perſonal attack upon this illuſtrious and virtuous hero of former times.

form of government proved:

nature of things be one beſt form of government, which all intellects, ſufficiently rouſed from the ſlumber of ſavage ignorance, will be irreſiſtibly incited to approve. If an equal participation of the benefits of nature be good in itſelf, it muſt be good for you and me and all mankind. Deſpotiſm may be of uſe to keep human beings in ignorance, but can never conduce to render them wiſe or virtuous or happy. If the general tendency of deſpotiſm be injurious, every portion and fragment of it muſt be a noxious ingredient. Truth cannot be ſo variable, as to change its nature by croſſing an arm of the ſea, a petty brook or an ideal line, and become falſhood. On the contrary it is at all times and in all places the ſame.

from the unity of truth:

from the nature of man.

The ſubject of legiſlation is every where the ſame, man. The points in which human beings reſemble are infinitely more conſiderable than thoſe in which they differ. We have the ſame ſenſes, the ſame inlets of pleaſure and pain, the ſame faculty to reaſon, to judge and to infer. The ſame cauſes that make me happy will make you happy. We may differ in our opinions upon this ſubject at firſt, but this difference is only in prejudice, and is by no means invincible. An event may often conduce moſt to the benefit of a human being, which his erroneous judgment perhaps regarded with leaſt complacency. A wiſe ſuperintendent of affairs would purſue with ſteady attention the real advantage of thoſe over whom he preſided, careleſs of the temporary diſapprobation he incurred, and which would laſt no

longer

longer than the partial and miſguided apprehenſion from which it flowed.

Is there a country in which a prudent director of education would propoſe ſome other object for his labours than to make his pupil temperate and juſt and wiſe? Is there a climate that requires its inhabitants to be hard drinkers or horſe-jockies or gameſters or bullies, rather than men? Can there be a corner of the world, where the lover of juſtice and truth would find himſelf out of his element and uſeleſs? If no; then liberty muſt be every where better than ſlavery, and the government of rectitude and impartiality better than the government of caprice.

Objection from human weakneſs and prejudice.

But to this it may be objected that "men may not be every where capable of liberty. A gift however valuable in itſelf, if it be intended to be beneficial, muſt be adapted to the capacity of the receiver. In human affairs every thing muſt be gradual; and it is contrary to every idea that experience furniſhes of the nature of mind to expect to advance men to a ſtate of perfection at once. It was in a ſpirit ſomewhat ſimilar to this, that Solon, the Athenian lawgiver, apologiſed for the imperfection of his code, ſaying, "that he had not ſought to promulgate ſuch laws as were good in themſelves, but ſuch as his countrymen were able to bear."

Danger in eſtabliſhing an imperfect code.

The experiment of Solon ſeems to be of a dangerous nature. A code, ſuch as his, bid fair for permanence, and does not appear

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appear to have contained in it a principle of improvement. He did not meditate that gradual progreſs which was above deſcribed, nor contemplate in the Athenians of his own time, the root from which were to ſpring the poſſible Athenians of ſome future period, who might realiſe all that he was able to conceive of good ſenſe, fortitude and virtue. His inſtitutions were rather calculated to hold them down in perpetuity to one certain degree of excellence and no more.

Manners of nations produced by their forms of government.

This ſuggeſtion furniſhes us with the real clue to that ſtriking coincidence between the manners of a nation and the form of its government, which was mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, and which has furniſhed ſo capital an argument to the advocates for the local propriety of different forms of government. It was in reality ſomewhat illogical in theſe reaſoners to employ this as an argument upon the ſubject, without previouſly aſcertaining which of the two things was to be regarded as a cauſe and which as an effect, whether the government aroſe out of the manners of the nation, or the manners of the nation out of the government. The laſt of theſe ſtatements appears upon the whole to be neareſt to the fact. The government may be indebted for its exiſtence to accident or force. Revolutions, as they have moſt frequently taken place in the world, are epochas, in which the temper and wiſhes of a nation are leaſt conſulted*. When it is otherwiſe, ſtill the real effect of the government

* See Hume's Eſſays. Part II. Eſſay xii.

which

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which is inſtituted, is to perpetuate propenſities and ſentiments, which without its operation would ſpeedily have given place to other propenſities. Upon every ſuppoſition, the exiſting correſpondence between national character and national government will be found in a juſt conſideration to ariſe out of the latter.

Gradual improvement neceſſary.

The principle of gradual improvement advanced in the laſt cited objection muſt be admitted for true; but then it is neceſſary, while we adopt it, that we ſhould not ſuffer ourſelves to act in direct oppoſition to it; and that we ſhould chooſe the beſt and moſt powerful means for forwarding that improvement.

Simplicity chiefly to be deſired.

Man is in a ſtate of perpetual progreſs. He muſt grow either better or worſe, either correct his habits or confirm them. The government propoſed muſt either increaſe our paſſions and prejudices by fanning the flame, or by gradually diſcouraging tend to extirpate them. In reality, it is ſufficiently difficult to imagine a government that ſhall have the latter tendency. By its very nature political inſtitution has a tendency to ſuſpend the elaſticity, and put an end to the advancement of mind. Every ſcheme for embodying imperfection muſt be injurious. That which is to-day a conſiderable melioration, will at ſome future period, if preſerved unaltered, appear a defect and diſeaſe in the body politic. It were earneſtly to be deſired that each man was wiſe enough to govern himſelf without the intervention of any compulſory reſtraint; and, ſince government even in its beſt ſtate is

an evil, the object principally to be aimed at is, that we ſhould have as little of it as the general peace of human ſociety will permit.

Publication of truth the grand inſtrument: by individuals, not by government:

But the grand inſtrument for forwarding the improvement of mind is the publication of truth. Not the publication on the part of government; for it is infinitely difficult to diſcover infallibly what the truth is, eſpecially upon controverted points, and government is as liable as individuals to be miſtaken in this reſpect. In reality it is more liable; for the depoſitaries of government have a very obvious temptation to deſire, by means of ignorance and implicit faith, to perpetuate the exiſting ſtate of things. The only ſubſtantial method for the propagation of truth is diſcuſſion, ſo that the errors of one man may be detected by the acuteneſs and ſevere diſquiſition of his neighbours. All we have to demand from the officers of government, at leaſt in their public character, is neutrality. The intervention of authority in a field proper to reaſoning and demonſtration is always injurious. If on the right ſide, it can only diſcredit truth, and call off the attention of men to a foreign conſideration. If on the wrong, though it may not be able to ſuppreſs the ſpirit of enquiry, it will have a tendency to convert the calm purſuit of knowledge into paſſion and tumult.

the truth entire, and not by parcels.

"But in what manner ſhall the principles of truth be communicated ſo as beſt to lead to the practice? By ſhewing to mankind

kind truth in all its evidence, or concealing one half of it? Shall they be initiated by a partial diſcovery, and thus led on by regular degrees to concluſions that would at firſt have wholly alienated their minds?"

This queſtion will come to be more fully diſcuſſed in a following chapter. In the mean time let us only conſider for the preſent the quantity of effect that may be expected from theſe two oppoſite plans.

An inhabitant of Turkey or Morocco may perhaps be of opinion, that the veſting power in the arbitrary will or caprice of an individual has in it more advantages than diſadvantages. If I be deſirous to change his opinion, ſhould I undertake to recommend to him in animated language ſome modification of this caprice? I ſhould attack it in its principle. If I do otherwiſe, I ſhall betray the ſtrength of my cauſe. The principle oppoſite to his own, will not poſſeſs half the irreſiſtible force which I could have given to it. His objections will aſſume vigour. The principle I am maintaining being half truth and half falſhood, he will in every ſtep of the conteſt poſſeſs an advantage in the offenſive, of which, if he be ſufficiently acute, I can never deprive him.

Now the principle I ſhould have to explain of equal law and equal juſtice to the inhabitant of Morocco, would be as new to

BOOK III. CHAP. VII

him, as any principle of the boldeſt political deſcription that I could propagate in this country. Whatever apparent difference may exiſt between the two caſes, may fairly be ſuſpected to owe its exiſtence to the imagination of the obſerver. The rule therefore which ſuggeſts itſelf in this caſe is fitted for univerſal application.

Sort of progreſs to be deſired.

As to the improvements which are to be introduced into the political ſyſtem, their quantity and their period muſt be determined by the degree of knowledge exiſting in any country, and the ſtate of preparation of the public mind for the changes that are to be deſired. Political renovation may ſtrictly be conſidered as one of the ſtages in intellectual improvement. Literature and diſquiſition cannot of themſelves be rendered ſufficiently general; it will be only the cruder and groſſer parts that can be expected to deſcend in their genuine form to the multitude; while thoſe abſtract and bold ſpeculations, in which the value of literature principally conſiſts, muſt neceſſarily continue the portion of the favoured few. It is here that ſocial inſtitution offers itſelf in aid of the abſtruſer powers of argumentative communication. As ſoon as any important truth has become eſtabliſhed to a ſufficient extent in the minds of the enterpriſing and the wiſe, it may tranquilly and with eaſe be rendered a part of the general ſyſtem; ſince the uninſtructed and the poor are never the ſtrenuous ſupporters of thoſe complicated ſyſtems by which oppreſſion is maintained; and ſince they have an obvious intereſt

tereſt in the practical introduction of ſimplicity and truth. One valuable principle being thus realiſed, prepares the way for the realiſing of more. It ſerves as a reſting-place to the human mind in its great buſineſs of exploring the regions of truth, and gives it new alacrity and encouragement for farther exertions.

BOOK III. CHAP. VII.

AN

AN

ENQUIRY

CONCERNING

POLITICAL JUSTICE.

BOOK IV.

MISCELLANEOUS PRINCIPLES.

CHAP. I.

OF RESISTANCE.

EVERY INDIVIDUAL THE JUDGE OF HIS OWN RESISTANCE.—OBJECTION.—ANSWERED FROM THE NATURE OF GOVERNMENT—FROM THE MODES OF RESISTANCE.—I. FORCE RARELY TO BE EMPLOYED—EITHER WHERE THERE IS SMALL PROSPECT OF SUCCESS—OR WHERE THE PROSPECT IS GREAT.—HISTORY OF CHARLES THE FIRST ESTIMATED.—2. REASONING THE LEGITIMATE MODE.

IT has appeared in the course of our reasonings upon political authority, that every man is bound to resist every unjust proceeding on the part of the community. But who is the judge

BOOK IV. CHAP. I. Every individual the

judge of his own resistance.

judge of this injustice? The question answers itself: the private judgment of the individual. Were it not so, the appeal would be nugatory, for we have no infallible judge to whom to refer our controversies. He is obliged to consult his own private judgment in this case, for the same reason that obliges him to consult it in every other article of his conduct.

Objection.

"But is not this position necessarily subversive of all government? Can there be a power to rule, where no man is bound to obey; or at least where every man is to consult his own understanding first, and then to yield his concurrence no farther than he shall conceive the regulation to be just? The very idea of government is that of an authority superseding private judgment; how then can the exercise of private judgment be left entire? What degree of order is to be expected in a community, where every man is taught to indulge his own speculations, and even to resist the decision of the whole, whenever that decision is opposed to the dictates of his own fancy?"

Answered from the nature of government:

The true answer to these questions lies in the observation with which we began our disquisition on government, that this boasted institution is nothing more than a scheme for enforcing by brute violence the sense of one man or set of men upon another, necessary to be employed in certain cases of peculiar emergency. Supposing the question then to lie merely between the force of the community on one part, and the force with which

which any individual member should think it incumbent upon him to resist their decisions on the other, it is sufficiently evident that a certain kind of authority and supremacy would be the result. But this is not the true state of the question.

It is farther evident, that, though the duty of every man to exercise his private judgment be unalterable, yet so far as relates to practice, wherever government subsists, the exercise of private judgment is substantially intrenched upon. The force put by the community upon those who exercise rapine and injustice, and the influence of that force as a moral motive upon its members in general, are each of them exhibitions of an argument, not founded in general reason, but in the precarious interference of a fallible individual. Nor is this all. Without anticipating the question of the different kinds of resistance and the election that it may be our duty to make of one kind rather than another, it is certain in fact, that my conduct will be materially altered by the foresight that, if I act in a certain manner, I shall have the combined force of a number of individuals to oppose me. That government therefore is the best, which in no one instance interferes with the exercise of private judgment without absolute necessity.

from the modes of resistance.

1. Force rarely to be employed,

The modes according to which an individual may oppose any measure which his judgment disapproves are of two sorts, action and speech. Shall he upon every occasion have recourse to the former?

former? This it is abſurd ſo much as to ſuppoſe. The object of every virtuous man is the general good. But how can he be ſaid to promote the general good, who is ready to waſte his active force upon every trivial occaſion, and ſacrifice his life without the chance of any public benefit?

either where there is ſmall proſpect of ſucceſs,

"But he reſerves himſelf," I will ſuppoſe, "for ſome great occaſion; and then, careleſs as to ſucceſs, which is a large object only to little minds, generouſly embarks in a cauſe where he has no hope but to periſh. He becomes the martyr of truth. He believes that ſuch an example will tend to impreſs the minds of his fellow men, and to rouſe them from their lethargy."

The queſtion of martyrdom is of a difficult nature. I had rather convince men by my arguments, than ſeduce them by my example. It is ſcarcely poſſible for me to tell what opportunities for uſefulneſs may offer themſelves in the future years of my exiſtence. Nor is it improbable in a general conſideration that long and perſevering ſervices may be more advantageous than brilliant and tranſitory ones. The caſe being thus circumſtanced, a truly wiſe man cannot fail to heſitate as to the idea of offering up his life a voluntary oblation.

Whenever martyrdom becomes an indiſpenſible duty, when nothing can preſerve him ſhort of the cleareſt dereliction of principle and the moſt palpable deſertion of truth, he will then meet it

it with perfect ſerenity. He did not avoid it before from any weakneſs of perſonal feeling. When it muſt be encountered, he knows that it is indebted for that luſtre which has been ſo generally acknowledged among mankind, to the intrepidity of the ſufferer. He knows that nothing is ſo eſſential to true virtue, as an utter diſregard to individual advantage.

The objections that offer themſelves to an exertion of actual force, where there are no hopes of ſucceſs, are numerous. Such an exertion cannot be made without injury to the lives of more than a ſingle individual. A certain number both of enemies and friends muſt be expected to be the victims of ſo wild an undertaking. It is regarded by contemporaries, and recorded by hiſtory as an intemperate ebullition of the paſſions; and ſerves rather as a beacon to deter others, than as a motive to animate them. It is not the frenzy of enthuſiaſm, but the calm, ſagacious and deliberate effort of reaſon, to which truth muſt be indebted for its progreſs.

or where the proſpect is great.

But let us ſuppoſe, "that the proſpect of ſucceſs is conſiderable, and that there is reaſon to believe that reſolute violence may in no long time accompliſh its purpoſe." Even here we may be allowed to heſitate. Force has already appeared to be an odious weapon; and, if the uſe of it be to be regretted in the hands of government, it does not change its nature though wielded by a band of patriots. If the cauſe we plead be the cauſe of truth,

BOOK IV. CHAP. I.

there is no doubt that by our reaſonings, if ſufficiently zealous and conſtant, the ſame purpoſe may be effected in a milder and more liberal way *.

In a word, it is proper to recollect here what has been eſtabliſhed as to the doctrine of force in general, that it is in no caſe to be employed but where every other means is ineffectual. In the queſtion therefore of reſiſtance to government, force ought never to be introduced without the moſt imminent neceſſity; never but in circumſtances ſimilar to thoſe of defending my life from a ruffian, where time can by no means be gained, and the conſequences inſtantly to enſue are unqueſtionably fatal.

History of Charles the firſt eſtimated.

The hiſtory of king Charles the firſt furniſhes an inſtructive example in both kinds. The original deſign of his opponents was that of confining his power within narrow and palpable limits. This object, after a ſtruggle of many years, was fully accompliſhed by the parliament of 1640, without bloodſhed (except indeed in the ſingle inſtance of lord Strafford) and without commotion. They next conceived the project of overturning the hierarchy and the monarchy of England, in oppoſition to great numbers, and in the laſt point no doubt to a majority of their countrymen. Admitting theſe objects to have been in the utmoſt degree excellent, they ought not, for the purpoſe

* See this caſe more fully diſcuſſed in the following chapter.

poſe of obtaining them, to have precipitated the queſtion to the extremity of a civil war. BOOK IV. CHAP. I.

2. Reaſoning the legitimate mode.

" But, ſince force is ſcarcely under any circumſtances to be employed, of what nature is that reſiſtance which ought conſtantly to be given to every inſtance of injuſtice?" The reſiſtance I am bound to employ is that of uttering the truth, of cenſuring in the moſt explicit manner every proceeding that I perceive to be adverſe to the true intereſts of mankind. I am bound to diſſeminate without reſerve all the principles with which I am acquainted, and which it may be of importance to mankind to know; and this duty it behoves me to practiſe upon every occaſion and with the moſt perſevering conſtancy. I muſt diſcloſe the whole ſyſtem of moral and political truth, without ſuppreſſing any part under the idea of its being too bold and paradoxical, and thus depriving the whole of that complete and irreſiſtible evidence, without which its effects muſt always be feeble, partial and uncertain.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

OF REVOLUTIONS.

SECTION I.

DUTIES OF A CITIZEN.

OBLIGATION TO SUPPORT THE CONSTITUTION OF OUR COUNTRY CONSIDERED—MUST ARISE EITHER FROM THE REASON OF THE CASE, OR FROM A PERSONAL AND LOCAL CONSIDERATION.—THE FIRST EXAMINED.—THE SECOND.

BOOK IV. CHAP. II. SECTION I. Obligation to support the conſtitution of our country conſidered:

NO queſtion can be more important than that which reſpects the beſt mode of effecting revolutions. Before we enter upon it however, it may be proper to remove a difficulty which has ſuggeſted itſelf to the minds of ſome men, how far we ought generally ſpeaking to be the friends of revolution; or, in other words, whether it be juſtifiable in a man to be the enemy of the conſtitution of his country.

"We live," it will be ſaid, "under the protection of this conſtitution; and protection, being a benefit conferred, obliges us to a reciprocation of ſupport in return."

BOOK IV. CHAP. II. SECTION I.

To this it may be anſwered, firſt, that this protection is a very equivocal thing; and, till it can be ſhown that the vices, from the effects of which it protects us, are not for the moſt part the produce of that conſtitution, we ſhall never ſufficiently underſtand the quantity of benefit it includes.

Secondly, gratitude, as has already been proved *, is a vice and not a virtue. Every man and every collection of men ought to be treated by us in a manner founded upon their intrinſic qualities and capacities, and not according to a rule which has exiſtence only in relation to ourſelves.

Add to this, thirdly, that no motive can be more equivocal than the gratitude here recommended. Gratitude to the conſtitution, an abſtract idea, an imaginary exiſtence, is altogether unintelligible. Affection to my countrymen will be much better proved, by my exertions to procure them a ſubſtantial benefit, than by my ſupporting a ſyſtem which I believe to be fraught with injurious conſequences.

He who calls upon me to ſupport the conſtitution muſt found his requiſition upon one of two principles. It has a claim upon my ſupport either becauſe it is good, or becauſe it is Britiſh. muſt ariſe either from the reaſon of the caſe, or from a perſonal and local conſideration.

* Book II. chap. ii. p. 83.

Againſt the requiſition in the firſt ſenſe there is nothing to object. All that is neceſſary is to prove the goodneſs which is aſcribed to it. But perhaps it will be ſaid, "that, though not abſolutely good, more miſchief will reſult from an attempt to overturn it, than from maintaining it with its mixed character of partly right and partly wrong." If this can be made evident, undoubtedly I ought to ſubmit. Of this miſchief however I can be no judge but in conſequence of enquiry. To ſome the evils attendant on a revolution will appear greater, and to others leſs. Some will imagine that the vices with which the Engliſh conſtitution is pregnant are conſiderable, and ſome that it is nearly innocent. Before I can decide between theſe oppoſite opinions and balance the exiſting and the poſſible evils, I muſt examine for myſelf. But examination in its nature implies uncertainty of reſult. Were I to determine before I ſat down on which ſide the deciſion ſhould be, I could not ſtrictly ſpeaking be ſaid to examine at all. He that deſires a revolution for its own ſake is to be regarded as a madman. He that deſires it from a thorough conviction of its uſefulneſs and neceſſity has a claim upon us for candour and reſpect.

The ſecond.

As to the demand upon me for ſupport to the Engliſh conſtitution, becauſe it is Engliſh, there is little plauſibility in this argument. It is of the ſame nature as the demand upon me to be a Chriſtian, becauſe I am a Briton, or a Mahometan, becauſe I am

I am a native of Turkey. Inſtead of being an expreſſion of reſpect, it argues contempt of all government, religion and virtue, and every thing that is ſacred among men. If there be ſuch a thing as truth, it muſt be better than error. If there be ſuch a faculty as reaſon, it ought to be exerted. But this demand makes truth a matter of abſolute indifference, and forbids us the exerciſe of our reaſon. If men reaſon and reflect, it muſt neceſſarily happen that either the Engliſhman or the Turk will find his government to be odious and his religion falſe. For what purpoſe employ his reaſon, if he muſt for ever conceal the concluſions to which it leads him? How would man have arrived at his preſent attainments, if he had always been contented with the ſtate of ſociety in which he happened to be born? In a word, either reaſon is the curſe of our ſpecies, and human nature is to be regarded with horror; or it becomes us to employ our underſtanding and to act upon it, and to follow truth wherever it may lead us. It cannot lead us to miſchief, ſince utility, as it regards percipient beings, is the only baſis of moral and political truth.

SECTION II.

MODE OF EFFECTING REVOLUTIONS.

PERSUASION THE PROPER INSTRUMENT—NOT VIOLENCE—NOR RESENTMENT.—LATENESS OF EVENT DESIRABLE.

BOOK IV. CHAP. II. SECTION II. Perſuaſion the proper inſtrument:

TO return to the enquiry reſpecting the mode of effecting revolutions. If no queſtion can be more important, there is fortunately no queſtion perhaps that admits of a more complete and ſatisfactory general anſwer. The revolutions of ſtates, which a philanthropiſt would deſire to witneſs, or in which he would willingly co-operate, conſiſt principally in a change of ſentiments and diſpoſitions in the members of thoſe ſtates. The true inſtruments for changing the opinions of men are argument and perſuaſion. The beſt ſecurity for an advantageous iſſue is free and unreſtricted diſcuſſion. In that field truth muſt always prove the ſucceſsful champion. If then we would improve the ſocial inſtitutions of mankind, we muſt write, we muſt argue, we muſt converſe. To this buſineſs there is no cloſe; in this purſuit there ſhould be no pauſe. Every method ſhould be employed,—not ſo much poſitively to allure the attention of mankind, or perſuaſively to invite them to the adoption of our opinions,—as to remove every reſtraint upon thought, and to throw

throw open the temple of ſcience and the field of enquiry to all the world. BOOK IV. CHAP. II. SECTION II.

not violence:

Thoſe inſtruments will always be regarded by the diſcerning mind as ſuſpicious, which may be employed with equal proſpect of ſucceſs on both ſides of every queſtion. This conſideration ſhould make us look with averſion upon all reſources of violence. When we deſcend into the liſted field, we of courſe deſert the vantage ground of truth, and commit the deciſion to uncertainty and caprice. The phalanx of reaſon is invulnerable; it advances with deliberate and determined pace; and nothing is able to reſiſt it. But when we lay down our arguments, and take up our ſwords, the caſe is altered. Amidſt the barbarous pomp of war and the clamorous din of civil brawls, who can tell whether the event ſhall be proſperous or miſerable?

nor reſentment.

We muſt therefore carefully diſtinguiſh between informing the people and inflaming them. Indignation, reſentment and fury are to be deprecated; and all we ſhould aſk is ſober thought, clear diſcernment and intrepid diſcuſſion. Why were the revolutions of America and France a general concert of all orders and deſcriptions of men, without ſo much (if we bear in mind the multitudes concerned) as almoſt a diſſentient voice; while the reſiſtance againſt our Charles the firſt divided the nation into two equal parts? Becauſe the latter was the affair of the ſeventeenth century, and the former happened in the cloſe of the

eighteenth. Becauſe in the caſe of America and France philoſophy had already developed ſome of the great principles of political truth, and Sydney and Locke and Monteſquieu and Rouſſeau had convinced a majority of reflecting and powerful minds of the evils of uſurpation. If theſe revolutions had happened ſtill later, not one drop of the blood of one citizen would have been ſhed by the hands of another, nor would the event have been marked ſo much perhaps as with one ſolitary inſtance of violence and confiſcation.

Lateneſs of event deſirable.

There are two principles therefore which the man who deſires the regeneration of his ſpecies ought ever to bear in mind, to regard the improvement of every hour as eſſential in the diſcovery and diſſemination of truth, and willingly to ſuffer the lapſe of years before he urges the reducing his theory into actual execution. With all his caution it is poſſible that the impetuous multitude will run before the ſtill and quiet progreſs of reaſon; nor will he ſternly paſs ſentence upon every revolution that ſhall by a few years have anticipated the term that wiſdom would have preſcribed. But, if his caution be firmly exerted, there is no doubt that he will ſuperſede many abortive attempts, and conſiderably prolong the general tranquillity.

SECTIO

SECTION III.

OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

MEANING OF THE TERM.—ASSOCIATIONS OBJECTED TO—1. FROM THE SORT OF PERSONS WITH WHOM A JUST REVOLUTION SHOULD ORIGINATE—2. FROM THE DANGER OF TUMULT.—OBJECTS OF ASSOCIATION.—IN WHAT CASES ADMISSIBLE.—ARGUED FOR FROM THE NECESSITY TO GIVE WEIGHT TO OPINION—FROM THEIR TENDENCY TO ASCERTAIN OPINION.—UNNECESSARY FOR THESE PURPOSES.—GENERAL INUTILITY.—CONCESSIONS.—IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION.—PROPRIETY OF TEACHING RESISTANCE CONSIDERED.

A QUESTION naturally ſuggeſts itſelf in this place reſpecting the propriety of aſſociations among the people at large, for the purpoſe of effecting a change in their political inſtitutions. It ſhould be obſerved, that the aſſociations here ſpoken of are voluntary confederacies of certain members of the ſociety with each other, the tendency of which is to give weight to the opinions of the perſons ſo aſſociated, of which the opinions of the unconfederated and inſulated part of the community are deſtitute.

titute. This queſtion therefore has nothing in common with that other, whether in a well organized ſtate every individual would not find his place in a deliberative as well as an elective capacity; the ſociety being diſtributed into diſtricts and departments, and each man poſſeſſing an importance, not meaſured by the capricious ſtandard of ſome accidental confederacy, but by a rule impartially applied to every member of the community.

Aſſociations objected to:

Relative then to political aſſociations, as thus explained, there are two conſiderations, which, if they do not afford reaſon for undiſtinguiſhing condemnation, at leaſt tend to diminiſh our anxiety to their introduction.

1. from the ſort of perſons with whom a juſt revolution ſhould originate:

In the firſt place revolutions leſs originate in the energies of the people at large, than in the conceptions of perſons of ſome degree of ſtudy and reflection. I ſay, originate, for it muſt be admitted, that they ought ultimately to be determined on by the choice of the whole nation. It is the property of truth to diffuſe itſelf. The difficulty is to diſtinguiſh it in the firſt inſtance, and in the next to preſent it in that unequivocal form which ſhall enable it to command univerſal aſſent. This muſt neceſſarily be the taſk of a few. Society, as it at preſent exiſts in the world, will long be divided into two claſſes, thoſe who have leiſure for ſtudy, and thoſe whoſe importunate neceſſities perpetually urge them to temporary induſtry. It is no doubt to be deſired, that the latter claſs ſhould be made as much as poſſible to

to partake of the privileges of the former. But we ſhould be careful, while we liſten to the undiſtinguiſhing demands of benevolence, that we do not occaſion a greater miſchief than that we undertake to cure. We ſhould be upon our guard againſt an event the conſequences of which are always to be feared, the propagating blind zeal, where we meant to propagate reaſon.

The ſtudious and reflecting only can be expected to ſee deeply into future events. To conceive an order of ſociety totally different from that which is now before our eyes, and to judge of the advantages that would accrue from its inſtitution, are the prerogatives only of a few favoured minds. When theſe advantages have been unfolded by ſuperior penetration, they cannot yet for ſome time be expected to be underſtood by the multitude. Time, reading and converſation are neceſſary to render them familiar. They muſt deſcend in regular gradation from the moſt thoughtful to the moſt unobſervant. He, that begins with an appeal to the people, may be ſuſpected to underſtand little of the true character of mind. A ſiniſter deſign may gain by precipitation; but true wiſdom is beſt adapted to a ſlow, unvarying, inceſſant progreſs.

Human affairs, through every link of the great chain of neceſſity, are admirably harmoniſed and adapted to each other. As the people form the laſt ſtep in the progreſs of truth, they need leaſt preparation to induce them to aſſert it. Their

 prejudices

BOOK IV. CHAP. II. SECTION III.

prejudices are few and upon the ſurface. They are the higher orders of ſociety, that find, or imagine they find, their advantage in injuſtice, and are eager to invent arguments for its defence. In ſophiſtry they firſt ſeek an excuſe for their conduct, and then become the redoubted champions of thoſe errors which they have been aſſiduous to cultivate. The vulgar have no ſuch intereſt, and ſubmit to the reign of injuſtice from habit only and the want of reflection. They do not want preparation to receive the truth, ſo much as examples to embody it. A very ſhort catalogue of reaſons is ſufficient for them, when they ſee the generous and the wiſe reſolved to aſſert the cauſe of juſtice. A very ſhort period is long enough for them to imbibe the ſentiments of patriotiſm and liberty.

2. from the danger of tumult.

Secondly, aſſociations muſt be formed with great caution not to be allied to tumult. The conviviality of a feaſt may lead to the depredations of a riot. While the ſympathy of opinion catches from man to man, eſpecially in numerous meetings, and among perſons whoſe paſſions have not been uſed to the curb of judgment, actions may be determined on, which ſolitary reflection would have rejected. There is nothing more barbarous, cruel and blood-thirſty, than the triumph of a mob. Sober thought ſhould always prepare the way to the public aſſertion of truth. He, that would be the founder of a republic, ſhould, like the firſt Brutus, be inſenſible to the energies of the moſt imperious paſſions of our nature.

Upon

BOOK IV. CHAP. II. SECTION III. Objects of aſſociation.

Upon this ſubject of aſſociations an obvious diſtinction is to be made. Thoſe, who are diſſatisfied with the government of their country, may aim either at the correction of old errors, or the counteracting of new encroachments. Both theſe objects are legitimate. The wiſe and the virtuous man ought to ſee things preciſely as they are, and judge of the actual conſtitution of his country with the ſame impartiality, as if he had ſimply read of it in the remoteſt page of hiſtory.

