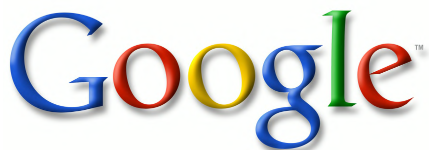

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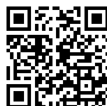

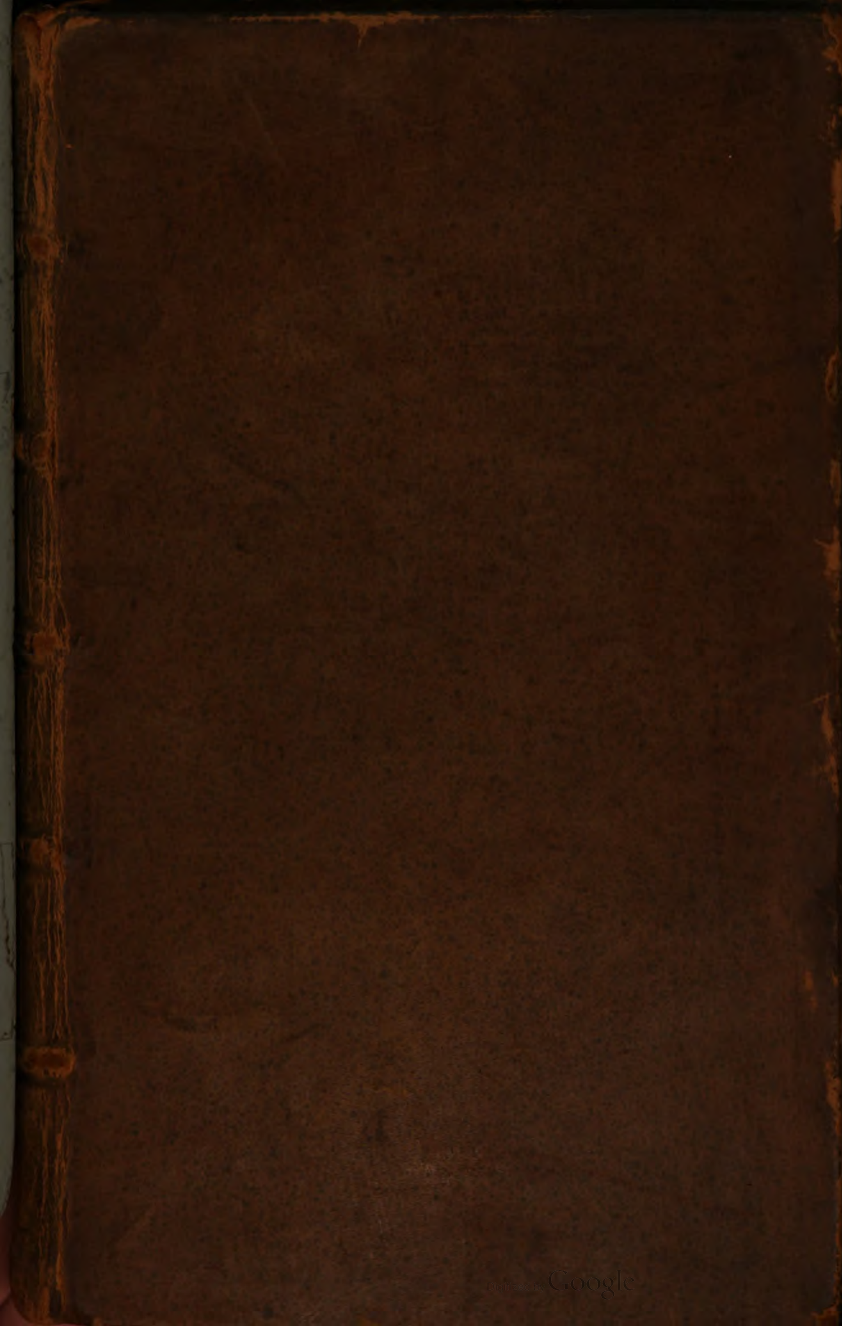

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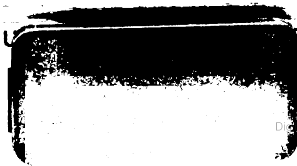

U... EK GENT

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ESSAYS
ON THE
PRINCIPLES
OF
MORALITY
AND
NATURAL RELIGION.

IN TWO PARTS.

The SECOND EDITION.

With Alterations and Additions.

LONDON:

Printed for C. Hitch & L. Hawes, R. & J. Dodsley, J. Rivington & J. Fletcher, and J. Richardson.

MDCCLVIII.

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IT is proper to acquaint the reader, before he enters on the following essays, that they are not thrown together without connection. The first, by the investigation of a particular fact, is designed to illustrate the nature of man, as a social being. The next considers him as the subject of morality. And as morality supposes freedom of action, this introduces the third essay, which is a disquisition on liberty and necessity. These make the first part of the work. The rest of the essays, ushered in by that on belief, hang upon each other. A plan is prosecuted, in support of the authority of our senses, external and internal; where it is occasionally shown, that our reasonings on some of the most important subjects, rest ultimately upon sense and feeling. This is illustrated in a variety of instances; and from these, the author would gladly hope, that he has thrown new light upon the principles of human knowledge: — All to prepare the way for a proof of the existence and perfections of the Deity, which is the chief aim in this undertaking. The author's manner of thinking, may, in some points, be esteemed bold, and new. But

freedom

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freedom of thought will not displease those who are led, in their inquiries, by the love of truth. To such only he writes: and with such, he will, at least, have the merit of a good aim; of having searched for truth, and endeavoured to promote the cause of virtue and natural religion.

1751.

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ESSAYS

ON THE

PRINCIPLES

OF

MORALITY

AND

NATURAL RELIGION.

PART I.

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ESSAY I.

Of our ATTACHMENT *to* OBJECTS *of* DISTRESS.

A NOTED French critic, treating of poetry and painting, undertakes a ſubject attempted by others unſucceſsfully, which is, to account for the ſtrong attachment we have to objects of diſtreſs, imaginary as well as real. " It is not eaſy (ſays he) to account " for the pleaſure we take in poetry and painting, which has often a ſtrong reſemblance to " affliction, and of which the ſymptoms are " ſometimes the ſame with thoſe of the moſt " lively ſorrow. The arts of poetry and painting are never more applauded than when they " ſucceed in giving pain. A ſecret charm attaches us to repreſentations of this nature, at " the very time our heart, full of anguiſh, riſes " up againſt its proper pleaſure. I dare undertake this paradox, (continues our author), and " to explain the foundation of this ſort of pleaſure which we have in poetry and painting; " an undertaking that may appear bold, if not " raſh, ſeeing it promiſes to account to every " man for what paſſes in his own breaſt, and for

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" the ſecret ſprings of his approbation and diſ-
" like." Our author is extremely ſenſible of the difficulty of his ſubject: and no wonder; for it lies deep in human nature.

LET us attend him in this difficult undertaking. He lays it down as a preliminary, That our wants and neceſſities are our only motives to action, and that in relieving us from them conſiſts all natural pleaſure: in which, by the way, he agrees with Mr Locke, in his chapter of power, ſect. 37. and 43. This account of our natural pleaſures ſhall be afterwards examined. What we have at preſent to attend to, is the following propoſition, laid down by our author as fundamental: " That man, by nature,
" is deſigned an active being: that inaction,
" whether of body or mind, draws on languor
" and diſguſt: and that this is a cogent motive
" to fly to any ſort of occupation for relief.
" Thus (adds he) we fly by inſtinct to every
" object that can excite our paſſions, and keep
" us in agitation, notwithſtanding the pain ſuch
" objects often give us, which cauſes vexatious
" days and ſleepleſs nights: but man ſuffers
" more by being without paſſions, than by the
" agitation they occaſion." This is the ſum of his firſt ſection. In the ſecond he goes on to particular inſtances. The firſt he gives is compaſſion; which makes us dwell upon the miſeries and diſtreſſes of others, though thereby we

are

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are made to partake of their ſufferings; an impulſe that, he obſerves, is entirely owing to the foregoing principle, which makes us chuſe occupation, however painful, rather than be without action. Another is public executions. "We "go in crouds (ſays he) to a ſpectacle the moſt "horrid that man can behold, to ſee a poor "wretch broke upon the wheel, burnt alive, or "his intrails torn out. The more dreadful "the ſcene, the more numerous the ſpectators. "Yet one might foreſee, even without expe-"rience, that the cruel circumſtances of the "execution, the deep groans and anguiſh of a "fellow-creature, muſt make an impreſſion, "the pain of which cannot be effaced but by a "long courſe of time. But the attraction of "agitation prevails more than the joint powers "of reflection and experience." He goes on to mention the ſtrange delight the Roman people had in the entertainments of the amphitheatre; criminals expoſed to be torn to pieces by wild beaſts, and gladiators in troops hired to butcher one another. He takes this occaſion to make the following obſervation upon the Engliſh nation. "So tender-hearted are that people, that "they obſerve humanity towards their greateſt "criminals. They allow of no ſuch thing as "torture; alledging it better to leave a crime "unpuniſhed, than to expoſe an innocent per-"ſon to thoſe torments which are authoriſed in "other Chriſtian countries, to extort a con-

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" feſſion from the guilty. Yet this people, ſo
" reſpectful of their kind, have an infinite plea-
" ſure in prize-fighting, bull-baiting, and ſuch
" other ſavage ſpectacles." He concludes with
ſhowing, that it is this very horror of inaction,
which makes men every day precipitate them-
ſelves into play, and deliver themſelves over to
cards and dice. " None but fools and ſharpers
" (ſays he) are moved to play by hope of gain.
" The generality are directed by another mo-
" tive. They neglect thoſe diverſions where
" ſkill and addreſs are required, chuſing rather
" to riſk their fortunes at games of mere chance,
" which keep their minds in continual motion,
" and where every throw is deciſive."

THIS is our author's account of the matter fairly ſtated. It has, I acknowledge, an air of truth; but the following conſiderations convince me that it is not ſolid. In the firſt place, if the pain of inaction be the motive which carries us to ſuch ſpectacles as are above mentioned, we muſt expect to find them frequented by none but thoſe who are oppreſſed with idleneſs. But this will not be found the truth of the matter. All ſorts of perſons flock to ſuch ſpectacles. Pictures of danger, or of diſtreſs, have a ſecret charm which attracts men from the moſt ſerious occupations, and operates equally upon the active and the indolent. In the next place, were there nothing in theſe ſpectacles to attract the

mind,

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mind, abſtracting from the pain of inaction, there would be no ſuch thing as a preference of one object to another, upon any other ground than that of agitation; and the more the mind was agitated, the greater would be the attraction of the object. But this is contrary to experience. There are many objects of horror and diſtaſte, which agitate the mind exceedingly, that even the idleſt fly from. And a more apt inſtance need not be given, than what our author himſelf cites from Livy *; who, ſpeaking of Antiochus Epiphanes, has the following words, *Gladiatorum munus Romanæ conſuetudinis, primo majore cum terrore hominum inſuetorum ad tale ſpectaculum, quam voluptate dedit. Deinde ſæpius dando, et familiare oculis gratumque id ſpectaculum fecit, et armorum ſtudium pleriſque juvenum accendit.* Such bloody ſpectacles behoved undoubtedly to make at firſt a greater impreſſion than afterwards, when, by reiteration, they were rendered familiar. Yet this circumſtance was ſo far from being an attraction to the Grecians, that it raiſed in them averſion and horror. Upon the ſame account, the bear-garden, which is one of the chief entertainments of the Engliſh, is held in abhorrence by the French, and other polite nations. It is too ſavage an entertainment, to be reliſhed by thoſe of a refined taſte.

* Lib. 41.

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If man be ſuppoſed a being, whoſe only view, in all his actions, is either to attain pleaſure, or to avoid pain; it would, upon that ſuppoſition, be hard, if not impoſſible, to give any ſatisfactory account why we ſhould chuſe, with our eyes open, to frequent entertainments which muſt neceſſarily give us pain. But when we more attentively examine human nature, we diſcover many and various impulſes to action, independent of pleaſure and pain. Let us proſecute this thought, becauſe it may probably lead to a ſolution of the problem.

When we attend to the emotions raiſed in us by external objects, or to any of our emotions, we find them greatly diverſified. They are ſtrong or weak, diſtinct or confuſed, &c. There is no diviſion of emotions more comprehenſive than into agreeable or diſagreeable. It is unneceſſary, and would perhaps be in vain, to ſearch for the cauſe of theſe differences. More we cannot ſay, than that ſuch is the conſtitution of our nature, ſo contrived by the Author of all things, in order to anſwer wiſe and good purpoſes.

There is another circumſtance to be attended to in theſe emotions; that *affection* enters into ſome of them, *averſion* into others. To ſome objects we have an affection, and we deſire to poſſeſs and enjoy them; other objects raiſe

raiſe our averſion, and move us to avoid them. No object can move our affection but what is agreeable, nor our averſion but what is diſagreeable. Whether it be the effect of every agreeable object to raiſe affection, we have no occaſion at preſent to inquire. But it is of importance to obſerve, that many objects are diſagreeable, or perhaps rather painful, which raiſe not averſion in any degree. Objects of horror and terror, loathſome objects, and many others, raiſe averſion. But there are many emotions or paſſions, ſome of them of the moſt painful ſort, which have no averſion in their compoſition. Grief is a moſt painful paſſion, and yet is not accompanied with any degree of averſion. On the contrary, we cling to the object which raiſes our grief, and love to dwell upon it. Compaſſion is an inſtance of the like nature. Objects of diſtreſs raiſe no averſion in us, though they give us pain. Affection always enters into the paſſion, and conſequently deſire to afford relief.

In infancy, appetite and paſſion are our ſole impulſes to action. But in the progreſs of life, when we learn to diſtinguiſh the objects around us, as productive of pleaſure or pain, we acquire, by degrees, impulſes to action of a different ſort. Self-love is a ſtrong motive to ſearch about for every thing that may contribute to happineſs. Self-love operates by means of reflection and experience; and every object, ſo ſoon

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ſoon as diſcovered to contribute to our happineſs, raiſes in us of courſe a deſire of poſſeſſing. Hence it is, that pleaſure and pain are the only motives to action, ſo far as ſelf-love is concerned. But our appetites and paſſions are not all of them of this nature. Theſe frequently operate by direct impulſe, without the intervention of reaſon, in the ſame manner as inſtinct does in brute creatures. As they are not influenced by any ſort of reaſoning, the view of ſhunning miſery, or acquiring happineſs, makes no part of the impulſive motive. It is true, that the gratification of our paſſions and appetites is agreeable; and it is alſo true, that, in giving way to a particular appetite, the view of pleaſure may, by a reflex act, become an additional motive to the action. But theſe things muſt not be confounded with the direct impulſe ariſing from the appetite or paſſion; which, as I have ſaid, operates blindly, and in the way of inſtinct, without any view to conſequences.

And to aſcertain the diſtinction betwixt actions directed by ſelf-love, and actions directed by particular appetites and paſſions, it muſt be further remarked, that the aim of ſelf-love is always to make us happy, but that other appetites and paſſions have frequently a very different tendency. This will be plain from induction. Revenge gratified againſt the man we hate, is agreeable. It is a very different caſe, where we have

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have taken offence at a man we love. Friendſhip will not allow me, however offended, to hurt my friend. " I cannot find in my heart to " do him miſchief; but I would have him made " ſenſible of the wrong he has done me." Revenge, thus denied a vent, recoils, and preys upon the vitals of the perſon offended. It diſplays itſelf in peeviſhneſs and bad humour; which muſt work and ferment, till time, or acknowledgment of the wrong, carry it off. This ſort of revenge is turned againſt the man himſelf who is offended; and examples there are of perſons in this pettiſh humour, working great miſchief to themſelves, in order to make the offenders ſenſible of the wrong. Thus, no example is more common than of a young woman, diſappointed in love, prone to her own miſery, and bent to throw herſelf away upon any worthleſs man that will aſk her the queſtion. My next example will be ſtill more ſatisfactory. Every one muſt have obſerved, that when the paſſion of grief is at its height, the very nature of it is to ſhun and fly from every thing which tends to give eaſe or comfort. In the height of grief, a man ruſhes on to miſery, by a ſort of ſympathy with the perſon for whom he is grieved. Why ſhould I be happy when my friend is no more? is the language of this paſſion. In theſe circumſtances, the man is truly a ſelf-tormentor. And here we have a ſingular phænomenon in human nature; an appetite after pain, an inclination to render

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render one's ſelf miſerable. This goes farther than even ſelf-murder; a crime that is never perpetrated but in order to put an end to miſery, when it riſes to ſuch an height as to be inſupportable.

We now ſee how imperfect the deſcription is of human nature, given by Mr Locke, and by our French author. They acknowledge no motive to action, but what ariſes from ſelf-love; meaſures laid down to attain pleaſure, or to ſhun pain. Many appetites and paſſions, with the affection and averſion involved in them, are left entirely out of the ſyſtem. And yet we may ſay, with ſome degree of probability, that we are more frequently influenced by theſe than by ſelf-love. In this inquiry a diſcovery is made of great importance to the ſubject in hand, to wit, a direct appetite or deſire, in ſome inſtances, after pain. So various is human nature, and ſo complicated its acting powers, that it is not readily to be taken in at one view.

We return to our ſubject, after having unfolded thoſe principles of action with which it is connected. It may be gathered from what is above laid down, that nature, which deſigned us for ſociety, has linked us together in an intimate manner, by the ſympathetic principle, which communicates the joys and ſorrow of one to many. We partake the afflictions of our fellows;

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lows; we grieve with them and for them; and, in many inſtances, their misfortunes affect us equally with our own. Let it not therefore appear ſurpriſing, that, inſtead of ſhunning objects of miſery, we chuſe to dwell upon them; for this is truly as natural as indulging grief for our own misfortunes. And it muſt be obſerved at the ſame time, that this is wiſely ordered by providence: were the ſocial affections mixed with any degree of averſion, even when we ſuffer under them, we ſhould be inclined, upon the firſt notice of an object of diſtreſs, to drive it from our ſight and mind, inſtead of affording relief.

NOR muſt we judge of this principle as any way vitious or faulty: for beſides that it is the great cement of human ſociety, we ought to conſider, that, as no ſtate is exempt from misfortunes, mutual ſympathy muſt greatly promote the ſecurity and happineſs of mankind. That the proſperity and preſervation of each individual ſhould be the care of many, tends more to happineſs in general, than that each man, as the ſingle inhabitant of a deſert iſland, ſhould be left to ſtand or fall by himſelf, without proſpect of regard, or aſſiſtance from others. Nor is this all. When we conſider our own character and actions in a reflex view, we cannot help approving this tenderneſs and ſympathy in our nature. We are pleaſed with ourſelves for being ſo conſtituted:

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constituted: we are conscious of inward merit; and this is a continual source of satisfaction.

To open this subject a little more, it must be observed, that naturally we have a strong desire to be acquainted with the history of others. We judge of their actions, approve or disapprove, condemn or acquit; and in this the busy mind has a wonderful delight. Nay, we go farther. We enter deep into their concerns, take a side; we partake of joys and distresses, with those we favour, and show a proportional aversion to others. This turn of mind makes history, novels, and plays, the most universal and favourite entertainments. It is natural to man as a sociable creature; and we may venture to affirm, that the most sociable have the greatest share of this sort of curiosity, and the strongest attachment to such entertainments.

TRAGEDY is an imitation or representation of human characters and actions, It is a feigned history; which generally makes a stronger impression than what is real; because, if it be a work of genius, incidents will be chosen to make the deepest impressions, and will be so conducted, as to keep the mind in continual suspense and agitation, beyond what commonly happens in real life. By a good tragedy, all the social passions are excited. The first scene is scarce ended before we are engaged. We take a

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a ſudden affection to ſome of the perſonages re-preſented. We come to be attached to them as to our boſom-friends, and we hope and fear for them, as if the whole were a true hiſtory, in-ſtead of a fable.

To a dry philoſopher, unacquainted with the-atrical entertainments, it may appear ſurpriſing, that imitation ſhould have ſuch an effect upon the mind, and that the want of truth and reality ſhould not prevent the operation of our paſſions. But whatever may be the phyſical cauſe, one thing is evident, that this aptitude of the mind of man to receive impreſſions from feigned, as well as from real objects, contributes to the no-bleſt purpoſes of life. Nothing contributes ſo much to improve the mind, and confirm it in virtue, as being continually employed in ſurvey-ing the actions of others, entering into the con-cerns of the virtuous, approving their conduct, condemning vice, and ſhowing an abhorrence at it; for the mind acquires ſtrength by exerciſe, as well as the body. But were this ſort of di-ſcipline confined to ſcenes in real life, the gene-rality of men would be little the better for it, becauſe ſuch ſcenes rarely occur. They are not frequent even in hiſtory. But in compoſitions where liberty is allowed of fiction, it muſt be want of genius, if the mind be not ſufficiently exerciſed, till it acquire the greateſt ſenſibility, and the moſt confirmed habits of virtue.

 THUS,

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Thus, tragedy engages our paſſions, not leſs than true hiſtory. Friendſhip, concern for the virtuous, abhorrence of the vitious, compaſſion, hope, fear, and the whole train of the ſocial paſſions, are rouſed and exerciſed by both of them equally.

This may appear to be a fair account of the attachment we have to theatrical entertainments: but when the ſubject is more narrowly examined, ſome difficulties occur, to which the principles above laid down will ſcarce afford a ſatiſfactory anſwer. It is not wonderful that young people flock to ſuch entertainments. The love of novelty, deſire of occupation, beauty of action, are ſtrong attractions: and if one be once engaged, of whatever age, by entering into the intereſts of the perſonages repreſented, the attraction becomes ſtrong beyond meaſure, and the ſtory muſt be followed out, whatever be the conſequence. The foreſight of running into grief and affliction will not diſengage. But we generally become wiſe by experience; and it may appear ſurpriſing, when diſtreſs is the never-failing effect of ſuch entertainments, that perſons of riper judgment ſhould not ſhun them altogether. Doth ſelf-love lie aſleep in this caſe, which is for ordinary ſo active a principle? When one conſiders the matter *a priori*, he will not heſitate to draw a concluſion to this purpoſe, That as repeated experience muſt, at the long-run, make

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make us wiſe enough to keep out of harm's way; deep tragedies, for that reaſon, will be little frequented by perſons of reflection. Yet the contrary is true in fact; the deepeſt tragedies being the moſt frequented by perſons of all ages, by thoſe eſpecially of delicate feelings, upon whom the ſtrongeſt impreſſions are made. A man of that character, who has ſcarce got the better of the deep diſtreſs he was thrown into the night before by a well-acted tragedy, does, in his cloſet, coolly and deliberately reſolve to go to the next entertainment of the kind, without feeling the ſmalleſt obſtruction from ſelf-love.

This leads to a ſpeculation, perhaps one of the moſt curious that belongs to human nature. Contrary to what is generally underſtood, the foregoing ſpeculation affords a palpable proof, that even ſelf-love does not always operate to avoid pain and diſtreſs. In examining how this is brought about, there will be diſcovered an admirable contrivance in human nature, to give free ſcope to the ſocial affections. Keeping in view what is above laid down, that of the painful paſſions ſome are accompanied with averſion, ſome with affection; we find, upon the ſtricteſt examination, that thoſe painful paſſions, which, in the direct feeling, are free from any degree of averſion, have as little of it in the reflex act. Or, to expreſs the thing more familiarly, when we reflect upon the pain we

have ſuffered by our concern for others, there is no degree of averſion mixed with the reflection, more than with the pain itſelf, which is the immediate effect of the object. For illuſtration's ſake, let us compare the pain which ariſes from compaſſion with any bodily pain. Cutting one's fleſh is not only accompanied with ſtrong averſion in the direct feeling, but with an averſion equally ſtrong in reflecting upon the action afterwards. We feel no ſuch averſion in reflecting upon the mental pains above deſcribed. On the contrary, when we reflect upon the pain which the misfortune of a friend gave us, the reflection is accompanied with an eminent degree of ſatisfaction. We approve ourſelves for ſuffering with our friend, value ourſelves the more for that ſuffering, and are ready to undergo chearfully the like diſtreſs upon the like occaſion.

When we examine thoſe particular paſſions, which, though painful, are yet accompanied with no averſion ; we find they are all of the ſocial kind, ariſing from that eminent principle of ſympathy, which is the cement of human ſociety. The ſocial paſſions are accompanied with appetite for indulgence, when they give us pain, not leſs than when they give us pleaſure. We ſubmit willingly to ſuch painful paſſions, and reckon it no hardſhip to ſuffer under them. In being thus conſtituted, we have the conſciouſneſs of regularity and order, and that it is *right*

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and *meet* we ſhould ſuffer after this manner. Thus the moral affections, even ſuch of them as produce pain, are none of them attended with any degree of averſion, not even in reflecting upon the diſtreſs they often bring us under. And this obſervation tends to ſet the moral affections in a very diſtinguiſhed point of view, in oppoſition to thoſe that are either malevolent, or merely ſelfiſh.

MANY and various are the ſprings of action in human nature, and not one more admirable than what is now unfolded. Sympathy is an illuſtrious principle, which connects perſons in ſociety by ties ſtronger than thoſe of blood. Yet compaſſion, the child of ſympathy, is a painful emotion; and were it accompanied with any degree of averſion, even in reflecting upon the diſtreſs it occaſions, after the diſtreſs is over, that averſion would, by degrees, blunt the paſſion, and at length cure us of what we would be apt to reckon a weakneſs or diſeaſe. But the author of our nature hath not left his work imperfect. He has given us this noble principle entire, without a counterbalance, ſo as to have a vigorous and univerſal operation. Far from having any averſion to pain, occaſioned by the ſocial principle, we reflect upon ſuch pain with ſatisfaction, and are willing to ſubmit to it upon all occaſions with chearfulneſs and heart-liking, juſt as much as if it were a real pleaſure.

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And now the cauſe of the attachment we have to tragedy is fairly laid open, and comes out in the ſtrongeſt light. The ſocial paſſions, put in motion by it, are often the occaſion of diſtreſs to the ſpectators. But our nature is ſo happily conſtituted, that diſtreſs occaſioned by the exerciſe of the ſocial paſſions, is not an object of the ſmalleſt averſion to us, even when we reflect coolly and deliberately upon it. Self-love does not carry us to ſhun affliction of this ſort. On the contrary, we are ſo framed, as willingly and chearfully to ſubmit to it upon all occaſions, as if it were a real and ſubſtantial good. And, thus, tragedy is allowed to ſeize the mind with all the different charms which ariſe from the exerciſe of the ſocial paſſions, without the leaſt obſtacle from ſelf-love.

Had our author reflected on the ſympathiſing principle, by which we are led, as by a ſecret charm, to partake of the miſeries of others, he would have had no occaſion of recurring to ſo imperfect a principle as that of averſion to inaction, to explain this ſeeming paradox, that a man ſhould voluntarily chuſe to give himſelf pain. Without entering deep into philoſophy, he might have had hints in abundance from common life to explain it. In every corner, perſons are to be met with of ſuch a ſympathiſing temper, as to chuſe to ſpend their lives with the diſeaſed and diſtreſſed. They partake with them

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in their afflictions, enter heartily into their concerns, and ſigh and groan with them. Theſe paſs their lives in ſadneſs and deſpondency, without having any other ſatisfaction than what ariſes upon the reflection of having done their duty.

AND if this account of the matter be juſt, we may be aſſured, that thoſe who are moſt compaſſionate in their temper, will be fondeſt of tragedy, which affords them a large field for indulging the paſſion. And indeed admirable are the effects brought about by this means: for paſſions, as they gather ſtrength by indulgence, ſo they decay by want of exerciſe. Perſons in proſperity, unacquainted with diſtreſs and miſery, are apt to grow hard-hearted. Tragedy is an admirable reſource in ſuch a caſe. It ſerves to humanize the temper, by ſupplying feigned objects of pity, which have nearly the ſame effect to exerciſe the paſſion that real objects have. And thus it is that we are carried by a natural impulſe to deal deep in affliction, occaſioned by repreſentations of feigned misfortunes; and the paſſion of pity alone would throng ſuch repreſentations, were there nothing elſe to attract the mind, or to afford ſatisfaction.

IT is owing to curioſity, that public executions are ſo much frequented. Senſible people endeavour to correct an appetite, which, upon indulgence,

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dulgence, gives pain and averſion, and, upon reflection, is attended with no degree of ſelf-approbation. Hence it is, that ſuch ſpectacles are the entertainment of the vulgar chiefly, who allow themſelves blindly to be led by the preſent inſtinct, with little attention whether it contribute to their good or not.

WITH reſpect to prize-fighting and gladiatorian ſhews, nothing animates and inſpires us more than examples of courage and bravery. We catch the ſpirit of the actor, and turn bold and intrepid as he appears to be. On the other hand, we enter into the diſtreſſes of the vanquiſhed, and have a ſympathy for them in proportion to the gallantry of their behaviour. No wonder, then, that ſuch ſhews are frequented by perſons of the beſt taſte. We are led by the ſame principle, that makes us fond of peruſing the lives of heroes and of conquerors. And it may be obſerved by the by, that ſuch ſpectacles have an admirable good effect in training up the youth to boldneſs and reſolution. In this, therefore, I ſee not that foreigners have reaſon to condemn the Engliſh taſte. Spectacles of this ſort deſerve encouragement from the ſtate, and to be made an object of public policy.

AS for gaming, I cannot bring myſelf to think that there is any pleaſure in having the mind kept in ſuſpenſe, and as it were upon the rack, which

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which muft be the cafe of thofe who venture their money at games of hazard. Inaction and idlenefs are not by far fo hard to bear. I am fatisfied that the love of money is at the bottom. Nor is it a folid objection, That people will neglect games of fkill and addrefs, to venture their money at hazard; for this may be owing to indolence, diffidence, or impatience. There is indeed a curious fpeculation with regard to this article of gaming, that pleafure and pain attend good and bad fuccefs at play, independent of the money loft or win. It is a plain cafe, that good luck raifes our fpirits, as bad luck depreffes them, without regard to confequences: and it feems extremely clear, that our concern at game, when we play for trifles, is owing to this very thing. What may be the root of this affection, is not fo obvious. But as it is not neceffarily connected with our prefent theme, I leave it to be inveftigated by others.

ESSAY

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ESSAY II.

Of the FOUNDATION *and* PRINCIPLES *of the* LAW *of* NATURE.

INTRODUCTION.

SUPERFICIAL knowledge produces the boldeſt adventurers, becauſe it gives no check to the imagination, when fired by a new thought. Shallow writers lay down plans, contrive models, and are hurried on to execution, by the pleaſure of novelty, without conſidering whether, after all, there be any ſolid foundation to ſupport the ſpacious edifice. It redounds not a little to the honour of ſome late inquirers after truth, that, ſubduing this bent of nature, they have ſubmitted to the ſlow and more painful method of facts and experiments; a method that has been applied to natural philoſophy with great ſucceſs. The accurate Locke, in the ſcience of logics, has purſued the ſame method, and has been followed by ſeveral ingenious writers. The miſtreſs-ſcience alone is neglected; and it ſeems hard that leſs deference ſhould be paid to her than to her hand-maids. Every author upon morals writes as if it were his privilege to mould this ſcience according to his own taſte and fancy. Regulations for human

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man conduct are daily framed, without the least consideration, whether they arise out of human nature, or can be accommodated to it. And hence many airy systems, that relate not more to man, than to any other being. Authors of a warm imagination, and benevolent temper, exalt man to the angelic nature, and compose laws for his conduct, so refined as to be far above the reach of humanity. Others of a contrary disposition, forcing down all men to a level with the very lowest of their kind, assign them laws more suitable to brutes than to rational beings. In abstract science, philosophers may more innocently indulge their fancies. The worst that can happen is, to mislead us in matters where error has little influence on practice. But they who deal in moral philosophy ought to be cautious; for their errors seldom fail to have a bad tendency. The exalting of nature above its standard, is apt to disgust the mind, conscious of its weakness, and of its inability to attain such an uncommon degree of perfection. The debasing of nature tends to break the balance of the affections, by adding weight to the selfish and irregular appetites. A cruel effect this, but not the only bad one. The many clashing opinions about morality are apt to tempt readers who have any hollowness of heart, to shake off all principles, and to give way to every appetite as it comes uppermost: and then adieu to a just tenor of life, and consistency of conduct.

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THESE confiderations give the author of this effay a juft concern to proceed with the utmoft circumfpection in his inquiries, and to try his conclufions by their true touchftone, that of facts and experiments. Had this method been ftrictly followed, the world would not have been perplexed with that variety of inconfiftent fyftems, which unhappily have rendered morality a difficult and intricate fcience. An attempt to reftore it to its original fimplicity and authority, muft be approved, however fhort one falls in the execution. Writers differ about the origin of the laws of nature, and they differ about the laws themfelves. It will perhaps be found, that, about the former, there is lefs difference in reality than in appearance. It were to be wifhed, that the different opinions about the latter could be as happily reconciled. But as the author acknowledges this to be above his reach, he muft take up with a lefs agreeable tafk; which is, to attempt a plan of the laws of nature, drawn from their proper fource, without regarding authority.

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CHAP. I.

Of the Foundation *of the* Law *of* Nature.

IN ſearching for the foundation of the laws of our nature, the following reflections readily occur. In the firſt place, two things cannot be more intimately connected than a being and its actions: for the connection is that of cauſe and effect. Such as the being is, ſuch muſt its actions be. In the next place, the ſeveral claſſes into which nature has diſtributed living creatures, are not more diſtinguiſhable by an external form, than by an internal conſtitution, which manifeſts itſelf in a certain uniformity of conduct, peculiar to each ſpecies. In the third place, any action conformable to the common nature of the ſpecies, is conſidered by us as regular and good. It is according to order, and according to nature. But if there exiſt a being, with a conſtitution different from that of its kind, the actions of this being, though conformable to its own peculiar conſtitution, will, to us, appear whimſical and diſorderly. We ſhall have a feeling of diſguſt, as if we ſaw a man with two heads or four hands. Theſe reflections lead us to the foundation of the laws of our nature. They are to be derived from the common nature of man, of which every perſon partakes who is not a monſter.

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As the foregoing obſervations make the groundwork of all morality, it may not be improper to enlarge a little upon them. Looking around, we find creatures of very different kinds, both as to their external and internal conſtitutions. Each ſpecies having a peculiar nature, ought to have a peculiar rule of action reſulting from its nature. We find this to hold in fact; and it is extreme agreeable to obſerve, how accurately the laws of each ſpecies are adjuſted to the external frame of the individuals which compoſe it, and to the circumſtances in which they are placed, ſo as to procure the conveniencies of life in the beſt manner, and to produce regularity and conſiſtency of conduct. To give but one inſtance: The laws which govern ſociable creatures, differ widely from thoſe which govern the ſavage and ſolitary. Among ſolitary creatures, who have no mutual connection, there is nothing more natural, or more orderly, than to make food one of another. But for creatures in ſociety to live after this manner, behoved to be the effect of jarring and inconſiſtent principles. No ſuch diſorderly appearance is diſcovered upon the face of this globe. There is, as above obſerved, a harmony betwixt the internal and external conſtitution of the ſeveral claſſes of animals; and this harmony obtains ſo univerſally, as to afford a delightful proſpect of deep deſign, effectively carried into execution. The common nature of every claſs of beings is perceived by us

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as perfect; and if, in any instance, a particular being swerve from the common nature of its kind, the action, upon that account, is accompanied with a sense of disorder and wrong. In a word, it is according to order, that the different sorts of living creatures should be governed by laws adapted to their peculiar nature. We consider it as fit and proper that it should be so; and it is a beautiful scene to find creatures acting according to their nature, and thereby acting uniformly, and according to a just tenor of life.

THE force of this reasoning cannot, at any rate, be resisted by those who admit of final causes. We make no difficulty to pronounce, that a species of beings are made for such and such an end, who are of such and such a nature. A lion is made to purchase the means of life by his claws. Why? because such is his nature and constitution. A man is made to purchase the means of life by the help of others, in society. Why? because, from the constitution both of his body and mind, he cannot live comfortably but in society. It is thus we discover for what end we were designed by nature, or the author of nature. And the same chain of reasoning points out to us the laws by which we ought to regulate our actions: for acting according to nature, is acting so as to answer the end of our creation.

CHAP.

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CHAP. II.

Of the MORAL SENSE.

HAVING ſhown that the nature of man is the foundation of the laws that ought to govern his actions, it will be neceſſary, with all poſſible accuracy, to trace out human nature, ſo far as regards the preſent ſubject. If we can happily accompliſh this part of our undertaking, it will be eaſy, in the ſynthetical method, to deduce the laws which ought to regulate our conduct. And we ſhall examine, in the firſt place, after what manner we are related to beings and things around us: for this ſpeculation will lead to the point in view.

As we are placed in a great world, ſurrounded with beings and things, ſome beneficial, ſome hurtful; we are ſo conſtituted, that ſcarce any object is indifferent to us. It either gives pleaſure or pain. Sounds, taſtes, and ſmells, are either agreeable or diſagreeable. This is the moſt of all remarkable in the objects of ſight, which affect us in a more lively manner than the objects of any other external ſenſe. Thus, a ſpreading oak, a verdant plain, a large river, are objects which afford great delight. A rotten carcaſe, a diſtorted figure, create averſion, which, in ſome caſes, goes the length of horror.

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With regard to objects of ſight, whatever gives pleaſure, is ſaid to be *beautiful*; whatever gives pain, is ſaid to be *ugly*. The terms *beauty* and *uglineſs*, in their original ſignification, are confined to objects of ſight. And indeed ſuch objects, being more highly agreeable or diſagreeable than others, deſerve well to be diſtinguiſhed by a proper name. But though this be the proper meaning of the terms *beauty* and *uglineſs*; yet, as it happens with words which convey a more lively idea than ordinary, the terms are applied in a figurative ſenſe to almoſt every thing which carries a high reliſh or diſguſt, where theſe ſenſations have not a proper name of their own. Thus, we talk of a beautiful theorem, a beautiful thought, and a beautiful paſſage in muſic. And this way of ſpeaking has, by common uſe, become ſo familiar, that it is ſcarce reckoned a figurative expreſſion.

Objects conſidered ſimply as exiſting, without relation to any end propoſed, or any deſigning agent, are to be placed in the loweſt rank or order with reſpect to beauty and uglineſs. But when external objects, ſuch as works of art, are conſidered with relation to ſome end propoſed, we feel a higher degree of pleaſure or pain. Thus, a building regular in all its parts, pleaſes the eye upon the very firſt view: but conſidered as a houſe for dwelling in, which is the end propoſed, it pleaſes ſtill more, ſuppoſing it

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to be well fitted to its end. A similar sensation arises in observing the operations of a well-ordered state, where the parts are nicely adjusted to the ends of security and happiness.

THIS perception of beauty, in works of art or design, which is produced not barely by a sight of the object, but by viewing the object in a certain light, as fitted to some use, and as related to some end, includes in it what is termed *approbation*: for approbation, when applied to works of art, means precisely our being pleased with them, or conceiving them beautiful in the view of being fitted to their end. *Approbation* and *disapprobation* do not apply to the first or lowest class of beautiful and ugly objects. To say that we approve a sweet taste, or a flowing river, is really saying no more, than barely that we are pleased with such objects. But the term is justly applied to works of art, because it means more than being pleased with such an object merely as existing. It imports a peculiar beauty, which is perceived, upon considering the object as fitted to the use intended.

IT must be further observed, to avoid obscurity, that the beauty which arises from the relation of an object to its end, is independent of the end itself, whether good or bad, whether beneficial or hurtful: for the perception arises from

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from confidering its fitnefs to the end propofed, whatever that end be.

WHEN we take the end itfelf under confideration, there is difcovered a beauty or uglinefs of a higher kind than the two former. A beneficial end propofed, ftrikes us with a very peculiar pleafure: and approbation belongs alfo to this feeling. Thus, the mechanifm of a fhip is beautiful, in the view of means well fitted to an end. But the end itfelf, of carrying on commerce, and procuring fo many conveniencies to mankind, exalts the object, and heightens our approbation and pleafure. By an end, I mean that to which any thing is fitted, which it ferves to procure and bring about, whether it be an ultimate end, or fubordinate to fomething farther. Hence, what is confidered as an end in one view, may be confidered as a means in another. But fo far as it is confidered as an end, the degree of its beauty depends upon the degree of its ufefulnefs. Approbation, in many inftances, terminates upon the thing itfelf, abftracted from the intention of an agent. This intention, as good or bad, coming into view, gives rife to a fpecies of beauty or deformity, different from thofe above fet forth; as fhall be prefently explained. Let it be only kept in view, that as the end or ufe of a thing is an object of greater dignity and importance than the means, the approbation beftowed on the former

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former rises higher than that bestowed on the latter.

THESE three orders of beauty may be blended together in many different ways, to have very different effects. If an object in itself beautiful, be ill fitted to its end, it will, upon the whole, be disagreeable. This may be exemplified, in a house, regular in its architecture, and beautiful to the eye, but incommodious for dwelling. If there be in an object an aptitude to a bad end, it will, upon the whole, be disagreeable, though it have the second modification of beauty in the greatest perfection. A constitution of government, formed with the most perfect art for inslaving the people, may be an instance of this. If the end proposed be good, but the object not well fitted to the end, it will be beautiful or ugly, as the goodness of the end, or unfitness of the means, are prevalent. Of this instances will occur at first view, without being suggested.

THE foregoing modifications of beauty and deformity, apply to all objects, animate and inanimate. A voluntary agent produceth a peculiar species of beauty and deformity, which may readily be distinguished from all others. The actions of living creatures are more interesting than the actions of matter. The instincts, and principles of action of the former, give us more delight,

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delight, than the blind powers of the latter; or, in other words, are more beautiful. No one can doubt of this fact, who is in any degree converſant with the poets. In Homer every thing lives. Even darts and arrows are endued with voluntary motion. And we are ſenſible, that nothing animates a poem more than the frequent uſe of this figure.

HENCE a new circumſtance in the beauty and deformity of actions, conſidered as proceeding from intention, deliberation, and choice. This circumſtance, which is of the utmoſt importance in the ſcience of morals, concerns chiefly human actions: for we diſcover little of intention deliberation and choice, in the actions of inferior creatures. Human actions are not only agreeable or diſagreeable, beautiful or deformed, in the different views above mentioned, but are further diſtinguiſhed in our perception of them, as *fit*, *right*, and *meet* to be done, or as *unfit*, *unmeet*, and *wrong* to be done. Theſe are ſimple perceptions, capable of no definition, and which cannot otherways be explained, than by making uſe of the words that are appropriated to them. But let any man attentively examine what paſſeth in his mind, when the object of his thought is an action proceeding from deliberate intention, and he will ſoon diſcover the meaning of theſe words, and the perceptions which they denote. Let him but attend to a deliberate

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deliberate action, ſuggeſted by filial piety, or ſuggeſted by gratitude; ſuch action will not only be agreeable to him, and appear beautiful, but will be agreeable and beautiful, as *fit*, *right*, and *meet* to be done. He will approve the action in that quality, and he will approve the actor for having done his duty. This diſtinguiſhing circumſtance intitles the beauty and deformity of human actions to peculiar names: they are termed *moral beauty* and *moral deformity*. Hence the *morality* and *immorality* of human actions; and the power or faculty by which we perceive this difference among actions, paſſeth under the name of the *moral ſenſe*.

It is but a ſuperficial account which is given of morality by moſt writers, that it depends upon approbation and diſapprobation. For it is evident, that theſe terms are applicable to works of art, and to objects beneficial and hurtful, as well as to morality. It ought further to have been obſerved, that the approbation or diſapprobation of actions, are very diſtinguiſhable from what relate to the objects now mentioned. Some actions are approved as good, and as fit, right, and meet to be done; others are diſapproved, as bad and unfit, unmeet and wrong to be done. In the one caſe, we approve the actor as a good man; in the other, diſapprove him as a bad man. Theſe perceptions apply not to objects as fitted to an end, nor even to the end itſelf, except

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except as proceeding from deliberate intention. When a piece of work is well executed, we approve the artificer for his ſkill, not for his goodneſs. Several things, inanimate as well as animate, ſerve to extreme good ends. We approve theſe ends as uſeful in themſelves, but not as morally fit and right, where they are not conſidered as the reſult of intention.

Of all objects whatever, human actions are the moſt highly delightful or diſguſtful, and poſſeſs the higheſt degree of beauty or deformity. In theſe every circumſtance concurs: the fitneſs or unfitneſs of the means; the goodneſs or badneſs of the end; the intention of the actor; which gives them the peculiar character of *fit*, *right*, and *meet*, or *unfit*, *wrong*, and *unmeet*.