In what caſes admiſſible.

Theſe two objects may be entitled to a different treatment. The firſt ought undoubtedly to proceed with a leiſurely ſtep and in all poſſible tranquillity. The ſecond appears to require ſomething more of activity. It is the characteriſtic of truth, to truſt much to its own energy, and to reſiſt invaſion rather by the force of conviction than the force of arms. The individual oppreſſed ſeems however particularly entitled to our aſſiſtance, and this can beſt be afforded by the concurrence of many. The caſe may require an early and unequivocal diſplay of opinion, and this perhaps will afford an apology for ſome ſort of aſſociation, provided it be conducted with all poſſible attention to peaceableneſs and good order.

Argued for from the neceſſity to give weight to opinion:

Few arguments can be of equal importance with that which we are here diſcuſſing. Few miſtakes can be more to be deplored than that which ſhould induce us to employ immoral and injurious methods for the ſupport of a good cauſe. It may be

alledged, "that aſſociation is the only expedient for arming the ſenſe of the country againſt the arts of its oppreſſors." Why arm? Why ſpread a reſtleſs commotion over the face of a nation, which may lead to the moſt deſtructive conſequences? Why ſeek to beſtow upon truth a weight that is not her own? a weight that muſt always produce ſome obliquity, ſome blind and unenlightened zeal? In attempting prematurely to anticipate the conqueſt of truth, we ſhall infallibly give birth to deformity and abortion. If we have patience to wait her natural progreſs, and to aſſiſt her cauſe by no arguments that are not worthy of her, the event will be both certain and illuſtrious.

from their tendency to aſcertain opinion.

Unneceſſary for theſe purpoſes.

A ſimilar anſwer will ſuggeſt itſelf to the objection, "that aſſociations are neceſſary unequivocally to aſcertain the opinion of the people." What ſort of opinion is that, which thus ſtands in need of ſome ſudden violence to oblige it to ſtart from its hiding-place? The ſentiments of mankind are then only equivocal in external appearance, when they are unformed and uncertain in the conception. When once the individual knows his own meaning, its ſymptoms will be clear and unequivocal. Be not precipitate. If the embryo ſentiment at preſent exiſting in my mind be true, there is hope that it will gain ſtrength by time. If you wiſh to aſſiſt its growth, let it be by inſtruction, not by attempting to paſs that ſentiment for mine which you only wiſh to be ſo. If the opinion of the people be not known to-day, it will not fail to ſhew itſelf to-morrow. If the opinion of

of the people be not known to-day, it is becauſe that which you would have ſuppoſed to be their opinion is not ſufficiently their opinion. You might as well think of hiding the inhabitants of England, concealing their towns and their cultivation, and making their country paſs for a deſert, as of concealing their real and deliberate ſentiment.

General inutility.

Theſe are the expedients of men who do not know that truth is omnipotent. It may appear to die for a time, but it will not fail to revive with freſh vigour. If it have ever failed to produce gradual conviction, it is becauſe it has been told in a meagre, an obſcure or a puſillanimous manner. Ten pages that ſhould contain an abſolute demonſtration of the true intereſts of mankind in ſociety could no otherwiſe be prevented from changing the face of the globe, than by the literal deſtruction of the paper on which they were written. It would become us to repeat their contents as widely as we were able; but, if we attempted any thing more than this, it would be a practical proof that we did not know they contained a demonſtration.

Conceſſions.

Such are the reaſonings that ſhould decide upon our abſtract opinion of every caſe of aſſociation that comes before us. But, though from hence it ſhould ſufficiently appear that aſſociation is ſcarcely in any caſe to be deſired, there are conſiderations that ſhould lead us ſometimes to judge it with moderation and forbearance. There is one mode, according to which the benefit of mankind

may beſt be promoted, and which ought always to be employed. But mankind are imperfect beings, and there are certain errors of his ſpecies which a wiſe man will be inclined to regard with indulgence. Aſſociations, as a meaſure intrinſically wrong, he will endeavour at leaſt to poſtpone as long as he can. But it muſt not be diſſembled that in the criſis of a revolution they will ſometimes be unavoidable. While opinion is advancing with ſilent ſtep, imagination and zeal may be expected ſomewhat to outrun her progreſs. Wiſdom will be anxious to hold them at bay; and, if her votaries be many, ſhe will be able to do this long enough to prevent tragical conſequences. But, when the caſt is thrown, when the declaration is made and irrevocable, ſhe will not fail, be the confuſion greater or leſs, to take the ſide of truth, and forward her reign by the beſt means that the neceſſity of the caſe will admit.

Importance of ſocial communication.

But, though aſſociation, in the received ſenſe of that term, muſt be granted to be an inſtrument of a very dangerous nature, it ſhould be remembered that unreſerved communication in a ſmaller circle, and eſpecially among perſons who are already awakened to the purſuit of truth, is of unqueſtionable advantage. There is at preſent in the world a cold reſerve that keeps man at a diſtance from man. There is an art in the practice of which individuals communicate for ever, without any one telling his neighbour what eſtimate he ſhould form of his attainments and character, how they ought to be employed, and how to be improved.

improved. There is a ſort of domeſtic tactics, the object of which is to inſtruct us to elude curioſity, and to keep up the tenour of converſation, without the diſcloſure either of our feelings or our opinions. The philanthropiſt has no object more deeply at heart than the annihilation of this duplicity and reſerve. No man can have much kindneſs for his ſpecies, who does not habituate himſelf to conſider upon each ſucceſſive occaſion of ſocial intercourſe how that occaſion may be moſt beneficently improved. Among the topics to which he will be anxious to awaken attention, politics will occupy a principal ſhare.

Books have by their very nature but a limited operation; though, on account of their permanence, their methodical diſquiſition, and their eaſineſs of acceſs, they are entitled to the foremoſt place. But their efficacy ought not to engroſs our confidence. The number of thoſe by whom reading is neglected is exceedingly great. Books to thoſe by whom they are read have a ſort of conſtitutional coldneſs. We review the arguments of an "inſolent innovator" with ſullenneſs, and are unwilling to ſtretch our minds to take in all their force. It is with difficulty that we obtain the courage of ſtriking into untrodden paths, and queſtioning tenets that have been generally received. But converſation accuſtoms us to hear a variety of ſentiments, obliges us to exerciſe patience and attention, and gives freedom and elaſticity to our mental diſquiſitions. A thinking man, if he will recollect his intellectual hiſtory, will find that he has derived ineſtimable advantage from the ſtimulus and ſurpriſe of colloquial ſuggeſtions; and, if he review

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review the hiſtory of literature, will perceive that minds of great acuteneſs and ability have commonly exiſted in a cluſter.

It follows that the promoting of the beſt intereſts of mankind eminently depends upon the freedom of ſocial communication. Let us imagine to ourſelves a number of individuals, who, having firſt ſtored their minds with reading and reflection, proceed afterwards in candid and unreſerved converſation to compare their ideas, to ſuggeſt their doubts, to remove their difficulties, and to cultivate a collected and ſtriking manner of delivering their ſentiments. Let us ſuppoſe theſe men, prepared by mutual intercourſe, to go forth to the world, to explain with ſuccinctneſs and ſimplicity, and in a manner well calculated to arreſt attention, the true principles of ſociety. Let us ſuppoſe their hearers inſtigated in their turn to repeat theſe truths to their companions. We ſhall then have an idea of knowledge as perpetually gaining ground, unaccompanied with peril in the means of its diffuſion. Reaſon will ſpread itſelf, and not a brute and unintelligent ſympathy. Diſcuſſion perhaps never exiſts with ſo much vigour and utility as in the converſation of two perſons. It may be carried on with advantage in ſmall and friendly ſocieties. Does the fewneſs of their numbers imply the rarity of their exiſtence? Far otherwiſe: the time perhaps will come when ſuch inſtitutions will be univerſal. Shew to mankind by a few examples the advantages of political diſcuſſion undebauched by political enmity and vehemence, and the beauty of the ſpectacle will ſoon render the example contagious. Every man will commune

commune with his neighbour. Every man will be eager to tell and to hear what the intereſt of all requires them to know. The bolts and fortifications of the temple of truth will be removed. The craggy ſteep of ſcience, which it was before difficult to aſcend, will be levelled with the plain. Knowledge will be acceſſible to all. Wiſdom will be the inheritance of man, from which none will be excluded but by their own heedleſſneſs and prodigality. If theſe ideas cannot completely be realiſed, till the inequality of conditions and the tyranny of government are rendered ſomewhat leſs oppreſſive, this affords no reaſon againſt the ſetting afloat ſo generous a ſyſtem. The improvement of individuals and the melioration of political inſtitutions are deſtined mutually to produce and reproduce each other. Truth, and above all political truth, is not hard of acquiſition, but from the ſupercilioufneſs of its profeſſors. It has been ſlow and tedious of improvement, becauſe the ſtudy of it has been relegated to doctors and civilians. It has produced little effect upon the practice of mankind, becauſe it has not been allowed a plain and direct appeal to their underſtandings. Remove theſe obſtacles, render it the common property, bring it into daily uſe, and you may reaſonably promiſe yourſelf conſequences of the moſt ineſtimable value.

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But theſe conſequences are the property only of independent and impartial diſcuſſion. If once the unambitious and candid circles of enquiring men be ſwallowed up in the inſatiate gulf of noiſy aſſemblies, the opportunity of improvement is inſtantly

annihilated. The happy varieties of ſentiment which ſo eminently contribute to intellectual acuteneſs are loſt. Activity of thought is ſhackled by the fear that our aſſociates ſhould diſclaim us. A fallacious uniformity of opinion is produced, which no man eſpouſes from conviction, but which carries all men along with a reſiſtleſs tide. Clubs, in the old Engliſh ſenſe, that is, the periodical meeting of ſmall and independent circles, may be admitted to fall within the line of theſe principles. But they ceaſe to be admiſſible, when united with the tremendous apparatus of articles of confederacy and committees of correſpondence. Human beings ſhould meet together, not to enforce, but to enquire. Truth diſclaims the alliance of marſhalled numbers.

It ſeems ſcarcely neceſſary to add, that the individuals who are engaged in the tranſactions here cenſured, have frequently been inſtigated by the beſt intentions, and informed with the moſt liberal views. It would be in the higheſt degree unjuſt, if their undertakings ſhould be found of dangerous tendency, to involve the authors in indiſcriminate cenſure for conſequences which they did not foreſee. But at the ſame time, in proportion to the purity of their views and the ſoundneſs of their principles, it were earneſtly to be deſired that they would ſeriouſly reflect on the means they employ. It would be deeply to be lamented, if thoſe who were the trueſt friends to the welfare of mankind, ſhould come, by the injudiciouſneſs of their conduct, to rank among its enemies.

From

From what has been ſaid it is ſufficiently evident, that no alarm can be more groundleſs, than that of violence and precipitation from the enlightened advocates of political juſtice. There is however another objection which has been urged againſt them, built upon the ſuppoſed inexpediency of inculcating upon the people at large the propriety of occaſional reſiſtance to the authority of government. "Obedience," ſay theſe objectors "is the rule; reſiſtance the exception. Now what can be more prepoſterous, than perpetually to inſiſt with all the pomp of eloquence upon an expedient, to which only an extreme neceſſity can oblige us to have recourſe*?"

It has already been ſhewn that obedience, that is, a ſurrender of the underſtanding to the voice of authority, is a rule to which it can never be creditable to human beings to conform. Tranquillity indeed, a ſtate in which a man ſhall leaſt be diſturbed in the exerciſe of his private judgment by the interpoſition of violence, is an object we ſhould conſtantly endeavour to promote; but this tranquillity the principles here inculcated have little tendency to diſturb.

There is certainly no truth which it can be for the general intereſt to conceal. It muſt be confeſſed indeed, that a ſingle

* This argument, nearly in the words here employed, may be found in Hume's Eſſay on Paſſive Obedience. Eſſays, Part II, Eſſay xiii.

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truth may be ſo detached from the ſeries to which it belongs, as, when ſeparately told, to have the nature of falſhood. But this is by no means the caſe in the preſent inſtance. To inform mankind of thoſe general principles upon which all political inſtitutions ought to be built, is not to diffuſe partial information. To diſcover to them their true intereſts, and lead them to conceive of a ſtate of ſociety more uncorrupt and more equitable than that in which they live, is not to inculcate ſome rare exception to a general rule. If there be any government which muſt be indebted for its perpetuity to ignorance, that government is the curſe of mankind. In proportion as men are made to underſtand their true intereſts, they will conduct themſelves wiſely, both when they act and when they forbear, and their conduct will therefore promiſe the moſt advantageous iſſue. He, whoſe mind has carefully been inured to the dictates of reaſon, is of all men leaſt likely to convert into the raſh and headſtrong invader of the general weal.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

OF THE SPECIES OF REFORM TO BE DESIRED.

OUGHT IT TO BE PARTIAL OR ENTIRE?—TRUTH MAY NOT BE PARTIALLY TAUGHT.—PARTIAL REFORMATION CONSIDERED.—OBJECTION.—ANSWER.—PARTIAL REFORM INDISPENSIBLE.—NATURE OF A JUST REVOLUTION—HOW DISTANT?

BOOK IV. CHAP. II. SECTION IV. Ought it to be partial or entire?

THERE is one more queſtion which cannot fail occaſionally to ſuggeſt itſelf to the advocate of ſocial reformation. "Ought we to deſire to ſee this reformation introduced gradually or at once?" Neither ſide of this dilemma preſents us with the proper expedient.

Truth may not be partially taught.

No project can be more injurious to the cauſe of truth, than that of preſenting it imperfectly and by parcels to the attention of mankind. Seen in its juſt light, the effect produced cannot fail to be conſiderable; but, ſhewn in ſome partial and imperfect way, it will afford a thouſand advantages to its adverſaries. Many objections will ſeem plauſible, which a full view of the ſubject would have diſſipated. Whatever limits truth is error; and of conſequence ſuch a limited view cannot fail to include a

considerable mixture of error. Many ideas may be excellent as parts of a great whole, which, when violently torn from their connection, will not only ceaſe to be excellent, but may in ſome caſes become poſitively injurious. In this war of poſts and ſkirmiſhes victory will perpetually appear to be doubtful, and men will either be perſuaded, that truth itſelf is of little value, or that human intellect is ſo narrow as to render the diſcovery of truth a hopeleſs purſuit.

Partial reformation conſidered.

Objection.

It may be alledged, that "one of the conſiderations of greateſt influence in human affairs is that of the gradual decline of ill things to worſe, till at length the miſchief, having proceeded to its higheſt climax, can maintain itſelf no longer. The argument in favour of ſocial improvement would loſe much of its relative energy, if the opportunity of a ſecret compariſon of poſſible good with actual evil were taken away. All partial reforms are of the nature of palliatives. They ſkin over the diſeaſed part inſtead of extirpating the diſeaſe. By giving a ſmall benefit, perhaps a benefit only in appearance, they cheat us of the ſuperior good we ought to have demanded. By ſtripping error of a part of its enormities, they give it freſh vigour and a longer duration."

Anſwer.

We muſt be cautious however of puſhing this argument too far. To ſuppoſe that truth ſtands in abſolute need of a foil, or that ſhe cannot produce full conviction by her native light, is a con-

a conception unworthy of her enlightened advocates. The true ſolution will probably be found in the accurately diſtinguiſhing the ſources of reform. Whatever reform, general or partial, ſhall be ſuggeſted to the community at large by an unmutilated view of the ſubject, ought to be ſeen with ſome degree of complacency. But a reform, that ſhall be offered us by thoſe whoſe intereſt is ſuppoſed to lie in the perpetuating of abuſe, and the intention of which is rather to give permanence to error by diveſting it of its moſt odious features, is little entitled to our countenance. The true principle of ſocial improvement lies in the correcting public opinion. Whatever reform is ſtolen upon the community unregarded, and does not ſpontaneouſly flow from the energy of the general mind, is unworthy of congratulation. It is in this reſpect with nations as with individuals. He that quits a vicious habit, not from reaſon and conviction, but becauſe his appetites no longer ſolicit him to its indulgence, does not deſerve the epithet of virtuous. The object it becomes us to purſue is, to give vigour to public opinion, not to ſink it into liſtleſſneſs and indifference.

Gradual reform indiſpenſible.

When partial reformation proceeds from its legitimate cauſe, the progreſs ſociety has made in the acquiſition of truth, it may frequently be entitled to our applauſe. Man is the creature of habits. Gradual improvement is a moſt conſpicuous law of his nature. When therefore ſome conſiderable advantage is ſufficiently underſtood by the community to induce them to deſire

deſire its eſtabliſhment, that eſtabliſhment will afterwards react to the enlightening of intellect and the generating of virtue. It is natural for us to take our ſtand upon ſome leading truth, and from thence explore the regions we have ſtill to traverſe.

There is indeed a ſenſe in which gradual improvement is the only alternative between reformation and no reformation. All human intellects are at ſea upon the great ocean of infinite truth, and their voyage though attended with hourly advantage will never be at an end. If therefore we will ſtay till we ſhall have deviſed a reformation ſo complete, as ſhall need no farther reformation to render it more complete, we ſhall eternally remain in inaction. Whatever is fairly underſtood upon general principles by a conſiderable part of the community, and oppoſed by none or by a very few, may be conſidered as ſufficiently ripe for execution.

Nature of a juſt revolution.

To recapitulate the principal object of this chapter, I would once again repeat, that violence may ſuit the plan of any political partiſan, rather than of him that pleads the cauſe of ſimple juſtice. There is even a ſenſe in which the reform aimed at by the true politician may be affirmed to be leſs a gradual than an entire one, without contradicting the former poſition. The complete reformation that is wanted, is not inſtant but future reformation. It can in reality ſcarcely be conſidered as of the nature of action. It conſiſts in an univerſal illumination. Men feel their ſituation,

tion, and the reſtraints, that ſhackled them before, vaniſh like a mere deception. When the true criſis ſhall come, not a ſword will need to be drawn, not a finger to be lifted up. The adverſaries will be too few and too feeble to dare to make a ſtand againſt the univerſal ſenſe of mankind.

How diſtant?

Nor do theſe ideas imply, as at firſt ſight they might ſeem to imply, that the revolution is at an immeaſurable diſtance. It is of the nature of human affairs that great changes ſhould appear to be ſudden, and great diſcoveries to be made unexpectedly, and as it were by accident. In forming the mind of a young perſon, in endeavouring to give a new bent to that of a perſon of maturer years, I ſhall for a long time ſeem to have produced little effect, and the fruits will ſhew themſelves when I leaſt expected them. The kingdom of truth comes not with oſtentation. The ſeeds of virtue may appear to periſh before they germinate.

To recur once more to the example of France, the works of her great political writers ſeemed for a long time to produce little proſpect of any practical effect. Helvetius, one of the lateſt, in a work publiſhed after his death in 1771, laments in pathetic ſtrains the hopeleſs condition of his country. "In the hiſtory of every people," ſays he, "there are moments, in which, uncertain of the ſide they ſhall chooſe, and balanced between political good and evil, they feel a deſire to be inſtructed; in which the ſoil, ſo to expreſs myſelf, is in ſome manner prepared, and may eaſily be impregnated

impregnated with the dew of truth. At ſuch a moment the publication of a valuable book may give birth to the moſt auſpicious reforms: but, when that moment is no more, the nation, become inſenſible to the beſt motives, is by the nature of its government plunged deeper and deeper in ignorance and ſtupidity. The ſoil of intellect is then hard and impenetrable; the rains may fall, may ſpread their moiſture upon the ſurface, but the proſpect of fertility is gone. Such is the condition of France. Her people are become the contempt of Europe. No ſalutary criſis ſhall ever reſtore them to liberty*."

But in ſpite of theſe melancholy predictions, the work of renovation was in continual progreſs. The American revolution gave the finiſhing ſtroke, and only ſix years elapſed between the completion of American liberty and the commencement of the French revolution. Will a term longer than this be neceſſary,

* " *Dans chaque nation il eſt des moments où les citoyens, incertains du parti qu'ils doivent prendre, et ſuſpendus entre un bon et un mauvais gouvernement, éprouvent la ſoif de l'inſtruction, où les eſprits, ſi je l'oſe dire, préparés et ameublis peuvent être facilement pénétrés de la roſée de la vérité. Qu'en ce moment un bon ouvrage paroiſſe, il peut opérer d'heureuſes réformes: mais cet inſtant paſſé, les citoyens, inſenſibles à la gloire, ſont par la forme de leur gouvernement invinciblement entraînés vers l'ignorance et l'abrutiſſement. Alors les eſprits ſont la terre endurcie: l'eau de la vérité y tombe, y coule, mais ſans la féconder. Tel eſt l'état de la France. Cette nation avilie eſt aujourd'hui le mépris de l'Europe. Nulle criſe ſalutaire ne lui rendra la liberté.*"

De l'Homme, Préface.

before

before France, the moſt refined and conſiderable nation in the world, will lead other nations to imitate and improve upon her plan? Let the true friend of man be inceſſant in the propagation of truth, and vigilant to counteract all the cauſes that might diſturb the regularity of her progreſs, and he will have every reaſon to hope an early and a favourable event.

CHAP. III.

OF TYRANNICIDE.

DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.—ARGUMENT IN ITS VINDICATION.—THE DESTRUCTION OF A TYRANT NOT A CASE OF EXCEPTION.—CONSEQUENCES OF TYRANNICIDE.—ASSASSINATION DESCRIBED.—IMPORTANCE OF SINCERITY.

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Diverſity of opinions on this ſubject.

A QUESTION, connected with the mode of effecting revolutions, and which has been eagerly diſcuſſed among political reaſoners, is that of tyrannicide. The moraliſts of antiquity warmly contended for the lawfulneſs of this practice; by the moderns it has generally been condemned.

Argument in its vindication.

The arguments in its favour are built upon a very obvious principle. "Juſtice ought univerſally to be adminiſtered. Upon leſſer criminals it is done, or pretended to be done, by the laws of the community. But criminals by whom law is ſubverted, and who overturn the liberties of mankind, are out of the reach of the ordinary adminiſtration of juſtice. If juſtice be partially adminiſtered in ſubordinate caſes, and the rich man be able to oppreſs the

the poor with impunity, it muſt be admitted that a few examples of this ſort are inſufficient to authoriſe the laſt appeal of human beings. But no man will deny that the caſe of the uſurper and the deſpot is of the moſt atrocious nature. In this inſtance, all the proviſions of civil policy being ſuperſeded, and juſtice poiſoned at the ſource, every man is left to execute for himſelf the decrees of eternal equity."

The deſtruction of a tyrant not a caſe of exception.

It may however be doubted whether the deſtruction of a tyrant be in any reſpect a caſe of exception from the rules proper to be obſerved upon ordinary occaſions. The tyrant has certainly no particular ſanctity annexed to his perſon, and may be killed with as little ſcruple as any other man, when the object is that of repelling immediate violence. In all other caſes, the extirpation of the offender by a ſelf-appointed authority, does not appear to be the proper mode of counteracting injuſtice.

Conſequences of tyrannicide.

For, firſt, either the nation, whoſe tyrant you would deſtroy, is ripe for the aſſertion and maintenance of its liberty, or it is not. If it be, the tyrant ought to be depoſed with every appearance of publicity. Nothing can be more improper, than for an affair, intereſting to the general weal, to be conducted as if it were an act of darkneſs and ſhame. It is an ill leſſon we read to mankind, when a proceeding, built upon the broad baſis of general juſtice, is permitted to ſhrink from public ſcrutiny. The piſtol and the dagger may as eaſily be made the auxiliaries of vice as

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of virtue. To proſcribe all violence, and neglect no means of information and impartiality, is the moſt effectual ſecurity we can have for an iſſue conformable to the voice of reaſon and truth.

If the nation be not ripe for a ſtate of freedom, the man, who aſſumes to himſelf the right of interpoſing violence, may indeed ſhew the fervour of his conception, and gain a certain degree of notoriety. Fame he will not gain, for mankind at preſent regard an act of this ſort with merited abhorrence; and he will inflict new calamities on his country. The conſequences of tyrannicide are well known. If the attempt prove abortive, it renders the tyrant ten times more bloody, ferocious, and cruel than before. If it ſucceed, and the tyranny be reſtored, it produces the ſame effect upon his ſucceſſors. In the climate of deſpotiſm ſome ſolitary virtues may ſpring up. But in the midſt of plots and conſpiracies there is neither truth, nor confidence, nor love, nor humanity.

Aſſaſſination deſcribed.

Secondly, the true merits of the queſtion will be ſtill farther underſtood, if we reflect on the nature of aſſaſſination. The miſtake, which has been incurred upon this ſubject, is to be imputed principally to the ſuperficial view that has been taken of it. If its advocates had followed the conſpirator through all his windings, and obſerved his perpetual alarm leſt truth ſhould become known, they would probably have been leſs indiſcriminate in

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in their applauſe. No action can be imagined more directly at war with a principle of ingenuouſneſs and candour. Like all that is moſt odious in the catalogue of vices, it delights in obſcurity. It ſhrinks from the penetrating eye of wiſdom. It avoids all queſtion, and heſitates and trembles before the queſtioner. It ſtruggles for a tranquil gaiety, and is only complete where there is the moſt perfect hypocriſy. It changes the uſe of ſpeech, and compoſes every feature the better to deceive. Imagine to yourſelf the conſpirators, kneeling at the feet of Cæſar, as they did the moment before they deſtroyed him. Not all the virtue of Brutus can ſave them from your indignation.

Importance of ſincerity.

There cannot be a better inſtance than that of which we are treating, to prove the importance of general ſincerity. We ſee in this example, that an action, which has been undertaken from the beſt motives, may by a defect in this particular tend to overturn the very foundations of juſtice and happineſs. Wherever there is aſſaſſination, there is an end to all confidence among men. Proteſts and aſſeverations go for nothing. No man preſumes to know his neighbour's intention. The boundaries, that have hitherto ſerved to divide virtue and vice, are gone. The true intereſts of mankind require, not their removal, but their confirmation. All morality proceeds upon the aſſumption of ſomething evident and true, will grow and expand in proportion as theſe indications are more clear and unequivocal, and could not exiſt for a moment, if they were deſtroyed.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE CULTIVATION OF TRUTH.

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV.

PERHAPS there cannot be a ſubject of greater political importance, or better calculated to lead us in ſafety through the mazes of controverſy, than that of the value of truth. Truth may be conſidered by us, either abſtractedly, as it relates to certain general and unchangeable principles, or practically, as it relates to the daily incidents and ordinary commerce of human life. In whichever of theſe views we conſider it, the more deeply we meditate its nature and tendency, the more ſhall we be ſtruck with its unrivalled importance.

SECTION

SECTION I.

OF ABSTRACT OR GENERAL TRUTH.

ITS IMPORTANCE AS CONDUCING—TO OUR INTELLECTUAL IMPROVEMENT—TO OUR MORAL IMPROVEMENT.—VIRTUE THE BEST SOURCE OF HAPPINESS.—PROVED BY COMPARISON—BY ITS MANNER OF ADAPTING ITSELF TO ALL SITUATIONS—BY ITS UNDECAYING EXCELLENCE—CANNOT BE EFFECTUALLY PROPAGATED BUT BY A CULTIVATED MIND.—IMPORTANCE OF GENERAL TRUTH TO OUR POLITICAL IMPROVEMENT.

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV. SECTION I. Its importance as conducing

ABSTRACTEDLY conſidered, it conduces to the perfection of our underſtandings, our virtue and our political inſtitutions.

to our intellectual improvement:

In the diſcovery and knowledge of truth is compriſed all that which an impartial and reflecting mind is accuſtomed to admire. It is not poſſible for us ſeriouſly to doubt concerning the preference of a capacious and ardent intelligence over the limited perceptions of a brute. All that we can imagine of angels and Gods conſiſts in ſuperior wiſdom. Do you ſay in power alſo? It will preſently appear that wiſdom is power. The truths of general:

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV. SECTION I.

general nature, thoſe truths which preceded, either ſubſtantially or in the nature of things, the particular exiſtences that ſurround us, and are independent of them all, are inexhauſtible. Is it poſſible that a knowledge of theſe truths, the truths of mathematics, of metaphyſics and morals, the truths which, according to Plato's conception *, taught the creator of the world the nature of his materials, the reſult of his operations, the conſequences of all poſſible ſyſtems in all their detail, ſhould not exalt and elevate the mind? The truths of particular nature, the hiſtory of man, the characters and propenſities of human beings, the proceſs of our own minds, the capacity of our natures, are ſcarcely leſs valuable. The reaſon they are ſo will beſt appear if we conſider, ſecondly, the tendency of truth in conducing to the perfection of our virtue.

to our moral improvement.

Virtue cannot exiſt in an eminent degree, unaccompanied by an extenſive ſurvey of cauſes and their conſequences, ſo that, having ſtruck an accurate balance between the mixed benefits and injuries that for the preſent adhere to all human affairs, we may adopt that conduct which leads to the greateſt poſſible advantage. If there be ſuch a thing as virtue, it muſt admit of degrees. If it admit of degrees, he muſt be moſt virtuous, who chooſes with the ſoundeſt judgment the greateſt poſſible good of his ſpecies. But, in order to chooſe the greateſt poſſible good,

* See the Parmenides.

he

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV. SECTION I.

he muſt be deeply acquainted with the nature of man, its general features and its varieties. In order to execute it, he muſt have conſidered all the inſtruments for impreſſing mind, and the different modes of applying them, and muſt know exactly the proper moment for bringing them into action. In whatever light we conſider virtue, whether we place it in the action or the diſpoſition, its degree muſt be intimately connected with the degree of knowledge. No man can love virtue ſufficiently, who has not an acute and lively perception of its beauty, and its tendency to produce the only ſolid and permanent happineſs. What compariſon can be made between the virtue of Socrates and that of a Hottentot or a Siberian? A humorous example how univerſally this truth has been perceived might be drawn from Tertullian, who, as a father of the church, was obliged to maintain the hollowneſs and inſignificance of pagan virtues, and accordingly aſſures us, "that the moſt ignorant peaſant under the Chriſtian diſpenſation poſſeſſed more real knowledge than the wiſeſt of the ancient philoſophers *."