Thus we find the nature of man ſo conſtituted, as to approve certain actions, and to diſapprove others; to conſider ſome actions as *fit*, *right*, and *meet* to be done, and to conſider others as *unfit*, *unmeet*, and *wrong*. What diſtinguiſheth actions, to make them objects of the one or the other perception, will be explained in the following chapter. And with regard to ſome of our actions, another circumſtance may perhaps be diſcovered, different from any that have been mentioned, which will be a foundation for the well-known terms of *duty* and *obligation*, and conſequently for a rule of conduct,

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conduct, that, in the stricteſt ſenſe, may be termed a law. But at preſent it is ſufficient to have explained in general, that we are ſo conſtituted, as to perceive a right and wrong in actions. And this is what ſtrongly characteriſes the laws which govern the actions of mankind. With regard to all other beings, we have no *data* to diſcover the laws of their nature, other than their frame and conſtitution. We have the ſame *data* to diſcover the laws of our own nature. We have, over and above, a peculiar ſenſe of approbation or diſapprobation, to point out to us what we ought to do, and what we ought not to do. And one thing extremely remarkable will be explained afterwards, that the laws which are fitted to the nature of man, and to his external circumſtances, are the ſame which we approve by the moral ſenſe.

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CHAP. III.

Of DUTY *and* OBLIGATION.

THOUGH thefe terms are of the utmoft importance in morals, I know not that any author hath attempted to explain them, by pointing out thofe principles or perceptions which they exprefs. This defect I fhall endeavour to fupply, by tracing thefe terms to their proper fource, without which the fyftem of morals cannot be complete, becaufe thefe terms point out to us the moft precife and effential branch of morality.

LORD Shaftefbury, to whom the world is much indebted for his ineftimable writings, has clearly and convincingly made out, "that virtue "is the good, and vice the ill of every one." But he has not proved virtue to be our duty, otherways than by fhowing it to be our intereft; which comes not up to the idea of duty. For this term plainly implies fomewhat indifpenfable in our conduct; what we ought to do, what we ought to fubmit to. Now, a man may be confidered as foolifh, for acting againft his intereft; but he cannot be confidered as wicked or vitious. His Lordfhip indeed, in his effay upon virtue

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virtue *, approaches to an explanation of duty and obligation, by aſſerting the ſubordinacy of the ſelf affections to the ſocial. But though he ſtates this as a propoſition to be made out, he drops it in the after part of his work, and never again brings it into view.

Hutcheson, in his eſſay upon beauty and virtue †, founds the morality of actions on a certain quality of actions, which procures approbation and love to the agent. But this account of morality is imperfect, becauſe it ſcarce includes juſtice, or any thing which may be called duty. The man who, confining himſelf ſtrictly to duty, is true to his word, and avoids harming others, is a juſt and moral man; is intitled to ſome ſhare of eſteem; but will never be the object of love or friendſhip. He muſt ſhow a diſpoſition to the good of mankind, of his friends at leaſt, and neighbours; he muſt exert acts of humanity and benevolence, before he can hope to procure the affection of others.

But it is chiefly to be obſerved, that, in this account of morality, the terms *right*, *obligation*, *duty*, *ought* and *ſhould*, have no diſtinct meaning; which ſhows, that the entire foundation of morality is not taken in by this author. It is true, that, towards the cloſe of his work, he

* Page 98. † Page 101.

attempts to explain the meaning of the term *obligation*. But as criticizing upon authors, thoſe eſpecially who have promoted the cauſe of virtue, is not an agreeable taſk; I would not chuſe to ſpend time, in ſhowing that he is unſucceſsful in his attempt. The ſlighteſt attention to the ſubject will make it evident. For his whole account of obligation is no more than, either "a motive from ſelf-intereſt, ſufficient to determine all thoſe who duly conſider it, to a certain courſe of action;" which ſurely is not moral obligation: or "a determination, without regard to our own intereſt, to approve actions, and to perform them; which determination ſhall alſo make us diſpleaſed with ourſelves, and uneaſy upon having acted contrary to it;" in which ſenſe, he ſays, there is naturally an obligation upon all men to benevolence. But this account falls far ſhort of the true idea of obligation; becauſe it makes no diſtinction betwixt it and that ſimple approbation of the moral ſenſe, which can be applied to heroiſm, magnanimity, generoſity, and other exalted virtues, as well as to juſtice. Duty however belongs to the latter only; and no man reckons himſelf under an obligation to perform any action that belongs to the former.

Neither is the author of the treatiſe upon human nature more ſucceſsful, when he endeavours to reſolve the moral ſenſe into pure ſympathy

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pathy *. According to this author, there is no more in morality, but approving or disapproving an action, after we discover, by reflection, that it tends to the good or hurt of society. This would be by far too faint a principle to control our irregular appetites and passions. It would scarce be sufficient to restrain us from incroaching upon our friends and neighbours; and, with regard to strangers, would be the weakest of all restraints. We shall, by and by, show, that morality has a more solid foundation. In the mean time, it is of importance to observe, that, upon this author's system, as well as Hutcheson's, the noted terms of *duty*, *obligation*, *ought* and *should*, *&c.* are perfectly unintelligible.

We shall now proceed to explain these terms, by pointing out the perceptions which they express. And, in performing this task, there will be discovered a wonderful and beautiful contrivance of the author of our nature, to give authority to morality, by putting the self affections in a due subordination to the social. The moral sense has, in part, been explained above; that by it we perceive some actions, as being *fit*, *right*, and *meet* to be done, and others, as being *unfit*, *unmeet*, and *wrong*. When this observation is applied to particulars, it is an evident fact, that we have a sense of *fitness* in kindly

* Vol. 3. part 3.

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and beneficent actions; we approve ourselves and others for performing actions of this kind: as, on the other hand, we disapprove the unsociable, peevish, and hard-hearted. But in one set of actions, there is an additional circumstance which is regarded by the moral sense. Actions directed against others, by which they are harmed in their persons, in their fame, or in their goods, are the objects of a peculiar perception. They are perceived not only as *unfit* to be done, but as absolutely *wrong* to be done, and what, upon no account, we *ought* to do. What is here asserted, is a matter of fact, which can admit of no other proof than an appeal to every man's own perceptions. Lay prejudice aside, and give fair play to what passes in the mind. I ask no other concession. There is no man, however irregular in his life and manners, however poisoned by a wrong education, but must be sensible of this fact. And indeed the words which are to be found in all languages, and which are perfectly understood in the communication of sentiments, are an evident demonstration of it. *Duty*, *obligation*, *ought* and *should*, in their common meaning, would be empty sounds, unless upon supposition of such a perception.

THE case is the same with regard to gratitude to benefactors, and performing of engagements. We perceive these to be our *duty* in the strictest sense,

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ſenſe, and what we are indiſpenſably *obliged* to. We do not conſider them as in any degree under our own power. We have the conſciouſneſs of neceſſity, and of being bound and tied to performance, as if we were under ſome external compulſion.

IT is proper here to be remarked, that benevolent and generous actions are not objects of this peculiar ſenſe. Hence, ſuch actions, though conſidered as *fit* and *right* to be done, are not however conſidered to be our *duty*, but as virtuous actions beyond what is ſtrictly our duty. Benevolence and generoſity are more beautiful, and more attractive of love and eſteem, than juſtice. Yet, not being ſo neceſſary to the ſupport of ſociety, they are left upon the general footing of approbatory pleaſure; while juſtice, faith, truth, without which ſociety could not at all ſubſiſt, are objects of the foregoing peculiar ſenſe, to take away all ſhadow of liberty, and to put us under a neceſſity of performance.

DR Butler, a manly and acute writer, hath gone farther than any other, to aſſign a juſt foundation for moral duty. He conſiders conſcience or reflection *, "as one principle of ac-
" tion, which, compared with the reſt as they
" ſtand together in the nature of man, plainly

* Preface to the later editions of his ſermons.

" bears

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" bears upon it marks of authority over all the
" reſt, and claims the abſolute direction of them
" all, to allow or forbid their gratification."
And his proof of this propoſition is, " that a
" diſapprobation of reflection is in itſelf a prin-
" ciple manifeſtly ſuperior to a mere propen-
" ſion." Had this admirable writer handled the ſubject more profeſſedly than he had occaſion to do in a preface, it is more than likely he would have put it in a clear light. But he has not ſaid enough to afford that light the ſubject is capable of. For it may be obſerved, in the firſt place, that a diſapprobation of reflection is far from being the whole of the matter. Such diſapprobation is applied to moroſeneſs, ſelfiſhneſs, and many other partial affections, which are, however, not conſidered in a ſtrict ſenſe as contrary to our duty. And it may be doubted, whether a diſapprobation of reflection be, in every caſe, a principle ſuperior to a mere propenſion. We diſapprove a man who neglects his private affairs, and gives himſelf up to love, hunting, or any other amuſement: nay, he diſapproves himſelf. Yet from this we cannot fairly conclude, that he is guilty of any breach of duty, or that it is unlawful for him to follow his propenſion. We may obſerve, in the next place, what will be afterwards explained, that conſcience, or the moral ſenſe, is none of our principles of action, but their guide and director. It is ſtill of greater importance to obſerve, that the authority

authority of confcience does not confift merely in an act of reflection. It arifes from a direct perception, which we have upon prefenting the object, without the intervention of any fort of reflection. And the authority lies in this circumftance, that we perceive the action to be our duty, and what we are indifpenfably bound to perform. It is in this manner that the moral fenfe, with regard to fome actions, plainly bears upon it the marks of authority over all our appetites and paffions. It is the voice of God within us which commands our ftricteft obedience, juft as much as when his will is declared by exprefs revelation.

WHAT is above laid down is an analyfis of the moral fenfe, but not the whole of it. A very important branch ftill remains to be unfolded. And, indeed, the more we fearch into the works of nature, the more opportunity there is to admire the wifdom and goodnefs of the fovereign architect. In the matters above mentioned, performing of promifes, gratitude, and abftaining from harming others, we have not only the peculiar fenfe of duty and obligation: in tranfgreffing thefe duties, we have not only the fenfe of vice and wickednefs, but we have further the fenfe of merited punifhment, and dread of its being inflicted upon us. This dread may be but flight in the more venial tranfgreffions. But, in crimes of a deep dye, it rifes to a degree of

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of anguiſh and deſpair. Hence that remorſe of conſcience, the moſt ſevere of all tortures, which hiſtories are full of, upon the commiſſion of certain crimes. This dread of merited puniſhment operates for the moſt part ſo ſtrongly upon the imagination, that every unuſual accident, every extraordinary misfortune, is by the criminal judged to be a puniſhment purpoſely inflicted upon him. During proſperity, he makes a ſhift to blunt the ſtings of his conſcience. But no ſooner does he fall into diſtreſs, or into any depreſſion of mind, than his conſcience lays faſt hold of him: his crime ſtares him in the face; and every accidental misfortune is converted into a real puniſhment. "And they ſaid one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us; and we would not hear: therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us. And Reuben anſwered them, ſaying, Spake I not unto you, ſaying, Do not ſin againſt the child; and ye would not hear? therefore behold alſo, his blood is required *."

One material circumſtance is here to be remarked, which widens the difference ſtill more betwixt the primary and ſecondary virtues. As juſtice, and the other primary virtues, are more eſſential to ſociety, than generoſity, benevolence,

* Geneſis xlii. 21. 22.

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or any other ſecondary virtue, they are likewiſe more univerſal. Friendſhip, generoſity, ſoftneſs of manners, form peculiar characters, and ſerve to diſtinguiſh one man from another. But the ſenſe of juſtice, and of the other primary virtues, is univerſal. It belongs to man as ſuch. Though it exiſts in very different degrees of ſtrength, there perhaps never was a human creature abſolutely void of it. And it makes a delightful appearance in the human conſtitution, that even where this ſenſe is weak, as it is in ſome individuals, it notwithſtanding retains its authority as the director of their conduct. If there be any ſenſe of juſtice, or of abſtaining from injury, it muſt diſtinguiſh right from wrong, what we *ought* to do from what we *ought not* to do; and, by that very diſtinguiſhing faculty, juſtly claims to be our guide and governor. This conſideration may ſerve to juſtify human laws, which make no diſtinction among men, as endued with a ſtronger or weaker ſenſe of morality.

AND here we muſt pauſe a moment, to indulge ſome degree of admiration upon this part of the human ſyſtem. Man is evidently intended to live in ſociety; and becauſe there can be no ſociety among creatures who prey upon one another, it was neceſſary, in the firſt place, to provide againſt mutual injuries. Further, man is the weakeſt of all creatures ſeparately, and the very ſtrongeſt in ſociety; therefore mutual aſſiſtance

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assistance is the principal end of society; and to this end it was necessary, that there should be mutual trust and reliance upon engagements, and that favours received should be thankfully repaid. Now, nothing can be more finely adjusted, than the human heart, to answer these purposes. It is not sufficient that we approve every action which is essential to the preservation of society. It is not sufficient, that we disapprove every action which tends to its dissolution. Approbation or disapprobation merely, is not sufficient to subject our conduct to the authority of a law. But the approbation in this case has the peculiar modification of duty, that these actions are what we ought to perform, and what we are indispensably bound to perform. This circumstance converts into a law, what without it can only be considered as a rational measure, and a prudential rule of conduct. Nor is any thing omitted to give it the most complete character of a law. The transgression is attended with apprehension of punishment, nay with actual punishment; as every misfortune which befalls the transgressor is considered by him as a punishment. Nor is this the whole of the matter. Sympathy is a principle implanted in the breast of every man: we cannot hurt another without suffering for it, which is an additional punishment. And we are still further punished for our injustice or ingratitude, by incurring thereby the aversion and hatred of mankind.

CHAP.

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CHAP. IV.

Of the DIFFERENT RANKS *of* MORAL VIRTUES.

IT is a fact which will be univerſally admitted, that no man thinks ſo highly of himſelf, or of another, for having done a juſt, as for having done a generous action: yet every one muſt be ſenſible, that juſtice is more eſſential than generoſity, to the order and preſervation of ſociety; and why we ſhould place the greater merit upon the leſs eſſential action, may appear unaccountable. This matter deſerves to be examined, becauſe it diſcloſes more and more the ſcience of morals; and to this examination we ſhall proceed, after making ſome further obſervations upon the ſubject-matter of the preceding chapter.

THE primary virtues, as obſerved in that chapter, being eſſential to the ſubſiſtence of ſociety, are entirely withdrawn from our election and choice. They are perceived as indiſpenſably obligatory upon us; and the tranſgreſſion of the laws which regulate this branch of our conduct, is attended with ſevere and never-failing puniſhment. In a word, there is not a characteriſtic of poſitive law which is not applicable, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, to theſe laws of nature; with this material difference,

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that the ſanctions of theſe laws are greatly more efficacious than any that have been invented to enforce municipal laws. The ſecondary virtues, which contribute to the improvement of ſociety, but are not ſtrictly neceſſary to its ſubſiſtence are left to our own choice. They have not the character of neceſſity impreſſed upon them, nor is the forbearance of them attended with a ſenſe of guilt. On the other hand, the actions which belong to this claſs, are objects of the ſtrongeſt perceptions of moral beauty; of the higheſt degree of approbation, both from ourſelves and others. Offices of undeſerved kindneſs, requital of good for evil, generous toils and ſufferings for the good of our country, come under this claſs. Theſe are not made our *duty*. There is no motive to the performance, which, in any proper ſenſe, can be called a law. But there are the ſtrongeſt motives that can conſiſt with perfect freedom. The performance is rewarded with a conſciouſneſs of ſelf-merit, and with the praiſe and admiration of all the world, which are the higheſt and moſt deſirable rewards human nature is ſuſceptible of.

THERE is ſo much of enthuſiaſm in this branch of moral beauty, that it is not wonderful to find perſons of a free and generous turn of mind captivated with it, who are leſs attentive to the primary virtues. The magnanimous, who cannot bear reſtraint, are guided more by generoſity

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generosity than by justice. The sense however of strict duty is, with the bulk of mankind, a more powerful incitement to honesty, than praise and self-approbation are to generosity. And there cannot be a more pregnant example of wisdom than in this part of the human constitution; it being far more essential to society, that all men be just and honest, than that they be patriots and heroes.

FROM what is above laid down, the following observation naturally arises, that with respect to the primary virtues, the pain of transgressing our duty is much greater than the pleasure which results from obeying it. The contrary is the case of the secondary virtues. The pleasure which arises from performing a generous action is much greater than the pain of neglect. Among the vices opposite to the primary virtues, the most striking appearances of moral deformity are found; among the secondary virtues, the most striking appearances of moral beauty.

WE are now prepared to carry on the speculation suggested in the beginning of this chapter. In ranking the moral virtues according to their dignity and merit, one would readily imagine, that the primary virtues should be intitled to the highest class, as being more essential to society than those that are secondary. But, upon examination, we find that this is not the order of

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nature. The firſt rank in point of dignity is aſſigned to the ſecondary virtues, which are not the firſt in point of utility. Generoſity, for example, in the ſenſe of mankind, hath more merit than juſtice ; and other ſecondary virtues, undaunted courage, magnanimity, heroiſm, riſe ſtill higher in our eſteem. Is not nature whimſical and irregular, in ranking after this manner the moral virtues? One at firſt view is apt to ſuſpect ſo. But, like other difficulties which meet us in contemplating the works of nature, this under conſideration ariſes from partial and obſcure views. When this matter is examined with attention, and the whole is ſurveyed as well as its ſeveral parts, we at the longrun diſcover, that nature, if in any caſe, has here taken her meaſures with peculiar foreſight and wiſdom. Let us only recollect what is inculcated in the foregoing part of this eſſay, that juſtice is enforced by natural ſanctions of the moſt effectual kind, by which it becomes a law in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, a law which never can be tranſgreſſed with impunity. To extend this law to generoſity, and the other ſecondary virtues, and to make theſe our duty, would produce an inconſiſtency in human nature. It would make univerſal benevolence a ſtrict duty, to which the limited capacity, and more limited abilities, of man, are by no means proportioned. Generoſity, therefore, heroiſm, and all the extraordinary exertions of virtue, muſt be left to our own choice, without

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without adjecting any punifhment to the forbearance. Day-light now begins to break in upon us. If the fecondary virtues muft not be enforced by punifhment, it becomes neceffary that they be encouraged by reward; for without fuch encouragement, examples would be rare of facrificing one's own intereft to that of others. And after confidering the matter with the utmoft coolnefs and deliberation, I cannot, for my part, imagine any reward more proper than that actually beftowed, which is to place thefe virtues in the higheft rank, to give them a fuperior dignity, and to make them productive of grand and lofty emotions. To place the primary virtues in the higheft rank, would no doubt be a ftrong fupport to them. But as this could not be done without difplacing the fecondary virtues, detruding them into a lower rank, and confequently depriving them of their reward, the alteration would be ruinous to fociety. It would indeed more effectually prevent injuftice and wrongs of every fort. But would it not as effectually prevent the exercife of benevolence, and the numberlefs benefits which we inceffantly draw from each other in a focial ftate? If it would put an end to our fears, fo it would equally to our hopes; and, to fay all in one word, we would, in the midft of fociety, become folitary beings; worfe, if poffible, than being folitary in a defert. Juftice at the fame time is not left altogether deftitute of reward. Though it

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reaches not the ſplendor of the more exalted virtues, it gains at leaſt our eſteem and approbation; and, which is ſtill of greater importance, it never fails to advance the happineſs of thoſe who obey its dictates, by the mental ſatisfaction it beſtows.

CHAP.

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CHAP. V.

Of the PRINCIPLES *of* ACTION.

IN the three chapters immediately foregoing, we have taken ſome pains to inquire into the moral ſenſe, and to analyze it into its different parts. Our preſent taſk muſt be to inquire into thoſe principles in our nature which move us to action. Theſe muſt be diſtinguiſhed from the moral ſenſe; which, properly ſpeaking, is not a principle of action. Its province, as ſhall forthwith be explained, is to inſtruct us, which of our principles of action we may indulge, and which of them we muſt reſtrain. It is the voice of God within us, regulating our appetites and paſſions, and ſhowing us what are lawful, what unlawful.

IN a treatiſe upon the law of nature, it is of great importance to trace out the principles by which we are incited to action. It is above obſerved, that the laws of nature can be no other than rules of action adapted to our nature. Now, our nature, ſo far as concerns action, is made up of appetites and paſſions, which move us to action, and of the moral ſenſe, by which theſe appetites and paſſions are governed. The moral ſenſe, of itſelf, is in no caſe intended to be the firſt mover: but it is an excellent ſecond,

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cond, by the moſt authoritative of all motives, that of duty. Nature is not ſo rigid to us her favourite children, as to leave our conduct upon the motive of duty ſolely. A more maſterly and kindly hand is viſible in the architecture of man. We are impelled to motion by the very conſtitution of our nature; and to prevent our being carried too far, or in a wrong direction, conſcience is ſet as at the helm. That ſuch is our nature, may be made evident from induction. Were conſcience alone, in any caſe, to be the ſole principle of action, it might be expected in matters of juſtice, of which we have the ſtrongeſt ſenſe, as our indiſpenſable duty. We find this however no exception from the general plan. For is not love of juſtice a principle of action common to all men? This principle gives the firſt impulſe, which is finely ſeconded by the influence and authority of conſcience. It may ſafely therefore be pronounced, that no action is a duty, to the performance of which we are not prompted by ſome natural motive or principle. To make ſuch an action our duty, would be to lay down a rule of conduct contrary to our nature, or that has no foundation in our nature. Actions to which we are incited by a natural principle, are ſome of them authoriſed, others condemned by conſcience; but conſcience, or the moral ſenſe, is not, in any caſe, the ſole principle or motive of action. Nature has aſſigned it a different province. This is

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a truth which has been little attended to by thofe who have given us fyftems of natural laws. No wonder they have gone aftray. Let this truth be kept clofe in view, and it will put an end to many a controverfy about thefe laws. If, for example, it be laid down as a primary law of nature, That we are ftrictly bound to advance the good of all, regarding our own intereft no farther than as it makes a part of the general happinefs, we may fafely reject fuch a law, as inconfiftent with our nature; unlefs it be made appear, that there is a principle of benevolence in man which prompts him to an equal purfuit of the happinefs of all. To found this difinterefted fcheme wholly upon the moral fenfe, would be a vain attempt. The moral fenfe, as above obferved, is our guide only, not our mover. Approbation or difapprobation of thefe actions, to which, by fome natural principle, we are antecedently directed, is all that can refult from it. If it be laid down, on the other hand, That we ought to regard ourfelves only in all our actions; and that it is folly, if not vice, to concern ourfelves for others; fuch a law can never be admitted, unlefs upon the fuppofition that felf-love is our only principle of action.

It is probable, that, in the following particular, man differs from the brute creation. Brutes are entirely governed by principles of action, which, in them, obtain the name of inftincts.

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ſtincts. They blindly follow their inſtincts, and are led by that inſtinct which is ſtrongeſt for the time. It is *meet* and *fit* they ſhould act after this manner, becauſe it is acting according to the whole of their nature. But for man to ſuffer himſelf to be led implicitly by inſtinct, or his principles of action, without check or control, is not acting according to the whole of his nature. He is endued with a moral ſenſe, or conſcience, to check and control his principles of action, and to inſtruct him which of them he may indulge, and which of them he ought to reſtrain. This account of the brute creation is undoubtedly true in the main: whether ſo in every particular, is of no importance to the preſent ſubject, being ſuggeſted by way of contraſt only, to illuſtrate the peculiar nature of man.

A FULL account of our principles of action would be an endleſs theme. But as it is propoſed to confine the preſent ſhort eſſay to the laws which govern ſocial life, we ſhall have no occaſion to inquire into any principles of action, but what are directed upon others; dropping thoſe which have ſelf alone for their object. And, in this inquiry, we ſet out with the following queſtion, In what ſenſe are we to hold a principle of univerſal benevolence, as belonging to human nature? This queſtion is of importance in the ſcience of morals: for, as obſerved above, univerſal benevolence cannot be a duty, if

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if we be not antecedently prompted to it by a natural principle. When we consider a single man, abstracted from all circumstances and all connections, we are not conscious of any benevolence to him; we feel nothing within us that prompts us to advance his happiness. If one be agreeable at first sight, and attract any degree of affection, it is owing to looks, manners, or behaviour. And for evidence of this, we are as apt to be disgusted at first sight, as to be pleased. Man is by nature a shy and timorous animal. Every new object gives an impression of fear, till, upon better acquaintance, it is discovered to be harmless. Thus an infant clings to its nurse, upon the sight of a new face; and this natural dread is not removed but by long experience. If every human creature did produce affection in every other at first sight, children, by natural instinct, would be fond of strangers. But no such instinct discovers itself. The fondness of a child is confined to the nurse, the parents, and those who are most about it; till, by degrees, it open to a sense of other connections. This argument may be illustrated by a low, but apt instance. Dogs have, by nature, an affection for the human species; and upon this account, puppies run to the first man they see, show marks of fondness, and play about his feet. There is no such general fondness of man to man by nature. Certain circumstances are always required to produce and call it forth. Distress indeed never

ver fails to beget ſympathy. The miſery of the moſt unknown gives us pain, and we are prompted by nature to afford relief. But when there is nothing to call forth our ſympathy; where there are no peculiar circumſtances to intereſt us, or beget a connection, we reſt in a ſtate of indifference, and are not conſcious of wiſhing either good or ill to the perſon. Thoſe moraliſts, therefore, who require us to lay aſide all partial affection, and to act upon a principle of equal benevolence to all men, require us to act upon a principle, which, in truth, has no place in our nature.

In the manner now mentioned, a principle of univerſal benevolence does certainly not exiſt in man. Let us next inquire if it exiſt in any other manner. The happineſs of mankind is an object agreeable to the mind in contemplation; and good men have a ſenſible pleaſure in every ſtudy or purſuit by which they can promote it. It muſt indeed be acknowledged, that benevolence is not equally directed to all men, but gradually decreaſeth, according to the diſtance of the object, till it dwindle away to nothing. But here comes in a happy contrivance of nature, to ſupply the want of benevolence towards diſtant objects; which is, to give power to an abſtract term, ſuch as, our religion, our country, our government, or even mankind, to raiſe benevolence or public ſpirit in the mind. The particular

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lar objects under each of these classes, considered singly and apart, may have little or no force to produce affection; but when comprehended under one general view, they become an object that dilates and warms the heart. In this manner, a man is enabled to embrace in his affection all mankind: and, in this sense, man, without question, is endued with a principle of universal benevolence.

THAT man must have a great share of indifference in his temper, who can reflect upon this branch of human nature without some degree of emotion. There is perhaps not one scene to be met with, in the natural or moral world, where more of design, and of consummate wisdom, are displayed, than in this under consideration. The authors, who, impressed with reverence for human nature, have endeavoured to exalt it to the highest pitch, could none of them stretch their imagination beyond a principle of equal benevolence to every individual. And a very fine scheme it is in idea. But, unluckily, it is entirely of the Utopian kind, altogether unfit for life and action. It hath escaped the consideration of these authors, that man is by nature of a limited capacity, and that his affection, by multiplication of objects, instead of being increased, is split into parts, and weakened by division. A principle of universal equal benevolence, by dividing the attention and affection, instead of pro-

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moting benevolent actions, would in reality be an obstruction to them. The mind would be distracted by the multiplicity of objects that have an equal influence, so as to be eternally at a loss where to begin. But the human system is better adjusted, than to admit of such disproportion betwixt ability and affection. The chief objects of a man's love are his friends and relations. He reserves some share to bestow on his neighbours. His affection lessens gradually, in proportion to the distance of the object, till it vanish altogether. But were this the whole of human nature, with regard to benevolence, man would be but an abject creature. By a very happy contrivance, objects which, because of their distance, have little or no influence, are made by accumulation, and by being gathered together in one general view, to have the very strongest effect; exceeding, in many instances, the most lively affection that is bestowed upon a particular object. By this happy contrivance, the attention of the mind, and its affections, are preserved entire, to be bestowed upon general objects, instead of being dissipated among an endless number of individuals. Nothing more ennobles human nature than this principle or spring of action; and at the same time, nothing is more wonderful, than that a general term, to which a very faint, if any idea, is affixed, should be the foundation of a more intense affection than is bestowed, for the most part, upon particular objects,

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objects, how attractive foever. When we talk of our country, our religion, our government, the ideas annexed to thefe general terms are, at beft, obfcure and indiftinct. General terms are extremely ufeful in language; ferving, like mathematical figns, to communicate our thoughts in a fummary way. But the ufe of them is not confined to language. They ferve for a much nobler purpofe; to excite us to generous and benevolent actions, of the moft exalted kind; not confined to individuals, but grafping whole focieties, towns, countries, kingdoms, nay all mankind. By this curious mechanifm, the defect of our nature is amply remedied. Diftant objects, otherways infenfible, are rendered confpicuous. Accumulation makes them great, and greatnefs brings them near the eye. The affection is preferved, to be beftowed entire, as upon a fingle object. And, to fay all in one word, this fyftem of benevolence, which is really founded in human nature, and not the invention of man, is infinitely better contrived to advance the good and happinefs of mankind, than any Utopian fyftem that ever has been produced by the warmeft imagination.

UPON the oppofite fyftem, of abfolute felfifhnefs, there is no occafion to lofe a moment. It is evidently chimerical, becaufe it has no foundation in human nature. It is not more certain, that there exifts the creature man, than that he

hath principles of action directed entirely upon others; some to do good, and others to do mischief. Who can doubt of this, when friendship, compassion, gratitude, on the one hand; and, on the other, malice and resentment, are considered? It hath indeed been observed, that we indulge such passions and affections merely for our own gratification. But no person can relish this observation, who is in any measure acquainted with human nature. The social affections are in fact the source of the deepest afflictions, as well as of the most exalted pleasures, as has been fully laid open in the foregoing essay. In a word, we are evidently formed by nature for society, and for indulging the social, as well as the selfish passions; and therefore to contend, that we ought to regard ourselves only, and to be influenced by no principles but what are selfish, is directly to fly in the face of nature, and to lay down a rule of conduct inconsistent with our nature.

These systems being laid aside, as deviating from the nature of man, the way lies open to come at what are his true and genuine principles of action. The first thing that nature consults, is the preservation of her creatures. Hence the love of life is made the strongest of all instincts. Upon the same foundation, pain is in a greater degree the object of aversion, than pleasure is of desire. Pain warns us of what tends to our dissolution,

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ſolution, and thereby is a ſtrong guard to ſelf-preſervation. Pleaſure is often ſought after unwarily, and by means dangerous to health and life. Pain comes in as a monitor of our danger; and nature, conſulting our preſervation in the firſt place, and our gratification in the ſecond only, wiſely gives pain more force to draw us back, than it gives pleaſure to puſh us forward.

THE ſecond principle of action is ſelf-love, or deſire of our own happineſs and good. This is a ſtronger principle than benevolence, or love beſtowed upon others; and in that reſpect is wiſely ordered; becauſe every man has more power, knowledge, and opportunity, to promote his own good than that of others. Thus the good of individuals is principally truſted to their own care. It is agreeable to the limited nature of ſuch a creature as man, that it ſhould be ſo; and, conſequently, it is wiſely ordered, that every man ſhould have the ſtrongeſt affection for himſelf.

THE foregoing principles having *ſelf* for their object, come not properly under the preſent undertaking. They are barely mentioned, to illuſtrate, by oppoſition, the following principles, which regard others. Of this ſort, the moſt univerſal is the love of juſtice, without which there could be no ſociety. Veracity is another principle not leſs univerſal. Fidelity, a third

 principle,

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principle, is circumfcribed within narrower bounds; for it cannot exift without a peculiar connection betwixt two perfons, to found a reliance on the one fide, which requires on the other a conduct correfponding to the reliance. Gratitude is a fourth principle of action, univerfally acknowledged. And benevolence poffeffes the laft place, diverfified by its objects, and exerting itfelf more vigoroufly or more faintly, in proportion to the diftance of particular objects, and the grandeur of thofe that are general. This principle of action has one remarkable quality, that it operates with much greater force to relieve thofe in diftrefs, than to promote pofitive good. In the cafe of diftrefs, fympathy comes to its aid; and, in that circumftance, it acquires the name of *compaffion*.

THESE feveral principles of action are ordered with admirable wifdom, to promote the general good, in the beft and moft effectual manner. We act for the general good, when we act upon thefe principles, even when it is not our immediate aim. The general good is an object too remote, to be the fole impulfive motive to action. It is better ordered, that, in moft inftances, individuals fhould have a limited aim, which they can readily accomplifh. To every man is affigned his own tafk. And if every man do his duty, the general good will be promoted much

much more effectually, than if it were the aim in every ſingle action.

THE above-mentioned principles of action belong to man as ſuch, and conſtitute what may be called the common nature of man. Many other principles exert themſelves upon particular objects, in the inſtinctive manner, without the intervention of any ſort of reaſoning or reflection, which alſo belong to man as ſuch; appetite for food, animal love, *&c.* Other particular appetites, paſſions, and affections, ſuch as ambition, avarice, envy, *&c.* conſtitute the peculiar nature of individuals; becauſe theſe are diſtributed among individuals in very different degrees. It belongs to the ſcience of ethics, to treat of theſe particular principles of action. All that needs here be obſerved of them is, that it is the aim of the general principle of ſelf-love, to obtain gratification to theſe particular principles.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VI.

Of the SOURCE *of the* LAWS *of* NATURE, *according to ſome authors.*

HAVING thus at full length explained the nature of man, ſo far as concerns the preſent ſubject, it may not be diſagreeable to the reader, to have ſome relaxation, before he enter upon the remaining part of the work. We ſhall fill up this interval, with a view of ſome opinions about the foundation of the laws of nature, which we cannot help judging to be inaccurate, if not erroneous. The epiſode is, at the ſame time, ſtrictly connected with the principal ſubject; becauſe truth is always beſt illuſtrated by oppoſing it to error. That morality depends entirely on the will of God, and that his will creates the only obligation we lie under to be virtuous, is the opinion of ſeveral writers. This opinion, in one ſenſe, is true; but far from being true in their ſenſe who inculcate it. And, true or falſe, it does not advance us a ſingle ſtep in the knowledge of our duty. For what does it avail, to know, that morality depends upon the will of God, till we once know what his will is? If it be ſaid, there is an original revelation of it to us in our nature; this can only mean, that our nature itſelf makes us perceive the diſtinction

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tinction betwixt virtue and vice, which is the very doctrine above laid down. But, say they, God, from the purity and rectitude of his nature, cannot but approve good actions, and disapprove such as are otherways. Here they don't consider, that this argument supposes a distinction betwixt virtue and vice, antecedent to the will of God. For if, abstracting from his will, virtue and vice were indifferent, which is supposed in the proposition, we have no *data* from the purity of God's nature, or from any other principle, to conclude, that virtue is more the object of his choice than vice. But, further, the very supposition of the purity and rectitude of the nature of the divine being, presupposes a sense or knowledge in us of an essential difference betwixt virtue and vice. Therefore it can never be said, in any proper sense, that our only obligation to virtue is the will of God; seeing it is true, that, abstracting altogether from his will, there is an obligation to virtue founded in the very frame of our nature.

In one sense indeed it is true, that morality depends upon the will of God, who made us such as we are, with a moral sense to distinguish virtue from vice. But this is saying no more, but that it is God's will, or that it is agreeable to him, we should be virtuous. It is another thing to maintain, that man is indifferent to virtue and vice, and that he is under no obligation

to

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to the one more than to the other, unlefs fo far as he is determined by the arbitrary will of a fuperior or fovereign. That a being may be fo framed as to anfwer this defcription, may be yielded. But, taking man as he is, endued with a moral fenfe, it is a direct contradiction to hold, that he is under no obligation to virtue, other than the mere will of God. In this fenfe, morality no more depends upon the will of God, than upon our own will.

WE fhall next take a view of a doctrine which may be fet in oppofition to the foregoing; and that is, Dr Clarke's demonftration of the unalterable obligation of moral duty. His propofition is, "That, from the eternal and neceffary "differences of things, there naturally and ne-"ceffarily arife certain moral obligations, which "are of themfelves incumbent on all rational "creatures, antecedent to all pofitive inftitution, "and to all expectation of reward or punifh-"ment." And this propofition he demonftrates in the following manner. "That there is a fit-"nefs of certain circumftances to certain per-"fons, and an unfitnefs of others, antecedent "to pofitive laws; and that, from the different "relations of different things, there arifes a fit-"nefs and unfitnefs of certain behaviour of "fome perfons. For inftance, God is fuperior "to man, and therefore it is fit that man fhould "worfhip him."

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If this demonſtration, as it is called, be the only or chief foundation of morals, unlucky it is, that a doctrine of ſuch importance ſhould have ſo long been hid from mankind. The ancients, however, carried the obligation of morals perhaps as far as this eminent divine does. And now that the important diſcovery is made, it is not likely to do great ſervice; conſidering how little the bulk of mankind are able to enter into abſtruſe reaſoning, and how little influence ſuch reaſoning generally has, after it is apprehended.

But abſtruſeneſs is not the only imperfection of this celebrated argument. It appears to me altogether inconcluſive. Laying aſide perception and the moral ſenſe, upon which the Doctor founds no part of his demonſtration, I ſhould be utterly at a loſs, from any given relation betwixt perſons, to draw a concluſion of the fitneſs or unfitneſs of a certain courſe of behaviour. "God is our ſuperior, and therefore it is fit "we ſhould worſhip him." I put the queſtion, Upon what principle of reaſon does this concluſion reſt? where is the connecting propoſition by means of which the inference is drawn? Here the Doctor muſt be utterly at a loſs. For the truth of the matter is, that the terms *fitneſs* and *unfitneſs*, in their preſent ſignification, depend entirely upon the moral ſenſe. *Fitneſs* and *unfitneſs*, with regard to a certain end or purpoſe,

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poſe, are qualities of actions which may be gathered from experience. But *fitneſs* or *unfitneſs* of actions, as importing *right* or *wrong*, as denoting what we *ought* to do, or abſtain from, have truly no meaning, unleſs upon ſuppoſition of a moral ſenſe, which this learned divine never once dreams of taking into his argument. The Doctor's error therefore is a common one, that he endeavours to ſubſtitute reaſon in place of ſentiment. The fitneſs of worſhipping our Creator was obvious to him, as it is to every man, becauſe it is founded in our very nature. It is equally obvious with the preference of honeſty to diſhoneſty. His only miſtake is, that, overlooking the *law written in his own heart*, he vainly imagines that his metaphyſical argument is juſt, becauſe the conſequence he draws from it happens to be true. And to ſatisfy even his moſt devoted diſciples, that this is the caſe, let us only ſuppoſe, that man, by nature, had no approbatory or diſapprobatory ſenſe of actions; it could never be evinced, by any abſtract argument whatever, that the worſhip of the Deity is his duty, or, in the moral ſenſe of fitneſs, that it is more fit for him to be honeſt than to be diſhoneſt.

And, upon this head, we will take the liberty to add, becauſe it is of importance to the ſubject in general, that, ſuppoſing our duty could be made plain to us, by an abſtract chain of reaſoning, yet we have good ground to conclude, from analogy,

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analogy, that the author of nature has not left our actions to be directed by so weak a principle as reason: and a weak principle it must be to the bulk of mankind, who have little capacity to enter into abstract reasoning; whatever effect it may have upon the learned and contemplative. Nature has dealt more kindly by us. We are compelled by cogent principles, to perform all the different duties of life. Self-preservation is not left to the conduct of reason, but is guarded by the strongest instinct, which makes us carefully, or rather mechanically, avoid every appearance of danger. The propagation of the species is enforced by the most importunate of all appetites; and the care of our offspring, by a lively and constant affection. Is nature so deficient, as to leave the duty we owe our neighbour, which stands in the first rank of duties, to be directed by cool reasoning? This is not according to the analogy of nature: nor is it fact; witness compassion, friendship, benevolence, and all the tribe of the social affections. Neither is common justice left upon this footing, the most useful, though not the most exalted virtue. We are compelled to it by a principle common to all men, and it is attended with a severe sense of disapprobation, and of merited punishment.

A LATE author *, whom I shall just mention

* Wollaston.

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by the way, gives a whimsical system of morals. He endeavours to reduce all crimes to that of telling a lie; and, because telling a lie is immoral, he concludes, that the several crimes he mentions are immoral. Robbery, for example, is acting or telling a lie; because it is in effect saying, that the goods I seize are mine. Adultery is acting or telling a lie, because it is in effect maintaining, that my neighbour's wife is not his, but mine. But not to insist upon the absurdity of giving all crimes the same character, and confounding their nature, it appears evident, that, in this argument, the very thing is taken for granted which is to be proved. For why is it a virtual lie to rob one of his goods? Is it not by imposing upon mankind, who must presume those goods to be mine, which I take as my own? But does not this evidently presuppose a difference betwixt *meum* and *tuum*, and that I ought not to make free with another's property without his consent? For what other reason are the goods presumed to be mine, but that it is unlawful to meddle with what belongs to another? The same observation will apply to all his other transmutations; for, in acting or telling the lie, it is constantly taken for granted, that the action is wrong in itself. And this very wrong is the circumstance which, by the author's supposition, imposes upon the spectators. The error therefore of this author is of the same nature with Dr Clarke's, in his system above examined,

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mined. It is an evident begging of the queſtion: the very thing is taken for granted which is undertaken to be proved. With regard to the preſent ſubject, we have no occaſion further to obſerve of this curious author, that when he draws ſo ſtrong conſequences from telling a lie, it was incumbent upon him to ſet in the cleareſt light the immorality of that action. But this he does not ſo much as attempt, leaving it upon the conviction of one's own mind. This indeed he might ſafely do; but not more ſafely than to leave upon the ſame conviction all the other crimes he treats of.

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CHAP. VII.

Of Justice *and* Injustice.

JUSTICE is that moral virtue which guards property, and gives authority to covenants. And as it is made out above, that juſtice, being eſſentially neceſſary to the maintenance of ſociety, is one of thoſe primary virtues which are enforced by the ſtrongeſt natural laws, it would be unneceſſary to ſay more upon the ſubject, were it not for a doctrine eſpouſed by the author of a treatiſe upon human nature, that juſtice, ſo far from being one of the primary virtues, is not even a natural virtue, but eſtabliſhed in ſociety by a ſort of tacit convention, founded upon a notion of public intereſt. The figure which this author deſervedly makes in the learned world, is too conſiderable, to admit of his being paſſed over in ſilence. And as it is of great importance to creatures who live in ſociety, to be made ſenſible upon how firm a baſis juſtice is erected, a chapter expreſsly upon that ſubject may perhaps not be unacceptable to the reader.

OUR author's doctrine, ſo far as it concerns that branch of juſtice by which property is ſecured, comes to this: That, in a ſtate of nature, there can be no ſuch thing as property; and that the idea of property ariſes, after juſtice is eſtabliſhed

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eſtabliſhed by convention, whereby every one is ſecured in his poſſeſſions. In oppoſition to this ſingular doctrine, there is no difficulty to make out, that we have an idea of property, antecedent to any ſort of agreement or convention; that property is founded on a natural principle; and that violation of property is attended with remorſe, and a ſenſe of breach of duty. In proſecuting this ſubject, it will appear how admirably the ſprings of human nature are adapted one to another, and to external circumſtances.

THE ſurface of this globe, which ſcarce yields ſpontaneouſly food for the wildeſt ſavages, is by labour and induſtry made ſo fruitful, as to ſupply man, not only with neceſſaries, but even with materials for luxury. Man originally made ſhift to ſupport himſelf, partly by prey, and partly by the natural fruits of the earth. In this ſtate he in ſome meaſure reſembled beaſts of prey, who devour inſtantly what they ſeize, and whoſe care is at an end when the belly is full. But man was not deſigned by nature to be an animal of prey. A tenor of life where food is ſo precarious, requires a conſtitution that can bear long faſting and immoderate eating, as occaſion offers. Man is of a different make. He requires regular and frequent ſupplies of food, which could not be obtained in his original occupations of fiſhing and hunting. He found it neceſſary therefore to abandon this manner of life, and to

become ſhepherd. The wild creatures, ſuch of them as are gentle and proper for food, were brought under ſubjection. Hence herds of cattle, ſheep, goats, *&c.* ready at hand for the ſuſtenance of man. This contrivance was ſucceeded by another. A bit of land is divided from the common; it is cultivated with the ſpade or plough; grain is ſown, and the product is ſtored for the uſe of a family. Reaſon and reflection prompted theſe improvements, which are eſſential to our well-being, and in a good meaſure neceſſary even for bare exiſtence. But a matter which concerns ſelf-preſervation, is of too great moment to be left entirely to the conduct of reaſon. This would not be according to the analogy of nature. To ſecure againſt neglect or indolence, man is provided with a principle that operates inſtinctively without reflection; and that is the hoarding diſpoſition, common to him with ſeveral other animals. No author, I ſuppoſe, will be ſo bold as to deny this diſpoſition to be natural and univerſal. It would be ſhameleſs to deny it, conſidering how ſolicitous every man is after a competency, and how anxious the plurality are to ſwell that competency beyond all bounds. The hoarding appetite, while moderate, is not graced with a proper name. When it exceeds juſt bounds, it is known by the name of *avarice.*

THE compaſs I have taken is large, but the ſhorteſt road is not always the ſmootheſt or moſt patent.