Virtue the beſt ſource of happineſs: proved by compariſon:

We ſhall be ſtill more fully aware of the connection between virtue and knowledge, if we conſider that the higheſt employment of virtue is to propagate itſelf. Virtue alone is happineſs. The happineſs of a brute that ſpends the greater part of his life in liſtleſſneſs and ſleep, is but one remove from the happineſs of a plant that is full of ſap, vigour and nutrition. The happineſs

* Apologia, Cap. xlvi. See this ſubject farther purſued in Appendix, No. I.

of a man who purſues licentious pleaſure is momentary, and his intervals of wearineſs and diſguſt perpetual. He ſpeedily wears himſelf out in his ſpecious career; and, every time that he employs the means of delight which his corporeal exiſtence affords him, takes ſo much from his capacity of enjoyment. If he be wiſe enough like Epicurus to perceive a part of theſe diſadvantages, and to find in freſh herbs and the water of the ſpring the trueſt gratification of his appetite, he will be obliged to ſeek ſome addition to his ſtock of enjoyment, and like Epicurus to become benevolent out of pure ſenſuality. But the virtuous man has a perpetual ſource of enjoyment. The only reaſon on account of which the truth of this aſſertion was ever controverted, is, that men have not underſtood what it was that conſtituted virtue.

by its manner of adapting itſelf to all ſituations:

It is impoſſible that any ſituation can occur in which virtue cannot find room to expatiate. In ſociety there is continual opportunity for its active employment. I cannot have intercourſe with any human being who may not be the better for that intercourſe. If he be already juſt and virtuous, theſe qualities are improved by communication. It is from a ſimilar principle that it has been obſerved that great geniuſes have uſually exiſted in a cluſter, and have been awakened by the fire ſtruck into them by their neighbours. If he be imperfect and erroneous, there muſt be always ſome prejudice I may contribute to deſtroy, ſome motive to delineate, ſome error to remove.

If I be prejudiced and imperfect myſelf, it cannot however happen that my prejudices and imperfections ſhall be exactly coincident with his. I may therefore inform him of the truths that I know, and even by the colliſion of prejudices truth is elicited. It is impoſſible that I ſhould ſtrenuouſly apply myſelf to his mind with ſincere motives of benevolence without ſome good being the reſult. Nor am I more at a loſs in ſolitude. In ſolitude I may accumulate the materials of ſocial benefit. No ſituation can be ſo deſperate as to preclude theſe efforts. Voltaire, when ſhut up in the Baſtille, and for ought he knew for life, deprived of books, of pens and of paper, arranged and in part executed the project of his Henriade *.

by its undecaying excellence:

Another advantage of virtue in this perſonal view, is that, while ſenſual pleaſure exhauſts the frame, and paſſions often excited become frigid and callous, virtue has exactly the oppoſite propenſities. Paſſions, in the uſual acceptation of that term, having no abſolute foundation in the nature of things, delight only by their novelty. But the more we are acquainted with virtue, the more eſtimable will it appear; and its field is as endleſs as the progreſs of mind. If an enlightened love of it be once excited in the mind, it is impoſſible that it ſhould not continually increaſe. By its variety, by its activity it perpetually

* *Vie de Voltaire, par M**** (ſaid to be the marquis de Villette). *A Geneve*, 1786. *Chap. iv.* This is probably the beſt hiſtory of this great man which has yet appeared.

renovates itſelf, and renders the intellect in which it reſides ever new and ever young.

cannot be effectually propagated but by a cultivated mind.

All theſe reaſonings are calculated to perſuade us that the moſt precious boon we can beſtow upon others is virtue, that the higheſt employment of virtue is to propagate itſelf. But, as virtue is inſeparably connected with knowledge in my own mind, ſo can it only by knowledge be communicated to others. How can the virtue we have juſt been contemplating be created, but by infuſing comprehenſive views and communicating energetic truths? Now that man alone is qualified to give theſe views, and communicate theſe truths, who is himſelf pervaded with them.

Let us ſuppoſe for a moment virtuous diſpoſitions as exiſting without knowledge or outrunning knowledge, the laſt of which is certainly poſſible, and we ſhall preſently find how little ſuch virtue is worthy to be propagated. The moſt generous views will in ſuch caſes frequently lead to the moſt nefarious actions. A Calvin will burn Servetus, and a Digby generate the gunpowder treaſon. But, to leave theſe extreme inſtances, in all caſes where miſtaken virtue leads to cruel and tyrannical actions, the mind will be ſoured and made putreſcent by the actions it perpetrates. Truth, immortal and ever preſent truth, is ſo powerful, that, in ſpite of all his inveterate prejudices, the upright man will ſuſpect himſelf, when he reſolves upon an action

action that is at war with the plaineſt principles of morality. He will become melancholy, diſſatisfied and anxious. His firmneſs will degenerate into obſtinacy, and his juſtice into inexorable ſeverity. The farther he purſues his ſyſtem, the more erroneous will he become. The farther he purſues it, the leſs will he be ſatisfied with it. As truth is an endleſs ſource of tranquillity and delight, error will be a prolific fountain of new miſtakes and new diſcontent.

Importance of general truth to our political improvement.

As to the third point, the tendency of truth to the improvement of our political inſtitutions, this is in reality the ſubject of the preſent volume, and has been particularly argued in ſome of the earlier diviſions of the work. If politics be a ſcience, the inveſtigation of truth muſt be the means of unfolding it. If men reſemble each other in more numerous and eſſential particulars than thoſe in which they differ, if the beſt purpoſes that can be accompliſhed reſpecting them be to make them free and virtuous and wiſe, there muſt be one beſt method of advancing theſe common purpoſes, one beſt mode of ſocial exiſtence deducible from the principles of their nature. If truth be one, there muſt be one code of truths on the ſubject of our reciprocal duties. Nor is the inveſtigation of truth only the beſt mode of arriving at the object of all political inſtitutions, but it is alſo the beſt mode of introducing and eſtabliſhing it. Diſcuſſion is the path that leads to diſcovery and demonſtration. Motives ferment in the minds of great bodies of men till all is ripe for action.

action. The more familiar the mind becomes with the ideas of which they conſiſt and the propoſitions that expreſs them, the more fully is it pervaded with their urgency and importance.

SECTION II.

OF SINCERITY.

NATURE OF THIS VIRTUE.—ITS EFFECTS—UPON OUR OWN ACTIONS—UPON OUR NEIGHBOURS.—ITS TENDENCY TO PRODUCE FORTITUDE.—EFFECTS OF INSINCERITY.—CHARACTER WHICH SINCERITY WOULD ACQUIRE TO HIM WHO PRACTISED IT.—OBJECTIONS.—THE FEAR OF GIVING UNNECESSARY PAIN.—ANSWER.—THE DESIRE OF PRESERVING MY LIFE.—THIS OBJECTION PROVES TOO MUCH.—ANSWER.—SECRECY CONSIDERED.—THE SECRETS OF OTHERS.—STATE SECRETS.—SECRETS OF PHILANTHROPY.

SECTION II. Nature of this virtue.

IT is evident in the laſt place, that a ſtrict adherence to truth will have the beſt effect upon our minds in the ordinary commerce of life. This is the virtue which has commonly been known by the denomination of ſincerity; and, whatever certain accom-

accommodating moraliſts may teach us, the value of ſincerity will be in the higheſt degree obſcured, when it is not complete. Real ſincerity depoſes me from all authority over the ſtatement of facts. Similar to the duty which Tully impoſes upon the hiſtorian, it compels me not to dare "to utter what is falſe, or conceal what is true." It annihilates the baſtard prudence, which would inſtruct me to give language to no ſentiment that may be prejudicial to my intereſts. It extirpates the low and ſelfiſh principle, which would induce me to utter nothing "to the diſadvantage of him from whom I have received no injury." It compels, me to regard the concerns of my ſpecies as my own concerns. What I know of truth, of morals, of religion, of government, it compels me to communicate. All the praiſe which a virtuous man and an honeſt action can merit, I am obliged to pay to the uttermoſt mite. I am obliged to give language to all the blame to which profligacy, venality, hypocriſy and circumvention are ſo juſtly entitled. I am not empowered to conceal any thing I know of myſelf, whether it tend to my honour or to my diſgrace. I am obliged to treat every other man with equal frankneſs, without dreading the imputation of flattery on the one hand, without dreading his reſentment and enmity on the other.

Its effects upon our own actions.

Did every man impoſe this law upon himſelf, he would be obliged to conſider before he decided upon the commiſſion of an equivocal action, whether he choſe to be his own hiſtorian, to be

be the future narrator of the ſcene in which he was engaging. It has been juſtly obſerved that the popiſh practice of auricular confeſſion has been attended with ſome ſalutary effects. How much better would it be, if, inſtead of a practice thus ambiguous, and which may be converted into ſo dangerous an engine of eccleſiaſtical deſpotiſm, every man would make the world his confeſſional, and the human ſpecies the keeper of his conſcience?

upon our neighbours.

How extenſive an effect would be produced, if every man were ſure of meeting in his neighbour the ingenuous cenſor, who would tell to himſelf, and publiſh to the world, his virtues, his good deeds, his meanneſſes and his follies? I have no right to reject any duty, becauſe it is equally incumbent upon my neighbours, and they do not practiſe it. When I have diſcharged the whole of my duty, it is weakneſs and vice to make myſelf unhappy about the omiſſions of others. Nor is it poſſible to ſay how much good one man ſufficiently rigid in his adherence to truth would effect. One ſuch man, with genius, information and energy, might redeem a nation from vice.

Its tendency to produce fortitude.

The conſequence to myſelf of telling every man the truth, regardleſs of perſonal danger or of injury to my intereſts in the world, would be uncommonly favourable. I ſhould acquire a fortitude that would render me equal to the moſt trying ſituations, that would maintain my preſence of mind entire in ſpite of

of unexpected occurrences, that would furniſh me with extemporary arguments and wiſdom, and endue my tongue with irreſiſtible eloquence. Animated by the love of truth, my underſtanding would always be vigorous and alert, not as before frequently ſubject to liſtleſſneſs, timidity and inſipidity. Animated by the love of truth, and by a paſſion inſeparable from its nature, and which is almoſt the ſame thing under another name, the love of my ſpecies, I ſhould carefully ſeek for ſuch topics as might moſt conduce to the benefit of my neighbours, anxiouſly watch the progreſs of mind, and inceſſantly labour for the extirpation of prejudice.

Effects of inſincerity.

What is it that at this day enables a thouſand errors to keep their ſtation in the world, prieſtcraft, teſts, bribery, war, cabal, and whatever elſe is the contempt and abhorrence of the enlightened and honeſt mind? Cowardice. Becauſe, while vice walks erect with an unabaſhed countenance, men leſs vicious dare not paint her with that truth of colouring, which ſhould at once confirm the innocent and reform the guilty. Becauſe the majority of thoſe who are not involved in the buſy ſcene, and who, poſſeſſing ſome diſcernment, ſee that things are not altogether right, yet ſee in ſo frigid a way, and with ſo imperfect a view. Many, who detect the impoſture, are yet abſurd enough to imagine that impoſture is neceſſary to keep the world in awe, and that truth being too weak to curb the turbulent paſſions of mankind, it is exceedingly proper to call in knavery and artifice as the abettors of her power. If every man to-day

would tell all the truth he knows, three years hence there would be ſcarcely a falſhood of any magnitude remaining in the civiliſed world.

Character which ſincerity would acquire to him who practiſed it.

There is no fear that the character here deſcribed ſhould degenerate into ruggedneſs and brutality *. The motive by which it is animated affords a ſufficient ſecurity againſt ſuch conſequences. "I tell an unpleaſant truth to my neighbour from a conviction that it is my duty. I am convinced it is my duty, becauſe I perceive the communication is calculated for his benefit." His benefit therefore is the motive of my proceeding, and with ſuch a motive it is impoſſible I ſhould not ſeek to communicate it in the moſt efficacious form, not rouſing his reſentment, but awakening his moral feelings and his energy. Meanwhile the happieſt of all qualifications in order to render truth palatable, is that which riſes ſpontaneouſly in the ſituation we have been conſidering. Truth according to the terms of the ſuppoſition is to be ſpoken from the love of truth. But the face, the voice, the geſture are ſo many indexes to the mind. It is ſcarcely poſſible therefore that the perſon with whom I am converſing ſhould not perceive, that I am influenced by no malignity, acrimony and envy. In proportion as my motive is pure, at leaſt after a few experiments, my manner will become unembarraſſed. There will be frankneſs in my voice, fervour in my geſture, and kindneſs in my heart. That man's mind muſt be

* See a particular caſe of this ſincerity diſcuſſed in Appendix, No. II.

of a very perverſe texture, that can convert a beneficent potion adminiſtered with no ungenerous retroſpect, no ſelfiſh triumph, into rancour and averſion. There is an energy in the ſincerity of a virtuous mind that nothing human can reſiſt.

Objections.

I ſtop not to conſider the objections of the man who is immerſed in worldly proſpects and purſuits. He that does not know that virtue is better than riches or title muſt be convinced by arguments foreign to this place.

The fear of giving unneceſſary pain.

But it will be aſked, "What then, are painful truths to be diſcloſed to perſons who are already in the moſt pitiable circumſtances? Ought a woman that is dying of a fever to be informed of the fate of her huſband whoſe ſkull has been fractured by a fall from his horſe?"

Anſwer.

The moſt that could poſſibly be conceded to a caſe like this, is, that this perhaps is not the moment to begin to treat like a rational being a perſon who has through the courſe of a long life been treated like an infant. But in reality there is a mode in which under ſuch circumſtances truth may ſafely be communicated; and, if it be not thus done, there is perpetual danger that it may be done in a blunter way by the heedleſs loquaciouſneſs of a chambermaid, or the yet undebauched ſincerity of an infant. How many arts of hypocriſy, ſtratagem and falſhood muſt be employed to cover this pitiful ſecret? Truth was calculated in

the nature of things to diſcipline the mind to fortitude, humanity and virtue. Who are we, that we ſhould ſubvert the nature of things and the ſyſtem of the univerſe, that we ſhould breed up a ſet of ſummer inſects, upon which the breeze of ſincerity may never blow, and the tempeſt of misfortune never beat?

The deſire of preſerving my life.

"But truth may ſometimes be fatal to him that ſpeaks it. A man, who fought for the Pretender in the year 1745, when the event happened that diſperſed his companions, betook himſelf to ſolitary flight. He fell in with a party of loyaliſts who were ſeeking to apprehend him; but not knowing his perſon, they enquired of him for intelligence to guide them in their purſuit. He returned an anſwer calculated to cheriſh them in their miſtake, and ſaved his life."

This objection proves too much.

This like the former is an extreme caſe; but the true anſwer will probably be found to be the ſame. If any one ſhould queſtion this, let him conſider how far his approbation of the conduct of the perſon above cited would lead him. The rebels, as they were called, were treated in the period from which the example is drawn with the moſt illiberal injuſtice. This man, guided perhaps by the moſt magnanimous motives in what he had done, would have been put to an ignominious death. But, if he had a right to extricate himſelf by falſhood, why not the wretch who has been guilty of forgery, who has deſerved puniſhment, but who may now be conſcious that he has in him materials

materials and inclination to make a valuable member of ſociety? Nor is the inclination an eſſential part of the ſuppoſition. Wherever the materials exiſt, it will perhaps be found to be flagrantly unjuſt on the part of ſociety to deſtroy them, inſtead of diſcovering the means by which they might be rendered innocent and uſeful. At this rate, a man has nothing to do but to commit one crime, in order to give him a right to commit a ſecond which ſhall ſecure impunity to the firſt.

Anſwer.

But why, when ſo many hundred individuals have been contented to become martyrs to the unintelligible principles of a pitiful ſect, ſhould not the one innocent man I have been deſcribing be contented to offer himſelf up a victim at the ſhrine of veracity? Why ſhould he purchaſe a few poor years of exile and miſery by the commiſſion of falſhood? Had he ſurrendered himſelf to his purſuers, had he declared in the preſence of his judges and his country, "I, whom you think too wicked and degenerate to deſerve even to live, have choſen rather to encounter your injuſtice than be guilty of an untruth: I would have eſcaped from your iniquity and tyranny if I had been able; but, hedged in on all ſides, having no means of deliverance but in falſhood, I chearfully ſubmit to all that your malice can inflict rather than violate the majeſty of truth:" would he not have done an honour to himſelf, and afforded an example to the world, that would have fully compenſated the calamity of his untimely death? It is in all caſes incumbent upon us to diſcharge

charge our own duty, without being influenced by the enquiry whether other men will discharge or neglect theirs.

It must be remembered however that this is not the true jet of the argument. The stress does not lie upon the good he would have done: that is precarious. This heroic action, as it is to be feared has been the case with many others, might be consigned to oblivion. The object of true wisdom under the circumstances we are considering, is to weigh, not so much what is to be done, as what is to be avoided. We must not be guilty of insincerity. We must not seek to obtain a desirable object by vile means. We must prefer a general principle to the meretricious attractions of a particular deviation. We must perceive in the preservation of that general principle a balance of universal good, outweighing the benefit to arise in any instance from superseding it. It is by general principles that the business of the universe is carried on. If the laws of gravity and impulse did not make us know the consequences of our actions, we should be incapable of judgment and inference. Nor is this less true in morals. He that, having laid down to himself a plan of sincerity, is guilty of a single deviation, infects the whole, contaminates the frankness and magnanimity of his temper (for fortitude in the intrepidity of lying is baseness), and is less virtuous than the foe against whom he defends himself; for it is more virtuous in my neighbour to confide in my apparent honesty, than in me to abuse his confidence. In the case of martyrdom

tyrdom there are two things to be considered. It is an evil not wantonly to be incurred, for we know not what good yet remains for us to do. It is an evil not to be avoided at the expence of principle, for we should be upon our guard against setting an inordinate value upon our own efforts, and imagining that truth would die, if we were to be destroyed.

Secrecy considered.

"But what becomes of the great duty of secrecy, which the incomparable Fenelon has made a capital branch in the education of his Telemachus?" It is annihilated. It becomes a truly virtuous man not to engage in any action of which he would be ashamed though all the world were spectator. Indeed Fenelon with all his ability has fallen into the most palpable inconsistency upon this subject. In Ithaca a considerable part of the merit of Telemachus consists in keeping his mother's secrets *. When he arrives in Tyre, he will not be persuaded to commit or suffer a deception, though his life was apparently at stake †.

What is it of which an honest man is commonly ashamed? Of virtuous poverty, of doing menial offices for himself, of having raised himself by merit from a humble situation, and of a thousand particulars which in reality constitute his glory. With respect to actions of beneficence we cannot be too much upon our guard against a spirit of ostentation and the character that imperiously exacts the gratitude of its beneficiaries; but it is certainly an extreme weakness to desire to hide our deserts. So

* *Télémaque. Liv. XVI.* † *Liv. III.*

far

far from desiring to withhold from the world the knowledge of our good deeds, we ought to be forward to exhibit an attractive and illustrious example. We cannot determine to keep any thing secret without risking at the same time to commit a hundred artifices, quibbles, equivocations and falsehoods.

The secrets of others.

But the secrets of others, "have I a power over them?" Probably not: but you have a duty respecting them. The facts with which you are acquainted are a part of your possessions, and you are as much obliged respecting them as in any other case, to employ them for the public good. Have I no right to indulge in myself the caprice of concealing any of my affairs, and can another man have a right by his caprice to hedge up and restrain the path of my duty?—"But state secrets?" This perhaps

State secrets.

is a subject that ought not to be anticipated. We shall have occasion to enquire how ministers of the concerns of a nation came by their right to equivocate, to juggle and over-reach, while private men are obliged to be ingenuous, direct and sincere.

Secrets of philanthropy.

There is one case of a singular nature that seems to deserve a separate examination; the case of secrets that are to be kept for the sake of mankind. Full justice is done to the affirmative side of this argument by Mr. Condorcet in his Life of Voltaire, where he is justifying this illustrious friend of mankind, for his gentleness and forbearance in asserting the liberties of the species. He first

first enumerates the incessant attacks of Voltaire upon superstition, hypocritical austerities and war; and then proceeds: "It is true, the more men are enlightened, the more they will be free; but let us not put despots on their guard, and incite them to form a league against the progress of reason. Let us conceal from them the strict and eternal union that subsists between knowledge and liberty. Voltaire thought proper to paint superstition as the enemy of monarchy, to put kings and princes upon their guard against the gloomy ferocity and ambition of the priesthood; and to demonstrate that, were it not for the freedom of thought and investigation, there would be no security against the return of papal insolence, of proscriptions, assassinations and religious war. Had he taken the other side of the question, had he maintained, which is equally true, that superstition and ignorance are the support of despotism, he would only have anticipated truths for which the public were not ripe, and have seen a speedy end to his career. Truth taught by moderate degrees gradually enlarges the intellectual capacity, and insensibly prepares the equality and happiness of mankind; but taught without prudential restraint would either be nipped in the bud, or occasion national concussions in the world, that would be found premature and therefore abortive*."

What

* "*Plus les hommes seront éclairés, plus ils seront libres.—Mais n'avertissons point les oppresseurs de former une ligue contre la raison, cachons leur l'étroite et nécessaire union des lumières et de la liberté.—Quel sera donc le devoir d'un philosophe?—Il éclairera les gouvernemens sur tout ce qu'ils ont à craindre des prêtres.—Il fera voir*

que

What a cowardly diſtruſt do reaſonings like theſe exhibit of the omnipotence of truth! With reſpect to perſonal ſafety, it will be found upon an accurate examination that Voltaire with all his ingenuity and ſtratagem was for ſixty years together, the object of perpetual, almoſt daily perſecution from courts and miniſters*. He was obliged to retire from country to country, and at laſt to take advantage of a reſidence upon the borders of two ſtates with a habitation in each. His attempts to ſecure the patronage of princes led only to viciſſitude and diſgrace. If his plan had been more firm and direct, he would not have been leſs ſafe. Timidity, and an anxious endeavour to ſecure to ourſelves a protector, invite perſecution. With the advantages of Voltaire, with his talents and independence, he might have held the tyrants of the world in awe.

que ſans la liberté de penſer le même eſprit dans le clergé ramènerait les mêmes aſſaſſinats, les mêmes ſupplices, les mêmes proſcriptions, les mêmes guerres civiles.—Au lieu de montrer que la ſuperſtition eſt l'appui du deſpotiſme, avant que la raiſon ait raſſemblé aſſez de force, il prouvera qu'elle eſt l'ennemie des rois.—Tel eſt l'eſprit de tous les ouvrages de Voltaire—Que des hommes, inferieurs à lui, ne voyent pas que ſi Voltaire eût fait autrement, ni Monteſquieu ni Rouſſeau n'auraient pu écrire leurs ouvrages, que l'Europe ſerait encore ſuperſtitieuſe, et reſterait long-tems eſclave.—En attaquant les oppreſſeurs avant d'avoir éclairé les citoyens, on riſque de perdre la liberté et d'étouffer la raiſon. L'hiſtoire offre la preuve de cette vérité. Combien de fois, malgré les généreux efforts des amis de la liberté, une ſeule bataille n'a-t-elle pas réduit des nations à une ſervitude de pluſieurs ſiècles!—Pourquoi ne pas profiter de cette expérience funeſte, et ſavoir attendre des progrès des lumières une liberté plus réelle, plus durable et plus paiſible?"

* *Vie de Voltaire, par M****, throughout.

As

As to the progreſs of truth, it is not ſo precarious as its fearful friends may imagine. Mr. Condorcet has juſtly inſinuated in the courſe of his argument, that "in the invention of printing is contained the embryo, which in its maturity and vigour is deſtined to annihilate the ſlavery of the human race*." Books, if proper precautions be employed, cannot be deſtroyed. Knowledge cannot be extirpated. Its progreſs is ſilent, but infallible; and he is the moſt uſeful ſoldier in this war, who accumulates in an unperiſhable form the greateſt maſs of truth.

As truth has nothing to fear from her enemies, ſhe needs not have any thing to fear from her friends. The man, who publiſhes the ſublimeſt diſcoveries, is not of all others the moſt likely to inflame the vulgar, and hurry the great queſtion of human happineſs to a premature criſis. The object to be purſued undoubtedly is, the gradual improvement of mind. But this end will be better anſwered by exhibiting as much truth as poſſible, enlightening a few, and ſuffering knowledge to expand in the proportion which the laws of nature and neceſſity preſcribe, than by any artificial plan of piecemeal communication that we can invent. There is in the nature of things a gradation in diſcovery and a progreſs in improvement, which do not need to be aſſiſted by the ſtratagems of their votaries. In a word, there cannot be a more unworthy idea, than that truth and virtue ſhould be

* "*Peut-être avant l'invention de l'imprimerie était-il impoſſible à ſe ſouſtraire au joug.*"

 under

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV. SECTION II.

under the neceſſity of ſeeking alliance with concealment. The man, who would artfully draw me into a little, that by ſo doing he may unawares ſurpriſe me into much, I infallibly regard as an impoſtor. Will truth, contracted into ſome petty ſphere and ſhorn of its beams, acquire additional evidence? Rather let me truſt to its omnipotence, to its congeniality with the nature of intellect, to its direct and irreſiſtible tendency to produce liberty, and happineſs, and virtue. Let me fear that I have not enough of it, that my views are too narrow to produce impreſſion, and anxiouſly endeavour to add to my ſtock; not apprehend that, exhibited in its noon-day brightneſs, its luſtre and genial nature, ſhould not be univerſally confeſſed *.

* See this ſubject farther purſued in Appendix, No. III.

APPENDIX,

APPENDIX, No. I. p. 233.

OF THE CONNEXION BETWEEN UNDERSTANDING AND VIRTUE.

CAN EMINENT VIRTUE EXIST UNCONNECTED WITH TALENTS?—NATURE OF VIRTUE.—IT IS THE OFFSPRING OF UNDERSTANDING.—IT GENERATES UNDERSTANDING.—ILLUSTRATION FROM OTHER PURSUITS—LOVE—AMBITION—APPLIED.

CAN EMINENT TALENTS EXIST UNCONNECTED WITH VIRTUE?—ARGUMENT IN THE AFFIRMATIVE FROM ANALOGY—IN THE NEGATIVE FROM THE UNIVERSALITY OF MORAL SPECULATION—FROM THE NATURE OF VICE AS FOUNDED IN MISTAKE.—THE ARGUMENT BALANCED.—IMPORTANCE OF A SENSE OF JUSTICE.—ITS CONNEXION WITH TALENTS.—ILLIBERALITY WITH WHICH MEN OF TALENTS ARE USUALLY TREATED.

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV. APPENDIX, No. I. Can eminent virtue exiſt unconnected with talents?

A PROPOSITION which, however evident in itſelf, ſeems never to have been conſidered with the attention it deſerves, is that which affirms the connexion between underſtanding and virtue. Can an honeſt ploughman be as virtuous as Cato?

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Cato? Is a man of weak intellects and narrow education as capable of moral excellence as the ſublimeſt genius or the mind moſt ſtored with information and ſcience?

Nature of virtue.

To determine theſe queſtions it is neceſſary we ſhould recollect the nature of virtue. Conſidered as a perſonal quality it conſiſts in the diſpoſition of the mind, and may be defined a deſire to promote the benefit of intelligent beings in general, the quantity of virtue being as the quantity of deſire. Now deſire is another name for preference, or a perception of the excellence real or ſuppoſed of any object. I ſay real or ſuppoſed, for an object totally deſtitute of real and intrinſic excellence, may become an object of deſire by means of the imaginary excellence that is aſcribed to it. Nor is this the only miſtake to which human intelligences are liable. We may deſire an object of abſolute excellence, not for its real and genuine recommendations, but for ſome fictitious attractions we may impute to it. This is always in ſome degree the caſe, when a beneficial action is performed from an ill motive.

How far is this miſtake compatible with real virtue? If I deſire the benefit of intelligent beings, not from a clear and diſtinct perception of what it is in which their benefit conſiſts, but from the unexamined leſſons of education, from the phyſical effect of ſympathy, or from any ſpecies of zeal unallied to and incommenſurate with knowledge, can this deſire be admitted for virtuous?

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tuous? Nothing ſeems more inconſiſtent with our ideas of virtue. A virtuous preference is the preference of an object for the ſake of certain beneficial qualities which really belong to that object. To attribute virtue to any other ſpecies of preference would be the ſame as to ſuppoſe that an accidental effect of my conduct, which was altogether out of my view at the time of adopting it, might entitle me to the appellation of virtuous.

It is the offſpring of underſtanding.

Hence it appears, firſt, that virtue conſiſts in a deſire of the benefit of the ſpecies: and, ſecondly, that that deſire only can be denominated virtuous, which flows from a diſtinct perception of the value, and conſequently of the nature, of the thing deſired. But how extenſive muſt be the capacity that comprehends the full value of that benefit which is the object of virtue! It muſt begin with a collective idea of the human ſpecies. It muſt diſcriminate, among all the different cauſes that produce a pleaſurable ſtate of mind, that which produces the moſt exquiſite and durable pleaſure. Eminent virtue requires that I ſhould have a grand view of the tendency of knowledge to produce happineſs, and of juſt political inſtitution to favour the progreſs of knowledge. It demands that I ſhould perceive in what manner ſocial intercourſe may be made conducive to virtue and felicity, and imagine the unſpeakable advantages that may ariſe from a coincidence and ſucceſſion of generous efforts. Theſe things are neceſſary, not merely for the purpoſe of enabling me to employ my virtuous diſpoſition in the beſt manner, but alſo

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for the purpoſe of giving to that diſpoſition a juſt animation and vigour. God, according to the ideas uſually conceived of that being, is more benevolent than man, becauſe he has a conſtant and clear perception of the nature of that end which his providence purſues.

It generates underſtanding.

A farther proof that a powerful underſtanding is inſeparable from eminent virtue will ſuggeſt itſelf, if we recollect that earneſt deſire never fails to generate capacity.

Illuſtration from other purſuits:

love:

This propoſition has been beautifully illuſtrated by the poets, when they have repreſented the paſſion of love as immediately leading in the breaſt of the lover to the attainment of many arduous accompliſhments. It unlocks his tongue, and enables him to plead the cauſe of his paſſion with inſinuating eloquence. It renders his converſation pleaſing and his manners graceful. Does he deſire to expreſs his feelings in the language of verſe? It dictates to him the moſt natural and pathetic ſtrains, and ſupplies him with a juſt and intereſting language which the man of mere reflection and ſcience has often ſought for in vain.

ambition:

No picture can be more truly founded in a knowledge of human nature than this. The hiſtory of all eminent talents is of a ſimilar kind. Did Themiſtocles deſire to eclipſe the trophies of the battle of Marathon? The uneaſineſs of this deſire would not let him ſleep, and all his thoughts were occupied with the

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invention of means to accompliſh the purpoſe he had choſen. It is a well known maxim in the forming of juvenile minds, that the inſtruction, which is communicated by mere conſtraint, makes a ſlow and feeble impreſſion; but that, when once you have inſpired the mind with a love for its object, the ſcene and the progreſs are entirely altered. The uneaſineſs of mind which earneſt deſire produces, doubles our intellectual activity; and as ſurely carries us forward with increaſed velocity towards our goal, as the expectation of a reward of ten thouſand pounds would prompt me to walk from London to York with firmer reſolution and in a ſhorter time.

Let the object be for a perſon uninſtructed in the rudiments of drawing to make a copy of ſome celebrated ſtatue. At firſt, we will ſuppoſe, his attempt ſhall be mean and unſucceſsful. If his deſire be feeble, he will be deterred by the miſcarriage of this eſſay. If his deſire be ardent and invincible, he will return to the attack. He will derive inſtruction from his failure. He will examine where and why he miſcarried. He will ſtudy his model with a more curious eye. He will perceive that he failed principally from the looſe and undigeſted idea he had formed of the object before him. It will no longer ſtand in his mind as one general maſs, but he will analyſe it, beſtowing upon each part in ſucceſſion a ſeparate conſideration.

The caſe is ſimilar in virtue as in ſcience. If I have con- applied:

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ceived an earneſt deſire of being a benefactor of my ſpecies, I ſhall no doubt find out a channel in which for my deſire to operate, and ſhall be quick-ſighted in diſcovering the defects or comparative littleneſs of the plan I have choſen. But the choice of an excellent plan for the accompliſhment of an important purpoſe, and the exertion of a mind perpetually watchful to remove its defects, imply conſiderable underſtanding. The farther I am engaged in the purſuit of this plan the more will my capacity increaſe. If my mind flag and be diſcouraged in the purſuit, it will not be merely want of underſtanding, but want of deſire. My deſire and my virtue will be leſs, than thoſe of the man, who goes on with unremitted conſtancy in the ſame career.

Can eminent talents exiſt unconnected with virtue?

Thus far we have only been conſidering how impoſſible it is that eminent virtue ſhould exiſt in a weak underſtanding, and it is ſurpriſing that ſuch a propoſition ſhould ever have been conteſted. It is a curious queſtion to examine, how far the converſe of this propoſition is true, and in what degree eminent talents are compatible with the abſence of virtue.

Argument in the affirmative from analogy:

From the arguments already adduced it appears that virtuous deſire is another name for a clear and diſtinct perception of the nature and value of the object of virtue. Hence it ſeems moſt natural to conclude, that, though underſtanding, or ſtrong percipient power is the indiſpenſible prerequiſite of virtue, yet it is neceſſary

neceſſary that this power ſhould be fixed upon this object, in order to its producing the deſired effect. Thus it is in art. Without genius no man ever was a poet; but it is neceſſary that general capacity ſhould have been directed to this particular channel, for poetical excellence to be the reſult.

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in the negative from the univerſality of moral ſpeculation:

There is however ſome difference between the two caſes. Poetry is the buſineſs of a few, virtue and vice are the affairs of all men. To every intellect that exiſts one or other of theſe qualities muſt properly belong. It muſt be granted that, where every other circumſtance is equal, that man will be moſt virtuous, whoſe underſtanding has been moſt actively employed in the ſtudy of virtue. But morality has been in a certain degree an object of attention to all men. No perſon ever failed more or leſs to apply the ſtandard of juſt and unjuſt to his own actions and thoſe of others; and this has of courſe been generally done with moſt ingenuity by men of the greateſt capacity.

from the nature of vice as founded in miſtake.

It muſt farther be remembered that a vicious conduct is always the reſult of narrow views. A man of powerful capacity and extenſive obſervation is leaſt likely to commit the miſtake, either of ſeeing himſelf as the only object of importance in the univerſe, or of conceiving that his own advantage may beſt be promoted by trampling on that of others. Liberal accompliſhments are ſurely in ſome degree connected with liberal principles. He, who takes into his view a whole nation as the ſubjects of his

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operation or the inſtruments of his greatneſs, may naturally be expected to entertain ſome kindneſs for the whole. He, whoſe mind is habitually elevated to magnificent conceptions, is not likely to ſink without ſtrong reluctance into thoſe ſordid purſuits, which engroſs ſo large a portion of mankind.

The argument balanced.

But, though theſe general maxims muſt be admitted for true, and would incline us to hope for a conſtant union between eminent talents and great virtues, there are other conſiderations which preſent a ſtrong drawback upon ſo agreeable an expectation. It is ſufficiently evident that morality in ſome degree enters into the reflections of all mankind. But it is equally evident, that it may enter for more or for leſs; and that there will be men of the higheſt talents, who have their attention diverted to other objects, and by whom it will be meditated upon with leſs earneſtneſs, than it may ſometimes be by other men who are in a general view their inferiors. The human mind is in ſome caſes ſo tenacious of its errors, and ſo ingenious in the invention of a ſophiſtry by which they may be vindicated, as to fruſtrate expectations of virtue in other reſpects the beſt founded.

Importance of a ſenſe of juſtice.

From the whole of the ſubject it ſeems to appear, that men of talents, even when they are erroneous, are not deſtitute of virtue, and that there is a degree of guilt of which they are incapable. There is no ingredient that ſo eſſentially contributes to a virtuous character as a ſenſe of juſtice. Philanthropy, as con-

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contradiſtinguiſhed to juſtice, is rather an unreflecting feeling, than a rational principle. It leads to an abſurd indulgence, which is frequently more injurious than beneficial even to the individual it propoſes to favour. It leads to a blind partiality, inflicting calamity without remorſe upon many perhaps, in order to promote the imagined intereſt of a few. But juſtice meaſures by one inflexible ſtandard the claims of all, weighs their oppoſite pretenſions, and ſeeks to diffuſe happineſs, becauſe happineſs is the fit and reaſonable adjunct of a conſcious being. Wherever therefore a ſtrong ſenſe of juſtice exiſts, it is common and reaſonable to ſay, that in that mind exiſts conſiderable virtue, though the individual from an unfortunate concurrence of circumſtances may with all his great qualities be the inſtrument of a very ſmall portion of benefit. Can great intellectual energy exiſt without a ſtrong ſenſe of juſtice?

Its connexion with talents.

It has no doubt reſulted from a train of ſpeculation ſimilar to this, that poetical readers have commonly remarked Milton's devil to be a being of conſiderable virtue. It muſt be admitted that his energies centered too much in perſonal regards. But why did he rebel againſt his maker? It was, as he himſelf informs us, becauſe he ſaw no ſufficient reaſon for that extreme inequality of rank and power which the creator aſſumed. It was becauſe preſcription and precedent form no adequate ground for implicit faith. After his fall, why did he ſtill cheriſh the ſpirit of oppoſition? From a perſuaſion that he was hardly and injuriouſly

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injuriouſly treated. He was not diſcouraged by the apparent inequality of the conteſt: becauſe a ſenſe of reaſon and juſtice was ſtronger in his mind, than a ſenſe of brute force: becauſe he had much of the feelings of an Epictetus or a Cato, and little of thoſe of a ſlave. He bore his torments with fortitude, becauſe he diſdained to be ſubdued by deſpotic power. He ſought revenge, becauſe he could not think with tameneſs of the unexpoſtulating authority that aſſumed to diſpoſe of him. How beneficial and illuſtrious might the temper from which theſe qualities flowed have proved with a ſmall diverſity of ſituation!

Let us deſcend from theſe imaginary exiſtences to real hiſtory. We ſhall find that even Cæſar and Alexander had their virtues. There is great reaſon to believe, that, however miſtaken was their ſyſtem of conduct, they imagined it reconcileable and even conducive to the general good. If they had deſired the general good more earneſtly, they would have underſtood better how to promote it.

Upon the whole it appears, that great talents are great energies, and that great energies cannot flow but from a powerful ſenſe of fitneſs and juſtice. A man of uncommon genius is a man of high paſſions and lofty deſign; and our paſſions will be found in the laſt analyſis to have their ſureſt foundation in a ſentiment of juſtice. If a man be of an aſpiring and ambitious temper, it is becauſe at preſent he finds himſelf out of his place, and

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and wiſhes to be in it. Even the lover imagines that his qualities or his paſſion give him a title ſuperior to that of other men. If I accumulate wealth, it is becauſe I think that the moſt rational plan of life cannot be ſecured without it; and, if I dedicate my energies to ſenſual pleaſures, it is that I regard other purſuits as irrational and viſionary. All our paſſions would die in the moment they were conceived, were it not for this reinforcement. A man of quick reſentment, of ſtrong feelings, and who pertinaciouſly reſiſts every thing that he regards as an unjuſt aſſumption, may be conſidered as having in him the ſeeds of eminence. Nor is it eaſily to be conceived that ſuch a man ſhould not proceed from a ſenſe of juſtice to ſome degree of benevolence; as Milton's hero felt real compaſſion and ſympathy for his partners in misfortune.

Illiberality with which men of talents are uſually treated.

If theſe reaſonings are to be admitted, what judgment ſhall we form of the deciſion of doctor Johnſon, who, ſpeaking of a certain obſcure tranſlator of the odes of Pindar, ſays, that he was "one of the few poets to whom death needed not to be terrible*?" Let it be remembered that the error is by no means peculiar to doctor Johnſon, though there are few inſtances in which it is carried to a more violent extreme, than in the general tenour of the work from which this quotation is taken. It was natural to expect that there would be a combination among the multitude to pull down intellectual eminence. Ambition is com-

* Lives of the Poets: Life of Weſt.

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mon to all men; and those, who are unable to rise to distinction, are at least willing to reduce others to their own standard. No man can completely understand the character of him with whom he has no sympathy of views, and we may be allowed to revile what we do not understand. But it is deeply to be regretted that men of talents should so often have entered into this combination. Who does not recollect with pain the vulgar abuse that Swift has thrown upon Dryden, and the mutual jealousies and animosities of Rousseau and Voltaire, men who ought to have co-operated for the salvation of the world?

APPENDIX,

APPENDIX, No. II, p. 242.

OF THE MODE OF EXCLUDING VISITORS.

ITS IMPROPRIETY ARGUED—FROM THE SITUATION IN WHICH IT PLACES, 1. THE VISITOR—2. THE SERVANT.—OBJECTIONS:—PRETENDED NECESSITY OF THIS PRACTICE, 1. TO PRESERVE US FROM INTRUSION—2. TO FREE US FROM DISAGREEABLE ACQUAINTANCE.—CHARACTERS OF THE HONEST AND DISHONEST MAN IN THIS RESPECT COMPARED.

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV. APPENDIX, No. II. Its impropriety argued:

THIS principle respecting the observation of truth in the common intercourses of life cannot perhaps be better illustrated, than from the familiar and trivial case, as it is commonly supposed to be, of a master directing his servant to say he is not at home, as a means of freeing him from the intrusion of impertinent guests. No question of morality can be foreign to the science of politics; nor will those few pages of the present work be found perhaps the least valuable, which here and in other places* are dedicated to the refutation of errors, that by their extensive influence have perverted the foundation of moral and political justice.

* Vide Appendices to Book II, Chap. II.

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV.

APPENDIX, No. II. from the ſituation in which it places, 1. the viſitor:

Let us firſt, according to the well known axiom of morality, put ourſelves in the place of the perſon whom this anſwer excludes. It ſeldom happens but that he is able, if he be in poſſeſſion of any diſcernment, to diſcover with tolerable accuracy whether the anſwer he receives be true or falſe. There are a thouſand petty circumſtances by which falſhood continually detects itſelf. The countenance and the voice of the ſervant, unleſs long practiſed indeed in this leſſon of deceit, his cold and reſerved manner in the one caſe, and his free, ingenuous and unembarraſſed air in the other, will almoſt always ſpeak a language leſs ambiguous than his lips. But let us ſuppoſe only that we vehemently ſuſpect the truth. It is not intended to keep us in ignorance of the exiſtence of ſuch a practice. He that adopts it, is willing to avow in general terms that ſuch is his ſyſtem, or he makes out a caſe for himſelf much leſs favourable than I was making out for him. The viſitor then who receives this anſwer, feels in ſpite of himſelf a contempt for the prevarication of the perſon he viſits. I appeal to the feelings of every man in the ſituation deſcribed, and I have no doubt that he will find this to be their true ſtate in the firſt inſtance, however he may have a ſet of ſophiſtical reaſonings at hand by which he may in a few minutes reaſon down the firſt movements of indignation. He feels that the trouble he has taken and the civility he intended intitled him at leaſt to truth in return.

Having

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APPENDIX, No. II. 2. the ſervant.

Having put ourſelves in the place of the viſitor, let us next put ourſelves in the place of the poor deſpiſed ſervant. Let us ſuppoſe that we are ourſelves deſtined as ſons or huſbands to give this anſwer that our father or our wife is not at home, when he or ſhe is really in the houſe. Should we not feel our tongues contaminated with the baſe plebeian lie? Would it be a ſufficient opiate to our conſciences to ſay that "ſuch is the practice, and it is well underſtood?" It never can be underſtood: its very intention is, not to be underſtood. We ſay that "we have certain arguments that prove the practice to be innocent." Are ſervants only competent to underſtand theſe arguments? Surely we ought beſt to be able to underſtand our own arguments, and yet we ſhrink with abhorrence from the idea of perſonally acting upon them.

Whatever ſophiſtry we may have to excuſe our error, nothing is more certain than that our ſervants underſtand the leſſon we teach them to be a lie. It is accompanied by all the retinue of falſhood. Before it can be gracefully practiſed, the ſervant muſt be no mean proficient in the myſteries of hypocriſy. By the eaſy impudence with which it is uttered, he beſt anſwers the purpoſe of his maſter, or in other words the purpoſe of deceit. By the eaſy impudence with which it is uttered, he beſt ſtifles the upbraidings of his own mind, and conceals from others the ſhame impoſed on him by his deſpotic taſk-maſter. Before this can be ſufficiently done, he muſt have diſcarded the ingenuous

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV. Appendix, No. II.

frankneſs by means of which the thoughts find eaſy commerce with the tongue, and the clear and undiſguiſed countenance which ought to be the faithful mirror of the mind. Do you think, when he has learned this degenerate leſſon in one inſtance, that it will produce no unfavourable effects upon his general conduct? Surely, if we will practiſe vice, we ought at leaſt to have the magnanimity to practiſe it in perſon, not cowardlike corrupt the principles of another, and oblige him to do that which we have not the honeſty to dare to do for ourſelves.

Objections: Pretended neceſſity of this practice, 1. to preſerve us from intruſion:

But it is ſaid, "that this lie is neceſſary, and that the intercourſe of human ſociety cannot be carried on without it." What, is it not as eaſy to ſay, "I am engaged," or "indiſpoſed," or as the caſe may happen, as "I am not at home?" Are theſe anſwers more inſulting, than the univerſally ſuſpected anſwer, the notorious hypocriſy of "I am not at home?"

The purpoſe indeed for which this anſwer is uſually employed is a deceit of another kind. Every man has in the catalogue of his acquaintance ſome that he particularly loves, and others to whom he is indifferent, or perhaps worſe than indifferent. This anſwer leaves the latter to ſuppoſe, if they pleaſe, that they are in the claſs of the former. And what is the benefit to reſult from this indiſcriminate, undiſtinguiſhing manner of treating our neighbours? Whatever benefit it be, it no doubt exiſts

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exiſts in conſiderable vigour in the preſent ſtate of poliſhed ſociety, where forms perpetually intrude to cut off all intercourſe between the feelings of mankind; and I can ſcarcely tell a man on the one hand "that I eſteem his character and honour his virtues," or on the other "that he is fallen into an error which will be of prejudicial conſequence to him," without trampling upon all the barriers of politeneſs. But is all this right? Is not the eſteem or the diſapprobation of others among the moſt powerful incentives to virtue or puniſhments of vice? Can we even underſtand virtue and vice half ſo well as we otherwiſe ſhould, if we be unacquainted with the feelings of our neighbours reſpecting them? If there be in the liſt of our acquaintance any perſon whom we particularly diſlike, it uſually happens that it is for ſome moral fault that we perceive or think we perceive in him. Why ſhould he be kept in ignorance of our opinion reſpecting him, and prevented from the opportunity either of amendment or vindication? If he be too wiſe or too fooliſh, too virtuous or too vicious for us, why ſhould he not be ingenuouſly told of his miſtake in his intended kindneſs to us, rather than be ſuffered to find it out by ſix months enquiry from our ſervants?

2. to free us from diſagreeable acquaintance.

This leads us to yet one more argument in favour of this diſingenuous practice. We are told, "there is no other by which we can rid ourſelves of diſagreeable acquaintance." How long ſhall this be one of the effects of poliſhed ſociety, to perſuade us that

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that we are incapable of doing the moſt trivial offices for ourſelves? You may as well tell me, "that it is a matter of indiſpenſible neceſſity to have a valet to put on my ſtockings." In reality the exiſtence of theſe troubleſome viſitors is owing to the hypocriſy of politeneſs. It is that we wear the ſame indiſcriminate ſmile, the ſame appearance of cordiality and complacence to all our acquaintance. Ought we to do thus? Are virtue and excellence entitled to no diſtinctions? For the trouble of theſe impertinent viſits we may thank ourſelves. If we practiſed no deceit, if we aſſumed no atom of cordiality and eſteem we did not feel, we ſhould be little peſtered with theſe buzzing intruders. But one ſpecies of falſhood involves us in another; and he, that pleads for theſe lying anſwers to our viſitors, in reality pleads the cauſe of a cowardice, that dares not deny to vice the diſtinction and kindneſs that are excluſively due to virtue.

Characters of the honeſt and diſhoneſt man in this reſpect compared.

The man who acted upon this ſyſtem would be very far removed from a Cynic. The conduct of men formed upon the faſhionable ſyſtem is a perpetual contradiction. At one moment they fawn upon us with a ſervility that diſhonours the dignity of man, and at another treat us with a neglect, a ſarcaſtic inſolence, and a ſupercilious diſdain, that are felt as the ſevereſt cruelty, by him who has not the firmneſs to regard them with neglect. The conduct of the genuine moraliſt is equable and uniform. He loves all mankind, he deſires the benefit of all, and this love and this deſire are legible in his conduct. Does

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he remind us of our faults? It is with no mixture of aſperity, of ſelfiſh diſdain and inſolent ſuperiority. Of conſequence it is ſcarcely poſſible he ſhould wound. Few indeed are thoſe effeminate valetudinarians, who recoil from the advice, when they diſtinguiſh the motive. But, were it otherwiſe, the injury is nothing. Thoſe who feel themſelves incapable of ſuffering the moſt benevolent plain dealing, would derive leaſt benefit from the preſcription, and they avoid the phyſician. Thus is he delivered, without harſhneſs, hypocriſy and deceit, from thoſe whoſe intercourſe he had leaſt reaſon to deſire; and the more his character is underſtood, the more his acquaintance will be ſelect, his company being chiefly ſought by the ingenuous, the well diſpoſed, and thoſe who are deſirous of improvement.

APPENDIX,

APPENDIX, No. III, p. 252.

SUBJECT OF SINCERITY RESUMED.

A CASE PROPOSED.—ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF CONCEALMENT.—PREVIOUS QUESTION: IS TRUTH IN GENERAL TO BE PARTIALLY COMMUNICATED?—CUSTOMARY EFFECTS OF SINCERITY—OF INSINCERITY—UPON HIM WHO PRACTISES IT—1. THE SUSPENSION OF IMPROVEMENT—2. MISANTHROPY—3. DISINGENUITY—UPON THE SPECTATORS.—SINCERITY DELINEATED—ITS GENERAL IMPORTANCE.—APPLICATION.—DUTY RESPECTING THE CHOICE OF A RESIDENCE.

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV. APPENDIX, No. III. A case proposed.

TO enable us more accurately to judge of the extent of the obligation to be sincere, let us suppose, "that I am resident, as a native or otherwise, in the kingdom of Portugal, and that I am of opinion that the establishment, civil and religious, of that country is in a high degree injurious to the welfare and improvement of the inhabitants." Ought I explicitly to declare the sentiments I entertain? To this question I answer, that "my immediate duty is to seek for myself a different residence."

The

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV. APPENDIX, No. III. Arguments in favour of concealment.

The arguments in favour of concealment in this case are obvious. "That country is subject to a high degree of despotism, and, if I delivered my sentiments in this frank manner, especially if along with this I were ardent and indefatigable in endeavouring to proselyte the inhabitants, my sincerity would not be endured. In that country the institution of the holy inquisition still flourishes, and the fathers of this venerable court would find means effectually to silence me, before I had well opened my commission. The inhabitants, wholly unaccustomed to such bold assertions as those I uttered, would feel their pious ears inexpressibly shocked, and the martyrdom I endured, instead of producing the good effects with which martyrdom is sometimes attended, would soon be forgotten, and, as long as it was remembered, would be remembered only with execrations of my memory. If on the contrary I concealed my sentiments, I might spend a long life in acts of substantial benevolence. If I concealed them in part, I might perhaps by a prudent and gradual disclosure effect that revolution in the opinions of the inhabitants, which by my precipitation in the other case I defeated in the outset. These arguments in favour of concealment are not built upon cowardice and selfishness, or upon a recollection of the horrible tortures to which I should be subjected. They flow from considerations of philanthropy, and an endeavour fairly to estimate in what mode my exertions may be rendered most conducive to the general good."

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APPENDIX, No. III.

Previous question: Is truth in general to be partially communicated?

Before we enter upon their direct examination, it may be proper to premise some general observations. In the first place, let us calmly enquire whether the instance here stated be of the nature of an exception or a rule. "Ought I universally to tell only a small part of the truth at a time, careful not to shock the prejudices of my hearers, and thus lead them imperceptibly to conclusions which would have revolted them at first; or am I to practise this method only, where the risk is great, and my life may be the forfeit?" It would seem as if truth were a sacred deposit, which I had no right to deal out in shreds to my fellow men, just as my temper or my prudence should dictate. It would seem as if it were an unworthy artifice, by an ingenious arrangement of my materials to trick men into a conclusion, to which frankness, ingenuity and sincerity would never have conducted them. It would seem as if the shock I am so careful to avoid were favourable to the health and robust constitution of mind; and that, though I might in this way produce least temporary effect, the ultimate result would afford a balance greatly in favour of undisguised sincerity.

Customary effects of sincerity:

A second preliminary proper to be introduced in this place consists in a recollection of the general effects of sincerity and insincerity, the reasons for which the one is commonly laudable and the other to be blamed, independently of the subjects about which they may be employed. Sincerity is laudable, on account of the firmness and energy of character it never fails to produce.

"An

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"An upright man," it has sometimes been said, "ought to carry his heart in his hand." He ought to have an ingenuousness which shrinks from no examination. The commerce between his tongue and his heart is uniform. Whatever he speaks you can depend upon to be the truth and the whole truth. The designs he has formed he employs no artifice to conceal. He tells you in the first instance: "This is the proposition I mean to demonstrate. I put you upon your guard. I will not take you by surprise. If what I affirm be the truth, it will bear your scrutiny. If it were error, I could have recourse to no means more equivocal, than that of concealing in every step of the process the object in which my exertions were intended to terminate."

of insincerity: upon him who practises it:

Insincerity is to be blamed, because it has an immediate tendency to vitiate the integrity of character. "I must conceal the opinions I entertain," suppose, "from the holy father inquisitor." What method shall I employ for this purpose? Shall I hide them as an impenetrable secret from all the world? If this be the system I adopt, the consequence is an instant and immediate end to the improvement of my mind. It is by the efforts of a daring temper that improvements and discoveries are made. The seeds of discovery are scattered in every thinking mind, but they are too frequently starved by the ungenial soil upon which they fall. Every man suspects the absurdity of kings and lords, and the injustice of that glaring and oppressive inequality which subsists in most civilised countries. But he dares not let his

1. the suspension of improvement:

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mind looſe in ſo adventurous a ſubject. If I tell my thoughts, I derive from the act of communication encouragement to proceed. I perceive in what manner they are received by others, and this perception acts by rebound upon my own progreſs. If they be received cordially, I derive new encouragement from the approbation of others. If they be received with oppoſition and diſtruſt, I am induced to reviſe them. I detect their errors, or I ſtrengthen my arguments, and add new truths to thoſe which I had previouſly accumulated. What can excite me to the purſuit of diſcovery, if I know that I am never to communicate my diſcoveries? It is in the nature of things impoſſible, that the man, who has determined with himſelf never to utter the truths he knows, ſhould be an intrepid and indefatigable thinker. The link which binds together the inward and the outward man is indiſſoluble; and he, that is not bold in ſpeech, will never be ardent and unprejudiced in enquiry. Add to this, that conſcious diſguiſe has the worſt effect upon the temper, and converts virtue, which ought to be frank, ſocial and ingenuous, into a ſolitary, moroſe and miſanthropical principle.

2. miſanthropy:

3. diſingenuity:

But let us conceive that the method I employ to protect myſelf from perſecution is different from that above ſtated. Let us ſuppoſe that I communicate my ſentiments, but with caution and reſerve. This ſyſtem involves with it an endleſs train of falſhood, duplicity and tergiverſation. When I communicate my ſentiments, it is under the inviolable ſeal of ſecrecy. If my zeal

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zeal carry me any great lengths, and my love of truth be ardent, I ſhall wiſh to communicate it as far as the bounds of prudence will poſſibly admit, and it will be ſtrange if in a courſe of years I do not commit one miſtake in my calculation. My grand ſecret is betrayed, and ſuſpicion is excited in the breaſt of the father inquiſitor. What ſhall I do now? I muſt, I ſuppoſe, ſtoutly deny the fact. I muſt compoſe my features into a conſiſtent expreſſion of the moſt natural ignorance and ſurpriſe, happy if I have made ſuch progreſs in the arts of hypocriſy and falſhood, as to put the change upon the wild beaſt who is ready to devour me. The moſt conſummate impoſtor is upon this hypotheſis the man of moſt perfect virtue.

But this is not all. My character for benevolence being well known, I am likely to be ſurrounded by perſons of good humoured indiſcretion rather than by inveterate enemies. Of every man who queſtions me about my real ſentiments I muſt determine firſt, whether he ſimply wiſh to be informed, or whether his deſign be to betray me. The character of virtue ſeems in its own nature to be that of firm and unalterable reſolution, confident in its own integrity. But the character that reſults from this ſyſtem begins in heſitation, and ends in diſgrace. I am queſtioned whether ſuch be my real ſentiments. I deny it. My queſtioner returns to the charge with an, "Oh, but I heard it from ſuch a one, and he was preſent when you delivered them." What am I to do now? Am I to aſperſe the character of the

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the honeſt reporter of my words? Am I to make an impotent effort to get rid of the charge; and, inſtead of eſtabliſhing my character for orthodoxy, aſtoniſh my informer with my cool and intrepid effrontery?

upon the ſpectators.

Inſincerity has the worſt effect both upon him who practiſes, and upon them who behold it. It deprives virtue of that conſcious magnanimity and eaſe, which ought ever to be ranked among its nobleſt effects. It requires the perpetual exerciſe of preſence of mind, not for the purpoſe of telling the moſt uſeful truths in the beſt manner, but in order to invent a conſiſtent catalogue of lies, and to utter them with a countenance at war with every thing that is paſſing in my heart. It deſtroys that confidence on the part of my hearers, which ought to be inſeparable from virtue. They cannot all of them be expected to underſtand the deep plan of benevolence and the total neglect of all ſelfiſh and timid conſiderations by which I am ſuppoſing my conduct to be regulated. But they can all ſee my duplicity and tergiverſation. They all know that I excel the moſt conſummate impoſtor in the coolneſs with which I can utter falſhood, and the craft with which I can ſupport it.

Sincerity delineated.

Sincerity has ſometimes been brought into diſrepute by the abſurd ſyſtem according to which it has been purſued, and ſtill oftener by the whimſical picture which the adverſaries of undiſtinguiſhing ſincerity have made of it. It is not neceſſary that I ſhould

ſhould ſtop every perſon that I meet in the ſtreet to inform him of my ſentiments. It is not neceſſary that I ſhould perpetually talk to the vulgar and illiterate of the deepeſt and ſublimeſt truths. All that is neceſſary is, that I ſhould practiſe no concealment, that I ſhould preſerve my diſpoſition and character untainted. Whoever queſtions me, it is neceſſary that I ſhould have no ſecrets or reſerves, but be always ready to return a frank and explicit anſwer. When I undertake by argument to eſtabliſh any principle, it is neceſſary that I ſhould employ no circuitous methods, but clearly ſtate in the firſt inſtance the object I have in view. Having ſatisfied this original duty, I may fairly call upon my hearer for the exerciſe of his patience. "It is true," I may ſay, "that the opinion I deliver will appear ſhocking to your prejudices, but I will now deliberately and minutely aſſign the reaſons upon which it is founded. If they appear ſatisfactory, receive; if they be inconcluſive, reject it." This is the ground work of ſincerity. The ſuperſtructure is the propagation of every important truth, becauſe it conduces to the improvement of man whether individually or collectively; and the telling all I know of myſelf and of my neighbour, becauſe ſtrict juſtice and unequivocal publicity are the beſt ſecurity for every virtue.

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Its general importance.

Sincerity then, in ordinary caſes at leaſt, ſeems to be of ſo much importance, that it is my duty firſt to conſider how to preſerve

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preſerve my ſincerity untainted, and afterwards to ſelect the beſt means in my power in each particular ſituation, of beneſiting mankind. Sincerity is one of thoſe paramount and general rules, which is never to give way to the aſſair of the day. I may imagine perhaps that falſhood and deceit may be moſt beneficial in ſome particular inſtances, as I might imagine upon the ſubject of a preceding chapter, that it would be virtuous to plant my dagger in the heart of a tyrant. But we ſhould be cautious of indulging our imaginations in theſe inſtances. The great law of always employing ingenuous and honourable means ſeems to be of more importance than the exterminating any local and temporary evils. I well know in the preſent caſe what good will reſult from a frank and undiſguiſed principle of action, and what evil from deceit, duplicity and falſhood. But I am much leſs certain of the good that will ariſe under particular circumſtances from a neglect of theſe principles.

Application.

Having thus unfolded the true ground of reaſoning upon this ſubject, we will return to the queſtion reſpecting the conduct to be obſerved by the reformer in Portugal.

Duty reſpecting the choice of a reſidence.

And here the true anſwer will perhaps be found to be that which has been above delivered, that a perſon ſo far enlightened upon theſe ſubjects, ought by no conſideration to be prevailed upon to ſettle in Portugal; and, if he were there already, ought to

to quit the country with all convenient ſpeed. His efforts in Portugal would probably be vain; but there is ſome other country in which they will be attended with the happieſt conſequences.

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It may be objected, "that ſome perſon muſt begin the work of reformation in Portugal, and why ſhould it not be the individual of whom we are treating?" But the anſwer is, that, in the ſenſe ſuppoſed in this objection, it is not neceſſary that any body ſhould begin. Theſe great and daring truths ought to be publiſhed in England, France and other countries; and the diſſemination that will attend them here, will produce a report and afford an example, which after ſome time may prepare them a favourable reception there.