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patent. I come now to the point, by putting a plain queſtion, What ſort of creature would man be, endued as he is with a hoarding principle, but with no ſenſe or notion of property? He hath a conſtant propenſity to hoard for his own uſe; conſcious at the ſame time that his ſtores are not leſs free to others than to himſelf;—racked thus perpetually betwixt the deſire of appropriation, and conſciouſneſs of its being ſcarce practicable. I ſay more; the hoarding principle is an inſtinct obviouſly calculated for aſſiſting reaſon, in moving us to provide againſt want. This inſtinct, like all others in the human ſoul, ought to be a cauſe adequate to the effect which is intended to be accompliſhed by it. But this it cannot be, independent of a ſenſe of property. For what effectual proviſion can be made againſt want, when the ſtores of every individual are, without any check from conſcience, left free to the depredations of the whole ſpecies? Here would be a palpable defect or inconſiſtency in the nature of man. If I could ſuppoſe this to be his caſe, I ſhould believe him to be a creature made in haſte, and left unfiniſhed. I am certain there is no ſuch inconſiſtency to be found in any other branch of human nature; nor indeed, ſo far as we can diſcover, in any other creature that is endued with the hoarding principle. Every bee inhabits its own cell, and feeds on its own honey. Every crow has its own neſt; and puniſhment is always applied, when a ſingle ſtick happens

happens to be pilfered. But we find no ſuch inconſiſtency in man. The cattle tamed by an individual, and the field cultivated by him, were held univerſally to be his own from the beginning. A relation is formed betwixt every man and the fruits of his own labour, the very thing we call property, which he himſelf is ſenſible of, and of which every other is equally ſenſible. *Yours* and *mine* are terms in all languages, familiar among ſavages, and underſtood even by children. This is a matter of fact, which every human creature can teſtify.

THIS reaſoning may be illuſtrated by many apt analogies. I ſhall mention one in particular. Veracity, and a diſpoſition to believe what is affirmed for truth, are correſponding principles, which make one entire branch of the human nature. Veracity would be of no uſe were men not diſpoſed to believe; and, abſtracting from veracity, a diſpoſition to believe, would be a dangerous quality; for it would lay us open to fraud and deceit. There is preciſely the ſame correſpondence betwixt the hoarding principle and the ſenſe of property. The latter is uſeleſs without the former; witneſs animals of prey, who having no occaſion for property, have no notion of it. The former again, without the latter, is altogether inſufficient to produce the effect for which it is intended by nature.

THUS

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Thus it appears clear, that the ſenſe of property does not owe its exiſtence to ſociety. But in a matter of ſo great importance in the ſcience of morals, I cannot reſt ſatisfied with a ſucceſsful defence. I aim at a complete victory, by inſiſting on a propoſition directly oppoſite to that of my antagoniſt, *viz.* That ſociety owes its exiſtence to the ſenſe of property; or at leaſt, that without this ſenſe no ſociety ever could have been formed. In the proof of this propoſition, we have already made a conſiderable progreſs, by evincing, that man by his nature is a hoarding animal, and loves to ſtore for his own uſe. In order to the concluſion, we have but one farther ſtep to make; which is, to conſider what originally would have been the ſtate of man, ſuppoſing him deſtitute of the ſenſe of property. The anſwer is extremely obvious, That it would have been a ſtate of univerſal war;—of men preying upon each other;—of robbing and pilfering the neceſſaries of life, where-ever found, without regard to induſtry, or the connection that is formed betwixt an individual and the fruits of his own labour. Courage and bodily ſtrength would have ſtood in place of right, and nothing left for the weak, but to hide themſelves and their goods, under ground, or in inacceſſible places. And to do Hobbes juſtice, who, as well as our author, denies the ſenſe of property to be natural, he fairly owns this reaſoning to be juſt, and boldly aſſerts, that the ſtate of nature is a ſtate of war.

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war, all againſt all. In a word, deſtitute of the ſenſe of property, men would naturally be enemies to each other, not leſs than they are to wolves and foxes at preſent. Now, if this muſt have been the original condition of man, let our author ſay, by what over-ruling power, by what miracle, individuals ſo diſpoſed ever came to unite in ſociety. We may pronounce with great aſſurance, that ſo ſignal a revolution in the ſtate of man could never have been compaſſed by natural means. Nothing can be more evident, than that relying upon the ſenſe of property, and the prevalence of juſtice, a few individuals ventured at firſt to unite for mutual defence and mutual ſupport; and finding the manifold comforts of ſuch a ſtate, that they afterwards gradually united into larger and larger ſocieties.

It muſt not be overlooked, that the ſenſe of property is fortified by another principle. Every man has a peculiar affection for what he calls his *own*. He applies his ſkill and induſtry with great alacrity to improve his own ſubject: his affection to it grows with the time of his poſſeſſion; and he puts a much greater value upon it, than upon any ſubject of the ſame kind that belongs to another.

But this is not all that is involved in the ſenſe of property. We not only ſuffer pain in having our goods taken from us by force; for that would

would happen were they deſtroyed or loſt by accident. We have the ſenſe of *wrong* and *injuſtice*. The perſon who robs us has the ſame ſenſe, and every mortal who beholds the action, conſiders it as vitious, and contrary to *right*.

JUDGING it not altogether ſufficient to have overturned the foundation of our author's doctrine, we proceed to make ſome obſervations upon it, in order to ſhow how ill it hangs together.

AND, in the firſt place, he appears to reaſon not altogether conſiſtently in making out his ſyſtem. He founds juſtice on a general ſenſe of common intereſt *. And yet, at no greater diſtance than a few pages, he endeavours to make out †, and does it ſucceſsfully, that public intereſt is a motive too remote and too ſublime to affect the generality of mankind, and to operate, with any force, in actions ſo contrary to private intereſt, as are frequently thoſe of juſtice and common honeſty.

IN the ſecond place, abſtracting from the ſenſe of property, it does not appear, that a ſenſe of common intereſt would neceſſarily lead to ſuch a regulation, as that every man ſhould have the undiſturbed enjoyment of what he hath acquired by his induſtry or good fortune. Suppoſing

* Vol. 3. p. 59. † Vol. 3. p. 43.

no

no ſenſe of property, I do not ſee it inconſiſtent with ſociety, to have a Lacedemonian conſtitution, that every man may lawfully take what by addreſs he can make himſelf maſter of, without force or violence. The depriving us of that to which we have no right, would be doing little more than drinking in our brook, or breathing in our air. At any rate, ſuch a refined regulation would never be conſidered of importance enough, to be eſtabliſhed upon the very commencement of ſociety. It muſt come late, if at all, and be the effect of long experience, and great refinement in the art of living. It is very true, that, abſtaining from the goods of others, is a regulation, without which ſociety cannot well ſubſiſt. But the neceſſity of this regulation ariſeth from the ſenſe of property, without which a man would ſuffer little pain in loſing his goods, and would have no notion of wrong or injuſtice. There appears not any way to evade the force of this reaſoning, other than peremptorily to deny the reality of the ſenſe of property. Others may, but our author, after all, cannot with a good grace do it. An appeal may be ſafely made to his own authority. For is it not evidently this ſenſe, which hath ſuggeſted to him the neceſſity, in the inſtitution of every ſociety, to ſecure individuals in their poſſeſſions? He cannot but be ſenſible, that, abſtracting from the affection for property, the neceſſity would be juſt nothing at all. But our perceptions operate calmly

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calmly and ſilently; and there is nothing more common, than to ſtrain for far-fetched arguments in ſupport of concluſions which are ſuggeſted by the ſimpleſt and moſt obvious perceptions.

A THIRD obſervation is, that ſince our author reſolves all virtue into ſympathy, why ſhould he with-hold the ſame principle from being the foundation of juſtice? Why ſhould not ſympathy give us a painful ſenſation, in depriving our neighbour of the goods he has acquired by induſtry, as well as in depriving him of his life or limb? For it is a fact too evident to be denied, that many men are more uneaſy at the loſs of their goods, than at the loſs of a member.

AND, in the laſt place, were juſtice founded on a general ſenſe of common intereſt only, it behoved to be the weakeſt ſenſe in human nature; eſpecially where injuſtice is committed againſt a ſtranger, with whom we are not in any manner connected. Now, this is contrary to all experience. The ſenſe of injuſtice is one of the ſtrongeſt that belongs to humanity, and is alſo of a peculiar nature. It involves a ſenſe of duty which is tranſgreſſed, and of meriting puniſhment for the tranſgreſſion. Had our author but once reflected upon theſe peculiarities, he never could have been ſatisfied with the ſlight founda-

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tion he gives to juſtice; for theſe peculiarities are altogether unaccountable upon his ſyſtem.

I SHALL cloſe this reaſoning with one reflection in general upon the whole. The ſubject in diſpute is a ſtrong inſtance how dangerous it is to erect ſchemes, and aſſert propoſitions, without relation to facts and experiments; — not leſs dangerous in morals than in natural philoſophy. Had our author examined human nature, and patiently ſubmitted to the method of induction, by making a complete collection of facts, before venturing upon general propoſitions; I am poſitive he would have been as far as any man from maintaining, that juſtice is an artificial virtue, and that property is the child of ſociety. Diſcovering this edifice of his to be a mere caſtle in the air, without the ſlighteſt foundation, he would have abandoned it without any reluctance.

THAT branch of juſtice which regards promiſes and covenants, hath alſo a ſolid foundation in human nature; notwithſtanding what is laid down by our author in two diſtinct propoſitions *, "That a promiſe would not be intelligible, before human conventions had eſtabliſhed it; and, That, even if it were intelligible, it would not be attended with any moral obligation." As man is framed for ſociety, mutual truſt and confidence, without which there can be no ſociety, enter into the character of the

* p. 102.

human

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human ſpecies. Correſponding to theſe, are the principles of veracity and fidelity. Veracity and fidelity would be of no ſignificancy, were men not diſpoſed to have faith, and to rely upon what is ſaid to them, whether in the way of evidence or engagement. Faith and truſt, on the other hand, would be very hurtful principles, were mankind void of veracity and fidelity. For, upon that ſuppoſition, the world, as obſerved above, would be over-run with fraud and deceit. If that branch of juſtice which reſtrains us from harming each other, be eſſential to the very exiſtence of ſociety, fidelity and veracity are not leſs eſſential to its well-being: for from them ſpring moſtly the advantages that are peculiar to the ſocial life. It is juſtly obſerved by our author, that man in a ſolitary ſtate is the moſt helpleſs of beings; and that by ſociety only he is enabled to ſupply his defects, and to acquire a ſuperiority over his fellow-creatures; that, by conjunction of forces, our power is augmented; by partition of employments, we work to better purpoſe; and, by mutual ſuccour, we acquire ſecurity. But, without mutual fidelity and truſt, we could enjoy none of theſe advantages; without them, we could not have any comfortable intercourſe with each other. Hence it is, that treachery is the vileſt of crimes, and what mankind have ever held in the utmoſt abhorrence. It is worſe than murder, becauſe it forms a character, and is directed againſt all mankind; where-

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as murder is but a tranſitory act, directed againſt a ſingle perſon. Infidelity is of the ſame ſpecies with treachery. The eſſence of both crimes is the ſame, to wit, breach of truſt. Treachery has only this aggravating circumſtance, that it turns the confidence repoſed in me againſt the friend who truſts me. Now, breach of promiſe is a ſpecies of infidelity; and therefore our author has but a ſingle choice. He muſt either maintain, that treachery is no crime, or that breach of promiſe is a crime. And, in fact, that it is ſo, every man muſt bear evidence to himſelf. The performance of a deliberate promiſe has, in all ages, been conſidered as a duty. We have that ſenſe of a promiſe, as what we are bound to perform by a ſtrict obligation; and the breach of promiſe is attended with the ſame natural ſtings which attend other crimes, *ſciz.* remorſe, and a ſenſe of merited puniſhment.

It is evident from what is now ſaid, that it is but an imperfect conception of a promiſe, to conſider it, as our author does *, with relation only to the perſon who makes the promiſe. In this act two perſons are concerned; the perſon who makes the promiſe, and the perſon to whom the promiſe is made. Were there by nature no truſt nor reliance upon promiſes, breach of promiſe would be a matter of indifferency. There-

* Vol. 3. p. 102.

fore

fore the eſſence of a promiſe conſiſts in keeping faith. The reliance upon us, produced by our own act, conſtitutes the obligation. We feel ourſelves bound to perform; we conſider it as our duty. And when we violate our engagement, we have a ſenſe of moral turpitude in diſappointing the perſon who relied upon our faith.

We ſhall cloſe this ſubject, concerning the foundation of juſtice, with a general reflection. Running over every branch of our duty, what concerns ourſelves as well as our neighbours, we find, that nature has been more provident, than to truſt us entirely to the guidance of cool reaſon. It is obſerved above, that our duty is enforced by inſtinct and appetite, as well as it is directed by reaſon. Now, if man be a ſocial being, and juſtice eſſential to ſociety, it is not according to the analogy of nature, that we ſhould be left to inveſtigate this branch of our duty by a chain of reaſoning; eſpecially where the reaſoning, according to our author's doctrine, turns upon ſo remote an object as public good. May we not apply to juſtice, what is ſo beautifully reaſoned concerning ſociety, in a dialogue upon happineſs *, "If ſociety be thus "agreeable to our nature, is there nothing within "us to excite and lead us to it? no impulſe; "no preparation of faculties? It would be

* p. 155.

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" ſtrange if there ſhould not." If we be fitted by our nature for ſociety ; if pity, benevolence, friendſhip, love, the general diſlike of ſolitude, and deſire of company, be natural affections, all of them conducive to ſociety, it would be ſtrange if there ſhould be no natural affection, no preparation of faculties, to direct us to do juſtice, which is ſo eſſential to ſociety. But nature has not failed us here, more than in the other parts of our conſtitution. We have a ſenſe of property ; we have a ſenſe of obligation to perform our engagements ; and we have a ſenſe of wrong in incroaching upon property, and in being untrue to our engagements. Society could not ſubſiſt without theſe affections, more than it could ſubſiſt without the ſocial affections, properly ſo called. We have reaſon, *a priori*, to conclude equally in favour of both ; and we find, upon examination, that our concluſion is juſt.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VIII.

Of the Primary Laws *of* Nature.

WE are now arrived at what is chiefly the purpofe of the prefent effay; and that is, to give a flight fketch, or curfory view, of the primary laws of nature, deduced from human nature, their true fource. This tafk I undertake, as a fpecimen merely of that fort of reafoning which belongs to the fubject; for a complete treatife is far beyond my reach. Action ought to be the end and aim of all our inquiries; without which, moral, as well as metaphyfical reafonings, are but empty fpeculation. And as life and manners are more peculiarly the object of the moral fcience, the weight and importance of the fubject, one would imagine, muft have brought authors to one way of thinking. But it is lamentable to find the world divided about thefe primary laws, almoft as much as they commonly are about the moft airy and abftract points. Some authors acknowledge no principle in man, and confequently no duty, but what is altogether felfifh; and it is curious to obferve how they wreft and torture every focial principle to give it the appearance of felfifhnefs. Others exalt human nature much above its juft ftandard, give no quarter to felfifhnefs, but confider man as

as bound to direct every action to the good of the whole, and not to prefer his own interest to that of others. The celebrated Lord Shaftesbury goes so far, as not to admit of any thing like partial benevolence; holding, that if it be not entire, and directed to the whole species, it is not benevolence at all. It is not difficult to assign a cause for such difference in opinion; though it may appear strange, that authors should differ so widely about the nature of man, which every man ought to be acquainted with. There is nothing more common in philosophy, as well as in action, than to build castles in the air. Impatient of the slow and cold method of induction, we fly to systems, which every writer takes the liberty of framing, according to his own taste and fancy. Fond of the fabric which he himself hath erected, it is far from his thoughts to subject it to examination, by trying whether it will stand the test of stubborn facts. Men of narrow minds, and contracted principles, naturally fall in with the selfish system. The system of universal benevolence attracts the generous and warm-hearted. In the midst of various and opposite opinions, the purpose of this essay is, by the patient method of induction, to search for truth; and, after what is above laid down, it will not be difficult to find it.

Let us only recapitulate, that the principles of action impel to action, and that the moral sense

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ſenſe is given as an inſtructor to regulate our actions, to enforce one principle, to reſtrain another, and to prefer one to another when they are in oppoſition. Hence the laws of nature may be defined to be, *Rules of our conduct and behaviour, founded on natural principles, approved by the moral ſenſe, and enforced by natural rewards and puniſhments.*

In ſearching for theſe laws, it muſt be obvious, from what is above ſaid, that, by the moral ſenſe, a difference is clearly eſtabliſhed among our principles of action. Some are enforced by the conſciouſneſs of duty; ſome are left in a meaſure upon our own choice. With reſpect to the former, we have no liberty, but ought to proceed to action: with reſpect to the latter, we may freely indulge every natural impulſe, where the action is not diſapproved by the moral ſenſe. From this ſhort ſketch may be readily deduced all the laws of nature which govern human actions; though, in the preſent eſſay, the duty which a man owes to himſelf, where others are not concerned, is not comprehended.

Of the principles of action which are enforced by the conſciouſneſs of duty, the principle of juſtice takes the lead. It conſiſts of two branches, one to abſtain from harming others, and one to perform our poſitive engagements. With reſpect to both of them no choice is admitted. We are bound

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bound to perform every act of justice as our indispensable duty. Veracity, fidelity, and gratitude, are principles of action which come under the same class. And with respect to the whole, it ought not to be overlooked, that the internal constitution of man is adjusted with admirable wisdom to his external circumstances as a social being. Were we allowed to prey upon one another like savage animals, there could be no society; and were there nothing in our nature that could bind us to instruct, to comfort, to benefit each other, society would be deprived of all its advantages, and man, in the midst of society, would be a solitary being. Benevolence is another principle of action, which, in many circumstances, by means of peculiar connections, becomes also an indispensable duty. Witness the connection of parent and child. We are obliged to provide for our children; it is strict duty, and the neglect of it causes remorse. In the case of other blood-relations, an only brother, for example, who depends entirely on our help, we feel somewhat of the same kind of obligation, though in a weaker degree; and thus, through other connections, it diminisheth by successive gradations, till, at last, the sense of duty is lost in simple approbation, without any obligatory feeling. This is universally the course which nature holds. Her transitions are soft and gentle. She makes things approximate so nicely one to another, as to leave no gap or chasm.

One

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One other inftance of a connection which produceth a fenfe of obligation, fhall fuffice. In the general cafe, of procuring pofitive good to others, or advancing happinefs, without any connection, fave merely that of humanity, it is felf-approbation, and not ftrict obligation, that is felt. But let us put the cafe of a perfon in diftrefs. By this fingle circumftance, though it forms no intimate connection, the moral fenfe is influenced, and now it becomes a pofitive duty to exert our benevolence, by affording relief. The neglect of this duty is attended with remorfe and felf-condemnation; though poffibly not of fo ftrong a kind as where we betray our truft, or are the authors of pofitive mifchief to others. Thus charity is, by all mankind, confidered as a duty to which we are ftrictly bound.

WITH refpect to principles of action which are not enforced by the confcioufnefs of duty, thefe we may reftrain at our pleafure, but may not always indulge at our pleafure. For in many circumftances the moral fenfe interpofes, and forbids the gratification. Self-prefervation is the ftrongeft of all our principles of action, and the means are infinite which may be put in motion for that end. Yet here the moral fenfe frequently interpofes, and even for the prefervation of our lives, gives no indulgence to the tranfgreffion of any pofitive duty. Self-prefervation, however it may alleviate, will not juftify any wrong

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wrong done to an innocent perſon. It will not juſtify treachery, nor any unjuſt action. And this is another inſtance of the admirable correſpondence of the moral ſenſe with the external circumſtances of man as a ſocial being. For it is eſſential to ſociety, that the ſocial duties ſhould be indiſpenſable; and it is agreeable to good order, that the intereſt of an individual ſhould yield to that of the whole. The doctrine thus laid down in general, may, I am ſenſible, be liable to miſconſtruction; and therefore it muſt be further explained. Self-preſervation, it is certain, will not juſtify any immoral action. But then, in the circumſtances of imminent danger, ſeveral actions become lawful, which are unlawful in ordinary circumſtances. For example, to prevent dying of hunger, a man may take food at ſhort-hand where-ever he can find it, without conſulting the proprietor. Seizing upon what belongs to another, is in ordinary circumſtances an unlawful act: but in a caſe which can bear no delay, the act is lawful, becauſe the approbation of the proprietor will be preſumed. At any rate, it is his duty to relieve the diſtreſſed; and what he ought to give, may juſtly be forced from him at ſhort-hand, where the delay of applying to a judge would be fatal. Another example, is the caſe of two men in a ſhipwreck, laying hold at the ſame inſtant of a plank which cannot ſupport both. In this caſe it becomes lawful to ſtruggle for the ſole poſſeſſion,

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ſion, though one muſt periſh in the ſtruggle: for each has an equal title to act for ſelf-preſervation; and if both cannot be preſerved, mere force is the only method by which the diſpute can be determined. Upon this ſignal authority of the moral ſenſe to reſtrain the exerciſe of this claſs of principles, nothing further is neceſſary to be ſaid, but only that if it poſſeſs this authority over the principle of ſelf-preſervation, its authority muſt, if poſſible, be ſtill more complete over the weaker principle of ſelf-love, and others which belong to the ſame claſs.

THESE are the outlines of the laws which govern our actions, comprehending what we *may* do, what we *ought* to do, and what we *ought not* to do. The two latter, as matter of duty, are the proper objects of law, natural and municipal. And no more ſeems to be requiſite in this matter, than clearly to point out our duty, by informing us of what we ought to do, and what we ought not to do; ſeeing actions which come not under the character of duty, may be ſafely left to our own choice. With regard then to what may be called our duty, the firſt and primary law is the law of reſtraint, by which we are prohibited to hurt others in their perſons, goods, or whatever elſe is dear to them. This is a law which dictates to us what ought not to be done; and ſo ſacred it is, as to yield to none of our principles of action, not even

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that of self-preservation. The second, which is a law dictating what we ought to do, binds us to the performance of our promises and covenants. Veracity, descending in a scale of laws, occupies the next place. This law excludes not fable, nor any liberty of speech which tends to amusement. It excludes deceit only, and obliges us in all cases to adhere to truth where truth is expected from us. Fidelity is a fourth law, not less vigorous, though more confined, than veracity; for, as observed above, fidelity presupposes a peculiar connection betwixt two persons, to found a reliance on the one side, and on the other an obligation to fulfil what is justly expected. Gratitude comes next, limited, like fidelity, to particular objects, but more arbitrary as to what it requires of us. Gratitude, without doubt, is strictly our duty; but the measure of performance, and the kind, is left pretty much in our own choice. Benevolence occupies the last place; which, considered abstractly, is not a positive duty. But there are many connections of different sorts, in consequence of which it becomes a duty. For the sake of illustration I shall slightly mention a few. The connection of parent and child is one of the strongest, for it makes mutual benevolence an indispensable duty. Benevolence among other blood-relations becomes also our duty in many particular circumstances, though here it is seldom that we feel ourselves so firmly bound as we are when enga-

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ged in the former connection. Many are the connections, some intimate, some more slight, which come under the law of equity, and which bind us to the performance of certain acts of benevolence. I shall add but one connection more, *viz.* that which subsists betwixt us and a person in distress. Benevolence in this case becomes the duty of every one who can afford relief.

THESE several laws are admirably adjusted to our nature and circumstances, and tend in the most perfect manner to promote the ends of society. In the first place, as man is limited with regard to power and capacity, the foregoing laws are accommodated to his nature, ordering and forbidding nothing but what falls within his compass. In the second place, peace and security in society are amply provided for, by tying up the hands, as it were, of every person from harming others. In the third place, man is prompted in an admirable manner to be useful to others. It is his positive duty to relieve the distressed, and to perform his engagements. Boundless are the good offices which are enforced by veracity, fidelity, and gratitude. We are further incited to do all the good we can, by the pleasure which arises from being useful, and by grateful returns from the persons obliged. And, lastly, in competition betwixt a man himself and others, though his principles of action directed upon himself, may be stronger than

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thofe directed upon others, the fuperior rewards beftowed by the conftitution of our nature upon the latter, may be deemed a fufficient counterbalance to give an afcendant to the focial affections, even fuch of them as are left to our own choice, and are not enforced by a confcioufnefs of duty.

It may feem ftrange, that the municipal law of all countries is fo little regardful of the laws of nature, as to adopt but a very few of them. There never was a general law in any country, to punifh ingratitude, if it was not among the ancient Perfians. There is no pofitive law to enforce compaffion, and to relieve thofe in diftrefs, if the maintenance of the poor be excepted, which, in fome countries, is provided for by law. No notice is taken of breach of friendfhip, by ftatute, nor of the duty we owe our children, further than of fupporting them while they are under age. But municipal laws, being of human invention, are of no great extent. They cannot reach the heart, nor its intentions, further than as expreffed by outward acts. And thefe are to be judged of cautioufly, and with referve; becaufe they form a language, dark, and at beft full of ambiguities. At the fame time, the object of human laws is man, confidered fingly in the quality of a citizen. When fociety is formed, and government fubmitted to, every private right, inconfiftent with fociety and government,

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government, is ſurrendered. But, in every other reſpect, individuals reſerve their independency and their private rights. Whether a man be virtuous, is not the concern of the ſociety, at leaſt not of its laws; but only whether he tranſgreſs thoſe regulations, which are neceſſary to the preſervation of ſociety. In this view, great attention is given by the legiſlature in every country, to enforce the natural law of reſtraint from mutual hurt and injury. The like attention is given, to enforce the natural obligation of engagements, and of fidelity, at leaſt ſo far as relates to commerce; for infidelity in love and friendſhip are left to the natural law. Ingratitude is not puniſhed by human laws, becauſe it may be guarded againſt by poſitive engagements; nor hard-heartedneſs with regard to objects of diſtreſs; becauſe ſociety may ſubſiſt without ſuch a law, and mankind are ſcarce yet arrived at ſuch refinement in manners, as to have an abhorrence of this crime, ſufficient to make it an object of human puniſhment.

THERE is another ſubſtantial reaſon, which confines municipal laws within a much narrower compaſs than the laws of nature. It is eſſential to municipal laws, that they be clear, plain, and readily applicable to particular caſes; without which judges would be arbitrary, and law made a handle for oppreſſion. For this reaſon, none of our actions can be the object of poſitive law,

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but what are reducible to a precife rule. Ingratitude therefore cannot be the object of municipal laws, becaufe the quality of the crime depends upon a multiplicity of circumftances, which can never be reduced to a precife rule. Duty to our children, friends, and relations, is, with regard to moft circumftances, in the fame cafe. The duty of relieving the diftreffed, in like manner, depends upon many circumftances; the nature of the diftrefs, the connection betwixt the parties, the opportunity and ability of affording relief. The abftinence from mutual harm, and the performance of promifes, are capable to be brought under a precife rule, and confequently to be objects of municipal law. The chief attention of the legiflature in all countries, was at firft to explain and enforce the natural law of reftraint, without which fociety cannot have a being. Municipal law was afterwards extended to fupport promifes and covenants, and to enforce performance, without which fociety may exift, but cannot flourifh. Gradual improvements in the arts of life, have in later times extended municipal law ftill farther. The duty of benevolence arifing from certain peculiar connections among individuals, is fufceptible in many cafes of a precife rule. So far benevolence is alfo taken under the authority of the legiflature, and enforced by rules paffing commonly under the name of the law of equity.

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CHAP. IX.

Of the LAW *of* NATIONS.

IF we can truſt hiſtory, the original inhabitants of this earth were a brutiſh and ſavage race. And we have little reaſon to doubt of the fact, when, even at this day, we find in diſtant corners the ſame ſort of people, who have no communication with the reſt of mankind. The ſtate of nature is accordingly repreſented by moſt writers, as a ſtate of war; nothing going on but rapine and bloodſhed. From this picture of the firſt men, one would be apt to conclude, that man is a wild and rapacious animal, little better than a beaſt of prey, till he be moulded by ſociety into a rational creature. If this concluſion be juſt, we cannot help being in ſome pain for the principles above laid down. Brutiſh manners imply brutiſh principles of action; and, from this view of the original ſtate of mankind, it might ſeem that moral virtues are not natural, but acquired by means of education and example in a well-regulated ſociety; in a word, that the whole moral part of the human ſyſtem is artificial, as juſtice is repreſented by a late writer.

BUT to be ſatisfied of the fallacy of this con-
cluſion,

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clusion, we need only look back to what has already been said upon the moral sense. If the perception of beauty and deformity in external existences be natural to man, the perception of beauty and deformity, and of a *right* and *wrong*, in actions, is equally so. And indeed, whatever be the influence of education and example, it is an evident truth, that they never can have power to create any one sense or perception. They may well cherish and improve the plants of nature's formation; but they cannot introduce any new or original plant whatever. We must therefore attribute the foregoing appearances to some other cause than want of the moral sense; and these appearances may easily be explained, from peculiar circumstances, that overbalance the moral sense, and produce, in appearance, the same effects which would result from a total absence of that sense. Let us point out these circumstances; for the subject is worthy of our strictest attention. In the first place, we must look back to the original state of man, destitute entirely of those arts which produce the conveniencies of life. In this state, man, a most indigent creature, would be incited by self-preservation, to supply his wants the best way he could, without much obstruction from the moral sense. Disputes and differences would multiply, which behoved all to be determined by the strong hand; there being no established rules of conduct to appeal to, nor judges to apply rules to particular cases.

cafes. In this ftate, barbarity, roughnefs, and cruelty, formed the character of the human fpecies. For, in the practice and habit of war, the malevolent principles gain ftrength and vigour, as the benevolent principles do, by the arts of peace. And to this confideration may be added, that man is by nature fhy and timorous, and confequently cruel when he gets the upper-hand. The fecurity obtained in a regular fociety puts an end, in a great meafure, to our fears. Man becomes a magnanimous and generous being, not eafily daunted, and therefore not eafily provoked to acts of cruelty.

IT may be obferved, in the next place, that the rude and illiterate are governed by their appetites and paffions, more than by general principles. We have our firft impreffions from external objects. It is by education and practice that we acquire a facility in forming complex ideas, and abftract propofitions. The ideas of a common intereft, of a country, of a people, of a fociety under government, of public good, are complex, and not foon acquired even by the thinking part of mankind. They are fcarce ever acquired by the rude and illiterate; and confequently can fcarce make any impreffion on them. One's own intereft, confidered in general, is too complex an object for the bulk of mankind; and therefore it is, that appetites and paffions, aiming at particular objects, are ftronger motives

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tives to action with the ignorant and unthinking, than the principle of self-love, or even of self-preservation, when it is not excited by some object which threatens danger. And the same must hold more strongly with regard to the affections of benevolence, charity, and such like, when there is no particular object in view, but only, in general, the good of others.

MAN is a complex machine, composed of various principles of motion, which may be conceived as so many springs or weights, counteracting or balancing one another. These being accurately adjusted, the movement of life is beautiful, because regular and uniform. But if some springs or weights be withdrawn, those which remain, acting now without opposition from their antagonist forces, will disorder the balance, and derange the whole machine. Remove those principles of action, which being directed upon general and complex objects, are conducted by reflection, and the force of the appetites and passions, which act by blind impulse, will, of course, be doubled. This is precisely the condition of those, who, abandoning the authority of reason, surrender themselves to every appetite. They are tyrannized by passion, and have no consistent rule of conduct. It is no cause of wonder, that the moral sense should not have sufficient authority to command obedience in such a case. This is the character of savages.

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We have no reaſon then to conclude, from the foregoing picture, that even the greateſt ſavages are deſtitute of the moral ſenſe. Their defect rather lies in the weakneſs of their general principles of action, which are directed upon objects too complex for ſavages readily to comprehend. This defect is remedied by education and reflection; and then it is, that the moral ſenſe, in concert with theſe general principles, acquires its full authority, which is openly recogniſed, and chearfully ſubmitted to.

THE contemplation is beautiful, when we compare our gradual improvement in knowledge and in morality. We begin with ſurveying particular objects, and lay in a ſtock of ſimple ideas. Our affections keep pace, being all directed to particular objects; and during this period, we are governed chiefly by our paſſions and appetites. So ſoon as we begin to form complex and general ideas, theſe alſo become the objects of our affections. Then it is, that love to our country begins to exert itſelf, benevolence to our neighbours and acquaintances, affection for our relations as ſuch. We acquire by degrees the taſte of public good, and of being uſeful in life. The pleaſures of ſociety are more and more reliſhed, ſelfiſh paſſions are tamed and ſubdued, and ſocial affections gain the aſcendant. We refine upon the pleaſures of ſociety, becauſe our happineſs conſiſts chiefly in ſocial intercourſe.

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We learn to ſubmit our opinions. We affect to give preference to others, and readily accommodate ourſelves to every thing which may render ſociety more complete. The malevolent paſſions, above all, are brought under the ſtricteſt diſcipline, if not totally eradicated. Inſtead of unbounded revenge for the ſmalleſt injury, we acquire a degree of ſelf-denial to overlook trifling wrongs, and in greater wrongs to be ſatisfied with moderate reparation.

THE moral ſenſe alſo, though rooted in the nature of man, admits of great refinements by culture and education. It improves gradually, like our other powers and faculties, till it comes to be productive of the ſtrongeſt as well as moſt delicate feelings. I will endeavour to explain in what manner this happens. Every one muſt be ſenſible of the great advantages of education and imitation. The moſt poliſhed nations differ only from ſavages in refinement of taſte, which being productive of nice and delicate feelings, is the ſource of pleaſure and pain, more exquiſite than ſavages are ſuſceptible of. Hence it is, that many actions which make little impreſſion upon ſavages, appear to us elegant and beautiful; as, on the other hand, actions which give them no pain, raiſe in us averſion and diſguſt. This may be illuſtrated by a compariſon betwixt the Engliſh and French dramatic performances. The Engliſh, a rough and hardy people,

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people, take delight in reprefentations, which more refined manners render infupportable to their neighbours. The diftreffes, on the other hand, reprefented on the French theatre, are too flight for an Englifh audience. Their paffions are not raifed; they feel no concern. In general, horror, which denotes the higheft degree of pain and averfion that can be raifed by a harfh action, is an emotion feldom felt among fierce and favage nations, where humanity is little regarded. But when the tender affections are improved by fociety, horror is more eafily raifed, and objects which move horror, become more frequent.

The moral fenfe not only accompanies our other fenfes in their gradual refinement, but receives additional ftrength upon every occafion from thefe other fenfes. For example, a favage inured to acts of cruelty, feels little pain or averfion in putting an enemy to death in cold blood; and confequently will have no remorfe at fuch an action, other than what proceeds from the moral fenfe acting by its native ftrength. But let us fuppofe a perfon of fo delicate feelings, as fcarce to endure a common operation of phlebotomy, and who cannot behold, without fome degree of horror, the amputation of a fractured member; fuch a perfon will be fhocked to the higheft degree, if he fee an enemy put to death in cold blood. The grating emotion, thus rai-

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fed in him, muft communicate itfelf to the feelings of the moral fenfe, and render them much more acute. And thus, refinement in tafte and manners, operating by communication upon the moral fenfe, occafions a ftronger perception of immorality in every vitious action, than what would arife before fuch refinement. At the fame time, the moral fenfe improves in its delicacy, as well as the other fenfes; whereby a double effect is produced, owing to a double caufe. And therefore, upon the whole, the operations of the moral fenfe in a favage, bear no proportion to its operations in a perfon who ftands poffeffed of all the advantages of which human nature is fufceptible by refined education.

I NEVER was fatisfied with the defcription given of the law of nations, commonly fo called, That it is a law eftablifhed among nations by common confent, for regulating their conduct with regard to each other. This foundation of the law of nations I take to be chimerical. For upon what occafion was this covenant made, and by whom? If it be faid, that the fenfe of common good gradually brought this law into force; I anfwer, that the fenfe of common good is too complex, and too remote an object, to be a folid foundation for any pofitive law, if it has no other foundation in our nature. But there is no neceffity to recur to fo flender a foundation. What is juft now obferved, will lead us to a

a more rational account of thefe laws. They are no other but gradual refinements of the original law of nature, accommodating itfelf to the improved ftate of mankind. The law of nature, which is the law of our nature, cannot be ftationary. It muft vary with the nature of man, and confequently refine gradually as human nature refines. Putting an enemy to death in cold blood, is at prefent looked upon with diftafte and horror, and therefore is immoral; though it was not always fo in the fame degree. It is confidered as barbarous and inhuman, to fight with poifoned weapons, and therefore is more remarkably difapproved by the moral fenfe than it was originally. Influenced by general objects, we have enmity againft France, which is our natural enemy. But this enmity is not directed againft individuals; confcious, as we are, that it is the duty of fubjects to ferve their king and country. Therefore we treat prifoners of war with humanity. And now it is creeping in among civilized nations, that, in war, a cartel fhould be eftablifhed for exchange of prifoners. The function of an ambaffador has ever been held facred. To treat him ill was originally immoral; becaufe it is treating as an enemy the man who comes to us with friendly intentions. But the improved manners of latter times have refined upon the privileges of an ambaffador, and extended them far beyond what they were originally. It is very true, that thefe refinements

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of the law of nature gain ſtrength and firmneſs by cuſtom. Hereby they acquire the additional ſupport of common conſent. For as every nation truſts that theſe laws will be obſerved, it is upon that account a breach of faith to tranſgreſs them. But this is not peculiar to theſe particular inſtitutions which paſs under the name of the law of nations. There is the ſame adventitious foundation for all the laws of nature, which every man truſts will be obſerved, and upon that faith directs his conduct.

ESSAY

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ESSAY III.

Of LIBERTY *and* NECESSITY.

WHEN we apply our thoughts to the contemplation of final caufes, no fubject more readily prefents itfelf than the material world, which is ftamped with the brighteft characters of wifdom and goodnefs. The moral world, being lefs in view, hath been generally overlooked, though it yields not to the other in rich materials. Man's inward fyftem, accurately furveyed, will be found not lefs admirable than the external fyftem, of which he makes a part. The fubject is the more curious, that the traces of wifdom and defign difcernible in our internal frame, lie more out of common fight. They are touches, as it were, of a finer pencil, and of a nicer hand, than are difcovered in the material world. Thought is more fubtile than motion; and more of exquifite art is difplayed in the laws of voluntary action, than there is place for in adjufting the laws of mere matter.

AN extreme beautiful fcene opens to our view, when we confider with what propriety the ideas, feelings, and whole conftitution of the mind of man, correfpond to his prefent ftate. The impreffions he receives, and the notions he forms,

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forms, are accurately adapted to the uſeful purpoſes of life, though they correſpond not, in every inſtance, to the philoſophic truth of things. It was not intended that man ſhould make profound diſcoveries. He is framed to be more an active than a contemplative being; and his views are ſo adjuſted, as to be made ſubſervient to correctneſs of action rather than of belief. Several inſtances there are of perceptions, which, for want of a more proper term, muſt be called deceitful or deluſive *; becauſe they differ from the real truth. But man is not thereby in the leaſt miſled. On the contrary, the ends of life and action are better provided for by ſuch artifice, than if theſe perceptions were more exact copies of their objects.

In the material world, ſomewhat of this kind is generally admitted by modern philoſophers. It is found, that the repreſentations of external objects, and their qualities, conveyed by the ſenſes, differ ſometimes from what philoſophy diſcovers theſe objects and their qualities to be. Thus, a ſurface appears ſmooth and uniform, when its roughneſs is not ſuch as to be hurtful.

* I am ſenſible that theſe terms are unhappy, becauſe they are generally taken in a bad ſenſe. Let it only be conſidered, that in Latin there is a *dolus bonus* as well as a *dolus malus*. By the art of perſpective painting, a plain ſurface appears raiſed, and an object near the eye appears at a great diſtance. We are deceived, it is true; but the deceit contributes to our entertainment.

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The ſame ſurface, examined with a microſcope, is found to be full of ridges and hollows. Were man endued with a microſcopic eye, the bodies that ſurround him would appear not leſs different from what they do at preſent, than if he were tranſported into another world. His ideas, upon that ſuppoſition, would indeed be more agreeable to ſtrict truth, but they would be far leſs ſerviceable in common life. It is now univerſally admitted, that the qualities called ſecondary, which we by natural inſtinct attribute to matter, belong not properly to matter, nor exiſt really without us. It is a wonderful artifice, to preſent objects to us thus differently diſtinguiſhed; to mark them out to the eye in various attires, ſo as to be beſt known and remembered; and to paint on the fancy, gay and lively, grand and ſtriking, or ſober and melancholy ſcenes: whence many of our moſt agreeable and moſt affecting emotions ariſe. Colour, in particular, is a beauty which nature hath ſpread upon all her works. Yet all this beauty of colours, with which heaven and earth appear clothed, is a ſort of romance or illuſion. For among external objects, to which colours are attributed by ſenſe, there is really no other diſtinction than what ariſeth from a difference in the ſize and arrangement of the conſtituent parts, whereby the rays of light are reflected or refracted in ſuch different ways, as to produce in the mind a peculiar perception, which is termed *colour*. From this, and

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and other inſtances of the ſame kind which might be given, it appears, that our perceptions, ſometimes, are leſs accommodated to the truth of things, than to the end for which our ſenſes are intended. Nature, at the ſame time, hath provided a remedy; for ſhe ſeldom or never leaves us without means of diſcovering the deception, and arriving at the truth. And it is wonderful, that even when we act upon theſe deceitful impreſſions, we are not betrayed into any thing that is hurtful. On the contrary, life and action are better provided for, and the ends of our being fulfilled to more advantage, than if we conducted ourſelves by rigid truth.

Let us carry on this ſpeculation from the material to the moral world, in order to examine, whether there may not be here alſo analogous inſtances of deluſive impreſſions. This will lead us into an unbeaten track. If, in following this track, the reader ſhall ſtumble upon any object that is altogether new or ſingular, let him guard againſt ſurpriſe, and ſuſpend a final judgment, till he have leiſurely reviewed the whole.

That nothing can happen without a cauſe, is a principle embraced by all men, the illiterate and ignorant as well as the learned. Nothing that happens is conceived as happening of itſelf, but as an *effect* produced by ſome other thing. However ignorant of the cauſe, we notwithſtanding

ing conclude, that every event muſt have a cauſe. We ſhould perhaps be at a loſs to deduce this principle from any premiſſes, by a chain of reaſoning. But perception affords conviction, where reaſon leaves us in the dark. We perceive the propoſition to be true. And indeed a ſentiment common to all, muſt be founded on the common nature of all. Curioſity is one of the earlieſt emotions that are diſcovered in children; and about nothing are they more curious, than to have cauſes and reaſons given them, why ſuch a thing happened, or how it came about. Hiſtorians and politicians make it their chief concern, to trace the cauſes of actions, the moſt myſterious not excepted. Be an event ever ſo extraordinary, the ſenſe of its being an effect, is not in the leaſt weakened, even with the vulgar; who, rather than aſſign no cauſe, recur to the operation of inviſible powers. What is a cauſe with reſpect to its proper effect, is conſidered as an effect with reſpect to ſome prior cauſe, and ſo backward, without end. Events thus viewed, in a chain of cauſes and effects, ſhould naturally be conſidered, one would think, as neceſſary and fixed: for the relation betwixt a cauſe and its effect implies ſomewhat preciſe and determinate, and leads our thoughts to what muſt be, and cannot be otherways than it is.

THAT we have ſuch a ſenſe as is above deſcribed, cannot be controverted; and yet, when we

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we ſearch farther into human nature, a ſenſe of an oppoſite kind is diſcovered, a ſenſe of chance or contingency in events; which is not leſs deeply rooted in our nature than the former. However ſtrange it may appear, that man ſhould be compoſed of ſuch inconſiſtencies, the fact muſt notwithſtanding be admitted. This ſenſe of chance or contingency is moſt conſpicuous when we look forward to future events. Some things we indeed always conſider as certain or neceſſary; ſuch as, the revolution of ſeaſons, and the riſing and ſetting of the ſun. Theſe, as experience teacheth, are regulated by fixed laws. But many things appear to us looſe, fortuitous, uncertain; uncertain not only with reſpect to us, on account of our ignorance of the cauſe, but uncertain in themſelves, or not tied down, and predetermined to fall out, by any invariable law. We naturally make a diſtinction betwixt things that *muſt be*, and things that *may be*, or *may not be*. Thus, with reſpect to future events, we have a ſenſe of chance, or of contingency, which ſeems to baniſh the other ſenſe, of the dependency of events upon preciſe and determinate cauſes.

When we conſider in what view our own actions are perceived by the mind, there is ſomewhat equally ſtrange and myſterious. It is admitted by all men, that we act from motives. The plain man, as well as the philoſopher, perceives

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ceives the connection betwixt an action and its motive to be so strong, that, from this perception, both of them reason with full confidence about the future actions of others. That an avaritious man will take every fair opportunity of acquiring riches, is as little doubted, as that rain and sun-shine will make plants grow. The motive of gain is judged to operate, as certainly and infallibly, upon his temper, as heat and moisture upon the soil, each to produce its proper effect. If we are uncertain what part any particular man will act, the uncertainty ariseth, not from our doubting whether he will act from a motive; for this is never called in question. It ariseth from our not being able to judge, what the motive is, which, in his present circumstances, will prevail. It being then a natural sense, that actions are so connected with their proper motives, as necessarily to arise from the temper, character, and other circumstances of the agent, it should seem, that all the train of human actions would occur to our minds as necessary and fixed. Yet human actions do not always appear to us in this light. Previous to any particular action, we indeed always judge, that it will be the necessary result of some motive. But in a retrospect the judgment seems to vary. Hath a man done what is wrong and shameful? we accuse, and we condemn him, for acting the wrong and shameful part. We conceive that he had power to act otherways, and

and *ought* to have acted otherways. The whole train of our perceptions, in a moment, accommodate themselves to the supposition of his being a free agent.

These are phænomena in human nature of a singular kind; perceptions which clash with each other; every past event admitted to have a necessary cause, and yet many future events supposed contingent; every future action admitted to be necessary, and yet many actions, in an after view, judged free. Our perceptions are no doubt the test of truth; which is so evident, that, in many instances, no other means are afforded us for coming at the truth. The few exceptions that are discovered by reason or experience, serve the more to confirm the general rule. But the perceptions we have now laid open can be no test of truth; because, in contradictory propositions, truth cannot lie on both sides. There is no other way to get out of this labyrinth of doubts and difficulties, but to enter upon a strict survey both of the material and moral world, which may possibly lead to a discovery of what is really the truth of the matter. Let us then proceed, with impartiality and attention, to inquire what we are to believe concerning contingency in events, and liberty or necessity in human actions: whether our perceptions can be reconciled to each other, and reconciled to truth; or whether there be not here some

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ſome of thoſe deluſive perceptions which, in other inſtances above hinted, belong to our nature.

TAKING a view of the material world, we find all things there proceeding in a fixed and ſettled train of cauſes and effects. It is a point which admits not of diſpute, that all the changes produced in matter, and all the different modifications it aſſumes, are the reſult of fixed laws. Every effect is ſo preciſely determined, that no other effect could, in ſuch circumſtances, have poſſibly reſulted from the operation of the cauſe: which holds even in the minuteſt changes of the different elements, as all philoſophers admit. Caſual and fluctuating as theſe ſeem, even their ſlighteſt variations are the reſult of pre-eſtabliſhed laws. There is a chain of cauſes and effects which hang one upon another, running through this whole ſyſtem; and not the ſmalleſt link of the chain can be broken, without altering the whole conſtitution of things, or ſuſpending the regular operation of the laws of nature. Here then, in the material world, there is nothing that can be called *contingent*; nothing that is left looſe; but every thing muſt be preciſely what it is, and be found in that ſtate in which we find it.

IN the moral world, this neceſſary chain of cauſes and effects appears not ſo clearly. Man is the actor here. He is endued with will,

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and he acts from choice. He hath a power of beginning motion, which is subject to no mechanical laws; and therefore he is not under what is called physical necessity. He hath appetites and passions which prompt him to their respective gratifications: but he is under no necessity of blindly submitting to their impulse. For reason hath a power of restraint. It suggests motives from the cool views of good and evil. He deliberates upon these. In consequence of his deliberation he chuseth: and here, if any where, lies our liberty. Let us examine to what this liberty amounts. That motives have some influence in determining the mind, is certain; and that they have this influence in different degrees, is equally certain. The sense of honour and gratitude, for example, are powerful motives with a man to serve a friend. Let the man's private interest concur; and the motives become more powerful. Add the certain prospect of poverty, shame, or bodily suffering, if he shall act a different part; and you leave him no choice; the motives to action are rendered irresistible. Motives being once allowed to have a determining influence in any degree, it is easy to suppose the influence so augmented, whether of the same or of accumulated motives, as to leave little freedom to the mind, or rather none at all. In such a case, there is no denying that we are under a necessity to act. And though this, to be sure, is not physical necessity, as arising,

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ſing, not from the laws of matter, but from the conſtitution of the mind; yet in this caſe the conſequence is not leſs certain, fixed, and unavoidable, than in that of phyſical neceſſity. So evident this is, that, in ſome inſtances, moral and phyſical neceſſity ſeem to coincide, or ſcarcely to be diſtinguiſhed. A criminal walks to the ſcaffold in the midſt of his guards. No man will deny that he is under an abſolute neceſſity in this caſe. Why? becauſe he knows, that if he refuſe to go, they will drag him. I aſk, Is this a phyſical, or a moral neceſſity? The anſwer, at firſt view, is not obvious; for the diſtinction betwixt theſe two ſeems loſt. And yet, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is only a moral neceſſity: for it is the force of a motive which determines the criminal to walk to the ſcaffold; to wit, that reſiſtance is vain, becauſe the guards can neither be reſiſted nor corrupted. The idea of neceſſity, however, in the minds of the ſpectators, when they view the criminal in this ſituation, is not leſs ſtrong, than if they ſaw him bound, and carried on a ſledge. Nothing is more common, than to talk of an action which one muſt do, and cannot avoid. He was compelled to it, we ſay, and it was impoſſible he could act otherwiſe; when, at the ſame time, all the compulſion we mean, is only the application of ſome very ſtrong motive to the mind. This ſhows, that, in the judgment of all mankind, a motive may, in certain circumſtances, carry in it the

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power of rendering an action neceſſary. In other words, we expect ſuch an action in conſequence of ſuch a motive, with equal confidence, as when we expect to ſee a ſtone fall to the ground when it is dropped from the hand.

THIS, it will be ſaid, may hold in ſome inſtances, but not in all. For, in the greater part of human actions, there is really a ſenſe of liberty. When the mind heſitates betwixt two things, examines and compares, and at laſt reſolves, is there any compulſion or neceſſity here? No compulſion, it is granted; but as to neceſſity, let us pauſe, and examine more accurately. The reſolution being taken, the choice being made, upon what is it founded? Certainly upon ſome reaſon or motive, however ſilent or weak. No man in his ſenſes ever made choice of one thing before another, without being able to aſſign a reaſon, weak or ſtrong, for the preference. It would be a pregnant mark of idiocy, to ſay that one has come to a reſolution and cannot ſay why. If this be an undoubted fact, it follows of conſequence, that the determination muſt reſult from that motive which has the greateſt influence for the time; or from what appears the beſt and moſt eligible upon the whole. If motives be different with regard to ſtrength and influence, which is plainly the caſe; it is involved in the very idea of the ſtrongeſt motive, that it muſt have the ſtrongeſt effect in determining the mind.

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mind. This can no more be doubted, than that, in a balance, the greater weight muſt turn the ſcale.

HERE perhaps we ſhall be interrupted. Men are not always rational in their determinations: they often act from whim, paſſion, humour, motives looſe and variable as the wind. This is admitted. But ſuppoſe the motive which determines the mind, to be as whimſical and unreaſonable as you pleaſe; its influence, however, is equally neceſſary with that of the moſt rational motive. An indolent man, for example, is incited to action, by the ſtrongeſt conſiderations, which reaſon, virtue, intereſt, can ſuggeſt. He wavers and heſitates; at laſt reſiſts them all, and folds his arms. What is the cauſe of this odd choice? Is it that he is leſs under the power of motives than another man? By no means. The love of reſt is his motive, his prevailing paſſion: and this is as effectual to fix him in his place, as the love of glory or riches are, to render active the vain or the covetous. In ſhort, if motives be not under our power or direction, which is confeſſedly the fact, we can, at bottom, have no liberty. In acting by blind impulſe or inſtinct, which is ſometimes the caſe, there is obviouſly no liberty; and with regard to matters which admit deliberation and choice, ſuch is our conſtitution, that we cannot exert a ſingle action, but with ſome view, aim, or purpoſe. At the

 ſame

ſame time, when two oppoſite motives preſent themſelves, we have not the power of an arbitrary choice. We are neceſſarily determined to prefer the ſtronger motive.

It is true, that, in diſputing upon this ſubject of human liberty, a man may attempt to ſhow, that motives have no neceſſary influence, by eating perhaps the worſt apple that is before him, or, in ſome ſuch trifling inſtance, preferring an obviouſly leſs good to a greater. But is it not plain, that the humor of ſhowing that he can act againſt motives, is, in this caſe, the very motive of the whimſical preference?

A comparison inſtituted betwixt moral and phyſical neceſſity may poſſibly throw additional light upon this ſubject. Where the motives to any action are perfectly full, cogent, and clear, the ſenſe of liberty, as we ſhowed before, entirely vaniſheth. In other caſes, where the field of choice is wider, and where oppoſite motives counterbalance and work againſt each other, the mind fluctuates for a while, and feels itſelf more looſe: but, in the end, muſt as neceſſarily be determined to the ſide of the moſt powerful motive, as the balance, after ſeveral vibrations, muſt incline to the ſide of the preponderating weight. The laws of mind, and the laws of matter, are in this reſpect perfectly ſimilar; though, in making the compariſon, we are apt

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to deceive ourfelves. In forming a notion of phyfical neceffity, we feldom think of any force, but what hath vifibly a full effect. A man in prifon, or tied to a poft, muft remain there. If he be dragged along, he cannot refift. Whereas motives, which, from the higheft to the loweft, are very different, do not always produce fenfible effects. Yet, when the comparifon is accurately inftituted, the very fame thing holds in the actions of matter. A weak motive makes fome impreffion: but, in oppofition to one more powerful, it has no effect to determine the mind. In the precife fame manner, a fmall force will not overcome a great refiftance; nor the weight of an ounce in one fcale, counterbalance a pound in the other. Comparing together the actions of mind and of matter, fimilar caufes will, in both equally, produce fimilar effects.

BUT admitting all that hath been contended for, of the neceffary influence of motives, to bring on the choice or laft judgment of the underftanding, it is urged by Dr Clarke, that man is ftill a free agent, becaufe he hath a power of acting, or beginning motion, according to his will. In this he placeth human liberty, that motives are not phyfical efficient caufes of motion *. We agree with the Doctor, that the im-

* Vid. his demonftration of the being and attributes, p. 565. fol. edit. and his anfwer to Collins *paffim*.

mediate

mediate efficient caufe of motion, is not the motive, but the will to act. No perfon ever held, that the pleafure of a fummer-evening, when a man goes abroad into the fields, is the immediate caufe of the motion of his limbs. But what doth this obfervation avail, when the prevailing motive, the will to act, and the action itfelf, are three things infeparably linked together? The motive, according to his own conceffion, neceffarily determines the will; and the will neceffarily produces the action, unlefs it be obftructed by fome foreign force. Is not the action, by confequence, as neceffary, as the will to act; though the motive be the immediate caufe of the will only, and not of the action, or beginning of motion? What doth this author gain, by fhowing, that we have a power of beginning motion, if that power never is, never can be, exerted, unlefs in confequence of fome volition or choice, which is neceffarily caufed? "But," fays he, "it is only a moral neceffity "which is produced by motives; and a moral "neceffity is no neceffity at all, being confiftent "with the higheft liberty." If thefe words have any meaning, the difpute is at an end. For moral neceffity, being that fort of neceffity which affects the mind, and phyfical neceffity that which affects matter, it is plain, that, in all reafonings concerning human liberty, moral neceffity, and no other, is meant to be eftablifhed. The laws of action, we fay, which refpect the human

human mind, are as fixed as thofe which refpect matter. The different nature of thefe laws occafions the fixed confequences of the one to be called *moral*, and of the other to be called *phyfical* neceffity. But the idea of *neceffary*, *certain*, *unavoidable*, equally agrees to both. And to fay that moral neceffity is no neceffity at all, becaufe it is not phyfical neceffity, which is all that the Doctor's argument amounts to, is no better, than to argue, that phyfical neceffity is no neceffity at all, becaufe it is not moral neceffity.

ONE great fource of confufion, in reflecting upon this fubject, feems to be, our not diftinguifhing betwixt *neceffity* and *conftraint*. In common language, thefe are ufed as equivalent terms; but they ought to be diftinguifhed when we treat of this fubject. A perfon having a ftrong defire to efcape, remains in prifon becaufe the doors are guarded. Finding his keepers gone, he makes his efcape. His efcape now is as neceffary, *i. e.* as certain and infallible a confequence of the circumftances he finds himfelf in, as his confinement was before; though in the one cafe there is conftraint, in the other none. When, being under no conftraint, we act according to our inclination and choice, our actions, in one fenfe, may juftly be reckoned free. But in another fenfe they are ftrictly neceffary; becaufe every

every inclination and choice is unavoidably caufed or occafioned by the prevailing motive.

The preceding reafonings may perhaps make a ftronger impreffion, by being reduced into a fhort argument, after the following manner. When a being acts merely by inftinct, and without any view to confequences, every one muft fee, and acknowledge, that the being acts neceffarily. Though not fo obvious, the cafe comes to the fame, where an action is exerted in order to bring about fome end or event. This end or event muft be the object of defire; for no man in his fenfes, who ufes means in order to a certain end, but muft wifh or defire the means to be effectual. If we do not defire to accomplifh an event, we cannot poffibly act in order to bring it about. Defire and action are then intimately connected; fo intimately, that no action can ever be exerted where there is no antecedent defire. The event is firft the object of defire, and then we act in order to bring it about. This being fo, it follows clearly, that our actions cannot be free in any fenfe oppofed to their being morally neceffary. Our defires obvioufly are not under our own power, but are raifed by means that depend not upon us. And if our defires are not under our power, neither can our actions be under our power. Liberty, as oppofed to moral neceffity, if it have any meaning, muft fignify a power to act in contradiction to defire;

or,

or, in other words, a power to act in contradiction to any view, purpose, or design, we can have in acting; which power, besides that no man was ever conscious of it, seems to be an absurdity altogether inconsistent with a rational nature.

WITH regard to things supposed so equal as to found no preference of one to another, it is not necessary to enter into any intricate inquiry, how the mind in such cases is directed. Though it should be admitted, that where there is no sort of motive to influence the mind, it may act arbitrarily; this would not affect the preceding reasonings; in which the existence of a motive being once supposed, we have shown the mind to be necessarily determined. Objects so balanced one against another, with perfect equality, if such instances are to be found, must be so few, and in matters so trivial, (as in the common instance of eggs), that they cannot have any considerable influence upon the chain of causes and effects. It may well admit of a doubt, whether the mind be, in any case, left altogether destitute of a motive to determine its choice betwixt two objects. For though the objects should in themselves be perfectly equal, yet various circumstances, arising from minute unobserved specialties of fancy, custom, proximity of place, *&c.* may turn the scale in favour of one of the objects. In this state of suspense, betwixt two things

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things equally balanced, the uneaſineſs one feels, ſearching and caſting about for ſome ground of choice, proves, that to act altogether arbitrarily is unnatural, and that our conſtitution fits us to be determined by motives.

As there is ſcarce room for overdoing in explaining the doctrine of neceſſity, which in ſome particulars goes croſs to the common notions of mankind; I ſhall endeavour to ſet it in a clear light, by oppoſing it to phyſical neceſſity. Formerly I ſhowed their reſemblance, in the article of neceſſity: I now again compare them, to ſhow in what circumſtances they differ. In the firſt place, a man under the influence of a phyſical cauſe is paſſive: he is acted upon, and doth not act. Under the influence of a moral cauſe, he himſelf acts; and the moral cauſe operates, by influencing and determining him to act. Secondly, a phyſical cauſe is generally exerted againſt a man's inclination and will. If the force applied overcome his reſiſtance, he muſt ſubmit; and in this caſe, the neceſſity is involuntary. It is conſtraint or coaction. Phyſical neceſſity, however, is not always involuntary. Force may be applied to bring about an event which is agreeable. In this caſe the neceſſity is *voluntary*. A ſhip having, in a ſtorm, loſt its maſts and rigging, is driven towards the port by a violent wind: the ſeamen being under the power of a phyſical neceſſity, are entirely paſſive; but their deſire

desire is to be on shore. The necessity they are under, corresponds with their desire, and is thereby *voluntary*. Elias was translated to heaven in a chariot of fire. The necessity was physical, but it was also voluntary. On the other hand, moral necessity is always *voluntary*. A moral cause operates not by force or coaction, but by solicitation and persuasion. It applies to the judgment, and generally affords conviction. But whether or not, it never fails to succeed with the sensitive part of our nature, by raising desire; and when a man is under no restraint, he naturally and necessarily proceeds to action, in order to accomplish his desire. The action is performed as a means to an end. It is directed by will, and is in the strictest sense voluntary. It is at the same time necessary: for such is the nature of man, that desire always determines the will. Thirdly, physical necessity, except when voluntary, which rarely happens, is extremely disagreeable. But moral necessity, which is always voluntary, is, for that reason, always agreeable. To nothing is human nature more averse than to constraint. On the other hand, our condition is always agreeable when we enjoy the freedom of our own will. Fourthly, a man impelled by a physical cause, and acted upon involuntarily, must be sensible of the force and coaction, and consequently of the necessity he is under. A moral cause is in a very different condition. As it influences by persuasion, and not

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force, it may well be ſuppoſed to operate, without diſcovering itſelf to be a neceſſary cauſe. And, in fact, that it ſo operates, is evident from conſtant experience. We have no intuitive perception, nor direct conſciouſneſs, of the neceſſary connection that links will to deſire. This connection would to us be a dead ſecret, were it not brought to light by a long and painful reaſoning. And hence the ignorance, almoſt univerſal, of our being neceſſary agents.

And this luckily ſuggeſts a thought, which is, to compare moral neceſſity with a power to act againſt motives, termed commonly *liberty of indifference*. To convince men that they are neceſſary agents, is, I am ſenſible, a difficult undertaking. Voluntary neceſſity is in the courſe of life never felt; and for this reaſon, we find in common language no term for it. It is not otherways diſcoverable, but by deep thinking, and by a long chain of abſtract reaſoning. It is therefore known to philoſophers only, who give it the name of *moral neceſſity*. Hence it is, that when we talk of neceſſity, the groſs of mankind are apt to take the alarm; becauſe they can form no idea of neceſſity, different from that of conſtraint, where the neceſſity is involuntary. We have thus natural prejudice and prepoſſeſſion to ſtruggle with, which are not to be ſurmounted, till the heart be pre-engaged to receive a favourable impreſſion. The compariſon propoſed will,

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will, I am hopeful, place moral neceſſity in a light that will make it be generally reliſhed. Moral neceſſity, as has been obſerved, is always agreeable. An action, provided it be voluntary, is not the leſs agreeable by being neceſſary. So far from it, that the neceſſity and agreeableneſs are inſeparable, as proceeding from the ſame cauſe. An action is neceſſary, becauſe it is directed by deſire: it is at the ſame time agreeable, becauſe it tends to the accompliſhment of deſire. And from this it clearly follows, that the greater the neceſſity is, the greater muſt alſo be the pleaſure. And now to the other member of the compariſon. It is difficult to form a conception of a power to act, without motives, or any thing to influence the mind. But ſuppoſing ſuch a power, it muſt be devoid of all pleaſure or ſatisfaction, even when exerciſed without croſſing any appetite or paſſion. It is ſtill more difficult to form a conception of a power to act in contradiction to motives, and conſequently in contradiction to deſire; for theſe are inſeparable. But ſuch power, if it can exiſt, muſt be extremely diſagreeable: for here a man acting in contradiction to his deſires, muſt, of courſe, render himſelf miſerable. In this circumſtance, liberty of indifference coincides with phyſical neceſſity. For when a man lies open to have his moſt rational and beſt-concerted ſchemes diſappointed, it comes to the ſame in point of diſtreſs, whether the diſappointment be

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occafioned by an internal or an external caufe. Would any man defire fuch a power, could he obtain it by a wifh; a power which would form a contradiction in his nature, and be in a great meafure fubverfive of his happinefs?

But now a thought comes acrofs the mind, which demands attention. How hard is the lot of the human fpecies, to be thus tied down, and fixed by motives; fubjected by a neceffary law to the choice of evil, if evil happen to be the prevailing motive, or if it miflead us under the form of our greateft intereft or good! How happy to have had a free independent power of acting, contrary to motives, when the prevailing motive hath a bad tendency! By this power we might have pufhed our way to virtue and happinefs, whatever motives were fuggefted by vice and folly to draw us back; or we might, by arbitrary will, have refrained from acting the bad part, though all the power of motives concurred to urge us on. So far well. But let us fee whither this will carry us. This arbitrary power being once fuppofed, may it not be exerted againft good motives as well as bad ones? If it do us good by accident, in reftraining us from vice, may it not do us ill by accident, in reftraining us from virtue? and fo fhall we not be thrown loofe altogether? At this rate, we could not rely on any man. Promifes, oaths, vows, would be vain; for nothing can ever

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ever bind or fix one who is influenced by no motive. The diſtinction of characters would be at an end: for a perſon cannot have a character, who hath no fixed nor uniform principles of action. Nay, moral virtue itſelf, and all the force of law, rule, and obligation, would, upon this hypotheſis, be nothing. For no creature can be the ſubject of rational or moral government, whoſe actions, by the conſtitution of its nature, are independent of motives, and whoſe will is capricious and arbitrary. To exhort, to inſtruct, to promiſe, to threaten, would be to no purpoſe. In ſhort, ſuch a creature, if ſuch could exiſt, would be a moſt bizarre and unaccountable being; a mere abſurdity in nature, whoſe exiſtence could ſerve no end. Were we ſo conſtituted, as always to be determined by the moral ſenſe, even againſt the ſtrongeſt countermotives; this would be conſiſtent with human nature, becauſe it would preſerve entire the connection that, by an unalterable law, is eſtabliſhed betwixt the will and the prevailing motive. But to break this connection altogether; to introduce an unbounded arbitrary liberty, in oppoſition to which motives ſhould not have influence, would be, inſtead of amending, to deform and unhinge the human conſtitution. No reaſon have we therefore to regret, that we find the will neceſſarily ſubjected to motives; unleſs we would rather have man to be a whimſical and ridiculous, than a rational and moral being.

THUS far have we advanced in our argument, that all human actions proceed in a fixed and neceſſary train. Man being what he is, a creature endued with a certain degree of underſtanding, certain paſſions and principles, and placed in certain circumſtances, it is impoſſible he ſhould will or chuſe otherways than in fact he wills or chuſes. His mind is paſſive in receiving impreſſions of things as good or ill: according to theſe impreſſions, the laſt judgment of the underſtanding is neceſſarily formed; which the will, if conſidered as different from the laſt judgment of the underſtanding, neceſſarily obeys, as is fully ſhown; and the external action is neceſſarily connected with the will, or the mind's final determination to act.

IN the courſe of this reaſoning, we have abſtracted from all controverſies about divine preſcience and decree; though in fact, from what hath been proved, it appears, that the Divine Being decrees all future events: for he who gave ſuch a nature to his creatures, and placed them in ſuch circumſtances, as that a certain train of actions behoved neceſſarily to follow; he, I ſay, who did this, and who muſt have foreſeen the conſequences, did certainly reſolve or decree, that events ſhould fall out, and men ſhould act as they do. Preſcience indeed is not, properly ſpeaking, any cauſe of events. For events do not happen, becauſe they are foreſeen; but

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but becaufe they are certainly to happen, therefore they are capable of being forefeen. Though prefcience doth not caufe, yet it undoubtedly fuppofes, the certain futurition (as fchoolmen fpeak) of events. And were there not caufes which render the exiftence of future events certain, it would involve a contradiction, to maintain, that future events could be certainly forefeen. But I avoid carrying the reader any further into fuch thorny difputes.

The fum of what we have difcovered concerning the impreffions we have of contingency in events, and liberty in actions, is this. Comparing together the moral and the material world, every thing is as much the refult of eftablifhed laws in the one as in the other. There is nothing in the whole univerfe that can properly be called contingent, that may be, or may not be; nothing loofe and fluctuating in any part of nature; but every motion in the material, and every determination and action in the moral world, are directed by immutable laws; fo that, whilft thefe laws remain in their force, not the fmalleft link of the univerfal chain of caufes and effects can be broken, nor any one thing be otherways than it it *.

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* As to an objection, of making God the author of fin, which may feem to arife from our fyftem, it is rather popular than philofophical. Sin, or moral turpitude, lies in the evil intention of him who commits it. It confifts in fome wrong or depraved affection

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The doctrine of universal necessity being thus laid open, and proved to be the true system of nature, we proceed to a most important speculation; which is, to consider how far it is consistent with our moral sentiments, and in particular with those of praise, blame, merit, demerit, guilt, &c. While we continue uncertain as to this point, we cannot have any just or accurate notion of morals. The doctrine of liberty and necessity is, in this view, worthy of great attention; and in this view chiefly was it undertaken. To find our actions governed by a law repugnant to the foregoing moral sentiments, which are natural and universal, would, in the human constitution, be a puzzling circumstance. It would argue a defect or inconsistence, not uncommon in works of art, but rare, if at all to be found, in any work of nature. And yet we have occasion to be alarmed, when we hear

fection supposed to be in the sinner. Now, the intention of the Deity is unerringly good. The end proposed by him is order and general happiness: and there is the greatest reason to believe, that all events are so directed by him, as to work towards this end. In the present system of things, some moral disorders are indeed included. No doubt, it is a considerable difficulty, how evil comes to be in the world, seeing God is perfectly good. But this difficulty is not peculiar to our doctrine; but recurs upon us at last with equal force, whatever hypothesis we embrace. For moral evil cannot exist, without being, at least, permitted by the Deity. And with regard to a first cause, PERMITTING is the same thing with CAUSING; since against his will nothing can possibly happen. All the schemes that have been contrived for answering this objection, are but the tortoise introduced to support the elephant. They put the difficulty a step further off, but never remove it.

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the advocates for liberty of indifference reaſon in the following manner. "If action (ſay they) "be neceſſary, and if we know it to be ſo, "what ground can there be for reprehenſion and "blame, for ſelf-condemnation and remorſe? "If a clock were ſenſible of its own motions, "knowing that they proceed according to ne-"ceſſary laws, could it find fault with itſelf for "ſtriking wrong? Would it not rather blame "the artiſt, who had ill adjuſted the wheels on "which its movements depend? They urge "accordingly, that, upon the ſyſtem of neceſſity, "the moral conſtitution of our nature is totally "overturned. There is an end to all the opera-"tions of conſcience about right and wrong. "Man is no longer a moral agent, nor the ſub-"ject of praiſe or blame for what he does." Suppoſing our actions to be ſubjected to the law of neceſſity, this is a ſtrong attack upon human nature; and better a thouſand times give up this ſyſtem we have been contending for, than acknowledge that man is incapable of morality. But let us not be raſh in relinquiſhing a ſyſtem that appears to be ſo well ſupported. Upon a narrower inſpection, it may poſſibly be diſcovered, that the moral ſenſe is concordant with neceſſity, and that the connection betwixt deſire and will is no obſtacle to approbation and diſapprobation, praiſe and blame. To have a juſt conception of this matter, we muſt examine carefully by what particular circumſtances theſe moral

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moral ſentiments are occaſioned. In this view, I obſerve, in the firſt place, that an action is always approved when it proceeds from a virtuous motive, and conſequently hath a good aim or tendency. The connection betwixt the motive and the action, ſo far from diminiſhing, is the very circumſtance that conſtitutes the morality of the action. The greater the influence of the motive, the greater the virtue of the actor, and the ſtronger our approbation. Do we not even praiſe one for modeſty or ſweetneſs of temper? The Deity is an object of the higheſt praiſe, for this very reaſon that he is neceſſarily good. On the other hand, an action is diſapproved, when it proceeds from a vitious motive; and the more influence the motive had on the agent, the greater his vice, and the ſtronger our diſapprobation. We are obviouſly ſo conſtituted, as to blame ourſelves, even when we have the cleareſt conviction of inability to behave better. A coward is conſcious that he has no heart to encounter danger, and that he will certainly turn his back upon the approach of an enemy. Though he knows that he cannot help this weakneſs, yet he accuſes and blames himſelf. He cannot help cenſuring himſelf in this manner, more than he can help his weakneſs, or more than he can help being aſhamed of it. Upon the ſame foundation are evidently built our notions of rewards and puniſhments. If virtue ought to be rewarded, that man hath the beſt

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claim, who is virtuous by the conſtitution of his nature, and upon whom a vitious motive never hath the ſmalleſt influence. On the other hand, no man is more guilty, or more deſerving of puniſhment, than he who, by his nature, hath the ſtrongeſt propenſity to vice, and upon whom virtuous motives have little or no effect.

But, in the foregoing inſtances, it will be urged, that the man we praiſe or blame had it in his power to act a different part; that we praiſe him for a benevolent action, or blame him for one that is ſordid, becauſe ſuch action was his choice when he could have abſtained from it. I admit, that in all our moral ſentiments a power is ſuppoſed ſuch as is here deſcribed. But when we attentively examine the nature of this power, we find it to be a phyſical power only, *viz.* a power to act according to our will, not a power to act againſt it. A man, in doing what is worthy of praiſe or blame, muſt be free from external coaction, and at liberty to follow his own choice. This power or freedom, which is perfectly conſiſtent with moral or voluntary neceſſity, is evidently the only power which morality requires. Suppoſing only a man is free to act as he pleaſes, we currently praiſe or blame him for the part he acts, without requiring any other condition. We demand not that he ſhould have a power to act in contradiction to his own deſire and choice. The idea of ſuch power enters not into

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into any of our moral ſentiments: on the contrary, if the nature of any individual be either ſo good or ſo bad, as that he could not avoid being determined to the choice he made, he on that very account is the more praiſed or blamed.

I ENFORCE this doctrine, by conſidering the operation of conſcience with reſpect to guilt. I have done a bad action which fills me with remorſe. The firſt ſentiment that ariſes, is, that I *ought* to have done otherways, or that it was my *duty* to have done otherways; which in effect is blaming myſelf, or my nature, for not being ſufficiently influenced by duty. Another ſentiment alſo ariſes, that I *might* or *could* have done otherways. After the ſtricteſt analyſis of this ſentiment, it will be found to relate to phyſical power merely. "I was compelled by no force; I could have acted a different part had I been ſo inclined; and this unhappy action was my own choice and voluntary deed."

WE then find, that the moral ſentiments have their full ſwing, without ſuppoſing liberty of indifference, or any thing like a power to act againſt our own will. Nor can I even conceive, that ſuch power, ſuppoſing it real, could add any ſpring or force to the moral ſenſe. When a man commits a crime, let us ſuppoſe, for a moment, he could have reſiſted the prevailing motive;

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tive ; the queſtion upon this occurs, Why did he not reſiſt ? why did he yield to the vitious motive, and bring upon himſelf ſhame and miſery ? The anſwer muſt be, for no other can be given, That his diſpoſition was bad, that he is a wretch, a miſcreant, and deſerves to be deteſted and abhorred. Here we clearly ſee, upon the preſent ſuppoſition, as well as upon that of neceſſity, that praiſe and blame reſt ultimately upon the diſpoſition or frame of mind ; that a virtuous diſpoſition is the only object of praiſe, and a vitious diſpoſition the only object of blame. It is therefore a fond conceit, to eſpouſe the chimerical ſyſtem of liberty of indifference, as neceſſary to explain our moral ſentiments. Theſe ſentiments are perfectly concordant with the ſyſtem of voluntary neceſſity ; and ſuppoſing liberty of indifference, we cannot even conceive how it ſhould make man a more proper ſubject of moral ſentiments, than in fact he is, conſidered as a neceſſary being.

I PROCEED one ſtep farther ; which is, to make out, that liberty of indifference, ſo far from being implied in the moral ſentiments of praiſe and blame, would in ſome meaſure cramp the moral ſenſe, and blunt the ſentiments ariſing from it. In order to put this matter in its true light, I muſt ſtate a caſe. A man tempted to betray his truſt, deliberates, wavers, but at laſt rejects the offered bribe, and adheres to his duty.

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Another man, without the leaſt deliberation, rejects with diſdain the bribe, and conſiders the offer as a high injury. Which of theſe perſons is the moſt virtuous, and which of them merits the greateſt praiſe, no one is at a loſs to ſay. This familiar example is given to illuſtrate the influence that liberty of indifference muſt have on our moral ſentiments. A power of reſiſting the ſtrongeſt motives, muſt imply a wavering and fluctuation of the mind, betwixt the motives, and the power of reſiſtance; for, by the ſuppoſition, the mind has both to chuſe on. If ſo, a man endued with liberty of indifference is juſtly repreſented by the perſon firſt deſcribed, fluctuating and wavering betwixt a virtuous and vitious motive; and upon that account the actions of a man endued with liberty of indifference, will, in the eſtimation of all mankind, be leſs praiſe or blame worthy, than the actions of a man who is unerringly directed by the ſtrongeſt motive without wavering or fluctuating. And indeed, after all, it would ſound extremely harſh, that a good or an evil tendency, ſo ſlight as to leave power in the mind to reſiſt it, ſhould be an object of greater praiſe or blame, than a tendency ſo ſtrong as to leave no power of reſiſtance. Viewing the matter in this light, it evidently appears, that a power to act againſt motives, ſo far from being neceſſary to found praiſe or blame, would, if it really did exiſt, detract conſiderably from both.

HAVING

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Having ſhown that our moral ſentiments are perfectly concordant with moral neceſſity, I urge, in the next place, that no other ſyſtem of action, allowing the utmoſt liberty of ſuppoſition, can lay a better foundation for praiſe or blame, or any moral ſentiment, than the ſyſtem of voluntary neceſſity doth. It is, I hope, made evident, that liberty of indifference, or a power to act againſt motives, lays not ſo good a foundation; and in place of it, I cannot imagine another ſyſtem that will better anſwer the purpoſe. In judging of moral ſentiments, an error is extremely apt to creep in. We have a clear conception, that a man under coaction or external force, can neither be praiſed nor blamed for what he doth. He had not power to do otherways, and therefore he is innocent. This reflection we unwarily apply to moral neceſſity, not adverting to the ſubſtantial difference betwixt a voluntary and involuntary action. A man in his own conſcience is made accountable for every voluntary action. It is not regarded, whether he had or had not a power of reſiſtance; and we have ſhown, that this circumſtance ought not to be regarded. And indeed, as obſerved above, a power of reſiſtance, were it the ſyſtem of nature, ſo far from contributing to praiſe or blame, would have no other effect but to leſſen both.

The ſtrong prepoſſeſſion in favour of liberty of

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of indifference, ariseth, I am sensible, from a laudable cause. It is conceived to be more consistent with our sentiments of morality, than the system of necessity is. This opinion, when examined, is found to be erroneous. A man who is necessarily good or bad by the constitution of his nature, deserves more to be praised or blamed than he would be, supposing him to have a power of resisting all motives, and acting against them. And indeed, as every action doth in effect proceed from an internal cause, *viz.* a virtuous or vitious temper, praise or blame must ultimately rest upon this cause, and not upon the external action, or the power of acting. This consideration ought to make us chearfully abandon a system which is chimerical, and which at the same time is less concordant with the moral sense, than the true system of necessity is.

AND this leads me to inquire, whence the delusive notion of liberty of indifference? for surely it could not be generally espoused without some foundation. We have had occasion to observe, that we have no intuitive perception or direct consciousness of our being necessary agents; and that this branch of our nature is hid from the generality of mankind. The knowledge of it, not being necessary for our well-being, is left to be gathered by reasoning and reflection. We are however intuitively conscious of freedom of action, and of a power existing

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in us to act according to our will and choice. This power is far from being the same with that of willing and chusing in an arbitrary manner; and yet, in superficial thinking, we are apt to confound these two powers, and to consider them as the same. Power indeed is with mankind a favourite idea, and we are prone to adopt any system which seems to extend it. The operations of the will, besides, are subtile and delicate; and, with the bulk of mankind, a power to chuse, and a power to act according to that choice, though essentially distinct, pass readily the one for the other.

HAVING discovered, that the moral sense is perfectly concordant with moral or voluntary necessity; as also, that we have no such thing naturally as a sense of power to act in contradiction to our inclination and choice; I proceed to a more particular examination of the sense of contingency, in the view chiefly to discover, if possible, whether it have any deeper root in our nature, than the erroneous conviction of liberty of indifference. In our ordinary train of thinking, it is certain, that all events appear not to us as necessary. A multitude of events seem to be under our power to cause or to prevent; and we readily make a distinction betwixt events that are necessary, *i.e.* that must be, and events that are contingent, *i.e.* that may be or may not be. This distinction is void of truth; for all things

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that fall out either in the material or moral world, are, as we have ſeen, alike neceſſary, and alike the reſult of fixed laws. Yet whatever conviction a philoſopher may have of this, the diſtinction betwixt things neceſſary, and things contingent, poſſeſſes his common train of thought, as much as it poſſeſſes the moſt illiterate. We act univerſally upon this diſtinction: nay, it is in truth the cauſe of all the labour, care, and induſtry of mankind. I illuſtrate this doctrine by an example. Conſtant experience hath taught us, that death is a neceſſary event. The human frame is not made to laſt for ever in its preſent condition; and no man thinks of more than a temporary exiſtence upon this globe. But the particular time of our death appears a contingent event. However certain it be, that the time and manner of the death of each individual is determined by a train of preceding cauſes, and is not leſs fixed than the hour of the ſun's riſing or ſetting; yet no perſon is affected by this doctrine. In the care of prolonging life, we are directed by the ſuppoſed contingency of the time of death; which, to a certain term of years, we conſider as depending in a great meaſure on ourſelves, by caution againſt accidents, due uſe of food, exerciſe, &c. Theſe means are proſecuted with the ſame diligence, as if there were in fact no neceſſary train of cauſes to fix the period of life. In ſhort, whoever attends to his own practical ideas; whoever reflects upon the meaning

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meaning of the following words, which occur in all languages, of things *poſſible, contingent, that are in our power to cauſe or prevent*; whoever, I ſay, reflects upon theſe words, will clearly ſee, that they ſuggeſt certain perceptions or notions, repugnant to the doctrine above eſtabliſhed, of univerſal neceſſity *.

So ſtands the fact, and the queſtion is, Whence proceeds this deluſive ſenſe of contingency? Is it original, or can it otherwiſe be accounted for? Reflecting upon this ſubject, I find that uniform events are underſtood to be neceſſary,

* This repugnancy of perception to truth, gave riſe to the famous diſpute concerning things poſſible, among the ancient Stoics, who held this doctrine of univerſal neceſſity. Diodorus, as Cicero informs us in his book *de fato*, cap. 7. held this opinion, *Id ſolum fieri poſſe, quod aut verum ſit, aut futurum ſit verum; at quicquid futurum ſit, id dicit fieri neceſſe eſſe, et quicquid non ſit futurum, id negat fieri poſſe:* that is, He maintained, there is nothing contingent in future events, nothing poſſible to happen, but that preciſe event which will happen. This, no doubt, was carrying their ſyſtem its due length: though, in this way of ſpeaking, there is ſomething that manifeſtly ſhocks the natural perceptions of mankind. Chryſippus, on the other hand, ſenſible of its harſhneſs, maintained, that it is poſſible for future events to happen otherways than in fact they happen. In this he was certainly inconſiſtent with his general ſyſtem of neceſſity; and therefore, as Cicero gives us to underſtand, was often imbarraſſed in the diſpute with Diodorus: and Plutarch, in his book *de repugnantiis Stoicorum*, expoſes him for this inconſiſtency. But Chryſippus choſe to follow his natural perceptions, in oppoſition to philoſophy; holding by this, that Diodorus's doctrine of nothing being poſſible but what happens, is *ignava ratio*, tending to abſolute inaction; *cui ſi pareamus*, as Cicero expreſſes it, *nihil omnino agamus in vita*. So early were philoſophers ſenſible of the difficulty of reconciling ſpeculation with perception, as to this doctrine of fate.

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ceſſary, ſuch as day and night, winter and ſummer, death, &c.; but events in which there are any degrees of variety, ſuch as the time of death, good or bad weather, &c. are generally underſtood to be contingent. Does our ſenſe of contingency ariſe from the uncertainty of the event? Hardly ſo; for uncertainty cannot naturally have any other effect upon the mind, than to produce a conſciouſneſs of our ignorance. The ſenſe of contingency, then, with reſpect to things uncertain, muſt be pronounced an original law in our nature. By this law we are made to conceive many future events as in themſelves uncertain, and as having no determined cauſe of exiſtence. Contingency in this view may juſtly be conſidered as a ſecondary quality, which hath no real exiſtence in things; but, like other ſecondary qualities, is made to appear as an attribute of events, in order to ſerve the purpoſes of human life.

THIS ſenſe of contingency in events, which I now hold to be original, regards not only events in the material world, but alſo events which ariſe from moral cauſes, or the activity of man. The event of a pitched battle betwixt two armies equal in numbers and in diſcipline, every one deems to be in ſome meaſure contingent. When a man is apt to waver in his reſolutions, the courſe he will ſteer is reckoned a matter of chance or contingency. But how can the ſenſe of

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of contingency in this caſe be reconciled to the doctrine of our being neceſſary agents? We ſhall ſee anon an extreme beneficial final cauſe of the ſenſe of contingency, with reſpect to actions as well as events; and to this end there appears a very wiſe contrivance of nature. A ſenſe of neceſſity would, no doubt, be directly contradictory to the ſenſe of contingency; and both could not ſubſiſt together. To make way therefore for the ſenſe of contingency, the neceſſary connection betwixt deſire and will is kept out of ſight; and by this contrivance it is, that we are not ſenſible of being neceſſary agents. The diſcovery that we are ſo, proceeds from a long train of reaſoning; and the conviction which ariſes from a proceſs of reaſoning, is too faint to counterbalance an intuitive perception or original ſenſe of contingency.

THUS then we find in the moral world a caſe where truth contradicts the natural notions of mankind; where it preſents to us, with irreſiſtible evidence, the ſyſtem of univerſal neceſſity, upon which we never regulate our conduct, but are ſo formed as to act upon notions quite oppoſite. What ſhall be done in this caſe? Muſt we ſacrifice truth to ſenſe? or muſt we adhere to truth, and force ſenſe into a compliance? Neither. Truth is too rigid to bend to our perceptions; and theſe are too vigorous to be ſubdued by abſtract reaſoning. The attempt is vain,

pugnantia

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pugnantia secum, frontibus adversis, componere. Ler us be honest then: let us fairly own that truth is on the side of necessity; but that it was proper for man to be formed with such notions of contingency, as would fit him for the part he hath to act. This thought leads us to a final cause, which I shall now endeavour to explain.

THE Deity is the primary cause of all things. In his infinite mind he formed the great plan of government which is carried on by laws fixed and immutable. These laws produce a regular train of causes and effects in the moral as well as material world, bringing about those events which are comprehended in the original plan, and admitting the possibility of none other. This universe is a vast machine, winded up and set a-going. The several springs and wheels operate unerringly one upon another. The hand advanceth, and the clock strikes, precisely as the artist hath determined. Whoever hath just ideas, and a true taste of philosophy, will see this to be the real theory of the universe; and that, upon any other theory, there can be no general order, no whole, no plan, no means nor end in its administration. In this plan, man, a rational creature, bears his part, and fulfils certain ends for which he was designed. He must be an actor, and must act with consciousness and spontaneity. He exercises thought and reason, and his nature is

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is improved by the due uſe of theſe rational powers. Conſequently, it is neceſſary, that he ſhould have ſome ſenſe of things poſſible and contingent, things depending upon himſelf to cauſe, that he may be led to a proper exerciſe of that activity for which he was deſigned. But as a ſenſe of neceſſity would be a perpetual contradiction to the ſenſe of contingency, it was well ordered, that his being a neceſſary agent ſhould be hid from him. To have had his inſtinctive perceptions, his practical ideas, formed upon the plan of univerſal neceſſity; to have ſeen himſelf a part of that great machine, winded up, and ſet a-going, by the author of his nature, would have been inconſiſtent with the part that is allotted him to act. Then indeed the *ignava ratio*, the inactive doctrine of the Stoics, would have followed. Conceiving nothing to be contingent, or depending upon himſelf to cauſe, there would have been no room for forethought about futurity, nor for any ſort of induſtry and care. He would have had no motives to action, but immediate ſenſations of pleaſure and pain. He muſt have been formed like the brutes, who have no other principle of action but mere inſtinct. The few inſtincts he is at preſent endued with, would have been altogether inſufficient. He muſt have had an inſtinct to ſow, another to reap; he muſt have had inſtincts to purſue every conveniency, and perform every office of life. In ſhort, reaſon and thought

thought could not have been exercifed in the way they are, that is, man could not have been man, had he not been furnifhed with a fenfe of contingency, and alfo been kept in ignorance of his being a neceffary agent. In this, as in all things elfe, the divine wifdom and goodnefs are moft admirable. As, in the material world, the Almighty hath formed our fenfes, not for the difcovery of the intimate nature and effences of things, but for the ufes and conveniencies of life; as he hath, in feveral inftances, exhibited natural objects to us, not in their real, but in a fort of artificial view, clothed with fuch diftinctions and productive of fuch fenfations as are for the benefit of man; fo he hath exhibited the intellectual world to us in a like artificial view, clothed with certain colours and diftinctions, imaginary, but ufeful. Life is conducted according to this artificial view of things; and by our fpeculations is not in the leaft affected. Let the philofopher meditate in his clofet upon abftract truth; let him be ever fo much convinced of the fettled neceffary train of caufes and effects, which leaves nothing, properly fpeaking, in his power; yet the moment he comes forth into the world he acts as a free agent *.