The great chain of cauſes from which every event in the univerſe takes its riſe, has ſufficiently provided for the gradual inſtruction of mankind, without its being neceſſary that individuals ſhould violate their principles and ſacrifice their integrity to accompliſh it. Perhaps there never was a mind that ſo far outran the reſt of the ſpecies, but that there was ſome country in which the man that poſſeſſed it might ſafely tell all he knew. The ſame cauſes that ripen the mind of the individual are acting generally, ripening ſimilar minds, and giving a certain degree of ſimilar impreſſion to whole ages and countries. There exiſt perhaps at this very moment in Portugal, or ſoon will exiſt, minds, which, though mere children in ſcience compared with

 their

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their gigantic neighbours in a more favoured ſoil, are yet accurately adapted to the improvement of their countrymen. If by any ſport of nature an exotic ſhould ſpring up, let him be tranſplanted to a climate that will prove more favourable to his vigour and utility. Add to this, that, when we are inclined to ſet an inordinate value upon our own importance, it may be reaſonable to ſuſpect that we are influenced by ſome lurking principle of timidity or vanity. It is by no means certain that the individual ever yet exiſted, whoſe life was of ſo much value to the community, as to be worth preſerving at ſo great an expence, as that of his ſincerity.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

OF FREE WILL AND NECESSITY.

IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION.—DEFINITION OF NECESSITY.—WHY SUPPOSED TO EXIST IN THE OPERATIONS OF THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE.—THE CASE OF THE OPERATIONS OF MIND IS PARALLEL.—INDICATIONS OF NECESSITY—IN HISTORY—IN OUR JUDGMENTS OF CHARACTER—IN OUR SCHEMES OF POLICY—IN OUR IDEAS OF MORAL DISCIPLINE.—OBJECTION FROM THE FALLIBILITY OF OUR EXPECTATIONS IN HUMAN CONDUCT.—ANSWER.—ORIGIN AND UNIVERSALITY OF THE SENTIMENT OF FREE WILL.—THE SENTIMENT OF NECESSITY ALSO UNIVERSAL.—THE TRUTH OF THIS SENTIMENT ARGUED FROM THE NATURE OF VOLITION.—HYPOTHESIS OF FREE WILL EXAMINED.—SELF-DETERMINATION.—INDIFFERENCE.—THE WILL NOT A DISTINCT FACULTY.—FREE WILL DISADVANTAGEOUS TO ITS POSSESSOR.—OF NO SERVICE TO MORALITY.

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HAVING now finiſhed the theoretical part of our enquiry, ſo far as appeared to be neceſſary to afford a foundation for our reaſoning reſpecting the different proviſions of political

 inſtitution,

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inſtitution, we might directly proceed to the conſideration of thoſe proviſions. It will not however be uſeleſs to pauſe in this place, in order to conſider thoſe general principles of the human mind, which are moſt intimately connected with the topics of political reaſoning*.

None of theſe principles ſeems to be of greater importance than that which affirms that all actions are neceſſary.

Importance of the queſtion.

Moſt of the reaſonings upon which we have hitherto been employed, though perhaps conſtantly built upon this doctrine as a poſtulate, will yet by their intrinſic evidence, however inconſiſtently with his opinion upon this primary topic, be admitted by the advocate of free will. But it ought not to be the preſent deſign of political enquirers to treat the queſtions that may preſent themſelves ſuperficially. It will be found upon maturer reflection that this doctrine of moral neceſſity includes in it conſequences of the higheſt moment, and leads to a bold and comprehenſive view of man in ſociety, which cannot poſſibly be entertained by him who has embraced the oppoſite opinion. Severe method would have required that this propoſition ſhould have been eſtabliſhed in the firſt inſtance, as an indiſpenſible

* The reader, who is indiſpoſed to abſtruſe ſpeculations, will find the other members of the enquiry ſufficiently connected, without an expreſs reference to the remaining part of the preſent book.

foundation

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foundation of moral reaſoning of every ſort. But there are well diſpoſed perſons, who notwithſtanding the evidence with which it is attended, have been alarmed at its conſequences; and it was perhaps proper, in compliance with their miſtake, to ſhew that the moral reaſonings of this work did not ſtand in need of this ſupport, in any other ſenſe than moral reaſonings do upon every other ſubject.

Definition of neceſſity.

To the right underſtanding of any arguments that may be adduced under this head, it is requiſite that we ſhould have a clear idea of the meaning of the term neceſſity. He who affirms that all actions are neceſſary, means, that, if we form a juſt and complete view of all the circumſtances in which a living or intelligent being is placed, we ſhall find that he could not in any moment of his exiſtence have acted otherwiſe than he has acted. According to this aſſertion there is in the tranſactions of mind nothing looſe, precarious and uncertain. Upon this queſtion the advocate of liberty in the philoſophical ſenſe muſt join iſſue. He muſt, if he mean any thing, deny this certainty of conjunction between moral antecedents and conſequents. Where all is conſtant and invariable, and the events that ariſe uniformly flow from the circumſtances in which they originate, there can be no liberty.

Why ſuppoſed to exiſt.

It is acknowledged that in the events of the material univerſe every

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in the operations of the material univerſe.

thing is ſubjected to this neceſſity. The tendency of inveſtigation and enquiry relatively to this topic of human knowledge has been, more effectually to exclude chance, as our improvements extended. Let us conſider what is the ſpecies of evidence that has ſatisfied philoſophers upon this point. Their only ſolid ground of reaſoning has been from experience. The argument which has induced mankind to conceive of the univerſe as governed by certain laws, and to entertain the idea of neceſſary connexion between ſucceſſive events, has been an obſerved ſimilarity in the order of ſucceſſion. If, when we had once remarked two events ſucceeding each other, we had never had occaſion to ſee that individual ſucceſſion repeated; if we ſaw innumerable events in perpetual progreſſion without any apparent order, ſo that all our obſervation would not enable us, when we beheld one, to pronounce that another of ſuch a particular claſs might be expected to follow; we ſhould never have conceived of the exiſtence of neceſſary connexion, or have had an idea correſponding to the term cauſe.

Hence it follows that all that ſtrictly ſpeaking we know of the material univerſe is this ſucceſſion of events. Uniform ſucceſſion irreſiſtibly forces upon the mind the idea of abſtract connexion. When we ſee the ſun conſtantly riſe in the morning and ſet at night, and have had occaſion to obſerve this phenomenon invariably taking place through the whole period of our exiſtence,

exiſtence, we cannot avoid believing that there is ſome cauſe producing this uniformity of event. But the principle or virtue by which one event is conjoined to another we never ſee.

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Let us take ſome familiar illuſtrations of this truth. Can it be imagined that any man by the inſpection and analyſis of gunpowder would have been enabled, previouſly to experience, to predict its exploſion? Would he previouſly to experience have been enabled to predict, that one piece of marble having a flat and poliſhed ſurface might with facility be protruded along another in a horizontal, but would with conſiderable pertinacity reſiſt ſeparation in a perpendicular direction? The ſimpleſt phenomena of the moſt hourly occurrence were originally placed at an equal diſtance from human ſagacity.

There is a certain degree of obſcurity incident to this ſubject ariſing from the following circumſtance. All human knowledge is the reſult of perception. We know nothing of any ſubſtance but by experience. If it produced no effects, it would be no ſubject of human intelligence. We collect a conſiderable number of theſe effects, and, by their perceived uniformity having reduced them into general claſſes, form a general idea annexed to the ſubject that produces them. It muſt be admitted, that a definition of any ſubſtance, that is, any thing that deſerves to be called knowledge reſpecting it, will enable us to predict ſome of its future poſſible effects, and that for this plain reaſon, that definition

nition is prediction under another name. But, though, when we have gained the idea of impenetrability as a general phenomenon of matter, we can predict ſome of its effects, there are others which we cannot predict: or in other words, we know none of its effects but ſuch as we have actually remarked, added to an expectation that ſimilar events will ariſe under ſimilar circumſtances, proportioned to the conſtancy with which they have been obſerved to take place in our paſt experience. Finding as we do by repeated experiments, that material ſubſtances have the property of reſiſtance, and that one ſubſtance in a ſtate of reſt, when impelled by another, paſſes into a ſtate of motion, we are ſtill in want of more particular obſervation to enable us to predict the ſpecific effects that will follow from this impulſe in each of the bodies. Enquire of a man who knows nothing more of matter than its general property of impenetrability, what will be the reſult of one ball of matter impinging upon another, and you will ſoon find how little this general property can inform him of the particular laws of motion. We ſuppoſe him to know that it will communicate motion to the ſecond ball. But what quantity of motion will it communicate? What effects will the impulſe produce upon the impelling ball? Will it continue to move in the ſame direction? will it recoil in the oppoſite direction? will it fly off obliquely, or will it ſubſide into a ſtate of reſt? All theſe events will appear equally probable to him whom a ſeries of obſervations upon the paſt has not inſtructed as to what he is to expect from the future.

From

From theſe remarks we may ſufficiently collect what is the ſpecies of knowledge we poſſeſs reſpecting the laws of the material univerſe. No experiments we are able to make, no reaſonings we are able to deduce, can ever inſtruct us in the principle of cauſation, or ſhew us for what reaſon it is that one event has, in every inſtance in which it has been known to occur, been the precurſor of another event of a certain given deſcription. Yet we reaſonably believe that theſe events are bound together by a perfect neceſſity, and exclude from our ideas of matter and motion the ſuppoſition of chance or an uncauſed event. Aſſociation of ideas obliges us, after having ſeen two events perpetually conjoined, to paſs, as ſoon as one of them occurs, to the recollection of the other: and, in caſes where this tranſition never deceives us, but the ideal ſucceſſion is always found to be an exact copy of the future event, it is impoſſible that this ſpecies of foreſight ſhould not convert into a general foundation of reaſoning. We cannot take a ſingle ſtep upon this ſubject, which does not partake of the ſpecies of operation we denominate abſtraction. Till we have been led to conſider the riſing of the ſun to-morrow as an incident of the ſame ſpecies as its riſing to-day, we cannot deduce from it ſimilar conſequences. It is the buſineſs of ſcience to carry this taſk of generaliſation to its fartheſt extent, and to reduce the diverſified events of the univerſe to a ſmall number of original principles.

Let us proceed to apply theſe reaſonings concerning matter to the

The caſe of the opera-

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tions of mind is parallel.

the illuſtration of the theory of mind. Is it poſſible in this latter theory, as in the former ſubject, to diſcover any general principles? Can intellect be made a topic of ſcience? Are we able to reduce the multiplied phenomena of mind to any certain ſtandard of reaſoning? If the affirmative of theſe queſtions be conceded, the inevitable conſequence appears to be, that mind, as well as matter, exhibits a conſtant conjunction of events, and affords a reaſonable preſumption to the neceſſary connexion of thoſe events. It is of no importance that we cannot ſee the ground of that connexion, or imagine how propoſitions and reaſoning, when preſented to the mind of a percipient being, are able by neceſſary conſequence to generate volition and animal motion; for, if there be any truth in the above reaſonings, we are equally incapable of perceiving the ground of connexion between any two events in the material univerſe, the common and received opinion that we do perceive ſuch ground of connexion being in reality nothing more than a vulgar prejudice.

Indications of neceſſity:

in hiſtory:

That mind is a topic of ſcience may be argued from all thoſe branches of literature and enquiry which have mind for their ſubject. What ſpecies of amuſement or inſtruction would hiſtory afford us, if there were no ground of inference from moral cauſes to effects, if certain temptations and inducements did not in all ages and climates produce a certain ſeries of actions, if we were unable to trace connexion and a principle of unity in men's tempers, propenſities and tranſactions? The amuſement would be

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be inferior to that which we derive from the peruſal of a chronological table, where events have no order but that of time; ſince, however the chronologiſt may neglect to mark the internal connexion between ſucceſſive tranſactions, the mind of the reader is buſied in ſupplying that connexion from memory or imagination: but the very idea of ſuch connexion would never have ſuggeſted itſelf, if we had never found the ſource of that idea in experience. The inſtruction ariſing from the peruſal of hiſtory would be abſolutely none; ſince inſtruction implies in its very nature the claſſing and generaliſing of objects. But, upon the ſuppoſition on which we are arguing, all objects would be unconnected and disjunct, without the poſſibility of affording any grounds of reaſoning or principles of ſcience.

in our judgments of character:

The idea correſpondent to the term character inevitably includes in it the aſſumption of neceſſary connexion. The character of any man is the reſult of a long ſeries of impreſſions communicated to his mind, and modifying it in a certain manner, ſo as to enable us, from a number of theſe modifications and impreſſions being given, to predict his conduct. Hence ariſe his temper and habits, reſpecting which we reaſonably conclude, that they will not be abruptly ſuperſeded and reverſed; and that, if they ever be reverſed, it will not be accidentally, but in conſequence of ſome ſtrong reaſon perſuading, or ſome extraordinary event modifying his mind. If there were not this original and eſſential connexion between motives and actions, and, which

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forms one particular branch of this principle, between men's paſt and future actions, there could be no ſuch thing as character, or as a ground of inference enabling us to predict what men would be from what they have been.

In our ſchemes of policy:

From the ſame idea of neceſſary connexion ariſe all the ſchemes of policy, in conſequence of which men propoſe to themſelves by a certain plan of conduct to prevail upon others to become the tools and inſtruments of their purpoſes. All the arts of courtſhip and flattery, of playing upon men's hopes and fears, proceed upon the ſuppoſition that mind is ſubject to certain laws, and that, provided we be ſkilful and aſſiduous enough in applying the cauſe, the effect will inevitably follow.

In our ideas of moral diſcipline.

Laſtly, the idea of moral diſcipline proceeds entirely upon this principle. If I carefully perſuade, exhort, and exhibit motives to another, it is becauſe I believe that motives have a tendency to influence his conduct. If I reward or puniſh him, either with a view to his own improvement or as an example to others, it is becauſe I have been led to believe that rewards and puniſhments are calculated in their own nature to affect the ſentiments and practices of mankind.

Objection from the fallibility of our expectations in human conduct.

There is but one conceivable objection againſt the inference from theſe premiſes to the neceſſity of human actions. It may be alledged, that "though there is a real connexion between motives

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motives and actions, yet that this connexion may not amount to a certainty, and that of conſequence the mind ſtill retains an inherent activity by which it can at pleaſure diſſolve this connexion. Thus for example, when I addreſs argument and perſuaſion to my neighbour to induce him to adopt a certain ſpecies of conduct, I do it not with a certain expectation of ſucceſs, and am not utterly diſappointed if all my efforts fail of their effect. I make a reſerve for a certain faculty of liberty he is ſuppoſed to poſſeſs, which may at laſt counteract the beſt digeſted projects."

Anſwer.

But in this objection there is nothing peculiar to the caſe of mind. It is juſt ſo in matter. I ſee a part only of the premiſes, and therefore can pronounce only with uncertainty upon the concluſion. A philoſophical experiment, which has ſucceeded a hundred times, may altogether fail upon the next trial. But what does the philoſopher conclude from this? Not that there is a liberty of choice in his retort and his materials, by which they baffle the beſt formed expectations. Not that the connexion between effects and cauſes is imperfect, and that part of the effect happens from no cauſe at all. But that there was ſome other cauſe concerned whoſe operation he did not perceive, but which a freſh inveſtigation will probably lay open to him. When the ſcience of the material univerſe was in its infancy, men were ſufficiently prompt to refer events to accident and chance; but the farther they have extended their enquiries and obſervation,

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obſervation, the more reaſon they have found to conclude that every thing takes place according to neceſſary and univerſal laws.

The caſe is exactly parallel with reſpect to mind. The politician and the philoſopher, however they may ſpeculatively entertain the opinion of free will, never think of introducing it into their ſcheme of accounting for events. If an incident turn out otherwiſe than they expected, they take it for granted, that there was ſome unobſerved bias, ſome habit of thinking, ſome prejudice of education, ſome ſingular aſſociation of ideas, that diſappointed their prediction; and, if they be of an active and enterpriſing temper, they return, like the natural philoſopher, to ſearch out the ſecret ſpring of this unlooked for event.

Origin and univerſality of the ſentiment of free will.

The reflections into which we have entered upon the doctrine of cauſes, not only afford us a ſimple and impreſſive argument in favour of the doctrine of neceſſity, but ſuggeſt a very obvious reaſon why the doctrine oppoſite to this has been in a certain degree the general opinion of mankind. It has appeared that the idea of neceſſary connexion between events of any ſort is the leſſon of experience, and the vulgar never arrive at the univerſal application of this principle even to the phenomena of the material univerſe. In the eaſieſt and moſt familiar inſtances, ſuch as the impinging of one ball of matter upon another and its conſequences, they willingly admit the interference of chance, or

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or an event uncauſed. In this inſtance however, as both the impulſe and its effects are ſubjects of obſervation to the ſenſes, they readily imagine that they perceive the abſolute principle which cauſes motion to be communicated from the firſt ball to the ſecond. Now the very ſame prejudice and precipitate concluſion, which induce them to believe that they diſcover the principle of motion in objects of ſenſe, act in an oppoſite direction with reſpect to ſuch objects as cannot be ſubjected to the examination of ſenſe. The manner in which an idea or propoſition ſuggeſted to the mind of a percipient being produces animal motion they never ſee; and therefore readily conclude that there is no neceſſary connexion between theſe events.

The ſentiment of neceſſity alſo univerſal.

But, if the vulgar will univerſally be found to be the advocates of free will, they are not leſs ſtrongly, however inconſiſtently, impreſſed with the belief of the doctrine of neceſſity. It is a well known and a juſt obſervation, that, were it not for the exiſtence of general laws to which the events of the material univerſe always conform, man could never have been either a reaſoning or a moral being. The moſt conſiderable actions of our lives are directed by foreſight. It is becauſe he foreſees the regular ſucceſſion of the ſeaſons, that the farmer ſows his field, and after the expiration of a certain term expects a crop. There would be no kindneſs in my adminiſtering food to the hungry, and no injuſtice in my thruſting a drawn ſword againſt the boſom

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bosom of my friend, if it were not the established quality of food to nourish, and of a sword to wound.

But the regularity of events in the material universe will not of itself afford a sufficient foundation of morality and prudence. The voluntary conduct of our neighbours enters for a share into almost all those calculations upon which our own plans and determinations are founded. If voluntary conduct, as well as material impulse, were not subjected to general laws, included in the system of cause and effect, and a legitimate topic of prediction and foresight, the certainty of events in the material universe would be productive of little benefit. But in reality the mind passes from one of these topics of speculation to the other, without accurately distributing them into classes, or imagining that there is any difference in the certainty with which they are attended. Hence it appears that the most uninstructed peasant or artisan is practically a necessarian. The farmer calculates as securely upon the inclination of mankind to buy his corn when it is brought into the market, as upon the tendency of the seasons to ripen it. The labourer no more suspects that his employer will alter his mind and not pay him his daily wages, than he suspects that his tools will refuse to perform those functions to-day, in which they were yesterday employed with success *.

* The reader will find the substance of the above arguments in a more diffusive form in Hume's Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, being the third part of his Essays.

Another

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The truth of this sentiment argued from the nature of volition.

Another argument in favour of the doctrine of necessity, not less clear and irresistible than that from the consideration of cause and effect, will arise from any consistent explication that can be given of the nature of voluntary motion. The motions of the animal system distribute themselves into two great classes, voluntary and involuntary. Involuntary motion, whether it be conceived to take place independently of the mind, or to be the result of thought and perception, is so called, because the consequences of that motion, either in whole or in part, did not enter into the view of the mind when the motion commenced. Thus the cries of a new-born infant are not less involuntary than the circulation of the blood; it being impossible that the sounds first resulting from a certain agitation of the animal frame should be foreseen, since foresight is the fruit of experience.

From these observations we may deduce a rational and consistent account of the nature of volition. Voluntary motion is that which is accompanied with foresight, and flows from intention and design. Volition is that state of an intellectual being, in which, the mind being affected in a certain manner by the apprehension of an end to be accomplished, a certain motion of the organs and members of the animal frame is found to be produced.

Here then the advocates of intellectual liberty have a clear

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dilemma propoſed to their choice. They muſt aſcribe this freedom, this imperfect connexion of effects and cauſes, either to our voluntary or our involuntary motions. They have already made their determination. They are aware that to aſcribe freedom to that which is involuntary, even if the aſſumption could be maintained, would be altogether foreign to the great ſubjects of moral, theological or political enquiry. Man would not be in any degree more of an agent or an accountable being, though it could be proved that all his involuntary motions ſprung up in a fortuitous and capricious manner.

But on the other hand to aſcribe freedom to our voluntary actions is an expreſs contradiction in terms. No motion is voluntary any farther than it is accompanied with intention and deſign, and flows from the apprehenſion of an end to be accompliſhed. So far as it flows in any degree from another ſource, ſo far it is involuntary. The new-born infant foreſees nothing, therefore all his motions are involuntary. A perſon arrived at maturity takes an extenſive ſurvey of the conſequences of his actions, therefore he is eminently a voluntary and rational being. If any part of my conduct be deſtitute of all foreſight of the effects to reſult, who is there that aſcribes to it depravity and vice? Xerxes acted juſt as ſoberly as ſuch a reaſoner, when he cauſed his attendants to inflict a thouſand laſhes on the waves of the Helleſpont.

The

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Hypotheſis of free will examined.

Self determination.

The truth of the doctrine of neceſſity will be ſtill more evident, if we conſider the abſurdity of the oppoſite hypotheſis. One of its principal ingredients is ſelf determination. Liberty in an imperfect and popular ſenſe is aſcribed to the motions of the animal ſyſtem, when they reſult from the foreſight and deliberation of the intellect, and not from external compulſion. It is in this ſenſe that the word is commonly uſed in moral and political reaſoning. Philoſophical reaſoners therefore, who have deſired to vindicate the property of freedom, not only to our external motions, but to the acts of the mind, have been obliged to repeat this proceſs. Our external actions are then ſaid to be free, when they truly reſult from the determination of the mind. If our volitions, or internal acts be alſo free, they muſt in like manner reſult from the determination of the mind, or in other words, "the mind in adopting them" muſt be "ſelf determined." Now nothing can be more evident than that that in which the mind exerciſes its freedom, muſt be an act of the mind. Liberty therefore according to this hypotheſis conſiſts in this, that every choice we make has been choſen by us, and every act of the mind been preceded and produced by an act of the mind. This is ſo true, that in reality the ultimate act is not ſtyled free from any quality of its own, but becauſe the mind in adopting it was ſelf determined, that is, becauſe it was preceded by another act. The ultimate act reſulted completely from the determination that was its precurſor. It was itſelf neceſſary; and, if we would look for freedom, it muſt be in the preceding act. But in that

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preceding act alſo, if the mind were free, it was ſelf determined, that is, this volition was choſen by a preceding volition, and by the ſame reaſoning this alſo by another antecedent to itſelf. All the acts except the firſt were neceſſary, and followed each other as inevitably as the links of a chain do, when the firſt link is drawn forward. But then neither was this firſt act free, unleſs the mind in adopting it were ſelf determined, that is, unleſs this act were choſen by a preceding act. Trace back the chain as far as you pleaſe, every act at which you arrive is neceſſary. That act, which gives the character of freedom to the whole, can never be diſcovered; and, if it could, in its own nature includes a contradiction.

Indifference.

Another idea which belongs to the hypotheſis of ſelf determination, is, that the mind is not neceſſarily inclined this way or that by the motives which are preſented to it, by the clearneſs or obſcurity with which they are apprehended, or by the temper and character which preceding habits may have generated; but that by its inherent activity it is equally capable of proceeding either way, and paſſes to its determination from a previous ſtate of abſolute indifference. Now what ſort of activity is that which is equally inclined to all kinds of actions? Let us ſuppoſe a particle of matter endowed with an inherent propenſity to motion. This propenſity muſt either be to move in one particular direction, and then it muſt for ever move in that direction unleſs counteracted by ſome external impreſſion; or it muſt have

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have an equal tendency to all directions, and then the reſult muſt be a ſtate of perpetual reſt.

The abſurdity of this conſequence is ſo evident, that the advocates of intellectual liberty have endeavoured to deſtroy its force by means of a diſtinction. "Motive," it has been ſaid, "is indeed the occaſion, the *ſine qua non* of volition, but it has no inherent power to compel volition. Its influence depends upon the free and unconſtrained ſurrender of the mind. Between oppoſite motives and conſiderations the mind can chooſe as it pleaſes, and by its determination can convert the motive which is weak and inſufficient in the compariſon into the ſtrongeſt." But this hypotheſis will be found exceedingly inadequate to the purpoſe for which it is produced. Motives muſt either have a neceſſary and irreſiſtible influence, or they can have no influence at all.

For, firſt, it muſt be remembered, that the ground or reaſon of any event, of whatever nature it be, muſt be contained among the circumſtances which precede that event. The mind is ſuppoſed to be in a ſtate of previous indifference, and therefore cannot be, in itſelf conſidered, the ſource of the particular choice that is made. There is a motive on one ſide and a motive on the other: and between theſe lie the true ground and reaſon of preference. But, wherever there is tendency to preference, there may be degrees of tendency. If the degrees be equal,

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equal, preference cannot follow: it is equivalent to the putting equal weights into the oppoſite ſcales of a balance. If one of them have a greater tendency to preference than the other, that which has the greateſt tendency muſt ultimately prevail. When two things are balanced againſt each other, ſo much amount may be conceived to be ſtruck off from each ſide as exiſts in the ſmaller ſum, and the overplus that belongs to the greater is all that truly enters into the conſideration.

Add to this, ſecondly, that, if motive have not a neceſſary influence, it is altogether ſuperfluous. The mind cannot firſt chooſe to be influenced by a motive, and afterwards ſubmit to its operation: for in that caſe the preference would belong wholly to this previous volition. The determination would in reality be complete in the firſt inſtance; and the motive, which came in afterwards, might be the pretext, but could not be the true ſource of the proceeding*.

The will not a diſtinct faculty.

Laſtly, it may be obſerved upon the hypotheſis of free will, that the whole ſyſtem is built upon a diſtinction where there is no difference, to wit, a diſtinction between the intellectual and active powers of the mind. A myſterious philoſophy taught men to ſuppoſe, that, when the underſtanding had perceived any object to be deſirable, there was need of ſome diſtinct

* The argument from the impoſſibility of free will is treated with great force of reaſoning in Jonathan Edwards's Enquiry into the Freedom of the Will.

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power to put the body in motion. But reaſon finds no ground for this ſuppoſition; nor is it poſſible to conceive, that, in the caſe of an intellectual faculty placed in an aptly organiſed body, preference can exiſt, together with a conſciouſneſs, gained from experience, of our power to obtain the object preferred, without a certain motion of the animal frame being the neceſſary reſult. We need only attend to the obvious meaning of the terms in order to perceive that the will is merely, as it has been happily termed, the laſt act of the underſtanding, one of the different caſes of the aſſociation of ideas. What indeed is preference, but a perception of ſomething that really inheres or is ſuppoſed to inhere in the objects themſelves? It is the judgment, true or erroneous, which the mind makes reſpecting ſuch things as are brought into compariſon with each other. If this had been ſufficiently attended to, the freedom of the will would never have been gravely maintained by philoſophical writers, ſince no man ever imagined that we were free to feel or not to feel an impreſſion made upon our organs, and to believe or not to believe a propoſition demonſtrated to our underſtanding.

Free will diſadvantageous to its poſſeſſor:

It muſt be unneceſſary to add any thing farther on this head, unleſs it be a momentary recollection of the ſort of benefit that freedom of the will would confer upon us, ſuppoſing it to be poſſible. Man being, as we have now found him to be, a ſimple ſubſtance, governed by the apprehenſions of his underſtanding, nothing farther is requiſite but the improvement of his

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reaſoning faculty, to make him virtuous and happy. But, did he poſſeſs a faculty independent of the underſtanding, and capable of reſiſting from mere caprice the moſt powerful arguments, the beſt education and the moſt ſedulous inſtruction might be of no uſe to him. This freedom we ſhall eaſily perceive to be his bane and his curſe; and the only hope of laſting benefit to the ſpecies would be, by drawing cloſer the connexion between the external motions and the underſtanding, wholly to extirpate it. The virtuous man, in proportion to his improvement, will be under the conſtant influence of fixed and invariable principles; and ſuch a being as we conceive God to be, can never in any one inſtance have exerciſed this liberty, that is, can never have acted in a fooliſh and tyrannical manner. Freedom of the will is abſurdly repreſented as neceſſary to render the mind ſuſceptible of moral principles; but in reality, ſo far as we act with liberty, ſo far as we are independent of motives, our conduct is as independent of morality as it is of reaſon, nor is it poſſible that we ſhould deſerve either praiſe or blame for a proceeding thus capricious and indiſciplinable.

of no ſervice to morality.

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CHAP. VI.

INFERENCES FROM THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY.

IDEA IT SUGGESTS TO US OF THE UNIVERSE.—INFLUENCE ON OUR MORAL IDEAS—ACTION—VIRTUE—EXERTION—PERSUASION—EXHORTATION—ARDOUR—COMPLACENCE AND AVERSION—PUNISHMENT—REPENTANCE—PRAISE AND BLAME—INTELLECTUAL TRANQUILLITY.—LANGUAGE OF NECESSITY RECOMMENDED.

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CONSIDERING then the doctrine of moral neceſſity as ſufficiently eſtabliſhed, let us proceed to the conſequences that are to be deduced from it. This view of things preſents us with an idea of the univerſe as connected and cemented in all its parts, nothing in the boundleſs progreſs of things being capable of happening otherwiſe than it has actually happened. In the life of every human being there is a chain of cauſes, generated in that eternity which preceded his birth, and going on in regular proceſſion through the whole period of his exiſtence, in conſequence of which it was impoſſible for him to act in any inſtance otherwiſe than he has acted.

Idea it ſuggeſts to us of the univerſe.

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Influence on our moral ideas.

The contrary of this having been the conception of the maſs of mankind in all ages, and the ideas of contingency and accident having perpetually obtruded themſelves, the eſtabliſhed language of morality has been univerſally tinctured with this error. It will therefore be of no trivial importance to enquire how much of this language is founded in the truth of things, and how much of what is expreſſed by it is purely imaginary. Accuracy of language is the indiſpenſible prerequiſite of ſound knowledge, and without attention to that ſubject we can never aſcertain the extent and importance of the conſequences of neceſſity.

Action.

First then it appears, that, in the emphatical and refined ſenſe in which the word has ſometimes been uſed, there is no ſuch thing as action. Man is in no caſe ſtrictly ſpeaking the beginner of any event or ſeries of events that takes place in the univerſe, but only the vehicle through which certain cauſes operate, which cauſes, if he were ſuppoſed not to exiſt, would ceaſe to operate. Action however, in its more ſimple and obvious ſenſe, is ſufficiently real, and exiſts equally both in mind and in matter. When a ball upon a billiard board is ſtruck by a perſon playing, and afterwards impinges upon a ſecond ball, the ball which was firſt in motion is ſaid to act upon the ſecond, though it operate in the ſtricteſt conformity to the impreſſion it received, and the motion it communicates be preciſely determined by the circumſtances of the caſe. Exactly ſimilar to this, upon the principles

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ciples already explained, are the actions of the human mind. Mind is a real cauſe, an indiſpenſible link in the great chain of the univerſe; but not, as has ſometimes been ſuppoſed, a cauſe of that paramount deſcription, as to ſuperſede all neceſſities, and be itſelf ſubject to no laws and methods of operation. Upon the hypotheſis of a God, it is not the choice, apprehenſion or judgment of that being, ſo properly as the truth which was the foundation of that judgment, that has been the ſource of all contingent and particular exiſtences. His exiſtence, if neceſſary, was neceſſary only as the ſenſorium of truth and the medium of its operation.