And,

* It appears from the poets, (fee Pope's Iliad, book 6. l. 624.), that among the Greeks, an enlightened and inquifitive people, the doctrine of fate or deftiny prevailed. Yet when one's evil deftiny was foretold, even by the moft celebrated oracle, this never had any other effect than redoubling the perfon's diligence

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And, what is wonderful, though in this he acts upon a falſe ſuppoſition, yet he is not thereby miſled from the ends of action, but, on the contrary, fulfils them to better advantage.

It will now be proper to anſwer ſome objections which may be urged againſt the doctrine we have advanced *. One, which at firſt may ſeem of conſiderable weight, is, That it ſeems to repreſent

gence to avoid the impending evil. Such authority have natural impreſſions, in oppoſition to abſtract reaſoning, and even to the moſt ſacred authority.

* I acknowledge it to have been once my opinion, that we have a deluſive ſenſe of power to act againſt motives, or to act againſt our own inclination and choice, commonly termed *liberty of indifference*. I was carried along by the current of popular opinion; and I could not dream this ſenſe to be a pure imagination, when I found it vouched by ſo many grave writers. I had at the ſame time a thorough conviction, from the cleareſt evidence, that man is a neceſſary agent; and therefore I juſtly concluded, that the ſenſe of liberty of indifference, like that of contingency, muſt be deluſive. I yielded to another popular opinion, That the perceptions of the moral ſenſe, praiſe and blame, merit and demerit, guilt and remorſe, are inconſiſtent with neceſſity, and muſt be founded upon the deluſive ſenſe of liberty of indifference. From theſe premiſſes, I was obliged, though reluctantly, to admit, that ſome of the moſt noted perceptions and emotions of the moral ſenſe are entirely built upon this deluſive ſenſe of liberty. The ſubject being handled after that manner in the firſt edition of this book, I was ſenſible of the odium of a doctrine that reſts virtue in any meaſure upon a deluſion; and I ſtated this as the firſt objection, in order to remove it the beſt way I could. Candor I ſhall always eſteem eſſential in ſpeaking to the public, not leſs than in private dealings; and my opinion of the wiſdom of providence in the government of this world, is ſo firmly eſtabliſhed, that I never can be apprehenſive of harm in adhering to truth, however ſingular it may appear upon ſome occaſions. I now chearfully acknowledge my errors; and am happy in thinking, that I have at laſt got into the right track. It appears to me at

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represent the Deity as acting deceitfully by his creatures. He hath given them certain notions of contingency in events, by which he hath, in a manner, forced them to act upon a false hypothesis; as if he were unable to carry on the government of this world, did his creatures conceive things according to the real truth. This objection is, in a great measure, obviated, by what is observed in the introduction to this essay. It is universally allowed by modern philosophers, that the perceptions of our external senses do not always correspond to strict truth, but are so contrived, as rather to answer useful purposes. Now, if it be called a deceit in our senses, not to give us just representations of the material world, the Deity must be the author of this deceit, as much as he is of that which prevails in the moral world. But no just objection can lie against the conduct of the Deity, in either case. Our senses, both internal and external, are given us for different ends and purposes; some to discover truth, others to make us happy and virtuous. The senses which are appropriated

present a harsh doctrine, that virtue in any part should be founded on a delusion, though formerly the supposed truth of the doctrine reconciled me to it. It gives me solid satisfaction, to find the moral sense entirely consistent with voluntary necessity, which I must pronounce to be the system of nature. The moral sense makes a chief branch of the original constitution of man; and it can never lose its authority, while we have any feeling of pleasure and pain. According to this plan of morality, the objection, That it is partly founded on a delusion, vanisheth; and the objection, for that reason, is dropt in the present edition.

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ted to the discovery of truth, unerringly answer their end. So do the senses which are appropriated to virtue and happiness. And, in this view, the objection vanisheth, because it amounts but to this, that the same sense doth not answer both ends. As to the other branch of the objection, That it must imply imperfection in the Deity, if he cannot govern this world without deluding his creatures; I answer, That there is nothing in the foregoing doctrine which can justly argue imperfection in the Deity. For it is abundantly plain, first, that it is a more perfect state of things, and more worthy of the Deity, to have all events going on with unbroken order, in a fixed train of causes and effects, than to have every thing desultory and contingent. And if such a being as man was to be placed in this world, to act his present part, it was necessary, that he should have a notion of contingency in events, and of power to direct and control them. The objection therefore, on the whole, amounts to no more, than that the Deity cannot work contradictions. For if it was fit and wise, that man should think and act as an independent being, having power to regulate his own actions, and, by means of these, to regulate also future events; it was impossible this could be otherways accomplished, than by enduing him with a sense of this power: and if it was also fit and wise, that universal necessity should be the real plan of the universe, this sense must be delusive.

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And, after all, feeing our happinefs, in many inftances, is placed upon delufive perceptions, why fhould it puzzle us, that our activity is promoted by the fame means? No one confiders it as an imputation on the Deity, that we are fo framed as to perceive what is not, *viz.* beauty, grandeur, colour, heat or cold, as exifting in objects, when fuch perceptions, though delufive, contribute to our happinefs: and yet our happinefs depends greatly more on action than on any of thefe perceptions.

THE foregoing objection may perhaps be turned into a different fhape. If it was neceffary for man to be conftituted with fuch an artificial fenfe, why was he endued with fo much knowledge as to unravel the myftery? What purpofe does it ferve, to let in juft fo much light, as to difcover the difguifed appearance of the moral world, when it was intended that his conduct fhould be adjufted to this difguifed appearance? To this I anfwer, firft, That the difcovery, when made, is not attended with any bad confequence; and next, that a good confequence, of very great importance, refults from it. No bad confequence, I fay, enfues from the difcovery, that contingency, and power to regulate our own conduct, are delufive perceptions: for the cafe is confeffedly parallel in the material world, where no harm hath enfued. After we have difcovered, by philofophy, that feveral of the appearances

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pearances of nature are only uſeful illuſions; that ſecondary qualities exiſt not in matter; and that the perceptions of our external ſenſes, in various inſtances, do not correſpond to philoſophic truth; after theſe diſcoveries are made, do they in the leaſt affect even the philoſopher himſelf, in ordinary action? Doth not he, in common with the reſt of mankind, proceed, as it is fit he ſhould, upon the common ſyſtem of appearances and natural perceptions? As little, in the preſent caſe, do our ſpeculations about liberty and neceſſity unhinge the plan of nature. Upon the common ſyſtem we do and muſt act; and no diſcoveries made concerning the illuſive nature of our perceptions, can diſappoint in any degree the intention of the Deity.

But this is not all. Theſe diſcoveries are alſo of excellent uſe; as they furniſh us with one of the ſtrongeſt arguments for the exiſtence of the Deity, and as they ſet the wiſdom and goodneſs of his providence in the moſt ſtriking light. Nothing carries more expreſs characters of deſign, nothing can be conceived more oppoſite to chance, than a plan ſo artfully contrived, for adjuſting our impreſſions and feelings to the purpoſes of life. For here things are carried off, as it were, from the ſtraight line; taken out of the courſe in which they would of themſelves proceed; and ſo moulded, as forcibly, and againſt their nature, to be ſubſervient to

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man. He doth not receive the impreſſion of the moral world in the ſame manner as wax receives the impreſſion of a ſeal; he doth not reflect the image of it in the ſame manner as a mirror reflects its images. He hath a peculiar caſt and turn given to his conceptions, admirably adjuſted to the part allotted him to act. Theſe conceptions are indeed illuſive; yet, which is wonderful, it is by this very circumſtance, that, in man, two of the moſt oppoſite things in nature are happily reconciled, liberty and neceſſity; having this illuſtrious effect, that in him are accumulated all the prerogatives both of a neceſſary and free agent. The diſcovery of ſuch a marvellous adjuſtment, which is more directly oppoſed to chance than any other thing conceivable, muſt neceſſarily give us the ſtrongeſt impreſſion of a wiſe deſigning cauſe. And now a ſufficient reaſon appears, for ſuffering man to make this ſurpriſing diſcovery. The Almighty hath admitted us ſo far into his counſels, as to afford the juſteſt foundation for admiring and adoring his wiſdom. It is a remark worthy to be made, that the capacities of man ſeem in general to have a tendency beyond the wants and occaſions of his preſent ſtate. This hath often been obſerved with reſpect to his wiſhes and deſires. The ſame holds as to his intellectual faculties, which ſometimes, as in the inſtance before us, run beyond the limits of what at preſent is neceſſary for him to know,

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and let in upon him ſome glimmerings of higher and nobler diſcoveries. A veil is thrown over nature, where it is not uſeful for him to behold it: and yet ſometimes, by turning aſide that veil a very little, he is admitted to a fuller view; that his admiration of nature, and the God of nature, may be increaſed; that his curioſity and love of truth may be fed; and perhaps that ſome *augurium*, ſome intimation may be given, of his being deſigned for a future, more exalted ſtate of being; when attaining the full maturity of his nature, he ſhall no longer ſtand in need of artificial impreſſions, but ſhall perceive and act according to the ſtricteſt truth of things.

APPEN-

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APPENDIX.

Containing the ſubſtance of a pamphlet writ in defence of the foregoing Eſſay.

WITH reſpect to liberty and neceſſity, our author's doctrine may be compriſed under the following heads. 1. That man is a rational being, endued with liberty. 2. That his liberty conſiſts in acting voluntarily, or according to his inclination and choice. 3. That his will is neceſſarily, that is, infallibly and certainly, determined by motives; or, in the ſtyle of the ſchools, *voluntas neceſſario ſequitur ultimum judicium intellectus practici.* 4. That, conſequently, liberty of indifference, or an arbitrary power of acting, without or againſt motives, is no part of human nature. 5. That though human actions proceed in a fixed train, this is owing to no blind fate, but to the predeſtination or decree of God, who is the firſt cauſe of all things.

CONCERNING theſe points philoſophers and divines may differ in opinion, and each ſide may, and will impute error to the other; but that, by any of the church of Scotland, ſuch opinions ſhould be cenſured as unſound or heterodox, ſhows great ignorance, when they are eſpouſed by

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by our firſt great reformers, and inculcated in all the moſt noted ſyſtems of theology, compoſed by Calviniſt divines, and taught in our univerſities. With us it is a fundamental principle, That God from all eternity hath foreordained whatever comes to paſs; that all events are immutably and neceſſarily fixed by the decree of God, and cannot happen in any other way than he hath predetermined. But the moſt orthodox divines agree with our author, not only in his doctrine of neceſſity, as founded on the decree of God; but likeways in his account of that rational or moral neceſſity, which is effectuated by the operation of motives on the will. They hold, with him, that liberty is oppoſed, not to neceſſity, but to conſtraint; that it conſiſts, not in indifference, but in ſpontaneity, or *lubentia rationalis*; and that the will neceſſarily follows the laſt judgment of the underſtanding. They ſhew, that none of the conſequences follow, which are endeavoured to be laid upon our author; but that virtue and vice, rewards and puniſhments, are conſiſtent with a neceſſity of this ſort. Thus, for inſtance, the great Calvin reaſons in the following manner. "Seeing we have often mentioned the diſtinction betwixt *neceſſity* and *conſtraint*, upon which this whole controverſy turns, we muſt now explain it a little more accurately. They who defend free will, in oppoſition to divine grace, maintain, that there can be neither virtue nor vice where there is "neceſſity.

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" necessity. We answer, That God is necessarily good; and that his goodness, though necessary, is not upon that account the less worthy of praise. Again, that the devil is necessarily wicked; and yet his wickedness is not the less criminal. Nor is this any invention of ours; for in the same manner St Augustine and St Bernard reason.——Our adversaries insist, That what is *voluntary*, cannot at the same time be *necessary*. We shew them, that both these qualities are found in the goodness of God. They pretend it to be absurd, that men should be blamed for actions they must unavoidably perform. By the instance above given, we show, that there is in this no absurdity.——They object again, That unless virtue and vice proceed from a free choice, according to their sense of freedom, there can be no reason either for inflicting punishments, or bestowing rewards. As to punishments, I answer, That they are justly inflicted on those who commit evil; because it makes no difference, whether their choice was free, *i. e.* arbitrary, or whether they were under the influence of bad motives; provided only they were *voluntary* in their guilt.——As to rewards, there is certainly no absurdity in our saying, that these are bestowed rather according to the goodness of God, than the merit of men." *Calvin. tractat. theolog. p.* 152. *edit. Amstelod.* 1667.

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THE learned Francis Turrettine, Profeſſor in Geneva, whoſe authority as an orthodox divine will be allowed to be of the greateſt weight, examines this queſtion fully in his *Inſtitut. theolog.* under the head *de libero arbitrio, vol.* 1. *p.* 728. to 737. and maintains the ſame doctrine with our author. He repreſents it as the capital and fundamental hereſy of the Pelagians and Arminians, that they hold liberty to conſiſt in indifference, not in ſpontaneity; and that they maintain every kind of neceſſity to be inconſiſtent with liberty. With great accuracy and ſtrength of reaſon, he conſiders the ſeveral kinds of neceſſity. He ſhews, that two of them, coaction, and phyſical neceſſity ariſing from the laws of matter, are deſtructive of liberty. But that rational or moral neceſſity, which ariſes from the conſtitution of the mind as neceſſarily determined by motives, and the neceſſity which ariſes from the divine decree, are perfectly conſiſtent with liberty in its orthodox ſenſe. He removes the objection againſt this doctrine, of its making man a mere machine; and, much in the ſame manner with our author, ſhows, that upon the Arminian liberty of indifference, or an arbitrary power of counteracting all motives, man would be a moſt irrational and unaccountable being, to whom argument and reaſoning, precept and command, would be addreſſed in vain. The following are his words, (*p.* 566. *vol.* 1.), " There are " only two kinds of neceſſity which are incon-

" ſiſtent

" ſiſtent with liberty; phyſical neceſſity, and the
" neceſſity of conſtraint. The other kinds of
" neceſſity, which ariſe either from the decree
" or influence of God, or from the object itſelf,
" and the laſt judgment of the underſtanding,
" are ſo far from overthrowing liberty, that they
" rather eſtabliſh it; becauſe they do not con-
" ſtrain the will, but perſuade it; and produce
" a voluntary choice in one that was before un-
" willing. For whatever a man does according
" to his inclination, with judgment and under-
" ſtanding, and with the full conſent of his will,
" it is impoſſible but he muſt do freely, al-
" though, in another ſenſe, he does it neceſſari-
" ly. This holds, from whatever quarter we
" ſuppoſe the neceſſity laid upon him to ariſe;
" whether it be from the exiſtence of the thing
" itſelf, or from the motive effectually determi-
" ning his will, or from the decree and con-
" courſe of the firſt cauſe."

Benedict Pictet*, Turrettine's ſucceſſor in the chair of Geneva, and acknowledged in the univerſities of this country as an author of the ſoundeſt principles, eſtabliſhes the ſame doctrine in ſo clear a manner, as that words cannot be more preciſe and expreſs. "Before we diſcourſe
" of free will, we muſt explain the meaning of
" the term. By free will we underſtand no-
" thing elſe, but a power of doing what we
" pleaſe, with judgment and underſtanding,
" without

" without any external compulſion. To this
" free will two things are oppoſed. Firſt, phy-
" ſical or natural neceſſity; ſuch as we ſee in
" inanimate beings; for inſtance, the neceſſity
" by which fire burns. Next, the neceſſity of
" conſtraint; which ariſes from external vio-
" lence, impoſed againſt the inclination of him
" who ſuffers it; as when a man is hurried to
" priſon, or to an idol-temple. But we muſt
" not oppoſe to free will that neceſſity of de-
" pendence on God which all creatures lie un-
" der, and from which no rational being can be
" exempted; nor that rational neceſſity which
" ariſes from the laſt judgment of the under-
" ſtanding; as when I neceſſarily chuſe that
" which appears to me beſt; for my choice,
" though neceſſary, is notwithſtanding free.
" Wherefore, all that is requiſite to freedom is,
" that one ſhould act ſpontaneouſly, and with
" underſtanding: which clearly follows from
" this, that God is the freeſt of all beings, and
" yet he is neceſſarily determined to good. The
" ſame holds of ſaints and angels. Liberty there-
" fore does not conſiſt in indifference: for if ſo,
" God would not be a free being; and the more
" man was determined to good, or the more
" perfect he was, the leſs liberty he would en-
" joy; which is abſurd. This is further con-
" firmed by the following reaſoning. We all
" chuſe what appears to us our chief good or
" happineſs with entire liberty: for who is not

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"hearty and voluntary in ſuch choice? Yet to "this choice we are determined by a ſtrong and "irreſiſtible neceſſity: for no man has any free-"dom of indifference in this caſe. No man "can wiſh himſelf miſerable, or can chuſe evil "as ſuch. Liberty therefore by no means con-"ſiſts in indifference." *Theolog. Chriſt. l.* 4. *cap.* 6. § 4.

Of the modern Calviniſt writers who agree with our author, we ſhall give one example, *viz.* the Reverend Mr Jonathan Edwards miniſter of Stockbridge in New England, in his late treatiſe, intitled, *A careful and ſtrict inquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that freedom of will which is ſuppoſed to be eſſential to moral agency, virtue and vice, reward and puniſhment, praiſe and blame.* Publiſhed at Boſton 1754. The piety and orthodoxy of this author, it is preſumed, none but Arminians will adventure to call in queſtion. Nothing can be better calculated than this book to anſwer all the objections againſt our author's doctrine of moral neceſſity, to ſhew its conſiſtency with reaſon and ſcripture, and the injuſtice of aſcribing to it any bad tendency. To quote particular paſſages is unneceſſary; for the whole book, from beginning to end, is one continued chain of argumentation in favour of this doctrine. He every where holds and maintains, "That the will is in every caſe "neceſſarily determined by the ſtrongeſt mo-"tives,

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" tives, and that this moral neceſſity (*p.* 24.) " may be as abſolute as natural neceſſity; that " is, that a moral effect may be as perfectly " connected with its moral cauſe, as a naturally " neceſſary effect is with its natural cauſe." For, ſays he, (*p.* 22.), " The difference be- " tween theſe two does not lie ſo much in the " nature of the connection, as in the two terms " connected." He rejects the notion of liber- ty, as implying any *ſelf-determining* power in the will, any *indifference* or *contingency*, *p.* 29.; and ſhews in ſeveral chapters, *p.* 135.—192. that thoſe notions of liberty which the Armi- nians hold, are ſo far from being neceſſary to ac- countableneſs, to virtue or vice, to praiſe or blame, that, on the contrary, they are incon- ſiſtent with virtue, which muſt always ſuppoſe the determining power of motives.

He examines the paſſages of ſcripture which relate to this doctrine. He ſhews, that the acts of the will of the human ſoul of Chriſt were *ne- ceſſarily holy*, yet virtuous, praiſe-worthy, and rewardable. He anſwers the objection to this doctrine, of its making God the author of ſin, exactly in the ſame way with our author, by diſtinguiſhing between the intention of God and the intention of the ſinner. Though no man, who either knows the character of this au- thor, or peruſes his book, can entertain the leaſt doubt of his zeal for religion; yet it appears,

that in New England, as well as elſewhere, the worthieſt perſons are liable to be calumniated and traduced. For Mr Edwards, when concluding his book, obſerves, (*p.* 285.), "It is not "unlikely that ſome who value themſelves on "the ſuppoſed rational principles of modern "faſhionable divinity, will have their indigna- "tion raiſed at the ſubject of this diſcourſe, and "will renew the uſual exclamations about the "*fate of the Heathens*, Hobbes's neceſſity, "and making men mere machines; accumu- "lating the terrible epithets of *fatal*, *inevitable*, "*irreſiſtible*, and it may be with the addition of "*horrid* and *blaſphemous*; and perhaps much "ſkill may be uſed to ſet the things which have "been ſaid in colours which ſhall be ſhocking to "the imagination, and moving to the paſſions of "thoſe who have either too little capacity, or "too much confidence of the opinions they have "imbibed, and contempt of the contrary, to "try the matter by any ſerious and circumſpect "examination; or ſome particular things may "be picked out, which they think will ſound "harſheſt in the ears of the generality; and "theſe may be gloſſed and deſcanted on with "tart and contemptuous words, and from "thence the whole treated with triumph and "inſult." How unbecoming and indecent ſuch methods are, and how unlike the conduct of a fair and impartial inquirer after truth, the Reverend author fully ſhews; nor can I enter-

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tain any doubt that my readers will join with him in condemning ſuch a ſpirit.

To relieve myſelf a little from the languid uniformity of a continued defence, I will upon this ſingle occaſion change hands, and try my fortune in making an attack. Let us approach a little nearer to this liberty of indifference, which in late times has become ſo mighty a favourite, even with ſome who would be thought Calviniſts, and let us examine whether it will ſtand a narrow inſpection. I am not without hopes, that upon a cool ſurvey it will be found a favourite not worthy to be contended for. Liberty of indifference in chuſing betwixt two things of equal importance, is abundantly palatable, and may paſs without objection. But liberty of indifference is not confined to caſes of this nature. It is aſſerted of man, that he has a power to will and act, without having any reaſon or motive whatever to influence his will. A thing ſtill more extraordinary is aſſerted with equal aſſurance, that man has a power to will and act, not only without motives, but in direct contradiction to the ſtrongeſt motives that can influence the mind. It might well be urged, that this doctrine is a bold attack upon the common ſenſe of mankind; and not the leſs bold that it is taken for granted, without the leaſt evidence, or ſo much as a ſingle experiment to ſupport it. Such a being there may poſſibly be as

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is deſcribed; but every man who has not a cauſe to defend, will bear witneſs that this is not his caſe. I venture to affirm, that when the proper queſtions are put to any plain man who is ignorant of the controverſy, his anſwers to every one of them will be repugnant to liberty of indifference as above explained. But waving this conſideration at preſent, my attack ſhall be made from a different quarter, by examining the conſequences of ſuch a power, ſuppoſing it, for argument's ſake, to be inherent in man. In the eſſay upon liberty and neceſſity, it is inculcated at full length, that man endued with this power would be an abſurd and unaccountable being. He could not be relied on. Oaths and engagements would be but brittle ties, and therefore he would be quite unqualified for the ſocial life. I add, that this power, which is imagined to exiſt in man in order to beſtow on him the greater ſelf-command, has in reality the contrary effect. At the inſtant perhaps of willing or acting, man, upon this ſuppoſition, muſt have a ſway over himſelf, altogether arbitrary: but then he has no antecedent authority. He himſelf, even when the inſtant of execution approaches, cannot ſay what will be his determination, how he will chuſe, or how he will act. It is evident from the very nature of the thing, that even the Deity can have no foreſight here, when, by the ſuppoſition, the man's will is altogether arbitrary, and

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and is quite independent of all connections internal or external.

I MAKE a second attack, different from the former. I consider man as acting in the great theatre of the world, in which all things are governed by the providence of an almighty Being. As it appears to me, the directing influence of providence is altogether excluded from human actions, by this supposed liberty of indifference. The operations of matter are governed by steady laws, and thereby contribute unerringly to the great designs of providence. But to what rule can the actions of men be subjected, which are supposed to be altogether arbitrary, and under no manner of control? They cannot be under the direction of the Deity; for that supposition effectually annihilates the liberty of indifference. The influence of the Deity must be superior to all other motives in determining the will; and consequently must have the effect to make man a necessary agent in the sense of moral necessity. Man then, by this supposed power, is withdrawn from under the government of providence, and left at large to the most bizarre and most absurd course of action, independent of motives from good or evil, independent of reason, and independent of every view, purpose, or end. Here is chance clearly introduced in its most ugly form, so far as human actions can have an influence. This displays a dismal scene, sufficient

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to raiſe horror in every one who has feeling. After this, let not the Arminians cry out againſt blind fatality: A very uncomfortable doctrine to be ſure. But is blind fatality worſe than blind chance? Could I poſſibly be convinced of either, I ſhould dread falling into deſpair, and being led to deny the being of a God.

But enough of this diſmal ſcene. I proceed to follow out a thought occaſionally thrown out above, *viz.* that liberty of indifference is an imaginary ſcheme, unſupported by any facts in human nature, and which no man was ever conſcious of. This leads me to ſay and believe, that it never was embraced ſeriouſly in its true import by any man; not even by the moſt zealous Arminian. Thoſe who eſpouſe this doctrine, do certainly take up with words, neglecting to examine things as they truly are: for what man of plain ſenſe ever imagined, that he can incline, that he can chuſe, that he can reſolve and will, without being prompted by any conſideration, good or bad, and without having any end or purpoſe in view? When a man acts, it is expected that he can ſay, what moves him. If he can give no account, every one conſiders him as a changeling or madman. As a conſequence from this, I venture further to ſay, that the doctrine of moral neceſſity is that which is univerſally embraced by men of plain ſenſe, whoſe minds are not warped by the tenets of a ſect.

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This doctrine, I say, is universally embraced; though not carried its utmost length, nor seen in its full extent, except, perhaps, by the studious and contemplative. With regard to acting, every man indeed conceives himself to be free; because he is conscious that he acts voluntarily, and according to his own choice. He is however at the same time conscious, that he has not the power of chusing or willing arbitrarily or indifferently. As to his inclinations, wishes, and desires, he is sensible that these are not under his arbitrary power. And if this be once admitted, the chain of moral necessity is established. For no plain man, at the time of the action, entertains the least doubt, that his will is influenced by inclinations, wishes, and desires; which puts a final end to the liberty of indifference.

In the foregoing light to me appears unavoidably the celebrated doctrine of liberty of indifference: and when such is my case, I can as little avoid, after the coolest reflection, thinking that the author of the essays has done well in contributing his endeavour to banish the Arminian doctrine out of our church. It is my serious opinion, that to embrace it with all its necessary consequences, is in effect introducing into this world, blind chance, confusion, and anarchy; which are the high road to Atheism. Far be it from my thoughts, at the same time, to

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to accuſe Arminians of Atheiſm, or of irreligion in any degree. I am ſenſible, that the Arminian doctrine has been and is eſpouſed by many good and pious men. But this I muſt take the liberty to affirm, that theſe men ſtop ſhort at the threſhold, without puſhing their way forward to behold the ugly appearances within doors. Theſe appearances are now laid open to them. If the doctrine can be moulded into ſome new ſhape, to make it ſquare with religion and morality, ſuch improvement muſt be agreeable to every well-diſpoſed mind, becauſe of the comfort it will afford to thoſe who adhere to liberty of indifference. But, without pretending to the gift of prophecy, I venture to foretel, that it will be extremely difficult to ſtop any where ſhort of moral neceſſity; and that any ſolid reformation of the Arminian doctrine, muſt infallibly lead to the principles of Calvin, and of our other reformers.

ESSAYS

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ESSAYS
ON THE
PRINCIPLES
OF
MORALITY
AND
NATURAL RELIGION.

PART II.

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ESSAY I.

Of BELIEF.

BELIEF is a term ſo familiar, as to have eſcaped the inquiry of all philoſophers, except the author of the treatiſe of human nature. And yet the ſubject is by no means rendered ſo plain by that author, as not ſtill to admit doubts and difficulties. He hath made two propoſitions ſufficiently evident: 1. That belief is not any ſeparate action or perception of the mind, but only a certain manner of conceiving propoſitions. 2. That it does not accompany every one of our conceptions. A man, in ſome circumſtances, ſees objects double; but he doth not believe them to be double. He can form the idea of a golden mountain; he can form the idea of it, as of a certain ſize, and as exiſting in a certain place: but he doth not believe it to be exiſting.

HAVING proved that belief is not a ſeparate perception, but only a certain manner of conception, our author goes on to explain what he means by this certain manner of conception. And his doctrine is, That belief making no alteration upon the idea, as to its parts and compoſition, muſt conſiſt in the lively manner of con-

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ceiving the idea; and that, in reality, a lively idea and belief are the ſame. Whatever opinion I may have of this author's acuteneſs and penetration, neither his nor any man's authority ſhall prevail with me to embrace ſuch a doctrine. For, at this rate, credulity and a lively imagination would be always connected; which doth not hold in fact. Poetry and painting produce lively ideas, but they ſeldom produce belief. For my part, I have no difficulty to form as lively a conception of Cæſar's dying in his bed, deſcanting upon the vanity of ambition, or dictating rules of government to his ſucceſſor, as of his being put to death in the ſenate-houſe. Nothing is told with more vivacity, than the death of Cyrus, in a pitched battle with the Queen of the Scythians; who dipped his head, as we are told, in a veſſel full of blood; ſaying, "Satiate "thyſelf with blood, of which thou waſt ever "thirſty." Yet, upon comparing circumſtances and authors, the more probable opinion is, that Cyrus died in his bed.

It may be obſerved, at the ſame time, that the concluſion is very lame which this author draws from his premiſſes. Belief makes no alteration upon the idea, as to its parts and compoſition. It can only therefore conſiſt in a modification of the idea. But does it follow, that it conſiſts in a lively conception of the idea, which is

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is but one of many modifications? There is not here the ſhadow of an inference.

OUR author indeed urges, that true hiſtory takes faſt hold of the mind, and preſents its objects in a more lively manner than any fabulous narration can do. Every man muſt judge for himſelf. I cannot admit this to be my caſe. Hiſtory, no doubt, takes faſter hold of the mind, than any fiction told in the plain hiſtorical ſtyle. But can any man doubt, who has not an hypotheſis to defend, that poetry makes a ſtronger impreſſion than hiſtory? Let a man, if he hath any feeling, attend the celebrated Garrick in the character of Richard, or in that of King Lear; and he will find, that dramatic repreſentations make ſtrong and lively impreſſions, which hiſtory ſeldom comes up to.

BUT now, if it ſhall be ſuppoſed, that hiſtory preſents its objects in a more lively manner than can be done by dramatic or epic poetry; it will not therefore follow, that a lively idea is the ſame with belief. I read a paſſage in Virgil: let it be the epiſode of Niſus and Euryalus. I read a paſſage in Livy, *ſciz.* the ſacking of Rome by the Gauls. If I have a more lively idea of the latter ſtory, I put it to my author, to point out the cauſe of this effect. He ſurely will not affirm, that it is the force of expreſſion, or harmony of numbers: for, in theſe particulars, the

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hiſtorian cannot be compared to the poet. It is evident, that no other ſatisfactory account of the matter can be given, but this, that Livy's ſuperior influence upon the imagination, is the effect of his being conſidered as a true hiſtorian. The moſt then that our author can make of his obſervation, ſuppoſing it to hold true in fact, is, that the authority of the hiſtorian produceth belief, and that belief produceth a more lively idea than any fabulous narration can do. The truth of the matter is, that belief, and a lively conception, are really two diſtinct modifications of the idea; which, though often conjoined, are not only ſeparable in the imagination, but in fact are often ſeparated. Truth indeed beſtows a certain degree of vivacity upon our ideas. At the ſame time, I cannot admit, that hiſtory exceeds dramatic or epic poetry, in conveying a lively conception of facts; becauſe it appears evident, that, in works of imagination, the want of truth is more than compenſated by ſentiment and language.

SOMETIMES, indeed, belief is the reſult of a lively impreſſion. A dramatic repreſentation is one inſtance, when it affects us ſo much as to draw off the attention from every other object, and even from ourſelves. In this condition, we do not conſider the actor, but conceive him to be the very man whoſe character he aſſumes. We have that very man before our eyes. We perceive

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ceive him as exifting and acting, and believe him to be exifting and acting. This belief, however, is but momentary. It vanifheth like a dream, fo foon as we are roufed by any trivial circumftance, to a confcioufnefs of ourfelves, and of the place we are in. Nor is the lively impreffion, even in this cafe, the caufe of belief, but only the occafion of it, by diverting the attention of the mind from itfelf and its fituation. It is in fome fuch manner, that the idea of a fpectre in the dark, which fills the mind, and diverts it from itfelf, is, by the force of imagination, converted into a reality. We think we fee and hear it: we are convinced of it, and believe the matter to be fo.

REJECTING therefore this author's opinion, the real truth appears to be this. There is a certain peculiar manner of perceiving objects, and conceiving propofitions, which being altogether fimple, cannot be defcribed, but is expreffed by the word *belief*. The caufes of this modification, termed belief, are the authority of my own fenfes, and the authority of others, who either relate facts upon the authority of their fenfes, or what they have heard at fecond or third hand. So that belief, mediately or immediately, is founded upon the authority of our fenfes. We are fo conftituted by nature, as to put truft in our fenfes. Nor, in general, is it in our power to difbelieve our fenfes; they have

 authority

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authority with us irrefiftible. There is but one exception that I can think of. Finding, by experience, that we have been fometimes led into an error, by trufting fome particular perceptions, the remembrance of thefe inftances counterbalances the authority of our perception in the like cafes, and either keeps the mind fufpended, or perhaps makes it reft in a conviction that the perception is erroneous.

WITH regard to the evidence of my own fenfes, though I cannot admit, that the effence of belief confifts in the vivacity of the impreffion, I fo far agree with our author, that vivacity and belief, in this cafe, are always conjoined. A mountain I have once feen, I believe to be exifting, though I am a thoufand miles from it; and the image or idea I have of that mountain, is more lively and more diftinct, than of any I can form merely by the force of imagination. But this is far from being the cafe, as above obferved, of ideas raifed in my mind by the force of language.

BELIEF arifing from the evidence of others, refts upon a different foundation. Veracity, and a difpofition to believe, are correfponding principles in the nature of man; and, in the main, thefe principles are fo adjufted, that men are not often deceived. The difpofition we have to believe, is qualified by the opinion we have

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of the witnefs, and the nature of the ftory he relates. But fuppofing a concurrence of all other circumftances to prompt our belief, yet if the fpeaker pretend only to amufe, without confining himfelf to truth, his narration will not, in the fmalleft degree, prompt our belief, let him enliven it with the ftrongeft colours that poetry is mafter of.

I SHALL only add, that though our own fenfes, and the teftimony of others, are the proper caufes of belief; yet that thefe caufes are more or lefs efficacious, according to our prefent temper of mind. Hope and fear are influenced by paffion, fo is belief. Hope and fear are modifications of our conception of future events. If the event be agreeable, and the probability of its exiftence be great, our conception of its exiftence takes on a modification which is called *hope*. If the event be extremely agreeable, and the probability of its exifting do greatly preponderate, our hope is increafed proportionally, and fometimes is converted into a firm belief, that it will really happen. Upon weak minds, the delightfulnefs of the expected event will, of itfelf, have that effect. The imagination, fired with the profpect, augments the probability, till it convert it to a firm perfuafion or belief. On the other hand, if fear get the afcendant, by a conceived improbability

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probability of the exiſtence of the event, the mind deſponds, and fear is converted into a firm belief that the event will not happen. The operations of the mind are quite ſimilar, where the event in view is diſagreeable.

ESSAY

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ESSAY II.

Of the IDEA *of* SELF, *and of* PERSONAL IDENTITY.

HAD we no original impreſſions but thoſe of the external ſenſes, according to the author of the treatiſe of human nature, we never could have any conſciouſneſs of *ſelf*; becauſe ſuch conſciouſneſs cannot ariſe from any external object. Mankind would be in a perpetual reverie; ideas would be conſtantly floating in the mind; and no man be able to connect his ideas with *himſelf*. Neither would there be any idea of *perſonal identity*. For a man cannot conſider himſelf to be the ſame perſon, in different circumſtances, when he hath no idea nor conſciouſneſs of *himſelf* at all.

BEINGS there may be who are thus conſtituted: but man is none of theſe beings. It is an undoubted truth, that he hath an original perception or conſciouſneſs of himſelf, and of his exiſtence; which, for the moſt part, accompanies every one of his perceptions and ideas, and every action of his mind and body. I ſay, for the moſt part; for the faculty or internal ſenſe which is the cauſe of this peculiar perception,

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perception, is not always in action. In a dead sleep we have no consciousness of self. We dream sometimes without this consciousness; and even some of our waking minutes pass without it. A reverie is nothing else, but a wandering of the mind through its ideas, without carrying along the perception of self.

This consciousness or perception of self is of the liveliest kind. Self-preservation is every one's peculiar duty; and the vivacity of this perception is necessary to make us attentive to our own interest, and particularly to shun every appearance of danger. When a man is in a reverie, he has no circumspection, nor any manner of attention to himself.

It is remarkable, that one hath scarce any chance to fall asleep, till this perception vanish. Its vivacity keeps the mind in a certain degree of agitation, which bars sleep. A fall of water disposes to sleep. It fixes the attention, both by sound and sight, and, without creating much agitation, occupies the mind, so as to make it forget itself. Reading of some books hath the same effect.

It is this perception or consciousness of self, carried through all the different stages of life, and all the variety of action, which is the foundation of *personal identity*. It is by means of this

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this perception, that I confider myfelf to be the fame perfon, in all varieties of fortune, and in every change of life.

THE main purpofe of this fhort effay, is to introduce an obfervation, that it is not by any argument or reafoning I conclude myfelf to be the fame perfon I was ten years ago. This conclufion refts entirely upon the perception of identity, which accompanies me through all my changes, and which is the only connecting principle that binds together all the various thoughts and actions of my life. Far lefs is it by any argument, or chain of reafoning, that I difcover my own exiftence. It would be ftrange indeed, if every man's exiftence were kept a fecret from him, till the celebrated argument was invented, that *cogito ergo fum.* And if a fact that to common underftanding appears felf-evident, is not to be relied on without an argument; why fhould I take for granted, without an argument, that I think, more than that I exift? For furely I am not more confcious of thinking than of exifting.

UPON this fubject I fhall juft fuggeft a thought, which will be more fully infifted on afterwards; that any doctrine which leads to a diftruft of our fenfes, muft land in univerfal fcepticifm.

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ſcepticiſm. If natural perceptions, whether from internal or external ſenſes, are not admitted as evidence of truth, I cannot ſee, that we can be certain of any fact whatever. It is clear, from what is now obſerved, that, upon this ſceptical ſyſtem, we cannot be certain even of our own exiſtence.

ESSAY

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ESSAY III.

Of the AUTHORITY *of our* SENSES.

IN ſeveral inſtances things appear to us different from what they truly are; and ſo far our ſenſes may be termed deluſive. Theſe inſtances are of two ſorts. One is, when the deception is occaſioned by indiſpoſition of the organ, remoteneſs of place, groſſneſs of the medium, or the like; which diſtort the appearance of objects, and make them be ſeen double, or greater or leſs than they really are. In ſuch inſtances, the perception is always faint, obſcure, or confuſed; and they no way invalidate the authority of the ſenſes, in general, when, abſtracting from ſuch accidental obſtructions, the perception is lively, ſtrong, and diſtinct. In the other ſort, there is a deception eſtabliſhed by the laws of nature; as in the caſe of ſecondary qualities, taken notice of in the eſſay upon liberty and neceſſity; whence it was inferred, that nature does not always give us ſuch correct perceptions as correſpond to the philoſophic truth of things. Theſe exceptions notwithſtanding, the teſtimony of our ſenſes ſtill remains a ſufficient ground of confidence and truſt. For, in all theſe caſes, where there is this ſort of eſtabliſhed deception, nature furniſhes means for

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coming at the truth. In the foregoing inſtance of ſecondary qualities, philoſophy eaſily corrects the falſe appearances, and teacheth us, that they are to be conſidered as impreſſions made upon the mind, and not as qualities of the object. A remedy being thus provided to the deception, our belief, ſo far as it can be influenced by reaſon, is the more confirmed, with regard to our other perceptions, where there is no appearance of illuſion. But this is not the whole of the matter. When any ſenſe preſents to our view an appearance that may be called deceitful, we plainly diſcover ſome uſeful purpoſe intended. The deceit is not the effect of an imperfect or arbitrary conſtitution; but wiſely contrived, to give us ſuch notice of things as may beſt ſuit the purpoſes of life. From this very conſideration, we are the more confirmed in the veracity of nature. Singular inſtances, in which our ſenſes are accommodated to the uſes of life, rather than to the ſtrictneſs of truth, are rational exceptions, which ſerve the more firmly to eſtabliſh the general rule. And, indeed, when we have nothing but our ſenſes to direct our conduct with regard to external objects, it would be ſtrange, if there ſhould be any juſt ground for a general diſtruſt of them. But there is no ſuch thing. There is nothing to which all mankind are more neceſſarily determined, than to put confidence in their ſenſes. We entertain no

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doubt of their authority, becauſe we are ſo conſtituted, that it is not in our power to doubt.

When the authority of our ſenſes is thus founded on the neceſſity of our nature, and confirmed by conſtant experience, it cannot but appear ſtrange, that it ſhould come into the thought of any man to call it in queſtion. But the influence of novelty is great; and when a man of a bold genius, in ſpite of common ſenſe, will ſtrike out new paths to himſelf, it is not eaſy to foreſee, how far his airy metaphyſical notions may carry him. A late author, who gives us a treatiſe concerning the principles of human knowledge, by denying the reality of external objects, ſtrikes at the root of the authority of our ſenſes, and thereby paves the way to the moſt inveterate ſcepticiſm. For what reliance can we have upon our ſenſes, if they deceive us in a point ſo material? If we can be prevailed upon to doubt of the reality of external objects, the next ſtep will be, to doubt of what paſſes in our own minds, of the reality of our ideas and perceptions; for we have not a ſtronger conſciouſneſs, nor a clearer conviction of the one, than of the other. And the laſt ſtep will be, to doubt of our own exiſtence; for it is ſhown in the eſſay immediately foregoing, that we have no certainty of this fact, but what depends upon ſenſe and feeling.

It is reported, that Dr Berkeley, the author of he above-mentioned treatife, was moved to adopt this whimfical opinion, to get free from fome arguments urged by materialifts againft the exiftence of the Deity. If fo, unhappy has been the experiment: for this doctrine, if it fhould not lead to univerfal fcepticifm, affords, at leaft, a fhrewd argument in favour of Atheifm. If I can only be confcious of what paffes in my own mind, and if I cannot truft my fenfes when they give me notice of external and independent exiftences; it follows, that I am the only being in the world; at leaft, that I can have no evidence from my fenfes, of any other being, body or fpirit. This is certainly an unwary conceffion; becaufe it deprives us of our chief or only means for attaining knowledge of the Deity. Laying afide fenfe and feeling, this learned divine will find it a difficult tafk, to point out by what other means we difcover the foregoing important truth. But of this more afterwards.

Were there nothing elfe in view, but to eftablifh the reality of external objects, it would be fcarce worth while to beftow much thought, in folving metaphyfical paradoxes againft their exiftence, which are better confuted by common fenfe and experience. But as the foregoing doctrine appears to have very extenfive confequences, and to ftrike at the root of the moft valuable branches of human knowledge; an attempt

tempt to re-eſtabliſh the authority of our ſenſes, by detecting the fallacy of the arguments that have been urged againſt it, may, it is hoped, not be unacceptable to the public. The attempt, at any rate, is neceſſary in this work; the main purpoſe of which is, to ſhow, that our ſenſes, external and internal, are the true ſources from whence the knowledge of the Deity is derived to us.

In order to afford ſatisfaction upon a ſubject which is eaſier felt than expreſſed, it will be proper to give a diſtinct analyſis of the operations of thoſe ſenſes by which we perceive external objects. And if this be once clearly apprehended, it will not be a matter of difficulty, to anſwer the ſeveral objections which have been urged againſt their exiſtence.

The perceptions of the external ſenſes are of different kinds. Some we have at the organs of ſenſe, ſuch as ſmelling, taſting, touching. Some we have as from a diſtance, ſuch as hearing and ſeeing. From the ſenſe of touching are derived the perceptions of body, ſolidity and external exiſtence. Laying my hand upon this table, I perceive a thing ſmooth and hard, preſſing upon my hand, and which is perceived as more diſtant from me than my hand is. From ſight we have the perceptions of motion and of colour; and from ſight as well as

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from touch, thofe of extenfion and figure. But it is more material to obferve, upon the prefent fubject, that from fight as well as touch, we have the perception of things as having an independent and continued or permanent exiftence.