Virtue.

Is this view of things incompatible with the exiſtence of virtue?

If by virtue we underſtand the operation of an intelligent being in the exerciſe of an optional power, ſo that under the ſame preciſe circumſtances it might or might not have taken place, undoubtedly it will annihilate it.

But the doctrine of neceſſity does not overturn the nature of things. Happineſs and miſery, wiſdom and error will ſtill be diſtinct from each other, and there will ſtill be a connexion between them. Wherever there is diſtinction there is ground for preference and deſire, or on the contrary for neglect and averſion. Happineſs and wiſdom will be objects worthy to be

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desired, misery and error worthy to be disliked. If therefore by virtue we mean that principle which asserts the preference of the former over the latter, its reality will remain undiminished by the doctrine of necessity.

Virtue, if we would speak accurately, ought to be considered by us in the first instance objectively, rather than as modifying any particular beings. It is a system of general advantage, in their aptitude or inaptitude to which lies the value or worthlessness of all particular existences. This aptitude is in intelligent beings usually termed capacity or power. Now power in the sense of the hypothesis of liberty is altogether chimerical. But power in the sense in which it is sometimes affirmed of inanimate substances, is equally true of those which are animate. A candlestick has the power or capacity of retaining a candle in a perpendicular direction. A knife has a capacity of cutting. In the same manner a human being has a capacity of walking: though it may be no more true of him, than of the inanimate substance, that he has the power of exercising or not exercising that capacity. Again, there are different degrees as well as different classes of capacity. One knife is better adapted for the purposes of cutting than another.

Now there are two considerations relative to any particular being, that excite our approbation, and this whether the being be possessed of consciousness or no. These considerations are capacity

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capacity and the application of that capacity. We approve of a sharp knife rather than a blunt one, because its capacity is greater. We approve of its being employed in carving food, rather than in maiming men or other animals, because that application of its capacity is preferable. But all approbation or preference is relative to utility or general good. A knife is as capable as a man of being employed in the purposes of virtue, and the one is no more free than the other as to its employment. The mode in which a knife is made subservient to these purposes is by material impulse. The mode in which a man is made subservient is by inducement and persuasion. But both are equally the affair of necessity. The man differs from the knife, just as the iron candlestick differs from the brass one; he has one more way of being acted upon. This additional way in man is motive, in the candlestick is magnetism.

But virtue has another sense, in which it is analogous to duty. The virtue of a human being is the application of his capacity to the general good; his duty is the best possible application of that capacity. The words thus explained are to be considered as rather similar to grammatical distinction, than to real and philosophical difference. Thus in Latin *bonus* is *good* as affirmed of a man, *bona* is *good* as affirmed of a woman. In the same manner we can as easily conceive of the capacity of an inanimate as of an animate substance being applied to the general good, and as accurately describe the best possible application of the one

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as of the other. There is no eſſential difference between the two caſes. But we call the latter virtue and duty, and not the former. Theſe words may in a popular ſenſe be conſidered as either maſculine or feminine, but never neuter.

exertion:

But, if the doctrine of neceſſity do not annihilate virtue, it tends to introduce a great change into our ideas reſpecting it. According to this doctrine it will be abſurd for a man to ſay, "I will exert myſelf," "I will take care to remember," or even "I will do this." All theſe expreſſions imply as if man was or could be ſomething elſe than what motives make him. Man is in reality a paſſive, and not an active being. In another ſenſe however he is ſufficiently capable of exertion. The operations of his mind may be laborious, like thoſe of the wheel of a heavy machine in aſcending a hill, may even tend to wear out the ſubſtance of the ſhell in which it acts, without in the ſmalleſt degree impeaching its paſſive character. If we were conſtantly aware of this, our minds would not glow leſs ardently with the love of truth, juſtice, happineſs and mankind. We ſhould have a firmneſs and ſimplicity in our conduct, not waſting itſelf in fruitleſs ſtruggles and regrets, not hurried along with infantine impatience, but ſeeing events with their conſequences, and calmly and unreſervedly given up to the influence of thoſe comprehenſive views which this doctrine inſpires.

perſuaſion:

As to our conduct towards others in inſtances where we were

concerned

concerned to improve and meliorate their minds, we ſhould addreſs our repreſentations and remonſtrances to them with double confidence. The believer in free will can expoſtulate with or correct his pupil with faint and uncertain hopes, conſcious that the cleareſt exhibition of truth is impotent, when brought into conteſt with the unhearing and indiſciplinable faculty of will; or in reality, if he were conſiſtent, ſecure that it could produce no effect at all. The neceſſarian on the contrary employs real antecedents, and has a right to expect real effects.

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exhortation:

But, though he would repreſent, he would not exhort, for this is a term without a meaning. He would ſuggeſt motives to the mind, but he would not call upon it to comply, as if it had a power to comply or not to comply. His office would conſiſt of two parts, the exhibition of motives to the purſuit of a certain end, and the delineation of the eaſieſt and moſt effectual way of attaining that end.

There is no better ſcheme for enabling us to perceive how far any idea that has been connected with the hypotheſis of liberty has a real foundation, than to tranſlate the uſual mode of expreſſing it into the language of neceſſity. Suppoſe the idea of exhortation ſo tranſlated to ſtand thus: "To enable any arguments I may ſuggeſt to you to make a ſuitable impreſſion it is neceſſary that they ſhould be fairly conſidered. I proceed therefore to evince to you the importance of attention, knowing, that,

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that, if I can make this importance ſufficiently manifeſt attention will inevitably follow." I ſhould however be far better employed in enforcing directly the truth I am deſirous to impreſs, than in having recourſe to this circuitous mode of treating attention as if it were a ſeparate faculty. Attention will in reality always be proportionate to our apprehenſion of the importance of the ſubject before us.

ardour:

At firſt ſight it may appear as if, the moment I was ſatisfied that exertion on my part was no better than a fiction, and that I was the paſſive inſtrument of cauſes exterior to myſelf, I ſhould become indifferent to the objects which had hitherto intereſted me the moſt deeply, and loſe all that inflexible perſeverance, which ſeems inſeparable from great undertakings. But this cannot be the true ſtate of the caſe. The more I reſign myſelf to the influence of truth, the clearer will be my perception of it. The leſs I am interrupted by queſtions of liberty and caprice, of attention and indolence, the more uniform will be my conſtancy. Nothing could be more unreaſonable than that the ſentiment of neceſſity ſhould produce in me a ſpirit of neutrality and indifference. The more certain is the connexion between effects and cauſes, the more chearfulneſs ſhould I feel in yielding to painful and laborious employments.

complacence and averſion:

It is common for men impreſſed with the opinion of free will to entertain reſentment, indignation and anger againſt thoſe who

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who fall into the commiſſion of vice. How much of theſe feelings is juſt, and how much erroneous? The difference between virtue and vice will equally remain upon the oppoſite hypotheſis. Vice therefore muſt be an object of rejection and virtue of preference; the one muſt be approved and the other diſapproved. But our diſapprobation of vice will be of the ſame nature as our diſapprobation of an infectious diſtemper.

One of the reaſons why we are accuſtomed to regard the murderer with more acute feelings of diſpleaſure than the knife he employs, is that we find a more dangerous property, and greater cauſe for apprehenſion, in the one than in the other. The knife is only accidentally an object of terror, but againſt the murderer we can never be enough upon our guard. In the ſame manner we regard the middle of a buſy ſtreet with leſs complacency as a place for walking than the ſide, and the ridge of a houſe with more averſion than either. Independently therefore of the idea of freedom, mankind in general find in the enormouſly vicious a ſufficient motive of antipathy and diſguſt. With the addition of that idea, it is no wonder that they ſhould be prompted to expreſſions of the moſt intemperate abhorrence.

puniſhment:

Theſe feelings obviouſly lead to the prevailing conceptions on the ſubject of puniſhment. The doctrine of neceſſity would teach us to claſs puniſhment in the liſt of the means we poſſeſs of re-

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forming error. The more the human mind can be ſhewn to be under the influence of motive, the more certain it is that puniſhment will produce a great and unequivocal effect. But the doctrine of neceſſity will teach us to look upon puniſhment with no complacence, and at all times to prefer the moſt direct means of encountering error, which is the development of truth. Whenever puniſhment is employed under this ſyſtem, it will be employed, not for any intrinſic recommendation it poſſeſſes, but juſt ſo far as it ſhall appear to conduce to general utility.

On the contrary it is uſually imagined, that, independently of the utility of puniſhment, there is proper deſert in the criminal, a certain fitneſs in the nature of things that renders pain the ſuitable concomitant of vice. It is therefore frequently ſaid, that it is not enough that a murderer ſhould be tranſported to a deſert iſland, where there ſhould be no danger that his malignant propenſities ſhould ever again have opportunity to act; but that it is alſo right the indignation of mankind againſt him ſhould expreſs itſelf in the infliction of ſome actual ignominy and pain. On the contrary, under the ſyſtem of neceſſity the ideas of guilt, crime, deſert and accountableneſs have no place.

repentance: Correlative to the feelings of reſentment, indignation and anger againſt the offences of others, are thoſe of repentance, contrition and ſorrow for our own. As long as we admit of an eſſential

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eſſential difference between virtue and vice, no doubt all erroneous conduct whether of ourſelves or others will be regarded with diſapprobation. But it will in both caſes be conſidered, under the ſyſtem of neceſſity, as a link in the great chain of events which could not have been otherwiſe than it is. We ſhall therefore no more be diſpoſed to repent of our own faults than of the faults of others. It will be proper to view them both as actions, injurious to the public good, and the repetition of which is to be deprecated. Amidſt our preſent imperfections it will perhaps be uſeful to recollect what is the error by which we are moſt eaſily ſeduced. But in proportion as our views extend, we ſhall find motives enough to the practice of virtue, without any partial retroſpect to ourſelves, or recollection of our own propenſities and habits.

praiſe and blame: In the ideas annexed to the words reſentment and repentance there is ſome mixture of true judgment and a ſound conception of the nature of things. There is perhaps ſtill more juſtice in the notions conveyed by praiſe and blame, though theſe alſo are for the moſt part founded in the hypotheſis of liberty. When I ſpeak of a beautiful landſcape or an agreeable ſenſation, I employ the language of panegyric. I employ it ſtill more emphatically, when I ſpeak of a good action; becauſe I am conſcious that panegyric has a tendency to procure a repetition of ſuch actions. So far as praiſe implies nothing more than this, it perfectly accords with the ſevereſt philoſophy. So far as it im-

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plies that the man could have abſtained from the virtuous action I applaud, it belongs only to the deluſive ſyſtem of liberty.

intellectual tranquillity.

A farther conſequence of the doctrine of neceſſity is its tendency to make us ſurvey all events with a tranquil and placid temper, and approve and diſapprove without impeachment to our ſelf poſſeſſion. It is true, that events may be contingent as to any knowledge we poſſeſs reſpecting them, however certain they are in themſelves. Thus the advocate of liberty knows that his relation was either loſt or ſaved in the great ſtorm that happened two months ago; he regards this event as paſt and certain, and yet he does not fail to be anxious about it. But it is not leſs true, that all anxiety and perturbation imply an imperfect ſenſe of contingency, and a feeling as if our efforts could make ſome alteration in the event. When the perſon recollects with clearneſs that the event is over, his mind grows compoſed; but preſently he feels as if it were in the power of God or man to alter it, and his diſtreſs is renewed. All that is more than this is the impatience of curioſity; but philoſophy and reaſon have an evident tendency to prevent an uſeleſs curioſity from diſturbing our peace. He therefore who regards all things paſt, preſent and to come as links of an indiſſoluble chain, will, as often as he recollects this comprehenſive view, be ſuperior to the tumult of paſſion; and will reflect upon the moral concerns of mankind with the ſame clearneſs of perception, the ſame unalterable firmneſs of judgment, and the ſame

tranquillity as we are accuſtomed to do upon the truths of geometry.

BOOK IV. CHAP. VI.

Language of neceſſity recommended.

It would be of infinite importance to the cauſe of ſcience and virtue to expreſs ourſelves upon all occaſions in the language of neceſſity. The contrary language is perpetually intruding, and it is difficult to ſpeak two ſentences upon any topic connected with human action without it. The expreſſions of both hypotheſes are mixed in inextricable confuſion, juſt as the belief of both hypotheſes, however incompatible, will be found to exiſt in all uninſtructed minds. The reformation of which I ſpeak would probably be found exceedingly practicable in itſelf; though, ſuch is the ſubtlety of error, that we ſhould at firſt find ſeveral reviſals and much laborious ſtudy neceſſary before it could be perfectly weeded out. This muſt be the author's apology for not having attempted in the preſent work what he recommends to others. Objects of more immediate importance demanded his attention, and engroſſed his faculties.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

OF THE MECHANISM OF THE HUMAN MIND.

NATURE OF MECHANISM—ITS CLASSES, MATERIAL AND INTELLECTUAL.—MATERIAL SYSTEM, OR OF VIBRATIONS.—THE INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM MOST PROBABLE—FROM THE CONSIDERATION THAT THOUGHT WOULD OTHERWISE BE A SUPERFLUITY—FROM THE ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES OF REASONING FROM EFFECTS TO CAUSES.—OBJECTIONS REFUTED.—THOUGHTS WHICH PRODUCE ANIMAL MOTION MAY BE—1. INVOLUNTARY. ALL ANIMAL MOTIONS WERE FIRST INVOLUNTARY.—2. UNATTENDED WITH CONSCIOUSNESS.—THE MIND CANNOT HAVE MORE THAN ONE THOUGHT AT ANY ONE TIME.—OBJECTION TO THIS ASSERTION FROM THE CASE OF COMPLEX IDEAS—FROM VARIOUS MENTAL OPERATIONS—AS COMPARISON—APPREHENSION—RAPIDITY OF THE SUCCESSION OF IDEAS.—APPLICATION.—DURATION MEASURED BY CONSCIOUSNESS.—3. A DISTINCT THOUGHT TO EACH MOTION MAY BE UNNECESSARY.—APPARENT FROM THE COMPLEXITY OF SENSIBLE IMPRESSIONS.—THE MIND ALWAYS THINKS.—CONCLUSION.—THE THEORY APPLIED TO THE PHENOMENON OF WALKING—TO THE CIRCULATION OF THE BLOOD.—OF MOTION IN GENERAL.—OF DREAMS.

BOOK IV. CHAP. VII. Nature of mechanism:

THE doctrine of neceſſity being admitted, it follows that the theory of the human mind is properly, like the theory of every other ſeries of events with which we are acquainted,

quainted, a ſyſtem of mechaniſm; underſtanding by mechaniſm nothing more than a regular connexion of phenomena without any uncertainty of event, ſo that every incident requires a ſpecific cauſe, and could be no otherwiſe in any reſpect than as the cauſe determined it to be.

its claſſes material and intellectual.

But there are two ſorts of mechaniſm capable of being applied to the ſolution of this caſe, one which has for its medium only matter and motion, the other which has for its medium thought. Which of theſe is to be regarded as moſt probable?

Material ſyſtem, or of vibrations.

According to the firſt we may conceive the human body to be ſo conſtituted as to be ſuſceptible of vibrations, in the ſame manner as the ſtrings of a muſical inſtrument are ſuſceptible of vibrations. Theſe vibrations, having begun upon the ſurface of the body, are conveyed to the brain; and, in a manner that is equally the reſult of conſtruction, produce a ſecond ſet of vibrations beginning in the brain, and conveyed to the different organs or members of the body. Thus it may be ſuppoſed, that a piece of iron conſiderably heated is applied to the body of an infant, and that the report of this uneaſineſs, or irritation and ſeparation of parts being conveyed to the brain, vents itſelf again in a ſhrill and piercing cry. It is in this manner that we are apt to imagine certain convulſive and ſpaſmodic affections to take place in the body. The caſe, as here deſcribed, is ſimilar to that of the bag of a pair of bagpipes, which, being preſſed

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preſſed in a certain manner, utters a groan, without any thing more being neceſſary to account for this phenomenon, than the known laws of matter and motion. Let us add to theſe vibrations a ſyſtem of aſſociations to be carried on by traces to be made upon the medullary ſubſtance of the brain, by means of which paſt and preſent impreſſions are connected according to certain laws, as the traces happen to approach or run into each other; and we have then a complete ſcheme for accounting in a certain way for all the phenomena of human action. It is to be obſerved, that, according to this ſyſtem, mind or perception is altogether unneceſſary to explain the appearances. It might for other reaſons be deſirable or wiſe, in the author of the univerſe for example, to introduce a thinking ſubſtance or a power of perception as a ſpectator of the proceſs. But this percipient power is altogether neutral, having no concern either as a medium or otherwiſe in producing the events *.

The intellectual ſyſtem moſt probable:

The ſecond ſyſtem, which repreſents thought as the medium

* The above will be found to be a tolerably accurate deſcription of the hypotheſis of the celebrated Hartley. It was unneceſſary to quote his words, as it would be foreign to the plan of the preſent work to enter into a refutation of any individual writer. The ſagacity of Hartley, in having pointed out the neceſſary connexion of the phenomena of mind, and ſhewn the practicability of reducing its different operations to a ſimple principle, cannot be too highly applauded. The reaſonings of the preſent chapter, if true, may be conſidered as giving farther ſtability to his principal doctrine by freeing it from the ſcheme of material automatiſm with which it was unneceſſarily clogged.

of

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of operation, is not leſs a ſyſtem of mechaniſm, according to the doctrine of neceſſity, than the other, but it is a mechaniſm of a totally different kind.

from the conſideration that thought would otherwiſe be a ſuperfluity:

There are various reaſons calculated to perſuade us that this laſt hypotheſis is the moſt probable. No inconſiderable argument may be derived from the ſingular and important nature of that property of human beings, which we term thought; which it is ſurely ſomewhat violent to ſtrike out of our ſyſtem as a mere ſuperfluity.

from the eſtabliſhed principles of reaſoning from effects to cauſes.

A ſecond reaſon ſtill more deciſive than the former, ariſes from the conſtancy with which thought in innumerable inſtances accompanies the functions of this mechaniſm. Now this conſtancy of conjunction has been ſhewn to be the only ground we have in any imaginable ſubject for inferring neceſſary connexion, or that ſpecies of relation which exiſts between cauſe and effect. We cannot therefore reject the principle which ſuppoſes thought to have an efficient ſhare in the mechaniſm of man, but upon grounds that would vitiate all our reaſonings from effects to cauſes.

Objections refuted.

It may be objected, "that, though this contiguity of event argues neceſſary connexion, yet the connexion may be exactly the reverſe of what is here ſtated, motion being in all inſtances the cauſe, and thought never any thing more than an effect." But this is contrary to every thing we know of the ſyſtem of

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the univerſe, in which each event appears to be alternately both the one and the other, nothing terminating in itſelf, but every thing leading on to an endleſs chain of conſequences.

It would be equally vain to object, "that we are unable to conceive how thought can have any tendency to produce motion in the animal ſyſtem;" ſince it has juſt appeared that this ignorance is by no means peculiar to the ſubject before us. We are univerſally unable to perceive the ground of neceſſary connexion.

Thoughts which produce animal motion may be,

It being then ſufficiently clear that there are cogent reaſons to perſuade us that thought is the medium through which the motions of the animal ſyſtem are generally carried on, let us proceed to conſider what is the nature of thoſe thoughts by which the limbs and organs of our body are ſet in motion. It will then probably be found, that the difficulties which have clogged the intellectual hypotheſis, are principally founded in erroneous notions derived from the ſyſtem of liberty; as if there were any eſſential difference between thoſe thoughts which are the medium of generating motion, and thoughts in general.

1. involuntary.

Firſt, thought may be the ſource of animal motion, without partaking in any degree of volition, or deſign. It is certain that there is a great variety of motions in the animal ſyſtem, which are in every view of the ſubject involuntary. Such, for example, are the cries of an infant, when it is firſt impreſſed with

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with the ſenſation of pain. Such muſt be all thoſe motions which flowed from ſenſation previouſly to experience. Volition implies that ſomething which is the ſubject of volition, is regarded as deſirable; but we cannot deſire any thing, till we have an idea correſponding to the term futurity. Volition implies intention, or deſign; but we cannot deſign any thing, till we have the expectation that the exiſtence of that thing is in ſome way connected with the means employed to produce it. An infant, when he has obſerved that a voice exciting compaſſion is the reſult of certain previous emotions, may have the idea of that voice predominant in his mind during the train of emotions that produce it. But this could not have been the caſe the firſt time it was uttered. In the firſt motions of the animal ſyſtem, nothing of any ſort could poſſibly be foreſeen, and therefore nothing of any ſort could be intended. Yet in the very inſtances here produced the motions have ſenſation or thought for their conſtant concomitant; and therefore all the arguments, which have been already alledged, remain in full force to prove that thought is the medium of their production.

Nor will this appear very extraordinary, if we conſider the nature of volition itſelf. In volition, if the doctrine of neceſſity be true, the mind is altogether paſſive. Two ideas preſent themſelves in ſome way connected with each other; and a perception of preferableneſs neceſſarily follows. An object having certain deſirable qualities, is perceived to be within my reach;

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and my hand is neceſſarily ſtretched out with an intention to obtain it. If a perception of preferableneſs and a perception of deſirableneſs irreſiſtibly lead to animal motion, why may not the mere perception of pain? All that the adverſary of automatiſm is concerned to maintain is, that thought is an eſſential link in the chain; and that, the moment it is taken away, the links that were before it have no longer any tendency to produce motion in the links that were after it. It is poſſible, that, as a numerous claſs of motions have their conſtant origin in thought, ſo there may be no thoughts altogether unattended with motion.

All animal motions were firſt involuntary.

Here it may be proper to obſerve, that, from the principles already delivered, it follows that all the original motions of the animal ſyſtem are involuntary. In proportion however as we obtain experience, they are ſucceſſively made the ſubjects of reflection and foreſight; and of conſequence become many of them the themes of intention and deſign, that is, become voluntary. We ſhall preſently have occaſion to ſuſpect that motions, which were at firſt involuntary, and afterwards by experience and aſſociation are made voluntary, may in the proceſs of intellectual operation be made involuntary again.—But to proceed.

2. unattended with conſciouſneſs.

Secondly, thought may be the ſource of animal motion, and yet be unattended with conſciouſneſs. This is undoubtedly a diſtinction of conſiderable refinement, depending upon the preciſe

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ciſe meaning of words; and, if any perſon ſhould chooſe to expreſs himſelf differently on the ſubject, it would be uſeleſs obſtinately to diſpute that difference with him. By the conſciouſneſs which accompanies any thought there ſeems to be ſomething implied diſtinct from the thought itſelf. Conſciouſneſs is a ſort of ſupplementary reflection, by which the mind not only has the thought, but adverts to its own ſituation and obſerves that it has it. Conſciouſneſs therefore, however nice the diſtinction, ſeems to be a ſecond thought.

The mind cannot have more than one thought at any one time.

In order to aſcertain whether every thought be attended with conſciouſneſs, it may be proper to conſider whether the mind can ever have more than one thought at any one time. Now this ſeems altogether contrary to the very nature of mind. My preſent thought is that to which my preſent attention is yielded; but I cannot attend to ſeveral things at once. This aſſertion appears to be of the nature of an intuitive axiom; and experience is perpetually reminding us of its truth. In comparing two objects we frequently endeavour as it were to draw them together in the mind, but we ſeem to be obliged to paſs ſucceſſively from the one to the other.

Objection to this aſſertion from the caſe of complex ideas:

But this principle, though apparently ſupported both by reaſon and experience, is not unattended with difficulties. The firſt is that which ariſes from the caſe of complex ideas. This will beſt be apprehended if we examine it as relates to viſible objects.

"Let

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" Let us ſuppoſe that I am at preſent employed in the act of reading. I appear to take in whole words and indeed cluſters of words by a ſingle act of the mind. But let it be granted for a moment that I ſee each letter ſucceſſively. Yet each letter is made up of parts: the letter D for example of a right line and a curve, and each of theſe lines of the ſucceſſive addition or fluxion of points. If I conſider the line as a whole, yet its extenſion is one thing, and its terminations another. I could not ſee the letter if the black line that deſcribes it and the white ſurface that bounds it were not each of them in the view of my organ. There muſt therefore, as it ſhould ſeem, upon the hypotheſis above ſtated, be an infinite ſucceſſion of ideas in the mind, before it could apprehend the ſimpleſt objects with which we are converſant. But we have no feeling of any ſuch thing, but rather of the preciſe contrary. Thouſands of human beings go out of the world without ever apprehending that lines are compoſed of the addition or fluxion of points. An hypotheſis therefore, that is in direct oppoſition to ſo many apparent facts, muſt have a very uncommon portion of evidence to ſuſtain it, if indeed it can be ſuſtained at all."

The true anſwer to this objection ſeems to be the following. The mind can apprehend only a ſingle idea at once, but that idea needs not be in every ſenſe of the word a ſimple idea. The mind can apprehend two or more objects at a ſingle effort, but it cannot apprehend them as two. There ſeems no ſufficient reaſon

reaſon to deny that all thoſe objects which are painted at once upon the retina of the eye, produce a joint and ſimultaneous impreſſion upon the mind. But they are not immediately conceived by the mind as many, but as one: ſo ſoon as the idea ſuggeſts itſelf that they are made up of parts, theſe parts cannot be conſidered by us otherwiſe than ſucceſſively. The reſolution of objects into their ſimple elements, is an operation of ſcience and improvement; but it is altogether foreign to our firſt and original conceptions. In all caſes the operation is rather analytical than ſynthetical, rather that of reſolution than compoſition. We do not begin with the ſucceſſive perception of elementary parts till we have obtained an idea of a whole; but, beginning with a whole, are capable of reducing it into its elements.

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from various mental operations:

as comparifon:

The ſecond difficulty is of a much ſubtler nature. It conſiſts in the ſeeming " impoſſibility of performing any mental operation, ſuch as compariſon for example, which has relation to two or more ideas, if we have not both ideas before us at once, if one of them be completely vaniſhed and gone, before the other begins to exiſt." The cauſe of this difficulty ſeems to lie in the miſtake of ſuppoſing that there is a real interval between the two ideas. It will perhaps be found upon an accurate examination, that, though we cannot have two ideas at once, yet it is not juſt to ſay, that the firſt has periſhed before the ſecond begins to exiſt. The inſtant that connects them, is of no real magnitude, and

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and produces no real diviſion. The mind is always full. It is this inſtant therefore that is the true point of compariſon.

It may be objected, "that this cannot be a juſt repreſentation, ſince compariſon is rather a matter of retroſpect deciding between two ideas that have been completely apprehended, than a perception which occurs in the middle, before the ſecond has been yet obſerved." To this objection experience will perhaps be found to furniſh the true anſwer. We find in fact that we cannot compare two objects till we have paſſed and repaſſed them in the mind.

apprehenſion:

"Suppoſing this account of the operation of the mind in compariſon to be admitted, yet what ſhall we ſay to a complex ſentence containing twenty ideas, the ſenſe of which I fully apprehend at a ſingle hearing, nay, even in ſome caſes by that time one half of it has been uttered?"

The mere taſk of underſtanding what is affirmed to us is of a very different nature from that of compariſon, or any other ſpecies of judgment that is to be formed concerning this affirmation. When a number of ideas are preſented in a train, though in one ſenſe there be variety, yet in another there is unity. Firſt, there is the unity of uninterrupted ſucceſſion, the perennial flow as of a ſtream, where the drop indeed that ſucceeds is numerically diſtinct from that which went before, but there is no ceſſation.

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Secondly, there is the unity of method. The mind apprehends, as the diſcourſe proceeds, a ſtrict aſſociation, from ſimilarity or ſome other ſource, between each idea as it follows in the proceſs, and that which went before it.

The faculty of underſtanding the different parts of a diſcourſe in their connexion with each other, ſimple as it appears, is in reality of gradual and ſlow acquiſition. We are by various cauſes excluded from a minute obſervation of the progreſs of the infant mind, and therefore do not readily conceive by how imperceptible advances it arrives at a quickneſs of apprehenſion relative to the ſimpleſt ſentences. But we more eaſily remark its ſubſequent improvement, and perceive how long it is before it can apprehend a diſcourſe of any length or a ſentence of any abſtraction.

Nothing is more certain than the poſſibility of my perceiving the ſort of relation that exiſts between the different parts of a methodical diſcourſe, for example, Mr. Burke's Speech upon Oeconomical Reform, though it be impoſſible for me after the ſevereſt attention to conſider the ſeveral parts otherwiſe than ſucceſſively. I have a latent feeling of this relation as the diſcourſe proceeds, but I cannot give a firm judgment reſpecting it otherwiſe than by retroſpect. It may however be ſuſpected that, even in the caſe of ſimple apprehenſion, an accurate attention to the operations of mind would ſhow, that we ſcarcely

in any inſtance hear a ſingle ſentence, without returning again and again upon the ſteps of the ſpeaker, and drawing more cloſely in our minds the preceding members of his period, before he arrives at its concluſion; though even this exertion of mind, ſubtle as it is, be not of itſelf thought ſufficient to authoriſe us to give a judgment upon the whole. There may perhaps be caſes where the apprehenſion is more inſtantaneous. A ſimilar exception appears to take place even in ſome caſes of judgment or compariſon. A new aſſociation, or a connecting of two ideas by means of a middle term, which were never brought into this relation before, is a taſk of ſuch a nature, that the ſtrongeſt mind feels ſome ſenſe of effort in the operation. But, where the judgment accurately ſpeaking is already made, the operation is in a manner inſtantaneous. If you ſay, that a melon is a larger fruit than a cherry, I immediately aſſent. The judgment, though perhaps never applied to this individual ſubject, may be ſaid to have been made by me long before. If again you tell me that Cæſar was a worſe man than Alexander, I inſtantly apprehend your meaning; but, unleſs I have upon ſome former occaſion conſidered the queſtion, I can neither aſſent nor diſſent till after ſome reflection.

Rapidity of the ſucceſſion of ideas.