LET us endeavour to explain this circumftance of independency and permanent exiftence of the objects of fight and touch; for it is a cardinal point. To begin with objects of fight: I caft my eye upon a tree, and perceive colour, figure, extenfion, and fometimes motion. If this be a complete analyfis of the perception, fubftance is not difcoverable by fight. But upon attentively examining this perception, to try if there be any thing more in it, I find one circumftance omitted, that the foregoing particulars are not perceived as fo many feparate exiftences, having no relation to each other, but as clofely united and connected. When looking around on different objects, I perceive colour in one quarter, motion in a fecond, and extenfion in a third; the appearances thefe make in my mind are in nothing fimilar to the impreffion made by a tree, where the extenfion, motion, and other qualities, are introduced into the mind as intimately united and connected. But in what manner are they united and connected? Of this every perfon can give an account; that they are perceived as inhering in or belonging to fome *fubftance* or *thing*, of which they are *qualities;*

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qualities; and that, by their reference to this ſubſtance or thing, they are thus cloſely united and connected. Thus it is that the perception of *ſubſtance*, as well as of *qualities*, is derived from ſight. And it is alſo to be attended to, as a part of the total perception, that as the qualities appear to belong to their ſubſtance, and to inhere in it, ſo both the ſubſtance and its qualities, which we call the tree, are perceived as altogether independent of us, as really exiſting, and as having a permanent exiſtence.

A SIMILAR impreſſion is made upon us by means of the ſenſe of feeling. It is obſerved above, that, from the touch, we have the perceptions of body, ſolidity and external exiſtence; and we have, from the ſame ſenſe, the perceptions of ſoftneſs and hardneſs, ſmoothneſs and roughneſs. Now, when I lay my hand upon this table, I have a perception, not only of ſmoothneſs, hardneſs, figure, and extenſion, but alſo of a thing I call *body*, of which the particulars now mentioned are perceived as *qualities*. Smoothneſs, hardneſs, extenſion, and figure; are perceived, not as ſeparate and unconnected exiſtences, but as inhering in and belonging to ſomething I call *body*, which is really exiſting, and which hath an independent and permanent exiſtence. And it is this body, with its ſeveral qualities, which I expreſs by the word *table*.

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The foregoing analyſis of the perceptions of ſight and touch, will be beſt illuſtrated by a compariſon with the perceptions of the other ſenſes. I hear a ſound, or I feel a ſmell. Theſe are not perceived as the qualities or properties of any body, thing, or ſubſtance. They make their appearance in the mind as ſimple exiſtences; and do not ſuggeſt any perception of independency, or permanent exiſtence. Did ſeeing and feeling carry us no farther, we never could have the leaſt conception of ſubſtance.

It is not a little ſurpriſing, that philoſophers, who diſcourſe ſo currently of *qualities*, ſhould affect ſo much doubt and heſitation about *ſubſtance*; ſeeing theſe are relative ideas, and imply each other. For what other reaſon do we call figure a quality, but that we perceive it, not as a ſeparate exiſtence, but as belonging to ſomething that is figured; and which thing we call *ſubſtance*, becauſe it is not a property of any other thing, but is a thing which ſubſiſts by itſelf, or hath an independent exiſtence. Did we perceive figure as we perceive ſound, it would not be conſidered as a quality. In a word, a quality is not intelligible, unleſs upon ſuppoſition of ſome other thing, of which it is the quality. Sounds indeed, and ſmells, are alſo conſidered as qualities. But this proceeds from habit, not from original perception. For, having once acquired the diſtinction betwixt a *thing* and its *qualities*,

lities, and finding found and smell more to re-resemble *qualities* than *substances*, we readily come into the use of considering them as qualities.

ANOTHER observation occurs with regard to those things which by the sight and touch are perceived as qualities; that we cannot form a conception of them, independent of the beings to which they belong. It is not in our power to separate, even in imagination, colour, figure, motion, and extension, from body or substance. There is no such thing as conceiving motion by itself, abstracted from some body which is in motion. Let us try ever so often, our attempts will be in vain, to form an idea of a triangle independent of a body which has that figure. We cannot conceive a body that is not figured; and we can as little conceive a figure without a body; for this would be to conceive a figure as having a separate existence, at the same time that we conceive it as having no separate existence; or to conceive it, at once, to be a quality, and not a quality. Thus it comes out, that *substance* makes a part, not only of every perception of sight and touch, but of every conception we can form of colour, figure, extension, and motion. Taking in the whole train of our ideas, there is not one more familiar to us, than that of *substance*, a being or thing which hath qualities.

WHEN

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WHEN thefe things are confidered, I cannot readily difcover what wrong conception of the matter hath made Locke talk fo obfcurely and indiftinctly of the idea of fubftance. It is no wonder he fhould be difficulted to form an idea of fubftance in general, abftracted from all properties, when fuch abftraction is altogether beyond the reach of our conception. But there is nothing more eafy, than to form an idea of any particular fubftance with its properties; yet this has fome how efcaped him. When he forms the idea of a horfe or a ftone, he admits nothing into the idea, but a collection of feveral fimple ideas of fenfible qualities *. "And be-"caufe," fays he, "we cannot conceive how "thefe qualities fhould fubfift alone, nor one in "another, we fuppofe them exifting in and fup-"ported by fome common fubject, which fup-"port we denote by the name *fubftance*; though "it be certain we have no clear or diftinct idea "of that thing we fuppofe a fupport." A fingle queftion would have unfolded the whole myftery. How comes it, that we cannot conceive qualities to fubfift alone, nor one in another? Locke himfelf muft have given the following anfwer, That the thing is not conceivable; becaufe a property or quality cannot fubfift without the thing to which it belongs; for if it did, that it would ceafe to be a property or quality. Why

* Book 2. chap. 23.

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then does he make ſo faint an inference, as that we ſuppoſe qualities exiſting in and ſupported by ſome common ſubject? It is not a bare ſuppoſition: it is an eſſential part of the idea; it is neceſſarily ſuggeſted to us by ſight and touch. He obſerves, that we have no clear nor diſtinct idea of ſubſtance. If he mean, that we have no clear nor diſtinct idea of ſubſtance abſtracted from properties, the thing is ſo true, that we can form no idea of ſubſtance at all abſtracted from properties. But it is alſo true, that we can form no idea of properties abſtracted from ſubſtance. The ideas both of ſubſtance and of quality are perfectly in the ſame condition in this reſpect; which it is ſurpriſing philoſophers ſhould ſo little attend to. At the ſame time, we have clear and diſtinct ideas of many things as they exiſt, though perhaps we have not a complete idea of any one thing. We have ſuch ideas of things as ſerve to all the uſeful purpoſes of life. It is true, our ſenſes reach not beyond the external properties of beings. We have no direct perception of the eſſence and internal properties of any thing. Theſe we diſcover from the effects produced. But had we ſenſes to perceive directly the eſſence and internal properties of things, our idea of them would indeed be more full and complete, but not more clear and diſtinct, than at preſent. For, even upon that ſuppoſition, we could form no notion of ſubſtance, but by its properties, internal

ternal and external. To form an idea of a thing abſtracted from all its properties, is impoſſible.

THE following is the ſum of what is above laid down. By ſight and touch we have the perceptions of ſubſtance and body, as well as of qualities. It is not figure, extenſion, motion, that we perceive; but a thing figured, extended, and moving. As we cannot form an idea of ſubſtance abſtracted from qualities, ſo we cannot form an idea of qualities abſtracted from ſubſtance. They are relative ideas, and imply each other. This is one point gained. Another is, that the idea of ſubſtance or body thus attained, comprehends in it independent and permanent exiſtence; that is, ſomething which exiſts independent of our perceptions, and remains the ſame, whether we perceive it or not.

IN this manner are we made ſenſible of the real exiſtence of things without us. The perception is ſo ſtrong, and the conviction, which makes a part of the perception, that ſceptical arguments, however cunningly deviſed, may puzzle, but can never get the better: for ſuch is our conſtitution, that we can entertain no doubt of the authority of our ſenſes in this particular. At the ſame time, every ſort of experience confirms the truth of our perceptions. I ſee a tree at a diſtance, of a certain ſhape and ſize. Walking forward, I find it in its place, by the reſiſtance

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ance it makes to my body; and, so far as I can discover by touch, it is of the same shape and size which my eye represents it to be. I return day after day, year after year, and find the same object, with no other variation, but what the seasons and time produce. The tree is at last cut down. It is no longer to be seen or felt.

To overthrow the authority of our senses, a few singular instances in which they appear fallacious, are of no weight. And to confirm this branch of the argument, we need but compare the evidence of our senses with the evidence of human testimony. The comparison cannot fail to afford satisfaction. Veracity, and a disposition to rely upon human evidence, are corresponding principles, which greatly promote society. Among individuals, these principles are found to be of different degrees of strength. But, in the main, they are so proportioned to each other, that men are not often deceived. In this case, it would be an inconclusive argument, that we ought not to give credit to any man's testimony, because some men are defective in the principle of veracity. The only effect such instances have, or ought to have, is, to correct our propensity to believe, and to bring on a habit of suspending our belief, till circumstances be examined. The evidence of our senses rises undoubtedly much higher than the evidence of human testimony. And if we continue to put trust in the

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latter, after many inſtances of being deceived, we have better reaſon to put truſt in the former, were the inſtances of being deceived equally numerous; which is plainly not the fact. When people are in ſound health of mind and body, they are very ſeldom miſled by their ſenſes.

If I have been ſo lucky as to put this ſubject in its proper light, it will not be a difficult taſk to clear it of any doubts which may ariſe, upon peruſing the above-mentioned treatiſe. The author boldly denies the exiſtence of matter, and the reality of the objects of ſenſe; contending, that there is nothing really exiſting without the mind of an intelligent being; in a word, reducing all to be a world of ideas. "It is an opinion ſtrangely prevailing among men," ſays he, "that houſes, mountains, rivers, and in a word all ſenſible objects, have an exiſtence, natural or real, diſtinct from their being perceived by the underſtanding." He ventures to call this a manifeſt contradiction; and his argument againſt the reality of theſe objects, is in the following words. "The forementioned objects are things perceived by ſenſe. We cannot perceive any thing but our own ideas or perceptions; therefore what we call men, houſes, mountains, *&c.* can be nothing elſe but ideas or perceptions." This argument ſhall be examined afterwards, with the reſpect that is due to its author. It ſhall only be taken notice of by

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by the way, that, ſuppoſing mankind to be under ſo ſtrange and unaccountable a deluſion, as to miſtake their ideas for men, houſes, mountains, *&c.* it will not follow, that there is in this any manifeſt contradiction, or any contradiction at all. For deception is a very different thing from contradiction. But he falls from this high pretenſion, in the after part of his work, to argue more conſiſtently, "that, ſuppoſing ſolid, "figured, and moveable ſubſtances, to exiſt "without the mind, yet we could never come "to the knowledge of this *." Which is true, if our ſenſes bear no teſtimony of the fact. And he adds †, "that, ſuppoſing no bodies to exiſt "without the mind, we might have the very ſame "reaſons for ſuppoſing the exiſtence of external "bodies that we have now." Which may be true, ſuppoſing our ſenſes to be fallacious.

THE Doctor's fundamental propoſition is, That we can perceive nothing but our own ideas or perceptions. This, at beſt, is an ambiguous expreſſion. For taking perception in one ſenſe, as ſignifying every object we perceive, it is a mere identical propoſition, *ſciz.* that we perceive nothing but what we perceive. But taking the Doctor's propoſition as intended, that we can have no perception or conſciouſneſs of any thing

* Sect. 18.

† Sect. 20.

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but what exiſts in our own minds, he had certainly no reaſon to take this aſſertion for granted: and yet he hath never once attempted a proof of it; though, in ſo bold an undertaking as that of annihilating the whole univerſe, his own mind excepted, he had no reaſon to hope, that an aſſertion ſo ſingular, and ſo contradictory to common ſenſe and apprehenſion, would be taken upon his word. It may be true, that it is not eaſy to explain, nor even to comprehend, by what means we perceive external objects. But our ignorance is, in moſt caſes, a very indifferent argument againſt matter of fact. At this rate, he may take upon him equally to deny the bulk of the operations in the material world, which have not hitherto been explained by him or others. And at bottom, it is perhaps as difficult to explain the manner of perceiving our own ideas, or the impreſſions made upon us, as to explain the manner of perceiving external objects. The Doctor, beſides, ought to have conſidered, that, by this bold doctrine, he, in effect, ſets bounds to the power of nature, or of the Author of nature. If it was in the power of the Almighty to beſtow upon man a faculty of perceiving external objects, he has certainly done it. For ſuppoſing the exiſtence of external objects, we have no conception how they could be otherways manifeſted to us than in fact they are. Therefore the Doctor was in the right to aſſert, that a faculty in man to perceive external objects,

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objects, would be a contradiction, and consequently a privilege not in the power of the Deity to bestow upon him. He perceived the necessity of carrying his argument so far; at the same time, sensible that this was not to be made out, he never once attempts to point at any thing like a contradiction. And if he cannot prove it to be a contradiction, the question is, at an end: for supposing only the fact to be possible, we have the very highest evidence of its reality that our nature is capable of, not less than the testimony of our senses.

It hath been urged in support of this doctrine, that nothing is present to the mind, but the impressions made upon it; and that it cannot be conscious of any thing but what is present. This difficulty is easily solved. For the proposition, "That we cannot be conscious of "any thing but what is present to the mind, or "passes within it," is taken for granted, as if it were self-evident: and yet the direct contrary is an evident fact, *sciz.* that we are conscious of many things which are not present to the mind; that is, which are not, like perceptions and ideas, within the mind. Nor is there any manner of difficulty to conceive, that an impression may be made upon us by an external object, in such a manner as to raise a direct perception of the external object itself. When we attend to the operations of the external

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ſenſes, we diſcover that external objects make not impreſſions all of them in the ſame manner. In ſome inſtances we feel the impreſſion, and are conſcious of it, as an impreſſion. In others, being quite unconſcious of the impreſſion, we perceive only the external object. And to give full ſatisfaction to the reader upon the preſent ſubject, it may perhaps not be fruitleſs, briefly to run over the operations of the ſeveral external ſenſes, by which the mind is made conſcious of external objects, and of their properties.

AND, firſt, with regard to the ſenſe of ſmelling, which gives us no notice of external exiſtences. Here the operation is of the ſimpleſt kind. It is no more but an impreſſion made at the organ, which is perceived as an impreſſion. Experience, it is true, and habit, lead us to aſcribe this particular impreſſion to ſome external thing as its cauſe. Thus, when a particular impreſſion is made upon us, termed the *ſweet ſmell of a roſe*, we learn to aſcribe it to a roſe, becauſe that peculiar impreſſion upon the organ of ſmelling, is always found to accompany the ſight and touch of the body called a *roſe*. But that this connection is the child of experience only, will be evident from the following conſiderations; that when a new ſmell is perceived, we are utterly at a loſs what cauſe to aſcribe it to; and that when a child feels a ſmell, it is not led to aſcribe it to any cauſe whatever. In this caſe, there can be no other

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other difficulty, but to comprehend in what manner the mind becomes conſcious of an impreſſion made upon the body. Upon which it ſeems ſufficient to obſerve, that we are kept entirely ignorant in what manner the ſoul and body are connected. But, from our ignorance of the manner of this connection, to deny the reality of external exiſtences, reducing all to a world of ideas, is in reality not leſs whimſical, than if one, after admitting the reality of external exiſtences, ſhould go about to deny, that we have any perception of them; merely becauſe we cannot fully account for the manner of this perception, nor how a material ſubſtance can communicate itſelf to the mind, which is ſpirit, and not matter. The ſame obſervations may be applied to the ſenſe of hearing; with this difference only, that a ſound is not perceived, at leaſt not originally, as an impreſſion made at the organ, but merely as an exiſtence in the mind.

In the ſenſes of taſting and touching, we are conſcious not only of an impreſſion made at the organ, but alſo of a body which makes the impreſſion. When I lay my hand upon this table, the impreſſion is of a hard ſmooth body, which reſiſts the motion of my hand. In this impreſſion there is nothing to create the leaſt ſuſpicion of fallacy. The body acts where it is, and it acts merely by reſiſtance. There occurs not, therefore,

therefore, any difficulty in this case, other than that mentioned above, *sciz.* after what manner an impression made at an organ of the body, is communicated to, or perceived by the mind. We shall only add upon this head, that touch alone, which is the least intricate of all our senses, is sufficient to overthrow the Doctor's whole pompous system. We have, from that sense, the fullest and clearest perception of external existences that can be conceived, subject to no doubt, ambiguity, nor even cavil. And this perception must, at the same time, support the authority of our other senses, when they give us notice of external existences.

WHAT remains to be examined, is the sense of seeing, which, it is presumed, the Doctor had chiefly in view, when he argues against the reality of external existences. And, indeed, the operation of perceiving objects at a distance, is so curious, and so singular, that it is not surprising a rigid philosopher should be puzzled about it. In this case, there is a difficulty, which applies with some shew of strength, and which possibly has had weight with our author, though it is never once mentioned by him. It is, that no being can act but where it is; and that a body at a distance cannot act upon the mind, more than the mind upon it. I candidly own, that this argument appears to evince the necessity of some intermediate means in the act of vision. One means

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means is ſuggeſted by matter of fact. The image of a viſible object is painted upon the retina of the eye. And it is not more difficult to conceive, that this image may be ſome how conveyed to the mind, than to conceive the manner of its being painted upon the retina. This circumſtance puts the operation of viſion, in one reſpect, upon the ſame footing with that of touching; both being performed by means of an impreſſion made at the organ. There is indeed this eſſential difference, that the impreſſion of touch is felt as ſuch, whereas the impreſſion of ſight is not felt: we are not conſcious of any ſuch impreſſion, but ſingly of the object itſelf which makes the impreſſion.

AND here a curious piece of mechaniſm preſents itſelf to our view. Though an impreſſion is made upon the mind, by means of the image painted upon the retina, whereby the external object is perceived; yet nature hath carefully concealed this impreſſion from us, in order to remove all ambiguity, and to give us a diſtinct perception of the object itſelf, and of that only. In touching and taſting, the impreſſion made at the organ, is ſo cloſely connected with the body which makes the impreſſion, that the perception of the impreſſion, along with that of the body, creates no confuſion nor ambiguity, the body being perceived as operating where it really is. But were the impreſſion of a viſible object perceived,

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ceived, as made on the retina, which is the organ of ſight, all objects behoved to be ſeen as within the eye. It is doubted among naturaliſts, whether outneſs or diſtance is at all diſcoverable by ſight, and whether that appearance be not the effect of experience. But bodies, and their operations, are ſo cloſely connected in place, that were we conſcious of an organic impreſſion at the retina, the mind would have a conſtant propenſity to place the body there alſo; which would be a circumſtance extremely perplexing in the act of viſion, as ſetting feeling and experience in perpetual oppoſition; enough to poiſon all the pleaſure we enjoy by that noble ſenſe.

In ſo ſhort-ſighted a creature as man, it is the worſt reaſon in the world for denying any well-atteſted fact, that he cannot account for the manner in which it is brought about. It is true, we cannot explain after what manner it is, that, by the intervention of the rays of light, the beings and things around us are laid open to our view: but it is great arrogance, to pretend to doubt of the fact upon that account; for it is, in effect, maintaining, that there is nothing in nature but what we can explain.

The perception of objects at a diſtance, by intervention of rays of light, involves no inconſiſtency nor impoſſibility: and unleſs this could be aſſerted, we have no reaſon nor foundation to

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to call in queſtion the authority of the perception. And after all, this particular ſtep of the operation of viſion, is, at bottom, not more difficult to be conceived, or accounted for, than the other ſteps, of which no man entertains a doubt. It is, perhaps, not eaſy to explain how the image of an external body is painted upon the *retina tunica*; and no perſon pretends to explain how this image is communicated to the mind. Why then ſhould we heſitate about the laſt ſtep, to wit, the perception of external objects, more than about the two former, when they are all equally ſupported by the moſt unexceptionable evidence? The whole operation of viſion far ſurpaſſes human knowledge; but not more than the operation of magnetiſm, electricity, and a thouſand other natural appearances; and our ignorance of the cauſe, ought not to make us ſuſpect deceit in the one caſe, more than in the other.

We ſhall conclude this ſubject with the following reflection. Whether our perception of the reality of external objects correſpond to the truth of things, or whether it be a mere illuſion, is a queſtion, which, from the nature of the thing, cannot admit of a ſtrict demonſtration. One thing is certain, that ſuppoſing the reality of external objects, we can form no conception of their being diſplayed to us in a more lively and convincing manner, than in fact

fact is done. Why then call a thing in doubt, of which we have as good evidence as human nature is capable of receiving? But we cannot call it in doubt, otherways than in speculation, and even then but for a moment. We have a thorough conviction of the reality of external objects; it rises to the highest certainty of belief; and we act, in consequence of it, with the greatest security of not being deceived. Nor are we in fact deceived. When we put the matter to a trial, every experiment answers to our perceptions, and confirms us more and more in our belief.

ESSAY

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ESSAY IV.

Of our IDEA *of* POWER.

THE subject proposed to be handled in the present essay is the idea of *power*, and its origin. This term is found in all languages: we talk familiarly, of a power in one body to produce certain effects, and of a capacity in another body to have certain effects produced upon it. Yet authors have differed strangely about the foundation of these ideas; and, after all that has been said, it seems yet to be a matter of uncertainty, whether they be suggested by reason, by experience, or by what other means. This subject deserves our attention the more, that the bulk of useful knowledge depends upon it. Without some insight into causes and their effects, we should be a very imperfect race of beings. And, with regard to the present undertaking, this subject must not, at any rate, be overlooked; because from it, principally, is derived any knowledge we have of the Deity, as will afterwards be made evident.

POWER denotes a simple idea, which, upon that account, cannot admit of a definition. But no person is, or can be at a loss about the

 meaning.

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meaning. Every action we perceive, gives us a notion of power: for a productive cause is implied in our perception of every action or event *; and the very idea of cause comprehends a power of producing its effect. Let us only reflect upon the perception we have when we see a stone thrown into the air out of one's hand. In the perception of this action are included contiguity of the hand and stone, the motion of the person's hand with the stone in it, and the separate motion of the stone following the other circumstances in point of time. The first circumstance is necessary to put the man in a condition to exert his power upon the stone; the second is the actual exertion of the power; and the last is the effect produced by that exertion. But these circumstances, which include both contiguity and succession, make no part of the idea of power; which is conceived as an inherent property subsisting in the man, not merely when he is exerting it, but even when he is at rest. That all men have this very idea, is a fact not to be controverted. The only doubt is, whence it is derived; from what source it springs.

THAT reason cannot help us out, will be evident. For reason must always have some object to employ itself upon. There must be known *data* or principles, to lead us to the discovery of

* Essay of liberty and necessity.

things

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things which are connected with these *data* or principles. But with regard to power, which makes a necessary connection betwixt a cause and its effect, we have no *data* nor principles to lead us to the discovery. We are not acquainted with the beings and things about us, otherways than by certain qualities and properties obvious to the external senses. Power is none of these; nor is there any connection which we can discover betwixt power and any of these. In a word, we have not the least foundation for concluding power in any body, till it once exert its power. If it be urged, That the effects produced are *data*, from which we can infer a cause by a process of reasoning, and consequently a power in the cause to produce these effects; I answer, That when a new thing or quality is produced, when in general any change is brought about, it is extremely doubtful, whether, by any process of reasoning, we can conclude it to be an effect, so as necessarily to require a cause of its existence. That we do conclude it to be an effect, is most certain. But that we can draw any such conclusion, merely from reason, I do not clearly see. What leads me, I confess, to this way of thinking, is, that men of the greatest genius have been unsuccessful, in attempting to prove, that every thing which begins to exist, must have a cause of its existence. " Whatever " is produced (says Locke) without any cause, is " produced by *nothing*; or, in other words,

" has *nothing* for its cauſe. But *nothing* can
" never be a cauſe, no more than it can be
" *ſomething*." This is obviouſly begging the
queſtion. To affirm that *nothing* is the cauſe,
is taking for granted that a cauſe is neceſſary;
which is the very point undertaken to be made
out. Dr Clarke's argument labours under the
ſame defect. " Every thing (he ſays) muſt
" have a cauſe; for if any thing wanted a cauſe,
" it would produce itſelf; that is, exiſt before
" it exiſted; which is impoſſible." If a thing
can exiſt without a cauſe, there is no neceſſity it
ſhould produce itſelf, or that any thing ſhould
produce it. In ſhort, there does not appear to
me any contradiction in the propoſition, That
a thing may begin to exiſt without a cauſe:
and therefore I dare not declare the fact to be
impoſſible. But ſenſe affords me a conviction,
that nothing begins to exiſt without a cauſe,
though reaſon cannot afford me a demonſtration
of it. This matter will be opened afterwards.
At preſent, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that the con-
viction in this caſe is complete, and carries ſo
much authority with it, as ſcarce to admit a bare
conception, that the thing can poſſibly be other-
ways. This ſubject, at the ſame time, affords a
new inſtance of what we have had more than
once occaſion to obſerve. Fond of arguments
drawn from the nature of things, we are too
apt to apply ſuch arguments without diſcretion;
and to call that demonſtration, which, at bot-
tom,

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tom, is a conviction founded on sense merely. Our perceptions, which work silently, and without effort, are apt to be overlooked; and we vainly imagine, we can demonstrate every proposition which we perceive to be true.

It will be pretty obvious, that the idea of power is not deducible from experience, more than from reason. We can learn nothing from experience merely, but that two objects may have been constantly conjoined in time past, such as fire and heat, the sun and light. But, in the first place, all that can be gathered from such facts, comes far short of our idea of cause and effect, or of a power in one body to produce some change in another. In the second place, experience, which relateth to the actions only of the particular bodies we are acquainted with, cannot aid us to discover power in any body that we have not formerly seen in action. Yet, from the very first operation of such a body, we have the perception of cause and effect, which therefore cannot be from experience. And, in the last place, as experience in no case reaches to futurity, our idea of power, did it depend upon experience, could only look backward: with regard to every new production, depending upon causes even the most familiar, we should be utterly at a loss to form any idea of power.

It being now evident, that our idea of power is

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is not derived, either from reaſon or experience; we ſhall endeavour to trace out its true foundation. Running over the ſubject, the following thoughts occur, which I ſhall ſet before the reader in their natural order. As man, in his life and actions, is neceſſarily connected both with the animate and inanimate world; he would be utterly at a loſs to conduct himſelf, without ſome acquaintance with the beings around him, and their operations. His external ſenſes give him all the intelligence that is neceſſary, not only for being, but for well-being. They diſcover to him, in the firſt place, the exiſtence of external things. But this would not be ſufficient, unleſs they alſo diſcovered to him their powers and operations. The ſenſe of ſeeing is the principal means of his intelligence. I have explained, in a former eſſay, that perception by which we diſcover the exiſtence of external objects. And when theſe are put in motion, whereby certain things follow, it is by another perception that we diſcover a relation betwixt certain objects, which makes one be termed the cauſe, the other the effect. I need ſcarce repeat again, that ſimple perceptions and ideas cannot otherways be explained than by ſuggeſting the terms which denote them. All that can be done in this caſe, is to requeſt of the reader, to attend to what paſſes in his mind, when he ſees one billiard-ball ſtruck againſt another, or a tree which the wind is blowing down, or a ſtone thrown into the

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air out of one's hand. We are obviouſly ſo conſtituted, as not only to perceive the one body acting, and exerting its power; but alſo to perceive, that the change in the other body is produced by *means* of that action or exertion of power. This change we perceive to be an *effect*; and we perceive a neceſſary connection betwixt the action and the effect, ſo as that the one muſt unavoidably follow the other.

As I diſcover power in external objects by the eye, ſo I diſcover power in my mind by an internal ſenſe. By one act of the will, ideas are raiſed; by another act of the will, my limbs are put in motion. Attending to theſe operations, I perceive or feel the motion of my limbs, and the entry of ideas, to follow neceſſarily from the act of the will. In other words, I perceive or feel theſe to be effects, and the act of the will to be the cauſe.

AND that this feeling is involved in the very perception of the action, without taking in either reaſon or experience, may be illuſtrated by ſome plain obſervations. There is no relation more familiar, even to children, than that of cauſe and effect. The firſt time a child lifts a bit of bread, the perception it hath of this action, not only includes a conjunction of the hand with the bread, and that the motion of the latter follows the motion of the former; but

but it likeways includes that particular circumſtance which is expreſſed by a power in the hand to lift the bread. Accordingly, we find no expreſſion more familiar among children and ruſtics, nor better underſtood, than I *can* do this, I *can* do that. Further, as things are beſt illuſtrated by their contraries, let us put the caſe, of a being, if there be ſuch a one, who, in viewing external objects, hath no idea of ſubſtance, but only of qualities; and who, in viewing motion, doth not perceive the change produced by it to be an effect, or any way connected with the motion, further than as following it in point of time. It appears extremely evident, that this ſuppoſed being can never have the idea of body, nor of its powers. Reaſon or experience can never give it the idea of body or ſubſtance, and far leſs of their powers.

It is very true, we cannot diſcover power in any object, as we diſcover the object itſelf, merely by intuition. But the moment an alteration is produced by any object, we perceive that the object hath a power to produce that alteration; which leads to denominate the one a cauſe, and the other an effect. I do not aſſert, that we can never be in a miſtake about this matter. Children often err, by attributing an effect to one cauſe inſtead of another, or by conſidering that to be a cauſe which is not. Miſtakes of this kind are corrected by experience. But

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But they prove the reality of the perception of power, juſt as much as where our perceptions are agreeable to the truth of things.

AND with regard to the fallibility of the ſenſe of ſeeing, when it points out to us cauſes and effects, the compariſon may be juſtly inſtituted betwixt it and belief. The faculty which regulates belief is not infallible: it ſometimes leads us into errors. Neither is the faculty infallible, by which we diſcern one thing to be a cauſe, another to be an effect. Yet both are exerted with ſufficient certainty, to guide us through life, without many capital errors.

THE author of the treatiſe of human nature, has employed a world of reaſoning, in ſearching for the foundation of our idea of power, and of neceſſary connection. And, after all his anxious reſearches, he can make no more of it, but, "That the idea of neceſſary connection, "*alias power* or *energy*, ariſes from a number "of inſtances, of one thing always following "another, which connects them in the imagi"nation; whereby we can readily foretell the "exiſtence of the one from the appearance of "the other." And he pronounces, "That "this connection can never be ſuggeſted from "any one of theſe inſtances, ſurveyed in all "poſſible lights and poſitions *." Thus he

* Philoſophical eſſays, eſſay 7.

places

places the essence of necessary connection or power upon that propensity which custom produces, to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant. And from these premisses, he draws a conclusion of a very extraordinary nature, and which he himself acknowledges to be not a little paradoxical. His words are: "Upon the whole, necessity is something that "exists in the mind, not in objects; nor is it "possible for us even to form the most distant "idea of it, considered as a quality in bodies. "The efficacy or energy in causes, is neither "placed in the causes themselves, nor in the "Deity, nor in the concurrence of these two "principles; but belongs entirely to the soul, "which considers the union of two or more ob-"jects in all past instances. It is here that the "real power of causes is placed, along with "their connection and necessity *."

He may well admit this doctrine to be a violent paradox; because, in reality, it contradicts our natural perceptions, and wages war with the common sense of mankind. We cannot put this in a stronger light than our author himself does, in forming an objection against his own doctrine. "What! the efficacy of causes lie "in the determination of the mind! as if causes "did not operate entirely independent of the

* Treatise of human nature, vol. 1. p. 290. 291.

"mind,

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" mind, and would not continue their opera-
" tion, even though there was no mind exiſtent
" to contemplate them, or reaſon concerning
" them. This is to reverſe the order of na-
" ture, and to make that ſecondary which is
" really primary. To every operation there is
" a power proportioned; and this power muſt
" be placed on the body that operates. If we
" remove the power from one cauſe, we muſt
" aſcribe it to another. But to remove it from
" all cauſes, and beſtow it on a being that is no
" ways related to the cauſe or effect, but by
" perceiving them, is a groſs abſurdity, and
" contrary to the moſt certain principles of hu-
" man reaſon *." In ſhort, nothing is more
clear, than that, from the very ſight of bodies
in motion, we have the idea of power, which
connects them together, in the relation of *cauſe*
and *effect*. This power is perceived as a quality
in the acting body, and by no means as an ope-
ration of the mind, or an eaſy tranſition of
thought from one object to another. And there-
fore, flatly to deny our perception of ſuch a qua-
lity in bodies, as our author does, is taking up-
on him to contradict a plain matter of fact, of
which all the world can give teſtimony. He
may be at a loſs indeed to diſcover the ſource of
this perception; becauſe he can neither derive
it, nor the idea of ſubſtance, from his own prin-

* Pag. 294.

ciples.

ciples. But it has been more than once obſerved, that it is too bold, to deny a fact, ſupported by the beſt evidence, merely becauſe one is at a loſs to diſcover the cauſe. At the ſame time, there is no manner of difficulty to lay open the foundation of theſe perceptions. Both of them are impreſſions of ſight, as is clearly made out above.

And to ſhow, that our author's account of this matter comes far ſhort of truth, it will be plain, from one or two inſtances, that though a conſtant connection of two objects, may, by habit or cuſtom, produce a ſimilar connection in the imagination; yet that a conſtant connection, whether in the imagination, or betwixt the objects themſelves, doth by no means come up to our idea of power. Far from it. In a garriſon, the ſoldiers conſtantly turn out at a certain beat of the drum. The gates of the town are opened and ſhut regularly, as the clock points at a certain hour. Theſe connected facts are obſerved by a child, are aſſociated in his mind, and the aſſociation becomes habitual during a long life. The man, however, above ſuppoſed, if not a changeling, never imagines the beat of the drum to be the cauſe of the motion of the ſoldiers; nor the pointing of the clock to a certain hour, to be the cauſe of the opening or ſhutting of the gates. He perceives the cauſe of theſe operations to be very different; and is not led into

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into any miſtake by the above-mentioned circumſtances, however cloſely connected. Let us put another inſtance, ſtill more appoſite. Such is the human conſtitution, that we act neceſſarily, upon the exiſtence of certain motives. The proſpect of victuals makes a hungry man accelerate his pace. Reſpect to an ancient family moves him to take a wife. An object of diſtreſs prompts him to lay out his money, or venture his perſon. Yet no man dreams a motive to be the cauſe of action; though, if the doctrine of neceſſity hold true, here is not only a conſtant, but a neceſſary connection *.

FROM the inſtance laſt given, it appears, that conſtant connection, and the other circumſtances mentioned by our author, are far from coming up to our idea of *power*. There may be even

* A thought or idea, it is obvious, cannot be the cauſe of action; cannot, of itſelf, produce motion. After what manner then does it operate? I explain the matter thus. The power of magnetiſm, or any other particular power in matter, by which the body endued with the power is impelled towards other bodies, cannot operate, if there be no other body placed within its ſphere of activity. But placing another body there, the magnetic body is directly impelled towards this new body. Yet the new body is not the *cauſe* of the motion, but only the *occaſion* of it; the condition of the power being ſuch, that the body endued with it cannot operate, but with relation to another body within its ſphere of action. Preciſely in the ſame manner doth the mind act, upon preſenting a thought or idea. The idea is not the *cauſe* of the action, but only the *occaſion* of it. It is the mind which exerts the action; only it is ſo framed, that it cannot exert its powers, otherways than upon the preſenting of certain objects to it.

a neceſſary connection betwixt two objects, without putting them in the relation of *cauſe* and *effect*, and without involving a power in the one to produce the other. Our author, then, attempts rather too bold an enterpriſe, when he undertakes to argue mankind out of their ſenſes. That we have ſuch a perception of power as is above deſcribed, is a fact that cannot admit of the ſmalleſt controverſy. And all that is left him, would he argue with any proſpect of ſucceſs, is, to queſtion whether this perception doth in fact correſpond to the truth of things. But he will not undertake ſo ſtubborn a taſk, as to prove this a deluſive perception; when he muſt be ſenſible of the wonderful harmony that ſubſiſts betwixt it and the reality of cauſes and their effects. We have no reaſon to ſuſpect deceit in this caſe, more than with regard to many other ſenſes, ſome of which remain to be unfolded, that are wrought into the conſtitution of man, for wiſe and good purpoſes, and without which he would be a very irregular and defective being.

And were it neceſſary to ſay more, upon a ſubject which indeed merits the utmoſt attention, we have, if I miſtake not, this author's own evidence for us; which I conſider as no mean evidence in any caſe; and which muſt be held of the greateſt authority when given againſt himſelf. And this evidence he gives in his philoſophical

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phical essays. For though, in this work, he continues to maintain, "That necessity exists "only in the mind, not in objects; and that it "is not possible for us even to form the most "distant idea of it, considered as a quality in "bodies;" yet, in the course of the argument, he more than once discovers, that he himself is possessed of an idea of *power*, considered as a quality in bodies, though he has not attended to it. Thus he observes *, "That nature con-"ceals from us those powers and principles on "which the influence of objects entirely de-"pends." And of these powers and principles he gives several apt instances; such as, a power or quality in bread to nourish; a power by which bodies persevere in motion. This is not only owning an idea of power as a quality in bodies, but also owning the reality of this power. In another passage †, he observes, "That the par-"ticular powers by which all natural operations "are performed, never appear to the senses;" and "that experience does not lead us to the "knowledge of the secret power by which one "object produces another." What leads us to the knowledge of this secret power, is not at present the question. But here is the author's own acknowledgment, that he hath an idea of a power in one object to produce another; for he cer-

* London edition, p. 58.

† pag. 72.

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tainly will not ſay, that he is here making uſe of words without having any ideas annexed to them. In one paſſage in particular *, he talks diſtinctly and explicitly of "a power in one "object, by which it infallibly produces the o-"ther, and operates with the greateſt certainty, "and ſtrongeſt neceſſity." No maſter of language can give a deſcription of power, conſidered as a quality in bodies, in more apt or more expreſſive terms. So difficult it is, to ſtifle or to diſguiſe natural perceptions and ſentiments †.

If the foregoing arguments have not prevailed, may not the following argument hope for ſucceſs? Figure the ſimpleſt of all caſes; a man riſing from his ſeat, to walk in his chamber; and try to analyſe the perception of this ſimple event. In the firſt place, is the man active or paſſive? Is he moved, or doth he move himſelf? No mortal is at a loſs to underſtand theſe queſtions; and no mortal is at a loſs to anſwer them. We have a diſtinct perception, that the man is not moved, but moves; or, which is the ſame, moves himſelf. Let us examine, in the next place, what is involved in the perception we have, when we ſee this man walking. Do we not ſay familiarly, doth not a child ſay, that he *can* walk? And what other thing do we mean

* pag. 121

† Naturam expellas furca, tamen uſque recurret.

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by this expreſſion, than that he hath a *power* to walk? Doth not the very idea of walking include in it a power to walk? In this inſtance, our author, unhappily for his argument, hath neither contiguity nor ſucceſſion to recur to, for explaining his idea of power, imperfect as it is. And therefore, with regard to this inſtance, he muſt either admit, that we have an idea of power, conſidered as a quality in objects, or take upon him to deny, that we have any idea of power at all: for it is evident, that the idea of power, when it comprehends only a ſingle object, can never be reſolved into a connection in the imagination betwixt two or more objects. We have thus the perception of power from every action, be it of the ſimpleſt kind that can be figured. And having once acquired the idea of power exerted by an animal, to put itſelf in motion, we readily transfer that idea to the actions of bodies, animate and inanimate, upon each other. And, after all, with due regard to an author of very acute parts, I cannot help obſerving, that there is perhaps not one idea of all the train, which is more familiar to us, or more univerſal, than the idea of power.

HAVING thus aſcertained the reality of our idea of power, as a quality in bodies, and traced it to its proper ſource, I ſhall cloſe this eſſay with ſome obſervations upon cauſes and their effects. That we cannot diſcover power in any

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object, otherways than by feeing it exert its power, is above obferved. Therefore, we can never difcover any object to be a caufe, otherways than by the effect produced. But with regard to things caufed or produced, the cafe is very different. For we can difcover an object to be an effect, after the caufe is removed, or when it is not at all feen. For inftance, no one is at a lofs to fay, that a table or a chair is an effect produced. A child will afk, who made it? We perceive every event, every new object, to be an effect or production, the very conception of which involves the idea of a caufe. Hence the maxim, "That nothing can fall out, nothing begin to exift, without a caufe;" in other words, "That every thing which begins to exift, muft have a caufe:" A maxim univerfally recognifed, and admitted by all mankind as felf-evident. Nor can this be attributed to experience. The perception is original, regarding fingular objects and events, the caufes of which are utterly unknown, not lefs than objects and events which depend upon familiar caufes. Children and ruftics are confcious of this relation, equally with thofe who have the moft confummate experience of nature, and its operations*.

FURTHER, the perception we have of any object as an effect, includes in it the percep-

* See the effay upon liberty and neceffity, p. 64.

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tion of a cauſe proportioned to the effect. If the object be an effect properly adapted to ſome end, the perception of it neceſſarily includes an intelligent deſigning cauſe. If the effect be ſome good end, brought about by proper means, the perception neceſſarily includes a deſigning and benevolent cauſe. Nor is it in our power, by any ſort of conſtraint, to vary theſe perceptions, or to give them a modification different from what they have by nature. It may be in our power to conceive, but it is not in our power to believe, that a fine painting, a well-wrote poem, or a beautiful piece of architecture, can ever be the effect of chance, or of blind fatality. The ſuppoſition indeed, ſo far as we can diſcover, involves not any inconſiſtency in the nature of things. It may be poſſible, for any reaſon we have to the contrary, that a blind and undeſigning cauſe may be productive of excellent effects. But our ſenſes diſcover, what reaſon does not, that every object which appears beautiful, as adapted to an end or purpoſe, is the effect of a deſigning cauſe; and that every object which appears beautiful, as fitted to a good end or purpoſe, is the effect of a deſigning and benevolent cauſe. We are ſo conſtituted, that we cannot entertain a doubt of this, if we would. And, ſo far as we gather from experience, we are not deceived.

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ESSAY V.

Of our KNOWLEDGE *of* FUTURE EVENTS.

WHILE we are tied to this globe, ſome knowledge of the beings around us, and of their operations, is neceſſary; becauſe, without it, we ſhould be utterly at a loſs how to conduct ourſelves. This ſubject is handled in two former eſſays. But were our knowledge limited to this ſubject, it would not be ſufficient for our well-being, and ſcarce for our preſervation. It is likeways neceſſary, that we have ſome knowledge of future events; for about theſe we are moſtly employed. A man will not ſow, if he hath not a proſpect of reaping: he will not build a houſe, if he hath not ſome ſecurity, that it will ſtand firm for years. Man is poſſeſſed of this valuable branch of knowledge: he can foretell future events. There is no doubt of the fact. The difficulty only is, what are the means employed in making the diſcovery. It is, indeed, an eſtabliſhed maxim, That the courſe of nature continues uniformly the ſame; and that things will be as they have been. But, from what premiſſes we draw this concluſion, is not obvious. Uniformity in the operations of nature, with regard to time paſt, is diſcovered by experience.

But

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But of future time, having no experience, the maxim aſſuredly cannot be derived from that ſource. Neither will reaſon help us out. It is true, the production of one thing by another, even in a ſingle inſtance, implies a power; and this power is neceſſarily connected with its effect. But as power is an internal property, not diſcoverable but by the effects produced, we can never, by any chain of reaſoning, conclude power to be in any body, except in the inſtant of operation. The power, for ought we know, may be at an end from that very inſtant. We cannot ſo much as conclude, from any deduction of reaſon, that this earth, the ſun, or any one being, will exiſt to-morrow. And, ſuppoſing their furure exiſtence to be diſcoverable by reaſon, we are not ſo much acquainted with the nature or eſſence of any one thing, as to diſcover a neceſſary connection betwixt it and its powers, that the one ſubſiſting, the other muſt alſo ſubſiſt. There is nothing more eaſily conceived, than that the moſt active being ſhall at once be deprived of all its activity: and a thing that may be conceived, can never be proved inconſiſtent or impoſſible. An appeal to paſt experience, will not carry us through. The ſun has afforded us light and heat from the beginning of the world. But what reaſon have we to conclude, that its power of giving light and heat muſt continue; when it is as eaſy to conceive powers to be limited in point of time, as to conceive them perpetual?

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perpetual? If to help us out here, we have recourse to the wisdom and goodness of a Supreme Being, as establishing permanent general laws; the difficulty is, that we have no *data*, from whence to conclude, in the way of reasoning, that these general laws must continue invariably the same without end. It is true, the conclusion is actually made, but it must be referred to some other source. For reasoning will not aid us, more than experience doth, to draw any one conclusion from past to future events. It is certain, at the same time, that the uniformity of nature's operations, is a maxim admitted by all mankind. Though altogether unassisted either by reason or experience, we never have the least hesitation to conclude, that things will be as they have been; in so much that we trust our lives and fortunes upon this conclusion. I shall endeavour to trace out the principle upon which this important conclusion is founded. And this subject will afford, it is hoped, a fresh instance of the admirable correspondence which is discovered betwixt the nature of man and his external circumstances. What is already made out, will lead us directly to our point. If our conviction of the uniformity of nature be not founded upon reason nor experience, it can have no other foundation but sense. The fact truly is, that we are so constituted, as, by a necessary determination of nature, to transfer our past experience to futurity, and to have a direct perception

tion of the conftancy and uniformity of nature. Our knowledge here is intuitive, and is more firm and folid than any conclufion from reafoning can be. This perception muft belong to an internal fenfe, becaufe it evidently hath no relation to any of our external fenfes. And an argument which hath been more than once ftated in the foregoing effays, will be found decifive upon this point. Let us fuppofe a being which hath no perception or notion of the uniformity of nature: fuch a being will never be able to transfer its paft experience to futurity. Every event, however conformable to paft experience, will come equally unexpected to this being, as new and rare events do to us; though poffibly without the fame furprife.

This fenfe of conftancy and uniformity in the works of nature, is not confined to the fubject above handled, but difplays itfelf, remarkably, upon many other objects. We have a conviction of a common nature in beings, which are fimilar in their appearances. We expect a likenefs in their conftituent parts, in their appetites, and in their conduct. We not only lay our account with uniformity of behaviour in the fame individual, but in all the individuals of the fame fpecies. This principle hath fuch influence, as even to make us hope for conftancy and uniformity, where experience would lead us to the oppofite conclufion. The rich man never thinks of

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of poverty, nor the diſtreſſed of relief. Even in this variable climate, we cannot readily bring ourſelves to believe, that good or bad weather will have an end. Nay, it governs our notions in law-matters, and is the foundation of the maxim, "That alteration or change of circum-"ſtances is not to be preſumed." Influenced by the ſame principle, every man acquires a certain uniformity of manner, which ſpreads itſelf upon his thoughts, words, and actions. In our younger years, the effect of this principle is not remarkable, being oppoſed by a variety of paſſions, which, as they have different, and ſometimes oppoſite tendencies, occaſion a fluctuation in our conduct. But ſo ſoon as the heat of youth is over, this principle, acting without counterbalance, ſeldom fails to bring on a punctual regularity in our way of living, which is extremely remarkable in moſt old people.

ANALOGY is one of the moſt common ſources of reaſoning; the force of which is univerſally admitted. The conviction of every argument founded on analogy, ariſeth from this very ſenſe of uniformity. Things ſimilar in ſome particulars, are preſumed to be ſimilar in every particular.

IN a word, as the bulk of our views and actions have a future aim, ſome knowledge of future events is neceſſary, that we may adapt our

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views and actions to natural events. To this end the Author of our nature hath done two things: He hath established a constancy and uniformity in the operations of nature; and he hath given us an intuitive conviction of this constancy and uniformity, and that things will be as they have been.

ESSAY

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ESSAY VI.

Of our DREAD *of* SUPERNATURAL POWERS *in the* DARK.

A VERY ſlight view of human nature, is ſufficient to convince us, that we were not dropt here by accident. This earth is fitted for man, and man is fitted for inhabiting this earth. By means of inſtinctive faculties, we have an intuitive knowledge of the things that ſurround us, at leaſt of thoſe things by which we may be affected. We can diſcover objects at a diſtance. We diſcern them in their connection of cauſe and effect; and their future operations are laid open, as well as their preſent. But in this grand apparatus of inſtinctive faculties, by which the ſecrets of nature are diſcloſed to us, one faculty ſeems to be with-held; though in appearance the moſt uſeful of all: and that is, a faculty to diſcern what things are noxious, and what are friendly. The moſt poiſonous fruits have ſometimes the faireſt colours; and the ſavage animals partake of beauty with the tame and harmleſs. And when other particulars are inquired into, it will be found, by induction, that man hath no original ſenſe of what is ſalutary to him, and what is hurtful.

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It is natural to inquire why this inſtinct is with-held, when it appears to be the deſign of nature, to furniſh us plentifully with inſtincts for the diſcovery of uſeful truths. With regard to this matter, it is too bold an undertaking for man to dive into all the ſecrets of his maker. We ought to reſt contented with the numerous inſtances we have of good order and good purpoſe, which muſt afford us a rational conviction, that good order and good purpoſe take place univerſally. At the ſame time, a rational account may be ſuggeſted of this matter. We have a conviction, that there is nothing redundant or ſuperfluous in the operations of nature. Different means are never afforded us to bring about the ſame end. Experience, ſo far as it can go, is given us for acquiring knowledge; and inſtinct only, where experience cannot aid us. Inſtinct therefore is denied us in the preſent caſe, becauſe the knowledge of what is harmful, and what beneficial, may be obtained by experience. Inſtinct, it is true, is a more compendious way of diſcovering uſeful truths. But man being intended an active being, is left to his own induſtry as much as poſſible.

Man then is placed in this world, amidſt a great variety of objects, the nature and tendency of which are unknown to him, otherways than by experience. In this ſituation, he would be in perpetual danger, had he not ſome faithful monitor

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monitor to keep him conſtantly upon the watch againſt harm. This monitor is the propenſity he hath to be afraid of new objects; ſuch eſpecially as have no peculiar beauty to raiſe deſire. A child, to whom all nature is ſtrange, dreads the approach of every object; and even the face of man is frightful to it. The ſame timidity and ſuſpicion may be obſerved in travellers, who converſe with ſtrangers, and meet with unknown appearances. Upon the firſt ſight of an herb or fruit, we apprehend the worſt, and ſuſpect it to be noxious. An unknown animal is immediately conceived to be dangerous. The more rare phænomena of nature, the cauſes of which are unknown to the vulgar, never fail to ſtrike them with terror. From this induction, it is clear, that we dread unknown objects. They are always ſurveyed with an emotion of fear, till experience diſcover them to be harmleſs.

This dread of unknown objects is ſuppoſed to enter into the conſtitution of all ſenſible beings, but is moſt remarkable in the weak and defenceleſs. The more feeble and delicate the creature is, the more ſhy and timorous it is obſerved to be. No creature is, by nature, more feeble and delicate than man; and this principle is to him of admirable uſe, to keep him conſtantly upon guard, and to balance the principle of curioſity, which is prevalent in man above all

other creatures, and which, indulged without control, would often betray him into fatal accidents.

THE dread of unknown objects is apt to fire the imagination, ſo as to magnify their ſuppoſed evil qualities and tendencies. For it is a well-known truth, that paſſion hath a wonderful effect upon the imagination. The leſs we know of a new object, the greater liberty we take to dreſs it up in frightful colours. The object is forthwith conceived to have all thoſe dreadful qualities which are ſuggeſted by the imagination; and the ſame terror is raiſed, as if thoſe qualities were real, and not imaginary *.

AGAIN, where the new and unknown objects have any thing dreadful in appearance, this circumſtance, joined with our natural propenſity to dread unknown objects, will raiſe terror even in the moſt reſolute. If the evils dreaded from ſuch objects be known neither in quality nor degree, the imagination, being under no reſtraint, figures the greateſt evils, both in kind and magnitude, that can be conceived. Where no immediate harm enſues, the mind, by the impulſe it hath received, tranſports itſelf into futurity, and imagines the ſtrange forms to be preſages of direful calamities. Hence it is, that the uncommon phænomena of nature, ſuch as

* See eſſay upon belief.

comets,

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comets, eclipſes, earthquakes, and the like, are, by the vulgar, held as forerunners of uncommon events. Grand objects make a deep impreſſion upon the mind, and give force to that paſſion which occupies it at the time. The above appearances being uncommon, if not altogether new, diſpoſe the mind to terror; which, aided by the emotion ariſing from the grandeur of the objects, produceth great agitation, and a violent apprehenſion of danger.

THE ſtrongeſt and moſt familiar inſtance of our natural propenſity to dread unknown objects, is the fear that ſeizes many young perſons in the dark; a phænomenon that has not been accounted for with any degree of ſatisfaction. Light diſpoſeth the mind to chearfulneſs and courage. Darkneſs, on the contrary, depreſſes the mind, and diſpoſeth it to fear. Any object alarms the mind, when it is already prepared by darkneſs to receive impreſſions of fear. The object, which, in the dark, is ſeen but obſcurely, leaves the heated imagination at full liberty, to beſtow upon it the moſt dreadful appearance. This phantom of the imagination, conceived as a reality, unhinges the mind, and throws it into a fit of diſtraction. The imagination, now heated to the higheſt degree, multiplies the dreadful appearances to the utmoſt bounds of its conception. The object becomes a ſpectre, a devil, a hobgoblin,

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hobgoblin, ſomething more terrible than ever was ſeen or deſcribed.

A VERY few accidents of this kind, having ſo powerful an effect, are ſufficient to introduce an aſſociation between darkneſs and malignant powers. And when once this aſſociation is formed, there is no occaſion for the appearance of an object to create terror. Frightful ideas croud into the mind, and augment the fear which is occaſioned by darkneſs. The imagination becomes ungovernable, and converts theſe ideas into real appearances.

THAT the terror occaſioned by darkneſs, is entirely owing to the operations of the imagination, will be evident from a ſingle reflection, that in company no ſuch effect is produced. A companion can afford no ſecurity againſt ſupernatural powers. But a companion hath the ſame effect with ſunſhine, to chear the mind, and preſerve it from gloomineſs and deſpondency. The imagination is thereby kept within bounds, and under due ſubjection to ſenſe and reaſon.

ESSAY

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ESSAY VII.

Of our Knowledge *of the* Deity.

THE arguments *a priori* for the exiſtence and attributes of the Deity, are urged, with the greateſt ſhew of reaſon, in the ſermons preached at Boyle's lectures. But the ſermons upon this ſubject, though they command my ſtricteſt attention, never have gained my heart: on the contrary, they always give me a ſenſible uneaſineſs; the cauſe of which I have been at a loſs to diſcover, though I imagine I can now explain it. Such deep metaphyſical reaſoning, if it afford any conviction, is ſurely not adapted to the vulgar and illiterate. Is the knowledge of God, then, reſerved for perſons of great ſtudy and deep thinking? Is a vail thrown over the eyes of the reſt of mankind? This thought always returned upon me, and gave me pain. If there really exiſt a Being, who made, and who governs the world; and if it be his purpoſe to diſplay himſelf to his rational creatures; it is not conſiſtent with any idea we can form of the power and wiſdom of this Being, that his purpoſe ſhould be defeated; which plainly is the caſe, in a great meaſure, if he can only be diſcovered, and but obſcurely, by a very ſmall part of mankind. At the ſame time, to found our knowledge

knowledge of the Deity upon reaſoning ſolely, is not agreeable to the analogy of nature. We are not left to gather our duty by abſtract reaſoning, nor indeed by any reaſoning. It is engraved upon the table of our hearts. We adapt our actions to the courſe of nature, by mere inſtinct, without reaſoning, or even experience. Therefore, if we can truſt to analogy, we ought to expect, that God will diſcover himſelf to us, in ſome ſuch manner as may take in all mankind, the vulgar and illiterate, as well as the deep-thinking philoſopher.

If theſe abſtruſe arguments, however, be reliſhed by the learned and ſpeculative, it is ſo far well. I cannot help acknowledging, that they afford me no conviction; at leaſt no ſolid and permanent conviction. We know little about the nature of things, but what we learn from a ſtrict attention to our own nature. That nothing can begin to exiſt without a cauſe, is ſufficiently evident from ſenſe *. But that this can be demonſtrated by any argument *a priori*, drawn from the nature of things, I have not obſerved †. And if demonſtration fail us in the very outſetting, we cannot hope for its aſſiſtance in the after ſteps. If any one being can begin to exiſt without a cauſe, every being may; upon which ſuppoſi-

* See the eſſay of our idea of power, towards the cloſe.

† See the ſame eſſay, at the beginning.

tion,

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tion, we never can hope for a demonſtration, that any one being muſt be eternal. But if this difficulty ſhall be ſurmounted, we have another to ſtruggle with. Admitting that ſomething has exiſted from all eternity, I find no *data* to determine *a priori*, whether this world have exiſted of itſelf from all eternity, in a conſtant ſucceſſion of cauſes and effects; or whether it be an effect produced by an almighty power. It is indeed hard to conceive a world, eternal and ſelf-exiſtent, where all things are carried on by blind fate, without deſign or intelligence. And yet I can find no demonſtration to the contrary. If we can form any obſcure notion of one intelligent being, exiſting from all eternity, it appears not more difficult to form a notion of a ſucceſſion of beings, with or without intelligence; or a notion of a perpetual ſucceſſion of cauſes and effects.

In ſhort, difficulties preſs both ways. But theſe difficulties, when examined, ariſe not from any inconſiſtency in our ideas. They are occaſioned by the limited capacity merely of the mind of man. We cannot comprehend an eternity of exiſtence. It is an object too bulky. It eludes our graſp. The mind is like the eye. It cannot take in an object that is very great or very little. This plainly is the ſource of our difficulties, when we attempt ſpeculations ſo remote from common apprehenſion. Abſtract rea-
ſoning

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ſoning upon ſuch a ſubject, muſt lead into endleſs perplexities. It is indeed leſs difficult to conceive one eternal unchangeable Being who made the world, than to conceive a blind chain of cauſes and effects. At leaſt, we are diſpoſed to the former, as being more agreeable to the imagination. But as we cannot find any inconſiſtency in the latter ſuppoſition, we cannot juſtly ſay that it is demonſtrably falſe.

Give me leave to add, that to bring out ſuch abſtruſe and intricate ſpeculations into any clear light, is, at any rate, ſcarce to be expected. And if, after the utmoſt ſtraining, they remain obſcure and unaffecting, it is evident to me, that they muſt have a bad tendency. Perſons of a peeviſh and gloomy caſt of mind, finding no conviction from that quarter, will be fortified in their propenſion to believe, that all things happen by blind chance; that there is no wiſdom, order, nor harmony, in the government of this world; and conſequently, that there is no God.

Being, therefore, little ſolicitous about arguments *a priori* for the exiſtence of a Deity, which are not proportioned to the capacity of man, I apply myſelf with zeal and chearfulneſs, to ſearch for the Deity in his works; for by theſe we muſt diſcover him, if he have thought proper to make himſelf known. And the better to manage the inquiry, I ſhall endeavour to make out

out three propofitions ; 1*ft*, That if there exift a being, who is the maker and governor of the world, it feems to be a neceffary part of his government, that he fhould make himfelf known to his intelligent creatures. 2*dly*, That in fact he hath done fo. And, 3*dly*, That to compafs this end, a method is employed entirely fuited to the nature of man, and the fame by which many other truths of the greateft importance are laid open to him.

THERE certainly cannot be a more difcouraging thought to man, than that the world was formed by a fortuitous concourfe of atoms, and that all things are carried on by blind impulfe. Upon that fuppofition, he can have no fecurity for his life ; nor for his continuing to be a moral agent, and an intelligent creature, even for a moment. Things have been carried on with regularity and order : but chance may, in an inftant, throw all things into the moft horrid and difmal confufion. We can have no folid comfort in virtue, when it is a work of mere chance ; nor can we juftify our reliance upon the faith of others, when the nature of man refts upon fo precarious a foundation. Every thing muft appear gloomy, difmal, and disjointed, without a Deity to unite this world of beings into one beautiful and harmonious fyftem. Thefe confiderations, and many more that will occur upon the firft reflection, afford a very ftrong con-

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viction, if there be a wife and good Being, who fuperintends the affairs of this world, that he will not conceal himfelf from his rational creatures. Can any thing be more defirable, or more fubftantially ufeful, than to know, that there is a Being from whom no fecrets are hid, to whom our good works are acceptable, and even the good purpofes of our hearts; and whofe government, directed by wifdom and benevolence, ought to make us reft fecure, that nothing doth or will fall out but according to good order? This fentiment, rooted in the mind, is an antidote to all misfortune. Without it, life is at beft but a confufed and gloomy fcene.

And this leads to a different confideration, which makes our knowledge of a benevolent Deity of the greateft importance to us. Though natural and moral evil are far from prevailing in this world, yet fo much of both is fcattered over the face of things, as to create fome degree of doubt, whether there may not be a mixture of chance, or of ill-will, in the government of this world. But once fuppofing the fuperintendency of a good being, thefe evils are no longer confidered as fuch. A man reftrains himfelf from unlawful pleafures, though the reftraint gives him pain. But then he does not confider this pain as an evil to repine at. He fubmits to it voluntarily and with fatisfaction, as one doth to

to grief for the loſs of a friend; being conſcious that it is *right* and *fit* for him to be ſo affected. In the ſame manner, he ſubmits to all the evils of this life. Having confidence in the good government of the Deity, he is perſuaded that every thing happens for the beſt, and therefore that it is his duty to ſubmit to whatever happens. This unfolds a ſcene ſo enlivening, and ſo productive of chearfulneſs and good humour, that we cannot readily think, if there be a benevolent Deity, that he will with-hold from his creatures ſo invaluable a bleſſing.

MAN, at the ſame time, by his taſte for beauty, regularity, and order, is fitted for contemplating the wiſdom and goodneſs diſplayed in the frame and government of this world. Theſe are proper objects of admiration and joy. It is not agreeable to the ordinary courſe of nature, that man ſhould be endued with an affection, without having a proper object to beſtow it upon. And as the providence of the Deity is the higheſt object of this affection, it would be unnatural, that man ſhould be kept in ignorance of it.

THESE, I admit, are but probable reaſons for believing, that if there exiſt a benevolent Deity, it muſt be his intention to manifeſt himſelf to his creatures: but they carry a very high degree of probability, which leaves little room for

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doubt. At the ſame time, though it ſhould be our fate to ſearch in vain for this object of our affection, we ought not however to deſpair, and in that deſpair to conclude there is no God. Let us but reflect, that he hath not manifeſted himſelf to all his creatures. The brutes apparently know nothing of him. And ſhould we be diſappointed in this ſearch, the worſt we can conclude is, that, for good and wiſe purpoſes, which we cannot dive into, he hath thought proper to with-hold himſelf alſo from us. We certainly have no reaſon to convert our ignorance into an argument againſt his exiſtence. Our ignorance brings us only a ſtep lower, and puts us, ſo far, upon a footing with the brute creation.

The ſecond and important branch of our diſquiſition is, to aſcertain this fact, that there is a Deity, and that he hath manifeſted himſelf to us. I requeſt only attention of my reader, and not any unreaſonable conceſſion. In a former eſſay *, two propoſitions are made out. The firſt is, That every thing which hath a beginning, is perceived as a *production* or *effect*, which neceſſarily involves the idea of a *cauſe*. The ſecond, That we neceſſarily transfer to the cauſe, whatever of contrivance or deſign is diſcovered in the effect. Conſidering a houſe, garden, picture,

* Of our idea of power.

ture, or ſtatue, in itſelf, it is perceived as beautiful. If we attend to theſe objects in a different view, as things having a beginning, we perceive them to be effects, involving the idea of a cauſe. If, again, we conſider them as artfully contrived to anſwer certain purpoſes, we perceive them to be the workmanſhip of ſome perſon of ſkill. Nor are we deceived in theſe perceptions. Upon examination, we find, that they correſpond to truth and reality.

BUT not only are thoſe objects perceived as effects, which we afterwards learn, from experience, to be the production of man. Natural objects, ſuch as plants and animals, as well as all other objects which once were not, are alſo perceived as effects, or as the production of ſome cauſe. The queſtion will always recur, How came it here? Who made it? What is the cauſe of its exiſtence?

WE are ſo accuſtomed to human arts, that every work of deſign and uſe will be attributed to man. But what if it exceed his known powers and faculties? This ſuppoſition doth not alter the nature of our perceptions; but only leads us to a different cauſe; and, in place of man, to determine upon ſome ſuperior power. If the object be conſidered as an effect, it neceſſarily involves the idea of a cauſe; and the cauſe cannot be man, if the object of our per-

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ception be an effect far ſurpaſſing the power of man. This train of thinking leads us directly to our point. Attend but to the anatomy of the meaneſt plant: ſo much of art and of curious mechaniſm is diſcovered in it, that it muſt be the production of ſome cauſe, far ſurpaſſing the power and intelligence of man. The ſcene opens more and more, when, paſſing from plants to animals, we come to man, the moſt wonderful of all the works of nature. And when, at laſt, we take in, at one view, the material and moral world; full of harmony, order, and beauty; happily adjuſted in all its parts to anſwer great and glorious purpoſes; there is, in this grand production, neceſſarily involved the perception of a cauſe, unbounded in power, intelligence, and goodneſs.

Thus it is that the Deity hath manifeſted himſelf to us, by the means of principles wrought into our nature, which muſt infallibly operate, upon viewing objects in their relation of cauſe and effect. We diſcover external objects by their qualities of colour, figure, ſize, and motion. In the perception of theſe qualities, connected after a certain manner, is comprehended the perception of the ſubſtance or thing to which theſe qualities belong. At the ſame time, we perceive this ſubſtance or thing, ſuppoſing it to have a beginning of exiſtence, to be an effect produced by ſome cauſe. And we perceive the powers

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powers and properties of this cause from its effects. If there be an aptitude in the effect to some end, we attribute to the cause, intelligence and design. If the effect produced be something that is good in itself, or that hath a tendency to some good end or purpose, we attribute goodness to the cause, as well as intelligence and design. And this we do, not by any process of reasoning, but by sense and perception. The Deity hath not left his existence to be gathered from slippery and far-fetched arguments. We need but open our eyes, to receive impressions of him almost from every thing we perceive. We discover his being and attributes in the same manner that we discover external objects. We have the evidence of our senses; and none but those who are so stubbornly hypothetical, as to deny the existence of matter, against the evidence of their senses, can seriously and deliberately deny the existence of the Deity. In fine, there is a wonderful harmony established betwixt our perceptions and the course of nature. We rely on our perceptions, for the existence of external objects, and their past, present, and future operations. We rely on these perceptions by the necessity of our nature; and, upon experience, find ourselves not deceived. Our perception of the Deity is as distinct and authoritative, as that of external objects. And though here we cannot have experience to appeal to, the want of experience can never afford an

argument

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argument againſt the authority of any perception, where, from the nature of the thing, there can be no experience. It is ſufficient for conviction, that our perceptions in general correſpond to the truth of things, where-ever there is an opportunity to try them by experience ; and therefore we can have no cauſe to doubt of our perceptions in any caſe where they are not contradicted by experience.

So far the Deity is diſcoverable, by every perſon who goes but one ſtep beyond the ſurface of things, and their mere exiſtence. We may indeed behold the earth in its gayeſt dreſs, the heavens in all their glory, without having any perception other than that of beauty, ſomething in theſe objects that pleaſes and delights us. Many paſs their lives, brutiſhly involved in the groſs pleaſures of ſenſe, without having any perception, at leaſt any ſtrong or permanent perception of the Deity: and poſſibly this, in general, is the caſe of ſavages, before they are humanized by ſociety and government. But the Deity cannot be long hid from thoſe who are accuſtomed to any degree of reflection. No ſooner are we prepared to reliſh beauties of the ſecond and third claſs * ; no ſooner do we acquire a taſte for regularity, or-

* See the eſſay upon the foundation and principles of the law of nature.

der,

der, deſign, and good purpoſe, than we begin to perceive the Deity in the beauty of the operations of nature. Savages, who have no conſiſtent rule of conduct, who act by the blind impulſe of paſſion and appetite, and who have only a glimmering of the moral ſenſe, are but ill qualified to diſcover the Deity in his works. If they have little or no perception of a juſt tenor of life, of the dignity of behaviour, and of the beauty of action, how ſhould they perceive the beauty of the works of creation, and the admirable harmony of all the parts, in the great ſyſtem of things? Being conſcious of nothing but diſorder and ſenſual impulſe within, they cannot be conſcious of any thing better without them. Society teaches mankind ſelf-denial, and improves the moral ſenſe. Diſciplined in ſociety, the taſte for order and regularity unfolds itſelf by degrees. The ſocial affections gain the aſcendant, and the morality of actions gets firm poſſeſſion of the mind. In this improved ſtate, the beauty of the creation makes a ſtrong impreſſion; and we can never ceaſe admiring the excellency of that cauſe, who is the author of ſo many beautiful effects. And thus, to ſociety we owe all the bleſſings of life; and particularly, the knowledge of the Deity, the moſt valuable branch of human knowledge.

HITHERTO we have gone no farther, than to point out the means by which we diſcover the Deity,

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Deity, and his attributes of power, wiſdom, and goodneſs. So far are we carried by thoſe wonderful principles in our nature, which diſcover the connection betwixt cauſe and effect, and from the effect diſcover the powers and properties of the cauſe. But there is one attribute of the Supreme Being, of the moſt eſſential kind, which remains to be unfolded. It is what commonly paſſeth under the name of *ſelf-exiſtence*, that he muſt have exiſted for ever; and, conſequently, that he cannot be conſidered as an effect, to require a cauſe of his exiſtence; but, on the contrary, without being cauſed, that, mediately or immediately, he is the cauſe of all other things. A principle we have had occaſion more than once to mention, will make this evident; *ſciz.* That nothing can begin to exiſt without a cauſe. Every thing which comes into exiſtence, and once was not, is, by a neceſſary determination of our nature, perceived as an effect, or as a production; the very conception of which involves an adequate cauſe. Now, if every thing have a beginning, one being at leaſt, to wit, that which firſt came into exiſtence, muſt be an effect or production without a cauſe; which is a direct inconſiſtency. If all beings had a beginning, there was a time when the world was an abſolute void; upon which ſuppoſition, it is intuitively certain, that nothing could ever have come into exiſtence. This propoſition we perceive to be true; and our perception affords us, in

in this caſe, a more ſolid conviction than any demonſtration can do. One being, therefore, muſt have exiſted from all eternity; who, as he is not an effect or production, cannot poſſibly be indebted for his exiſtence to any other being. At the ſame time, as we can have no foundation for ſuppoſing the exiſtence of more eternal beings than one, this one being muſt be the Deity; becauſe all other beings, mediately or immediately, owe their exiſtence to him. All other beings, as they are ſuppoſed to be produced in time, muſt have a cauſe of their exiſtence; and, by the ſuppoſition, there can be no other cauſe but this eternal Being. The bulk of mankind probably, in their notions of the Deity, ſcarce comprehend this attribute of ſelf-exiſtence. A man muſt be accuſtomed a good deal to abſtract reaſoning, who of himſelf diſcovers this truth. But it is not difficult to explain it to others, after it is diſcovered. And it deſerves well to be inculcated; for without it our knowledge of the Deity muſt be extremely imperfect. His other attributes of power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, are, in ſome meaſure, communicated to his creatures; but his attribute of ſelf-exiſtence makes the ſtrongeſt oppoſition imaginable betwixt him and his creatures.

A FEW words will ſuffice upon the third propoſition, which, in a good meaſure, is already explained. The eſſence of the Deity is far beyond

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yond the reach of our comprehenſion. Were he to exhibit himſelf to us in broad day-light, it is not a thing ſuppoſable, that he could be reached by any of our external ſenſes. The attributes of ſelf-exiſtence, wiſdom, goodneſs, and power, are purely intellectual. And therefore, ſo far as we can comprehend, there are no ordinary means to acquire any knowledge of the Deity, but by his works. By means, indeed, of that ſenſe which diſcovers cauſes from their effects, he hath manifeſted himſelf to us in a ſatisfactory manner, liable to no doubt nor error. And after all, what further evidence can we deſire, when the evidence we have of his exiſtence is little inferior to that we have of our own exiſtence? Impreſſions or perceptions ſerve us for evidence in both caſes *. Our own exiſtence, indeed, is, of all facts, that which concerns us the moſt; and therefore of our own exiſtence we ought to have the higheſt certainty. Next to it, we have not, as it appears to me, a greater certainty of any matter of fact, than of the exiſtence of the Deity. It is, at leaſt, equal to the certainty we have of external objects, and of the conſtancy and uniformity of the operations of nature, upon the faith of which our whole ſchemes of life are adjuſted.

The arguments *a poſteriori* which have been

* See the eſſay upon the idea of ſelf, and perſonal identity.

urged

urged for the being and attributes of the Deity, are generally defective. There is always wanting one link of the chain, to wit, that peculiar principle upon which is founded our knowledge of causes and their effects. But the calm perceptions, turning habitual by frequent repetition, are apt to be overlooked in our reasonings. Many a proposition is rendered obscure, by much laboured argument, for the truth of which we need but appeal to our own perceptions. Thus we are told, that the frame and order of the world, the wisdom and goodness displayed in every part of it, are an evident demonstration of the being of a God. These things, I acknowledge, afford us full conviction of his being. But, laying aside sense and perception, I should be utterly at a loss, by any sort of reasoning, to conclude the existence of any one thing from that of any other thing. In particular, by what process of reasoning can we demonstrate this conclusion to be true, That order and beauty must needs proceed from a designing cause? It is true, the idea of an effect involves the idea of a cause. But how does reason make out, that the thing we name an *effect*, may not exist of itself, as well as what we name a *cause?* If it be urged, that human works, where means are apparently adjusted to an end, and beauty and order discovered, are always known to be the effects of intelligence and design: I admit this to be true, so far as I have experience. But

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where experience fails me, I desire to know, by what step, what link in the chain of reasoning, am I to connect my past experience with this inference, that in every case I ought to form the same conclusion. If it be said, that nature prompts us to judge of similar instances, by former experience; this is giving up reason and demonstration, to appeal to that very sense on which I contend the evidence of this truth must entirely rest. All the arguments *a posteriori* may be resolved into this principle; which, no doubt, had its due influence upon the writers who handle the present subject; though, I must be allowed to say, it hath not been explained, nor, perhaps, sufficiently understood by them; whereby all of them have been led into the error of stating, as demonstrative reasoning, what is truly an appeal to our senses. They reason, for example, upon the equality of males and females, and hold the infinite odds against this equality, to be a demonstration, that matters cannot be carried on by chance. This, considered merely as reasoning, does not conclude; for, besides that chance is infinite in its varieties, there may be some blind fatality, some unknown cause, in the nature of things, which produceth this uniformity. But though reason cannot afford demonstration in this case, sense and perception afford conviction. The equality of males and females, is one of the many instances which we know and perceive to be ef-

fects

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fects of a defigning caufe; and of which we can no more entertain a doubt, than of our own exiftence. The fame principle which unfolds to us the connection of caufes and their effects in the moft common events, difcovers this whole univerfe to ftand in the relation of an effect to a fupreme caufe.

To fubftitute perception in place of reafon and demonftration, may feem to put the evidence of the Deity upon too low a footing. But this is a miftake; for the effect is directly oppofite. Intuition affords a higher degree of conviction than any reafoning poffibly can do. And after all, human reafon ought not to be fo much vaunted of as is commonly done by philofophers. It affords very little aid in making original difcoveries. The comparing things together, and directing our inferences from fenfe and experience, are its proper province. In this way reafon gives its aid, in our inquiries concerning the Deity. It enlarges our views of final caufes, and of the prevalence of wifdom and goodnefs. But the application of the argument from final caufes, to prove the exiftence of a Deity, and the force of our conclufion from beautiful and orderly effects to a defigning caufe, are not from reafon, but from an internal light, which fhows things in their relation of caufe and effect. Thefe conclufions reft entirely upon fenfe and perception; and it is furprifing, that writers fhould o-

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verlook what is ſo natural, and ſo obvious. But the pride of man's heart makes him deſire to extend his diſcoveries by dint of reaſoning. For reaſoning is our own work. There is merit in acuteneſs and penetration; and we are better pleaſed to aſſume merit to ourſelves, than humbly to acknowledge, that, to the moſt important diſcoveries, we are directly led by the hand of the Almighty *.

Having unfolded that principle upon which I would reſt the moſt important of all truths, objections muſt not be overlooked, ſuch as appear to have weight: and I ſhall endeavour to give theſe objections their utmoſt weight; which ought to be done in every diſpute, and which becomes more ſtrictly a duty, in handling a ſubject where truth is of the utmoſt importance.

Considering the foregoing argument on all ſides,

* To prevent miſtakes, it is proper to be obſerved, that, in a lax ſenſe, reaſon comprehends intuition, as well as the power of drawing concluſions from premiſſes. But here it is uſed in its ſtrict and proper ſenſe, as oppoſed to intuition. By intuition we perceive certain propoſitions to be true, preciſely as by ſight we perceive certain things to exiſt. Other propoſitions require a chain of compariſons, and ſeveral intermediate ſteps, before we arrive at the concluſion; by which we perceive, either demonſtrably or probably, the propoſition to be true. Hence it is clear, that intuitive knowledge, which is acquired by a ſingle act of perception, muſt ſtand higher in the ſcale of conviction, than any reaſoning can do which requires a plurality of perceptions. The more complex any proceſs is by which we acquire knowledge, the greater is the chance of error; and conſequently the leſs entire our conviction.

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ſides, I do not find, that it can be more advantageouſly combated, than by oppoſing to it, the eternity and ſelf-exiſtence of the world, governed by chance or blind fatality. It is above admitted to be very difficult, by any abſtract reaſoning, to prove the inconſiſtency of this ſuppoſition. But we have an intuitive perception of the inconſiſtency; for the frame and conduct of this world contain in them too much of wiſdom, art, and foreſight, to admit of the ſuppoſition of chance or blind fatality. We are neceſſarily determined, by a principle in our nature, to attribute ſuch effects to ſome intelligent and deſigning cauſe. Suppoſing this cauſe to be the world itſelf, we have, at leaſt, got free from the ſuppoſition of chance and blind fatality. And if the world be a being endued with unbounded power, intelligence, and benevolence, the world is the being we are in queſt of; for we have no other idea of the Deity, but of an eternal and ſelf-exiſtent being, endued with power, wiſdom, and goodneſs. But the hypotheſis, thus reformed, ſtill contradicts our perceptions. The world is made up of parts, ſeparable, and actually ſeparated. The attributes of unbounded power, intelligence, and benevolence, do certainly not belong to this earth; and as little to the ſun, moon, or ſtars; which are not conceived to be even voluntary agents. Therefore theſe attributes muſt belong to a Being, who made the

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earth, ſun, moon, and ſtars, and who connects the whole together in one ſyſtem.

A SECOND objection may be, That the foregoing reaſoning, by which we conclude the eternity and ſelf-exiſtence of one Being, who made this world, doth not neceſſarily infer ſuch a concluſion, but only an eternal ſucceſſion of ſuch beings; which may be reckoned a more natural ſuppoſition, than the idea of one eternal ſelf-exiſtent Being, without any cauſe of his exiſtence.

IN matters ſo profound, it is difficult to form notions with any degree of accuracy. I have obſerved above, that it is too much for man, to graſp, in his thought, an eternal Being, whoſe exiſtence, upon that account, cannot admit of the ſuppoſition of a cauſe. To talk, as ſome of our metaphyſical writers do, of an abſolute neceſſity in the nature of the Being, as the cauſe of his exiſtence, is mere jargon. For we can conceive nothing more clearly, than that the cauſe muſt go before the effect, and that the cauſe cannot poſſibly be in the effect. But however difficult it may be to conceive one eternal Being, without a cauſe of its exiſtence; it is not leſs difficult to conceive an eternal ſucceſſion of beings, deriving their exiſtence from each other. For though every link be ſuppoſed a production, the chain itſelf exiſts without a cauſe, as well as one eternal Being does. Therefore

fore an eternal ſucceſſion of beings is not a more natural ſuppoſition, than one eternal ſelf-exiſtent Being. And taking it in a different light, it will appear a ſuppoſition much leſs natural, or rather altogether unnatural. Succeſſion in exiſtence, implying the ſucceſſive annihilation of individuals, is indeed a very natural conception. But then it is intimately connected with frail and dependent beings, and cannot, without the utmoſt violence to the conception, be applied to the Maker of all things, to whom we naturally aſcribe perpetual exiſtence, and every other perfection. And therefore, as this hypotheſis of a perpetual ſucceſſion, when applied to the Deity, is deſtitute of any ſupport from reaſon or experience, and is contradicted by every one of our natural perceptions, there can be no ground for adopting it.

THE noted remark, That *primos in orbe deos fecit timor*, may be objected; as it will be thought unphiloſophical, to multiply cauſes for our belief of a Deity, when fear alone muſt have that effect. For my part, I have little doubt of the truth of the remark, taking it in its proper ſenſe, that fear is the foundation of our belief of inviſible malevolent powers. For it is evident, that fear can never be the cauſe of our belief of a benevolent Deity. I have unfolded, in another eſſay *, the cauſe of our dread of malevo-

* Of our dread of ſupernatural powers in the dark.

lent

lent invisible powers. And I am persuaded, that nothing has been more hurtful to religion, than an irregular propensity in our nature to dread such powers. Superficial thinkers are apt to confound these phantoms of the imagination, with the objects of our true and genuine perceptions: and finding so little reality in the former, they are apt to conclude the latter also to be a fiction. But if they gave any sort of deliberate attention, they would soon learn, by the assistance of history, as well as by original perception, to distinguish these objects, as having no real connection with each other. Man, in his original savage state, is a shy and timorous animal, dreading every new object, and attributing every extraordinary event to some invisible malevolent power. Led, at the same time, by mere appetite, he hath little idea of regularity and order, of the morality of actions, or of the beauty of nature. In this state he naturally multiplies his invisible malevolent powers, without entertaining any notion of a supreme Being, the Creator of all things. As man ripens in society, and is benefited by the good-will of others, his dread of new objects gradually lessens. He begins to perceive regularity and order in the course of nature. He becomes sharp-sighted, in discovering causes from effects, and effects from causes. He ascends gradually, through the different orders of beings, and their operations, till he discovers the Deity, who is the cause of all things. When

we

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we run over the hiſtory of man, it will be found to hold true in fact, that ſavages, who are the moſt poſſeſſed with the opinion of evil ſpirits, are, of all people, the moſt deficient in the knowledge of a Deity; and that as all civilized nations, without exception, entertain the firm belief of a Deity, ſo the dread of evil ſpirits wears out in every nation, in proportion to their gradual advances in ſocial intercourſe *.

AND

* With reſpect to the deification of heroes, which was the practice in the firſt ſtages of ſociety, it is a common opinion, that, in the eagerneſs of a too forward gratitude to thoſe who had in any degree contributed to the better accommodation of life, their countrymen no ſooner ſaw them removed by death from the ſociety of men, than they exalted them to that of the gods. I cannot for my part reliſh this conjecture. The notions of immortality among ſavages are generally obſcure; and when a man is cut off by a natural or violent death, he is not, among barbarians, conceived to be ſtill alive, far leſs to be tranſlated into a higher order of beings. It is true, that among ſavages, where every new invention makes a ſhining figure, a man who contributes in any meaſure to the accommodation of ſociety, is honoured during his life, and remembered after his death; and to honour the memory of ſuch men, feaſts and ceremonies have been inſtituted. It is not reaſonable to believe, that at firſt the matter was carried any further. That, among ſavages, the firſt notions of ſupernatural powers aroſe from fear, is extremely probable. In the gradual improvement of ſociety, regularity, order, and good deſign, came in ſome obſcure manner to be recognized in the affairs of this world; and this naturally ſuggeſted the ſuperintendence of benevolent powers, perhaps of the ſun or moon, thoſe exalted and illuſtrious beings. This apparently was the firſt dawn of internal conviction with reſpect to the Deity. So far is certain, that Polytheiſm was firſt recognized before the unity of the Deity was diſcovered by our more enlightened faculties. In this firſt ſtage of religion, ſuperior beings, according to the notions entertained of them, were much limited in power, as well as in benevolence. Men could not ſtrain their thoughts to conceive much more power or benevolence than exiſted in their

And this leads to a reflection, which cannot fail to have univerſal influence. Man, in a ſavage and brutiſh ſtate, is hurried away by every guſt of paſſion, and by every phantom of the imagination. His powers and faculties are improved by education, and good culture. He acquires deep knowledge in the nature of things, and learns accurately to diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood. What more ſatisfying evidence can we require of the truth of our perceptions of the Deity, than to find theſe perceptions prevalent, in proportion as mankind improve in the arts of life? Theſe perceptions go hand in hand with the rational powers. As man increaſeth in knowledge, and in the diſcerning faculties, his perceptions of the Deity become proportionally more ſtrong, clear, and authoritative. The univerſal conviction of a Deity, which hath, without exception, ſpread through all civilized nations, cannot poſſibly be without a foundation in our nature. To inſiſt that it may, is to inſiſt,

their own ſpecies. Such confined and groveling notions favoured the ſyſtem of Polytheiſm: for we are apt to ſupply by numbers what is wanting in energy; and as fear had multiplied the number of malevolent powers, hope was not leſs fruitful with reſpect to thoſe who were ſuppoſed benevolent. Then it was, and no ſooner, that good men, held in remembrance by ſolemn inſtitutions, were, in the fond imagination of their countrymen, advanced a ſtep higher, and converted into genii, or tutelary deities. They were ſtill ſuppoſed to ſuperintend the affairs of mankind, and, in their exalted ſtate, to continue that good-will to their country which was ſo remarkable during their exiſtence in the human ſhape. Theſe appear to be the natural gradations of the mind in its progreſs towards the Deity.

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that an effect may be without an adequate cause. Reason cannot be an adequate cause; because our reasonings upon this subject, must, at best, be abstruse, and beyond the comprehension of the bulk of mankind. Our knowledge, therefore, of the Deity, must be founded on intuition and perception, which are common to mankind. And it is agreeable to the analogy of nature, that God should discover himself to his rational creatures after this manner. If this subject be involved in any degree of obscurity, writers are to blame, who, in a matter of so great importance, ought to give no quarter to inaccuracy of thought or expression. But it is an error common in the bulk of writers, to substitute reason in place of intuitive perception. The faculty of perception, working silently, and without effort, is generally overlooked: and we must find a reason for every thing we judge to be true; though the truth of the proposition often depends, not upon reasoning, but merely upon perception. It is thus that morality has been involved in some obscurity, by metaphysical writers; and it is equally to be regretted, that, by the same sort of writers, the knowledge of the Deity hath also been involved in some obscurity.

Having settled the belief of a Deity upon its proper basis, we shall proceed to take a general view of the attributes which belong to that great Being. And, first,

Of

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Of the UNITY *of the* DEITY.

WITH regard to this, and all the other attributes of the Deity, it ought to be no discouraging reflection, that we cannot attain an adequate idea of them. The Deity is too grand an object to be comprehended, in any perfect manner, by the human mind. We have not words nor ideas which any way correspond to the manner of his existence. Should some good angel undertake to be our instructor, we would still be at a loss to form a distinct conception of it. Power, intelligence, and goodness, are attributes which we can comprehend. But with regard to the nature of the Deity in general, and the manner of his existence, we must be satisfied, in this mortal state, to remain much in the dark. The attribute of *Unity*, is what, of all, we have the least certainty about, by the light of nature. It is not inconsistent, that there should be two or more beings of the very highest order, whose essence and actions may be so regulated by the nature of the beings themselves, as to be altogether concordant and harmonious. In truth, the nature of the Divine Being is so far out of our reach, that we must be absolutely at a loss to apply to it *unity* or *multiplicity*. This property applies to numbers, and to individual things; but we know not that it will apply to the Deity. At the same time, if we may venture

ture to judge of a matter ſo remote from common apprehenſion, we ought to conclude in favour of the attribute of *unity*. We perceive the neceſſity of one eternal being; and it is ſufficient, that there is not the ſmalleſt foundation from ſenſe or reaſon, to ſuppoſe more than one.

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Of the POWER *and* INTELLIGENCE *of the* DEITY.

THESE two attributes I join together, becauſe the ſame reflection will apply to both. The wiſdom and power which muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed in the creation and government of this world, are ſo far beyond the reach of our comprehenſion, that they may juſtly be ſtyled *infinite*. We can aſcribe no bounds to either: and we have no other notion of *infinite*, but that to which we can aſcribe no bounds.

Of

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Of the BENEVOLENCE *of the* DEITY.

THE mixed nature of the events which fall under our obſervation, ſeems, at firſt ſight, to point out a mixed cauſe, partly good and partly ill. The author of *Philoſophical eſſays concerning human underſtanding*, in his eleventh eſſay, *Of the practical conſequences of natural religion*, puts in the mouth of an Epicurean philoſopher a very ſhrewd argument againſt the benevolence of the Deity. The ſum of it is what follows. "If the cauſe be known "only by the effect, we never ought to aſſign "to it any qualities, beyond what are preciſely "requiſite to produce the effect. Allowing, "therefore, God to be the author of the exiſt"ence and order of the univerſe; it follows, "that he poſſeſſes that preciſe degree of power, "intelligence, and benevolence, which appears "in his workmanſhip." And hence, from the preſent ſcene of things, apparently ſo full of ill and diſorder, it is concluded, "That we have "no foundation for aſcribing any attribute to "the Deity, but what is preciſely commenſu"rate with the imperfection of this world." With regard to mankind, he reaſons differently. "In works of human art and contrivance, it is "admitted, that we can advance from the effect "to the cauſe, and returning back from the "cauſe, that we conclude new effects, which

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" have not yet exifted. Thus, for inftance,
" from the fight of a half-finifhed building, fur-
" rounded with heaps of ftones and mortar,
" and all the inftruments of mafonry, we natu-
" rally conclude, that the building will be fi-
" nifhed, and receive all the farther improve-
" ments which art can beftow upon it. But the
" foundation of this reafoning is plainly, that
" man is a being whom we know by experience,
" and whofe motives and defigns we are ac-
" quainted with, which enables us to draw ma-
" ny inferences, concerning what may be ex-
" pected from him. But did we know man on-
" ly from the fingle work or production which
" we examine, we could not argue in this
" manner; becaufe our knowledge of all the
" qualities which we afcribe to him, being, up-
" on that fuppofition, derived from the work or
" production, it is impoffible they could point
" any thing farther, or be the foundation of any
" new inference."