But, if the principle here ſtated be true, how infinitely rapid muſt be the ſucceſſion of ideas? While I am ſpeaking no two ideas are in my mind at the ſame time, and yet with what facility do I paſs from one to another? If my diſcourſe be argumentative,

mentative, how often do I paſs the topics of which it conſiſts in review before I utter them, and even while I am ſpeaking continue the review at intervals without producing any pauſe in my diſcourſe? How many other ſenſations are perceived by me during this period, without ſo much as interrupting, that is, without materially diverting the train of my ideas? My eye ſucceſſively remarks a thouſand objects that preſent themſelves. My mind wanders to the different parts of my body, and receives a ſenſation from the chair upon which I ſit, from the table upon which I lean; from the pinching of a ſhoe, from a ſinging in my ear, a pain in my head, or an irritation of the breaſt. When theſe moſt perceptibly occur, my mind paſſes from one to another, without feeling the minuteſt obſtacle, or being in any degree diſtracted by their multiplicity. From this curſory view of the ſubject it appears that we have a multitude of different ſucceſſive perceptions in every moment of our exiſtence*.

Application.

Conſciouſneſs, as it has been above defined, appears to be one of the departments of memory. Now the nature of memory, ſo far as it relates to the ſubject of which we are treating, is exceedingly obvious. An infinite number of thoughts paſſed

* An attempt has been made to calculate theſe, but there is no reaſon to believe that the calculation deſerves to be conſidered as a ſtandard of truth. Senſations leave their images behind them, ſome for a longer and ſome for a ſhorter time; ſo that, in two different inſtances, the calculation is in one caſe eight, and in another three hundred and twenty to a-ſecond.

See Watſon on Time, Ch. II.

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through my mind in the laſt five minutes of my exiſtence. How many of them am I now able to recollect? How many of them ſhall I recollect to-morrow? One impreſſion after another is perpetually effacing from this intellectual regiſter. Some of them may with great attention and effort be revived; others obtrude themſelves uncalled for; and a third ſort are perhaps out of the reach of any power of thought to reproduce, as having never left their traces behind them for a moment. If the memory be capable of ſo many variations and degrees of intenſity, may there not be ſome caſes with which it never connects itſelf? If the ſucceſſion of thoughts be ſo inexpreſſibly rapid, may they not paſs over ſome topics with ſo delicate a touch, as to elude the ſupplement of conſciouſneſs?

Duration meaſured by conſciouſneſs.

It ſeems to be conſciouſneſs, rather than the ſucceſſion of ideas, that meaſures time to the mind. The ſucceſſion of ideas is in all caſes exceedingly rapid, and it is by no means clear that it can be accelerated. We find it impracticable in the experiment to retain any idea in our minds unvaried for any perceptible duration. Continual flux appears to take place in every part of the univerſe. It is perhaps a law of our nature, that thoughts ſhall at all times ſucceed to each other with equal rapidity. Yet time ſeems to our apprehenſion to flow now with a precipitated and now with a tardy courſe. The indolent man reclines for hours in the ſhade; and, though his mind be perpetually at work, the ſilent lapſe of duration is unobſerved.

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But, when acute pain or uneaſy expectation obliges conſciouſneſs to recur with unuſual force, the time then appears inſupportably long. Indeed it is a contradiction in terms to ſuppoſe that the ſucceſſion of thoughts, where there is nothing that perceptibly links them together, where they totally elude or inſtantly vaniſh from the memory, can be a meaſure of time to the mind. That there is ſuch a ſtate of mind in ſome caſes aſſuming a permanent form, has been ſo much the general opinion of mankind, that it has obtained a name, and is called reverie. It is probable from what has been ſaid that thoughts of reverie, underſtanding by that appellation thoughts untranſmitted to the memory, perpetually take their turn with our more expreſs and digeſted thoughts, even in the moſt active ſcenes of our life.

3. a diſtinct thought to each motion may be unneceſſary:

Laſtly, thought may be the ſource of animal motion, and yet there may be no need of a diſtinct thought producing each individual motion. This is a very important point in the ſubject before us. In uttering a cry for example, the number of muſcles and articulations of the body concerned in this operation is very great; ſhall we ſay that the infant has a diſtinct thought for each motion of theſe articulations?

apparent from the complexity of ſenſible impreſſions.

The anſwer to this queſtion will be conſiderably facilitated, if we recollect the manner in which the impreſſions are blended, which we receive from external objects. The ſenſe of feeling is diffuſed over every part of my body, I feel the different ſubſtances

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ſtances that ſupport me, the pen I guide, various affections and petty irregularities in different parts of my frame, nay, the very air that environs me. But all theſe impreſſions are abſolutely ſimultaneous, and I can have only one perception at once. Out of theſe various impreſſions, the moſt powerful, or that which has the greateſt advantage to ſolicit my attention, overcomes and drives out the reſt; or, which not leſs frequently happens, ſome idea of aſſociation ſuggeſted by the laſt preceding idea wholly withdraws my attention from every external object. It is probable however that this perception is imperceptibly modified by the miniature impreſſions that accompany it, juſt as we actually find that the very ſame ideas preſented to a ſick man, take a peculiar tinge, that renders them exceedingly different from what they are in the mind of a man in health. It has been already ſhown, that, though there is nothing leſs frequent than the apprehending of a ſimple idea, yet every idea, however complex, offers itſelf to the mind under the conception of unity. The blending of numerous impreſſions into one perception is a law of our nature, and the cuſtomary train of our perceptions is entirely of this denomination. Mean while it deſerves to be remarked by the way, that, at the very time that the moſt methodical ſeries of perceptions is going on in the mind, there is another ſet of perceptions, or rather many ſets playing an under or intermediate part; and, though theſe perpetually modify each other, yet the manner in which it is done is in an eminent degree minute and unobſerved.

Theſe

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The mind always thinks.

Theſe remarks furniſh us with an anſwer to the long diſputed queſtion, whether the mind always thinks? It appears that innumerable impreſſions are perpetually made upon our body, and the only way, in which the ſlighteſt of theſe is prevented from conveying a diſtinct report to the mind, is in conſequence of its being overpowered by ſome more conſiderable impreſſion. It cannot therefore be alledged, "that, as one impreſſion is found to be overpowered by another while we wake, the ſtrongeſt only of the ſimultaneous impreſſions furniſhing an idea to the mind; ſo the whole ſet of ſimultaneous impreſſions during ſleep may be overpowered by ſome indiſpoſition of the ſenſorium, and entirely fail of its effect." For, firſt, the caſes are altogether different. From the explication above given it appeared, that not one of the impreſſions was really loſt, but tended, though in a very limited degree, to modify the predominant impreſſion. Secondly, nothing can be more unintelligible than this indiſpoſition. Were it of the nature which the objection requires, ſleep ought to ceaſe of its own accord after the expiration of a certain term, but to be incapable of interruption from any experiment I might make upon the ſleeper. To what purpoſe call or ſhake him? Shall we ſay, that it requires an impreſſion of a certain magnitude to excite the ſenſorium? But a clock ſhall ſtrike in the room and not wake him, when a voice of a much lower key produces that effect. What is the preciſe degree of magnitude neceſſary? We actually find the ineffectual calls that are addreſſed to us, as well as various other ſounds, occaſionally

mixing

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mixing with our dreams, without our being aware from whence this new perception aroſe.

To apply theſe obſervations. If a number of impreſſions may come blended to the mind, ſo as to make up one thought or perception, why may not one thought, in caſes where the mind acts as a cauſe, produce a variety of motions? It has already been ſhown that there is no eſſential difference between the two caſes. The mind is completely paſſive in both. Is there any ſufficient reaſon to ſhow, that, though it be poſſible for one ſubſtance conſidered as the recipient of effects to be the ſubject of a variety of ſimultaneous impreſſions, yet it is impoſſible for one ſubſtance conſidered as a cauſe to produce a variety of ſimultaneous motions? If it be granted that there is not, if the mere modification of a thought deſigning a motion in chief, may produce a ſecondary motion, then it muſt perhaps farther be confeſſed poſſible for that modification which my firſt thought produced in my ſecond, to carry on the motion, even though the ſecond thought be upon a ſubject altogether different.

Concluſion.

The conſequences, which ſeem deducible from this theory of mind, are ſufficiently memorable. By ſhowing the extreme ſubtlety and ſimplicity of thought, it removes many of the difficulties that might otherwiſe reſt upon its finer and more evaneſcent operations. If thought, in order to be the cauſe of animal motion, need not have either the nature of volition, or the concomitant

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concomitant of conſciouſneſs, and if a ſingle thought may become a complex cauſe and produce a variety of motions, it will then become exceedingly difficult to trace its operations, or to diſcover any circumſtances in a particular inſtance of animal motion, which can ſufficiently indicate that thought was not the principle of its production, and by that means ſuperſede the force of the general arguments adduced in the beginning of this chapter. Hence therefore it appears that all thoſe motions which are obſerved to exiſt in ſubſtances having perception, and which are not to be diſcovered in ſubſtances of any other ſpecies, may reaſonably be ſuſpected to have thought, the diſtinguiſhing peculiarity of ſuch ſubſtances, for their cauſe.

The theory applied to the phenomenon of walking:

There are various claſſes of motion which will fall under this definition, beſide thoſe already enumerated. An example of one of theſe claſſes ſuggeſts itſelf in the phenomenon of walking. An attentive obſerver will perceive various ſymptoms calculated to perſuade him, that every ſtep he takes during the longeſt journey is the production of thought. Walking is in all caſes originally a voluntary motion. In a child when he learns to walk, in a rope dancer when he begins to practiſe that particular exerciſe, the diſtinct determination of mind preceding each ſtep is ſufficiently perceptible. It may be abſurd to ſay, that a long ſeries of motions can be the reſult of ſo many expreſs volitions, when theſe ſuppoſed volitions leave no trace in the memory. But it is not unreaſonable to believe, that a

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ſpecies of motion which began in expreſs deſign, may, though it ceaſes to be the ſubject of conſcious attention, owe its continuance to a continued ſeries of thoughts flowing in that direction, and that, if life were taken away, material impulſe would not carry on the exerciſe for a moment. We actually find, that, when our thoughts in a train are more than commonly earneſt, our pace ſlackens, and ſometimes our going forward is wholly ſuſpended, particularly in any leſs common ſpecies of walking, ſuch as that of deſcending a flight of ſtairs. In aſcending the caſe is ſtill more difficult, and accordingly we are accuſtomed wholly to ſuſpend the regular progreſs of reflection during that operation.

to the circulation of the blood.

Another claſs of motions of a ſtill ſubtler nature, are the regular motions of the animal economy, ſuch as the circulation of the blood, and the pulſation of the heart. Are thought and perception the medium of theſe motions? We have the ſame argument here as in the former inſtances, conjunction of event. When thought begins, theſe motions alſo begin; and, when it ceaſes, they are at an end. They are therefore either the cauſe or effect of percipiency, or mind; but we ſhall be inclined to embrace the latter ſide of this dilemma, when we recollect that we are probably acquainted with many inſtances in which thought is the immediate cauſe of motions, which ſcarcely yield in ſubtlety to theſe; but that, as to the origin of thought, we are wholly uninformed. Add to this, that there are probably no

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no motions of the animal economy, which we do not find it in the power of volition, and ſtill more of our involuntary ſenſations, to haſten or retard.

Of motion in general.

It is far from certain that the phenomenon of motion can any where exiſt where there is not thought. Motion may be diſtributed into four claſſes; the ſimpler motions which reſult from what are called the eſſential properties of matter and the laws of impulſe; the more complex ones which cannot be accounted for by the aſſumption of theſe laws, ſuch as gravitation, elaſticity, electricity and magnetiſm; and the motions of the vegetable and animal ſyſtems. Each of theſe ſeems farther than that which preceded it from being able to be accounted for by any thing we underſtand of the nature of matter.

Of dreams.

Some light may be derived from what has been here advanced upon the phenomenon of dreams. "In ſleep we ſometimes imagine" for example "that we read long paſſages from books, or hear a long oration from a ſpeaker. In all caſes ſcenes and incidents paſs before us that in various ways excite our paſſions and intereſt our feelings. Is it poſſible that theſe ſhould be the unconſcious production of our own minds?"

It has already appeared, that volition is the accidental, and by no means the neceſſary concomitant, even of thoſe thoughts which are moſt active and efficient in the producing of motion.

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It is therefore no more to be wondered at that the mind ſhould be buſied in the compoſition of books which it appears to read, than that a train of thoughts of any other kind ſhould paſs through it without a conſciouſneſs of its being the author. In fact we perpetually annex wrong and erroneous ideas to this phraſe, that we are the authors. Though mind be a real and efficient cauſe, it is in no caſe a firſt cauſe. It is the medium through which operations are produced. Ideas ſucceed each other in our ſenſorium according to certain neceſſary laws. The moſt powerful impreſſion, either from without or from within, conſtantly gets the better of all its competitors, and forcibly drives out the preceding thought, till it is in the ſame irreſiſtible manner driven out by its ſucceſſor.

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OF THE PRINCIPLE OF VIRTUE.

HYPOTHESES OF BENEVOLENCE AND SELF LOVE—SUPERIORITY OF THE FORMER.—ACTION IS EITHER VOLUNTARY OR INVOLUNTARY.—NATURE OF THE FIRST OF THESE CLASSES.—ARGUMENT THAT RESULTS FROM IT.—VOLUNTARY ACTION HAS A REAL EXISTENCE.—CONSEQUENCE OF THAT EXISTENCE.—EXPERIMENTAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT.—SUPPOSITIONS SUGGESTED BY THE ADVOCATES OF SELF LOVE—THAT WE CALCULATE UPON ALL OCCASIONS THE ADVANTAGE TO ACCRUE TO US.—FALSENESS OF THIS SUPPOSITION.—SUPPOSITION OF A CONTRARY SORT.—WE DO NOT CALCULATE WHAT WOULD BE THE UNEASINESS TO RESULT FROM OUR REFRAINING TO ACT—EITHER IN RELIEVING DISTRESS—OR IN ADDING TO THE STOCK OF GENERAL GOOD.—UNEASINESS AN ACCIDENTAL MEMBER OF THE PROCESS.—THE SUPPOSITIONS INCONSISTENTLY BLENDED.—SCHEME OF SELF LOVE RECOMMENDED FROM THE PROPENSITY OF MIND TO ABBREVIATE ITS PROCESS—FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT OBTAINS IN THE NATURES OF THINGS.—HYPOTHESIS OF SELF LOVE INCOMPATIBLE WITH VIRTUE.—CONCLUSION.—IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION.—APPLICATION.

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THE ſubject of intellectual mechaniſm ſuggeſted itſelf as the moſt ſuitable introduction to an enquiry into the moral principles of human conduct. Having firſt aſcertained that

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that thought is the real and efficient ſource of animal motion, it remains to be conſidered what is the nature of thoſe particular thoughts in which the moral conduct of man originates.

Hypotheſes of benevolence and ſelf love.

Upon this queſtion there are two opinions. By ſome it is ſuppoſed that the human mind is of a temper conſiderably ductile, ſo that, as we in certain inſtances evidently propoſe our own advantage for the object of our purſuit, ſo we are capable no leſs ſincerely and directly in other inſtances of deſiring the benefit of our neighbour. By others it is affirmed, that we are incapable of acting but from the proſpect or ſtimulant of perſonal advantage, and that, when our conduct appears moſt retrograde from this object, the principle from which it flows is ſecretly the ſame. It ſhall be the buſineſs of this chapter to prove that the former hypotheſis is conformable to truth.

Superiority of the former.

Action is either voluntary or involuntary.

It is to be preſumed from the arguments of the preceding chapter, that there exiſt in the theory of the human mind two claſſes of action, voluntary and involuntary. The laſt of theſe we have minutely inveſtigated. It has ſufficiently appeared that there are certain motions of the animal ſyſtem, which have ſenſation or thought for their medium of production, and at the ſame time ariſe, to have recourſe to a uſual mode of expreſſion, ſpontaneouſly, without foreſight of or a direct reflecting on the reſult which is to follow. But, if we admit the exiſtence of this phenomenon, there does not ſeem leſs reaſon to admit the exiſtence of the other claſs of action above enumerated, which

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is accompanied in its operation with a foreſight of its reſult, and to which that foreſight ſerves as the reaſon and cauſe of exiſtence.

Nature of the firſt of theſe claſſes.

Voluntary action cannot proceed from all perceptions indiſcriminately, but only from perceptions of a peculiar claſs, viz. ſuch perceptions as are accompanied with the idea of ſomething as true reſpecting them, ſomething which may be affirmed or denied. One of the firſt inferences therefore from the doctrine of voluntary action, is the exiſtence of the underſtanding as a faculty diſtinct from ſenſation, or, to ſpeak more accurately, the poſſibility of employing the general capacity of perception, not merely as the vehicle of diſtinct ideas, but as the medium of connecting two or more ideas together. This particular habit, when it has once been created, gradually extends itſelf to every province of the mind, till at length it is impoſſible for any thing to make a clear and diſtinct impreſſion upon the ſenſorium, without its being followed with ſome judgment of the mind concerning it.

It is thus that man becomes a moral being. He is no farther ſo than he is capable of connecting and comparing ideas, of making propoſitions concerning them, and of foreſeeing certain conſequences as the reſult of certain motions of the animal ſyſtem.

But, if the foreſight of certain conſequences to reſult may be

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the ſufficient reaſon of action, that is, if there be ſuch a thing as volition, then every foreſight of that kind has a tendency to action. If the perception of ſomething as true, joined with the conſciouſneſs of my capacity to act upon this truth, be of itſelf ſufficient to produce motion in the animal ſyſtem, then every perception ſo accompanied has a tendency to motion. To apply this to the ſubject before us.

Argument that reſults from it.

I perceive a certain agreeable food, I perceive in myſelf an appetite which this food is adapted to gratify, and theſe perceptions are accompanied with a conſciouſneſs of my power to appropriate this food. If no other conſideration exiſt in my mind beyond thoſe which have juſt been ſtated, a certain motion of the animal ſyſtem irreſiſtibly follows.

Suppoſe now that the perſon about whoſe appetites theſe propoſitions are converſant, is not myſelf but another. This variation cannot materially alter the caſe. Still there remain all the circumſtances neceſſary to generate motion. I perceive the food, I am acquainted with the wants of the perſon in queſtion, and I am conſcious of my power of adminiſtering to them. Nothing more is neceſſary in order to produce a certain movement of my body. Therefore, if, as in the former caſe, no other conſideration exiſt in my mind, a certain motion of the animal ſyſtem irreſiſtibly follows. Therefore, if ten thouſand other conſiderations exiſt, yet there was in this, ſeparately conſidered,

ſidered, a tendency to motion. That which, when alone, muſt inevitably produce motion, muſt, however accompanied, retain its internal character.

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Voluntary action has a real exiſtence.

Let us however ſuppoſe, which ſeems the only conſiſtent mode of ſupporting the doctrine of ſelf love, "that there is no ſuch thing practically conſidered as volition, that man never acts from a foreſight of conſequences, but always continues to act, as we have proved him to act at firſt, from the mere impulſe of pain, and preciſely in the manner to which that impulſe prompts him, without the rational faculty having any tendency to prolong, to check or to regulate his actions." What an incredible picture does this exhibit to us of the human mind? We form to ourſelves, for this cannot be diſputed, opinions, we meaſure the tendency of means to the promotion of ends, we compare the value of different objects, and we imagine our conduct to be influenced by the judgments we are induced to make. We perceive the preferableneſs of one thing to another, we deſire, we chuſe; all this cannot be denied. But all this is a vain apparatus; and the whole ſyſtem of our conduct proceeds, uninfluenced by our apprehenſion of the relative value of objects, and our foreſight of conſequences favourable or adverſe.

Conſequence of that exiſtence.

There is no other alternative. Once admit the underſtanding to an efficient ſhare in the buſineſs, and there is no reaſon that

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can poſſibly be aſſigned, why every topic, which is the object of human underſtanding, ſhould not have its portion of efficiency. Once admit that we act upon the apprehenſion of ſomething that may be affirmed or denied reſpecting an idea, and we ſhall be compelled to acknowledge that every propoſition including in it the notion of preferableneſs or the contrary, of better or worſe, will, ſo far as it falls within the compaſs of our power real or ſuppoſed to effect, afford a motive inducing, though with different degrees of energy, to animal motion. But this is directly contrary to the theory of ſelf love. They who maintain that ſelf love is the only ſpring of action, ſay in effect, not only that no action is diſintereſted, but that no diſintereſted conſideration contributes in any degree as an inducement to action. If I relieve the virtuous diſtreſs of the beſt of men, I am influenced according to them by no particle of love for the individual or compaſſion for his diſtreſs, but excluſively by the deſire of procuring gratification to myſelf.

Let us conſider this caſe a little more cloſely. If I perceive either that my proſperity or exiſtence muſt be ſacrificed to thoſe of twenty men as good as myſelf, or theirs to mine, ſurely this affords ſome ſmall inducement to adopt the former part of the alternative. It may not be ſucceſsful, but does it excite no wiſh however fleeting, no regret however ineffectual? The deciſion of the queſtion is in reality an affair of arithmetic; is there no human being that was ever competent to underſtand it?

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it? The value of a man is his uſefulneſs; has no man ever believed that another's capacity for uſefulneſs was equal to his own? I am as 40, conſequently the others are as 800; if the 40 were not myſelf, I ſhould perceive that it was leſs than 800; is it poſſible I ſhould not perceive it, when the caſe becomes my own?

But the advocates for the ſyſtem of ſelf love generally admit, "that it is poſſible for a man to ſacrifice his own exiſtence in order to preſerve that of twenty others;" but they affirm, "that in ſo doing he acts from perſonal intereſt. He perceives that it is better for him to die with the conſciouſneſs of an heroic action, than live with the remorſe of having declined it." That is, here is an action attended with various recommendations, the advantage to ariſe to twenty men, their tranquillity and happineſs through a long period of remaining exiſtence, the benefits they will not fail to confer on thouſands of their contemporaries, and through them on millions of poſterity, and laſtly his own eſcape from remorſe and momentary exultation in the performance of an act of virtue. From all theſe motives he ſelects the laſt, the former he wholly diſregards, and adopts a conduct of the higheſt generoſity from no view but to his own advantage. Abſtractedly and impartially conſidered, and putting ſelf as ſuch out of the queſtion, this is its leaſt recommendation, and he is abſolutely and unlimitedly callous to all the reſt.

Conſidering then the ſyſtem of diſintereſtedneſs as ſufficiently eſtabliſhed

Experimental view of the ſubject.

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Suppoſitions ſuggeſted by the advocates of ſelf love:

eſtabliſhed in theory, let us compare it with the leſſons of experience. There are two different hypotheſes by which this theory is oppoſed; the one affirming "that in every thing we do, we employ, previouſly to the choice of the mind, a calculation by which we determine how far the thing to be done will conduce to our own advantage;" the other aſcribing our actions "to the ſame blind and unintelligent principle, by which, when a child cries, he frequently utters a ſound unexpected by himſelf, but which inevitably reſults from a certain connexion of an organized body with an irritated mind."

that we calculate upon all occaſions the advantage to accrue to us.

How far does experience agree with the firſt of theſe hypotheſes? Surely nothing can be more contrary to any thing we are able to obſerve of ourſelves, than to imagine, that in every act, of pity ſuppoſe, we eſtimate the quantity of benefit to ariſe to ourſelves, before we yield to the emotion. It might be ſaid indeed, that the mind is very ſubtle in its operations, and that, a certain train of reaſoning having been rendered familiar to us, we paſs it over in our reflections with a rapidity that leaves no trace in the memory. But this, though true, will contribute little to relieve the ſyſtem we are conſidering, ſince it unfortunately happens that our firſt emotions of pity are leaſt capable of being accounted for in this way.

Falſeneſs of this ſuppoſition.

To underſtand this let us begin with the caſe of an infant. Before he can feel ſympathy, he muſt have been led by a ſeries

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ſeries of obſervations to perceive that his nurſe for example, is of being poſſeſſed of conſciouſneſs, and ſuſceptible like himſelf of the impreſſions of pleaſure and pain. Having ſupplied him with this previous knowledge, let us ſuppoſe his nurſe to fall from a flight of ſtairs and break her leg. He will probably feel ſome concern for the accident; he will underſtand the meaning of her cries, ſimilar to thoſe he has been accuſtomed to utter in diſtreſs; and he will diſcover ſome wiſh to relieve her. Pity is perhaps firſt introduced by a mechanical impreſſion upon the organs, in conſequence of which the cries uttered by another prompt the child without direct deſign to utter cries of his own. Theſe are at firſt unaccompanied with compaſſion, but they naturally induce the mind of the infant to yield attention to the appearance which thus impreſſed him.

In the relief he wiſhes to communicate is he prompted by reflecting on the pleaſures of generoſity? This is by the ſuppoſition the firſt benevolent emotion he has experienced, and previouſly to experience it is impoſſible he ſhould foreſee the pleaſures of benevolence. Shall we ſuppoſe that he is influenced by other ſelfiſh conſiderations? He conſiders, that, if his nurſe die, he will be in danger of periſhing; and that, if ſhe be lame, he will be deprived of his airings. Is it poſſible that any man ſhould believe, that, in the inſtantaneous impulſe of ſympathy, the child is guided by theſe remote conſiderations? Indeed it was unneceſſary to have inſtanced in an action apparently benevolent, ſince it is equally clear that our moſt

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moſt familiar actions are inconſiſtent with this explanation. We do not ſo much as eat and drink, from the recollection that theſe functions are neceſſary to our ſupport.

Suppoſition of a contrary ſort.

The ſecond of the two hypotheſes enumerated, is diametrically the reverſe of the firſt. As the former repreſented all human actions as proceeding from a very remote deduction of the intellect, the latter conſiders the whole as merely phyſical. In its literal ſenſe, as has already been ſeen, nothing can be more incompatible with experience. Its advocates therefore are obliged to modify their original aſſumption, and to ſay, not that we act merely from ſenſation, but that ſenſation affords the baſis for reflection; and that, though we be capable of conducting ourſelves by ſyſtem and foreſight, yet the only topic to which we can apply that foreſight is the removal of pain. In reality all that which is regularly adapted to the accompliſhment of a certain purpoſe, muſt be admitted to flow from the dictates of reflection. The tear ſtarts, the cry is uttered at the prompting of ſenſation only, but we cannot lift a finger to relieve except as we are commanded by the underſtanding.

We do not calculate what would be the uneaſineſs to reſult from our refraining to act:

either in relieving diſtreſs;

Here then we are preſented with the commencement of a new ſeries. If uneaſineſs be ſtill the ſource of the phenomena, at leaſt it is now under a different form. Before, a certain emotion was produced, reſpecting which no intention was extant in the mind. Now an action or a ſeries of actions is adopted with a certain view and leading to a certain end. This end is ſaid to

be the removal of uneaſineſs. Whether it be or no is a queſtion which recollection in many caſes is competent to enable us to decide. If we frequently deceive ourſelves as to the motive by which we are prompted to act, this is chiefly owing to vanity, a deſire of imputing to ourſelves, or being underſtood by the world to act from a principle more elevated than that which truly belongs to us. But this idea is leaſt prevalent with children and ſavages, and of conſequence they ought to be moſt completely aware that the project they have conceived is that of removing uneaſineſs. It ſeems to be an uncommon refinement in abſurdity to ſay, that the end we really purſue is one to which we are in no inſtance conſcious; that our action is wholly derived from an unperceived influence, and the view extant in the underſtanding altogether impotent and unconcerned.

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or in adding to the ſtock of general good.

In the caſe we have juſt examined uneaſineſs is the firſt ſtep in the proceſs; in others which might be ſtated uneaſineſs is not the firſt ſtep. "In the purſuit" ſuppoſe "of a chemical proceſs I accidentally diſcover a circumſtance, which may be of great benefit to mankind. I inſtantly quit the object I was originally purſuing, proſecute this diſcovery, and communicate it to the world." In the former proceeding a ſenſation of pain was the initiative, and put my intellectual powers into action. In the preſent caſe the perception of truth is the original mover. Whatever uneaſineſs may be ſuppoſed to exiſt, rendering me anxious for the publication of this benefit, is the conſequence of

the

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the perception. The uneaſineſs would never have exiſted if the perception had not gone before it.

Uneaſineſs an accidental member of the proceſs.

But it has been ſaid, "that, though the perception of truth in this caſe goes firſt, the pain was not leſs indiſpenſible in the proceſs, ſince, without that, action would never have followed. Action is the child of deſire, and a cold and unintereſting deciſion of the underſtanding would for ever have laid dormant in the mind." Granting that pain in a certain modified degree is a conſtant ſtep in the proceſs, it may nevertheleſs be denied that it is in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word indiſpenſible. To perceive that I ought to publiſh a certain diſcovery, is to perceive that publiſhing is preferable to not publiſhing it. But to perceive a preference is to prefer, and to prefer is to chooſe. The proceſs is in this caſe complete, and pain, in the ſenſe in which it comes in at all, is merely an accident. Why do I feel pain in the neglect of an act of benevolence, but becauſe benevolence is judged by me to be a conduct which it becomes me to adopt? Does the underſtanding wait to enquire what advantage will reſult from the propoſitions, that two and two make four, or that ſuch and ſuch cauſes will contribute to the happineſs of my neighbour, before it is capable of perceiving them to be true?

The ſame principle which is applied here, is not leſs applicable to fame, wealth and power, in a word to all thoſe purſuits which engage the reflecting and ſpeculative part of the civiliſed world.

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world. None of theſe objects would ever have been purſued, if the deciſions of the intellect had not gone firſt, and informed us that they were worthy to be purſued.

The ſuppoſitions inconſiſtently blended.

Neither of the two hypotheſes we have been examining would perhaps have been reckoned ſo much as plauſible in themſelves, if they had not been blended together by the inadvertence of their ſupporters. The advocates of ſelf love have been aware, that the mere ſenſitive impulſe of pain would account for a very ſmall part of the hiſtory of man; and they have therefore inſenſibly ſlided from the conſideration of uneaſineſs to be removed, to that of intereſt to be promoted. They have confounded the two caſes of ſenſation and reflection; and, taking it for granted in the latter that private gratification was the object univerſally purſued, have concluded that they were accounting for all human actions from one principle. In reality no two principles can be more diſtinct, than the impulſe of uneaſineſs, which has very improperly been denominated the love of ourſelves, and that deliberate ſelf love, by which of ſet deſign we purſue our own advantage. One circumſtance only they have in common, that of repreſenting us as incapable of underſtanding any propoſition, till we have in ſome way or other connected it with perſonal intereſt. This is certainly a juſt repreſentation of their conſequences; ſince, if I were capable of underſtanding the naked propoſition, that my neighbour ſtood in need, of a candle for

inſtance to be removed from one end of a room to the other, this would be a reaſon of action, a motive, either ſtrong or weak, either predominant or the contrary. But, if this conſideration entered for any thing into the ground of my proceeding, the whole would not be reſolvable into ſelf love.

Scheme of ſelf love recommended from the propenſity of mind to abbreviate its proceſs.

An hypotheſis, which has been thought to have ſome tendency to relieve the difficulties of the ſyſtem of ſelf love, is that "of the mind's reaſoning out for itſelf certain general principles, which are a ſort of reſting-places in the proceſs, to which it afterwards recurs, and upon which it acts, without being at the trouble in each inſtance of application, of repeating the reaſons upon which the general principle was founded. Thus in geometry, as we proceed to the higher branches, we perpetually refer to the earlier propoſitions as eſtabliſhed and certain, without having at the time in our minds perhaps the ſmalleſt recollection of the way in which thoſe early propoſitions were demonſtrated." But this repreſentation, though true, has very little tendency to decide in the ſubject before us. It is ſtill true, that, if I be capable of underſtanding a propoſition as it relates to the intereſt of my neighbour, any reaſoning about the propoſition by which it is indirectly connected with my own intereſt, is unneceſſary to put me into a ſtate of action. It is ſtill true, that my action has a direct and an indirect tendency; and, till it can be ſhown that there is ſomething in the nature of mind

mind that unfits it for entertaining the direct purpoſe, an unprejudiced enquirer will be very little diſpoſed univerſally to have recourſe to that which is indirect.

from the ſimplicity that obtains in the natures of things.

The hypotheſis of ſelf love ſeems to have been originally invented from a love of "that ſimplicity, which appears to be the ultimate term in all grand diſcoveries relative to the ſyſtem of the univerſe." But ſimplicity, though well deſerving our approbation, can ſcarcely of itſelf be a ſufficient ſupport for any opinion. The ſimplicity however in this caſe is more apparent than real. Not to repeat what has been ſaid relative to the coalition of two hypotheſes very incongruous in their own nature, there is little genuine ſimplicity in a ſcheme, that repreſents us as perpetually acting from a motive which we leaſt ſuſpected, and ſeeks by a circuitous and intricate method for a recommendation of little intrinſic value, rejecting in all caſes the great and obvious reaſon which the firſt view of the ſubject ſuggeſted. True ſimplicity is altogether on the ſide of the oppoſite ſyſtem, which repreſents man as capable of being governed by the nature of the thing, and of acting from the motive which he ſuppoſes to influence him; which requires nothing but perception to account for all the phenomena of mind, and, when a reaſon exciting to action is apprehended, does not ſeek for an additional principle to open a communication between the judgment and the choice.

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Hypotheſis of ſelf love incompatible with virtue.

There is one obſervation more, which, though it be not ſo concluſive as ſome of thoſe which have been mentioned, ought not to be omitted. If ſelf love be the only principle of action, there can be no ſuch thing as virtue. Virtue is a principle in the mind, by which we are enabled to form a true eſtimate of the pretenſions of different reaſons inviting us to preference. He, that makes a falſe eſtimate, and prefers a trivial and partial good to an important and comprehenſive one, is vicious. It is in the diſpoſition and view of the mind, and not in the good which may accidentally and unintentionally reſult, that virtue conſiſts. Judas's act in betraying Chriſt, according to the Chriſtian ſyſtem, may be regarded as a real and eſſential cauſe conducing to the ſalvation of mankind. Yet Judas's act was not virtuous, but vicious. He thought only of the forty pieces of ſilver, the price of his treachery, and neglected every conſideration of public utility and juſtice. Juſt ſo in the caſe ſtated early in the preſent chapter, the public benefactor, abſolutely and ſtrictly ſpeaking, prefers forty to eight hundred or eight hundred millions. So far as relates to the real merits of the caſe, his own advantage or pleaſure is a very inſignificant conſideration, and the benefit to be produced, ſuppoſe to a world, is ineſtimable. Yet he falſely and unjuſtly prefers the firſt, and regards the latter, abſtractedly conſidered, as nothing. If there be ſuch a thing as juſtice, if I have a real and abſolute value, upon which truth can decide, and which can be compared with what is greater or leſs, then, according to this ſyſtem, the beſt action that

ever was performed, may, for any thing we know, have been the action in the whole world of the moſt exquiſite and deliberate injuſtice. Nay, it could not have been otherwiſe, ſince it produced the greateſt good, and therefore was the individual inſtance in which the greateſt good was moſt directly poſtponed to perſonal gratification.

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Nor will this objection be much relieved by the ſyſtem already alluded to of reſting-places, enabling a man in a certain degree to forget the narrow and ſelfiſh principles in which his conduct originated. It can ſcarcely be queſtioned, that the motives which induced a man to adopt his ſyſtem of conduct, and without which he never would have adopted it, are of more importance, than the thoughtleſſneſs and inattention by which they are forgotten, in deciding upon the morality of his character.

Concluſion.

From this train of reaſoning the reſult is, that men are capable of underſtanding the beauty of virtue, and the claims of other men upon their benevolence; and, underſtanding them, that theſe views, as well as every other perception of the intellect, are of the nature of motives, ſometimes overpowered by other conſiderations, and ſometimes overpowering them, but always in their own nature capable of exciting to action, when not counteracted by pleas of a different ſort. Men are capable no doubt of preferring an inferior intereſt of their own to a ſuperior intereſt of other people; but to this preference it is

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perhaps neceſſary, that they ſhould imagine the benefit to themſelves to be great and the injury to others comparatively ſmall, or elſe that they ſhould have embraced the pernicious opinion that the general good is beſt ſerved by each man's applying himſelf excluſively to his perſonal advantage.

Importance of the queſtion.

There is no doctrine in which the generous and elevated mind reſts with more ſatisfaction, than in that of which we are treating. If it be falſe, it is no doubt incumbent upon us to make the beſt of the ſmall remnant of good that remains. But it is a heartleſs proſpect for the moraliſt, who, when he has done all, has no hope to perſuade mankind to one atom of real affection towards any one individual of their ſpecies. We may be made indeed the inſtruments of good, but in a way leſs honourable, than that in which a frame of wood or a ſheet of paper may be made the inſtrument of good. The wood or the paper are at leaſt neutral. But we are drawn into the ſervice with affections of a diametrically oppoſite direction. When we do the moſt benevolent action, it is with a view only to our own advantage, and with the moſt ſovereign and unreſerved neglect of that of others. We are inſtruments of good, juſt in the ſame manner as bad men are ſaid to be the inſtruments of providence, even when their inclinations are moſt refractory to its decrees. In this ſenſe we may admire the ſyſtem of the univerſe, where public utility reſults from each man's contempt of that utility, and where the moſt beneficial actions of thoſe, whom we have been accuſtomed

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accuſtomed to term the beſt men, are only inſtances in which juſtice and the real merits of the caſe are moſt flagrantly violated. But we can think with little complacence of the individuals of whom this univerſe is compoſed. It is no wonder that philoſophers, whoſe ſyſtem has taught them to look upon their fellow men as thus perverſe and unjuſt, have been frequently cold, phlegmatic and unanimated. It is no wonder that Rouſſeau, the moſt benevolent of all theſe philoſophers, and who moſt eſcaped the general contagion, has been driven to place the perfection of all virtue in doing no injury *. Neither philoſophy nor morality nor politics will ever ſhow like themſelves, till man ſhall be acknowledged for what he really is, a being capable of juſtice, virtue and benevolence, and who needs not always to be led to a philanthropical conduct by foreign and frivolous conſiderations.

The ſyſtem of diſintereſted benevolence proves to us, that it is poſſible to be virtuous, and not merely to talk of virtue; that all which has been ſaid by philoſophers and moraliſts reſpecting impartial juſtice is not an unmeaning rant; and that, when we call upon mankind to diveſt themſelves of ſelfiſh and perſonal conſiderations, we call upon them for ſomething which they are able to practiſe. An idea like this reconciles us to our ſpecies; teaches us to regard with enlightened admiration the men who

* "*La plus ſublime vertu eſt négative; elle nous inſtruit de ne jamais faire du mal à perſonne.*" EMILE, Liv. II.

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have appeared to loſe the feeling of their perſonal exiſtence in the purſuit of general advantage; and gives us reaſon to expect, that, as men collectively advance in ſcience and uſeful inſtitution, they will proceed more and more to conſolidate their private judgment and their individual will with abſtract juſtice and the unmixed approbation of general happineſs.

Application.

What are the inferences that ought to be made from this doctrine with reſpect to political inſtitution? Certainly not that the intereſt of the individual ought to be made incompatible with the part he is expected to take in the intereſt of the whole. This is neither deſirable, nor even poſſible. But that ſocial inſtitution needs not deſpair of ſeeing men influenced by other and better motives. The legiſlator is bound to recollect that the true perfection of mind conſiſts in diſintereſtedneſs. He ſhould regard it as the ultimate object of his exertions, to induce men to eſtimate themſelves at their true value, and neither to grant to themſelves nor claim from others a higher conſideration than they juſtly deſerve. Above all he ſhould be careful not to add to the vigour of the ſelfiſh paſſions. He ſhould gradually wean men from contemplating their own benefit in all that they do, and induce them to view with complacency the advantage that is to reſult to others.

The laſt perfection of this feeling conſiſts in that ſtate of mind which bids us rejoice as fully in the good that is done by others, as

as if it were done by ourſelves. The truly wiſe man will be actuated neither by intereſt nor ambition, the love of honour nor the love of fame. He has no emulation. He is not made uneaſy by a compariſon of his own attainments with thoſe of others, but by a compariſon with the ſtandard of right. He has a duty indeed obliging him to ſeek the good of the whole; but that good is his only object. If that good be effected by another hand, he feels no diſappointment. All men are his fellow labourers, but he is the rival of no man. Like Pedaretus in ancient ſtory, he exclaims: "I alſo have endeavoured to deſerve; but there are three hundred citizens in Sparta better than myſelf, and I rejoice."

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CHAP. IX.

OF THE TENDENCY OF VIRTUE.

IT IS THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS—TO THE ESTEEM AND AFFECTION OF OTHERS.—OBJECTION FROM MISCONSTRUCTION AND CALUMNY.—ANSWER.—VIRTUE COMPARED WITH OTHER MODES OF PROCURING ESTEEM.—VICE AND NOT VIRTUE IS THE SUBJECT OF OBLOQUY—INSTANCED IN THE BASE ALLOY WITH WHICH OUR VIRTUES ARE MIXED—IN ARROGANCE AND OSTENTATION—IN THE VICES IN WHICH PERSONS OF MORAL EXCELLENCE ALLOW THEMSELVES.—THE VIRTUOUS MAN ONLY HAS FRIENDS.—VIRTUE THE ROAD TO PROSPERITY AND SUCCESS IN THE WORLD—APPLIED TO COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS—TO CASES THAT DEPEND UPON PATRONAGE.—APPARENT EXCEPTIONS WHERE THE DEPENDENT IS EMPLOYED AS THE INSTRUMENT OF VICE.—VIRTUE COMPARED WITH OTHER MODES OF BECOMING PROSPEROUS.—SOURCE OF THE DISREPUTE OF VIRTUE IN THIS RESPECT.—CONCESSION.—CASE WHERE CONVENIENT VICE BIDS FAIR FOR CONCEALMENT.—CHANCE OF DETECTION.—INDOLENCE—APPREHENSIVENESS—AND DEPRAVITY THE OFFSPRING OF VICE.

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HAVING endeavoured to eſtabliſh the theory of virtue upon its true principle, and to ſhew that ſelf intereſt is neither its baſis in juſtice and truth, nor by any means neceſſary to

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to incite us to the practice, it may not be improper to conſider in what degree public intereſt is coincident with private, and by that means at once to remove one of the enticements and apologies of vice, and afford an additional encouragement and direction to the true politician.

It is the road to happineſs:

In the firſt place then, there appears to be ſufficient reaſon to believe, that the practice of virtue is the true road to individual happineſs. Many of the reaſons which might be adduced in this place have been anticipated in the chapter of the Cultivation of Truth. Virtue is a ſource of happineſs that does not pall in the enjoyment, and of which no man can deprive us*. The eſſence of virtue conſiſts in the ſeeing every thing in its true light, and eſtimating every thing at its intrinſic value. No man therefore, ſo far as he is virtuous, can be in danger to become a prey to ſorrow and diſcontent. He will habituate himſelf, reſpecting every ſpecies of conduct and temper, to look at its abſolute utility, and to tolerate none from which benefit cannot ariſe either to himſelf or others. Nor will this be ſo difficult a taſk as it is commonly imagined. The man, who is accuſtomed upon every occaſion to conſult his reaſon, will ſpeedily find a habit of this nature growing upon him, till the juſt and diſpaſſionate value of every incident that befals him will come at length ſpontaneouſly to ſuggeſt itſelf. Thoſe evils which prejudice has

* Ch. IV. p. 233.

taught ſo great a part of mankind to regard with horror, will appear to his underſtanding diſarmed of their terrors. Poverty, obloquy and diſgrace will be judged by him to be very trivial misfortunes. Few conditions can be ſo deſtitute as to deprive us of the means of obtaining for ourſelves a ſubſiſtence. The reaſonable mind perceives at once the poſſibility of this and the beſt method of executing it; and it needs no great ſtretch of underſtanding to decide, that real happineſs does not conſiſt in luxurious accommodations. With reſpect to obloquy and diſgrace, the wiſe man may lament the tendency they poſſeſs to narrow the ſphere of his uſefulneſs; but he will readily perceive, that, ſeparately from this conſideration, they are no evils. My real value depends upon the qualities that are properly my own, and cannot be diminiſhed by the ſlander and contempt of the whole world. Even bodily pain loſes much of its ſting, when it is encountered by a chearful, a compoſed, and a determined ſpirit. To all theſe negative advantages of virtue, we may add the poſitive ſatisfaction of a mind conſcious of rectitude, rejoicing in the good of the whole, and perpetually exerted for the promotion of that good.

There are indeed ſome extreme caſes of the election of a virtuous conduct, reſpecting which it is difficult to pronounce. Was it Regulus's intereſt to return to Carthage to a tormenting death, rather than ſave his life by perſuading the Roman ſenate to an exchange of priſoners? Probably it was. Probably, with the

the exquiſite feeling of duty with which Regulus was animated, a life that was to be perpetually haunted with the recollection of his having omitted the nobleſt opportunity of public ſervice, was not worth his purchaſe. His reaſoning, ſo far as related to perſonal intereſt, might be like that of Cato in the play:

> "A day, an hour, of virtuous liberty
> Is worth a whole eternity in bondage *."

to the eſteem and affection of others.

Secondly, virtue not only leads to the happineſs of him who practiſes it, but to the eſteem and affection of others. Nothing can be more indiſputable, than that the direct road to the eſteem of mankind, is by doing things worthy of their eſteem. The moſt artful ſcheme for paſſing things upon others for ſomewhat different from what they really are, is in momentary danger of detection; and it would be an egregious miſtake to ſuppoſe, that men eſteem any thing but what comes to them under the ap-

* The firſt of the three heads diſcuſſed in this chapter is inſerted chiefly for the ſake of method, few perſons having really doubted that virtue is the moſt genuine ſource of individual tranquillity and happineſs. It is therefore diſmiſſed with all practicable brevity. The two remaining heads had a ſtronger claim to diſcuſſion. It unfortunately happens to be the generally received opinion, that rigid virtue is neither the ſureſt road to other men's approbation and eſteem, nor the moſt probable means of ſecuring our external proſperity. If the author had known of any work at preſent exiſting, that had appeared to him to place this ſubject in any degree in its true light, he would have omitted the reaſonings of this chapter.

pearance

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pearance of virtue. No man ever exiſted of a taſte ſo depraved as to feel real approbation of another, for the artfulneſs of his flattery, or the cunning with which he over-reached his neighbours.

Objection from miſconſtruction and calumny.

There is indeed one diſadvantage that occurs under this head, conſiſting in this circumſtance, "that no man truly admires what he does not underſtand. Now, in order thoroughly to comprehend the value of any mental effort, whether of a purely intellectual or moral nature, it is perhaps neceſſary that the genius or virtue of the ſpectator ſhould be equal to that of him by whom it is made. It is an inevitable law of our nature, that we ſhould in a great meaſure judge of others by ourſelves, and form our ſtandard of human nature by an inveſtigation of our own minds. That, reſpecting which we feel a clear and diſtinct conviction that we are ourſelves incapable, we are prone to ſuſpect to be mere ſhow and deception in others. We are the more inclined to this, becauſe we feel their virtues to be a reproach to our indolence, and therefore are little diſpoſed to make a liberal eſtimate of them."

Anſwer.

But, though there be ſome truth in theſe obſervations, they have frequently been made much too indiſcriminate, by the miſanthropy and impatience of thoſe, who have conceived their eſtimation with their neighbours or the world to fall greatly ſhort of their merit. It muſt be admitted that mankind are reluctant

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reluctant to acknowledge a wiſdom or a virtue ſuperior to their own; but this reluctance is by no means invincible. It is abſurd to ſuppoſe that no man believes himſelf the inferior of his neighbour, or that, when he reads the plays of Shakeſpeare, the philoſophy of Rouſſeau, or the actions of Cato, he ſays, "I am as ſkilful, as wiſe, or as virtuous as this man." It would be ſtill more abſurd to ſuppoſe that men may not in a conſiderable degree perceive the beauty of paſſages they could never have written, and actions they would never have performed.

Virtue compared with other modes of procuring eſteem.

It is true that men of high moral excellence are ſeldom eſtimated at their true value, eſpecially by their contemporaries. But the queſtion does not relate to this point, but to that other, whether they be not eſteemed more than perſons of any other deſcription, and of conſequence whether virtue be not the beſt road to eſteem? Now, let a ſpecious appearance be maintained with ever ſo much uniformity of ſucceſs, it is perpetually in danger of detection. It will always want ſomething of animation, of conſiſtency and firmneſs that true virtue would produce. The imitation will never come up to the life. That temporiſing and compliance, which are careful not to contradict too much the prejudices of mankind, and in which the principal advantage of a merely exterior virtue conſiſts, will always bear ſomething ſuſpicious about them. Men do not love him who is perpetually courting their applauſe. They do not give with a liberal ſpirit what is ſought with too unwearied an aſſiduity. But their praiſe

is

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is involuntarily extorted, by him who is not so anxious to obtain success, as to deserve it.

Vice and not virtue is the subject of obloquy:

If men of virtue be frequently misinterpreted or misunderstood, this is in a great degree to be ascribed to the imperfection of their virtue and the errors of their conduct. True virtue should hold no commerce with art. We ought not to be so desirous to exhibit our virtue to advantage, as to give it free scope and suffer it to exhibit itself. Art is nearly allied to selfishness; and true virtue has already been shown to be perfectly disinterested. The mind should be fixed only on the object pursued, and not upon the gracefulness or gallantry of the pursuit. We should be upon all occasions perfectly ingenuous, expressing with simplicity the sentiments of our heart, and speaking of ourselves, when that may be necessary, neither with ostentation and arrogance on the one hand, nor with the frequently applauded lies of a cowardlike humility on the other. There is a charm in sincerity that nothing can resist. If once a man could be perfectly frank, open and firm in all his words and actions, it would be impossible for that man to be misinterpreted.

instanced in the base alloy with which our virtues are mixed:

in arrogance and ostentation:

Another fruitful source of misrepresentation has appeared to be envy. But, if we be regarded with envy, it may be suspected to be in a great measure our own fault. He will always be envied most, who is most arrogant, and whose mind most

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most frequently recurs to his own attainments and the inferiority of others. Our virtues would seldom be contemplated with an uneasy sense of reproach, if they were perfectly unassuming. Any degree of ostentation in their less corrupted neighbour, as it humbles the vanity of mankind, must be expected to excite in them a desire of retaliation. But he whose virtues flow from philanthropy alone, whose heart expands with benevolence and good will, and who has no desire to make his superiority felt, will at all times have many friends and few enemies.

in the vices in which persons of moral excellence allow themselves.

Virtue has also frequently been subject to misrepresentation from a farther circumstance which is most properly chargeable upon the sufferers, and that is, the inequality of their actions. It is no wonder, if we first rouse the angry passions of mankind by our arrogance, and then render our motives suspected by a certain mixture of art in the exhibition of our characters, that the follies and vices we commit, if they be of a glaring kind, should too often furnish a triumphant argument to support against us the accusation of hypocrisy and deceit. It unfortunately happens, that, when men of an ardent spirit fall into error, their errors are inevitably conspicuous. It happens, that men, who have dedicated the flower of their strength to laudable purposes, too often think they have a right to indulge in relaxations unworthy of the energy of their characters. They would surely avoid this fatal mistake, if they duly reflected, that it is not their individual character only that is at stake, but that they

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are injuring the cauſe of juſtice and general good. Prudential and timid virtues, unalloyed with imprudent and thoughtleſs vices, are beſt underſtood by the vulgar. Their reign indeed is ſhort; they triumph only for a day: but that they are tranſitory is of little avail, while thoſe who are moſt worthy of laſting eſteem, wantonly barter it for gratifications, contemptible in themſelves, and fatally important in their effects.

The virtuous man only has friends.

But to return to the compariſon between the eſteem and affection that accrue from virtue, and from any other plan of conduct. The produce in the latter caſe muſt always be in a conſiderable degree barren, and of very ſhort duration. Whether the good name acquired by virtue be more or leſs, virtue will appear in the end to be the only mode for its acquiſition. He who merits the eſteem of his neighbours and fellow citizens, will at leaſt be underſtood by a few. Inſtances might be adduced in which perſons inſtigated by the pureſt motives have been eminently unpopular. But there is perhaps no inſtance in which ſuch men have not had a few friends of tried and zealous attachment. There is no friendſhip but this. No man was ever attached to an individual but for the good qualities he aſcribed to him; and the degree of attachment will always bear ſome proportion to the eminence of the qualities. Who would ever have redeemed the life of a knave at the expence of his own? And how many inſtances do there occur of ſuch heroic friendſhip where the character was truly illuſtrious?

In

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Virtue the road to proſperity and ſucceſs in the world:

In the third place, virtue will probably be found the ſecureſt road to outward proſperity and ſucceſs in the world, according to the old maxim, "that honeſty is the beſt policy." It is indeed natural to ſuppoſe that a good name ſhould eminently contribute to our ſucceſs. This is evident even in the humbleſt walks of life. That tradeſman, other things equal, will always be moſt proſperous, who is moſt fair and equitable in his dealings. Which is moſt likely to ſucceed, he who never gives expectations that he cannot fulfil, or who is perpetually diſappointing his cuſtomers? he who is contented with a reaſonable profit, or who is ever upon the watch to outwit thoſe with whom he deals? he who puts one conſtant price upon his commodities, or who takes whatever he can get, favouring a ſuſpicious cuſtomer unreaſonably, and extorting with mercileſs avarice from an eaſy one? in a word, he who wiſhes to keep the perſons with whom he is concerned in preſent good humour, or who would give them permanent ſatisfaction?

applied to commercial tranſactions:

There is no doubt, that, though the former may obtain by his artifices a momentary ſucceſs, the latter will in the ſequel be generally preferred. Men are not ſo blind to their own intereſt as they have ſometimes been repreſented, and they will ſoon feel the advantage of dealing with the perſon upon whom they can depend. We do not love to be perpetually upon our guard againſt an enemy, and for ever prying into the tricks and ſubterfuges of a depraved heart.

to cases that depend upon patronage.

Apparent exception where the dependent is employed as the instrument of vice.

But what shall we say to those cases in which advancement depends upon patronage? There are two circumstances under this head which seem to form an exception to the rule above delivered. The first is that of a patron, whose vicious and imperfect character renders the co-operation of vicious men necessary to his pursuits, whom therefore he will be contented to reward, even while he despises. The second is that of an office, and it is to be feared such offices exist, which may require a compliant and corrupt character in the person who is to fill it, and for the obtaining of which vice of a certain sort is a necessary recommendation.

Virtue compared with other modes of becoming prosperous.

It must no doubt be admitted as to this subject in general, that, so far as relates to success in the world, vicious men will often prove fortunate. But it may reasonably be questioned, whether vice be in the first instance the most likely road to fortune. The candidates for this equivocal species of preferment may be numerous. An individual cannot distinguish himself in the crowd but by a portion of ability, which it may well be supposed would not have been unsuccessful in the career of virtue. After all, not every candidate, not even every skilful candidate, will be victorious. There is always a struggle in the breast of the patron between contempt and a corrupt motive; and, where there is struggle, the decision will sometimes be on the side which the client least desires. Even when fortune seems to have overtaken him, his situation is still precarious. His success is founded upon a local and mutable basis; his

patron may desert him, may be deprived of his power or his life; and the client, who, after having sacrificed every principle to his hopes of advantage, misses his aim, or is cut short in his career, is in all cases a subject of derision. A bad eminence is always unstable; and, if we could sum up the numbers of those who have sacrificed their virtue to their ambition, we should probably find that a great majority of them had egregiously miscarried in their calculation.

In the mean time, if we turn to the other side of the estimate, we shall in the first place inevitably suspect that esteem must lead to some of the fruits of esteem. But, exclusively of this consideration, if there be offices for which vice of a certain sort is a necessary qualification, there are also undoubtedly a multitude of offices which cannot be well discharged but by a man of integrity. The patron, though he would perhaps willingly provide for his pander or his parasite at the expence of his country, will not be inclined to trust a man of accommodating principles with the superintendence of his fortune or the education of his child. With the exception of the two cases that have been stated, integrity, as it is the first qualification for discharging a function with propriety, will always occupy a foremost place in the recommendation of the client. The employer, whose object is the real interest of himself, his friends or his country, will have a powerful motive inducing him to prefer the honest candidate. Ability may be almost equally requisite; but ability and virtue,

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if we ſhould chooſe to ſuppoſe that there is no neceſſary alliance between them, will at leaſt by no perſon be thought excluſive of each other. If a knave may in ſome caſes obtain an employment of truſt and real importance, it is vehemently to be ſuſpected that this would not have happened, if an honeſt man of equal ability had been at hand. Add to this that virtue is perpetually gaining ground upon us. The more it is tried, and the more it is known, the more will it be reſpected. It is to the man of real virtue, whoſe character is not brought into ſuſpicion by the equivocal nature of ſome of his proceedings, whoſe virtue conſiſts in benevolence, equanimity and juſtice, that all will have recourſe, when they have the ſucceſs of the affair in which they are concerned deeply at heart.

Source of the diſrepute of virtue in this reſpect.

Nothing has tended more to bring honeſty as an inſtrument of ſucceſs into general diſrepute, than the ſort of complaint that is frequently heard from ſuch as are unſucceſsful. Theſe men will naturally have recourſe to the moſt ſpecious topic of ſelf conſolation, and there is none that more obviouſly ſuggeſts itſelf than the ſuppoſition that they failed through their too much virtue. Thus the man of rugged temper who is perpetually inſulting the foibles of others, the timid man who is incapable of embracing at once a perilous alternative, the ſcrupulous man who knows not what to admit or reject and is always undetermined upon his courſe of action, and a thouſand others, are forward to impute their miſcarriage to their integrity, though ſtrictly ſpeaking it was in every one of theſe caſes to be aſcribed to their vices.

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Conceſſion.

There is another conſideration which deſerves to be taken into account in this eſtimate. There is a degree of virtue which would probably render me diſinclined to fill many eminent ſtations, to be a great lawyer, a great ſenator, or a great miniſter. The functions of theſe ſituations in the preſent ſtate of mankind are of ſo equivocal a nature, that a man, whoſe moral views are in the higheſt degree ſublime, will perhaps find in himſelf little forwardneſs to exerciſe them. He will perhaps conceive that in a private ſtation, unincumbered with engagements, unwarped by the ſiniſter motives that high office will not fail to preſent, he may render more laſting ſervices to mankind. But ſurely it is no very formidable objection to ſay, that honeſty will prevent a man from acquiring what he has no wiſh to acquire.

Caſe where convenient vice bids fair for concealment.

A caſe of ſomewhat a different nature has been ſuggeſted, and it has been aſked, "Whether honeſty be the beſt road to ſucceſs, where the violation of it bids fair for perpetual concealment? Fortune has led me to the military profeſſion, I lack advancement, but promotions in the army are cuſtomarily made by purchaſe. Thus circumſtanced, I find by accident a ſum of money, in ſecreting which I am in little danger of detection, and I apply this ſum to purchaſe me a commiſſion. Should I have more effectually promoted my worldly ſucceſs by a more ſcrupulous conduct?"

Chance of detection.

The anſwer to this queſtion ought probably to be affirmative. In

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In the firſt place we are to conſider the chance of detection. The direct tendency of the laws of the material univerſe is ſuch, as to force the more conſiderable and intereſting actions of human beings into publicity. No man can render himſelf inviſible. The moſt artful conſpirator cannot ſufficiently provide againſt a thouſand petty circumſtances, that will lead, if not to conviction, at leaſt to preſumption againſt him. Who is there that would wiſh to have faſtened upon him the ſuſpicion of a baſe and diſingenuous procedure? This feature in human affairs is ſo remarkable, as to have furniſhed topics to the literary induſtry of former centuries, and to have been interpreted God's revenge againſt the unjuſt. Suppoſe that in this caſe I found the money dropped in a field. Will the owner have no ſuſpicion where he loſt it? Will no human being have obſerved that I was near the ſpot at the queſtionable period? The chances are certainly againſt me, and a mere balance of chance would probably have been ſufficient to prove that honeſty is the beſt policy. The bare circumſtance of my ſuddenly poſſeſſing a ſum of money without viſible means of acquiring it, a circumſtance to which the attention of my neighbours is always ſufficiently alive, would caſt an unpleaſant ſtain upon my character. How often has the well contrived train of the politician, triumphing in the inſcrutability of his wiſdom, been baffled by the moſt trivial accidents? Since therefore, "the race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong," the trueſt wiſdom is to act ſo as to fear no detection.

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Indolence:

There are other circumſtances which tend to eſtabliſh the ſame propoſition. The man, who depends upon his courage, his ability, or his amiable character for recommendation, will perpetually cultivate theſe. His conſtancy will be unwearied; and, conſcious of the integrity of his means, his ſpirit will be intrepid and erect. The progreſs of this man, if his ardour be ſufficiently great to inſpire him with ability, and to render him quick ſighted to the detection of his miſtakes, will be inceſſant. But the man who has employed foul means, will depend partly upon them, and cannot be ſo fervent in the cultivation of the true. If he always eſcape detection, he will always fear it, and this will fully the clearneſs of his ſpirit. Vice cannot compare with virtue in its tendency to individual happineſs. This is not the ſubject we are conſidering in this place; but this will apply to our ſubject. Remorſe, uneaſineſs and confuſion of mind are calculated to prevent me from perceiving the true point of projection in my affairs, and detract much from the probability of my riſing to eminence in any profeſſion.

apprehenſiveneſs:

Laſtly, the man who has once yielded to a diſhoneſt temptation, will yield to it again. He has loſt the conſiſtency of character and diſdain of vice, which were his firmeſt ſecurities. He that ſays, "I will be diſhoneſt now, and diſhoneſt no more," forgets ſome of the moſt obvious and characteriſtic features of the human mind. If he eſcape ſuſpicion in the firſt inſtance, he will

and depravity the offspring of vice.

only disgrace himself more foully in the second: if the remorse and degradation of spirit arising from one base action could perish, they would be fixed and invigorated by other base actions growing out of the first.

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