SUPPOSING reafon to be our only guide in thefe matters, which is fuppofed by this philofopher in his argument, I cannot help feeing his reafoning to be juft. It appears to be true, that by no inference of reafon can I conclude any power or benevolence in the caufe, beyond what is difplayed in the effect. But this is no wonderful difcovery. The philofopher might have carried his argument a greater length. He might have

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have obſerved, even with regard to a man I am perfectly acquainted with, that I cannot conclude, by any chain of reaſoning, he will finiſh the houſe he has begun. It is to no purpoſe to urge his temper and diſpoſition. For from what principle of reaſon can I infer, that theſe will continue the ſame as formerly? He might further have obſerved, that the difficulty is greater, with regard to a man I know nothing of, ſuppoſing him to have begun the building. For what foundation have I to transfer the qualities of the perſons I am acquainted with to ſtrangers? This ſurely is not performed by any proceſs of reaſoning. There is ſtill a wider ſtep; which is, that reaſon will not ſupport me, in attributing to the Deity even that preciſe degree of power, intelligence, and benevolence, which appears in his workmanſhip. I find no inconſiſtency in ſuppoſing, that a blind and undeſigning cauſe may be productive of excellent effects. It will, I preſume, be difficult to produce a demonſtration to the contrary. And ſuppoſing, at the inſtant of operation, the Deity to have been endued with theſe properties, can we make out, by any argument *a priori*, that they are ſtill ſubſiſting in him? Nay, this ſame philoſopher might have gone a great way further, by obſerving, when any thing comes into exiſtence, that, by no proceſs of reaſoning, can we ſo much as infer any cauſe of its exiſtence.

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But happily for man, where reafon fails him, fenfe and intuition come to his affiftance. By means of principles implanted in our nature, we are enabled to make the foregoing conclufions and inferences; as at full length is made out in fome of the foregoing effays. More particularly, power difcovered in any object, is intuitively perceived to be a permanent quality, like figure or extenfion *. Upon this account, power difcovered by a fingle effect, is confidered as fufficient to produce the like effects, without end. Further, great power may be difcovered from a fmall effect; which holds even in bodily ftrength; as where an action is performed readily, and without effort. This is equally remarkable in wifdom and intelligence. A very fhort argument may unfold correctnefs of judgment, and a deep reach. The fame holds in art and fkill. Examining a flight piece of workmanfhip done with tafte, we readily obferve, that the artift was equal to a greater tafk. But it is moft of all remarkable in the quality of benevolence. For even from a fingle effect, produced by an unknown caufe, which appears to be accurately adapted to fome good purpofe, we neceffarily attribute to this caufe benevolence, as well as power and wifdom †. The perception is indeed but weak, when it arifes from a fingle effect:

* Effay upon our knowledge of future events.

† Effay of our idea of power, at the clofe.

but

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but ſtill it is a clear and diſtinct perception of pure benevolence, without any mixture of malice; for ſuch contradictory qualities are not readily aſcribed to the ſame cauſe. There may be a difficulty indeed, where the effect is of a mixed nature, partly ill, partly good; or where a variety of effects, having theſe oppoſite characters, proceed from the ſame cauſe. Such intricate caſes cannot fail to imbarraſs us. But as we muſt form ſome ſentiment, the reſolution of the difficulty plainly is, that we muſt aſcribe benevolence or malevolence to the cauſe, from the prevalence of the one or other quality in the effects. If evil make the greater figure, we perceive the cauſe to be malevolent, notwithſtanding oppoſite inſtances of goodneſs. If, upon the whole, goodneſs be ſupereminent, we perceive the cauſe to be benevolent; and are not moved by the croſs inſtances of evil, which we endeavour to reconcile as we can with pure benevolence. It is indeed true, that where the oppoſite effects nearly balance each other, our perception cannot be entire upon either ſide. But if good or evil greatly preponderate, the weight in the oppoſite ſcale goes for nothing: the perception is entire upon one ſide or other. For it is the tendency of our perceptions, to reject a mixed character made up of benevolence and malevolence, unleſs where it is neceſſarily preſſed home upon us, by an equality of oppoſite effects.

SUCH

SUCH are the conclusions that we can with certainty draw; not indeed from reason, but from intuitive perception. So little are we acquainted with the essence and nature of things, that we cannot establish these conclusions upon any argument *a priori*. Nor would it be of great benefit to mankind, to have these conclusions demonstrated to them; few having either leisure or genius to deal in such profound speculations. It is more wisely ordered, that they appear to us intuitively certain. We perceive that they are true, and our perceptions have full authority over us. This is a solid foundation for our conviction of the benevolence of the Deity. If, from a single effect, pure benevolence in the cause can be perceived; what doubt can there be of the pure benevolence of the Deity, when we survey his works, pregnant with good-will to mankind? Innumerable instances, of things wisely adapted to good purposes, give us the strongest conviction of the goodness, as well as wisdom of the Deity; which is joined with the firmest persuasion of constancy and uniformity in his operations. A few cross instances, which to us, weak-sighted mortals, may appear of ill tendency, ought not, and cannot make us waver. When we know so little of nature, it would be surprising indeed, if we should be able to account for every event, and its final tendency. Unless we were let into the counsels

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of the Almighty, we can never hope to unravel all the myſteries of the creation.

I SHALL add ſome other conſiderations, to confirm our belief of the pure benevolence of the Deity. And, in the firſt place, I venture to lay it down for a truth, that pure malice is a principle not to be found in human nature, far leſs in the Deity. The benevolence of man is indeed often checked and controlled by jealouſy, envy, and other ſelfiſh paſſions. But theſe are diſtinct from pure malice, which is not oppoſite to ſelf-intereſt, but to pure benevolence. Now, the independent and all-ſufficient nature of the Deity, ſets him above all ſuſpicion of being liable even to envy, or the purſuit of any intereſt, other than the general intereſt of his creatures. Wants, weakneſs, and oppoſition of intereſts, are the cauſes of ill-will and malice among men. From all ſuch influences the Deity muſt be exempted. And therefore, unleſs we ſuppoſe him leſs perfect than the creatures he hath made, we cannot readily ſuppoſe, that there is any degree of malice in his nature.

THERE is a ſecond conſideration, which hath always afforded me great ſatisfaction. Did natural evil prevail in reality, as much as it doth in appearance, we muſt expect, that the enlargement of natural knowledge ſhould daily diſcover new inſtances of bad, as well as of good intention.

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tention. But the fact is directly otherways. Our discoveries ascertain us more and more of the benevolence of the Deity, by unfolding beautiful final causes without number; while the appearances of ill intention gradually vanish, like a mist after the sun breaks out. Many things are now found to be curious in their contrivance, and productive of good effects, which formerly appeared useless, or perhaps of ill tendency. And, in the gradual progress of learning, we have the strongest reason to expect, that many more discoveries of the like kind will be made hereafter. This very consideration, had we nothing else to rely on, ought to make us rest with assurance upon the intuitive conviction we have of the benevolence of the Deity; without giving way to the perplexity of a few cross appearances, which, in matters so far beyond our comprehension, ought rationally to be ascribed to our own ignorance, and, by no means, to any malevolence in the Deity. In the progress of learning, the time may come, we have great reason to hope it will come, when all doubts and perplexities of this kind shall be fully cleared up.

I SHALL satisfy myself with suggesting but one other consideration, That inferring a mixed nature in the Deity, from events which cannot be clearly reconciled to benevolence, is, at best, new-moulding the Manichean system, by substituting,

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tuting, in place of it, one really leſs plauſible. For I can, with greater facility, form a conception of two oppoſite powers governing the univerſe, than of one power endued with great goodneſs and great malevolence, which are principles repugnant to each other.

IT thus appears, that our conviction of this attribute of pure benevolence hath a wide and ſolid foundation. It is impreſſed upon us by intuitive perception, by every diſcovery we make in the ſcience of nature, and by every argument which is ſuggeſted by reaſon and reflection. There is but one objection of any weight which can be moved againſt it, ariſing from the difficulty of accounting for natural and moral evil. It is obſerved above, that the objection, however it may puzzle, ought not to ſhake our faith in this attribute; becauſe an argument from ignorance can never be a convincing argument in any caſe; and this therefore, in its ſtrongeſt light, appears but in the ſhape of a difficulty, not of a ſolid objection. At the ſame time, as the utmoſt labour of thought is well beſtowed upon a ſubject in which mankind is ſo much intereſted, I ſhall proceed to ſuggeſt ſome reflections, which may tend to ſatisfy us, that the inſtances commonly given of natural and moral evil, are not ſo inconſiſtent with pure benevolence, as at firſt ſight may be imagined.

ONE

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One preliminary point muſt be ſettled, which I preſume will be admitted without much heſitation. It certainly will not be thought inconſiſtent, in any degree, with the pure benevolence of the Deity, that the world is filled with an endleſs variety of creatures, gradually aſcending in the ſcale of being, from the moſt groveling to the moſt glorious. To think that this affords an argument againſt pure benevolence, is in effect to think, that all inanimate beings ought to be endued with life and motion, and that all animate beings ought to be angels. If, at firſt view, it ſhall be thought, that infinite power and goodneſs cannot ſtop ſhort of abſolute perfection in their operations, and that the work of creation muſt be confined to the higheſt order of beings, in the higheſt perfection; this thought will ſoon be corrected, by conſidering, that, by this ſuppoſition, a great void is left, which, according to the preſent ſyſtem of things, is filled with beings, and with life and motion. And, ſuppoſing the world to be repleniſhed with the higheſt order of beings, created in the higheſt degree of perfection, it is certainly an act of more extenſive benevolence, to complete the work of creation, by the addition of an infinity of creatures leſs perfect, than to leave a great blank betwixt beings of the higheſt order and nothing.

The imperfection, then, of a created being, abſtractly

abſtractly conſidered, impeaches none of the attributes of the Deity, whether power, wiſdom, or benevolence. And if ſo, neither can pain, abſtractly conſidered, be an impeachment, ſo far as it is the natural and neceſſary conſequence of imperfection. The government of the world is carried on by general laws, which produce conſtancy and uniformity in the operations of nature. Among many reaſons for this, we can clearly diſcover one, which is unfolded in a former eſſay *, that, were not nature uniform and conſtant, men, and other ſenſible beings, would be altogether at a loſs how to conduct themſelves. Our nature is adjuſted to theſe general laws; and muſt, therefore, be ſubjected to all their varieties, whether beneficial or hurtful. We are made ſenſible beings, and therefore equally capable of pleaſure and pain. And it muſt follow, from the very nature of the thing, that delicacy of perception, which is the ſource of much pleaſure, may be equally the ſource of much pain. It is true, we cannot pronounce it to be a contradiction, that a being ſhould be ſuſceptible of pleaſure only, and not of pain. But no argument can be founded upon this ſuppoſition, but what will conclude, that a creature, ſuch as man, ought to have no place in the ſcale of beings; which ſurely will not be maintained: for it is ſtill better, that man be as

* Of our knowledge of future events.

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he is, than not be at all. It is further to be obſerved in general, that averſion to pain is not ſo great, at leaſt in mankind, as to counterbalance every other appetite. Moſt men would purchaſe an additional ſhare of happineſs, at the expence of ſome pain. And therefore it can afford no argument againſt the benevolence of the Deity, that created beings, from their nature and condition, are capable of pain, ſuppoſing, in the main, their life to be comfortable. Their ſtate is ſtill preferable to that of inanimate matter, capable neither of pleaſure nor pain.

Thus then it appears, even from a general view of our ſubject, that natural evil affords no argument againſt the benevolence of the Deity. And this will appear ſtill in a ſtronger light, when we go to particulars. It is fully laid open in the firſt eſſay, that the ſocial affections, even when moſt painful, are accompanied with no degree of averſion, whether in the direct feeling, or in the after reflection. We value ourſelves the more for being ſo conſtituted; being conſcious that ſuch a conſtitution is *right* and *meet* for ſociable creatures. Diſtreſſes, therefore, of this ſort, cannot be called evils, when we have no averſion to them, and do not repine at them. And if theſe be laid aſide, what may be juſtly termed natural evils, will be reduced within a ſmall compaſs. They will be found to proceed neceſſarily, and by an eſtabliſhed train

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of caufes and effects, either from the imperfection of our nature, or from the operation of general laws. Pain is not diftributed through the world blindly, nor with any appearance of malice; but ends, proportions, and meafures, are obferved in the diftribution. Senfible marks of good tendency are confpicuous, even in the harfheft difpenfations of Providence, as well as in its general laws: and the good tendency of thefe general laws, is a fure pledge of benevolence, even in thofe inftances where we may be at a lofs about their application. One thing is certain, that there is in man a natural principle to fubmit to thefe general laws, and their confequences. And were this principle cultivated as it ought to be, men would have the fame confcioufnefs of right conduct, in fubmitting to the laws of the natural world, that they have in fubmitting to the laws of the moral world, and would as little repine at the diftreffes of the one kind, as at thofe of the other.

But juftice is not done to the fubject, unlefs we proceed farther, to fhow, that pain and diftrefs are productive of manifold good ends, and that the prefent fyftem cannot well be without them. In the firft place, pain is neceffary, as a monitor of what is hurtful and dangerous to life. Every man is trufted with the care of his own prefervation; and he would be ill qualified for this truft, were he left entirely to the guidance

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of reaſon. He would die for want of food, were it not for the pain of hunger. And, but for the pain ariſing from fear, he would precipitate himſelf, every moment, into the moſt deſtructive enterpriſes. In the next place, pain is the great ſanction of laws, both human and divine. There would be no order nor diſcipline in the world without it. In the third place, the diſtreſſes and diſappointments which ariſe from the uncertainty of ſeaſons, from the variable tempers of thoſe we are connected with, and from other croſs accidents, are wonderfully well adapted to our conſtitution, by keeping our hopes and fears in perpetual agitation. Man is an active being, and is not in his element, but when in variety of occupation. A conſtant and uniform tenor of life, without hopes or fears, however agreeable in itſelf, would ſoon bring on ſatiety and diſguſt. Pain therefore is neceſſary, not only to enhance our pleaſures, but to keep us in perpetual motion*. And it is needleſs to obſerve, a ſecond

* One argument uſed to the diſadvantage of Providence, I take to be a very ſtrong one in its defence. It is objected, That ſtorms and tempeſts, unfruitful ſeaſons, ſerpents, ſpiders, flies, and other noxious or troubleſome animals, with many more inſtances of the like kind, diſcover an imperfection in nature, becauſe human life would be much eaſier without them. But the deſign of Providence may clearly be perceived in this proceeding. The motions of the ſun and moon, in ſhort, the whole ſyſtem of the univerſe, as far as philoſophers have been able to diſcover and obſerve, are in the utmoſt degree of regularity and perfection; but where-ever God hath left to man the power of interpoſing a remedy by thought or labour, there he hath placed things

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cond time, that, to complain of man's conſtitution in this reſpect, is, in other words, to complain, that there is ſuch a creature as man in the ſcale of being. To mention but one other thing, pain and diſtreſs have a wonderful tendency to advance the intereſts of ſociety. Grief, compaſſion, and ſympathy, are ſtrong connecting principles, by which every individual is made ſubſervient to the general good of the whole ſpecies.

I SHALL cloſe this branch of my ſubject with a general reflection, which is reſerved to the laſt place, becauſe, in my apprehenſion, it brings the argument for the benevolence of the Deity within a very narrow compaſs. When we run over what we know of the formation and government of this world, the inſtances are without number, of good intention, and of conſummate wiſdom, in adjuſting things to good ends and purpoſes. And it is equally true, that, as we advance in knowledge, ſcenes of this kind multiply upon us. This obſervation is enforced above. But I muſt now obſerve, that there is not a ſingle inſtance to be met with, which can be juſtly aſcribed to malevolence or bad intention. Many evils may be pointed out; evils at leaſt as to us. But when the moſt is made of

things in a ſtate of imperfection, on purpoſe to ſtir up human induſtry, without which life would ſtagnate, or indeed rather could not ſubſiſt at all: *Curis acuunt mortalia corda.*

Swift's thoughts on various ſubjects.

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ſuch inſtances, they appear to be conſequences only from general laws, which regard the whole more than particulars; and therefore are not marks of malevolence in the author and governor of the world. Were there any doubt about the tendency of ſuch inſtances, it would be more rational to aſcribe them to want of power, than want of benevolence, which is ſo conſpicuous in other inſtances. But we cannot rationally aſcribe them to either, but to the pre-eſtabliſhed order and conſtitution of things, and to the neceſſary imperfection of all created beings. And after all, laying the greateſt weight upon theſe natural evils that can reaſonably be demanded, the account ſtands thus. Inſtances without number of benevolence, in the frame and government of this world, ſo direct and clear, as not to admit of the ſmalleſt dubiety. On the other ſide natural evils are ſtated, which, at beſt, are very doubtful inſtances of malevolence, and may be aſcribed, perhaps obſcurely, to another cauſe. In balancing this account, where the evil appearances are ſo far outnumbered by the good, why ſhould we heſitate a moment to aſcribe pure benevolence to the Deity, and to conclude theſe evils to be neceſſary defects in a good conſtitution; eſpecially when it is ſo repugnant to our natural perceptions, to aſcribe great benevolence and great malevolence to the ſame being?

IT

It will be remarked, that, in anſwering the foregoing objection to the benevolence of the Deity, I have avoided urging any argument from our future exiſtence; though it affords a fruitful field of comfort, greatly overbalancing the tranſitory evils of this life. But I ſhould ſcarce think it fair reaſoning, to urge ſuch topics upon this ſubject; which would be arguing in a circle; becauſe the benevolence of the Deity is the only ſolid foundation upon which we can build a future exiſtence.

Having diſcuſſed what occurred upon natural evil, we come now to conſider moral evil as an objection againſt the benevolence of the Deity. And ſome writers carry this objection ſo far, as to conclude, that God is the cauſe of moral evil, ſince he hath given man a conſtitution, by which moral evil doth, and muſt abound. It is certainly no ſatisfying anſwer to this objection, that moral evil is the neceſſary conſequence of human liberty; when it is a very poſſible ſuppoſition, that man might have been endued with a moral ſenſe, ſo lively and ſtrong, as to be abſolutely authoritative over his actions. Waving, therefore, the argument from human liberty, we muſt look about for a more ſolid anſwer to the objection; which will not be difficult, when we conſider this matter, as laid down in a former eſſay *. It is there made out, it is hoped, to the

* Eſſay upon liberty and neceſſity.

ſatisfaction

ſatisfaction of the reader, that human actions are, all of them, directed by general laws, which have an operation, not leſs infallible, than thoſe laws have which govern mere matter; and though this branch of our nature is kept out of ſight, yet that in reality we are neceſſary agents. Thus all things in the moral as well as material world proceed according to ſettled laws eſtabliſhed by Providence. We have a juſt ground of conviction, that all matters are by Providence ordered in the beſt manner, and therefore that even human vices and frailties are made to anſwer wiſe and benevolent purpoſes. Every thing poſſeſſes its proper place in the divine plan. All our actions contribute equally to carry on the great and good deſigns of our Maker; and, therefore, there is nothing which in his ſight is ill; at leaſt, nothing which is ill upon the whole.

CONSIDERING the objection in the foregoing light, which is the true one, it loſes its force. For it certainly will not be maintained as an argument againſt the goodneſs of the Deity, that he endued man with a ſenſe of moral evil; which, in reality, is one of the greateſt bleſſings beſtowed upon him, and which eminently diſtinguiſhes him from the brute creation.

BUT if, now, the objection be turned into another ſhape, and it be demanded, Why was not every man endued with ſo ſtrong a ſenſe of morality,

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rality, as to be completely authoritative over all his principles of action, which would prevent much remorse to himself, and much mischief to others? it is answered, first, That this would not be sufficient for an exact regularity of conduct, unless man's judgment of right and wrong were also infallible. For, as long as we differ about what is *yours*, and what is *mine*, injustice must be the consequence, in many instances, however innocent we be. But, in the next place, to complain of a defect in the moral sense, is to complain, that we are not perfect creatures. And, if this complaint be well founded, we may, with equal justice, complain, that our understanding is but moderate, and that, in general, our powers and faculties are limited. Why should imperfection in the moral sense be urged as an objection, when all our senses, internal and external, are imperfect? In short, if this complaint be, in any measure, just, it must go the length, as above observed, to prove, that it is not consistent with the benevolence of the Deity, to create such a being as man.

CON-

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CONCLUSION.

WE have thus gone through a variety of ſubjects, not without labour, and expence of thought. And now, like a traveller, who, after examining the different parts of a country, aſcends ſome eminence to review the whole; let us refreſh ourſelves, by looking back, and enjoying the diſcoveries we have made.

THE ſubject of theſe eſſays is man. We have formed no imaginary ſchemes for exalting, or for depreſſing his nature. The inquiry has been, whether his capacities and powers ſuit his preſent circumſtances, and fit him for acting a proper part in life? We begin with examining ſome of the great ſprings of action. Upon accurate ſcrutiny, it is found, that ſelf-love, or deſire of good, is not our ſole principle of action; but that we are furniſhed, beſides, with a variety of impelling powers. Mingled in ſociety, for the convenience of mutual help, it is neceſſary that we feel for each other. But as the feeling for another's ſorrow, cannot but be painful, here is traced an admirable contrivance to reconcile us to this virtuous pain, by taking off that averſion to pain, which, in all other caſes, is an over-ruling principle. This explains a ſeemingly ſtrange phænomenon, that we ſhould ſeek entertainment

tainment from repreſentations which immerſe us in the deepeſt affliction. From man as a ſocial, we proceed to man as a moral agent. We find him ſenſible of beauty, in different ranks and orders; and eminently ſenſible of it, in its higheſt order, that of ſentiment, action, and character. But the ſenſe of moral beauty is not alone ſufficient. The importance of morality requires ſome ſtronger principle to guard it; ſome checks and reſtraints from vice, more ſevere than mere diſapprobation. Theſe are not wanting. To the ſenſe of beauty, is ſuperadded a ſenſe of obligation, a perception of *right* and *wrong*, which conſtitutes a law within us. This law injoins the primary virtues, thoſe which are eſſential to ſociety, under the ſtricteſt ſanctions. Pain, the ſtrongeſt monitor, is here employed to check tranſgreſſion; whilſt in the ſublimer more heroic virtues, where ſtrict obligation ends, pleaſure is employed to reward the performance. No action is made a duty, to which we are not antecedently diſpoſed by ſome principle. An exact proportion is maintained betwixt the ſtrength of our internal principles, and their uſefulneſs. From ſelf, the object of our moſt vigorous principles, affection ſpreads through all the connections we have with others; till, among perſons indifferent and unknown, it is totally ſunk. After it is thus loſt, by the diſtance of particular objects, nature has an admirable artifice for reviving its force, by directing it on the abſtract idea

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idea of a public and a whole; which, though faint and obſcure in the conception, is yet equal to any of our ideas in force and energy. Man is, in this manner, furniſhed for acting a proper and uſeful part in the ſyſtem to which he belongs. But this ſyſtem could not be regulated upon any pre-adjuſted plan, the actions of man could not proceed with any order, nor be ſubject to any government, unleſs all men were determined by motives. At the ſame time, man could not anſwer the purpoſes of active life, without conceiving himſelf to be a free agent. Hence the neceſſity of giving his mind a peculiar caſt; in which we cannot but diſcern the brighteſt characters of deſigning wiſdom. By having his perceptions formed upon a deluſive ſenſe of contingency, ſcope is given for a far richer and more diverſified ſcene of action, than the conſciouſneſs of neceſſity could have admitted. Having made out, that morals are eſtabliſhed on an immoveable foundation, we proceed to ſhow, by what inward powers we are led to the knowledge and belief of ſome of the moſt important truths; particularly, the exiſtence of the Deity. To this we pave the way, by a full preparation of reaſoning. We firſt conſider the nature of that act of the mind which is termed *belief*; of which the immediate foundation is the teſtimony of our ſenſes. If the teſtimony they give to the real exiſtence of a material world, be a mere illuſion, as ſome have held, all belief founded

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on our own perceptions is at an end. Hence appears the abſurdity of denying the authority of our ſenſes. And here we find full ſatisfaction. For, in other caſes, where there is any thing like artifice in the conduct of nature, means are afforded, both of diſcovering the truth, and of diſcovering the end for which truth is artfully concealed: for nature never deceives us but for our good. In the caſe of external exiſtences, we find nothing, after the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny, but ſuppoſitions, and fallacious reaſonings, oppoſed to the cleareſt teſtimony which nature can give. Diſperſing, with no great labour, that philoſophic duſt which ſceptics have raiſed about material ſubſtance, we find, upon examination, that we have a conception of it, not leſs clear than of qualities; both being equally diſplayed to us by the ſenſe of ſight. But belief is not more ſolidly founded upon our external ſenſes, than upon our internal feelings. Not the greateſt ſceptic ever doubted of his own perſonal identity, continued through the ſucceſſive periods of life; of his being the ſame man this year he was the laſt: which, however, is a diſcovery made by no reaſoning; reſting wholly upon an inward ſenſe and conſciouſneſs of the fact. Upon a like foundation reſts our belief of cauſe and effect. No relation is more familiar than this, nor ſooner takes hold of the mind. Yet certain it is, that no reaſoning, no experience, can diſcover the power or energy of what we term

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term a *cauſe*, when we attempt to trace it to its ſource. It is neceſſary for the well-being of man, firſt, that he ſhould perceive the objects which exiſt around him; and next, that he ſhould perceive them in their true ſtate, not detached and looſe, but as cauſes and effects, as producing and produced. Nature hath furniſhed us with external ſenſes, for the perception of objects, not only as ſimply exiſting, but as exiſting thus related to each other. Nor without ſuch faculties could we ever have attained the idea of cauſe and effect. The ſame proviſion is made by nature in another caſe, not leſs remarkable than the former. Our ſenſes can only inform us of objects as preſently exiſting. Yet nothing is more common, than from our knowledge of the preſent, and our experience of the paſt, to reaſon about the future. Now, all reaſonings about futurity, which have ſuch extenſive influence on our conduct, would be utterly deſtitute of a foundation, were we not endued with a ſenſe of uniformity and conſtancy in the operations of nature. A ſecret inſtinct founds this concluſion, that the future will be like the paſt. Thus there is eſtabliſhed a marvellous harmony betwixt our inward perceptions and the courſe of external events. In the above-mentioned inſtances, we attribute to our boaſted reaſon, what, in truth, is performed by ſenſe or inſtinct. Without knowing it to be ſuch, we truſt to it. We act upon its informations, with equal confi-

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dence, as we do upon the cleareſt concluſions of reaſon: and, in fact, it does not oftener miſlead us. Nature thus moſt effectually provides for our inſtruction, in things the moſt neceſſary to be known. But this is not all. We purſue the argument into an intuitive perception of the Deity. He hath not left us to collect his exiſtence from abſtract or perplexed arguments, but makes us perceive intuitively that he exiſts. When external objects are preſented to our view, ſome are immediately diſtinguiſhed to be effects, not by any proceſs or deduction of reaſoning, but merely by ſight, which gives us the perception of cauſe and effect. Juſt in the ſame manner, this whole world is ſeen or diſcovered to be an effect produced by ſome inviſible deſigning cauſe. The evidence of this perception cannot be rejected, without introducing univerſal ſcepticiſm; without overthrowing all that is built upon perceptions, which, in many capital inſtances, govern our judgments and actions; and without obliging us to doubt of thoſe things, of which no man ever doubted. For, as in viewing an external object, the ſenſe of ſight produces the idea of ſubſtance, as well as of quality; as by an intuitive perception we diſcover ſome things to be effects requiring a cauſe; as, from experience of the paſt, inſtinct prompts us to judge of the future; in fine, as by the ſenſe of identity the reader is conſcious of being the ſame perſon he was when he began to read: as all

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these conclusions, I say, upon which mankind rest with the fullest assurance, are the dictates of senses external and internal; in the very same way, and upon the same evidence, we conclude the existence of a first Supreme Cause. Reason, when applied to, gives us all its aid, both to confirm the certainty of his being, and to discover his perfections. From effects so great and so good as those we see through the universe, we necessarily infer the cause to be both great and good. Mixed or imperfect qualities cannot belong to him. The difficulties from apparent evil, are found capable of a satisfactory solution. All the general laws of the universe, are confessedly wise and good. Pain is found not to be useful only, but necessary, in the present system. If this be an argument of an imperfect state, yet must it not be admitted, that, somewhere in the scale of existence, an imperfect order of beings must be found? And why not man such a being? unless we extravagantly demand, that, to prove the benevolence of the Deity, all the possible orders of being should be advanced to the top of the scale, and all be left void and waste below; no life, no existence allowed, except what is perfect. The more of nature is explored and known, the less of evil appears. New discoveries of wisdom, order, and good intention, are the never-failing effects of enlarged knowledge; an intimation, not obscure, of its being owing to our imperfect and bounded views, that evil is

ſuppoſed to take place at all. Now, when we conſider all theſe things in one complex view; ſo many ſtriking inſtances of final cauſes; ſuch undeniable proofs both of wiſe deſign, and ſkilful execution; baniſhing cold diſtruſt of the great univerſal cauſe, are we not raiſed to the higheſt admiration! Doth not this ſubject powerfully kindle a noble enthuſiaſm? And doth it not encourage us to attempt a higher ſtrain?

" For do not all theſe wonders, *O Eternal* " *Mind!* Sovereign Architect of all! form a " hymn to thy praiſe? If in the dead inanimate " works of nature, thou art ſeen; if in the ver- " dure of the fields, and the azure of the ſkies, " the ignorant ruſtic admire thy creative power; " how blind muſt that man be, who, looking " into his own nature, contemplating this living " ſtructure, this moral frame, diſcerns not thy " forming hand? What various and complica- " ted machinery is here! and regulated with " what exquiſite art! Whilſt man purſues hap- " pineſs as his chief aim, thou bendeſt ſelf-love " into the ſocial direction. Thou infuſeſt the " generous principle, which makes him feel for " ſorrows not his own: nor feels he only, but, " ſtrange indeed! takes delight in ruſhing into " foreign miſery; and, with pleaſure, goes to " drop the painful tear over real or imaginary " wo. Thy divine hand thus ſtrongly drew " the connecting tye, and by ſympathy linked " man

" man to man; that nothing might be ſolitary
" or deſolate in thy world; but all tend and
" work toward mutual aſſociation. For this
" great end he is not left to a looſe or arbitrary
" range of will. Thy wiſe decree hath erected
" within him a throne for virtue. There thou
" haſt not decked her with beauty only to his
" admiring eye, but thrown around her the aw-
" ful effulgence of authority divine. Her per-
" ſuaſions have the force of a precept; and her
" precepts are a law indiſpenſable. Man feels
" himſelf bound by this law, ſtrict and immu-
" table: and yet the privilege of ſupererogating
" is left; a field opened for free and generous
" action; in which, performing a glorious
" courſe, he may attain the high reward, by
" thee allotted, of inward honour and ſelf-eſti-
" mation. Nothing is made ſuperfluouſly ſevere,
" nothing left dangerouſly looſe, in thy moral
" inſtitution; but every active principle made to
" know its proper place. In juſt proportion,
" man's affections diverge from himſelf to ob-
" jects around him. Where the diverging rays,
" too widely ſcattered, begin to loſe their
" warmth; collecting them again by the idea of
" a public, a country, or the univerſe, thou re-
" kindleſt the dying flame. Converging eagerly
" to this point, behold how intenſe they glow!
" and man, though indifferent to each remote
" particular, burns with zeal for the whole. All
" things are by thee pre-ordained, great Mover

" of

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" of all! Throughout the wide expanſe, every
" living creature runs a deſtin'd courſe. Whilſt
" all, under a law irreſiſtible, fulfil thy decrees,
" man alone ſeems to himſelf exempt; free to
" turn and bend his courſe at will. Yet is he
" not exempt: but, under the impreſſion of
" freedom, miniſters, in every action, to thy
" decree omnipotent, as much as the rolling
" ſun, or ebbing flood. What ſtrange contra-
" dictions are, in thy great ſcheme, reconciled!
" what glaring oppoſites made to agree! Neceſ-
" ſity and liberty meet in the ſame agent, yet
" interfere not. Man, though free from con-
" ſtraint, is under the bonds of neceſſity. He
" diſcovers himſelf to be a neceſſary agent,
" and yet acts with perfect liberty. Within the
" heart of man thou haſt placed thy lamp, to
" direct his otherways uncertain ſteps. By this
" light he is not only aſſured of the exiſtence,
" and entertained with all the glories of the ma-
" terial world, but is enabled to penetrate into
" the receſſes of nature. He perceives objects
" joined together by the myſterious link of cauſe
" and effect. The connecting principle, though
" he can never explain, he is made to perceive,
" and is thus inſtructed, how to refer even things
" unknown, to their proper origin. Nay, en-
" dued with a prophetic ſpirit, he foretells
" things to come. Where reaſon is unavailing,
" inſtinct comes in aid, and beſtows a power of
" divination, which diſcovers the future by the
" paſt.

" paſt. Thus thou gradually lifteſt him up to
" the knowledge of thyſelf. The plain and
" ſimple ſenſe, which, in the moſt obvious ef-
" fect, reads and perceives a cauſe, brings him
" ſtraight to thee, the firſt great cauſe, the an-
" cient of days, the eternal ſource of all. Thou
" preſenteſt thyſelf to us, and we cannot avoid
" thee. We muſt doubt of our own exiſt-
" ence, if we call in queſtion thine. We ſee
" thee by thine own light. We ſee thee, not
" exiſting only, but in wiſdom and in benevo-
" lence ſupreme, as in exiſtence, firſt. As ſpots
" in the ſun's bright orb, ſo in the univerſal
" plan, ſcattered evils are loſt in the blaze of
" ſuperabundant goodneſs. Even, by the re-
" ſearch of human reaſon, weak as it is, thoſe
" ſeeming evils diminiſh and fly away apace.
" Objects, ſuppoſed ſuperfluous or noxious,
" have aſſumed a beneficial aſpect. How much
" more, to thine all-penetrating eye, muſt all ap-
" pear excellent and fair! It muſt be ſo.
" We cannot doubt. Neither imperfection nor
" malice dwell with thee. Thou appointeſt as
" ſalutary, what we lament as painful. Even
" the follies and vices of men miniſter to thy
" wiſe deſigns: and as at the beginning of days
" thou ſaweſt, ſo thou ſeeſt and pronounceſt ſtill,
" that *every thing thou haſt made is good.*"

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CONCLUSION.

WE have thus gone through a variety of ſubjects, not without labour, and expence of thought. And now, like a traveller, who, after examining the different parts of a country, aſcends ſome eminence to review the whole; let us refreſh ourſelves, by looking back, and enjoying the diſcoveries we have made.

THE ſubject of theſe eſſays is man. We have formed no imaginary ſchemes for exalting, or for depreſſing his nature. The inquiry has been, whether his capacities and powers ſuit his preſent circumſtances, and fit him for acting a proper part in life? We begin with examining ſome of the great ſprings of action. Upon accurate ſcrutiny, it is found, that ſelf-love, or deſire of good, is not our ſole principle of action; but that we are furniſhed, beſides, with a variety of impelling powers. Mingled in ſociety, for the convenience of mutual help, it is neceſſary that we feel for each other. But as the feeling for another's ſorrow, cannot but be painful, here is traced an admirable contrivance to reconcile us to this virtuous pain, by taking off that averſion to pain, which, in all other caſes, is an over-ruling principle. This explains a ſeemingly ſtrange phænomenon, that we ſhould ſeek entertainment

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term a *cause*, when we attempt to trace it to its source. It is necessary for the well-being of man, first, that he should perceive the objects which exist around him; and next, that he should perceive them in their true state, not detached and loose, but as causes and effects, as producing and produced. Nature hath furnished us with external senses, for the perception of objects, not only as simply existing, but as existing thus related to each other. Nor without such faculties could we ever have attained the idea of cause and effect. The same provision is made by nature in another case, not less remarkable than the former. Our senses can only inform us of objects as presently existing. Yet nothing is more common, than from our knowledge of the present, and our experience of the past, to reason about the future. Now, all reasonings about futurity, which have such extensive influence on our conduct, would be utterly destitute of a foundation, were we not endued with a sense of uniformity and constancy in the operations of nature. A secret instinct founds this conclusion, that the future will be like the past. Thus there is established a marvellous harmony betwixt our inward perceptions and the course of external events. In the above-mentioned instances, we attribute to our boasted reason, what, in truth, is performed by sense or instinct. Without knowing it to be such, we trust to it. We act upon its informations, with equal confi-

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" haſt not decked her with beauty only to his
" admiring eye, but thrown around her the aw-
" ful effulgence of authority divine. Her per-
" ſuaſions have the force of a precept; and her
" precepts are a law indiſpenſable. Man feels
" himſelf bound by this law, ſtrict and immu-
" table: and yet the privilege of ſupererogating
" is left; a field opened for free and generous
" action; in which, performing a glorious
" courſe, he may attain the high reward, by
" thee allotted, of inward honour and ſelf-eſti-
" mation. Nothing is made ſuperfluouſly ſevere,
" nothing left dangerouſly looſe, in thy moral
" inſtitution; but every active principle made to
" know its proper place. In juſt proportion,
" man's affections diverge from himſelf to ob-
" jects around him. Where the diverging rays,
" too widely ſcattered, begin to loſe their
" warmth; collecting them again by the idea of
" a public, a country, or the univerſe, thou re-
" kindleſt the dying flame. Converging eagerly
" to this point, behold how intenſe they glow!
" and man, though indifferent to each remote
" particular, burns with zeal for the whole. All
" things are by thee pre-ordained, great Mover

" of

" of all! Throughout the wide expanſe, every
" living creature runs a deſtin'd courſe. Whilſt
" all, under a law irreſiſtible, fulfil thy decrees,
" man alone ſeems to himſelf exempt; free to
" turn and bend his courſe at will. Yet is he
" not exempt: but, under the impreſſion of
" freedom, miniſters, in every action, to thy
" decree omnipotent, as much as the rolling
" ſun, or ebbing flood. What ſtrange contra-
" dictions are, in thy great ſcheme, reconciled!
" what glaring oppoſites made to agree! Neceſ-
" ſity and liberty meet in the ſame agent, yet
" interfere not. Man, though free from con-
" ſtraint, is under the bonds of neceſſity. He
" diſcovers himſelf to be a neceſſary agent,
" and yet acts with perfect liberty. Within the
" heart of man thou haſt placed thy lamp, to
" direct his otherways uncertain ſteps. By this
" light he is not only aſſured of the exiſtence,
" and entertained with all the glories of the ma-
" terial world, but is enabled to penetrate into
" the receſſes of nature. He perceives objects
" joined together by the myſterious link of cauſe
" and effect. The connecting principle, though
" he can never explain, he is made to perceive,
" and is thus inſtructed, how to refer even things
" unknown, to their proper origin. Nay, en-
" dued with a prophetic ſpirit, he foretells
" things to come. Where reaſon is unavailing,
" inſtinct comes in aid, and beſtows a power of
" divination, which diſcovers the future by the

" paſt.

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" paſt. Thus thou gradually lifteſt him up to
" the knowledge of thyſelf. The plain and
" ſimple ſenſe, which, in the moſt obvious ef-
" fect, reads and perceives a cauſe, brings him
" ſtraight to thee, the firſt great cauſe, the an-
" cient of days, the eternal ſource of all. Thou
" preſenteſt thyſelf to us, and we cannot avoid
" thee. We muſt doubt of our own exiſt-
" ence, if we call in queſtion thine. We ſee
" thee by thine own light. We ſee thee, not
" exiſting only, but in wiſdom and in benevo-
" lence ſupreme, as in exiſtence, firſt. As ſpots
" in the ſun's bright orb, ſo in the univerſal
" plan, ſcattered evils are loſt in the blaze of
" ſuperabundant goodneſs. Even, by the re-
" ſearch of human reaſon, weak as it is, thoſe
" ſeeming evils diminiſh and fly away apace.
" Objects, ſuppoſed ſuperfluous or noxious,
" have aſſumed a beneficial aſpect. How much
" more, to thine all-penetrating eye, muſt all ap-
" pear excellent and fair! It muſt be ſo.
" We cannot doubt. Neither imperfection nor
" malice dwell with thee. Thou appointeſt as
" ſalutary, what we lament as painful. Even
" the follies and vices of men miniſter to thy
" wiſe deſigns: and as at the beginning of days
" thou ſaweſt, ſo thou ſeeſt and pronounceſt ſtill,
" that *every thing thou haſt made is good.*"

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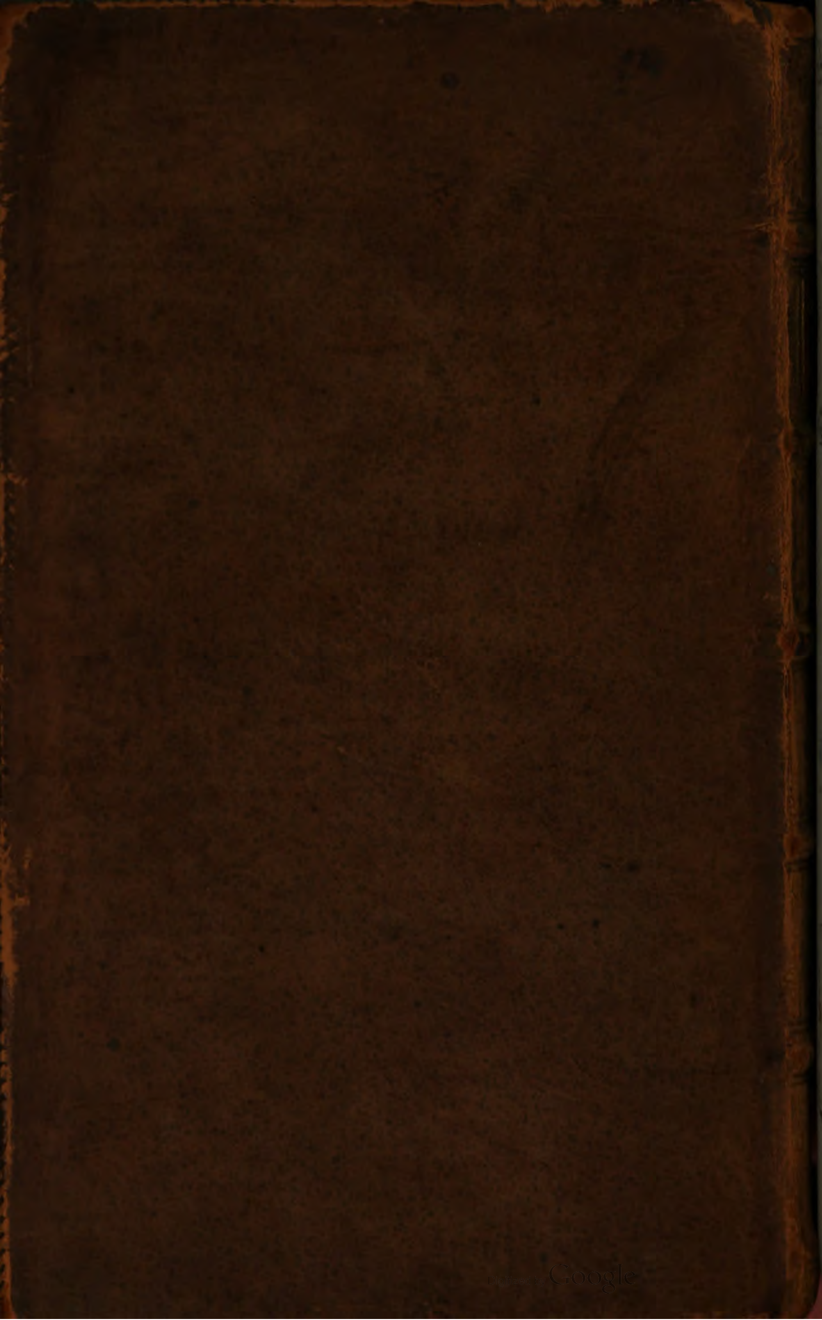
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